

PRESENTATION TO GUELPH CITY COUNCIL JANUARY 24 2022
ENSURING CITY OF GUELPH TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT POLICIES ALIGN WITH
THE CANADIAN GUIDE TO TRAFFIC CALMING RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- (1) Direct staff to include a statement in both the Transportation Master Plan and the Official Plan that:**

The primary function of local and collector roads in residential areas is to provide access to adjacent properties and to collect and distribute local traffic moving into and out of an area or neighbourhood. Local and collector roads are not intended for use as through routes or as corridors to move traffic within the overall road network.

Canadian Guide to Traffic Calming page 5

- (2) Revise the definition of Collector roads in the Transportation Master Plan and in the Official Plan to correspond to the functions assigned to Collector Roads in the Canadian Guide to Traffic Calming.**

For example:

Suggested Definitions for Classification of Streets

Arterial Road A road primarily for movement of through traffic; access to property of lesser importance and controlled.

Collector Road A road for movement of local traffic and for access to property; movement of local traffic and access to property have equal importance; through traffic discouraged.

Expressway A divided arterial roadway for through traffic with full or partial control of access and with some interchanges.

Freeway A road limited to through traffic with access only through interchanges.

Local Road A road providing access to property for local traffic; through traffic discouraged.

(3) Restore the regulation of volume of cut-through traffic on local and collector roads as being of equal importance to regulation of speed in the Traffic Calming Policy – Policy 016.

Justification for these recommendations

There is currently no established policy in the City of Guelph as to what role is assigned to Collector Roads in residential areas. Uncertainty about the function of Collector Roads leads to possible damage to neighbourhoods and inefficient allocation of resources in roadway construction and operation.

There are two different functions assigned to the traffic functions assigned to roadways. One function is to provide vehicle access to individual properties. The other function is to convey traffic from one part of the municipality to another part.

It is well established in past Transportation Master Plans and in Official Plans that the primary function of streets classified as local roads is to provide access to property for locally-generated traffic. Through traffic on local roads is actively discouraged as such cut-through traffic damages the neighbourhood.

It is equally well established that the primary function of arterial roads is to convey through traffic safely and efficiently. Providing access to individual properties on arterial roads is actively controlled to minimize disruption to movement of through traffic.

In the post-world-war-two period of automobile-based urban expansion traffic management emphasized minimizing delays in traffic movement. In keeping with this emphasis on giving priority to movement of through traffic the 1965 Transportation Master Plan and the City of Guelph Official Plan grouped Collector Roads with Arterial Roads and assigned to this group a primary function of moving through traffic.

The definition of the function of Collector Roads in Guelph's Official Plan has remained unchanged from the 1960's and assigns a through-traffic function to Collector Roads. ***“Collector roads are intended to move low to moderate volumes of traffic within specified areas of the city”.***

Beginning in the 1950's a growing body of studies by urban sociologists showed that excessive volumes of cut-through traffic using residential streets caused damage to the pattern of community living. Policies to discourage cut-through traffic were developed as part of Traffic Calming.

In 1973, in the secondary plan for the Kortright Hills neighbourhood, the City of Guelph established a new policy for Collector Roads within this subdivision. This new policy grouped Collector Roads with Local Roads, not with Arterial Roads. Under the new policy the function of Collector Roads was to convey local traffic to and from Arterial Roads and to prevent, by road design and enforcement, the use of Collector Roads by cut-through traffic.

By 1998 the Canadian Guide to Neighbourhood Traffic Calming had been developed by the Transportation Association of Canada. The CGNTC grouped Collector Roads with Local Roads and assigned to the group the role of providing access to property with through traffic use discouraged.

The City of Guelph, with the confirmation by the TAC that Collector Roads should be grouped with Local Roads and assigned a local-traffic-only function, broadened the application of the 1973 policy developed for Kortright Hills to apply to the whole city.

The Neighbourhood Traffic Management Policy adopted by City Council in 1998 and revised in 2006 had as its purpose the implementation of Traffic Calming measures prescribed by the Canadian Guide to Neighbourhood Traffic Calming. Guelph's NTMP carefully followed the CGNTC in defining two problem areas to be dealt with. One area was speeding and other unsafe driving behaviour. The second problem was excessive volume of cut through traffic on Local and Collector streets.

For the second problem area – volume of cut-through traffic - the NTMP set out criteria to define what constituted an excessive volume of cut-through traffic and assigned to staff the setting of an acceptably low volume for cut-through traffic dependent on the specific site conditions for a problem roadway and the task of finding control methods effective in reducing cut-through traffic volumes to the assigned upper limit.

The policy on cut-through traffic volumes set out in the 2006 revision of the NTMP remained in place until a further revised Traffic Calming Policy was adopted by City Council in July 2020. In the fourteen years the revised NTMP was in place I have found no evidence that the criteria in the NTMP for determining whether there was excessive cut-through traffic volume was ever applied to a problem roadway.

In the specific case of Niska Road there was a determination by the City that the criteria for excessive cut-through traffic was exceeded by a large amount. However, City staff applied the 1960's grouping of Collector Roads with Arterial Roads to Niska in place of the NTMP grouping with Local Roads and the result was a decision to increase the amount of cut-through traffic on Niska instead of applying the NTMP and controlling cut-through traffic volumes.

The Traffic Calming Policy adopted in 2020 rejects the recommendation of the Canadian Guide to Traffic Calming (revised in 2018) to give equal weight to speeding and cut-through traffic volumes. The TCP deals exclusively with speed and never mentions cut-through traffic as a hazard much less setting criteria for determining when cut-through traffic is a problem as was done very effectively in the 2006 revision of the NTMP.

There remains wide-spread agreement in Canada and internationally that cut-through traffic on residential streets is harmful to the healthy functioning of neighbourhoods and should be controlled. I strongly believe that Guelph should resume its leadership role in Traffic Calming and institute effective measures to curtail cut-through traffic on Local and Collector streets as is called for in the Canadian Guide to Traffic Calming.

Presentation to City Council
on
361 Whitelaw Road Development Proposal

By
Hugh Whiteley
February 10 2020

LOCATION



FUTURE TRAFFIC ON WHITELAW AN UNRESOLVED ISSUE

- City Policy is to direct traffic from high density residential development to arterial roads.
- Paisley and Elmira are the arterial roads adjacent to the development.
- All existing high density residential properties along Paisley are accessed from this arterial.

CLASSIFICATION OF WHITELOW ROAD IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT POLICY

- The NTMP applies to *“local and two-lane collector roadways only within in neighbourhoods of primarily residential land use.”*
- **Whitelaw Road** is listed as one of the two-lane collectors covered by the policies of the NTMP.
- A purposes of the NTMP is to select traffic calming measures, when needed, to reduce the volume of through traffic using a roadway.

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT POLICY FOLLOWS NATIONAL GUIDELINES

- The NTMP is guided by the Canadian Guide to Traffic Calming.
- The CGTC defines the function of collector roads as providing:
“access to adjacent properties...balanced by a need to distribute traffic travelling into or out of an area or neighbourhood . As with local streets, collector streets are generally not intended to be through routes or to move significant amounts of traffic from one part of the road network to another.”
- Section 5.6.5 of the OP requires new roads to follow the NTMP.

CURRENT TRAFFIC PATTERNS ON WHITELAW

- A high volume of through traffic is using Whitelaw to access the Paisley/Imperial Commercial Node.
- Responding to concerns of local residents about through traffic on Whitelaw the City initiated a traffic review under the NTMP.
- The City has confirmed that the criterion set out in the NTMP for consideration of traffic volume controls on Whitelaw has been met (>30% through traffic with total traffic > 2000 vehicles/day).
- Only speed-control traffic calming measures have been considered in the study so far; no volume-control measures have been presented.

RESOLVING TRAFFIC PROBLEMS ON WHITELAW

- Whitelaw Road will be closed at Shoemaker Crescent to allow complete reconstruction of the roadway.
- To ensure that no construction traffic uses Whitelaw Road during the construction phase for 361 Whitelaw the closure of Whitelaw at Shoemaker Crescent should be maintained until construction of 361 Whitelaw is completed.
- During the multi year period of no through traffic on Whitelaw the reduction in traffic volume and speed should be monitored and the community canvassed toward the end of the period to determine whether there is support for continued control over through traffic on Whitelaw either by permanently closure or designating the connection as one –way.

Recommended Actions by City Council

- Direct staff to consider an extended closure of Whitelaw at Shoemaker for the duration of the construction of 361 Whitelaw.
- Direct staff to consider the permanent closing of Whitelaw Road at the south end of the development as an option for traffic control.
- Direct staff to include consideration of a southerly extension of Elmira Road to connect with Whitelaw Road in Wellington County as part of the updating of the City of Guelph Transportation Master Plan.

POST SCRIPT – ELMIRA ROAD PLANS

- An extension of Elmira Road to connect with Whitelaw Road at Fife was first proposed in the 1965 Transportation Master Plan.
- The current (2005) Transportation Master Plan retains a proposed extension of Elmira Road.
- No development has occurred along a possible road alignment that could connect Elmira Road with Fife Road south of the rail line to Cambridge
- It would be prudent to protect this alignment from development until a decision is made on an Elmira Road extension.

Proposed Connection of Elmira Road with Whitelaw Road from 1965 City of Guelph Transportation Plan



CURRENT CONDITIONS

