



Emergency Management
Research & Development

Terry Bruining
Captain

Fareed Amin
Deputy City Manager

Fire Services
4330 Dufferin Street
Toronto, Ontario
M3H 5R9

Tel: 416-338-9136
Fax: 416-338-9527

December 8, 2005

David Dignard
Senior Traffic Investigator
Traffic Operations, Toronto and East York District
17th Floor, Metro Hall
Toronto, Ontario

RE: Traffic Calming Measures, Bingham Avenue, between Kingston Road and Gerrard Street East.

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.

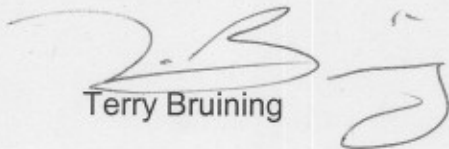
According to technical criteria data supplied Bingham Avenue does not receive the traffic volume or excessive speeds to warrant calming measures. Bingham Avenue already contains two stops signs at Wooddale and Swanwick that act as calming features. Site visit to the area reveals that existing speed humps are in place on the adjacent streets, (West) Scarborough Road and Lawlor Avenue. Overloading the area streets with speed humps will deplete route options for responding fire vehicles to emergencies in the area.

It was also noted that a short section of Bingham Avenue near Kingston Road is equipped with streetcar rails and appears to forms part of a transit route.

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