



## **HAWKINS CRESCENT TRAFFIC STUDY UPDATE**

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**Prepared by**

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### Introduction:

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Priorities Committee on the evaluation of the actions taken to improve traffic flow and safety on Hawkins Crescent.

### Background:

This study was originally undertaken in response to the February 27, 2018 Council motion "THAT Administration prepare a report on a traffic study of Hawkins Crescent that includes options for improvement to residential traffic flow by the end of the third quarter of 2018".

In order to address this motion, a resident survey and engineering review were undertaken and the results were presented to Priorities Committee on September 18, 2018.

### Conclusions of 2018 Study:

- About 20% of residents living near the school reported major traffic concerns. The majority of these concerns related to poor road user behaviour and general traffic volumes. Residents also expressed concern with sightlines at intersections near the school and with signal timings at Broadmoor Boulevard and Strathcona Drive.
- The engineering review confirmed resident observations of poor road user behaviour.
- While there is undoubtedly congestion during peak times, the level of service at intersections near the school remain at an acceptable level for all except a few minutes twice a day on school days primarily for school user traffic. Changing traffic controls would cause greater inconvenience to residents in off peak times than is warranted by the short peak conditions.
- Traffic safety concerns include U-turns and not using a crosswalk to cross the street.
- There is no significant crash history and low speeds in the area offer protection from serious collisions for all road users.
- Resident survey results and the engineering review indicate that compliance with the current traffic management plan has the potential to manage the majority of traffic concerns in the area.

Based on review, the following actions were implemented in September 2018:

- The crosswalk on Strathcona Drive at Wilson Crescent was relocated to Hawkins Crescent.
- Parking on the north side of Strathcona Drive was eliminated at peak time times.
- Parents at both schools were encouraged to use alternative pick up locations.

- For New Horizons School (NHS), the bus zone moved to Strathcona Drive eastbound next to the school curbside, and the drop off/pick up zone was extended through the school parking lot.
- École Claudette et Denis Tardif (ÉCDT) buses now stage in Kinsmen Park parking lot until traffic from New Horizons clears.
- Traffic plan maps were updated and both schools increased education/engagement efforts with parents/staff/students to improve road user behaviour at the schools.

All residents in the study area were mailed a letter informing them of the outcomes of this study. The letter included contact information and encouraged residents to give feedback that would be considered in the evaluation of this project, planned for January 2019 (see Appendix 1).

### January 2019 Project Evaluation:

On January 16, 2019, the School Traffic Safety Partnership, including Strathcona County's Transportation Planning and Engineering, Transportation and Agriculture Services, RCMP and Enforcement Services, Elk Island Public Schools Student Transportation, New Horizon School Administration and École Claudette-et-Denis-Tardif Administration and Transportation, met to evaluate the success and impacts of the recommended actions in improving traffic flow and safety at the school site. Each partner reported on their actions and observations at the school as well as any resident and parent feedback they had received.

#### Transportation Planning and Engineering (TPE):

TPE is continuing to monitor traffic operations on the site. No residents in the school area have contacted the Transportation Integration and Safety Advisor, whose direct contact information was provided on resident letters to provide feedback.

In October, one resident voiced his concerns via Twitter about increased traffic volume on Wilson Crescent. This resident expressed concerns with the road narrowing created by parents and residents parking on both sides of Wilson Crescent, not using a crosswalk to cross the street, drivers blocking driveways and parking too close to the corners. These concerns were passed on to the RCMP and Enforcement Services.

Some concern was also voiced by parents at the school regarding the buses parking on Strathcona Drive. They were concerned that buses stopping in that location forced them to cross the yellow centre line to go around them. Some were not sure if this was legal and did not want to pass the buses, resulting in some traffic backing up through the pick-up zone.

TPE has conducted four site visits since the changes were implemented. During all four visits in the afternoon peak, similar observations were made:

- Generally, there is better compliance with the Traffic Management Plan, with only 3 parents using the west side of Hawkins Crescent to pick-up students during the peak time.
- There is an increase of parents using Wilson Crescent (as per the plan) for pick-up. While most parents park appropriately, some are parking too close to driveways and corners.
- There are approximately 10 parents who use the Westboro Park parking lot after school. Since ÉCDT buses are queuing there, it is congested.
- The line to pick up students extends down the south leg of Hawkins Crescent, but parents are in their vehicles and do not block resident access. The inside corner in front of ÉCDT is congested, but functions well when parents follow the plan. The west leg of Hawkins Crescent and the west access to Strathcona Drive remain uncongested.
- No residents were observed trying to leave/access their homes during these peak times. The majority of the traffic congestion was borne by the parents.
- Parents were double parked on Hawkins Crescent east, heading north.
- The majority of parents/students crossing Strathcona Drive were utilizing the new crosswalk. The school is using the A-frame pedestrian crossing sign to bring extra attention to the crosswalk. The high usage at this location does cause some traffic back up in both directions on Strathcona Drive for a short time to permit pedestrian crossings.
- No parents were observed to be parking or picking up students anywhere on Strathcona Drive. Some parents still utilize the old crossing point at Wilson Crescent.
- There is congestion for a 15-20 minute window, but it disperses quickly. The congestion is very effective in managing traffic speeds, which maintains safety.
- Multiple staff/volunteers at New Horizons School were out in vests directing parents in the parking lot and helping facilitate quick movement through the pick-up zone.

Strathcona Drive is scheduled for rehabilitation in the short term, likely in the next three years. TPE will continue to monitor this location in order to recommend the best course of action for any potential physical realignment, if necessary, when the road is repaved.

The yellow centre line on Strathcona Drive was evaluated by TPE's Traffic Safety Engineer; it was deemed that it is unnecessary for the line to extend as far west as it does, and it will not be repainted going forward to clarify that drivers are permitted to pass the parked buses.

#### RCMP and Enforcement Services:

Other than the concerns forwarded in October regarding parking concerns on Wilson Crescent, the RCMP and Enforcement Services have not received any school-related traffic complaints in the area. During the 2018 site review, increased enforcement was not identified as a significant part of the solution. Most congestion-related concerns are not generally enforceable issues, and compliance with the traffic management plan is expected to alleviate many of the road user behaviours of concern. The RCMP and Enforcement Services continue their regular patrols and enforcement can be requested if a location specific concern is identified.

Other than one parked vehicle that reported minor damage in a hit and run during the pm peak on Strathcona Drive west of the school, no collisions have been reported in the school area. The RCMP and Enforcement Services were able to clarify that it is not a traffic violation for drivers to cross the yellow centre line to pass the buses parked on Strathcona Drive. This information will be communicated to parents.

#### New Horizons School (NHS):

New Horizons School reports a significant improvement in traffic management since the implementation of the changes. In particular, the morning peak times are running very smoothly since the entire parking lot has been dedicated to student drop off. Parents have also been very positive about the new location of the crosswalk on Strathcona Drive.

NHS has been working hard on communication with parents and staff. NHS has a parent Traffic Safety Committee that is committed to working with parents and students to improve traffic flow and safety at the site. The committee even developed a video to help with traffic at the site. Since the beginning of the school year, NHS has received one complaint from a resident on Hawkins Crescent across from the school after a parent parked blocking their driveway.

While traffic management has improved in the afternoon peak at the site, NHS still feels there is more room for improvement with parent education. The school is planning to implement a numbering system for parents and students to use during after school pick-up. This should eliminate the double parking being experienced on Hawkins Crescent.

#### École Claudette-et-Denis-Tardif (ÉCDT):

ÉCDT is dismissed eight minutes after NHS, and they report that the bulk of NHS traffic has cleared by this time. Buses for ÉCDT are now staging off of Hawkins Crescent during the PM peak to avoid adding to congestion and inconvenience in the area. Parents are also advised not to come early if they are picking up their children, and bus usage remains very high at the school.

ÉCDT reports that one nearby resident has complained to them about traffic. The school has open communication with this resident and continues to work with parents to address the resident's specific concern and general traffic safety at the site.

#### Elk Island Public Schools Student Transportation:

Buses are now loading and unloading on Strathcona Drive. This is going well and Student Transportation has no concerns.

#### Conclusions of 2019 Evaluation:

Generally, the changes made at the school site have improved traffic flow and overall safety. Compliance with the Traffic Management Plan has improved road user behaviour and enhanced traffic safety at the site. School generated traffic is mainly impacted by the congestion on Hawkins Crescent, and there is no significant delay for traffic traveling on Strathcona Drive.

Congestion at the site disperses quickly and is effective in managing traffic speeds, which maintains safety. No significant collision history is noted. In almost all observed cases, the greatest impact of delay was borne by parents during their pickup and drop.

NHS continues to work hard to manage their traffic and will be implementing a numbering system to be used during the afternoon peak time, which should further address traffic concerns in the area.

The RCMP and Enforcement Services will continue to monitor the site as resources allow. Residents and schools are encouraged to contact them if a particular concern is noted.

No further changes are warranted at this time. Change in traffic control would cause greater inconvenience to residents in off peak times than is warranted by peak conditions. Through the School Traffic Safety Partnership, TPE will continue to monitor traffic at the site.

Strathcona Drive is scheduled for rehabilitation in the short term, likely in the next three years. TPE will recommend the best course of action for any potential physical realignment, if necessary, when the road is repaved.

## Appendix 1: Resident Letter

August 10, 2018

Dear Resident:

In the spring of 2018, Strathcona County undertook a traffic study near New Horizons School and Ecole Claudette-et-Denis-Tardif. The purpose of the project was to fully understand the traffic environment in the area, including resident concerns, in order to recommend a course of action to improve traffic on and around Hawkins Crescent.

As part of this project, 92 households on Hawkins Crescent, Wilson Crescent and Strathcona Drive in close proximity to the school were asked to participate in a survey. Strathcona County would like to thank the residents of the 35 households who took the time to give their input on this project.

A complete report outlining the input received during this consultation is available through the link: <https://www.strathcona.ca/completed-consultations/>

In addition to the resident survey, an engineering review of the area was conducted. Using resident feedback as a starting point, the School Traffic Safety Partnership developed an action plan for September 2018. Highlights include:

- Adjust school traffic management plans to encourage parents to utilize alternate drop off/pick up locations at Kinsmen/Westboro Park and at Village Drive Sports Fields.
- Relocate the crosswalk on Strathcona Drive at Wilson Crescent to Hawkins Crescent to improve safety and provide a defined crossing point for those using Kinsmen/Westboro Park.
- Prohibit parking and student drop off /pick up on the north side of Strathcona Drive during school peak traffic times to improve egress from Wilson Crescent and discourage walking across the middle of the road.
- New Horizon School buses will load/unload students on the south side of Strathcona Drive, so parents can utilize the entire school parking lot for pick up activities.
- Both schools will be taking further steps to educate parents regarding compliance with the traffic management plan.

In January 2019, the School Traffic Safety Partnership will re-evaluate traffic at the school. Should these measures fail to manage traffic concerns, more aggressive solutions will be explored. The complete study results of the project will be presented at the September 18, 2018 Priorities Committee Meeting including the final traffic management plans. Strathcona County welcomes ongoing feedback from residents to help evaluate these changes. Please feel free to contact me using the contact information below.

Best,  
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