

DATE: July 14, 2025

REPORT NO: O-16-2025

SUBJECT: **Response to Participation Request – Niagara Region Automated Speed Enforcement (ASE) Program Expansion**

CONTACT: Mike DiPaola, P.Eng
Director, Infrastructure

OVERVIEW:

- Niagara Region is expanding its Automated Speed Enforcement (ASE) Program and has invited local municipalities to participate starting in 2026.
- This 2026 expanded ASE Program will consist of four (4) ASE cameras to be used on local roads once program participation / locations are confirmed, and may include a rotation schedule.
- ASE is intended to enhance road safety by using automated cameras to enforce speed limits in community safety zones and other designated areas.
- Administration have reviewed the program requirements and recommend that the Township decline participation for 2026, while remaining open to future consideration.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That, Recommendation Report O-16-2025, titled “Response to Participation Request – Niagara Region Automated Speed Enforcement (ASE) Program Expansion”, dated June 9, 2025 be received; and
2. That, Council direct Administration to notify Niagara Region that the Township of West Lincoln will not participate in the ASE program expansion for 2026, but will reassess the potential benefits of participation in future program phases.

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

Theme # 4

- **Foundational** – Advance organization capacity and effectiveness

BACKGROUND:

In April 2024, Niagara Region Council approved Report PW 11-2024, endorsing the expansion of the ASE camera program to include municipal roadways under local jurisdiction. This report recommended expanding the ASE program by 4 cameras annually in each year to further enhance road safety. Having undertaken the first round of expansion on Region Road in 2025, the Region is now proceeding with planned expansion on local roads in 2026. As part of this initiative, the Region is inviting local area municipalities to express interest in having ASE cameras installed on their local roads starting in 2026.

The Township of West Lincoln currently has a limited number of school zones/community safety zones, located on local municipal roads, including:

- St. Martins Catholic Elementary School (Main Entrance on Streamside Drive)
- Smithville Public School (Colver Street)
- Caistor Central Public School (Caistor Centre Road)

Both St. Martins Catholic Elementary School and Smithville Public School are located at the corner of a local road and regional road, with the main entrances located on local roads being Streamside Drive and Colver Street respectively.

Caistor Central Public School, despite being located in a rural area, experiences increased traffic volumes related to school bus and parental drop-off activities.

CURRENT SITUATION:

The Region has invited local area municipalities to participate in the expanded ASE program. Participation is voluntary and would involve collaboration on site selection, program administration and Council approvals, By-Laws, signage, data collection and reporting, communication, and dealing with public inquiries and complaints.

Municipalities are responsible for designating appropriate locations as community safety zones (if not already designated) with appropriate by-laws, council approvals, necessary signage and communication. Niagara Region would operate and maintain the ASE system under a shared services framework, however municipalities would be responsible for data collection and reporting, communication, and dealing with public inquiries and complaints.

Analysis:

The benefits of participating in the ASE expansion program include:

- **Enhanced Student Safety:** Reinforces lower speeds near schools, reducing the risk of accidents during critical times of day.

- **Traffic Calming:** Provides effective, non-intrusive traffic calming without the need for expensive physical traffic calming infrastructure devices.
- **Data-Driven Decision Making:** ASE units collect valuable traffic data that can inform future operations or infrastructure decisions.
- **Regional Consistency:** Supports a uniform approach to road safety across Niagara Region, reinforcing driver expectations.
- **Cost Recovery Potential:** Fine revenues (after cost recovery) could support additional road safety initiatives at the local level.

Specific to West Lincoln, Caistor Central Public School would be a logical site, given the convergence of buses, parent vehicles, and a rural road environment where controlling speeds is particularly important.

While Administration supports initiatives aimed at enhancing road safety, several factors currently limit our capacity to participate in the 2026 ASE program expansion, as outlined below:

- **Operational Readiness and Resource Allocation:** Successful implementation of ASE on local roads requires coordination with Niagara Region, in particular to bylaw enforcement, public communications, finance resources, and operations / infrastructure teams. Township staff are currently focused on delivering other key road safety initiatives and do not have the resources to support effective rollout and monitoring of the ASE program in 2026.
- **Financial Considerations:** While the Region would be responsible for funding the operational costs of the camera and cover some data collection costs, at this time, the Township has limited financial capacity to support additional obligations such as staff time required to install signage and coordinate with the Region without impacting other priority projects and initiatives.
- **Operational Priorities:** The Township is currently engaged in several significant infrastructure and service delivery projects. Introducing a new program at this juncture could divert attentions and resources from these established priorities.
- **Limited Evidence of Need on Local Roads:** The Township has limited traffic data, and limited school zone / community safety zones, which does not indicate a high incidence of speeding. Without evidence of persistent or severe speeding issues, the introduction of ASE may not offer measurable safety benefits in the short term.
- **Need for Community Engagement:** ASE implementation may impact public perception and other road safety priorities. Before proceeding, the Township would benefit from community consultation, development of site selection criteria, and review of potential equity concerns related to automated enforcement.

- ***Desire to Monitor Regional and Peer Municipal Experiences:*** As the expanded program begins across Niagara Region local area municipalities in 2026, West Lincoln will be able to observe outcomes in other municipalities, including effectiveness, public perception, and operational resources. These insights will better inform a future decision.

While the Township supports traffic safety and is open to innovative enforcement tools, it is recommended that West Lincoln defer participation in the Niagara Region ASE program expansion at this time. Administration will continue monitoring the program and report back with updated recommendations when appropriate regarding participation in future program phases.

While Township Administration recommends deferring ASE expansion onto local roads at this time, the Region will continue to operate the ASE program on Regional Roads within West Lincoln. Additionally, West Lincoln will still receive its proportional share of ASE revenue generated through the Region's program.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Regardless of the recommendation of this report, West Lincoln will continue to receive its proportional share of net fine revenues from the Region's ASE program.

If Council elects to participate, there will be implications on staff time. Direct costs would include costs to manufacture and install updated speed limit and Community Safety Zone signage as necessary, along with any additional traffic data collection West Lincoln would want such as before, during, and after.

INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COMMENTS:

This report was reviewed by the Director of Corporate Services/CFO, the CAO, and the Clerk's office.

CONCLUSION:

Give these considerations, Administration believe that it is prudent for the Township to defer participation in the 2026 expansion of the Niagara Region ASE program. This approach will allow time to assess the program's operational, financial impacts, and resources on participating municipalities, while ensuring that Township resources remain focused on current road safety initiatives and priorities. Administration will continue to engage with the Region and monitor developments, and may bring forward a future recommendation should condition become more favourable for participation in future ASE program expansion.

SCHEDULE(S)

N/A

Prepared & Submitted by:

Approved by:

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