TORONTO

Emergency Management
Research & Development

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RE: Traffic Calming Measures, Leslie Street, between Dundas St E and Gerrard St E.

Upon review of the proposal for installation of traffic calming measures (speed humps), I have the following comments.

Toronto Fire Services is supportive of initiatives that will improve the life safety for citizens of and visitors to the city of Toronto. Our concern is that the physical calming measures being proposed may negatively impact emergency response to the area.

Fire Services is opposed to this speed hump installation as they will slow our responding vehicles and affect our ability to deliver service in the quickest possible manner. The effectiveness of our services is directly proportional to time it takes to receive notification, travel to the incident and begin operations. The vertical restrictions imposed by speed humps have a much greater affect on large fire vehicles than smaller passenger vehicles. Response time increases with every obstacle a fire vehicle encounters on route from the fire station to the incident. Although the increase at each hump may only be seconds, the cumulative effect can be a significant amount of time. A thirty-second delay (3 to 4 humps) is enough to alter the outcome of an incident from a successful fire extinguishment with minimal property damage and rescue of all occupants to complete structure loss with fire fatalities.

This speed hump installation will not only impact responses to Leslie Street but also Sproat Avenue. The nearest fire station is located to the south and Leslie Street serves as one of the primary northbound travel routes for responses to this area. The most direct access to Sproat Avenue is from Leslie Street and fire vehicles will not be able to avoid the proposed speed humps when responding.

It is imperative that the individuals directly affected by this installation be made fully aware of the potential negative effects of the proposed calming devices. Careful consideration must be given to accepting delays of emergency response vehicles as a trade off to combat the risks presented by regular vehicle traffic.

Fire Services recommends that non-physical measures (speed limits or prohibited turns) be implemented and evaluated before physical forms are considered. Desired results may be obtained without imposing a physical obstruction to emergency vehicles. The impact of a speed hump installed in a segment of a street is difficult to evaluate without accounting for all measures that exist on the surrounding streets. It is our opinion that traffic-calming measures need to be evaluated on network-wide bases to better assess the impact to the entire response area.

In the future, please ensure that request for comment submitted to the fire services includes any associated assessment data and maps. This will provide a better understand of the number, the type and exact locations of the proposed calming measures.

Terry Bruining
Toronto Fire Services