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BATHURST STREET TRAFFIC CONCERNS TOWN OF NEWMARKET AND TOWNSHIP OF KING

The Transportation and Works Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, May 28, 2008, from the Commissioner of Transportation Services:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. This report be received as a status update of traffic operations and the construction schedule for Bathurst Street (Y.R. 38), between Davis Drive West (Highway 9) (Y.R. 31) and Mulock Drive (Y.R. 74), in the Town of Newmarket and Township of King.
2. The Regional Clerk forward this report to the Clerks of the Town of Newmarket and Township of King.

2. PURPOSE

This report addresses a request from the Transportation and Works Committee regarding traffic operations on Bathurst Street, between Davis Drive West (Highway 9) and Mulock Drive, in the Town of Newmarket and Township of King. A location map is attached (*see Attachment 1*).

3. BACKGROUND

Staff initiated the process to rename Highway 9 to Davis Drive West in accordance with a direction from Council on December 13, 2007 and this process is underway. This report will further reference Highway 9 as Davis Drive West.

At meetings with the public and area residents held in December of 2007 to discuss noise issues, a number of Bathurst Street operational concerns were also brought to the attention of Regional and local councillors and Regional staff. Subsequently, at its meeting of March 5, 2008, the Transportation and Works Committee requested staff to undertake a traffic study of Bathurst Street in the Town of Newmarket.

Bathurst Street, from Mulock Drive to Davis Drive West, has a two lane rural cross section with auxiliary lanes at the major intersections. This road section provides the boundary between the Town of Newmarket and Township of King and is approximately

two kilometres in length. There are a total of five municipal intersections, including Davis Drive West and Mulock Drive, on this road section. Traffic control signals exist at three intersections:

- Mulock Drive
- Keith Avenue
- Davis Drive West

Average daily traffic volumes on Bathurst Street have increased sufficiently to justify widening the roadway through the Region's capital reconstruction program

The current traffic volumes on Bathurst Street, south of Davis Drive West are approximately 20,000 vehicles per day based on data collected in 2007 which has increased from approximately 18,000 vehicles in 2004. This increase represents a growth in traffic volume of approximately 3.7% per year, which is comparable to the Regional average of 4% as determined by Regional Transportation Planning staff.

The lane configuration of Bathurst Street approaching Davis Drive West consists of a left turn lane, two through lanes, and a right turn lane. The queue of traffic attempting a left turn at the intersection often extends back from Davis Drive West and blocks the northbound through lane. When the through lane is blocked, it prevents traffic that intends to go north on Bathurst Street or turn right on to Davis Drive West, from doing so. At times, this queue has been observed to extend as far south as the intersection with Sykes Road preventing traffic from exiting Sykes Road.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

4.1 FUTURE ROADWAY GEOMETRICS ON BATHURST STREET ARE BEING IMPROVED UNDER TWO SEPARATE ROAD RECONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

Bathurst Street is being reconstructed from two lanes to five lanes (two lanes per direction plus a centre left turn lane) from Wellington Street in the Town of Aurora to Mulock Drive in the Town of Newmarket. The Class Environmental Assessment for this reconstruction project was completed in 2001 and this project is currently under way and is to be complete by the Fall of 2008. This project also includes the installation of a water-main that extends from Clearmeadow Boulevard, located just north of Mulock Drive, northerly to Woodspring Avenue, located just north of Davis Drive West.

A second contract, to reconstruct Bathurst Street between Mulock Drive and Davis Drive West, is currently in the final stages of design. It is expected this contract will be tendered in early summer of 2008 with construction in 2008.

Upon completion of construction, Bathurst Street will consist of a five lane (two lanes per direction plus a centre left turn lane) urban cross section between Sykes Road and Davis Drive West. Between Mulock Drive and Sykes Road, Bathurst Street will consist of a four lane (two lanes per direction) urban cross section with a one metre wide separation, achieved by pavement markings, between the northbound and southbound traffic. Right turn and left turn lanes exist at each intersection and will remain after completion of construction.

The existing signalized intersections of Bathurst Street at Keith Avenue and at Mulock Drive are included within the limits of this construction project; however, there are no geometric improvements required to either of these intersections. The existing lane configuration of two lanes in each direction plus left and right turn lanes, at each of these intersections, will remain as is and is sufficient to accommodate the expected traffic volumes.

4.2 SIGNALIZATION OF THE SYKES ROAD INTERSECTION

The intersection of Bathurst Street and Sykes Road is a “tee” intersection providing access to the residential community of Glenway. When the widening of Bathurst Street is complete, the new five lane cross-section will provide interim relief to the intersection of Bathurst Street and Sykes Road. Even if the left turn queue still backs up from Davis Drive West, and blocks a through lane, the additional northbound lane will allow traffic to continue to go north on Bathurst Street or to turn right on to Davis Drive West, which will eliminate the traffic queue that currently extends to Sykes Road.

Following the recent meetings with the community and stakeholders, staff again reviewed the operation and the projected traffic volumes for the Sykes Road intersection. Historically, the traffic volumes at Sykes Road fell just short of the Regional signal warrant criteria, and originally the Region’s upcoming contract only included underground provisions for future signals at this location.

The most recent staff review examined the projected traffic volumes at Sykes Road, Keith Avenue and on Bathurst Street. Traffic volumes on Bathurst Street in this area are expected to increase over the next few years. This increase in volume, in combination with the new five lane cross-section, may increase the delay to motorists attempting to exit Sykes Road particularly to travel south on Bathurst Street.

Sykes Road serves a mature, fully built out, residential development and volumes on this road are expected to remain constant even though volumes on Bathurst Street are expected to increase. A traffic control signal at the intersection of Bathurst Street and Sykes Road will attract some additional traffic as a signal will provide a more convenient access to Bathurst Street and some residents of the area may change their travel route accordingly. The additional traffic is difficult to predict, however, it is felt that with the widening of Bathurst Street and the installation of traffic signals at Bathurst Street and

Sykes Road sufficient additional traffic will be generated to closely meet the signals for warrants.

In light of this and the cost efficiency of including the signals in the current contract, staff has now included the installation of traffic control signals at Sykes Road in the Bathurst Street widening project.

4.3 REGIONAL NOISE POLICY APPLICATION

Noise studies were conducted along this section of Bathurst Street during the Environmental Assessment Study that was completed in 2000. Similar noise studies were conducted as part of the Detailed Design Study that was completed in 2007. These noise studies concluded that in accordance with the noise policy adopted by Council, noise barriers are not required.

To ensure the public and area residents are informed of construction projects, staff host public information centres where general details of projects are presented to residents and other members of the public. Regional staff hosted a public information centre on December 12, 2007 for the reconstruction of Bathurst Street, from Mulock Drive to Davis Drive West.

In addition to the public information centre, a residents meeting was held on January 29, 2008. The intention of this meeting was to deal specifically with the concerns brought forward by residents at the public information centre about the potential noise levels created by additional traffic on Bathurst Street after the completion of construction.

To ensure all stakeholders were informed of the status of the project, correspondence was sent to concerned residents in late January of 2008. Additional information was provided to representatives of the Town of Newmarket in early March of 2008.

Truck traffic on Bathurst Street may be reduced by signage on Highway 404

Through the most recent consultations, a number of stakeholders raised concerns about the volume of truck traffic using this section of Bathurst Street. Heavy truck traffic throughout the entire Regional road network averages at approximately 7%. Based on traffic information from 2007, heavy truck volumes in the vicinity of Mulock Drive and Bathurst Street are approximately 5%.

Until recently, trucks on Highway 404 northbound were being guided to use Mulock Drive to access Highway 400. Very recently, upon request by staff, the Ministry of Transportation removed guidance signage on Highway 404 suggesting Mulock Drive as an alternate route. Staff also has requested the Ministry of Transportation to implement appropriate signage on Highway 404 encouraging truck traffic to use Green Lane as an

alternate route to Highway 400 to help reduce the volume of trucks on Mulock Drive and Davis Drive.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications related to this report. The funds to reconstruct Bathurst Street are included in the current capital construction program.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

This report will be forwarded to the Town of Newmarket and the Township of King for their information.

7. CONCLUSION

At the Transportation and Works Committee meeting of March 5, 2008, Regional staff were requested to conduct a traffic study of Bathurst Street in the Town of Newmarket. In response to this, staff conducted a review of the area and the schedule for the reconstruction of Bathurst Street between Mulock Drive and Davis Drive West.

For more information on this report, contact Paul Jankowski, General Manager, Roads, Roads Branch at extension 5901 in the Transportation Services Department.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The attachment referred to in this clause was included in the agenda for the June 11, 2008 Committee meeting.)