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Roehampton Avenue, between Yonge Street and Redpath Avenue - Evaluation for installation of traffic calming devices.

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 greatly impacted by time. The time it takes to receive notification, travel to the incident and begin mitigation operations. The vertical restrictions imposed by speed humps have a much greater effect on large fire vehicles than smaller passenger vehicles. Response time increase with every obstacle a fire vehicle encounters on route 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.

It is imperative that the individuals directly affected by this installation be made fully aware of the potential negative effects of the proposed calming device. Careful consideration must be given to accepting delays of emergency response vehicles as a trade-off to combat the risks presented by all vehicular 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 considering all other existing factors 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.

Further, is the approximate total daily volume of vehicles indicated in Warrant 3.2 of Appendix A an accurate reflection of normal traffic patterns. The ongoing road work (Eglinton Crosstown transit project) is increasing volume on all adjacent streets. Temporary impacts caused by these types of major infrastructure projects should be given consideration.

Regards,

Terry Bruining
Captain, Emergency Management, Health & Safety
Toronto Fire Services