

Metrolinx Finch West Light Rail Transit: Traffic Amendments – Finch Avenue West and Elana Drive/York Gate Boulevard

Date: April 29, 2021

To: Etobicoke York Community Council

From: Director, Transportation Planning and Capital Program, Transportation Services

Wards: Ward 7 - Humber River-Black Creek

SUMMARY

As the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) operates a transit service on Finch Avenue West, City Council approval of this report is required.

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval to make permanent the temporary traffic regulations previously approved by City Council at the intersection of Finch Avenue West and Elana Drive/York Gate Boulevard that were to be enforce until May 31, 2021. The proposed amendments will enable safe operation of the Finch West Light Rail Transit service and access to the planned maintenance and storage facility.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Director, Transportation Planning and Capital Program, Transportation Services recommends that:

1. City Council prohibit westbound left turns at all times at the intersection of Finch Avenue West and Elana Drive/York Gate Boulevard.
2. City Council rescind the southbound through traffic prohibition in effect at all times at the intersection of Finch Avenue West and Elana Drive/York Gate Boulevard.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact to the City of Toronto associated with the recommendations in this report. Metrolinx's contractor, Mosaic Transit Group (MTG), will be responsible for

all costs related to the installation of approved signage, pavement markings and traffic signal timing adjustments.

DECISION HISTORY

City Council, at its meeting on October 27, 2020, approved the time extension of the temporary removal of the southbound through traffic prohibition and temporary removal of the westbound left-turn movement at the intersection of Finch Avenue West and Elana Drive/York Gate Boulevard from November 1, 2020 to May 31, 2021.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.MM25.2>

City Council, at its meeting on July 28, 2020, approved the time extension of the temporary removal of the southbound through traffic prohibition and temporary removal of the westbound left-turn movement at the intersection of Finch Avenue West and Elana Drive/York Gate Boulevard until October 31, 2020.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.EY16.12>

City Council, at its meeting of October 29 and 30, 2019, approved the time extension of the temporary removal of the southbound through traffic prohibition and temporary removal of the westbound left-turn movement at the intersection of Finch Avenue West and Elana Drive/York Gate Boulevard from November 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.EY9.7>

City Council, at its meeting of May 14, 2019, approved temporary removal of the southbound through traffic prohibition and temporary removal of the westbound left-turn movement at the intersection of Finch Avenue West and Elana Drive/York Gate Boulevard from June 1, 2019 to October 31, 2019.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.EY5.4>

COMMENTS

Metrolinx's Finch West Light Rail Transit (FWLRT) service will operate on Finch Avenue West. To ensure safe operation of the FWLRT service, including access to the maintenance and storage facility, turning movement modifications at the intersection of Finch Avenue West and Elana Drive/York Gate Boulevard were made on a temporary basis to allow staff to assess impacts on the boundary road network and to determine if any additional modifications should be recommended prior to permanent implementation.

City Council approved the prohibition of westbound left-turn movements and enabled southbound through traffic movements to be in effect at the intersection of Finch Avenue West and Elana Drive/York Gate Boulevard until October 31, 2020 and later extended until May 31, 2021.

MTG undertook a comprehensive traffic monitoring program that assessed the impacts of the traffic movement modifications on the intersections of Finch Avenue West and Elana Drive/York Gate Boulevard, Finch Avenue West and Jane Street, Jane Street and Firgrove Crescent and Firgrove Crescent and Elana Drive. The traffic monitoring program included collection of 24-hour and peak period traffic counts, analysis of intersection traffic patterns, origin-destination licence plate surveys on Elana Drive, and review of collision data at the intersection of Finch Avenue West and Elana Drive/York Gate Boulevard.

Travel demand variation on Elana Drive due to traffic movement modifications at the intersection of Finch Avenue West and Elana Drive/York Gate Boulevard was assessed by collecting 24-hour traffic volume data during the weekdays (between July and November in 2019) and comparing it with the historical data. The comparison indicates that overall travel demand (Northbound and Southbound combined) on Elana Drive has decreased by approximately 30 percent when compared to the historical data. In terms of directional travel, the comparison indicated that the demand for northbound movement remains higher than the southbound movement demand. However, the demand for southbound movement has increased when compared to the historical data. This could be attributed to the availability of southbound through traffic movement at the intersection of Finch Avenue West and Elana Drive/York Gate Boulevard, which was previously unavailable.

The peak period turning movement counts were conducted between July and November in 2019 at the intersections of Finch Avenue West and Elana Drive/York Gate Boulevard, Finch Avenue West and Jane Street, Jane Street and Firgrove Crescent, and Firgrove Crescent at Elana Drive to measure the shift in travel demand due to the subject traffic movement modifications. Intersection traffic operations analyses were conducted at these intersections using the recorded turning movement counts. Based on the traffic operations analysis findings, it is determined that there is no significant change in delay and level of service for the motorists at these intersections, and traffic operations did not experience any negative impact after the implementation of the turning movement modifications.

The origin-destination licence plate surveys were conducted to measure the volume of cut-through traffic on Elana Drive during both the weekdays and weekends. The survey data indicates that cut-through traffic is generally higher on weekends. However, with the overall reduction of travel demand on Elana Drive, the through traffic volume on Elana Drive has also decreased when compared to the historical data.

A review of historical collision data over the five-year period between 2014 and 2019 has indicated that one southbound through and three westbound left-turn collisions have occurred at the intersection of Finch Avenue West and Elana Drive/York Gate Boulevard. However, there was no collision being recorded at the intersection during the traffic monitoring program between June 2019 and December 2019. All four collisions between 2014 and 2019 were classified as "Turning Movement" related at this intersection. The removal of the westbound left-turn movement during the traffic monitoring program has reduced a turning movement conflict point that contributed to previous collisions. The permanent removal of westbound left-turn movement will continue reducing the conflict points and improve safety at this intersection.

Based on the traffic monitoring program findings, it is concluded that there is a decrease in travel demand and cut-through traffic on Elana Drive, no noticeable impact on traffic operations at the boundary road intersections, and an increase in traffic safety due to the removal of the westbound left-turn movement. Transportation Services recommends permanent implementation of the current temporary traffic by-laws to provide safe operation of the Finch West LRT service through the intersection of Finch Avenue West and Elana Drive/York Gate Boulevard.

The Ward Councillor has been advised of the recommendations of this staff report.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Finch West Light Rail Transit - Location Plan

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