

## Joseph Fernandez

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**From:** Transportation, Minister TRAN:EX <Minister.Transportation@gov.bc.ca>  
**Sent:** January 5, 2022 3:55 PM  
**Cc:** Minister, MSI TRAN:EX; Wood, Jeremy TRAN:EX  
**Subject:** 306334 – Municipal speed limits

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Dear Union of British Columbia Municipalities members:

Municipalities throughout British Columbia are committed to creating safer streets for all road users, and the ministry shares in this commitment. Reducing speed limits is one available avenue to meet this goal and, under the Motor Vehicle Act (MVA), municipalities have the authority to set and change speed limits on municipal roads as they deem appropriate. The purpose of this letter is to provide clarity about the options available to municipalities for enacting changes to speed limits.

[Section 146](#) of the MVA establishes a “default” speed limit of 50 km/h on municipal roads unless a municipality provides otherwise by way of:

- a bylaw directing the rate of speed at which a person may drive or operate a motor vehicle on a highway in the municipality; and,
- signs that have been erected or placed limiting the rate of speed of motor vehicles driven or operated on a designated portion of the highway.

The MVA does not specify the frequency or placement of speed limit signage—it is not necessarily the case that a municipality establishing either a 30 or 40 km/h speed limit on roads within specific geographic areas in the community will need to post speed signs on every block. Communities should take into consideration a range of factors when considering the placement of signage to support enforcement of speeding offences. Local factors such as the road network in the area under consideration, as well as advice from legal counsel and police are all important considerations in making adjustments to speed limits on local roads.

There are a number of municipalities that have taken different approaches to lowering speed limits and we encourage communities to engage one another and share best practices. The City of Nelson is an example of a community with a long-standing blanket speed limit of 40 km/hr, which is enforced using perimeter signage at highway entry points into the community. For examples of local speed reduction pilots, the Cities of Vancouver and Surrey have each recently implemented projects using a combination of street markings, gateway and speed limit signs to inform drivers about new slow streets initiatives and the reduced speed limits of 30 or 40 km/hr as applicable on specific neighbourhood roads.

[Division 23, Schedule 1](#), of the Motor Vehicle Act Regulations sets out signage standards, and local governments may apply for funding of signs through the [Active Transportation Grant](#).

We look forward to learning of the approaches that communities take to lowering speeds and continuing to work together to expand networks of active transportation to meet the CleanBC goal of doubling trips taken by walking, biking and other kinds of active networks by the year 2030. Thank you for your commitment to road safety, and we hope the information above provides clarity around options available to municipalities for adopting changes to speed limits.

If you have questions about the authority under the Motor Vehicle Act for local governments to reduce speed limits along their local roads, please do not hesitate to contact the Senior Legislative Director for the Transportation Policy and Legislation Branch, Jeremy Wood. Mr. Wood can be reached at 778 698-5191 or [Jeremy.Wood@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Jeremy.Wood@gov.bc.ca) and would be happy to help.

Sincerely,

Rob Fleming  
Minister

Copy to: Honourable Bowinn Ma  
Minister of State for Infrastructure  
MLA, North Vancouver-Lonsdale

Jeremy Wood, Senior Legislative Director  
Transportation Policy and Legislation Branch