

MINUTES

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF OTTAWA-CARLETON

CHAMPLAIN ROOM

3 SEPTEMBER 1997

1:30 P.M.

PRESENT

Chair: R. Cantin

Members: D. Beamish, A. Cullen, D. Holmes, H. Kreling, J. Legendre, M. Meilleur,
V. Waddell

REGRETS L. Davis

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

That the Transportation Committee approve the Minutes of the meeting of 6 August 1997.

CARRIED

PRESENTATION

1. AUDIBLE PEDESTRIAN SIGNALS

- Co-ordinator, Transportation Committee report dated 19 Aug 97
- Councillor D. Holmes memorandum dated 26 Aug 97

Chris Stark, a resident of Orléans, related the difficulties he and other visually impaired people are faced with at intersections in his community. He explained that when he first moved to the Region, Orléans was a smaller, more comfortable community; but, over time, development occurred and with that growth came increased traffic volumes. He has concerns about the intersections of St. Joseph Boulevard and Jeanne d'Arc, and Highway 417 at Jeanne d'Arc. He has a particular concern about the intersection of Jeanne d'Arc Boulevard and Youville Drive/Grey Nun's Drive because of the new audible signals at that location.

Note: 1. Underlining indicates a new or amended recommendation approved by Committee.
2. Reports requiring Council consideration will be presented to Council on 10 and 24 September 1997 in Transportation Committee Reports 60 and 61, respectively.

The difficulties they face at this five-laned intersection include having to locate the pedestrian crossing button to activate the lights (hoping it does in fact activate because there is no way of telling), finding the corner followed by crossing the road when the audible signals is activated. To add to these difficulties, the signal emits a sound much like a bird which is difficult to hear above the traffic noise. Mr. Stark added that half-way across the road the bird-like sound stops. This leaves the pedestrian without a signal for direction while vehicles continue to pass in front of and behind them. The crossing is also not straight across, so combined with the loss of the signal half-way, the blind pedestrian is left in sheer terror wondering in which direction to continue walking. He has difficulties with the intersections mentioned because of the way they are designed i.e. advance greens, islands and right-hand turn lanes and intersections that are not squared as they are more difficult to navigate.

He explained he has raised his concerns with several levels of government, the Transportation Association of Canada (TAC) and others, but nothing has been done. Mr. Stark further explained that the national standard for audible signals is based on certain types of intersections and has nothing to do with his abilities as a blind person. The problem with the current standard is the “walk” indicator is very short compared to the “don’t walk” display. This type of signalization causes some difficulty because the visually impaired can get disoriented when the displays change. Further to this, travel for a blind person with a white cane is different from travel with a guide dog. So he would like to see guide dog users/organizations involved in this process as well because it would help to understand the difference between those methods of mobility

He made reference to the installation of audible signals in the Region, noting there were many intersections that already have them and approximately 11 intersections on a waiting list. Although only two signals are installed each year, he requested that consideration be given to installing audible signals along the length of St. Joseph Boulevard and the crossing of Highway 417 at Jeanne d’Arc.

In closing, Mr. Stark asked that the original audible signal be reinstated at Jeanne d’Arc and Grey Nuns Drive or, failing that, some upgrading of the system be carried out to ensure it assists the visually impaired more than just getting them started to cross the road.

He asked that consideration be given to having an open process where all the needs of blind people can be addressed and considered, with direct involvement from those in the community. As well that steps be taken to re-examine the existing national standard with a view to ensuring it meets the needs of the visually impaired.

Ian Martin, a resident of Orléans, echoed some of the comments raised by Chris Stark. He cited examples where the proliferation of traffic noise makes it difficult to hear the audible signal, especially when hearing is very important to a blind person’s sense of direction. The bell and buzzer audible signals were more efficient because their very distinctive sound is easily identified amongst traffic noise. They are also located on both sides of the street, providing a guidance system for the blind. He indicated he was not aware of anyone consulting the blind community when these signals were changed.

Councillor Meilleur was surprised to hear there was no committee of blind people to advise staff because she thought such direction was given in March when this issue was first raised. The Commissioner confirmed this is one of the recommendations outlined in the documentation before committee today. He agreed the committee should be comprised of those individuals best suited to make recommendations on what is appropriate, as is done with other Regional advisory committees.

Councillor Holmes proposed the following Motions:

1. The former system of audible signals be reinstalled at Jeanne d'Arc Boulevard and Grey Nuns Drive in the interim.
2. That staff advise on the installation of the 11 locations on the waiting list for audible signals.
3. That an ad hoc committee called the "Audible Pedestrian Signals Advisory Committee" be established and that the mandate and composition be as set out in the Fulton brief entitled "Audible Signals: A Way to Resolve the Issues".

Councillor Holmes agreed there was a need for input by users of audible signals. With respect to the composition of this committee, she suggested bringing together as many people with different experiences as possible who could make recommendations on the types of signals to be installed and where they should be located. She suggested the committee could report back with specific recommendations for locations and numbers per year, depending on the need, et cetera.

With respect to the councillor's Motion about reinstating the original audible signals at Jeanne d'Arc and Grey Nuns, Mr. Martin inquired whether a freeze could be put on all other installations to be changed. The Committee Chair advised he has given such direction to staff until this issue is resolved. In response to a question posed by the Committee Chair, D. Brousseau, Director of Mobility Services indicated audible signals were invented in Canada and bells and buzzers were created by Regional staff. Although the Department has lobbied the TAC for many years for the installation of these types of signals, they have chosen to do otherwise. He added that recommendations from the TAC with respect to audible signals are more of a guideline and the Region can vary somewhat.

He recognized the importance of conformity because blind people may be visiting from other communities and if others are going to the national standard, the Region should be cognisant of that. He agreed that if there is a ground-swell of opposition to the existing standard perhaps it can be re-examined. Mr. Martin suggested the guidelines should not have to be adhered to if they do not fit the needs of the community. Staff reiterated that the Department does not have the expertise to solve problems raised by the visually-impaired and have always relied on the Canadian National Institute for the Blind to provide input.

Councillor Kreling recognized there are areas where the Region needs to show leadership. He notes that as frustrating as it has been for Mr. Stark, it has been equally frustrating for this committee not to be able to rely upon a group that speaks on behalf of blind individuals and their needs. He believed the Motion will give the Region an opportunity to address this situation, recognizing that a system in Ottawa-Carleton should conform to the needs of the blind, and therefore may be different from other areas.

Councillor Beamish suggested time frames be established for this group to illustrate a sense of urgency to address the issue. Councillor Holmes agreed they should be requested to report back in one year on their progress and the Motion was amended to reflect that direction.

The Committee Chair noted the budget for improvements to St. Joseph Boulevard was slated for intersection improvements and questioned whether some of those funds could be directed to installing audible signals at most of the intersections along that roadway as requested by the delegation. As an additional comment, he related a personal concern he had about the roadworks currently underway at Jeanne d'Arc and Orléans Boulevard and the difficulties this is causing to a visually impaired neighbour. He requested feedback from staff, in consultation with Gloucester, as to the timeline for this roadwork to be completed.

Moved by D. Holmes

The former system of audible signals be reinstalled at Jeanne d'Arc Boulevard and Grey Nuns Drive in the interim.

CARRIED

Moved by D. Holmes

That staff advise on the installation of the 11 locations on the waiting list for audible signals.

CARRIED

Moved by D. Holmes

That an ad hoc committee called the "Audible Pedestrian Signals Advisory Committee" be established and that the mandate and composition be as set out in the Fulton brief entitled "Audible Signals: A Way to Resolve the Issues", with a review of the mandate in one year.

CARRIED

Councillor Kreling proposed that the Transportation Association of Canada (TAC) be advised that the RMOC requests the Association to:

- a. reconsider the audible pedestrian signal standard;
- b. establish guidelines for the use of bells and buzzers as audible signals as developed in the RMOC for the complete walk cycle.

Councillor Legendre believed this Motion prejudices the work that the proposed committee will do and preferred to wait for their recommendations since they will undoubtedly go well beyond what the Motion proposes. Councillor Kreling explained his Motion is based on comments from staff and he wanted to draw to the attention of the TAC the Region's displeasure with the national standard. To alleviate Councillor Legendre's concerns, he suggested a covering letter from the

Commissioner or the Committee Chair could be included detailing to the Association that an ad hoc committee of the Region will be examining this matter in detail; however, he strongly felt the TAC should realize that the community the Region is trying to serve, is dissatisfied with the national standard because it does not address their needs. The Committee Chair suggested adding a point to his Motion "that the TAC be asked to canvas the member municipalities for input" and Councillor Kreling agreed with this suggestion.

Moved by H. Kreling

That the Transportation Association of Canada (TAC) be advised that the RMOC requests the Association to:

- a. reconsider the audible pedestrian signal standard;**
- b. establish guidelines for the use of bells and buzzers as audible signals as developed in the RMOC for the complete walk cycle as determined by the ad hoc committee;**
- c. that TAC invite member communities to provide input.**

CARRIED

2. WEST TRANSITWAY PINECREST ROAD TO ACRES ROAD -
ACRES ROAD INTERSECTION
- Director, Engineering Division report dated 8 Aug 97

Councillor Cullen indicated the Crystal Beach/Lakeview Community Association has an interest on the Acres Road side of this matter.

That the Transportation Committee:

- 1. Approve the preliminary design for the proposed construction of the Acres Road intersection that is required to provide for the new westbound ramp connection to Highway #417, as illustrated on Drawing No. RT-2266;**
- 2. Authorize that a Public Hearing be held by the Transportation Committee as required by Sections 297 and 300 of the Ontario Municipal Act;**
- 3. Refer this report to Regional Council following the Public Hearing Process.**

CARRIED

3. MODIFICATIONS TO CARLING AVENUE BETWEEN BAYSHORE DRIVE AND BOYCE AVENUE/ROSEVIEW AVENUE TO ACCOMMODATE THE BRITANNIA THEATRE REDEVELOPMENT

- Director, Mobility Services & Corporate Fleet Services report dated 12 Aug 97
- McCarthy Tétrault, Barristers and Solicitors letter dated 21 Aug 97

Doug Brousseau, Director of Mobility Services, indicated this situation is unique in Ottawa-Carleton in that there are no other theatre complexes this large in the Region. Consequently there will be a greater volume of traffic generated and to accommodate that, staff are recommending the construction of a dedicated curb lane from Bayshore Drive to the west entrance of this site. Although the proponent is not in agreement with this recommendation, he emphasized it is for safety reasons and would eliminate unnecessary weaving of vehicles from one lane to the other in order to access the facility. Concurrent with that construction, staff are recommending a new sidewalk be constructed in order to better serve pedestrians.

Councillor Legendre questioned whether turning movements from the east exit would interfere with motorists exiting from the main entrance/egress and although staff did not anticipate a problem, agreed to examine the volumes for the councillor. Staff advised there are approximately 80 metres between the two outlets, which would allow room for a continuous flow of traffic.

Councillor Cullen questioned what the anticipated volume of traffic would be during a regular day at the theatres and was advised that during peak periods, there would be approximately 450 cars turning left into the site at Kempster Avenue, 250 right-turns into the site, 450 exiting at the right-turn only exit and 350 exiting from the primary access/egress. Staff emphasized that the volume of vehicles turning right from Bayshore Drive onto Carling Avenue and into the site is three times the required volume for that roadway.

Michael Polowin, McCarthy Tétrault, Barristers and Solicitors for Famous Players Inc., indicated there is already a severe access problem for the site because the only access is at the intersection of Carling and Wylie. Motorists entering from the west have to cross over the existing access to the drive-in (no longer in operation), sometimes stopping to let people off, and motorists entering from the east have to cross the two lanes of eastbound traffic and make a sharp left turn into the site. Coupled with the access problems, there are associated parking problems in the community north of Carling Avenue, which they believe to be caused in large part by the difficulty of accessing the site i.e. motorists become frustrated having to queue along Carling Avenue and will venture into the community for a parking space. He acknowledged that staff's proposal for a double left-turn and the two right-in accesses will address these concerns; however, they take issue with the proposal by staff for the dedicated right-turn lane from Bayshore Drive to the western access because they feel it will create rather than solve a safety problem, at great cost to Famous Players Inc. In addition and although staff are recommending no-through traffic from the site at Kempster Avenue, they urged the same be imposed at Wylie Avenue to discourage motorists cutting across and into the community

Marie Carter, Traffic Engineer, McCormick Rankin explained that vehicles travelling west would turn into the site via the right-hand/through lane at that location. She understood the reasons for the warrant for a right-turn lane considering the volume of traffic turning right; however there is only 130 metres between traffic turning right from Bayshore Drive and the westerly entrance to the theatre and generally speaking, on an arterial road where there is a large volume of vehicles turning right out of that arterial lane, there is an increased possibility of rear-end collisions. She further explained that with the staff proposal, of the projected 330 vehicles turning from Bayshore onto Carling, approximately 100 will turn right into the theatre complex; hence, 230 vehicles will have to merge out of that right-turn lane into the through lane. Further, a large number of the vehicles coming through the intersection of Bayshore and Carling will want to merge into the right-turn lane to access the theatre complex, creating a weaving situation as motorists move in and out of the lanes, posing a higher potential for accidents than motorists simply merging into the through lane.

M. Polowin reiterated that the first access is a free flow right-turn which would operate much better than the existing entrance. Further, reconfiguring the parking lot will reduce accidents simply because there will not be as much of a need for cars approaching eastbound on Carling to slow down because that congestion will not exist.

Councillor Cullen believed their proposal is exactly the same situation that is faced with the staff proposal and did not see anything to differentiate the problems they suggest with the staff solution, from what they are recommending. By way of explanation, M. Polowin stated that of the 420 vehicles approaching from west of Bayshore Drive, approximately 100 will access the theatre and the rest will proceed through; in the latter case, motorists will move to the left lane or stay in the left lane. Under the staff proposal, motorists in the far left lane would have to cross two lanes, whilst in Novatech's design, vehicles will only have to move over one lane. The councillor was not convinced of their argument and

maintained their design would create the same weaving situation, although the staff proposal offers a little more security for motorists travelling north on Bayshore Drive and turning right into the facility. M. Carter interjected that because of the relatively low volumes of traffic on this arterial road, most people will be familiar with the situation and if they are continuing eastbound on Carling Avenue will already be in that left-hand lane.

In response to questions posed by the Committee Chair, the Environment and Transportation Commissioner advised that if the roadwork is there i.e. the continuous right-hand curb lane from Bayshore Drive, there are a variety of options that can be implemented (e.g. traffic lane markings) to remedy a situation as time goes by and traffic patterns/volumes change; however, if the lane is not there, the option to make changes no longer exists.

M. Polowin suggested that another issue to be considered is the facility operates during off-peak hours e.g. typically between 8:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. with Tuesdays and Saturdays being the highest peak days. He explained that the existing roadway is capable of carrying in a single lane far more than the present traffic flow and argued that if there is no accident problem at the moment and if one develops as a result of the additional lane, why would the proponent want to incur those costs to build that lane. The Commissioner responded by stating peak hours in the suburban areas are not the same as in the downtown and that staff examine each location individually. Based on the warrants, he strongly believed this lane was required, but confirmed staff monitor traffic on an ongoing basis because if there is a need to make adjustments, it can be done.

With respect to the delegations' comments about accidents, D. Brousseau assured committee that staff are very much concerned for the potential for rear-end collisions, which he believed to be more prevalent with the proponents proposal. He acknowledged the amount of vehicles currently turning into that facility are not changing a great deal with the expansion; however, the existing condition is not acceptable to the community and staff see this is an opportunity for committee to improve that situation. With regards to the traffic flow to and from the restaurant, combined with the theatre traffic, staff advised there is some potential for queuing onto Carling Avenue and when that happens, and without a dedicated right-turn lane, that queuing will occur in one of the through lanes. With respect to the volume of cars coming from the west and wanting to access the site, the design gives motorists the option of proceeding straight through and turning in at the next entrance, hence reducing staff's concern about the extent of the weaving.

Councillor Holmes proposed that the bus bay on Carling Avenue in front of the site be removed (filled in). She felt strongly that buses often get trapped in those bays and are delayed because they are unable to merge with traffic. M. Polowin advised they had consulted with OC Transpo with respect to the proposed design and the staff had requested that the bus bay remain as is. The Committee Chair suggested OC Transpo be contacted prior to this item coming to Council to ensure they are aware of this situation.

Moved by D. Holmes

That the bus bay on Carling Avenue in front of this site be removed (filled in).

CARRIED

That the Transportation Committee recommend Council:

1. **Approve the installation of traffic control signals at Carling Avenue and Kempster Avenue and the construction of the associated roadway modifications along Carling Avenue as illustrated in Annex C, subject to the owner, Famous Players Incorporated;**
 - a. **funding the total cost of the proposed road works which would include paying the annual maintenance costs for the traffic control signals until such time as they meet the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario installation warrants and Council approve the assumption of the costs;**
 - b. **executing a legal agreement with respect to (a) above, and;**
2. **Authorize the initiation of the public hearing process as required by Sections 297 and 300 of the Ontario Municipal Act.**

CARRIED as amended

4. **MODIFICATIONS TO INNES ROAD TO ACCOMMODATE THE EXPANSION OF BUILDER'S WAREHOUSE AT 3636 INNES ROAD**
- Director, Mobility Services & Corporate Fleet Services report dated 12 Aug 97

That the Transportation Committee recommend Council:

1. **Approve the installation of traffic control signals at 3636 Innes Road and the construction of associated roadway modifications along Innes Road as illustrated in Annex B, subject to the owner, Builder's Warehouse;**
 - a. **funding the total cost of the proposed road works which would include paying the annual maintenance costs for the traffic control signals until such time as they meet the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario installation warrants and Council approve the assumption of the costs;**
 - b. **executing a legal agreement with respect to (a) above, and;**

2. Authorize the initiation of the public hearing process as required by Sections 297 and 300 of the Ontario Municipal Act.

CARRIED

5. INCREASED FINES FOR HEAVY TRUCKS USING NON-TRUCK ROUTES

- Director, Mobility Services & Corporate Fleet Services report dated 14 Aug 97

Staff informed the Committee that the trucking association had not been circulated the report in advance, although the Commissioner advised this is simply an update and did not feel consultation was necessary and is a rather modest increase to the existing fine. He urged committee not to delay because this change requires a submission to the Chief Judge for approval.

Councillor Holmes questioned whether this is the highest fine the Chief Judge will accept and was informed by staff the amount is an estimation of what they believe is reasonable and is an incremental increase. The councillor proposed the fine be increased to \$150.00.

Support was unanimous for this amendment, noting the existing fine is not enough of a deterrent to those drivers and recognizing the real problem being the lack of enforcement. The Commissioner suggested it might be best to increase the fine each year until it becomes enough of a deterrent that enforcement is not necessary.

Moved by D. Holmes

That the Transportation Committee recommend Council approve that the fine for a heavy truck illegally using a non-truck route be increased from \$80 to \$150.

CARRIED as amended

6. AMENDMENTS TO SPEED ZONING POLICY FOR RECOMMENDATION OF 90 KM/H AND 100 KM/H SPEED ZONES

- Director, Mobility Services & Corporate Fleet Services report dated 14 Aug 97

At the outset, Councillor Legendre submitted the following Motion for the committee's consideration: "That staff prepare a report on the Regional Speed Zoning Policy focusing on the criteria that are used for recommending speed limits on Regional roads".

Councillor Holmes was not prepared to approve the staff recommendation without pin-pointing which roads this is appropriate for and without prior input from local community groups. She suggested staff bring forward a more comprehensive report responding to these comments and including public consultation. The Commissioner suggested the committee consider that under the authority of the Environment and Transportation

Commissioner, the existing speed limits be retained on roads assumed from the province. Councillor Meilleur supported that suggestion and proposed the following:

Moved by M. Meilleur

That the existing posted speeds on roads assumed from the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) become the official Regional speed limits on those roads.

CARRIED

Councillor Legendre indicated his willingness to amend his Motion to include “with public consultation” as suggested by Councillor Holmes. With respect to his Motion, as amended, Councillor Legendre clarified his intent is to ensure the Region’s speed zoning guidelines are in harmony with the Transportation Master Plan (TMP). Discussion ensued about the availability of resources and funds to carry out this study, and staff suggested it might be helpful to do a presentation on what the existing policy is and the committee could give direction then as to where any modifications should be examined. In response to this but on a more global issue, the Committee Chair suggested staff give an overview of the priorities, stating this would be a helpful session for new members of the committee coming on board at the end of the year. Councillor Legendre believed that as part of that review, staff should be able to reference sections in the TMP to determine whether there are any conflicts with that policy. The Director advised this will take time, because not all staff are fully-educated with respect to what is contained in the TMP.

Councillor Meilleur agreed it was important that staff are very familiar with the TMP and how the contents of that Plan may affect projects they are working on. In the same vein, she believed the public should also be aware of what is in that document. She invited staff to speak to her constituents about transportation changes as they affect her ward.

Moved by J. Legendre

That staff prepare a report on the “Regional Speed Zoning Policy” focusing on the criteria that are used for recommending speed limits on Regional roads with public consultation.

CARRIED

That the Transportation Committee recommend Council approve an amendment to the Regional Speed Zoning Policy to allow recommended speed limits of 90 and 100 km/h.

CARRIED as amended

7. RMOC RESOLUTION RE: DEDICATING PROVINCIAL FUEL TAXES
FOR HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS
- A/Co-ordinator, Transportation Committee report dated 26 Aug 97

That the Transportation Committee receive this report for information.

RECEIVED

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

CO-ORDINATOR

CHAIR