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Community News

# James Bay to get its much-asked for lowered speed limits

Moat said speeding often occurs on certain streets when cruise ships are in port—even when the posted limit is a robust 50 km/hr.

Mark Brennae | August 8, 2024



The James Bay Neighbourhood Association's (JBNA) request that speed limits in the oceanside community be lowered to 30 km/h from 50 km/hr appears to be just down the road.

In a response to an email from Capital Daily, city spokesperson Colleen Mycroft said the rollout of lowered speed limits, which began in spring 2023, will continue and that "Jubilee and James Bay are the next neighbourhoods in the program, planned for implementation of the speed limit change in late 2024."

"This is good news for the residents of James Bay," Trevor Moat, the James Bay Neighborhood Association president tells Capital Daily.

"We note, however, that speeding is and will remain a problem on certain streets and at certain times regardless of posted speed limits."

Moat said speeding often occurs on certain streets when cruise ships are in port—even when the posted limit is 50 km/hr.

"We have no reason to believe that a speed limit reduction to 30 km/hr will change driver behaviour," he said. Moat said what would help is enforcement with appropriate consequences.

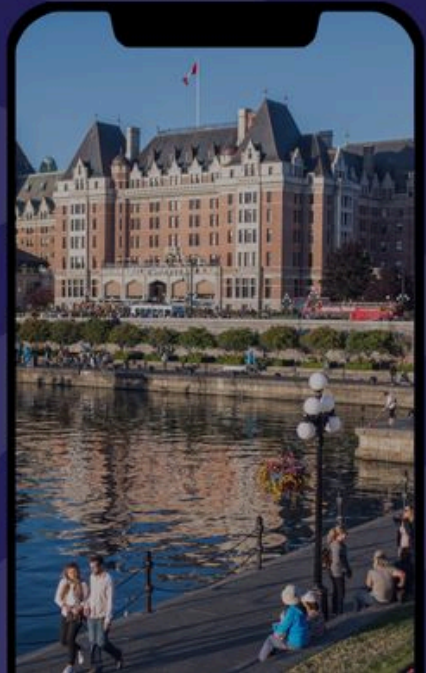
"This could be achieved through increased police presence on certain streets when multiple cruise ships are in port, and/or through the use of speed monitoring equipment in taxis that are authorized by GVHA to access the cruise ship terminal."

Moat said the JBNA has recommended both of these options in the past and to his knowledge neither had been implemented.

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Citing a [UVic traffic study](#) undertaken late last summer that looked at the environmental impact of cruise ships on the James Bay area, the JBNA wrote the city in June reaffirming its stance that there is more traffic on the roads and more vehicles exceeding the speed limit when cruise ships are docked at Ogden Point.

“There are myriad reasons why it would make sense to have vehicles slowed down,” Moat said.

## Victoria starting with local streets

Mycroft said the City of Victoria “is lowering speed limits to 30 km/hr from 50 km/hr on all local streets.” Local streets, the city tells Capital Daily, are typically quiet streets (fewer than 1K vehicles per day) without a centreline.

The speed limit on Dallas Road—a tourist hub and main artery for cruise-ship street traffic—will remain at 50 km/hr “at this time” Mycroft said in the email. In its list of recommendations, the JBNA suggested a 40 km/hr limit for Dallas.

“Busier roads may be explored in the future based on speed and safety data reviews, but the 30 km/h project prioritizes slowing down local streets in all Victoria neighbourhoods first,” Myrcoft said.

[This map](#) shows current and future 30 km/h streets across the city.

The tapering off of speed limits began in the Hillside Quadra neighbourhood, followed by Burnside Gorge, Oaklands and Vic West, and North Park.

“City staff started with the north end of the city due to the collision history, high speeds, and vehicle volumes in these neighbourhoods,” Myrcoft said.

## James Bay not built for speeding vehicles

Moat said James Bay needs slower—and less—traffic. He points to the fact the busy community of 11K+ is Victoria’s oldest residential area and that a number of its streets were built before the advent of vehicles. Moat, a trained engineer, says James Bay’s roadways weren’t designed for high speeds. In addition, he said there are horses and carriages, all kinds of tourists, and residents using many forms of transport in a community known to have one of the more elderly populations in the city—[according to the City of Victoria](#), James Bay is home to the most people aged 65+ in Victoria.

“From my perspective, as an engineer, knowing that there is higher potential in areas like James Bay for interaction between vehicles and pedestrians or bicycles, the key thing to point out is that it's a basic principle of physics that the amount of force of an object in motion is proportional to the square of its speed—not to its speed, to the square of its speed.”

In other words, if a vehicle is travelling at 25 km/hr and the speed is doubled to 50 km/hr, the force that impacts a pedestrian or cyclist is not doubled, it is quadrupled.

According to the city’s engineering staff, if a vehicle hits a pedestrian or cyclist/scooter operator at 50 km/hr, there is an 85% probability that the person hit

will die. But the probability of death drops to 30% at 40km/h and 10% at 30km/h or less.

“There is a square law related to the amount of force that a vehicle exhibits when it's involved in a collision. The momentum of a vehicle is proportional to the square of its velocity of its speed,” Moat said.

Citing studies that suggest exactly what Moat is saying, the City of Victoria moved to [lower speed limits two years ago](#).

“Slower speeds contribute to quieter, more livable neighbourhoods and help reduce the number and impact of crashes,” the city says on its website. “By driving slower, you have more time to be aware of your surroundings and respond to road conditions and other users.”

## It's a thing

[Just weeks ago](#), Saanich lowered the speed limit to 30 km/hr on series of streets. The district [began lowering speed](#) limits in 2022 in an environment which was not that friendly toward the idea.

Results of a [poll taken at the time](#) suggested 58% of Island residents were in favour of lowering speed limits. That sounds enthusiastic, that 50%+ approval. But not when you consider that figure ranked lower than every other region in BC, [according to the online Research Co. poll](#). Southern Interior BC ranked the most in favour, at 72% support. Metro Vancouver and Northern BC were both at 67%, with the Fraser Valley at 63%

You can learn more at [Lower Speed Limits | City of Victoria](#)

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