

REGION OF OTTAWA-CARLETON
RÉGION D'OTTAWA-CARLETON

REPORT
RAPPORT

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DATE 12 February 1999

TO/DEST. Co-ordinator Transportation Committee

FROM/EXP. Director Mobility Services and Corporate Fleet Services
Environment and Transportation Department

SUBJECT/OBJET **WALKLEY ROAD - TRUCK ROUTE STATUS**

DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION

That the Transportation Committee recommend Council approve that Walkley Road's status as a truck route between Riverside Drive and Bank Street continue.

INTRODUCTION

This report, in a slightly altered form, was considered by the Transportation Committee on 16 September 1998. As a result of the ensuing discussion the Committee approved Motion TC-6-98.

“That the Transportation Committee refer this item to staff for consultation with the local business community and to study the repercussion on other communities.”

This has been done and the report is being re-submitted.

BACKGROUND

The continued status of Walkley Road as a truck route between Riverside Drive and Bank Street has been discussed for some time, particularly since the completion of Hunt Club Road. Examples of this are:

- a. Section 2.5.3, paragraph 5 of the recently approved Transportation Master Plan states that Council shall “reconsider the existing designation of Walkley Road as a truck route between Riverside Drive and Bank Street, in light of the predominantly residential nature of this route and the availability of high-quality alternative routes”;
- b. Two independent studies conducted by a Walkley Road resident, one of which was submitted to the City of Ottawa during the Riverside Park Neighbourhood Study, and both of which were submitted to Regional staff for information and action; and

- c. The West Walkley Residents' Action Committee, through their Regional Councillor, has requested that action be taken to remove Walkley Road between Riverside Drive and Bank Street from the Truck Route System.

This report will discuss the issue and make a recommendation regarding whether or not Walkley Road should be removed from the Truck Route System.

HISTORY

Walkley Road has been a designated truck route for at least as long as the Region has existed, which is 30 years. Walkley Road's status as a truck route was reaffirmed by Council on 13 October 1982 as part of an overall review of truck route designations in the Region.

NATURE OF ROAD

The section of Walkley Road between Riverside Drive and Bank Street is a four lane urban cross section measuring about 2.2 km in length. About one-half of its length is separated by a central median. There are traffic control signals at its intersections with Riverside Drive, Otterson/Springland Drives, McCarthy Road, Avoncourt Way and Bank Street.

It is zoned as low density residential except for the section of Walkley Road between Bank Street and the CPR railway corridor which is zoned as commercial. The speed limit for this section of road is 50 km/h. Fielding Drive Public School backs onto the south side of Walkley Road west of McCarthy Road, and Holy Cross Church fronts Walkley Road immediately west of Springland Drive.

As indicated previously, the area immediately west of Bank Street is zoned for commercial use. In this area there is a strip mall on the north side and a car dealership on the south side, both of which are at the corner of Bank Street. Furthermore, both have entrances onto Bank Street. There are no other businesses along the section of Walkley Road being discussed, or along Riverside Drive in the immediate vicinity of Walkley Road, that would attract heavy trucks.

HEAVY TRUCK TRAFFIC

Traffic and Parking By-law No. 1 of 1996 defines a heavy truck as "a motor vehicle having a carrying capacity in excess of one tonne and any vehicle having a gross weight in excess of four and one-half (4.5) tonnes, but does not include a bus travelling on a bus route established by the Commission, an ambulance or a school vehicle". This definition includes a lot of vehicles, including large pick-up trucks, cube vans, school and OC Transpo buses, tandem trucks and, of course, the "18 wheelers" or tractor trailer combinations.

Heavy truck traffic on the subject section of Walkley Road is relatively low. Traffic counts taken at each end of the study section indicate that as a percentage of total traffic volume, truck traffic is less than four (4%) percent of the total. Specifically, in representative eight hour traffic counts, 220 heavy trucks (2.20%) made up part of the 9,961 total traffic volume recorded just east of the Walkley Road/Riverside Drive intersection and 388 heavy trucks (3.66%) were part of the 10,593 total traffic volume recorded just west of the Bank Street/Walkley Road intersection.

Without an origin/destination study it is difficult to determine with absolute certainty what their purpose on Walkley Road is, but the cost of such a study is not considered appropriate due to the relatively minor truck volumes. We can however make the following observations.

- the primary access for Riverside Park South residents, situated south of Walkley Road, is McCarthy Road; therefore, heavy trucks have no alternative but to use McCarthy Road to deliver goods to these residents;
- the residents situated north of Walkley Road landlocked between the Airport Parkway to the east and the Canadian National Railway tracks to the west rely on Avoncourt Way and Wexford Street as access roads; therefore, heavy trucks have no alternative but to use these two streets to deliver goods to the residents;
- the residents situated north of Walkley Road in the vicinity of Springland Drive are more accessible from Walkley Road. Trucks could access these residents from Riverside Drive; however, they would have to travel entirely on two lane residential streets whereas if they travel on Walkley Road to Springland Drive to access the community most of the trip is on a four lane divided highway which provides a safer alternative; and
- the residents situated south of Walkley Road in the vicinity of Otterson Drive are equally accessible from Walkley Road and Riverside Drive.

The actual truck travel patterns support the above observations. For the eight busiest hours at the intersection of,

- Springland Drive and Walkley Road, on the day the count was taken, there were 38 westbound right turning movements and 1 eastbound left turning movement onto Springland Drive, and 43 southbound left turning movements and 2 southbound right turning movements onto Walkley Road;
- Otterson Drive and Walkley Road, on the day the count was taken, there were only 1 northbound left turning movement onto Walkley Road and 2 eastbound right turning movements onto Otterson Drive;
- McCarthy Road and Walkley Road, on the day the count was taken, there were 69 eastbound right turning movements and 41 westbound left turning movements onto McCarthy Road, and 48 northbound left turning movements and 50 northbound right turning movements onto Walkley Road; and
- Avoncourt Way and Walkley Road, on the day the count was taken, there were 15 eastbound left turning movements and 11 westbound right turning movements onto Avoncourt Way, and 6 southbound right turning movements and 2 southbound left turning movements onto Walkley Road.

Thus, in summary there are a total of 90 westbound and 87 eastbound truck trips turning into the neighbourhoods directly served by Walkley Road; and there are also 57 westbound and 95

eastbound truck trips leaving the same neighbourhoods. These 329 trips, which are most likely all local, represent about 50% of the total truck trips on Walkley Road. It is therefore evident that if Walkley Road was removed from the Truck Route System, about half of the trucks currently using it would have no alternative but to continue using it for local deliveries

There is no way to accurately estimate the percentage of trucks using Walkley Road as a through road, but in any case the number is small because of the number of trucks that have no alternative but to use it for local deliveries. If it was decided to remove Walkley Road from the Truck Route System, through trucks would have two parallel alternatives: Heron Road and Hunt Club Road. Of these, there is no doubt that Hunt Club Road would be the preferred choice by the majority of truck operators because of its connections to Highways 416 and 417 (via Hawthorne and Walkley Roads). In fact, Hunt Club Road was designed for this purpose with almost all the adjacent homes backing onto the road allowance with generous set back distances and fencing. It is estimated that the number of through trucks that would use Heron Road as the preferred alternative is so small as to be virtually negligible when added to the existing Heron Road truck volumes.

A review of the Department's accident statistics reveals that for the years 1995 to 1997 inclusive there were a total of eight accidents involving what would be considered heavy vehicles, i.e. tractor trailer combinations, tandems, etc. Of these, six occurred at the intersection of Walkley Road and Bank Street, one occurred at the intersection of Walkley Road and McCarthy Road and one was a mid-block accident between McCarthy Road and Otterson/Springland Drives. Six of the eight accident reports indicate that the heavy truck operator was driving properly. In summary, it could be said that there have only been two accidents during this period between Riverside Drive and Bank Street, with the other six occurring at the Bank Street intersection.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The report was sent to the community associations most likely to be impacted by this report's recommendation, the local trucking associations and merchants on Bank Street between Heron and Hunt Club Roads.

Two responses were received, one by an individual and one by Ottawa Hydro.

The first respondent is a resident in the South Keys area whose primary concern is that Bank Street (a) already has high vehicular volumes and additional vehicles, particularly heavy trucks, would exacerbate the congestion; and (b) is reduced to 1-1/2 lanes in each direction after major snowfalls, combined with sidewalk plows pushing snow onto the roadway, and additional heavy trucks would make travel during these conditions more difficult than it already is. Furthermore, the residents fronting Walkley Road were aware that it was a truck route when the homes were originally purchased and their quality of life has not changed. In summary, Walkley Road should continue as a truck route and keep the additional heavy trucks off Bank Street.

Ottawa Hydro's concerns are that (a) Walkley Road is a major arterial required to provide service to customers in the south-west part of the city; (b) a large amount of overhead and underground plant is located on Walkley Road, as well as access to a substation, and quick response time is essential when responding to equipment problems; and (c) the cost of servicing the area would rise because of extra travel time, loss of productivity and wear and tear on the fleet. Also, Walkley Road provides an alternate route to access the Heron Road and Hunt Club Road Bridges.

Additionally, a number of individuals and one community association responded when the original report was circulated for comment. They have not responded during this most recent request for comment on the revised report, but may have felt that their original comments are still valid. From this consultation, 20 individuals (14 verbal and 6 written) supported the removal of Walkley Road from the Truck Route System. The Riverside Park Community and Recreation Association supported its removal as well. The West Walkley Residents' Action Committee initiated the request so it can safely be assumed that it supports the removal.

Staff Response

With respect to the first respondent's concern about additional truck volumes on Bank Street, this is true but the volumes will be low because it is estimated that about half of the trucks will continue to use Walkley Road for local deliveries. The winter maintenance concern will remain regardless of whether additional trucks are diverted onto Bank Street. In any case, the same could be said for any street following a major snowfall, and Bank Street would be one of the first cleaned because it is a major arterial and a bus route.

Ottawa Hydro's concerns are unfounded. The Traffic and Parking By-law exempts public utilities from the provisions regulating heavy trucks while servicing plant. In any case, the regulations would not apply if Ottawa Hydro was responding to an emergency. Ottawa Hydro has been informed of this.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications.

CONCLUSION

It has long been Regional Council's policy to recognize that Regional roads should generally speaking be truck routes. Because of the very low volume of heavy trucks on Walkley Road between Bank Street and Riverside Drive, its removal from the truck route system would not unduly compromise the integrity of the overall truck route network in the area.

*Approved by
Doug Brousseau*

SEM

2. WALKLEY ROAD - TRUCK ROUTE STATUS

- Director Mobility Services and Corporate Fleet Services report dated 24 Jul 98

The Acting Commissioner, Doug Brousseau advised that staff do not recommend deleting this portion of Walkley Road from the truck route system, based on Council policy that all Regional roads be truck routes. Further, when routes are removed, it has the potential for moving that traffic onto other roadways. He advised that the majority of trucks now on Walkley Road, which is in itself a small percentage, are there to make deliveries and would therefore still be on that section of road because the Traffic and Parking By-law permits truck drivers to make their deliveries along the shortest route.

Councillor McGoldrick-Larsen questioned whether staff look at changes in traffic patterns when a new Regional road is built i.e. what roads were previously used, in order to determine whether or not there could be an opportunity to make some adjustments. D. Brousseau indicated that as part of the Environmental Assessment Process traffic studies are carried out to determine where the traffic will be attracted to, but staff do not recommend Council change the truck route system as a result of those new roads. The Committee Chair inquired where that traffic will go to if this portion of Walkley is deleted and was advised they would probably use Heron and Hunt Club instead.

Elizabeth Wylie, West Walkley Residents Action Committee (WWRAC) indicated that the revocation of this truck route would not be counter to Regional policy, but consistent with it. To verify this statement, she referred to the "Urban Goods Movement Study" dated May 1991 where the summary report states: "In its entirety, Hunt Club Road will provide a third east/west link across the developing southern part of the RMOC urban area. Among other benefits, this would allow trucks to by-pass the Baseline/ Heron/Walkley corridor and the Queensway." She opined, therefore, that even as early as that time, it was clearly seen as a Regional policy that there would be a shift in traffic. Ms. Wylie understood there are some sensitivities when traffic is moved from one road to another, but in this situation, truck would not be moved to a road they would not otherwise be using and is in fact, more their destination. She questioned why these trucks are on Walkley in the first place because it is simply a residential street that got widened and is full of homes that front onto the street. And although there are not a lot of trucks on this section, it makes a lot of difference when a home is as close to the road as some of those homes are. In conclusion, she stated that by voting for revocation, Council will be making a positive contribution towards the quality of life for these residents.

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Some councillors were sympathetic to the delegations' concerns, although some opined that there are many other residential communities in the Region which suffer to an even greater degree from truck traffic. Ms. Wylie explained that she was sympathetic to those communities and did not want her proposal to in any way suggest they are trivializing the concerns of other neighbourhoods.

Councillor Legendre made reference to the quote Ms. Wylie read out and explained that he did not see the relevance of the citation to this section of Walkley Road. Ms. Wylie explained that the only reason this portion was selected to be removed from the system was that it is purely residential and therefore it is more feasible to do so. She believed the people living upstream of this section in the Herongate area will feel an affect because if the trucks cannot go all the down Walkley to get to Riverside, they may not enter it at all i.e. they will look for another way to get to their destination.

The Regional Chair questioned whether there had been an origin-destination study carried out and which businesses would be negatively affected by the removal of this truck route. D. Brousseau explained that staff had not conducted such a study because it would be too costly a study for such a small volume of trucks. He estimated that half of the number of trucks would probably be making local deliveries. When questioned whether the businesses in the area were notified about this meeting, he advised that staff had not carried out extensive consultation. The Regional Chair thought that such consultation should be part of the process, especially if a decision may impact negatively on a community or a business. D. Brousseau confirmed that such consultation is normally part of the process, but again, because of the limited number of vehicles involved, staff did not feel it was necessary to conduct any extensive consultation.

When questioned what consultation took place within the ward, Councillor Stewart advised that she had been to several meetings of the WWRAC and had sent a copy of the report to the Hunt Club Community Association. She explained that this has been an initiative of Ms. Wylie and other residents since Hunt Club Road was extended. She acknowledged that the trucking industry had been notified of the proposal and that no comments had been received in response. She maintained that there would be few people in the area who would be unaware of this issue and as the report concludes, there would be minimal impact if this route was revoked.

Councillor Bellemare questioned whether the Ms. Wylies' concerns focus more on large vehicles such as 18-wheelers, or whether all types of trucks were a concern. The delegation responded that residents are most concerned with the larger vehicles such as flatbeds, cement trucks, dump trucks, et cetera. The councillor

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then inquired whether staff would prefer to restrict the road to specific loads rather than removing it entirely from the truck route system and D. Brousseau indicated that restricting loads is a way of protecting the road bed itself and is not intended to deter heavier vehicles. With respect to the issue of removing this section of Walkley from the truck route system, he cautioned committee that this would set a precedent for other requests to come forward.

Joe Connolly was concerned about the noise and pollution that he and other residents have had to put up with over the years. He explained that some even have difficulty sleeping at night because of it and have gone so far as to put three panes of glass on their windows. He also explained that the noise makes it difficult for those wearing hearing aids. He stated that residents on Walkley Road stand to lose 10-20% of their property values as a result of living on such a busy, noisy road.

Fern Berthiaume explained that his home is situated very close to the road and he could not open his windows or sit outside because of the noise. He indicated that with the opening of Highway 417, the amount of trucks has increased tremendously. Since alternative routes exist for the trucks presently driving on this portion of Walkley and because the proposed ramp from the Airport Parkway will add more traffic to Walkley Road, he urged that it be deleted from the truck route system.

Hans Blokpoel remarked that he has lived at his home near Walkley for over 20 years and during that period, has seen a dramatic increase in vehicular traffic on the road. He agreed that the number of trucks to be affected is small, but it was the type of truck and the speed at which they are travelling which creates the potential disturbance in this residential area. He explained that it was like living next to a highway because of the noise and remarked that Walkley Road was never designed for this type of truck traffic.

Clarification was requested with respect to the last remark and staff advised that the roadway is constructed to carry heavy vehicles, but does not necessarily mean that “physically” the road was built that way, because it does travel through a large residential area.

In considering the item, Councillor Doucet did not understand what long term consequences would result from the deletion of this portion from the truck route system because there are only two roads coming from the south which end up coming through his ward. He believed that by removing Walkley, the trucks will be funnelled down to Heron Road, leaving them with only one choice if they want to go south and that is Bronson Avenue. He wanted to know where the truck

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traffic is going and where the growth possibilities are so that he could better determine what the impact would be on his community.

Councillor Byrne was concerned that this issue had not been through a very thorough public consultation process and was concerned about the residents who may not be aware of the issue, but may want to speak to it. D. Brousseau advised that staff would do more consulting if so directed by the committee, but requested specifics with respect to the radius of such consultation. The councillor remarked that staff should at least contact the businesses along Bank, Walkley, Hunt Club and Heron and the surrounding communities.

The following Motions were presented by Councillors Meilleur and Kreling respectively:

That the Transportation Committee refer this item to staff for consultation with the business community and to study the repercussion on other communities.

That the Transportation Committee recommend Council approve that Walkley Road's status as a truck route between Riverside Drive and Bank Street be revoked.

Councillor McGoldrick-Larsen questioned what impact the additional trucks will have on the intersections of Bank and Heron and Bank and Hunt Club and D. Brousseau advised that these intersections are already at capacity and dividing up approximately 100 trucks between them will not decrease their efficiency.

Councillor Stewart recognized that there are many truck routes running through communities, but stressed that this portion of Walkley is not the same as King Edward or Kirkwood for instance. In this instance, staff have concluded in their report that because of the very low volume of trucks on this stretch, its removal will not make a difference; therefore, she saw this as an opportunity to do something good for the residents. While she would not argue against more public consultation, she stated this has been an issue in the community for many months and articles have been printed in the local papers, but she had not received any negative feedback. She urged committee to support revocation of this portion of Walkley Road from the truck route system.

Councillor Bellemare questioned what the scope and cost would be if the Motion proposed by Councillor Meilleur were approved. D. Brousseau explained that he did not have those figures because it would depend on how much consultation the Committee directed staff to do. He suggested the consultation could entail

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sending a letter to businesses in the area on Bank, Heron and Walkley and to the affected community associations and that these could be identified by the ward councillors.

Councillor Doucet was concerned that the diverted traffic would go through his ward which already has enough traffic and the community is already physically split by Regional roads to either side of them. He could not support revocation knowing it will divert traffic to his ward. Instead, he proposed that an origin-destination survey be carried out because he believed the information gathered would not only be useful for this request but for future ones as well.

Councillor McGoldrick-Larsen made note of the fact that Hawthorne Road is currently being reconstructed and will connect to Highway 417 via Walkley Road by the end of 1999. In light of this, she was inclined to support the request to remove a portion of Walkley Road from the truck route system, at such time as that connection to Highway 417 is made.

Councillor Cantin stated that trucks leaving the industrial area of Walkley Road and heading west, will use Heron Road to Baseline Road or if they are travelling out of the Region, the majority will use Hunt Club Road to Highway 416. He believed the only trucks that should be on that section of Walkley are those doing local deliveries and did not see any inconvenience for those truckers if it was removed because the majority would be familiar enough with the area to find another route.

Taking into consideration the consultation staff and the ward councillor have done and the lack of response from the trucking industry and the fact that local businesses will still be able to access this section of Walkley Road, Councillor Kreling did not believe there will be a negative impact of removing this section from the system. He understood the concerns about the impact to other communities, but he believed there were a number of other truck routes available and did not feel the amount of trucks being discussed would place an undue burden on those routes.

While she was sympathetic to the residents, Councillor Meilleur believed that if the Region were to start removing truck routes there will be few left and more trucks on those left in the system. She referred to the flow of heavy vehicles through her community and while she did not believe that removing a portion of Walkley from the system will affect her community, she thought the spill-over affect would cause more requests to come forward to close other truck routes. She maintained that when there are a lot of truck routes, the truck traffic can be divided and no community is overburdened with its share. The Committee Chair suggested an

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amendment to her Motion to include reference to the “local” community. Councillor Meilleur agreed with this amendment.

Councillor Legendre indicated that as a result of the Transportation Master Plan and the new Regional Official Plan, he would have thought that a review of the entire network would have been a logical consequence to see if the network was still appropriate. D. Brousseau advised that the TMP also recognizes the paramount importance of goods movement and truck traffic and while it may seem appropriate to review the system periodically, there are costs involved with such study. The councillor agreed with the Motion proposed by Councillor Meilleur because the committee should, at the very least, consult with the people most affected, including merchants in the area of Bank Street and he suggested the consultation also include those that service the airport.

Reference was made to some roads on the truck route map which were not in fact truck routes and that corrections should be made. D. Brousseau believed the map illustrated the Regional road system as opposed to strictly truck routes and agreed to investigate.

Moved by M. Meilleur

That the Transportation Committee refer this item to staff for consultation with the local business community and to study the repercussion on other communities.

CARRIED

YEAS: W. Byrne, L. Davis, C. Doucet, D. Holmes, J. Legendre,
M. Meilleur....6

NAYS: M. Bellemare, R. Cantin, H. Kreling, M. McGoldrick-Larsen....4

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Moved by C. Doucet

That an origin-destination study be completed for trucks using the Walkley corridor.

LOST

YEAS: W. Byrne, L. Davis, C. Doucet, M. Meilleur....4

NAYS: M. Bellemare, R. Cantin, D. Holmes, H. Kreling, J. Legendre,
M. McGoldrick-Larsen....6