



Town of Newmarket
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Penn Avenue Traffic Calming Review Staff Report to Council

Report Number: 2022-18

Department(s): Engineering Services

Author(s): M. Kryzanowski, Manager, Transportation Services

Meeting Date: March 21, 2022

Recommendations

1. That the report entitled Penn Avenue Traffic Calming Review dated March 21, 2022 be received; and,
2. That Category 1 Traffic Calming plans noted in the report be approved; and,
3. That York Regional Police be contacted to request speed enforcement on Penn Avenue; and,
4. That Town staff monitor the speeds on Penn Avenue to determine the success or additional mitigations required; and,
5. That Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

Purpose

Town Council requested that staff review the speeds on the east half of Penn Avenue, extending from Main Street North to Maple Leaf Public School, in order to determine if any mitigation is needed. The purpose of this report is to outline the staff review and to present its findings.

Background

At its meeting of September 13, 2021, the Town's Committee of the Whole recommended:

That staff be directed to conduct a study to investigate traffic calming measures on Penn Avenue west of Main Street North to Maple Leaf Public School.

The results of the review and the recommendations are the subject of this report.

Discussion

Penn Avenue is classified as a local road, serving the transportation needs of the community from Longford Drive to Main Street. The east half of Penn Avenue, which is the subject of this review, extends from Maple Leaf Public School (just west of the intersection of Penn Avenue and Hillsvie Drive) to Main Street. This section of Penn Avenue is very straight, with no curves, and is lined with residential land uses.

Before any results are presented, it should be cautioned that traffic volumes have been found to be lower than normal throughout the Town due to the impacts of the pandemic, with more people working from home and travelers making fewer trips. However, results did show that travel speeds remained relatively consistent with pre-pandemic speeds.

Results of field monitoring for this east section of Penn Avenue in 2021 showed that the average speed was 44.5 km/h, with an operating speed of 52 km/h. Operating speed is defined as the 85th percentile speed, or the speed at or below which 85 percent of motorists travel. Penn Avenue has a posted speed limit of 40 km/h, and the speed data collected indicates that traffic calming is warranted on this section of Penn Avenue.

The Town's Traffic Mitigation Strategy calls for an incremental approach to traffic calming, starting with Category 1 measures. An example of a very effective Category 1 measure is the in-road flexible bollard system, which has shown success in reducing operating speeds since the pilots were implemented a few years ago. Other examples are solar speed boards and boulevard signs.

For the east half of Penn Avenue, it is recommended by Staff that in-road flexible bollards, solar speed boards and boulevard signs be implemented as part of Transportation Services' 2022 traffic calming program. Furthermore, speeds on Penn Avenue will be monitored throughout 2022 to determine the effectiveness of the measures. Also, given that this section of road is very straight and of considerable length, it is recommended that York Regional Police be asked to provide speed enforcement to supplement the Town's traffic calming initiatives.

In the case of Penn Avenue, since the measured operating speed was more than 10 km/h over the posted speed limit, Category 2 measures can be considered if Category 1 efforts are not found to be effective. Category 2 measures can include such things as speed humps, chicanes, road narrowing (road diets, bicycle lanes, etc.), pedestrian crossing islands, reduced radius curbs and other more permanent installations.

Conclusion

The east half of Penn Avenue will be the subject of several Category 1 measures, with the in-road flexible bollards as the primary measure for speed reduction. This will be supplemented by solar speed board installations, a boulevard sign campaign, and continued monitoring to determine effectiveness. York Regional Police will be contacted to provide enforcement. Additional measures, up to and including Category 2 measures may be added, if needed after subsequent monitoring.

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.

Consultation

There was no direct consultation required for the preparation of this report.

Human Resource Considerations

None.

Budget Impact

Funds for this initiative are available through the Transportation Services Business Unit's budget, and form part of the annual traffic calming program.

Attachments

None.

Approval

Rachel Prudhomme, M.Sc., P.Eng., Director, Engineering Services

Peter Noehammer, P.Eng., Commissioner, Development & Infrastructure Services

Contact

For more information or questions regarding this report, please contact Mark Kryzanowski, Manager, Transportation Services, by telephone at 905-895-5193 extension 2508, or by email at mkryzanowski@newmarket.ca.