



CITY OF RICHMOND
URBAN DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

MEMORANDUM

TO: Councillor Lyn Greenhill
Chair, Public Works and Transportation Committee

DATE: November 17, 2000

FROM: Gordon Chan, P. Eng.
Manager, Transportation

FILE: 6360-06

**RE: Heather Street Traffic Usage and Garden City Shopping Centre Access from
Dixon Avenue**

Ms. Kathy Stephens (8371 Heather Street) is expected to speak to the Public Works and Transportation Committee with concerns regarding:

- increased through traffic on Heather Street;
- speeding traffic on Heather Street; and
- the new access to the Garden City Shopping Centre on Dixon Avenue.

This memorandum provides a brief history of the traffic calming measures recently undertaken on Heather Street and addresses the issue of the new Dixon Avenue access to the Garden City Shopping Centre.

1. Heather Street Traffic Calming

In the mid-1980s, responding to the need expressed by area residents to slow traffic and discourage through traffic on local streets in the Heather Street area, a possible road closure on Heather Street (between Blundell Road and Dixon Road) was included in the Ash Street Sub-Area Plan. In 1993, consistent with the Ash Street Sub-Area Plan, a mid-block road closure on Heather Street between Blundell Road and Dixon Avenue was made one of the development requirements for the townhouse complex located at 8020 and 8040 Heather Street and 9280 and 9300 Blundell Road.

A survey sent to area residents in January/February, 1999 confirmed that the majority of respondents were still supportive of the proposed mid-block closure of Heather Street. In March, 1999, Council again endorsed the mid-block road closure of Heather Street to address the concerns of local residents about speeding and shortcutting in the area.

After the construction works of closing Heather Street (Blundell Road to Dixon Avenue) were completed in Spring, 2000, the City received a petition, dated April 13, 2000, from some residents of the Heather Street area suggesting that:

- access to the Garden City Shopping Centre be improved;
- Heather Street north of Dixon Avenue be kept open to through traffic; and
- a traffic circle be placed at the intersection of Heather Street and Dixon Avenue.

Upon discussion with the owners of the Garden City Shopping Centre, a new access to the shopping centre on Dixon Avenue was proposed to replace the access removed by the mid-block closure of Heather Street. On June 7, 2000, area residents who signed the petition (35 households) or live in close proximity to the new driveway access (three households) were asked to provide feedback on the proposal. Four of 38 residents who were sent letters responded. Only one resident opposed the new driveway access. Staff suggested that a cedar hedge be placed in front of the lot at 9020 Dixon Avenue (which is directly across from the access) at the discretion of the owner. Placement of the hedge is awaiting confirmation from the owner.

The new Dixon Avenue access was completed in Autumn, 2000, following approval by the Development Permit Panel meeting as part of a General Compliance Application for the shopping centre to address the request by area residents for improved access to the centre.

2. Heather Street Traffic Study

To investigate the recent concerns of through traffic usage and speeding, a study of vehicle traffic was conducted in both the southbound and northbound traffic lanes of Heather Street at Dolphin Avenue beginning November 1, 2000 at 3:00 PM and ending November 5, 2000 at 3:00 PM. A similar traffic study was conducted in February 1998 at the same intersection for the same time period prior to the mid-block closure of Heather Street. The results of both traffic studies are summarized below.

Measure	Before Closure on Heather Street		After Closure on Heather Street	
Study Period	<i>February 11-15, 1998 (3 PM to 3 PM)</i>		<i>November 1-5, 2000 (3 PM to 3 PM)</i>	
Direction	<i>Northbound</i>	<i>Southbound</i>	<i>Northbound</i>	<i>Southbound</i>
Total recorded volume of traffic	1,766	3,351	917 (48 % decrease)	1,309 (61 % decrease)
Average Speed	42 km/h	44 km/h	23 km/h	41 km/h
Peak Period	3:00 PM	5:30 PM	8:30 AM	3:00 PM

Traffic Volume and Speeds on Heather Street

The November 2000 traffic study reveals that northbound traffic on Heather Street has decreased by nearly one-half, while southbound traffic has fallen by nearly two-thirds. Average speeds in both directions have also decreased. Both results indicate that the mid-block closure of Heather Street has not only proven effective in significantly reducing through traffic using the street as a shortcut but has also reduced the average speed of vehicles using the street.

Change in Peak Time Period

The effectiveness of the Heather Street cul-de-sac is further supported by the change in the peak time periods, as the peak time periods now coincide with the start and end of the school day (8:30 AM and 3:00 PM, respectively), which suggests local resident usage, rather than the start and end of the afternoon rush hour (3:00 PM and 5:30 PM, respectively), which suggested through traffic using the street as a shortcut.

3. Dixon Avenue Access to Garden City Shopping Centre

The Dixon Avenue driveway for the Garden City Shopping Centre maintains local resident access to the centre, as it replaces the Heather Street access that was lost when the mid-block closure of Heather Street occurred. The results of the traffic study suggest that the new access has not had a significant impact on local traffic patterns. Without the new driveway, local residents would be forced to travel on the adjacent arterial roads (i.e., Garden City Road and Blundell Road) to access the centre.



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GFC:jc

cc: Dave McLellan
General Manager, Urban Development