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YORK REGION TRANSIT POLICY FOR TRAFFIC CALMING ON PUBLIC TRANSIT ROUTES

(Please refer to Minute No. 150 of the Regional Council Minutes for recorded vote on the adoption of the recommendations in the foregoing Clause.)

The Transit Committee recommends that:

1. The presentation from Rick Tagaki and Ann Marie Carroll regarding Traffic Calming Policy on Public Transit Routes be received.
2. The policy regarding “Traffic Calming on Public Transit Routes” be amended as follows:
 - a) The last sentence of the “Description” section be deleted and replaced with the following:

“It is recognized that both the installation and removal of traffic calming devices requires an Environmental Assessment process. The Region will work with the local municipality to identify options and possible alternative traffic calming devices to mitigate the impacts to York Region Transit.”
3. That recommendation contained in the following report, June 4, 2004, from the Commissioner of Transportation and Works be adopted, as amended above.

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

1. The policy entitled “Traffic Calming on Public Transit Routes” be adopted and that, York Region staff be authorized to communicate the policy to the local municipalities and the public (*see Attachment 1*).

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to update Transit Committee and Regional Council on the proposed York Region Transit (YRT) policy for traffic calming on public transit routes, and to seek adoption of the policy.

This policy will serve to identify issues surrounding the effects of traffic calming devices on public transit services. It will establish guidelines for the Region and the local municipalities when considering the implementation of traffic calming devices on streets

where transit buses currently operate and those where transit buses may operate in the future.

3. BACKGROUND

YRT staff submitted a proposed policy entitled “Traffic Calming Devices on Transit Routes” to the August 22, 2003 Transit Committee meeting. The following resolution was subsequently passed by Regional Council at its meeting on September 18, 2003.

- 1. The following report, August 22, 2003, from the Commissioner of Transportation and Works be received.*
- 2. This matter be referred to York Region Transit staff to establish a working group to include local municipalities, Regional Transportation and Works, Fire and EMS Departments, for the purpose of drafting a policy for region-wide traffic calming measures on public transit routes.*
- 3. Local municipalities be encouraged not to implement traffic calming measures on existing and/or anticipated York Region Transit routes until policy has been adopted.*

The list of working group members has been expanded to also include York Region Police (YRP).

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

YRT staff assembled the working group as directed. The group’s objectives were to:

- Determine whether the framework of YRT’s existing draft policy could be further developed.
- Identify preferred traffic calming solutions to be used on transit routes.

The goals of the working group were to:

- Remedy operating concerns.
- Reach consensus on types of traffic devices acceptable on transit routes.
- Develop a communications strategy.
- Prepare a Transit Traffic Calming Policy to be submitted to Regional Council.

It has been determined that the Town of Markham and the City of Vaughan are the only two municipalities that currently install speed humps/bumps along transit routes.

The Town of Markham began installing speed humps/bumps in 1999. Since 1999, Markham has designated 42 municipal streets to receive speed humps/bumps, 22 of which are streets where transit operates.

The Town of Vaughan has installed speed humps/bumps on 7 municipal streets where transit operates.

A critical issue with speed humps/bumps is the travel time delay they cause. The investigation into this indicated that for every speed hump/bump installed, there is the potential to reduce travel time by 10 seconds. An example of this is Route 40 (Markham-Unionville Local).

Table 1
Route 40 Time Delay

Route	No. of Speed Humps	Current Service	Time Delay
40	35	30min. peak hours 1 hr. off peak	12 min. round trip

The proposed policy submitted to Regional Council in September, 2003 was reviewed and discussed by the group members. Overall the members supported the intent of the policy. YRT was asked to include a grandfather clause in the policy exempting existing and approved locations having vertical traffic measures, inclusive of 2002/2003 projects. YRT staff has agreed to include a grandfather clause; however, if it is found that the vertical devices interfere with YRT's operation, YRT reserves the right to request the removal of the devices.

Speed humps/bumps are the most common type of traffic calming device being installed by local municipalities at this time and are the primary concern for both municipal and Regional staff. The pros and cons of this type of device are as follows:

Pros:

- Economical.
- Easy to install.
- Effective.

Cons:

- Reduced operating speeds (response time).
- Damage to vehicle and associated costs.
- Downtime of vehicles.
- Operator and customer discomfort.
- Liability.
- Street aesthetics.
- Road maintenance and construction works.
- Repairs to the devices and costs associated with the repairs.
- Traffic diversion. Redirecting traffic from one street to another.

Staff then considered other traffic calming devices to determine if there are in fact better solutions.

4.1 Traffic Calming Devices

There are four main categories of traffic calming devices to be considered as outlined in Table 2.

Table 2
Traffic Calming Device Options

	Type	Description	Sample
1.	Non-Physical	Do not alter the physical path of travel.	Speed Enforcement Photo Radar Radar Trailers Signage Pavement Markings Streetscaping
2.	Horizontal	Decrease width of roadway through physical measure.	Traffic Circles/Roundabouts Chicanes Medians Centre Islands Choke points Realigning Intersections On-street parking
3.	Vertical	Form road surface with varying heights and/or textures.	Speed humps/bumps Speed tables Textured pavement Raised crosswalks and intersections
4.	Diversion	Restricts traffic flow. (Not considered as part of analysis).	Street closures Turning prohibitions and other restrictions One-way to two-way streets Cul-de-sacs

Each of the four categories were discussed and then evaluated by each working group member. The categories were ranked based on an agree/disagree format, with non-physical devices being most preferred, and diversion devices the least preferred.

Non-physical devices were preferred as there were no concerns relating to municipal operations, transit and emergency services. Police enforcement was thought to be the most effective method of non-physical traffic calming. The representative from York Regional Police stated that they are currently planning for an increase in traffic enforcement resources in 2004.

Horizontal devices were thought to be more expensive and less effective, however, they do address the issues noted in the groups list of cons.

Group members agreed that vertical measures should be considered as the last resort. Diversion devices were not discussed as they do not relate to transit.

4.2 Plan of Action

The group identified the need for an integrated plan for traffic safety, taking into account the community as a whole. The following actions are suggested:

- Invest in public education to change perceptions, behaviours and attitudes that lead to collisions.
- Provide visible police enforcement where resources permit.
- Address specific traffic problems with intelligent, cost effective solutions that will not compromise safety or penalize law-abiding citizens.
- Educate community that instead of turning streets into playgrounds, there is a need to develop recreational grounds and facilities where children can play safely away from traffic.

Building obstacles to impede traffic is not the answer to the problem of aggressive drivers. It has been determined that police enforcement and public education should be the first steps to traffic calming.

The Town of Markham has recently coordinated a “Street Safe Task Force” that is addressing the issue of traffic calming specifically. Their staff is preparing a scheme that would serve the residents of a community, YRT and emergency service providers.

4.3 Communication

To improve communications with the local municipalities, YRT staff agreed to:

- Provide group members with one point of contact.
- Provide current transit information through its web site.
- Circulate a summary of its annual service plan each year to group members.
- Produce mapping identifying roads selected for future transit services through the subdivision plan approval process.

4.4 Relationship to Vision 2026

YRT will work with the local municipalities and other partners to support the goals stated in York Region’s Vision 2026 and will focus on the following areas:

“Housing Choices for Our Residents”

- Planning for Strong Lives, Work, Play and Learn Connections.
- Creating Well-Designed and Liveable Communities.

“Infrastructure for a Growing Region”

- Ensuring that our transportation network co-ordinates with development.
- Continuing to improve service and infrastructure for successfully integrated transit service.
- Promoting transit usage as a practical and wise alternative to private vehicle use.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

An overall financial impact caused by the installation of vertical traffic calming measures is unknown. It is certain that if vertical traffic calming devices continue to be installed along transit routes, the Region will incur costs as a direct result.

A twelve minute round trip time delay as shown in Table 1(Route 40 example) alone could cost the Region \$73,000 annually. Other areas identified as potential costs would be vehicle damage to the lower side panels, liability claims due to bumps and falls, and customer dissatisfaction due to extended travelling times.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Local planners and engineers will have to consider the impact on public transit when designing and/or approving traffic calming devices. Increased noise levels and pollution may occur as a result of the increase in the number of vertical devices being installed. Where vertical traffic calming measures are used, public transit will not be provided.

The working group determined that the local municipalities prefer vertical devices because they consider them to be economical, simple to install and effective, however the total cost associated with vertical devices has not yet been investigated by most municipalities. The local municipalities may or may not incur higher costs to install other types of devices in order to accommodate public transit service.

7. CONCLUSION

Regional Council endorsement is being sought for YRT’s policy entitled “Policy for Traffic Calming on Public Transit Routes”.

YRT supports municipal introduction of well-planned traffic calming measures into the municipal landscape and will assist local municipal staff to develop their plan. It is, however, necessary to continue to provide transit services to all areas of York Region while maintaining a safe and comfortable environment for the general public, transit customers and bus operators.

The cities of Toronto and Hamilton both have similar policies in place. Other jurisdictions such as Mississauga, Brampton and Waterloo are in the process of developing policies.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(A copy of the attachment referred to in the foregoing is included with this report and is also on file in the Regional Clerk's Office.)