

TO:	CHAIR AND MEMBERS BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING ON AUGUST 15, 2011
FROM:	JOHN LUCAS, P. ENG ACTING DIRECTOR, ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION PLANNING, ENVIRONMENTAL & ENGINEERING SERVICES DEPARTMENT
SUBJECT	OLD NORTH NEIGHBOURHOOD TRAFFIC CALMING PLAN -- RESULTS OF OPINION POLL

RECOMMENDATION

That, on the recommendation of the Director, Roads and Transportation, the following actions **BE TAKEN** with respect to traffic calming in the Old North Neighbourhood:

- a) the report of the Acting Director of Roads and Transportation Planning, dated August 15, 2011, pertaining to the Old North Neighbourhood Traffic Calming Plan **BE RECEIVED**;
- b) notwithstanding the January 18, 2010 Municipal Council resolution regarding the implementation plan for the Old North Neighbourhood Traffic Calming Study, the Old North Neighbourhood Traffic Calming Study and its recommendations **BE IMPLEMENTED** on an individual project basis with traffic calming measures, if any, being reflective of residents input and needs as identified during the project design phase, it being noted that this approach varies from the original study implementation plan.

PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER
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- Environment and Transportation Committee, September 28, 2009: Old North Neighbourhood Traffic Calming Plan
- Environment and Transportation Committee, January 11, 2010: Old North Neighbourhood Traffic Calming Plan Public Input and Monitoring Plan

BACKGROUND

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to provide the Built and Natural Environment Committee with further information on public opinion regarding the Old North Traffic Calming Plan resulting from an opinion poll undertaken, and to recommend changes to the implementation strategy that better matches neighbourhood interests.

Context:

At its meeting held on January 18, 2010, the Municipal Council approved the following recommendations regarding the Old North Traffic Plan:

“That, on the recommendation of the Director, Roads and Transportation, the following actions be taken with respect to traffic calming in the Old North Neighbourhood:

- a) the median at Cheapside Street and William Street **BE EVALUATED** independently to determine if it should remain or be removed after all of the traffic calming measures in the Old North Neighbourhood Traffic Study have been implemented;

- b) a traffic study of Huron Street, including traffic calming, transit service, Bicycle Master Plan implications and pedestrian safety **BE CONDUCTED**; it being noted that the Civic Administration has met with residents on Huron Street;
- c) the Old North Neighbourhood Traffic Calming Study and its recommendations, with the exceptions noted in (a) and (b) above, as reported on September 28, 2009, as well as those matters pertaining to bike lanes on Colbourne Street, the latter of which will be dealt with under separate report (see clause 11) **BE APPROVED** as the basis for detailed design requirements; and
- d) the Civic Administration **BE REQUESTED** to report back to the appropriate Committee with respect to a review of public consultation processes and recommendations for improvements to same.

it being noted that the Environment and Transportation Committee heard verbal presentations from the General Manager of Environmental and Engineering Services & City Engineer, the Director, Roads and Transportation and the Division Manager, Roads and Transportation and received communications dated January 10, 2010 from D. & K. Moser, 1040 William Street and T. Burke, 852 William Street, with respect to this matter. (2009-SO9-00)"

The implementation of traffic calming measures recommended in the study was to be over a 5 year period, with some work to be in conjunction with scheduled infrastructure reconstruction. Significant cost savings had been previous reported to Council on undertaking such work within proposed reconstruction of watermains, sewers and roads. A multi-year infrastructure reconstruction program is scheduled for the Old North community, of which the reconstruction of Colborne Street last year was the first.

On September 25, 2010, there was a Public Open House with the residents of Old North. The purpose of the meeting was to communicate future road construction and traffic calming projects to the neighbourhood. The meeting was to review information pertaining to future construction and traffic calming projects, and ask staff questions. A survey was also mailed to all area residences.

The results of the Public Open House and survey suggested that there was a negative opinion about the plan. This was of concern to staff and the Ward Councillor, as was the low public response during the plan development and at the Open House. The Communications Department was requested to assist in resolving the public opinion question, with a formal public opinion poll resulting. This report provides a summary of the poll and implications on the Traffic Calming Plan.

Discussion:

Open House

On September 25, 2010, an Open House with the residents of Old North London was hosted by the City. The purpose of the meeting was to communicate future road construction and traffic calming projects to the neighbourhood. The meeting was an informal drop in format where residents were given the opportunity to review information pertaining to future construction and traffic calming projects, and ask staff questions. 86 people signed the visitor registration.

In addition to the public meeting, 1904 homes in the area were sent mailback survey forms asking residents for feedback on specifically two areas:

- What residents would like to know more about (traffic calming, construction projects).
- How they would like to learn more.

Between the public meeting and the mail back survey 92(5%) of the surveys were returned. The number of responses received from each quadrant:

- Northwest 17 of 459 (3.7%)
- Northeast 19 of 490 (3.9%)
- Southeast 38 of 567 (6.7%)
- Southwest 18 of 388 (4.6%)

Of those who responded to the survey:

- 63% of the respondents want more information on traffic calming
- 61% of residents want information on traffic calming on their street
- 59% want to be informed through printed material

In addition to the above, residents were also given an opportunity to add comments. Below is a summary of the 40 comments received:

- 23 comments were negative about traffic calming, criticizing either the tools, the process or traffic calming in general
- 5 had specific requests asking for something to be done to a particular street or intersection
- 5 had complaints about issues outside the scope of the Old North area
- 2 complained about the cost
- 1 spoke positively in favour of the traffic calming
- 1 comment was also received on each of parking, bike lanes, more information on traffic calming

The response (participation) to the Open House and mail back survey was only slightly better than any other opportunity provided during the plan development (generally, less than 5%). Comments were heavy on the negative side. At the meeting, the topic of traffic calming was significantly polarized; neighbours discussed it passionately. Even though the response to the survey questions indicated a desire for more information, the preferred method of receiving it was in print. The plan development process had used this approach without successfully engaging a larger part of the population.

The resulting opinion of staff was that a truer measure of the neighbourhood interest in the traffic calming plan was needed. To determine this, professional services were used to design and undertake a comprehensive telephone survey to accurately measure:

- The effectiveness of the various mailings and surveys used during the plan development;
- Traffic concerns in the neighbourhood; and,
- Opinions about various traffic calming strategies.

Poll Results

The results of the survey are included in Appendix 'A' – Summary of Key Findings and Executive Summary. Highlights are as follows:

Accuracy: The random survey was of sufficient size to be accurate within + / - 7%, 19 times out of 20. As such, it is considered by staff to represent the opinion of the community.

Previous Consultation: Over 2/3 recalled past mailings, and almost 1/3 participated at least once in the plan development process. This is considered a good response rate for the qualitative methods used.

Traffic Concerns: Opinions were requested on both the "neighbourhood" and "my street" levels. The most frequent "unaided" neighbourhood concern was traffic volume (18%), with other concerns being noted at frequencies less than 10%. When asked about specific concerns "on my street", the highest noted "frequent" responses were traffic volume and speed on collector streets (38%) for those that lived on collector roads. Figures were less for local streets. This variation lies in the purpose and function of collectors vs. local streets. Those that live on collector streets use it like those who live on local streets – to access their property. However, there are more conflicts with through traffic. Staff believe this level of concern is typical of urban collectors in London, but there are not any comparable surveys from other areas to confirm this.

Effectiveness of Traffic Calming Measures: Speed bumps and curb extensions were not supported by a majority of those surveyed, with results ranging from 4:3 to 2:1 against. Those

against such measures were “strongly” against by 2:1 or more. The results also indicated that most were willing to have measures in their neighbourhood and on their street if they were effective, and that they do make cars slow down. However, most believe that they create more problems than they resolve. This last position appears to be the underlying reason for a lack of support for traffic calming measures. There was support for raised intersections; they were described as being beneficial near schools.

Old North Traffic Calming Plan Implications

Support for the Old North Traffic Calming Study was previously reported based on the opinion of those that participated in the plan development – the focus group members and their neighbours who attended various public meetings and provided comments. Of these, 2/3 supported the plan. The poll conducted this spring provides valuable information to consider, namely:

- In the opinion of residents, traffic concerns are more focused and not wide spread. Traffic data previously reported supports this opinion. In resolving such concerns, there is a risk of transferring problems from one street to another in a grid road network. This was not experienced in other London traffic calming projects because the road layout does not allow such a transfer, only a stronger reliance on the arterial road grid (a good thing).
- In the opinion of residents, traffic calming measures work, but create more problems than they resolve. Traffic data supports the opinion that traffic calming measures work. The acceptability of the measures is related to how strong the traffic concerns are, in opinion or fact. Where concerns are not strongly held, as measured in the Old North poll, then the acceptability is low. Where safety is at risk, measures are justified.

Considering the results of the opinion poll, it is evident that the approved plan and proposed implementation method are too prescriptive. The plan was approved “...as the basis for detailed design requirements.” Considering the poll results and to better address area interests, the plan should not be used in this way, but as technical information that when supplemented with the poll information can be considered by the design team and residents on each street (individual projects) as part of the road/watermain/sewer reconstruction program. This does not force a particular or any traffic calming measure on residents, but allows for consideration for traffic volume or speed mitigation during design. The plan should instead be approved as a background document for use in future project designs. This requires a change to clause c) of the January 18, 2010 Council Resolution.

Other clauses of the resolution stand, except for a), which should now be directed to staff.

Going Forward Strategy

Subject to the Municipal Council approving the recommendations of this report, the following topics should be managed.

Public Engagement: The Public Engagement Policy presently under development will provide approaches that should provide more clarity on issues at the local level. Project study and design team members are on the Committee that is lead by the Communications Department. This involvement should allow for changes in the near future with the draft policy schedule for completion in January, 2012. Meanwhile, design projects in Old North can continue with traffic concerns included in the scope of the project. Part of Maitland Street (Oxford to Cheapside) is scheduled for reconstruction next year.

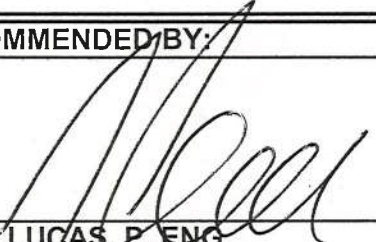
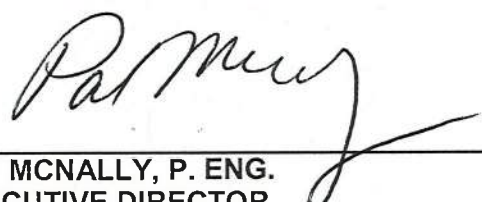
Other Traffic Calming Projects: Of the original list of traffic calming locations directed by the Municipal Council for action, only one remains outstanding for completion of a plan (Glenora Boulevard). An alternative method to managing street traffic speeds that has the potential for lower impacts on transit and cyclists will be presented to the street residents this fall. The road is in very poor condition and is scheduled for reconstruction in 2012 – it should not be delayed.

Traffic Calming Policy: The pending Public Engagement Policy should be used to subsequently update the Traffic Calming Policy. The update should also include the ongoing work on Book 15 -- Pedestrian Crossing Facilities and the updated policies of other municipalities. These are important enough issues to deter the City from starting new area traffic calming studies, like Old North. In the meantime, traffic concerns of a more focused nature will be discussed with the ward Councillor. Any actions should be guided by a measured level of the safety concern, site specific opportunities and constraints, staff availability, budget availability and a consultation method agreed to with the Ward Councillor. Conflicts between these would be brought to the Built and Natural Environment Committee. It should be noted that a more

direct involvement of Ward Councillors in such issues is part of the traffic calming policies elsewhere.

Summary:

1. The Old North Traffic Calming Plan was prepared with an extensive public consultation process over a two year period involving residents who live in the neighbourhood, with a Consultant and City staff providing technical direction. A general support level of 2/3 of the overall plan had been measured based on those who commented on the plan.
2. A recent public meeting and survey to introduce a comprehensive neighbourhood reconstruction program achieved a low response and negative comments about traffic calming.
3. A professional poll with accuracy of +/- 7%, 19 times out of 20 produced results that should be used to change how the Old North Traffic Calming Plan is used in a pending neighbourhood reconstruction program.
4. The Traffic Calming Policy should be updated using the outcomes of pending work on the London Public Engagement Policy and Book 15 – Pedestrian Crossing Facilities, as well as the latest policies used by other municipalities. Meanwhile there are strategies to manage existing projects or any arising traffic calming concerns.

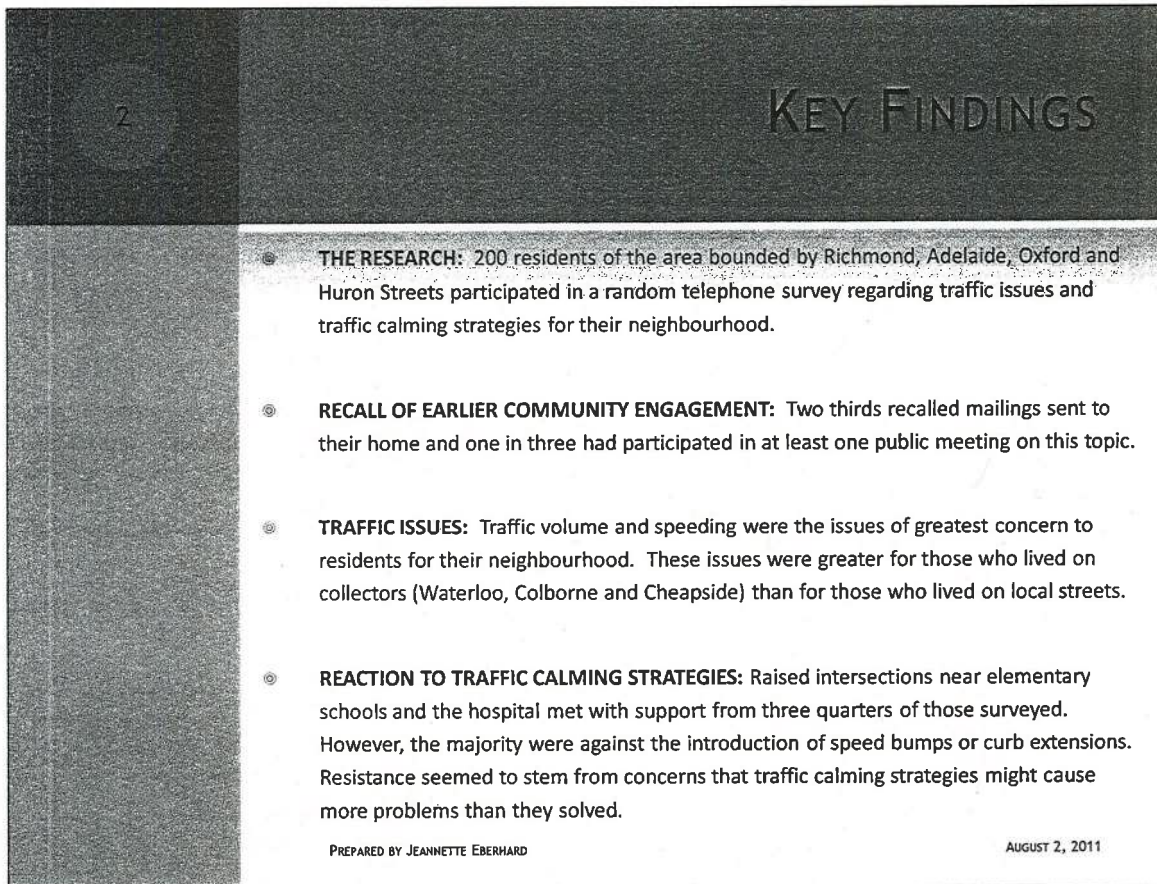
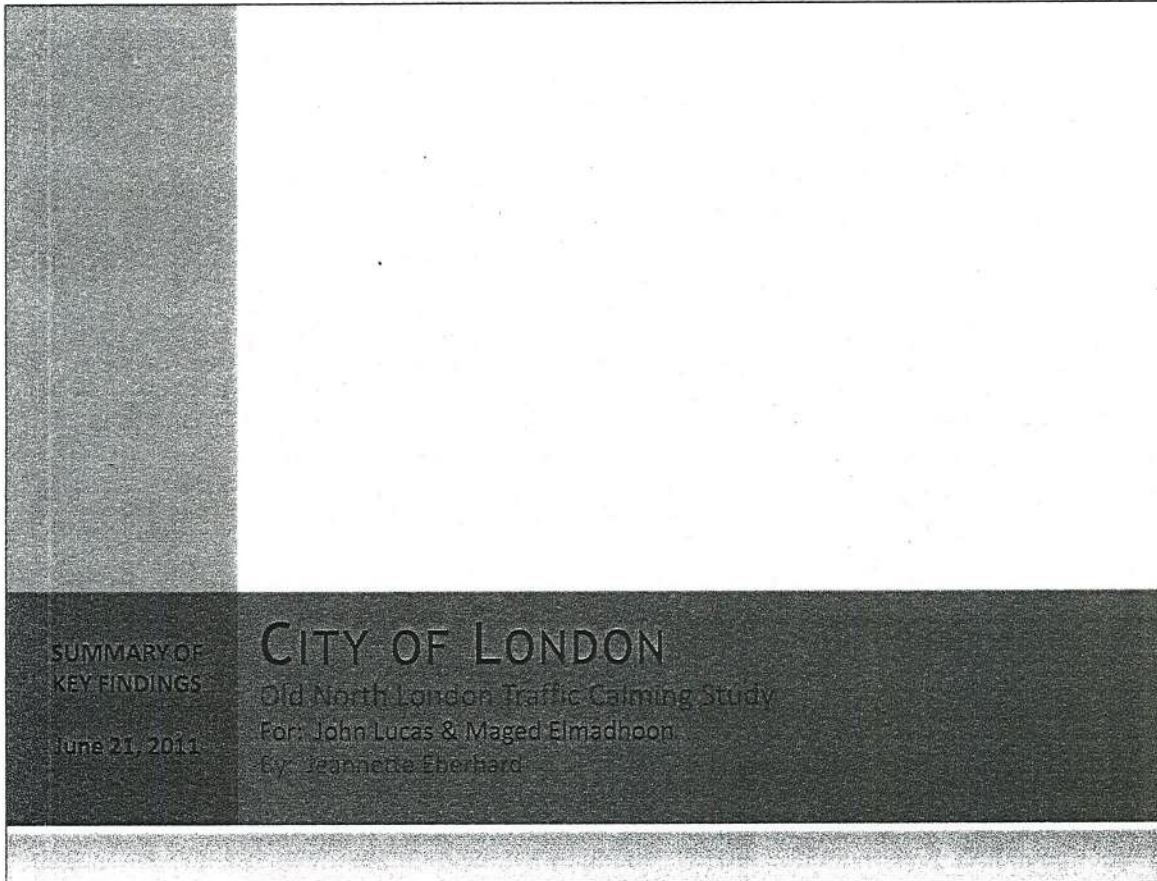
RECOMMENDED BY:	REVIEWED AND CONCURRED BY:
	
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Cc Clr. Nancy Branscombe
John Braam

Attachments: Appendix 'A' – Summary of Key Findings and Executive Summary

APPENDIX "A"



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE RESEARCH

- In May of 2011, a telephone survey was conducted with 200 adults who were the head or one of the heads of their household in the north London neighbourhood bounded by Richmond, Adelaide, Oxford, and Huron Streets.
 - The random sample included a good mix by age and gender, and by location and number of years lived in the neighbourhood.
 - A survey of this size has a range of error of +/- 7%, at worst, 19 times out of 20.
- The topic of the survey was traffic issues and traffic calming strategies that might be introduced in this neighbourhood.
 - The City had previously conducted public information sessions on this topic, however, attendance at such meetings is voluntary and does not represent a random sample of attitudes and opinions.
 - The goal of the telephone survey was to provide a random sample of residents and to quantify the level of concern about traffic issues and the level of support for traffic calming strategies. The results were to be one input to future planning for transportation and traffic strategies in this neighbourhood.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

RECALL OF EARLIER COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Previous qualitative research included household mailings and public information sessions on this topic.
- Among the 200 residents who completed the telephone survey:
 - 69% recalled household mailings on this topic, and
 - 30% had attended or participated in at least one of the public information sessions.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TRAFFIC ISSUES

- ⊙ On an unaided basis, respondents mentioned the following most frequently as traffic concerns “in this neighbourhood”.
 - ⊙ traffic volume (18%)
 - ⊙ speeding (9%)
 - ⊙ problems faced by cyclists (9%)
 - ⊙ streets being used as short cuts (7%)
- ⊙ Those who lived on collectors (Waterloo, Colborne and Cheapside), mentioned the following most frequently as traffic concerns “on my street”. Excess traffic volume was clearly their biggest concern.
 - ⊙ excess traffic volume (42%)
 - ⊙ speeding (19%)
 - ⊙ not stopping at lights or stop signs (13%)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TRAFFIC ISSUES

- ⊙ Respondents were asked if they believed four specific traffic issues happened frequently, sometimes, rarely or never, in their neighbourhood in general or on their street in particular. Their responses confirmed their unaided comments that the top two concerns related to the speed of cars and the volume of traffic.
- ⊙ Those who lived on collectors (Waterloo, Colborne and Cheapside) believed these issues occurred more frequently “on their street” than those who lived on and commented upon these issues for their own local streets.

Percent Who Believe Specific Traffic Issues Occur “Frequently”

	In this neighbourhood (n=200, Total Sample)	On my street (collector) (n=40 who live on collectors)	On my street (local) (n=148 who live on local streets)
Cars drive too fast	38%	38%	27%
Traffic is too heavy	33%	38%	18%
It is unsafe to ride a bike	17%	24%	12%
Pedestrian safety a problem	13%	15%	11%

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

REACTION TO TRAFFIC CALMING STRATEGIES

- ③ Three traffic calming measures – speed bumps, curb extensions, and raised intersections – were described to respondents and they were asked whether they would support or be against such measures in their neighbourhood.
- ③ Three quarters of respondents were in favour of raised intersections, but more were against than in favour of speed bumps and curb extensions. Support for all measures was highest among those under 45 years of age, and this support diminished as age increased, with lowest support among those 65+.
- ③ A lack of support for speed bumps and curb extensions may be explained by the fact that just over half of respondents agreed with the statement that “traffic calming strategies may cause more problems than they solve”.

Whether Respondent Supported or Would be Against
Three Traffic Calming Measures (n=200)

	Raised Intersections	Curb Extensions	Speed Bumps
In favour	74%	41%	34%
Against	20%	54%	64%