



DEVELOPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES – ENGINEERING SERVICES
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April 1, 2015

**DEVELOPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES REPORT
ENGINEERING SERVICES 2015-28**

TO: Committee of the Whole

SUBJECT: School Crossing Locations Request – Alexander Muir Public School
File No.: T08 T.30 Ford Wilson

ORIGIN: Director, Engineering Services

RECOMMENDATIONS

THAT Development and Infrastructure Services Report – ES2015-28, dated April 1, 2015 regarding School Crossing Locations Request – Alexander Muir Public School be received and the following recommendations be adopted:

1. THAT Schedule IX (School Crossing Locations) of the Traffic By-law 2011-42, as be further amended by adding:
 - a. Ford Wilson Boulevard, south of Dowson Loop – Mid-Block
2. AND THAT Schedule X (No Parking) of the Parking By-law 1993-62, as amended, be further amended by deleting the following:

ROAD	SIDE	BETWEEN	PROHIBITED TIMES
Ford Wilson Boulevard	East	Davis Drive to Woodspring Avenue	Monday to Friday 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

3. AND THAT Schedule X (No Parking) of the Parking By-law 1993-62, as amended, be further amended by adding the following:

ROAD	SIDE	BETWEEN	PROHIBITED TIMES
Ford Wilson Boulevard	East	Woodspring to Dowson Loop	Monday to Friday 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Ford Wilson Boulevard	East	Cheryl Mews Boulevard to Davis Drive	Monday to Friday 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

4. AND THAT Schedule XI (No Stopping) of the Parking By-law 1993-62, as amended, be further amended by deleting the following:

ROAD	SIDE	BETWEEN	PROHIBITED TIMES
Ford Wilson Boulevard	West	Dowson Loop to Woodspring Avenue	Monday to Friday 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

5. **AND THAT Schedule XI (No Stopping) of the Parking By-law 1993-62, as amended, be further amended by adding the following:**

ROAD	SIDE	BETWEEN	PROHIBITED TIMES
Ford Wilson Boulevard	West	Woodspring Avenue to Cheryl Mews Boulevard	Monday to Friday 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Ford Wilson Boulevard	East	Cheryl Mews Boulevard to Dowson Loop	Monday to Friday 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

6. **AND THAT the necessary By-laws be prepared and submitted to Council for their approval;**
7. **AND THAT the Alexander Muir Public School administration and York Region District School Board be forwarded a copy of the Council extract.**

BACKGROUND

Alexander Muir Public School is located on the southeast corner of Ford Wilson Boulevard and Woodspring Avenue. The school is a community public school opened in 2009. The school has a low percentage of their students transported by bus, and is currently served by a crossing guard at the corner of Woodspring Avenue and Ford Wilson Boulevard. The school's first bell is at approximately 8:00 a.m. and the dismissal bell is at 2:30 p.m. The catchment area is bounded by Yonge Street, Bathurst Street, Davis Drive, and a line along Alfred Smith Way to Bathurst Street towards the north. The crossing point would serve the several hundred homes on the west side of Ford Wilson Boulevard.

The initial request for a school guard location came from the Principal of Alexander Muir Public School in a letter dated September 16, 2013. The request was for a school crossing guard on Ford Wilson Boulevard at either Dowson Loop or Cheryl Mews Boulevard. The request stemmed from a parent survey undertaken as part of the York Region Public Health's initiative to improve healthy lifestyles through walking to school (Active and Safe Routes to School program). Full crossing guard studies were undertaken in the Fall of 2013, Spring of 2014 and Fall of 2014.

On November 27, 2014, Town staff attended a meeting at the school to discuss the crossing guard request with school representatives, school board officials and York Region Public Health representatives. It was confirmed that the school was promoting active transportation and was having a significant degree of success. However, some of the key elements of their program, such as 'walk-a-block' and a 'walking school bus', would still require crossing Ford Wilson Boulevard. This seemed to create some concern among parents, making them more uncertain about their willingness to participate.

The location and design of the school only affords one feasible frontage for access. Another factor to consider is the expected increase in population levels as a result of the Ardree Phase 3 subdivision (Sloss Court community) and the future development of Sundial Homes and Woodland Hills Phase 7 subdivisions (off of Bathurst Street). With this growth, it is expected that the school's population will also increase over the next several years.

COMMENTS

A pedestrian count and gap study were undertaken as per the Town's Transportation Management Policy. As Dowson Loop and Cheryl Mews Boulevard are close to each other, the crossing point for the gap study was between the two roads. The actual crossing location can be either at Cheryl Mews Boulevard, at a mid-block location, or at the south side of Dowson Loop (please refer to the map on page 6 of this report).

The requirement for the minimum spacing distance from the existing right-of-way control (i.e., all-way stops or traffic signals) has been achieved, with the closest all-way stop control being located 175 metres away at the intersection of Ford Wilson and Clarissa Run. The number of children counted is the total number of children crossing as they arrive from both of these roads, since a crossing guard would serve children arriving from both areas. This study methodology has remained consistent in all three studies done to date.

The study's main focus is the number of children crossing the street and the available gaps in traffic that allow the children sufficient time to cross. All three studies showed a large enough number of children crossing the road, but also a sufficient number of traffic gaps that would allow such a large number of children to cross.

Despite the findings cited above, there is a growing safety concern as a result of: 1) the number of parked cars on Ford Wilson Boulevard, 2) the number of U-turns taken, and 3) the number of 3-point turns that were witnessed during the studies by drivers attempting to leave the area. One of the most dangerous manoeuvres that a driver of a vehicle can undertake in a school zone is reversing as is required for 3-point turns. Furthermore, drivers were trying to complete their 3-point turns as quickly as possible to avoid conflicts with other travelling vehicles, thereby adding to the safety concerns.

Even though the studies identified sufficient gaps to allow crossing without a crossing guard, Section D.3 of the Transportation Management Policy states:

"D.3 Irrespective of the gap study, if it is in the opinion of the review agency that a school crossing guard is warranted, due to engineering or safety considerations, then a reason behind the warrant must be documented".

Based on the safety considerations that have been identified above, it is recommended that a school crossing guard on Ford Wilson Boulevard between Dowson Loop and Cheryl Mews Boulevard be implemented prior to September 1, 2015. This will provide a safe and protected crossing location for the children of the community. To further improve safety, it is also recommended that a No Stopping Zone be implemented from Dowson Loop to Cheryl Mews Boulevard to deter any parking too close to the recommended crossing location.

Finally, it is recommended that a copy of this report be forwarded to the Alexander Muir Public School administration and to the York Region District School Board, and that the school administration encourage parents to prepare and plan for the crossing guard location for the new school year in September 2015.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Engineering staff have been communicated with and consulted the school's administration, parent representatives, York Region Public Health staff, and the York Region School Board. Also, the Town's Transportation Management Advisory Committee (TMAC) has reviewed the results of the study and the recommendations being made, and is supportive of the recommendations.

BUSINESS PLAN AND STRATEGIC PLAN LINKAGES

- Well-planned and connected...strategically planning for the future to improve information access and enhance travel to, from, and within Newmarket.

HUMAN RESOURCE CONSIDERATIONS

There may be an impact on staff levels which is further discussed under the Operating Budget section.

IMPACT ON BUDGET

Operating Budget (Current and Future)

Typically, a school crossing guard costs approximately \$8,000.00 to \$10,000.00 per year. This new school crossing guard was not included in the 2015 budget because, at the time that budget was submitted, it was not known that the additional crossing guard would be required. Seeing that there are safety concerns that make it desirable to implement this new guard as of September 2015, the salary for the 4 month period from September 2015 to December 2015 will be covered using one, or a combination of, the following two strategies:

1. **Reallocation of Resources.** In the past, the Town has relocated school crossing guards based on need. Certain areas of the Town have seen a significant decline in school-age population levels and therefore, they may no longer need or meet the requirements for a school crossing guard. Because of this, over the past decade, the Town has successfully relocated a number of school crossing guards to better serve our changing needs.

Staff is currently looking at a number of crossing guard locations to determine whether they are still needed or still meet the requirements. If an under-utilized location is found, then a report will be brought back to Council recommending a change in location to accommodate the request being made in this report. In this case, the current staffing level for crossing guards would remain constant and there would be no increase in the Operating Budget.
2. **Traffic Management Budget.** If the option cited in "1" above is not possible, then the Town will need to increase the current crossing guard staffing level by one. The de-annualized cost for one additional crossing guard from September to December 2015 could be funded through the existing 2015 Traffic Management Budget without severely impacting current traffic management service levels. A significant pedestrian safety issue such as this one that needs to be addressed in a timely way qualifies as a transitory traffic management expense for 2015 only. A request would then be made in the 2016 budget exercise to ensure the future continuance of this additional crossing guard.

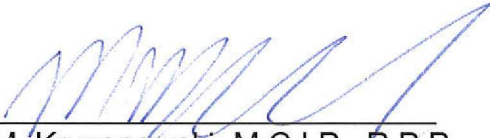
Capital Budget


The required signage, pavement markings and boulevard works will be approximately \$5,000.00 or less, and can be accommodated in the existing Sidewalk/Curb and signage budgets.

CONTACT

For more information on this report, please contact Mark Kryzanowski at 905-895-5193 extension 2508; mkryzanowski@newmarket.ca.

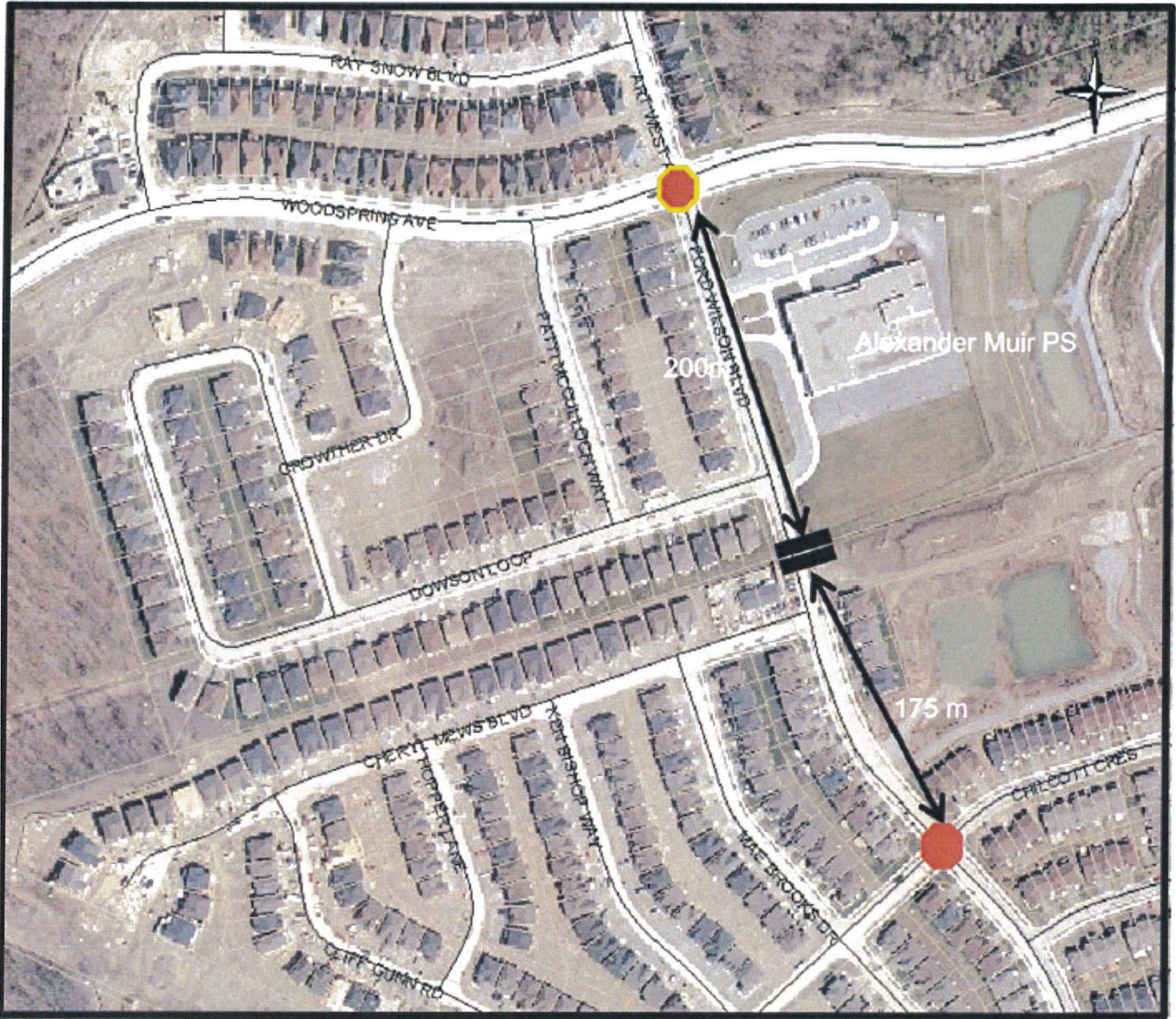
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Proposed School Crossing Location



Existing All-way Stop intersection



Existing All-way Stop intersection with an existing School Crossing Guard.