

STAFF REPORT: ENGINEERING AND PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT



REPORT TO: Infrastructure & Recreation Committee
MEETING DATE: August 11, 2009
REPORT NO.: EPW.09.067
SUBJECT: MTO Response re Speed Reduction on
 Highway 26 at Georgian Trail
PREPARED BY: Reg Russwurm – Director of Engineering
 and Public Works

A. Recommendation

THAT Council receive Report EPW.09.067 “MTO Response re Speed Reduction on Highway 26 at Georgian Trail” for their information.

B. Background

The Town and the community at large for a number of years has been interested in reducing the speed east out of Thornbury past the Georgian Trail. The Town has made verbal and written inquires to the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) over several years but has not received a formal response to date.

Attached is correspondence circulated to the Town in response to a speed reduction request made by the Community Policing Committee for The Blue Mountains made June 30, 2009.

Given this response and pervious verbal communications, it appears unlikely that a favourable response will be made at the MTO Staff level. Town Staff are preparing plans to divert the Georgian Trail parallel to the southern edge of Highway 26 to cross at County Road 2. The Town’s Comprehensive Transportation Strategic Plan being undertaken in partnership with the County of Grey and the MTO recognises that the current Trail crossing is not ideal and the preferred solution would be to cross the highway at an intersection which will have traffic lights in the future.

C. The Blue Mountains’ Strategic Plan

This report furthers the Town’s Strategic Goal #2, “Addressing the Town’s municipal infrastructure needs”.

D. Budget Impact

none

E. Attached

1. Attachment 1 – Letter from Kevin Bentley, MTO dated July 23, 2009
2. Attachment 2 – Letter from Larry Hall, Chair Community Policing Committee dated June 30, 2009

Respectfully submitted,

Reg Russwurm
Director, Engineering and Public Works

For more information, please contact:

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July 23, 2009

Mr. Larry M. Hall, Chair
 Community Policing Committee
 Town of the Blue Mountains
 RR 2
 Clarksburg, Ontario
 N0H 1J0

RECEIVED

JUL 31 2009

ENGINEERING & PUBLIC WORKS
 TOWN OF THE BLUE MOUNTAINS

Dear Mr. Hall:

Thank you for the letter requesting a reduced speed limit on Highway 26 at the east limits of Thornbury easterly to the Georgian Trail crossing.

When considering changes to speed limits, the ministry reviews the design features of the highway, the extent and type of development adjacent to the highway, the number of intersections and driveways, the collision history, and the results of a speed study.

In August 2008, ministry staff completed a speed study in the vicinity of the Georgian Trail Crossing. The results of the study indicate that 85% of the motorists were travelling slightly above the posted speed limit of 80 km/h. It was also found that a high percentage of the vehicles were travelling at relatively the same speed which is safer than having a wide range of speeds on a highway.

Research has shown that a lowered speed limit is not likely to reduce vehicle speeds. Drivers expect a lower speed limit to be associated with built-up areas that have numerous entrances onto the highway. Based on these principles, and the results of our review including the speed study, the existing speed limit of 80 km/h for this section of Highway 26 is appropriate.

I am forwarding a copy of your letter and my response to the Ontario Provincial Police for their information and their consideration when planning enforcement activities.

Sincerely,

Kevin Bentley, P. Eng.
 Manager of Engineering

Enclosure

c: Staff Sergeant Perry Dewbury (A), Ontario Provincial Police
 Inspector Mark Wright, Ontario Provincial Police
 Inspector Mark Vanlanduyt, Grey County Ontario Provincial Police
 Reg Russwurm, Town of the Blue Mountains

FOOTHILLS MANAGEMENT CONSULTING

LARRY M. HALL

June 30, 2009

RR #2
Clarksburg, Ontario
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Fax (519) 599-6694
lhall@georgian.netKevin Bentley
Manager of Engineering, West Region
Ministry of Transport
659 Exeter Road
London, ON
N6E 1L3

Dear Mr. Bentley

I am writing to you as the Chair of the Community Policing Committee for the Town of the Blue Mountains, to request that the MTO adjust the speed limits on Highway 26, East of Thornbury.

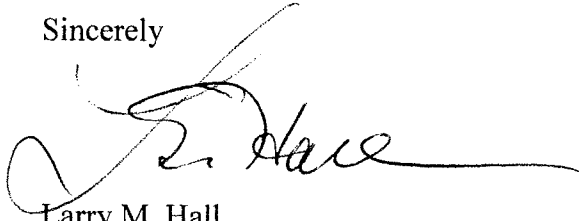
Highway 26, beginning with the intersection of the highway and the Georgian Trail, and ending beyond the Home Hardware, has a current speed limit of 80 KM per hour. Over the last several years, this stretch of highway has had a dramatic change in usage. Three points of entry, Lakeshore Drive, the Georgian Trail and Grey Road 2, intersect the highway. Although these points of entry are not new, the substantial increase in usage is new. The rapid expansion of the communities in the Town of the Blue Mountains has caused a significant increase in the use of these intersections and Highway 26 has continued to become a heavily used thoroughfare. In addition, new busy commercial establishments dot the initial entryway to Thornbury, including a new OK Tire and Auto Service, Zwart's Topsoil & Landscape Supplies Limited and The Landmark Group, the new Fire Hall and OPP detachment and the heavily patronized businesses of the Orchid Restaurant, the Home Hardware and Building Centre and the Foodland grocery store. Although there have been few accidents in this stretch, the number of near-accidents continues to grow. It is just a matter of time before a serious accident occurs on this stretch of highway.

After lengthy discussion of this matter, the Committee, supported by the local OPP detachment proposes that the speed limit be decreased to 70 KM per hour west of Lakeshore Drive with a sign announcing the new speed limit further east. The posting of "70 KM Ahead" and "70 KM Speed Limit" signs will help make the entry into Thornbury, safer and provide our colleagues at the OPP opportunities to enforce a more reasonable entry speed into the Town.

We have had discussions with the appropriate Engineering and Public Works personnel within the Town and have gathered their support for this Committee recommendation. We have sent a copy of this letter to these officials for their review. Please do not hesitate to contact them to solicit their views.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions for the Committee.

Sincerely



Larry M. Hall
Chair, Community Policing Committee
Town of the Blue Mountains

Cc: Glen Hill
Jim McConnell
Reg Russwurm

