

To: Mayor and Members of Council

From: Al Pickard, President, Legacy Community Ratepayers' Association (LCRA)
Ricardo Guevara, Co-Chair, Safety & Traffic Sub-Committee, LCRA
Don Hutchinson, Co-Chair, Safety & Traffic Sub-Committee, LCRA

Subject: Legacy Community – Additional All-Way Stop Intersections

Date: September 5, 2006

Request:

That at its regularly scheduled meeting of September 12, 2006, Markham Council:

Receive this submission from the Legacy Community Ratepayers' Association, dated September 5, 2006; and,

That Council designate the following intersections as all-way stop intersections with appropriate signage to be erected by the Town of Markham:

- Rouge Bank Drive at Cottontail Avenue and Russell Jarvis Drive;
- Russell Jarvis Drive at Legacy Drive and Juneberry Avenue;
- Legacy Drive at Lady Fern Drive;
- Russell Jarvis Drive at Rouge Bank Drive (northwest intersection); and,
- Rouge Bank Drive at Silverflower Avenue.

Purpose:

To expeditiously and proactively take appropriate action to provide additional and necessary safety for pedestrians, particularly children, required to use the identified intersections in order to walk to and from the Legacy Public School (opened September 5, 2006) and the Rouge River Community Centre.

Background:

The Legacy subdivision (see attached map) is located northwest of the intersection of 14th Avenue and Ninth Line. Legacy was designed with only one all-way stop intersection located at Rouge Bank Drive and Legacy Drive. Other design features of the community were anticipated to have a traffic calming effect – gently curving roads and intersections with stop signs in alternate directions. The posted speed limit in Legacy is 40 km/h.

The portion of Rouge Bank Drive between Ninth Line and Legacy Drive is approximately 0.5 km in distance without a stop sign. The portion of Rouge Bank Drive between Legacy Drive and Russell Jarvis Drive (northwest intersection) is approximately 1 km in distance without a stop sign. The portion of Russell Jarvis Drive between Rouge

Bank Drive (southeast intersection) and Purple Finch Avenue is approximately 1.5 kms in distance without a stop sign.

The design of the community includes Legacy Park (two baseball diamonds and a children's play area), and Legacy Public School (JK – 8 with child care facility) located in an area enclosed by local roads on all sides (Rouge Bank Drive, Russell Jarvis Drive and Legacy Drive).

The Rouge River Community Centre with outdoor pool and the Markham Green Golf Course clubhouse are located on the south side of Rouge Bank Drive at Silverflower Avenue, approximately the midpoint (0.5 km) between Legacy Drive and Russell Jarvis Drive (northwest intersection). Parking for these facilities is shared, located adjacent to the clubhouse on its west side.

These community amenities (school, park, community centre) encourage pedestrians, both children and adults, to cross the above noted long stretches of curving road to access the amenities without the benefit of requiring traffic to stop for safer crossing even though there are intersections located in a fashion to do so and, but for being all-way stop intersections, apparently designed for that purpose. Unfortunately, rather than calming traffic these long stretches of gently curving road encourage exceeding the speed limit and create hazards at high volume pedestrian intersections.

There have been numerous complaints forwarded to Markham Council members, Town staff and members of the LCRA Executive Committee in regard to the need for improved safety measures on several roads and at several identified intersections. Legacy residents have repeatedly endorsed the need for additional all-way stop intersections in our community, particularly at high volume pedestrian intersections. At the May 7, 2006 Annual General Meeting of the LCRA residents again endorsed the need for more all-way stop intersections – identifying the 5 most dangerous intersections based on our nearly ten years of experience living here.

THE 5 PRIMARY INTERSECTIONS

Legacy Public School, with child care facility, opened on September 5, 2006. Projected enrollment for opening was approximately 325 students based on the number of Legacy resident students and Ninth Line resident students attending Boxwood Public School and William Armstrong Public School. By the last week of August, it was apparent that enrollment was going to be approximately 480 students as a result of private and separate school Legacy resident students enrolling at Legacy P.S. and students resident or soon to be resident in the New BoxGrove development enrolling at Legacy P.S. Legacy P.S. is a holding school for the New BoxGrove until their schools are built.

With the opening of Legacy P.S., Legacy resident students are no longer eligible for the York Region District School Board's bus program. These students are considered to be within walking distance of the school and are expected to walk to and from school.

1. Rouge Bank Drive at Cottontail Avenue and Russell Jarvis Drive

This intersection has stop signs only for northbound and southbound traffic and is one of the busiest in the Legacy community. It is immediately adjacent to the Legacy P.S. site.

On September 25, 2002 Legacy resident Sheley Harshaw contacted Ward 5 Councillor Jack Heath and advised of her concerns about this intersection at which her home was located. Councillor Heath noted in an email sent that day to Sheley Harshaw, Alan Brown, Arup Mukherjee and Don Hutchinson that he had multiple complaints about this intersection in addition to a number of complaints about the speed of traffic on Rouge Bank Drive, Legacy Drive and Russell Jarvis Drive. The Town had not assumed the roads and Councillor Heath suggested contacting the developer to explore traffic calming options. Councillor Heath expressed his concern that there were bound to be accidents at this intersection. Sheley Harshaw replied by return email noting that she was aware of at least one serious collision already having occurred at the intersection. Town staff contacted the developer. The developer took no action.

Following a public meeting where this subject was discussed and a door to door canvass in the area of 12 identified problem intersections in the Legacy community a letter was sent on September 8, 2003 by Don Hutchinson (on behalf of the LCRA) to Arup Mukherjee (copies to Mayor Cousens, Deputy Mayor Scarpitti and Councillor Heath) identifying this intersection (and the four other primary intersections identified in this request) as the priority intersections requiring additional stop signs to facilitate safer pedestrian crossing to access the Legacy Park and Rouge River Community Centre. Seven other intersections were identified as problematic, but secondary or tertiary to these five.

On September 16, 2003 the Town of Markham conducted a traffic study on Rouge Bank Drive, near the Cottontail/Russell Jarvis intersection. The study notes nearly 40% of vehicles traveling at a speed of 50 km/h or more. Of the 940 vehicles noted, 15 were traveling at 60 km/h or more, 1 over 80 km/h, 4 over 90 km/h and 1 over 110 km/h. On September 17, 2003 again nearly 40% of vehicles were traveling at a speed of 50 km/h or more with 22 vehicles going in excess of 60 km/h of the 855 noted.

Legacy residents living at or near this intersection report that there has been at least one collision at this intersection per year over the last five years. There have been many near misses of vehicles and pedestrians. One dog was killed. The Harshaw's moved from their home at the southwest corner of the intersection, partly for the safety of their family.

An all-way stop at this intersection will significantly improve the safety of children and adult pedestrians crossing to the school and park sites.

2. Russell Jarvis Drive at Legacy Drive and Juneberry Avenue

This intersection has stop signs only for northbound and southbound traffic and is the primary access intersection for residents 110 homes in the northeast section of Legacy to

cross to and from the school/park site. Again, several motor vehicle collisions and near misses of vehicles and pedestrians have plagued this intersection.

An all-way stop at this intersection will significantly improve the safety of children and adult pedestrians crossing to the school and park sites.

3. Legacy Drive at Lady Fern Drive

Lady Fern Drive at Legacy Drive has a stop sign only for eastbound vehicles. This is the primary intersection for residents from over 400 homes to cross to and from the school/park site.

An all-way stop at this intersection will significantly improve the safety of children and adult pedestrians crossing to the school and park sites.

4. Russell Jarvis Drive at Rouge Bank Drive (northwest intersection)

This intersection has stop signs for northbound and southbound traffic only. Residents living at or near this intersection report at least 9 accidents have taken place at this intersection over the last 5 years. Combined with several near hits, this is the worst record in the community. Students from over 100 homes are required to cross at this intersection to get to the sidewalk on the south side of Russell Jarvis if they are going to walk to school. There is no sidewalk on the north side.

An all-way stop at this intersection will significantly improve the safety of children and adult pedestrians crossing to the school and park sites.

5. Rouge Bank Drive at Silverflower Avenue

This intersection has a stop sign only for southbound traffic.

Increasing numbers of programs for children, youth and families at the Rouge River Community Centre means increased pedestrian traffic as local residents attend these activities and increased vehicular traffic as local residents and more distant Markham residents attend these activities. The popular Markham Green Golf Course attracts people from inside and outside the community. The only access from outside the community is along Rouge Bank Drive. The location of the Rouge River Community Centre and pool, the Markham Green Golf Course and the cycling/walking paths located along the upper bank of the Rouge River Valley make the Rouge Bank Drive and Silverflower Avenue intersection a primary point for pedestrian crossing for residents of over 500 homes.

An all-way stop at this intersection will significantly improve the safety of children and adult pedestrians crossing to the school and park sites.

Comment:

The 5 intersections noted in this report have all been designed as 'natural' locations for pedestrians to cross to and from the Legacy Public School, Legacy Park and the Rouge River Community Centre – all amenities that encourage children to walk to and from them year round. The intersections do not provide the protection of requiring vehicular traffic to stop in order to allow safer pedestrian crossing.

The need to address the first four listed intersections has become urgent with the opening of Legacy Public School.

The fifth listed intersection is a continuing concern with increased pedestrian traffic when the pool is open coinciding with increased vehicular traffic with the golf course being open. There is increasing use of the community centre outside of summer use as programming at the Rouge River Community Centre continues to expand.

The residents of Legacy are convinced that establishing all-way stops at the intersections noted in this report will significantly enhance the safety of our children and adult pedestrians as they walk to and from school, the park, the community centre and the walking/cycling path along the Rouge River valley.

Administrative Matters:

Following designation of the intersections as all-way stops, Town staff will be required to erect appropriate signage, 10 stop signs on 4x4 wooden posts and 'new stop sign' signs.

Attachment:

Map of Legacy community showing proposed all-way stop intersection locations.



