

Report to Committee

For Council Direction

For Council Information



TOPIC:	Automated Traffic Enforcement Operations Update	August 27, 2024
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PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to inform Council of the impending changes that the Government of Alberta will be introducing in December 2024 for Automated Traffic Enforcement (ATE) operations.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Committee accept the Automated Traffic Enforcement Operations Update Report as information.

REPORT INFORMATION:

Alberta has operated with photo radar since 1987, as a tool to address roadway network speeds. In 1996, a Traffic Safety Initiatives Committee and the Courts of Alberta, accepted Automated Traffic Enforcement (ATE) as a valid tool for traffic enforcement. In 2002, an independent review of ATE concluded that there was no documentation that could refute the legitimate use of ATE. In 2004, a traffic collision fatality and injury reduction strategy confirmed ATE as a strategy in the reduction of road fatalities and injuries. To ensure appropriate use of ATE in Alberta, guidelines were created and amended starting in 1999, with audit procedures being introduced in 2014.

Morinville has implemented ATE as a traffic safety tool since 2009. Morinville residents confirmed the use of ATE through a referendum vote in 2014. Working through a robust ATE policy, and in partnership with the RCMP, Morinville has been successfully audited numerous times since 2014.

Morinville currently utilizes a third-party contractor for all ATE operations. Operations consist of speed enforcement only, offering up to 20 hours per week of traffic monitoring depending on operational need and ability. This contractor also conducts semi-annual speed counts.

In 2023, Council reviewed and amended the ATE policy to allow for more daily oversight by RCMP and Enforcement Services. In May 2024, the ATE contract was extended to May 2027.

On June 11, 2024, Morinville was invited as a stakeholder to an engagement session hosted by MNP consultants. These consultants worked on behalf of the Government of Alberta Justice and Solicitor General and Alberta Transportation. The discussion was focused on receiving feedback to develop a transitional plan for the forthcoming changes to ATE. A decision of Cabinet and the Ministry was presented at the meeting, stating that the following changes will occur with ATE in December of 2024:

- 1) There will be no ATE operations on any provincial highway or connector roads going through a municipality,

- 2) Intersection Safety Devices will only be allowed to capture red light infractions, not speed on green infractions, and
- 3) Municipalities will only perform operations in prescribed zones, being School and/or Playground zones.

It was also shared at this meeting that the moratorium on new sites and technology will be lifted, allowing municipalities to expand in those areas where applicable. The rationale for the decision was provided with limited explanation. The rationale was:

- 1) The number of ATE sites in Alberta is comparably higher than any other jurisdiction in Canada.
- 2) ATE should be focused on safety and not revenue generation.

This decision by the Government of Alberta will substantially affect current operations within the Town of Morinville. Morinville currently operates in twenty-four (24) designated locations; however, with the restriction for school and/or playground zones only, this decision will remove fourteen (14) of these locations. This change will leave ten (10) current sites within school or playground zones, with the ability to expand into Fourwinds and St Kateri School zones.

The explanation for the consultation was for the Government of Alberta to understand the downstream impacts of this decision and what would be required to assist municipalities with these changes. Discussion around resourcing for conventional enforcement through local or provincial agencies, statistic gathering and exemptions to the changes were all discussed.

IMPACT:

Although unclear what the full impact will be on ATE operations, there is an anticipated reduction in ATE revenue and operations.

There exists the possibility that ATE is no longer a viable option within Morinville and all ATE operations may cease.

Based on evidence from other Municipalities that have removed ATE operations, there will be an anticipated increase in speeds on Morinville's transportation network with either a reduction in operations or full removal.

There is an opportunity to explore expanding ATE use to other intersection safety violations or the use of other technology to maximize enforcement efforts. Based on a desire to ensure the safety of residents with this expansion, there is a need to be consider the use of intersection safety devices (ISD's), stop sign violations, and the use of can or box camera systems.

Consideration to increase conventional enforcement options could be explored in the future. This could include Community Peace Officers, RCMP or other provincial resources.

NEXT STEPS:

Administration will continue to collaborate with our contractor to review options for ATE operations and services once the Government of Alberta formally announce this operational update.

Considerations with expected changes will return to Council once we have received notification of the effective date of the ATE operational changes.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION:

At the July 11, 2023, Regular Meeting of Council, Council approved the Automated Traffic Enforcement Technology Policy.

At the June 20, 2023, Committee of the Whole meeting, Council requested to amend section. 3.4 of the Automated Traffic Enforcement Technology Policy to include provisions for using revenue generated from Automated Traffic Enforcement Technology for traffic, pedestrian, and public safety initiatives in terms of both safety-related infrastructure and program funding.

At the June 13, 2023, Regular Meeting of Council, Council moved that the Automatic Traffic Enforcement Technology Policy be deferred to the June 20, 2023, Committee of the Whole Meeting.

On August 29, 2017, Council approved the Automated Traffic Enforcement Technology Policy.

ALIGNMENT:

Morinville 2022-2025 Strategic Plan:

Goal 2 - Community Safety & Wellbeing

Objective 2.3: Continue to support, collaborate, and educate through a multifaceted approach to community crime prevention, safety, and wellbeing.

PRESENTER:	Sgt W. Norton, Supervisor Enforcement Services	ATTACHMENTS: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Automated Traffic Enforcement Operations Update Presentation
PREPARED BY:	Sgt W. Norton, Supervisor Enforcement Services	
CLEARANCES:	M. Hay, Acting Chief Administrative Officer S. Edwards, General Manager, Community and Infrastructure Services B. Boddez, Manager, Community Safety Services	