June 28, 2013

Shawn Dartsch
Acting Supervisor
Transportation Services
Toronto & East York District

Re: Highfield Road, between Dundas Street East and Kerr Road - Evaluation for the installation of traffic calming devices

Dear Mr. Dartsch,

I am in receipt 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 the time it takes to receive notification, travel to the incident and begin operations. The vertical restrictions imposed by speed humps have a much greater effect on large fire vehicles than smaller passenger vehicles. Response time increases with every obstacle a fire vehicle encounters en-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.

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.
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 basis to better assess the impact to the entire response area.

Regards

Joseph Del Vasto
Acting District Chief
Health, Safety and Emergency Management
Toronto Fire Services