



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Larchmount Avenue, between Queen Street East and Eastern Avenue – Traffic calming devices

Date:	December 20, 2006
To:	Toronto and East York Community Council
From:	Director, Transportation Services, Toronto and East York District
Wards:	Toronto-Danforth, Ward 30
Reference Number:	Ts07012tey.top.doc

SUMMARY

Recently, Transportation Services staff investigated installing traffic-calming devices to reduce the operating speed of Larchmount Avenue, between Queen Street East and Eastern Avenue.

The operating speed of the street is already below a level which would benefit from installing traffic-calming devices. Therefore, Transportation Services staff should not install speed humps on this section of Larchmount Avenue.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Transportation Services Division recommends that:

1. Traffic-calming devices not be installed on Larchmount Avenue, between Queen Street East and Eastern Avenue.

Financial Impact

The adoption of the above noted recommendation will not result in any financial impact. If, however, Council decides to approve installing traffic-calming devices on this section of Larchmount Avenue, the following financial impact will result:

1. The estimated cost for installing three speed humps would be \$9,000.00. Transportation Services has requested that the 2007 Capital budget process allocate \$750,000.00 for traffic-calming initiatives and installing speed humps on Larchmount Avenue would be subject to competing priorities and funding availability.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

At the request of Councillor Paula Fletcher, Transportation Services staff studied Larchmount Avenue, between Queen Street East and Eastern Avenue, to determine whether installing traffic-calming devices was needed.

COMMENTS

Larchmount Avenue, between Queen Street East and Eastern Avenue, is a local street, operating one-way southbound with a posted speed limit of 40 km/h and a pavement width of 7.3 metres.

Transportation Services staff have reviewed Toronto Police Service collision records for a three-year period ending December 31, 2005. The records report nine collisions on this section of Larchmount Avenue. One collision resulted from a vehicle travelling too fast for conditions.

We have assessed this section of Larchmount Avenue against the City of Toronto's Traffic-Calming Policy. According to the policy guidelines, vehicle speeds and traffic volume are the prime criteria for installing traffic-calming devices. Staff also consider other environmental factors, such as road width, pedestrian facilities and gradient. Transportation Services staff also evaluated this section of Larchmount Avenue for safety and found that it has sidewalks on both sides of the roadway and that the road grade is less than eight percent. Because the section of Larchmount Avenue met the basic criteria, staff could continue to further consider speed humps. Staff further evaluated the proposal under the technical criteria, and have summarized the results in appendix A.

Based on Transportation Services' assessment, Larchmount Avenue, between Queen Street East and Eastern Avenue, does not meet all the criteria of the traffic-calming policy for installing traffic-calming devices. Specifically, the average daily volume of 511 vehicles per day is well below the minimum daily volume of 1000 vehicles per day that the traffic-calming policy requires. Therefore, under the requirements of the traffic-calming policy, installing speed humps on Larchmount Avenue, between Queen Street East and Eastern Avenue, is not warranted.

Alternate recommendations

Even though the staff's findings were not favourable, if the Toronto and East York Community Council wishes to proceed with installing speed humps on Larchmount Avenue, between Queen Street East and Eastern Avenue, it must recommend that:

1. Transportation Services staff consult with Councillor Fletcher to develop a speed hump plan;
2. Transportation Services staff poll eligible householders on Larchmount Avenue, between Queen Street East and Eastern Avenue to determine whether residents

- support the installation, in accordance with the City of Toronto traffic-calming Policy;
3. Transportation Services staff give public notice pursuant to the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Act, including Notice of Study Commencement to the Ministry of Environment, Fire Service, Emergency Medical Service and Toronto Police Service; and
 4. subject to favourable results of the poll;
 - (a) The City Solicitor prepare a by-law to alter sections of the roadway on Larchmount Avenue, between Queen Street East and Eastern Avenue, for traffic calming purposes, generally as the speed hump plan that Transportation Services staff circulated to residents during the polling process shows; and
 - (b) Transportation Services staff reduce the speed limit from forty kilometres per hour to thirty kilometres per hour on Larchmount Avenue, between Queen Street East and Eastern Avenue, at the same time as they install speed humps.

Installing speed humps will result in slower operating speeds for all vehicles, including emergency service vehicles, and could result in increased response times in the event of an emergency.

On September 21, 2006, Toronto Fire Services has written a letter of concern to Transportation Services regarding the placement of speed humps on Larchmount Avenue. Appendix B contains the text of this letter.

Conduct poll

In accordance with the provisions of the City of Toronto traffic-calming policy, Transportation Services staff must formally poll householders who would be directly affected by installing speed humps on this section of Larchmount Avenue. Under this policy, Transportation Services staff must receive a minimum response of 50 percent plus one ballot, of which at least 60 percent of the responding households must be in favour of installing speed humps so that staff can proceed with the installation. Accordingly, subject to approval by Council of the alternative recommendations outlined above, Transportation Services' staff would poll householders on Larchmount Avenue, between Queen Street East and Eastern Avenue and report the results to Councillor Fletcher. If the poll supports installing speed humps on Larchmount Avenue, between Queen Street East and Eastern Avenue, Transportation Services staff would schedule installation based on relative need and competing priorities.

Staff use a technical screening mechanism to determine relative need and to prioritize installing speed humps, based on traffic volume, vehicle speed percentages, speed related collisions, and the presence of schools, parks, seniors residences or bicycle routes. Based

on this technical assessment, Larchmount Avenue scored 32 ranking points out of a possible 100.

One of the provisions of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Act specifies that other reasonable alternative solutions be investigated prior to the recommendation of any solutions involving roadway alterations, such as speed humps. In this regard, as an alternative to speed hump installation, the following options were considered as part of staff's review on Larchmount Avenue.

Police Enforcement:

Enhanced enforcement of the maximum speed limit requires the dedication of police resources. Many local streets generally do not have sufficient incidences of excessive speeding to justify radar enforcement on a frequent basis. Enforcement might be provided by the Police Service on a semi-regular basis for a one or two-week period. Frequent users of the street become aware of the police presence and generally adjust their speed accordingly. However, once Police Service staff detects a reduction in the number of enforceable speeding infractions, radar enforcement is likely to be withdrawn and incidence of speeding could recur.

Enhanced Public Awareness:

In some instances motorists might not consciously be aware of the speed at which they are travelling. Therefore, enhancing public awareness of the speed limit is an option. Transportation Services has initiated a "Watch Your Speed" program whereby a trailer equipped with a radar unit, speed limit sign, and display board, is deployed on a problem street for two or three days to record vehicle speeds and give the approaching motorist an immediate read-out of their speed relative to the speed limit. The intention of the "Watch Your Speed" program is to increase public awareness and encourage responsible driving in the community.

Other Types of Traffic Calming Measures:

Traffic calming measures such as pinch-points and chicanes are in limited use across the City. Such measures result in the loss of on-street parking spaces and generally have a minor impact on the operational speed of traffic. The loss of parking is a concern in many residential neighbourhoods in the central area of the City, especially on streets such as Larchmount Avenue, where there has been a history of a high demand for on-street parking spaces. Although feasible, it would not be prudent to remove on-street parking spaces on Larchmount Avenue for the sake of installing other physical traffic calming measures.

Do Nothing:

This too is an option that could be considered on Larchmount Avenue where the investigation has indicated that the speed profile and operating characteristics of the street

are typical of many local streets in residential neighbourhoods across the City and do not suggest a potentially resolvable problem presently exists.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Appendix "A" – Table 1: Traffic Calming Warrant Criteria
Appendix "B" – Letter Dated September 21, 2006, Fire Services

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