

TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION REPORT NO.

MEETING DATE: RESUBMITTED: January 28, 2014
December 19, 2013

SUBJECT: CHANGES TO BUS STOP LOCATIONS AT PLANNED NEW
PEDESTRIAN CROSSING SIGNAL ON BURNHAMTHORPE
ROAD

INFORMATION ITEM

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board receive this report for information, noting that:

- City Council recently approved a new midblock traffic signal for pedestrians -- on Burnhamthorpe Road, roughly midway between Meadowbank Road and Laurel Avenue -- as a means of improving pedestrian crossing safety in this area;
- once those signals are installed, TTC staff plan to remove the bus stops that are currently in place at both of the neighbouring intersections and consolidate them into a single pair of bus stops at the new signal, so that those TTC customers who cross Burnhamthorpe Road, when walking to and from the bus stops, are encouraged to take advantage of that crossing protection;
- the local Councillor for Ward 5, Peter Milczyn, upon hearing of the TTC's plans to modify the stop locations, indicated that he would prefer to leave the bus stops in their current locations;
- TTC staff will be meeting with Councillor Milczyn, and with Ward 3 Councillor Peter Leon, and communicating with the affected residents, to explain the rationale for placing transit stops as close as possible to protected crossings such as traffic signals; and
- City staff agree with the TTC's rationale for placing transit stops at signals and PXOs, in support of improving pedestrian safety on city streets.

FUNDING

This report has no effect on the TTC's operating or capital budget. New passenger platforms will be required at this new stop location, and these are the responsibility of the City of Toronto.

BACKGROUND

At its meeting on November 13, 14, and 15, 2013, City Council approved the installation of a new midblock traffic control signal on Burnhamthorpe Road, roughly midway between

Meadowbank Road and Laurel Avenue, which will replace the Pedestrian Crossover (PXO) now located at Meadowbank Road. The PXO is being removed in favour of a traffic signal following a survey that showed high traffic speeds on this section of Burnhamthorpe Road.

City staff had initially recommended signalling the Burnhamthorpe/Meadowbank intersection but reported that, when the area residents were given an opportunity to comment, a significant majority preferred the option of a traffic signal, solely for pedestrian crossings, at the midblock location. City staff noted that, should the midblock signal be approved, the TTC would remove the bus stops that are located a short distance east and west of the new signal, and consolidate them into a single stop location as close as possible to this new protected crossing.

City Council ultimately approved the midblock location for the new traffic signals. They also approved, "... requesting the Chief Executive Officer, Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) to consult with local Councillors and the community prior to any relocation of TTC stops as a result of the installation of these new traffic control signals".

At its meeting of November 18, 2013, the TTC Board passed a motion directing staff to report back at the December meeting on retaining the current stop locations. This report responds to that request.

DISCUSSION

As shown in Exhibit 1, there are bus stops at the intersections on either side of the planned new midblock traffic signal. To the west, there is a westbound stop at Meadowbank Road and an eastbound stop at Blaketon Road, which are 60 metres and 130 metres away, respectively. There is a pedestrian crossover immediately west of Meadowbank Road. To the east, there is an eastbound stop at Laurel Avenue, 75 metres away from the planned new signal, and a westbound stop at Warwood Road, 140 metres away. The westbound stop at Meadowbank, as well as the stops at Laurel and Warwood, are located in bus bays. The stops are lightly used: at the two eastbound stops, there is a total daily usage of 2 boardings and 54 alightings. The total for the two westbound stops is 52 boardings and 15 alightings.

When selecting locations for transit stops, TTC staff place stops at traffic signals or pedestrian crossovers (PXO) because they are better for pedestrian safety. By placing a transit stop at a traffic signal or a PXO, customers who cross the road, when accessing a transit stop, are encouraged to take advantage of the crossing protection that it provides. Experience has shown that, the further a stop is placed from a traffic signal, the greater the propensity for customers to jaywalk at an unprotected location on the street. There are many locations where the traffic signals are very far apart, and stops are placed where there is no crossing protection in the interests of convenient local access. However, if a protected crossing is available, that is where the stop will be placed. This approach is supported by City staff because it is consistent with their work to enhance pedestrian safety on City Streets.

The City is replacing the existing PXO on Burnhamthorpe Road at Meadowbank Road with a traffic signal because, given the observed high speed of cars, a traffic signal would be safer

than the existing PXO, for pedestrians crossing. The TTC plan to move the nearby stops to the new traffic signal will also improve pedestrian crossing safety.

In response to the Board's request, TTC staff considered the option of retaining the bus stops in their current locations, but concluded that this does not promote pedestrian crossing safety. By way of example, a customer who gets off of an eastbound bus at Laurel Avenue and wants to cross Burnhamthorpe Road to walk to their home on Warwood Road, would have to walk an extra 150 metres if they were to walk back in order to use the signal. Many people would be resistant to do this and would, instead, jaywalk to avoid this extra walking distance. With the eastbound stop located at the new traffic signal, people would be far more likely to use the protected crossing. They would have to wait for a green signal to allow them to cross, but making use of the signal would not result in any extra walking distance from the stop to their home.

In response to Council's direction, TTC staff will be meeting with the local Councillors, and communicating with the affected residents, to explain their rationale for placing transit stops where there is crossing protection available. Staff will consult with the Councillors on the preferred approach to communicating this issue to constituents.

New Stop Locations and Pedestrian Traffic Signal On Burnhamthorpe Rd

