WELCOME

Ferguson Avenue Class Environmental Assessment

Public Information Centre #1
September 23, 2015

Brooklin Community Centre & Library – Boardroom
Project Background

2014
Consultants for the Town completed the ‘Downtown Brooklin Transportation Study’ (begun in 2011). The purpose of the study was to identify existing and near-term transportation issues and recommended solutions.

The study concludes that there are significant traffic delays to southbound motorists on Ferguson Avenue during peak commuting hours.

Council directs staff to examine options for design improvements to Ferguson Avenue, including a possible closure, following the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment process.

2013 - on-going
Council authorizes the undertaking of a combined Transportation Master Plan and Secondary Plan for the Brooklin area, collectively referred to as the ‘Brooklin Study’.

It is expected that the population in Brooklin will increase significantly, and the Transportation Master Plan is to identify, at a strategic level, the infrastructure requirements and future transportation needs for the Brooklin area.

Details of the Brooklin Study are available on the Town’s website at:

2013 - 2014
Highway 7 is under construction during the 2013-2014 period, and the improvements to the highway are under the control of the Province of Ontario. The Town’s progress on moving forward with investigating options for Ferguson Avenue is delayed until the Highway 7 work is complete.

2008
Town staff bring a report forward to Council documenting residents’ concerns about the use of Ferguson Avenue as a short-cut to reach Highway 7.

Town staff conduct a traffic review and Ferguson Avenue is not extended north of Vipond Road.

Closure of Ferguson Avenue at Highway 7 is not considered at the time due to anticipated impacts on adjacent roads and intersections.

Town staff recommend the installation of a sidewalk on at least one side of Ferguson Avenue.

Ferguson Avenue residents were surveyed and a sidewalk was not supported by the residents.

2009
Town staff retain a consultant to conduct the ‘Brooklin Transportation Review’, to assess local traffic issues and concerns in the developed area northwest of Baldwin Street and Highway 7. At the time of the study, Highway 7 was a 2-lane road.

The study finds that motorists making right and left turns from Ferguson Avenue onto Highway 7 experience significant delays during the A.M. and P.M. peak traffic hours.

2010
The Town of Whitby Transportation Master Plan is complete, which provides the strategic framework for managing transportation needs for the Town for the 2011 - 2031 time frame.

Area-specific studies are conducted for the Brooklin community.

2015
Town staff are directed to finalize the recommended plan from the Downtown Brooklin Transportation Study, which included conducting a Municipal Class Environmental Assessment to examine operational and safety concerns on Ferguson Avenue at Highway 7.

To initiate the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment, Town staff issue a Request for Proposals to hire a consultant to conduct the recommended study.

Consultants are retained, and the study commences in September, 2015.
Ferguson Avenue

- Ferguson Avenue is designated as a collector road, with a statutory speed limit of 50 km/hr
- Collector roads are intended to be a link between local roads and arterial roads, and have higher traffic volumes / speed limits than local roads
- Ferguson Avenue has a rural cross-section (roadside ditches; no curb / gutter / sidewalk) within a 20 m right-of-way
- The current pavement width is 6.5 m, and there are no sidewalks on either side of the road
- There are no transit or on-road dedicated cycling facilities currently planned for Ferguson Avenue

Highway 7

- Highway 7 is a provincial road under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Transportation (MTO)
- MTO is the approval agency for any proposed changes to the functional intersection with Ferguson Avenue

Highway 407 East Extension

- The extension of Highway 407 to Harmony Road in Oshawa is to be completed by early 2016
- There is a proposed interchange at Baldwin Street south of Highway 7

Heber Down Crescent Development

- This future commercial development site has a small frontage on Highway 7, which will likely limit the possibility of it having an access to/from Highway 7
- Without access to/from Highway 7, access would be required from Ferguson Avenue and/or Heber Down Crescent

Downtown Brooklin Transportation Study

- Recommended intersection improvements at Ferguson Avenue and Highway 7 be considered to alleviate congestion and operational deficiencies
- Suggested various options, including full signalization of the intersection, limiting access to right-in / right-out, or closing the intersection

Brooklin Study Secondary Plan and Transportation Master Plan

- Residents have reported concerns regarding vehicle speed and motorists using roads in the general vicinity to avoid congestion on surrounding roadways
- Intersection improvements are necessary to address local operating deficiencies
- Traffic infiltration / diversion into local neighbourhoods is expected to persist as people try to avoid congestion on Highway 7

Brooklin Business District Main Central Area Expansion

- This future development area could potentially include approximately 500 residential units, and 1,000,000 sq. ft. of commercial development space
- The future road system within this development area will be designed to promote connectivity with adjacent areas and a pedestrian friendly environment; this could include a new road opposite to or offset from Ferguson Avenue to serve the development site south of Highway 7
What we studied...

- Current traffic capacity at key intersections (this is called ‘Level of Service’ or LOS for short - it is the delay time experienced before traffic can proceed)
- Traffic queue length at key intersections
- Whether or not there is warrant for a signal at the Ferguson Avenue / Highway 7 intersection
- History of collisions on Ferguson Avenue and at the intersections with Vipond Road, Heber Down Crescent, and Highway 7
- Vehicle speed on Ferguson Avenue
- The origin and destination of vehicles using Ferguson Avenue (to determine how many vehicles traveling on Ferguson Avenue use it as a means to get somewhere else)

What we found...

- Traffic Level of Service (LOS) is poor at the intersections of Highway 7 with Ashburn Road, Ferguson Avenue, and Baldwin Street (see map to the right)
- Some of the traffic queues along Highway 7 at the intersections with Ashburn Road and Baldwin Street exceed available storage length - these occasionally extend through the intersection with Ferguson Avenue, which affects function of that intersection
- Based on an analysis of existing traffic volumes, and the existing intersection configuration, there is no warrant for a traffic signal at the intersection of Ferguson Avenue with Highway 7. The long delay times for turning movements at this intersection result in poor LOS scores, but the volume of Ferguson Avenue traffic does not meet the minimum threshold required by current standards to warrant a signal
- Over a 10-year period from 2004 to 2014, there have only been 6 reported collisions on Ferguson Avenue; 3 of these were at the intersection with Vipond Road, and 3 were along Ferguson Avenue between intersections
- According to available data from the Ministry of Transportation for the last 3 years, there have been no reported collisions at Highway 7
- 5 of the 6 collisions involved property damage only; the other collision involved a non-fatal injury to a pedestrian
- Vehicle speeds have increased along Ferguson Avenue from 2008 to 2014; most recent data shows that 50% of vehicles travel within 2 km/h of the posted speed limit (50 km/hr), and 85% of vehicles travel at 61 km/h or less
- Depending on the time of day, between 43% and 72% of vehicles using Ferguson Avenue are originating from or destined to a location other than Ferguson Avenue itself
- One-third to one-half of vehicles using the Ferguson Avenue / Highway 7 intersection are going to or coming from Heber Down Crescent; this needs to be considered in any future decisions on intersection closures
Problems

Ferguson Avenue is a two-lane rural collector road with a right-of-way consisting of two paved lanes, narrow gravel shoulders, ditches to accommodate drainage and no sidewalks. In recent years, Ferguson Avenue residents have raised concerns regarding vehicle speeds, pedestrian safety, and through traffic to/from Highway 7.

Available data shows that vehicle speed along Ferguson Avenue has increased in recent years, with 85th percentile speeds at 10 km/hr above the statutory limit.

High volumes of east and westbound traffic along Highway 7 create peak hour capacity deficiencies and queuing delays on and at Ferguson Avenue that contribute to operational and safety concerns at the intersection of these roads.

It is anticipated that the opening of the Highway 407 East Extension will offer some relief to the traffic volumes traveling along Highway 7, and other east-west roadways. These effects will be examined in the next phase of the study.

Opportunities

There are options for mitigating the identified issues. This could include:

— Urbanizing the roadway (new travel lanes consistent with Town standards, removal of ditches and installation of curb/gutter, and sidewalks on both sides of the road)

— Traffic calming measures (e.g. narrower travel lanes, curb extensions, chicanes, median treatments, textured surfaces, etc.)

— Partial intersection closure (limit the turning movements at the Ferguson Avenue / Highway 7 intersection to one of two options):
  a. Eastbound left turn and westbound right turns only (no southbound left)
  b. Right turns only (all left turns physically prohibited)

— Full closure of Ferguson Avenue at Highway 7 (cul-de-sac immediately south of Heber Down Crescent; access would still be open to cyclists and pedestrians)

— Full closure of Ferguson Avenue at Heber Down Crescent (cul-de-sac immediately north of Heber Down Crescent; access to all roads would still be open to cyclists and pedestrians)

— Full closure of Ferguson Avenue at Vipond Road (cul-de-sac immediately south of Vipond Road; access to all roads would still be open to cyclists and pedestrians)
Class EA Process / Project Timeline

1. Problem or Opportunity
   - Review available existing information to identify the problem/opportunity of interest for the project
   - Issue a Notice of Study Commencement to the public and stakeholders identified for the project
   - Can include discretionary public consultation to review the Problem and/or Opportunity

2. Alternative Solutions to the Problem or Opportunity
   - Develop a range of reasonable solutions (the ‘alternatives’) to address the problem/opportunity (including the option of ‘do nothing’)
   - Conduct site-specific studies to document the existing environmental conditions in the study area (natural, social, cultural, and economic factors)
   - Compare the effectiveness of each alternative at addressing the problem/opportunity, and evaluate the potential environmental impact of each alternative
   - Consult with the public and stakeholders on the results of Phases 1 and 2 of the process, and present a preliminary recommendation for a ‘preferred solution’
   - Confirm the preferred solution after reviewing public and stakeholder comments

3. Alternative Designs for the Preferred Solution
   - Develop a range of reasonable designs for the preferred solution, based on applicable design standards and local site constraints
   - Conduct additional site-specific investigations (if required) to document existing environmental conditions in the study area not previously identified (natural, social, cultural, and economic factors)
   - Compare the effectiveness of each design at addressing the problem/opportunity at a detailed site level, and evaluate the potential environmental impact of each design
   - Consult with the public and stakeholders on the results of Phase 3 of the process, and present a preliminary recommendation for a ‘preferred design’
   - Confirm the preferred design after reviewing public and stakeholder comments, and prepare preliminary design drawings

4. Project File Report
   - Document the entire study process in a ‘Project File Report’ (including all information used in the decision-making process and records of all public consultation)
   - Place the Project File Report on the public record (published on-line, available in public libraries, available at the local municipality, etc.) for a 30-day review period
   - Issue a Notice of Study Completion to the public and stakeholders indicating where the Project File Report can be accessed, and providing the details of the project appeals process

5. Project Implementation
   - The municipality proceeds with having the detailed design and contract documents prepared for the preferred design identified in the study (incorporating all commitments identified in the study)
   - The municipality proceeds to have the project constructed according to the design, and as scheduled according to their capital infrastructure improvement plans
   - The municipality monitors the project during and after construction, as per the recommendations in the study

This Phase Does Not Apply to this Project
Stakeholders and Project Contact List

The study team has assembled a list of stakeholders to be consulted throughout the project, including government agencies, municipal representatives, First Nations, local residents, and other interested parties.

If you would like to be added to this contact list, please make sure you add your name to the sign-in sheet. You can also talk to any member of the study team here tonight, or send your contact information to the Town’s Project Manager.

Study Web Page

The Town has a web page dedicated to providing updates on current projects and studies. To keep up to date on this project, visit:

http://www.whitby.ca/en/townhall/studiesandplans

Be Involved...

Stay Informed

Notices and Advertisements

Project notices will be mailed in hard copy to all stakeholders on the project contact list (including property owners within the study area), and advertisements will also be placed in local newspapers.

All public consultation events will be advertised in this manner.

Project File Report

At the conclusion of the project, a report will be compiled detailing all the steps of the study and the record of all public consultations.

The Project File Report will be made available for public review for a 30-day period, during which time you can provide any final comments on the proposed solution or the study process.

The report will include information on the appeals process that is available to the public through the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change.
We need your input!
Please provide your comments on the transportation issues you experience in the study area.

What do you think the problems are?
How do you think they can be solved?
What else needs to be considered within the study area?

What’s Next After This Public Information Centre?
— Tonight’s Public Information Centre (PIC) is the first of 3 PICs that will be held for this project
— After tonight’s PIC, the project team will review any comments received, and confirm the problem/opportunity for the project
— Alternative solutions to the problem/opportunity will be developed, and the advantages/disadvantages will be evaluated. The second PIC, planned for early 2016, will present the alternative solutions being considered
— The third PIC is planned for late spring 2016, to present the details of the preferred solution
— Notices of all PICs will be mailed to stakeholders and advertised in local newspapers