

Committee of the Whole (2) Report

DATE: Tuesday, December 5, 2023

WARD(S): 3

TITLE: LAWFORD ROAD AND SEDGEWICK PLACE AREA TRAFFIC REVIEW

FROM:

Zoran Postic, Deputy City Manager, Public Works

ACTION: FOR INFORMATION

Purpose

To report on the key findings of the Lawford Road and Sedgewick Place Area Traffic Review, as directed by Council on September 28, 2022.

Report Highlights

- On September 28, 2022, Council directed staff to advance the development of an Area Traffic Review (including community engagement) for Sedgewick Place and the surrounding road network.
- As part of the Area Traffic Review, staff completed studies to assess vehicle speeds, traffic volume, and identified vulnerable road user concerns to improve traffic flow along both local and regional roads during school pick-up and drop-off hours.
- The results recommended traffic related treatments to reduce vehicle operating speeds, reduce school-related congestion, and implement measures to encourage active and sustainable travel, including pedestrian and cycling facilities.
- The plan aims to improve road safety, accessibility, and mobility for all users.
- During the study process, community involvement and education were crucial in advancing the recommendations. They included collaboration with York Region, York Region Transit, the York Region Catholic District School Board, the York Region District School Board, and school administration.

Recommendations

1. That this report be received; and
2. That the City Clerk forward a copy of this report to the Regional Municipality of York, York Regional Police, York Region Public District School Board, York Region Catholic District School Board, and Student Transportation Services of York Region.

Background

Council directed staff to undertake an Area Traffic Review for Sedgewick Place and the surrounding road network.

In 2018, the residents of Sedgewick Place expressed concerns about vehicular speeding on Sedgewick Place and the surrounding road network, resulting in several traffic measures to improve traffic operations. These measures included:

- Installation of radar message boards as part of the City's speed compliance program.
- The Installation of a "pedestrian ahead" warning sign on Sedgewick Place.
- The Installation of larger stop signs at the intersection of Chatfield Drive and Sedgewick Place.
- Increased enforcement by York Regional Police to address speeding concerns on Sedgewick Place.

Speed management measures were also implemented along Lawford Road to support active school travel and sustainable transportation. These measures were installed as part of the City's Active School Travel (AST) pilot program to promote active school travel for students at Johnny Lombardi Public School, Guardian Angels Catholic Elementary School, and Tommy Douglas Secondary School. As part of this program, staff installed in-road flexi-signs, radar message boards, and edge line painting to improve pedestrian safety in and around school zones. Overall, these measures encouraged students to engage in healthy, active, and sustainable travel options.

In 2022, residents expressed concerns about high traffic volumes and potential traffic infiltration on Sedgewick Place. In response, Council directed staff to conduct updated studies and present additional options for consideration. They also provided direction to engage with the community to better understand their concerns and provide feedback on the recommendations.

An independent consultant was selected to undertake an Area Traffic Review.

The City retained CIMA+ as an independent consultant to conduct an Area Traffic Review. Major traffic generators in the neighbourhood include Johnny Lombardi Public

School, Guardian Angel Catholic Elementary School, Tommy Douglas Secondary School and Chatfield District Park.

The Lawford Road neighbourhood has a 40 km/h area speed limit. Lawford Road consists entirely of unsignalized intersections, except for one roundabout located at the intersection of Chatfield Drive and Lawford Road. Access to the neighbourhood is provided via Weston Road to the east and Major Mackenzie Road to the south. A study area map is included in Attachment 1.

A critical component of the study was engaging community residents in the Lawford Road area for public input.

During the study process, the Corporate and Strategic Communications department used various engagement methods to keep Vaughan residents informed about the study and to encourage participation, including those residing in the Lawford Road community. The department utilized various communication tools, such as project webpages, public service announcements, council communication packages, engagement newsletters, direct mail, social media, digital graphics, and mobile signs. The community provided input through two public engagement events, held in June 2023 and September 2023, and two online surveys.

Of the two public engagement events that were held, the first took place online and shared information about the review of the existing conditions, community surveys, and gathered community feedback on potential solutions. The second public engagement event was held in-person at Tommy Douglas Secondary School to allow for interactive feedback through information boards around the room and gathered feedback on study findings, traffic management tools, and recommendations.

Residents were also invited to complete two online surveys to provide their feedback on community issues, their vision for the corridor within the Lawford neighborhood, traffic management tools, and solutions. Top issues identified by the community included traffic congestion in the neighbourhood, speed management, school pick-up and drop-off, and staggered bell times for the three schools along Lawford Road. Traffic management tools and solutions centered around traffic calming management tools, school related countermeasures, the need for pedestrian facilities, and cycling facilities.

A focus group meeting was held in August 2022 to present preliminary recommendations for the neighbourhood. School board members, school administration, and parent council members from the three schools attended. Key points raised included the need for parking enforcement and encouraging parents to park in safe locations, traffic management tools, staggering school bell times, and encouraging active and alternative modes of transportation. The comments were considered in the development of the plan.

In total, 534 individuals were involved in these engagement efforts. These public engagement efforts successfully involved the community and gathered their input. Common concerns and suggestions were identified and plans for the study area were developed with community concerns in mind.

In addition, two stakeholder meetings were held with the City of Vaughan, York Region Transportation, York Regional Police, and the York Regional District School Board. The purpose of the first meeting was to introduce the study, share information about the review of the existing conditions and community survey, and gather feedback about the study to shape potential study solutions. Stakeholders provided their input regarding the study findings and recommended traffic management tools and solutions to inform and shape the implementation strategy.

Previous Reports/Authority

Sedgewick Place and Neighbourhood Area Traffic Review, Extract from Council Meeting of September 28, 2022 (Item 17, Report No. 36)

<https://pub-vaughan.escrimemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=120498>

MoveSmart Mobility Management Strategy:

<https://www.vaughan.ca/about-city-vaughan/projects-and-initiatives/transportation-projects/movesmart-mobility-management-strategy>

[Speed Limit Policy](#)

Vaughan Official Plan:

[City of Vaughan Official Plan 2010 | City of Vaughan](#)

Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan:

[Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan | City of Vaughan](#)

Analysis and Options

The following are the Lawford Road and Sedgewick Place Area Traffic Review findings.

There is little evidence of traffic infiltration into the study area.

The findings of the origin-destination study, which analyzed traffic conditions and patterns in the neighborhood, suggest that there is limited evidence to support traffic infiltration into the Lawford Road study area from adjacent regional roads. Moreover, there is no evidence of traffic using Sedgewick Place as a shortcut by traffic outside of the study area. The vehicles noted traveling on Sedgewick Place are from the neighbourhood.

The study recommends installing "local traffic only" signs and centerline flexible signs to manage traffic through the street and address speeding concerns, considering the high

traffic volume recorded on Sedgwick Place. Additionally, traffic monitoring is suggested after the completion of any new development.

Traffic operations issues are centered around speeding, school related congestion, and the need for pedestrian and cycling facilities.

A review of the speed studies indicates higher operating speed (higher than 50km/h) occur on portions of Chatfield Drive, Stanton Avenue and Poetry Drive and speed management measures are recommended.

Arrival and dismissal bell times at three schools along Lawford Road occur at about the same time, resulting in significant congestion along Lawford Road during the time periods of 7:45am to 8:10am and 2:15pm to 2:45pm. Unsafe school pick up and drop off activities are noted at the three schools and aggressive driver behaviours and disobeying traffic controls are noted.

High pedestrian traffic is noted at several uncontrolled crossings. Several crossings meet the minimum pedestrian volume threshold to warrant a pedestrian crossover according to Provincial guidelines (Ontario Traffic Manual Book 15). There is lack of trail connection between the Lawford Neighbourhood Park and the two elementary schools (Johnny Lombardi Public School and Guardian Angels Catholic School).

With major destinations such as schools and parks along Lawford Road, and to align with the City's Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan, providing cycling facilities to promote active and sustainable travel is desirable to reduce car travel and to ensure travellers have alternative options.

Traffic-related treatments are recommended to reduce operating speeds, reduce-school related congestion, and to provide pedestrian and cycling facilities.

A number of traffic treatments have been identified to address the traffic operation issues outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Identified Needs and Recommended treatments.

Identified Need	Recommended treatments
A need to reduce the operating speeds on Chatfield Drive, Stanton Avenue, and Poetry Drive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrow travel lanes with edge line and center line markings, tightening the radius at the corner of Chatfield Drive and Poetry Drive. • Install radar message boards. • Place additional flex signs on Poetry Drive.
A need to manage school related congestion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work with the school administration and school boards to explore shifting bell times at one or two schools. • Encourage Active School Travel at Johnny Lombardi, Guardian Angels, and Tommy Douglas to reduce vehicle congestion. • Providing/improving pedestrian and cycling facilities to provide travel options.
A need to discourage unsafe pick up and drop off activities at the three schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforce existing no stopping bylaws, through flexible signs to discourage stopping in undesirable locations. • Install flexible signs along with bollards and pavement stencils (on Stanton Avenue in front of Johnny Lombardi Public School and Chatfield Drive in front of Guardian Angels Catholic School).
A need to provide/improve pedestrian facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install pedestrian crossovers at key warranted locations in the neighbourhood in consideration of pedestrian and traffic movements and the lack of a nearby dedicated controlled crossing. • Evaluate the feasibility of providing a dedicated path from the existing park path and the two schools. This requires collaboration with the school administration, school boards, and the City.
An opportunity to provide/improve cycling facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine the most appropriate cycling facilities for Poetry Drive, Stanton Avenue, and Chatfield Drive through functional and detailed designs that accommodate all ages and abilities. Determine the most appropriate cycling facilities for Lawford Road, considering the presence of the two parks and three schools and the availability of land (owned by the two school boards and the City).

The proposed recommendations and more detailed illustrations of these treatments are provided in Attachment 2.

The plan encourages sustainable and active travel, improves road safety, improves connectivity and accessibility, supports mobility for all road users, and supports mobility for all age groups.

Implementation Timelines

An implementation plan identifying short-term ‘quick wins’, medium-term and long-term improvements have been identified for the treatments as shown in Table 2.

- Short-term – any recommendations that do not require significant modifications to existing infrastructure. These treatments are generally implemented through existing City programs and contracts (such as pavement markings or signs) and are therefore accommodated through the department’s annual budgets.
- Medium-term and Long-term – any recommendations that may require the involvement of other authorities, additional analysis or design will be implemented in the medium and long term. These measures may be considered by staff through upcoming programs and will take longer to implement. Due to higher costs or planning implications, these measures will require approval from applicable City departments as part of their annual allocation of budgets.

Table 2 – Recommended Treatments

Short-Term (Quick-Wins)	Medium Term	Long Term
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edge line and centre line treatment on Poetry Drive, Chatfield Drive, Stanton Avenue and Lawford Road. • Other pavement marking improvements including modifications to lane markings at Lawford Road and Farooq Boulevard intersection. • Reinforce No Stopping restrictions near schools (review through the Safer School Zone Plan). • Flex signs and pavement markings stencils. • Radar message boards. • Continue communication and public awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feasibility, design, and implementation of pedestrian crossovers. • Curb radius reduction at Poetry Drive and Chatfield Drive • Evaluate cycling facility on Lawford Road through functional and detailed designs. • Assess the feasibility of a direct path connection to schools from the existing park. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate cycling facilities for Poetry Drive, Chatfield Drive and Stanton Avenue.

Financial Impact

The preliminary cost estimate for the proposed recommendations is provided in Table 3. The cost for Lawford Road, Poetry Drive, Chatfield Drive and Stanton Avenue cycling facilities will need to be further evaluated based on the functional and detailed design studies.

Table 3 – Preliminary Cost Estimates

Short-term Improvements Estimated Costs	Medium Term Improvements Estimated Costs	Long Term Improvements Estimated Costs
\$32,000	\$3.2M to \$3.7M	\$1.5M to \$2.0M

A detailed cost breakdown of the proposed improvements is provided in Attachment 3.

Cost estimates for the proposed recommendations will continue to be further refined as projects progress. Staff will develop a work plan to implement the short-term measures. Funding for implementation will be requested through the annual budget approval process. Regardless of the implementation timeframe identified, all implementations will be subject to budget approval. Staff will also continue to explore opportunities, partnerships, and alternative funding source to help support the implementation. Subject to budget approval, the short-term treatments will be implemented in summer 2024. Medium and long-term improvements will be brought forward in future budget approval processes. Staff will assess the best method in advancing the improvements during the annual budget approval process and will align all future improvements with the capital project planning process. The on-going cost to maintain the pavement markings, signage, and infrastructure will be incorporated in future Operating Budgets through the budget process.

Operational Impact

To ensure a comprehensive and well-informed decision-making process, consultation with various city departments and agencies have taken place during the course of the study. Staff from City departments participating in the discussions included Waste Management, Road Operations, Infrastructure Planning, and Corporate Asset Management (IPCAM), Parks Infrastructure Planning and Engineering, Emergency Services, Development Engineering, Infrastructure Delivery, the Project Management Office (PMO), and Bylaw and Compliance, Licensing and Permit Services.

Staff will work with internal City departments, including but not limited to Development Engineering to monitor the development activity in the neighbourhood.

Staff will work with IPCAM, Parks Infrastructure Planning and Engineering and PMO to plan and program the treatments identified in the medium-term and long term. Design and construction will be completed by the Infrastructure Delivery department.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

Partnership with external stakeholders is a key to the success of the implementation.

Implementing the recommendations outlined in this study will require ongoing collaboration between the York Region District School Board, the York Region Catholic District School Board, Student Transportation Services of York Region, and York Region.

To alleviate traffic congestion during arrival and dismissal periods, City staff have requested that the two School Boards and Student Transportation Services of York Region explore the possibility of adjusting bell times at the three schools, as these time periods coincide. The school board and transportation services have raised concerns about the feasibility of adjusting bell times due to tight schedules, the need for additional buses, and before/after school childcare. With the opening of the new Kleinburg Nashville Elementary School in 2024, the enrollment at Johnny Lombardi Public School is expected to substantially decrease. The school board anticipates this will reduce vehicle volumes in the area and staff will monitor these impacts in the Fall of 2024. The school board has indicated that they are open to conducting an assessment changing of bell times including for the schools in this area.

The successful implementation of the dedicated path from the park and the two schools will require collaboration and partnership with the school administration and the two school boards.

Continued communication with partners and the community to raise awareness of the importance of safeguarding vulnerable road users is critical. Expanding public education regarding the importance of adhering to the rules of the road and to encourage behavioural changes to achieve safety for the community are important elements. Road safety is a shared responsibility requiring all parties to come together to make our roads and communities safer.

City staff have requested that York Region should continue to monitor traffic conditions at the four Regional intersections that border the neighbourhood to ensure that traffic is flowing efficiently into and out of the neighbourhood. The four intersections are noted below:

- Major Mackenzie Drive and Poetry Drive
- Major Mackenzie Drive and Lawford Road
- Weston Road and Chatfield Drive
- Weston Road and Stanton Avenue

Conclusion

These recommendations have been developed with the aim of promoting sustainable and active travel, such as walking, cycling, and public transportation, while also enhancing road safety for all residents and visitors of the neighborhood. Additionally, the recommendations seek to improve connectivity and accessibility, and support mobility for all age groups and road users. The goal is to create a welcoming and inclusive neighbourhood that is safe and accessible for everyone.

For more information, please contact Peter Pilateris, Director of Transportation and Fleet Management Services, ext. 6141.

Attachments

1. Lawford Road Area Study Map
2. Lawford Road Area Traffic Study Executive Summary
3. Detailed cost breakdown of the proposed improvements

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