
City of Kelowna

MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 29th, 2005
FILE: 5460-04: Wilkinson Street
TO: City Manager
FROM: Transportation Manager
RE: **Wilkinson Street**

Report prepared by Harry Thompson, Traffic & Transportation Engineer

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council approve the following:

- Retention of access to and from Wilkinson Street at Guisichan Road and Springfield Road
- Provision of a median island on Gordon Drive between Guisichan and Springfield and increasing the posted speed to 50 km/h northbound to reduce delay (southbound to remain at 30 km/h)
- No additional traffic calming measures to be implemented at this time
- Traffic conditions be monitored next spring and the need for further traffic calming to be reviewed then

BACKGROUND:

The City has for many years planned to link Rose Avenue – Guisichan Road to Byrns Road as a continuous east-west route to complement KLO Road and Springfield Road. The route was negotiated as part of the planning for the parcel of land to the south of Guisichan Road east of Stillingfleet Road. The realignment is shown in the 1994–2013 and subsequent Official Community Plans (OCP's).

Wilkinson Street was identified in 1995 in the Transportation Plan as a collector road, but the 2013 OCP did not show any collectors in the City. This designation for Wilkinson was affirmed in the 2000 – 2020 Official Community Plan, where it is identified as a minor collector road.

Residents of Wilkinson Street had previously requested traffic calming, but this was not found to be warranted following a review of volumes, speed, crashes and other criteria. When the construction of the new Guisichan Road link was imminent, staff was aware that some of the traffic previously using Guisichan and Burtch as a route to Springfield would likely consider the new route too long, and use Wilkinson Street as a short-cut in preference. A decision was therefore made to implement traffic calming measures to discourage this short-cutting and to keep speeds to reasonable levels. A traffic circle at

McBride/Wilkinson or speed humps mid block were options under consideration. Residents favoured the traffic circle option. Ultimately though, both for cost reasons and because of the perceived urgency of implementing measures before opening the new Guisichan alignment through the Byrns/Burtch/Guisichan roundabout, two speed humps were installed.

Speed and volume data collected in May 2003 found the average daily volume (7-day average) to be 987 vehicles, with the 85th percentile speed being 57 km/h (i.e. 85% of vehicles traveling at 57km/h or less). Data collected in September 2005, after opening of the new Guisichan Road alignment and the installation of speed humps on Wilkinson showed average daily traffic to be 1805 vehicles, with an 85% speed of 48 km/h (a drop of 9 km/h). In addition, the number of vehicles doing very high speeds (e.g. over 70 km/h) had also decreased very significantly. This, while traffic volumes had increased significantly, speeds had shown a marked decrease, with obvious safety benefits. It should also be noted that as a minor collector road, volumes of up to 5,000 vpd are not considered unreasonable. Clearly this is far higher than the volumes now being experienced. Furthermore, volumes in the 1,500 to 2,500 vpd range are fairly typical on minor collectors elsewhere in the City.

The Wilkinson Street community has expressed concerns about the large increase in traffic flow on their street. Residents close to the speed humps have also complained of the noise of vehicles slowing down and accelerating at these speed humps, or bouncing noisily over them with minimal decrease in speeds. Requests from residents have been made for the installation of a traffic circle. A petition has also been received for the closure of Wilkinson at Guisichan Road.

The closure of Wilkinson is not recommended, as it reduces general accessibility within the neighbourhood, and inevitably diverts traffic away from Wilkinson (a designated collector road) to other roads (e.g. McBride and Stillingfleet, which are both local roads) for many trips. It will also likely lead to an increase in left turns from Wilkinson northbound into Springfield, which are obviously less safe than right turns southbound into Guisichan.

Collector roads such as Wilkinson Street serve an important second-tier function below arterial roads but above local roads. Nevertheless, it is recognized that it is undesirable to have traffic leaving arterial roads such as Gordon and Springfield to route along Guisichan and Wilkinson to reach Springfield a little quicker. Part of the reason is seen to be the delay due to the school zone on Gordon between Glenwood and Springfield. Staff is proposing to install a median island between Glenwood and Springfield and increase the northbound posted speed to 50 km/h. Crossing facilities for pedestrians are available at Gordon and Springfield. There is a successful precedent for differing speeds northbound and southbound on Glenmore Drive past Glenmore Elementary School. (Southbound posted speed on Gordon Drive adjacent to A.S.Matheson School would remain at 30 km/h.)

Staff is of the view that traffic volumes may well change in the coming months, for a number of reasons. Firstly, traffic is still adapting to the changes in the road network. Recent observations indicated a significant number of motorists using Guisichan eastbound and making a left turn at the roundabout into Burtch Road northbound. These are drivers that might well have used Wilkinson, but have found the travel time through the roundabout to be less of deterrence than the speed humps. Secondly, traffic

patterns have been significantly affected by the construction work on KLO and Benvoulin Roads. Motorists who normally might have been using Casorso or KLO to Benvoulin are probably now continuing up Gordon Drive en route to Orchard Park and other destinations to the east of Burtch Road. This is increasing the volume making the northbound right turn from Gordon onto Springfield, with delays increasing as a result. This is probably also leading to more traffic diverting to Guisichan and Wilkinson. It is likely that this pattern will drop off once construction work at KLO and Benvoulin is completed.

For the above reasons, it is recommended that traffic conditions be allowed to revert to their more typical long-term state before any further traffic calming measures are considered. Speeds and volume data will be collected in the spring of 2006, and the number of short-cutters from Gordon to Springfield via Wilkinson will be assessed. Thereafter a decision can be made as to whether additional traffic calming is justified.



Ron Westlake, P.Eng
Transportation Manager

Approved for inclusion:
John Vos, Director of Works & Utilities

RW/HT