

July 17, 2020

Mayor Guthrie and City Councilors
City of Guelph
1 Carden Street
Guelph, Ontario N1H 3A1
clerks @guelph.ca
Delivered via email

Community Engagement Essential before Changing Traffic Calming Policy

Dear Mayor Guthrie and Councilors

From my advocacy for traffic calming in the Kortright Hills neighbourhood, I can assure you that shortcutting traffic was, and remains, an issue of high concern for neighbourhood residents. Attached is a letter I wrote to the City which confirms the importance of this issue to local residents...

In 1998, the City of Guelph responded to neighbourhood traffic concerns by adopting the Neighbourhood Traffic Management Policy. The NTMP, revised in 2006, deals with two urgent traffic issues. One is speeding; the other urgent issue is the high volumes of shortcutting traffic.

Most recently, the City confirmed the importance of the Neighbourhood Traffic Management Policy by requiring adherence to the NTMP in the Official Plan. There should be no dispute about the NTMP being one of the core policy documents of the City of Guelph.

I was astonished, and very greatly concerned when I learned from reading Guelph Today, that a new Traffic Calming Policy was being brought to City Council for adoption, without prior notice, that this new policy was being prepared and there was no public engagement planned at all...

My concern deepened when I learned that the new policy removed any mention of shortcutting traffic and removed the City's commitment to restrict shortcutting traffic – essential features of the existing NTMP's purpose, objectives and criteria.

It is unconscionable that a City Council, committed to work within a Community Engagement Framework that emphasizes early involvement and access to decision making, will consider and approve a major reversal of policy with no explanation and no public consultation.

I urge Council to defer decision on the new Traffic Calming Policy until a full public engagement process has been completed.

Yours truly



Vince Hanson

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March 18, 2019

Ms. Kealy Dedman
City Engineer and General Manager of Engineering and Transportation Services
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Delivered via email

Requirement for Volume-Controlling Traffic Calming on Niska Road

Dear Ms. Dedman.

In 2006, the City of Guelph adopted a Neighbourhood Traffic Management Policy (NTMP). The NTMP applies to all roads classified as local in the Official Plan and all roads classified as two-lane collectors in primarily residential neighbourhoods in the Official Plan.

The Goals of the NTMP are:

- To improve public safety and the livability of neighbourhoods by limiting the use of roadways within the neighbourhoods to the functions intended in the Official Plan.
- An Objective of the NTMP to achieve its Goals is discouraging short-cutting traffic.

In Appendix B of the NTMP, Niska Road is listed as a two-lane collector to which the NTMP applies.

The need for future volume-controlling traffic-calming measures on Niska was recognized by the City in 2009 (p 7 Report 09-42).

High volumes on Niska Road justifying a review were confirmed by traffic-count measurements in 2011, and by higher volumes measured in 2013 (both City of Guelph sponsored traffic reviews).

In a letter dated November 24, 2011 to Mr. Bhaju Tamot, a resident of the Kortright Hills neighbourhood, the City of Guelph confirmed that the traffic-volume criteria of the Neighbourhood Traffic Management Policy (NTMP) were exceeded on Niska Road. The NTMP states that **“a traffic review will continue if one of the following criteria (speed or infiltrating traffic exceeds 30% and >2,000 vehicles per day volume) is met”**.

The purpose for traffic reviews triggered by the volume criteria of the NTMP is to establish an acceptable limit for ‘through traffic’ on the roadway under review. Limitation of ‘through traffic’ is needed for roadways governed by the NTMP because **“high volumes associated with traffic short-cutting through residential neighbourhoods”** creates **“traffic safety concerns”** and reduces **“livability of the neighbourhood”**.

Once an acceptable limit for volume of through traffic has been established in a traffic review, the next and final step of the traffic review is to select suitable volume-controlling traffic calming measure that will result in the reduction of 'through-traffic' volumes to at or below the acceptable limits.

These volume-controlling traffic-calming measures are then installed **“to restore the roadway to its intended function.”** The intended function for roadways covered by the NTMP is to convey locally-generated traffic to and from the neighbourhood in which they are situated to and from the City's through traffic network and not to provide for the transit through the neighbourhood of externally-generated traffic.

The City has been in breach of its obligations to identify and install volume-controlling traffic calming measures to restrict through traffic on Niska Road since November 24, 2011. In the City's letter to Mr. Tamot on that date, the City refused to continue the required traffic review citing lack of funds.

This contravenes the NTMP provision that **“a traffic review will continue...”**. There are no qualifications on this provision.

Since 2011, the City has undertaken at least eight traffic reviews. Two of the eight reviews are for two lane collector roads. During this eight year interval the City did not inform Mr. Tamot that funds had been found to conduct traffic reviews and that a traffic review of Niska Road would be continued.

During the preparation of the Niska Road Improvement Class Environmental Assessment Study between April 2013 and February 2016, I was a member of the Community Working Group (CWG) and can personally attest that on several occasions in both public meetings and meetings of the CWG, the issue of high volumes of non-local traffic on Niska Road was raised as a priority concern.

Example 1: In the Summary of Area Residents Concerns for the June 27, 2013 Community Workshop, the two concerns that head the list:

1. Non-local traffic on Niska Road
2. Truck traffic.

An extensive random, door-to-door survey conducted by local residents in November and December of 2015 asking a number of questions, one of which asked about level of concern over 'cut-through traffic on Niska'.

- Over 88% of residents stated that they were concerned or very concerned about 'cut-through traffic' on Niska Road*.

* **Note:** The term '*cut-through traffic*' was well known in the City of Guelph, yet never mentioned at all during any of the CWG meetings by the City staff or members of the engineering firm facilitating the meetings...)

Despite the efforts of local residents to have reduction of 'through traffic' on Niska Road listed as an issue to be addressed in the Niska Road Improvement EA, the problem statement for the EA (written by the City staff or engineering firm facilitators), did not mention 'through traffic' on Niska Road as a problem.

At no time during the EA was the public informed that the volume of total traffic and through traffic on Niska Road had exceeded the volume criteria of the NTMP in 2011, and that a traffic review was required for Niska Road, and that the review and traffic-calming had been done because of a lack of funds.

At no time during the EA was the need for volume-control for 'through traffic' on Niska Road considered, no acceptable level for 'through traffic' on Niska Road was set and no volume-controlling traffic calming measures for Niska Road have been made public in any way.

The lack of control over volume of 'through traffic' on Niska Road remains a major concern of local residents.

Example 2: A door-to-door survey conducted in November 2018 asking only one question:
Are traffic-volume controls needed on Ptarmigan Road and Niska Road?

- Again, overwhelmingly residents said Yes, traffic-volume controls were needed (80 to 1).
- Several residents commented they were very concerned about the high volume of 'cut-through' traffic as well as the lack of 'traffic-calming' on Niska promised since 2011.

Next Steps

Currently, with the new bridge construction advancing to completion, a large majority of the Kortright Hills residents are very concerned that Niska Road remain a neighbourhood collector with very restricted 'through traffic' and not become what many residents and neighbours to the North and East are referring to "the Costco Highway."

It is the view of many residents in Kortright Hills that the new bridge should not be put into service until effective volume controlling traffic calming measure are in place to ensure that 'through traffic' on Niska Road meets the requirements of the NTMP.

I am writing to ask you to agree to the condition that the new Niska Road bridge not be opened for traffic until the Traffic Review warranted since 2011 has been completed, a limiting number for 'through traffic' on Niska Road be established in accordance with the NTMP, and effective volume-controlling traffic calming measures on Niska Road established to meet the restrictive 'through traffic' requirement.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

Because of the urgency of this matter, I look forward to your timely response. Thank you.



Vince Hanson

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