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## **Lorne Avenue – Traffic Operations Review Staff Report**

Report Number: 2019-35

Department(s): Development & Infrastructure Services - Engineering

Author(s): Rachel Prudhomme, Director, Engineering Services

Meeting Date: April 8, 2019

### **Recommendations**

1. That the Speed Management Program continue to be deployed on Lorne Avenue (from Millard Avenue to Eagle Street) in 2019; and,
2. That this report, and the petition on which it was based, be considered in the design for the proposed 2020 reconstruction of Lorne Avenue; and,
3. That, once Council has heard and resolved the matter, the Clerk send a copy of the Council Resolution to the originators of the petition; and,
4. That Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to address the request from the Lorne Avenue community (from Millard Avenue to Eagle Street) for traffic calming measures to reduce speeds and improve pedestrian safety.

### **Background**

At its regular Committee of the Whole meeting of June 18, 2018, Town Council received a petition from the Lorne Avenue community (between Millard Avenue and Eagle Street) requesting traffic calming measures to reduce speeds and improve pedestrian safety.

In accordance with the Town's Council-approved Public Support and Consultation Policy, all residents within the petition area were contacted for additional input. This was

done by way of a notice dated July 17, 2018, that was mailed directly to all households affected.

This report provides a summary of the review.

## **Discussion**

Lorne Avenue, between Millard Avenue and Eagle Street, has been the subject of previous studies that were aimed at promoting proper traffic operations and pedestrian safety. The following provides a brief history:

1. In 2002, the traffic signals at Eagle Street and Lorne Avenue were improved by the installation of pedestrian signal heads (Public Works Report PWS 2002-81).
2. In 2003, there were improvements made to the signage around Stuart Scott Public School and at the school crossing location (Public Works Report PWS-2003-92).
3. In 2004 (Public Works Report 2004-07), the creation of a community safety zone was reviewed, but was not supported because it was not a Town standard (note: on October 15, 2012, community safety zones became a Town standard).
4. In 2006 (Community Services Report PWES 2006-93), the subject section of Lorne Avenue became the Town's location to pilot the installation of a fluorescent yellow and black school zone sign. This signage has since been adopted to become the Province's new standard.
5. Finally, as part of the 2016 Newmarket East-West bikeway, bike lanes were constructed on a small section of Lorne Avenue between Park Avenue and Millard Avenue, thereby providing some traffic calming along that section.

As per standard procedure, Transportation Services reviewed the historical data on the speed at which vehicles have been operating on Lorne Avenue. The information was supplemented with measurements taken in 2018.

Table 1 lists the information, which shows the year in which measurements were taken, the average operating speeds (which is the speed at which 85% of vehicles are travelling) and the daily traffic volumes. The speed limit on Lorne Avenue is 40 km/h and the road is classified as a minor residential collector with a carrying capacity of 5,000 vehicles per day.

TABLE 1: Traffic Information for Lorne Avenue

Year	Operating Speed	Daily Volume
2001	57 km/h	4,660
2003	58 km/h	2,070
2004	52 km/h	4,925
2006	52 km/h	2,650
2016	48 km/h	2,900
2018	46 km/h	3,300

Although it can be seen in Table 1 that traffic volumes fluctuate from year to year, a definite and consistent trend towards lower operating speeds can be seen. The reduction in speed is more than 10 km/h from 2001 to 2018.

The petition that was received on June 18, 2018, outlined five areas of concern from the residents. Here are the five areas, along with staff's comments:

1. Traffic flow around the school during drop-off and pick-up times:

Staff acknowledges that dropping off or picking-up children during these rush times results in longer vehicle queues in the school zone. Unfortunately, traffic calming measures will not reduce this type of congestion. Furthermore, the Town does not have any jurisdiction over traffic flow on school properties. This is entirely up to the school's administration, with help from traffic experts at their school administration board. Together, they can examine the flow of traffic on the school property and educate parents on proper pick-up and drop-off procedures. It is recommended that the residents contact the school's administration to discuss what the School Board can do. The Town is available to assist with boulevard signs and radar speed devices, but traffic flow on school grounds and educating parents are critical in reducing congestion.

2. Traffic speeds on Lorne Avenue, adjacent to Lions Park:

As shown in this report, speeds on Lorne Avenue have been decreasing in recent years. Transportation Services has been actively reducing speeds through the deployment of its Speed Management Program on Lorne Avenue. With the addition of the proposed bicycle lanes and other permanent traffic calming measures that may be possible to implement when the road is rebuilt, speeds are expected to drop even further. This will also create more safety and a greater feeling of security for our residents.

3. Canada Post community mailbox location:

In 2015, when Canada Post ceased door-to-door mail delivery and installed community mailboxes, the Town provided feedback on the proposed locations. Canada Post had certain criteria for placement that did not always abide by Newmarket's suggestions. On Lorne Avenue, the community mailbox location has resulted in residents of about seven Lorne Avenue households having to cross the street to collect their mail. Unfortunately, since the Town has no jurisdiction on mailbox locations, the residents will have to deal directly with Canada Post on this matter. When Lorne Avenue is reconstructed, the travel lane width will be reduced thanks to the addition of bike lanes and any other traffic calming measure that can be implemented. This will slow traffic down at the location of the mailboxes and will also shorten the width of road that needs to be crossed by the residents.

4. Distance between pedestrians and travelling vehicles:

Petitioners were concerned that they had to walk in close proximity to traffic on Lorne Avenue. In many locations on this street, there are no grassed boulevards between the curbs and the sidewalks. This causes a perception of not being protected from travelling vehicles. When Lorne Avenue is reconstructed, there will be bike lanes on each side of the road, immediately adjacent to the curbs. This will provide an additional 1.5 metre buffer between cars and pedestrians, which will increase pedestrian comfort.

5. High traffic volumes:

The petitioners were concerned about high traffic volumes, which can cause issues with accessing and egressing their driveways. Lorne Avenue is classified as a minor residential collector road with a carrying capacity of 5,000 vehicles per day. The daily volume measurements in Table 1 show that the traffic numbers are well within the volume limit. The petitioners' concerns may be related to either traffic speeds, commuter volumes at rush hours, or volume surges at school peak hours. Unfortunately, it is difficult to reduce volume on a public road without restricting access. Furthermore, peak volume surges occur on all of the Town's collector roads. Staff expects improvements once Lorne Avenue is reconstructed. Bicycle lanes and other permanent traffic calming measures that might be possible to install will help reduce traffic speeds. When speeds are reduced, it is hoped that some commuters may choose alternative routes, such as regional roads, to save time, thereby reducing volumes as well.

## Conclusion

The measured speeds on Lorne Avenue are currently below the Town's policy limit, and they appear to continue to drop. However, Category 1 traffic calming measures under the Town's Speed Management Program will continue to be deployed in 2019. The

reconstruction of Lorne Avenue, which is expected to take place in 2020, will significantly improve traffic operations and pedestrian safety on a permanent basis.

## **Business Plan and Strategic Plan Linkages**

This report links to Newmarket's Strategic Plan direction, Well Planned & Connected, by improving travel within Newmarket through inter-connected neighbourhoods, as well as providing varied transit options, including biking trails, paths, and lanes.

This report also aligns with Council's 2014-2018 Strategic Priority - Traffic Safety & Mitigation, by ensuring safe streets, improving traffic congestion, and supporting major transit service enhancements.

## **Consultation**

The Town received a petition at the Committee of the Whole on June 18, 2018, requesting, among other things, that traffic calming measures be implemented on Lorne Avenue between Millard Avenue and Eagle Street. The petition was signed by most of the residents on the street. As per the Town's policy, a letter (dated July 17, 2018) was sent to each household within the study area to solicit any additional input.

A copy of this report will be forwarded to the community that was polled, including all those who signed the petition, prior to the Committee of the Whole meeting so that residents may attend the meeting or present a deputation if they so wish.

## **Human Resource Considerations**

Not applicable to this report.

## **Budget Impact**

There is no budget impact at this time.

## **Attachments**

None

## **Approval**

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## **Contact**

For more information on this report, please contact Mark Kryzanowski, Manager, Transportation Services, at 905-953-5300, extension. 2508.