



Report to: General Committee

Date Report Authored: February 27, 2012

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**SUBJECT:** Spring and Year-Round Load Restrictions for the Town of Markham's Road Network  
**PREPARED BY:** Robert Maritzel, Ext 2842

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

- 1) That the report titled 'Spring and year round load restrictions for the Town of Markham's road network' be received;
- 2) And that the gross weight of commercial vehicles be restricted to 5 tonnes per axle on all public highways under the jurisdiction of the Town of Markham, from March 1 to April 30, each and every year, except for those roads which are exempt, as listed in Appendix 'A';
- 3) And that should adverse spring thaw conditions be encountered due to a harsh winter, at the discretion of the Director of Operations or their delegate, the load restrictions be extended up to May 31 (up to four weeks) in any year;
- 4) And that the gross vehicle weight of commercial vehicles be restricted to 5 tonnes per axle for the hard surfaced Town roads listed in Appendix 'B', from January 1 to December 31 each and every year;
- 5) And that the Director of Operations or their delegate be authorized to up-date or revise the streets and limits listed in the By-law Appendices each year or whenever necessary;
- 6) And that according to the *Highway Traffic Act* Subsection 122(4) the restrictions would exempt vehicles operated by or on behalf of the municipality and school busses;
- 7) And that the Director of Operations or their delegate, be authorized to grant exemptions to the By-laws to permit heavy vehicular loads, at her/his discretion;
- 8) And that staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this report is to prevent premature failure to the Town's road surface and to reduce the high cost of road repair and rehabilitation as a result of damages that occur from heavy commercial vehicle activities. Under the proposed By-laws, trucks over 5 tonnes per axle will be restricted on public highways and hard surfaced rural Town roads.

**BACKGROUND:**

Under Subsection 122(7) of the *Highway Traffic Act*, the municipal corporation having jurisdiction over a highway may, by by-law, designate the date on which a reduced load period shall start or end and the highway or portion thereof to which the designation applies. Therefore, the Council of the Town of Markham is granted authority under these sections to restrict heavy load vehicular traffic on its public highways to protect the structural components of its road network.

**OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:**

This report differs from previous Load Restriction By-law reports in that its resolution would authorize the By-laws to remain in effect each and every year, instead of being renewed each year by this Committee. Since the details of the By-laws have not changed for many years, this permanent authorization is more effective use of this Committee's time. Thereby, the Committee only need be consulted when amendments to the By-laws are proposed. This permanent authorization is not forbidden under the *Highway Traffic Act*, and is in fact used by many other municipalities.

The Operations Department will post load limit restrictions to limit loads to 5 tonnes per axle on all Town roads, with the exception of those listed in Appendix 'A', for the spring thaw period from March 1<sup>st</sup> through to April 30<sup>th</sup> each and every year. Should the Town encounter extreme cold temperatures that effectively slow the spring thaw, the load limit restrictions will be extended for up to an additional four weeks, or from April 30<sup>th</sup> to May 31<sup>st</sup> in any year. The roads with posted load limit restrictions do not have any potential to be major truck haulage routes.

In addition, the Operations Department will continue to impose year-round load restrictions on all hard surfaced rural roads, under the jurisdiction of the Town of Markham. Exceptions include vehicles operated by or on behalf of the municipality, where the vehicles are engaged in highway maintenance, including the carriage and application of abrasives or chemicals to the highway, vehicles used for the transportation of fire apparatus, transportation of waste, public utility emergency vehicles, and school busses as stated in Subsection 122(4) of the *Highway Traffic Act*.

There has been a significant increase in the volume of heavy commercial vehicles, which utilize sections of the Town's rural road network as truck routes. The Town's surface treatment program provides interim improved driving surfaces on sections of gravel roads that meet the Ministry of Transportation's guidelines for roads with traffic volumes that exceed 500 vehicles per day. Heavy commercial vehicles are infiltrating and damaging the infrastructure of these roads. The proposed year-round load restriction will discourage operators from utilizing these roads and thereby reduce the high cost of road repairs. Access along these roads will continue to be available for commuters and local residents. The year-round by-law restriction will apply only for the Town rural roads that have a potential for becoming heavy truck haulage routes. For businesses located on

these roads, annual overweight permits may be issued by the Town on a no-fee basis to address their needs.

A Town of Markham By-law is required under the *Highway Traffic Act* before any of the weight restriction regulations can be enforced. This will protect the integrity of the Town's road infrastructure and extends the designed life expectancy of the pavement.

**FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND TEMPLATE: (external link)**

The cost of installing load restrictions signs will be covered under the annual Operations budget.

**ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:**

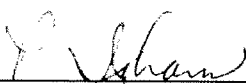
***Municipal Services***

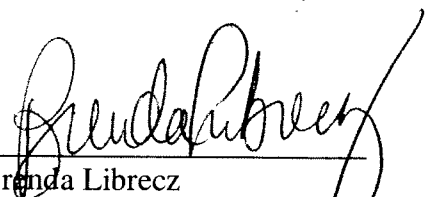
The load limit restrictions protect the structural integrity of the road while reducing the high cost of road repair and rehabilitation. Heavy loads cause more roads flexing than normal because of high moisture content in the roadbed during spring thaw period. The increased flexing then will lead to premature road failure and shortens the service life of the pavement.

**BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:**

The Operations Department have reviewed this report with the By-law Division of the Corporate Services Commission and Legal Services and they concur with the content.

**RECOMMENDED BY:**

  
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Paul Ingham  
Director, Operations

  
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Brenda Librecz  
Commissioner, Community & Fire Services

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Appendix 'A' – Spring Load Restriction By-law

Appendix 'B' – Year-round Load Restriction By-law