

## **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – FEBRUARY 16, 2004**

### **FIELDSTONE DRIVE TRAFFIC CONTROL**

#### **Recommendation**

The Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works recommends:

That a closure of Fieldstone Drive between Weston Road and Pottery Place / Windflower Gate not be implemented.

#### **Purpose**

To respond to the following recommendation adopted by Council at its September 22, 2003 meeting:

“That the petition from the residents of Fieldstone Drive with respect to traffic calming measures on Fieldstone Drive, be received; and

That Vaughan Council direct Engineering staff to attend a public meeting.”

The public meeting was held on October 9, 2003. Staff have reviewed the petition and are reporting on the feasibility of proposed traffic control options as well as addressing the concerns raised at the public meeting and outlined in a letter from the residents of Fieldstone Drive.

#### **Background - Analysis and Options**

A petition was received from the residents of Fieldstone Drive requesting closure of access to this street from Weston Road. In addition, several concerns were raised by the residents at the public meeting and outlined in a letter attached to the petition regarding vehicular speeds, turning violations, congestion and overall safety.

Fieldstone Drive is a feeder roadway with an existing speed limit of 50 km/h. The raised intersection of Fieldstone Drive and Pottery Place / Windflower Gate is under an all-way stop control. The intersection of Weston Road and Fieldstone Drive is controlled by traffic signals and is under the jurisdiction of the Region of York. A total of 14 homes front on to the north side of Fieldstone Drive between Weston Road and Pottery Place. The study area is shown on Attachment No. 1.

#### **Speeding**

The residents have expressed concerns regarding vehicular speeds along Fieldstone Drive and the difficulty of entering and exiting their driveways.

Staff conducted a speed study in order to determine the typical vehicle speeds on the road. The following table summarizes the results of the study.

DIRECTION OF TRAVEL	DATE	TIME	LOCATION	AVERAGE SPEED
Eastbound	November 13, 2003	4:00-4:30 PM	70 metres west of Weston Road	44.0 km/h
Westbound	November 13, 2003	4:00-4:30 PM	70 metres west of Weston Road	46.3 km/h

During the limited time noted above, the majority of motorists were travelling at an acceptable speed with an occasional exception of a motorist driving in excess of 60 km/h. The reader's attention is drawn to the results of the 24 hour speed studies referenced later in this report.

Nevertheless, on November 14, 2003, Engineering Staff sent a letter to the York Regional Police requesting strict and frequent enforcement of the 50 km/h speed limit on Fieldstone Drive between Weston Road and Pottery Place / Windflower Gate.

#### Traffic Violations

At the public meeting, the residents expressed concerns regarding motorists making illegal U-turns around the north end of the centre median on Weston Road at Fieldstone Drive. City staff contacted the Region of York regarding these concerns, as well as, requesting the Region to review the possibility of implementing an additional northbound left turn lane on Weston Road at Highway 7. The residents stated that since there is only one left turn lane at Highway 7, motorists travel up to Fieldstone Drive to make the left turn onto Fieldstone Drive, in order to proceed to the commercial areas.

Regional staff have indicated that they will review the issue of motorists undertaking U-turns around the north end of the centre median on Weston Road at Fieldstone Drive. Upon their review, if considered a safety issue, consideration will be given to the installation of the appropriate signage to prohibit the movement.

Due to the current geometrics of the intersection of Weston Road and Highway 7, northbound dual left turn lanes would not be feasible at this time as there is a dual southbound left turn, preventing the proper turning radius needed for a northbound dual left turn. Traffic is already congested on Highway 7 from Weston Road to Keele Street during the peak hour flow. The implementation of split timings at the intersection of Highway 7 and Weston Road would further increase congestion, delay and driver aggravation.

At the public meeting, the residents of Fieldstone Drive reported that their vehicles have been hit while parked on the street.

Staff conducted field observations on January 14, 2004, throughout the day to determine the number of vehicles parked on Fieldstone Drive. There were up to two vehicles parked concurrently on the street that day.

A review of the collision history on Fieldstone Drive was conducted. There have been five reportable accidents on Fieldstone Drive at Pottery Place / Windflower Gate and one on Weston Road at Fieldstone Drive / Chrislea Road since 2000. Two of these accidents were a result of poor weather conditions.

The residents' concerns regarding the excessive speeds at all hours of the day and night were investigated through the 24 hours speed studies that were completed from 3:00 PM on November 19, 2003 to 11:00 PM on November 21, 2003. During the noted times, the average speed of vehicles was 42 km/h in the westbound direction and 44 km/h in the eastbound direction. The observed 24 hours average speed was found comparable to the PM peak period speed observed on November 13, 2003.

The following table summarizes the results of these studies. Only a minor percentage of traffic was determined to be above 65 km/h.

DIRECTION OF TRAVEL	DATE	TIME	LOCATION	% OF TRAFFIC	
				57-64 km/h	Above 65 km/h
Eastbound	November 19, 2003	4:00-12:00 PM	90 metres east of Pottery Place / Windflower Gate	1.5	0.1
	November 20, 2003	00:00 AM-12:00PM		1.9	0.2
	November 21, 2003	00:00-8:00AM		2.0	0.4
Westbound	November 19, 2003	4:00-12:00 PM	90 metres east of Pottery Place / Windflower Gate	1.9	0.2
	November 20, 2003	00:00 AM-12:00PM		2.8	0.5
	November 21, 2003	00:00-8:00AM		7.9	0.6

#### Inappropriate Vehicles Using Fieldstone Drive

In response to the residents' concerns regarding transport trucks and tour buses using Fieldstone Drive at all hours of the day, staff conducted a vehicle classification study.

The following table summarizes the results of this study conducted from 3:00 PM on November 19, 2003 to 11:00 PM on November 21, 2003.

DIRECTION OF TRAVEL	% OF PASSENGER CARS	% OF BUSES	% OF TRUCKS (ALL SIZES)	% OF UNDEFINED VEHICLES
Eastbound	96.1	0.1	2.2	1.6
Westbound	92.6	0.2	3.5	3.7

It was noted that the majority of the trucks and buses were using Fieldstone Drive during the daytime prior to 8:00 PM. Fieldstone Drive is designed to accommodate large vehicle movements. Any restrictions on truck use on this roadway would generate concerns from the adjacent commercial business owners.

#### Traffic Congestion

In response to the residents' concerns regarding traffic congestion, Staff conducted traffic counts on Fieldstone Drive between Weston Road and Pottery Place / Windflower Gate.

The following table summarizes the results of the 24 hours traffic counts completed on November 20, 2003.

DIRECTION OF TRAVEL	DATE	PEAK HOUR	PEAK HOUR VOLUME	24-hour TRAFFIC VOLUME
Eastbound	November 20, 2003	1:00-2:00 PM	500	5,436
Westbound	November 20, 2003	12:00-1:00 PM	592	5,963

In comparison with the previous traffic counts conducted in March 2001, recent counts conducted on November 20, 2003 are shown to be significantly higher. The increased volume is due to additional retail developments to the south of Fieldstone Drive and to the new residential developments to the north. As indicated in the table above, the observed peak hours of use were during the mid-day period. It was noted that traffic on Fieldstone Drive was 22% to 27% lower during the evening peak hour.

In response to all these concerns, the residents of Fieldstone Drive and the neighbouring streets have requested the City to close the road and/or implement alternate solutions to reduce the amount of traffic on the street. Through their petition and letter, they have requested the City and Region to review and implement the following solutions:

- “... 1. Close the street at Fieldstone Drive and Weston Road intersection and install a gate with electronic remote for the fire hall to access the street from Weston Road.
2. Extend the driveway from the fire station off Weston Road for fire trucks to exit.
  3. Construct a raised median on Fieldstone Drive, to allow two-way traffic on the southern portion, the median would act like a buffer, the northern portion would allow residents to exit westbound only.
  4. Implement left turn lanes at the Best Buy store entrance with coordinating left turn traffic lights.”

Engineering staff and Vaughan Fire and Rescue Services (VFRS) staff are strongly against the above noted proposals. The fire station requires access to both eastbound and westbound Fieldstone Drive in order to offer appropriate rapid response to emergencies in the area. It also needs the traffic lights at Fieldstone Drive and Weston Road in order to access Weston Road quickly and safely. The fire station's direct driveway access onto Weston Road is too close to the Fieldstone Drive and Weston Road intersection and lacks sufficient site lines to ensure the safe entry onto Weston Road. This driveway is currently used for right-in only from Weston Road.

Any proposal to stop up Fieldstone Drive would require the installation of expensive electronic gates (minimum of 2) and a designated roadway from the existing fire station's Fieldstone driveway to the existing intersection of Fieldstone Drive and Weston Road (i.e., the exact same fire route would need to be maintained). Any alteration to the current traffic flow, including the proposal for gates (which are subject to failure and being blocked by snow and parking) would have an adverse affect on response times.

With respect to the proposal for the construction of a raised centre median on Fieldstone Drive to create a “service road” for the residents on the north side of this street, this cannot be viably undertaken. There would be insufficient room to construct the third northerly lane plus median to accommodate proper, safe vehicular movements and snow plow/garbage truck access. As well, the southerly lanes of Fieldstone Drive could not be properly aligned to accommodate through traffic from Chrislea Road.

An implementation of a left turn lane at the Best Buy store entrance with coordinating left turn traffic lights would not be a feasible solution. This is due to the insufficient distance required between traffic signals on Weston Road between Fieldstone Drive and the Best Buy entrance. Also, any left turn lane on Weston Road between Fieldstone Drive and Highway 7 cannot be accommodated because of the lack of queuing storage space required.

Closure of Fieldstone Drive would not be a viable option as the traffic would only be transferred to other streets creating congestion elsewhere. As well, the proposal for one-way traffic movement on Fieldstone Drive would also transfer traffic onto other neighbouring roadways such as Pottery Place and Blue Willow Drive. Installation of an electronic gate for fire trucks only would have an adverse impact on emergency response times and should not be considered. Therefore, the proposed solutions brought forth through this residents' petition to reduce traffic on Fieldstone Drive cannot be accommodated for the above noted reasons.

### **Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2007**

This traffic study is consistent with Vaughan Vision 2007 which seeks to improve community safety through design, prevention, enforcement and education (1.1) through the review of the level of enforcement, compliance and monitoring of regulations relating to public safety (1.1.6).

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council and the necessary resources have been allocated and approved.

### **Conclusion**

Based on our review, and input from the Vaughan Fire and Rescue Services and the Region of York Staff, Engineering Staff do not recommend the closure of Fieldstone Drive at Weston Road. The suggested proposals provided by the residents cannot be implemented for the noted reasons.

### **Attachments**

1. Location Map

### **Report prepared by**

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# ATTACHMENT No. 1

