

16

SCHOOL ZONE SIGNING

The Transportation and Works Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, April 21, 2004, from the Commissioner of Transportation and Works:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. The Regional Municipality of York continue to use the white on blue school zone signs on the Regional road system as outlined in the Ontario Traffic Manual and legislated in the Highway Traffic Act.
2. The Region support the Town of Richmond Hill in petitioning the Ministry of Transportation to amend the Highway Traffic Act to permit the use of fluorescent strong yellow green (FSYG) signs for school zones.
3. The Regional Clerk forward a copy of this report to the Clerk of each of the local municipalities.

2. PURPOSE

This report is in response to a request from staff of the Town of Richmond Hill to endorse the use of the fluorescent strong yellow green (FSYG) colour for all school zone related signs on Regional roads and to petition the Ministry of Transportation to amend the Ontario Traffic Manual and the Highway Traffic Act to permit its use.

3. BACKGROUND

Over the past few years, a number of municipalities within the province of Ontario have used the FSYG colour for school zone related signs rather than the white on blue colour, as described in both the Ontario Traffic Manual and legislated in the Highway Traffic Act. Recently, Town of Richmond Hill staff requested the Region use this colour for school related signing on Regional roads, as well as petition the Ministry of Transportation to amend the Ontario Traffic Manual and the Highway Traffic Act to permit their use. This report represents staff's position on the use of the FSYG colour for school related signs on Regional roads.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The current standard for school signs in the Province of Ontario, and as outlined in Book 6 (Warning Signs) of the Ontario Traffic Manual is as follows:

- School Area sign – blue and white pentagon sign.
- Advance School Crossing sign – blue and white, rectangular sign with “Crossing Ahead” tab below the sign.
- School Crossing sign – blue and white, rectangular sign, with “Crossing” tab.

The regulatory “School Zone Speed Limit” sign, as prescribed in the Highway Traffic Act, uses a blue and white pentagon sign.

Regional staff recommends staying with those standards detailed in the Ontario Traffic Manual and legislated in the Highway Traffic Act for the following reasons:

- While the emotional appeal of FSYG for school signs is acknowledged, there has been no objective evidence the FSYG colour improves safety for school children.
- The regulatory school zone speed limit sign, as prescribed in the Highway Traffic Act, uses a blue and white colour. If this colour is to be changed to be consistent with the FSYG colour, it will require a change to the Highway Traffic Act. If the Act is not changed, the speed limit cannot be enforced.
- There is a concern that FSYG on a static sign may visually overpower more important signs in the vicinity, creating other potential hazards.
- The concern with municipality exposure to liability over the use of a sign/colour that has not been sanctioned by the Ministry of Transportation for use on roads within the Province of Ontario has never been addressed.
- Uniformity and standardization in those factors affecting roads users in areas such as signing, pavement marking, road design etc. are key in maintaining a safe environment. The introduction of a single non standard colour/sign may lead to the use of other non standard colours/signs that, if left unchecked, will deteriorate the ability of the road user to respond appropriately.

Notwithstanding the above, Regional staff recommend supporting the Town of Richmond Hill in petitioning the Ministry of Transportation to amend the Highway Traffic Act to permit the use of fluorescent strong yellow green (FSYG) signs for school zones for the following reasons:

- The use of this colour for school related signing is increasing throughout the Province.
- In supporting the petition to the Ministry, it may generate the need for the Ministry to undertake more detailed studies to determine both the effectiveness of this colour and

in what applications it should be used.

- If the Highway Traffic Act is amended to reflect the use of this colour for school related signs, more use of the colour in this application will take place, providing uniformity throughout the Province, which is a key consideration with regards to overall driver and pedestrian safety.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The position recommended by Regional staff only affects school related signing on the Regional road system.

7. CONCLUSION

Town of Richmond Hill staff requested the Region to endorse the use of the fluorescent strong yellow green colour for all school zone related signs on Regional roads and to petition the Ministry of Transportation to amend the Ontario Traffic Manual and the Highway Traffic Act to permit its use.

Regional staff has reviewed the use of FSYG and recommends staying with those standards detailed in the Ontario Traffic Manual and legislated in the Highway Traffic Act for the following reasons:

- While the emotional appeal of FSYG for school signs is acknowledged, there has been no objective evidence the FSYG colour improves safety for school children.
- The regulatory school zone speed limit sign, as prescribed in the Highway Traffic Act, uses a blue and white colour. If this colour is to be changed to be consistent with the FSYG colour, it will require a change to the Highway Traffic Act. If the Act is not changed the speed limit cannot be enforced.
- There is a concern that FSYG on a static sign may visually overpower more important signs in the vicinity, creating other potential hazards.
- The concern with municipality exposure to liability over the use of a sign/colour that has not been sanctioned by the Ministry of Transportation for use on roads within the Province of Ontario has never been addressed.

- Uniformity and standardization in those factors affecting roads users in areas such as signing, pavement marking, road design etc. are key in maintaining a safe environment. The introduction of a single non standard colour/sign may lead to the use of other non standard colours/signs that, if left unchecked, will deteriorate the ability of the road user to respond appropriately.

Notwithstanding the above, Regional staff recommend supporting the Town of Richmond Hill in petitioning the Ministry of Transportation to amend the Highway Traffic Act to permit the use of FSYG signs for school zones for the following reasons;

- The use of this colour for school related signing is increasing throughout the Province.
- In supporting the petition to the Ministry, it may generate the need for the Ministry to undertake more detailed studies to determine both the effectiveness of this colour and in what applications it should be used.
- If the Highway Traffic Act is amended to reflect the use of this colour for school related signs, more use of the colour in this application will take place, providing uniformity throughout the Province, which is a key consideration with regards to overall driver and pedestrian safety.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.