

MEMO

To	Troy Warkentin – City Manager		
CC			
Subject	Southwood School Traffic Control Request		
From	Aaron Rach – City Engineer		
Date	July 28, 2025	Project #:	n/a

On March 26, 2025, the Hanover School Division Operations Committee submitted a letter to Steinbach City Council on behalf of Southwood Elementary School and its Parent Advisory Council (PAC), in support of several safety-related requests.

This report presents the Engineering Department's objective analysis of the request, including a review of site conditions and applicable guidelines.

Existing Conditions

The Southwood Elementary School is located within the City's core and is bordered by:

- Barkman Avenue to the northwest
- Third Street to the southwest
- Kroeker Avenue to the southeast

The school's buildings are situated in the northwest portion (front) of the site with a fenced playground at the southwest (rear). There is a bus drop off lane that creates a mid-block lane connecting Barkman and Kroeker on the northeast side of the property. There is a sidewalk along both sides of the road for Third and Barkman but only on the school's side for Kroeker.



As determined by a previous analysis that was conducted in 2014 using the *Manitoba Highway Traffic Act* and Alberta Infrastructure & Transportation's *Guidelines for School and Playground Zones and Areas*, Barkman Avenue and Third Street were assigned as 'school zones', which are signed and speed reduced areas, but Kroeker Avenue did not meet the same criteria. It was decided that a 'school area' was appropriate, which utilizes school-specific signage without a reduced speed zone.

PAC Request

The PAC's request includes the following components:

1. A reduced-speed school zone (RSSZ) along Kroeker Avenue where it fronts the school;
2. One or more pedestrian crossing enhancements near the bus loop exit, including:
 - a. Marked crosswalks with signage and possible speed bumps;
 - b. A four-way stop at the bus loop exit and Southwood Drive;
 - c. Sidewalk installation on the southeast side of Kroeker with overhead signals;
 - d. A concrete pad on the southeast corner of Kroeker and Southwood Drive;
 - e. Or another safe crossing treatment as recommended by the City.

The request also noted that there is poor visibility along the southeast boulevard of Kroeker Avenue due to landscaping. This appears to be a combination of both overgrown private landscaping that is encroaching into the right of way as well as private landscaping that was planted in the right of way with no record of permission.

School Zone/Area Evaluation

Since 2014, the school has noticed an increase in parents using their bus lane when dropping children off and picking them up, in conjunction with the regular bus traffic. The roads around the school have not changed in functionality or physical characteristics since the initial analysis.

Analysis' were conducted following Transportation Association of Canada (TAC) and *Guidelines for School and Playground Zones and Areas* (GSPZA) guidelines.

Reduced-Speed School Zone Analysis

The GSPZA guidelines were used to determine whether a reduced speed of 30km/h is warranted for Kroeker Avenue. These are the same guidelines that were used to evaluate and assign RSSZ's at other schools in the City, when the Highway Traffic Act was changed in 2014.

The worksheet assigns a total score out of 100 based on a number of parameters specific to the location. The recommendations based on scoring are as follows:

- | | |
|----------|-----------------------------|
| - 0-40 | No controls |
| - 41-64 | School Area |
| - 65-80 | School Area or School Zone* |
| - 81-100 | School Zone |

* The Guidelines state that “Local conditions must be considered in detail in order to determine the appropriate treatment. Wherever possible, mitigation measures should be explored that would reduce the score so that marginal school zones can be avoided.”

The worksheet yielded a score of 68 for Kroeker Avenue, as it did during the 2014 analysis, which would indicate this is at minimum a school area. Since this is at the lower threshold of the range where either a school area or zone could be assigned, careful consideration must be used to determine whether a RSSZ is appropriate. Assigning where it may not be strictly warranted can have several downsides, including:

1. Driver non-compliance and inconsistent driver behaviour that can undermine respect for other RSSZs that are truly necessary.
2. Enforcement challenges since police may deprioritize enforcement due to low perceived risk, reducing the zones effectiveness.
3. Resource impacts since this would require new signage, pavement markings and long-term maintenance.
4. Policy inconsistency if zones are applied based on pressure or perception rather than objective analysis.
5. Broader traffic impacts.

Not factored into the GSPZA worksheet is the presence of the bus loop exit adjacent to a separate pedestrian fence opening along Kroeker Avenue. This concern could be alleviated by relocating the pedestrian opening to the south corner of the school yard, reducing the risk of vehicular/pedestrian conflicts at the school's egress approach and moving it to a location where there is existing PCC and stop control.

Pedestrian Crossing Control Analysis

The request contained several considerations for pedestrian crossing control (PCC) at or near the Kroeker Avenue and Southwood Drive intersection. Given that the bus loop egress is located adjacent to their proposed PCC locations, it is critical to evaluate whether pedestrian crossings should be encouraged at or near this intersection.

Introduction of a four-way stop sign would bring its own challenges and concerns. The bus loop exit and Southwood Drive are offset by approximately 10m, which is not considered appropriate for a four-way intersection. This creates visibility issues and conflicting movements, creating additional conflict points and would not conform to TAC standards. This could also cause confusion for pedestrians and drivers, elevating the risk to safety. A realignment of Southwood Drive could address this issue but would be a costly solution that would also have considerable impact to the adjacent residential properties.

Relocating the fence opening to the south corner of the schoolyard would better facilitate pedestrian movements that are leaving the school to the southeast. There is already an existing PCC for Third Street at this intersection, as well as a stop sign for Kroeker traffic. This is a natural driver stopping point in a predictable location and would be recommended over a mid-block crossing or establishing stop-control for Kroeker at the intersection with Southwood Drive and the bus egress approach.

Accident Data

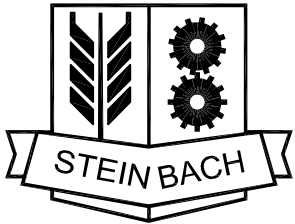
Accident data has been recorded by the City's Fire Department since 2010. No accidents at the intersections of Third and Kroeker as well as Kroeker and Southwood have been reported since 2010.

Recommendations

1. Install school area signs along Kroeker and Southwood according to current standards, warning motorists that they are entering and exiting the area, as shown in the attached drawing.
2. Recommend that the school relocate its fence opening to the south corner of the schoolyard which is a safer crossing point and would significantly reduce the number of pedestrians crossing Kroeker Avenue at the Southwood Drive intersection and bus loop exit, which isn't an ideal location for stop control or a PCC.
3. The landowners be instructed to cut back or remove any landscaping in the southeast Kroeker boulevard that is affecting visibility.



- DESIGN NOTES
- 1. GROUND MOUNTED CROSSINGS REQUIRES RA-4 SIGNS
 - 2. GROUND MOUNTED CROSSING REQUIRES RA-3 SIGNS WITH ZEBRA MARKINGS IN SCHOOL AREAS
 - 3. SCHOOL AREA REQUIRES WC-1 SIGNS. SPACED 20m FROM SCHOOL PROPERTY LINE FOR 50 km/h STREETS AND REQUIRE A DESIGNATED END SIGN



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PROJECT
**2025 SOUTHWOOD SCHOOL
TRAFFIC ANALYSIS**

DRAWING
**PROPOSED KROEKER
CROSSING & SIGNAGE**

DESIGN	AAA	APPROVED	ADR	SCALE	1: 750
DRAWN	AAA	DATE	JULY 29 2025		
CHECKED	ADR	DRAWING NO.			REV.
		01			1

Dear Steinbach City Councillors,

We are writing today to request two things:

1. Implementation of a reduced school speed zone (RRSZ) of 30 km/hr with signage on Kroeker Avenue between Second and Third Streets.

AND one of:

2. Signage and paint on roads indicating a crosswalk (*with potential speed bumps on both sides of bus egress on Second and Third Streets); OR
3. Introduction of a 4-way stop sign at the bus loop exit onto Kroeker, on Kroeker (both ways), and at Southwood Drive. The only current stop sign is on Southwood Drive; OR
4. Sidewalks or installed on SE side of Kroeker interrupting current home zoning status, AND overhead mounted signalized lights; OR
5. Curb cut and ramp up to a small (4 x 4) concrete pad on the corner of Kroeker and Southwood Drive, opposite from the curb access to the sidewalk on the west side of Kroeker, near the fence gate to the Southwood School playground right next to the bus loop egress. (See Map D)



6. A different reasonable suggestion from the City of Steinbach that ensures safe passage for children crossing Kroeker to enter Southwood School property.

Preamble:

All families want their children to be safe while crossing streets as they travel to and from school, and there are no communities more family and community-based with child safety in mind than Steinbach. By establishing lower speeds in school zones, we ensure safety for children by employing proven, effective mitigation strategies to reduce preventable, fatal accidents. Young children lack the ability to judge the speed of approaching traffic, and the social climate in recent years reflects the need to protect children from drivers who may be distracted or uninterested in the safety of our children.

The safety of children during the school day is a concern to all and the school day does not start and end in the classroom. The trips to and from school are critical components of every student's day, and their safety during those trips can be directly influenced by the decisions made by

transportation authorities and school divisions, as well as parents/voters. For many reasons, more children are being driven to school in private vehicles today than in the past, resulting in increased traffic congestion and vehicle-pedestrian collisions. While there are innumerable benefits to encouraging increased active transportation options for trips to and from school, the objective is ensuring child safety in all school areas.

To date, there are no signed or marked crosswalks, in-street signs, restricted turns at intersections, waiting areas, traffic calming measures, overhead mounted signed crosswalks, pedestrian corridors, curb extensions, crossing guards, full/half signalized intersections, in-street signs, raised crosswalks, four-way stops, etc. on Kroeker near Southwood School. There have been several “near misses” with children crossing Kroeker. With the bus egress being situated at Kroeker there is significant and immediate danger as very small children are crossing a street immediately in front of the bus and the bus driver cannot see anything nearer than 4 metres in front of the bus, and 4 metres on the left or right of the bus. Due to the age of the children and the number of buses exiting this bus lane each morning and afternoon and the clear and imminent dangers associated with this crossing – we ask for your consideration and convey a sense of urgency.

Our understanding is that the most recent traffic data informing the speed zone decisions was collected in 2014. While this study provided valuable insights at the time, it is now more than a decade old and may not fully reflect the current traffic patterns and volumes in the area. Given the continued growth of the community and increasing congestion around schools, we are requesting a revisit of this situation to ensure appropriate safety measures are in place for present-day conditions.

Background:

- September 18, 2013: Provincial amendments to the Highway Traffic Act providing local governments the authority to set lower speed limits in school zones.
- October 21, 2014: City of Steinbach council establishes new speed zones at three schools including Southwood Elementary. 2 of 3 roads are designated as RSSZ at Southwood.
- Elmdale School - Bus loop exit. Students at the Elmdale School benefit from a marked Crosswalk for students who walk home into the Elm Street/Hanover St. area to help them cross safely from the Elmdale School grounds to a sidewalk across Elm St. This Crosswalk is also situated near a bus loop exit.
- A common challenge at existing school sites is addressing the unique, local features such as bus entryways and exits, nearby driveways, travel lanes, parking lots, drop-off/pick-up areas, and loading zones. Due to each school's specific features, pedestrian facilities, including sidewalks and safe crossing areas, may be insufficient to provide safe pedestrian travel. Improvements can often be made through policy changes or minor modifications, such as adding paint or signage, which are cost-effective and easy to implement.
- Sept 11, 2023. Bus collision with pedestrian (child aged 6) at SRSS near the entrance of the bus loop. This accident heightened the awareness of dangers to small children crossing streets and egresses near high traffic areas. The child, their family, the driver, the children and adults who witnessed the accident, and indirect audience via media are highly impacted by information and ask for all levels of civic government to assist where they can to ensure children's safety from preventable accidents occurring again.

Impact/Need/Resistance (1-5 Scale, 1 low, 5 high):

- Impact – 5 – All students at this school and the public in general will directly and indirectly benefit from this measure being in place.
- Need – 5 – The measure is considered essential to update and correct a current safety issue that has resulted in complaints or incidents in the past.
- Resistance – 1 – This measure will be seen as beneficial to all with few if any negative impacts. This measure is a common practice in the area and has been implemented successfully elsewhere.

Infrastructure:

- Existing conditions have no sidewalks along the Southeast (SE) side of Kroeker along residential homes and landscaping that obstructs visibility of pedestrians and drivers.
- Student residents coming from this section of the catchment have no safe way to cross the streets aside from their “best guess” for safety with vehicles passing in 4 directions at 50km/hr at reduced visibility. Near misses have been witnessed on several occasions.

Current Status:

- 2014: 2 of 3 roads open to vehicular traffic encompassing Southwood Elementary have speed zones established, with signage. (Barkman Avenue and Third Street)
- 2024: Southwood Elementary implemented a crossing guard at Kroeker Avenue between Second and Third Streets to cross students safely for approximately 15 minutes each school day morning, and 15 minutes after dismissal. Crossing Guards have no clear crossing to use due to a lack of sidewalk infrastructure on Kroeker or Southwood Drive.
- 2024: Southwood School discontinues after school Crossing Guard due to scheduling challenges and issues with funding educational assistants. Morning crossing guard remains.
- 30 - 35 Students (ages 4 - 9) living in the area of concern must cross independently after school or have alternate arrangements made with further impact to vehicle congestion, impact of potential or real vehicle-pedestrian collisions, economy, interest in staying in the area, voting against current council, etc.

Next Steps: We ask that...

- City of Steinbach council recognizes the immediate need for speed zone signage on Kroeker Avenue between Second and Third Streets. *If the City requires extensive knowledge before decision making it implements the data collection strategies outlined in *Step 2: Collect Data and Review Existing Conditions for School Area Traffic Safety Guidelines for Manitoba. C-15 – C26.*
- City of Steinbach council responds with a strategy and time frame for implementing speed zone signage on Kroeker Avenue between Second and Third Streets.
- City of Steinbach takes steps as determined by governing city and council by-laws to

implement speed zone signage on Kroeker Avenue between Second and Third Streets.

- City of Steinbach, with collaboration of HSD and Southwood Elementary, notifies residents and families of changes implemented and suggestions to use main thoroughfare roads to improve safety for the children in their ward.

Cost:

Low – signage; paint. (*potential concrete-work for speed bumps or sidewalk ramps)

Map A:

City Planning Map of Roads parallel and adjacent to Southwood Elementary.

- Grey roads indicate roads with current signage for reduced speed zones. • Yellow highlighted roads (Kroeker Avenue) require signage and reduced speed limit.



Map B:

Google Map Image of roads parallel and adjacent to Southwood Elementary.

- Green roads (Barkman and Third) indicate roads with current signage for reduced speed zones.
- Yellow road is the staff parking lot and bus drop off/pick up loading zone.
- Red highlighted road (Kroeker) requires signage and reduced speed limit.
- Orange circle with blue outline is the bus ingress to the drop off/pick up loading zone.
- Blue square with orange outline is the bus egress exiting the parking lot to turn either left or right onto Kroeker.



Map C:

Google Map Photo of Crossing Markings at Elmdale School



Map D:

Proposed Crossing Markings and Concrete Sidewalk Ramp across Kroeker



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'M. Thiessen'.

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