

City of Vaughan

Pleasant Ridge Avenue Corridor Review



Final Report

Friday, February 16, 2024

B001467A

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Project No B001467A

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Executive Summary

Study Area

The City of Vaughan retained CIMA Canada Inc. (CIMA+) to review traffic and safety along a collector road in the City of Vaughan (Pleasant Ridge Avenue) between Langstaff Road and Rutherford Road. The study corridor is approximately 2.16 km long and is a primary north-south minor collector roadway with sidewalks on both sides, no designated cycling facilities, on-street parking, and two vehicular travel lanes. Pleasant Ridge Avenue has a posted speed limit of 40 km/h. Along the study corridor, there are low-density (single-family dwellings) and medium-density residential land use (townhouses) as well as the North Thornhill Community Centre, Stephen Lewis Secondary School and Carrville Mills Public School (just off Pleasant Ridge Avenue), all of which are major traffic generators in the area.

The study area has traffic controls in place within the study area, specifically posted speed control signs, stop signs and traffic signals. A set of 40 km/h begins, and end signs are provided at either end of the study area. The intersections at the Regional roads at either end of the study area are signalized. All-way Stop controls are in place at the following intersections:

- Pleasant Ridge Avenue at Mistysugar Trail / Firtree Trail
- Pleasant Ridge Avenue at Summeridge Drive
- Pleasant Ridge Avenue at Jacobi Court
- Pleasant Ridge Avenue at Coltrane Drive
- Pleasant Ridge Avenue at Autumn Hill Boulevard
- Pleasant Ridge Avenue at Apple Blossom Drive
- Pleasant Ridge Avenue at Balsamwood Road

Stop controls (on the minor approaches) are in place at all remaining intersections.

Several traffic calming measures are in place within the study area, specifically intersection medians, raised intersections, speed stencils, watch your speed signs, and edge line treatments recently installed (early October 2022) to slow down motorists.

Office Review

A significant amount of background data was reviewed for this study, consisting of collision data, ATR data (volume and speed), turning movement counts, origin-destination survey, parking data and a review of traffic impact studies in the area. This data was used to characterize traffic conditions in the neighbourhood and determine the potential need for changes to traffic control and/or pedestrian and cycling facilities. The following was noted:

- Traffic volumes on Pleasant Ridge Avenue carry roughly 3900 – 5300 vehicles per day, typical for a collector roadway.
- 85th percentile speeds collected in 2022 are in the range of 40 km/h – 55 km/h, including operating speeds somewhat higher than posted (particularly in the long section between Apple Blossom Drive and Autumn Hill Boulevard).
- Pedestrian counts indicate heavy pedestrian movements at intersections near Stephen Lewis Secondary School, North Thornhill Community Centre and Carville Mills Public School. Pedestrians were noted as crossing at uncontrolled locations.
- A parking survey indicates low levels of parking along Pleasant Ridge Avenue except for modest numbers of parked and/or stopped vehicles on the east and west sides of Pleasant Ridge Avenue adjacent to Stephen Lewis Secondary School during arrival and dismissal periods.
- The corridor is fully built out, and in the absence of any notable development, there is very limited potential for future traffic growth along the corridor.
- The traffic calming warrant indicates the need to calm traffic at selected locations along the corridor due to higher observed operating speeds.
- There is no need for any additional school crossing guards along the corridor.
- There is no need for additional all-way stop controls or traffic signals along the corridor.
- Based on pedestrian crossing volumes and adjacent controlled locations for pedestrians to cross Pleasant Ridge Avenue, there is no evidence of a demand of a pedestrian crossover. However, pedestrian desire lines exist between North Thornhill Community Center and Stephen Lewis Secondary School on Pleasant Ridge Avenue.
- The City has indicated a desire for dedicated cycling facilities along Pleasant Ridge Avenue. Given the observed operating speeds and volumes, an on-street bicycle lane with buffers would be appropriate.

- A review of historical collision performance noted that most collisions occurred at all-way stop controlled intersections.
- A review of traffic operations indicated some congestion at the intersection of Pleasant Ridge Avenue and Autumn Hill Boulevard in the weekday PM peak period, further degraded in the 10-year horizon year. While a traffic signal is not currently warranted, traffic conditions at this intersection should continue to be monitored.

Field Investigation

The following summarizes overall observations made during the field investigation:

- At Stephen Lewis Secondary School, potentially unsafe crossing was observed due to pick up and drop off activity occurring on the opposite side of the road to the high school (Stephen Lewis Secondary School located on the east side of Pleasant Ridge Avenue).
- Road width is approximately 10.8 – 11.0 m, without on-street parking. This encourages higher operating speeds.
- Missing stop bars and tactile strips noted at various intersections.
- Concrete pads (including those required for parks and trails maintenance and operations) noted at locations that may encourage crossing at uncontrolled locations.
- Crosswalks provided at uncontrolled locations.
- Limited sightlines to Langstaff Gospel Hall for traffic travelling southbound.

Consultation Summary

Throughout the project, CIMA met with stakeholders and members of the public. CIMA and the City project team had three agency meetings with stakeholders representing various internal City departments and selected external partners (Region of York, York Regional Police, York Transit). Separate meetings were held with school board officials, officials from the North Thornhill Community Centre, and City Council. CIMA staff and the City project team also held two virtual public engagement sessions during January 2023 and April 2023. In the initial meeting, the consultant team provided the results of the preliminary findings and problem identification to the public. Public input and comments were also received. An onsite meeting was also held with members of the Langstaff Gospel Hall to share information about the project, receive feedback on areas

of interest and discuss alternative options. The second public engagement provided the opportunity to report the preliminary study recommendations and gain further feedback from the public. Finally, stakeholders and members of the public had an opportunity to provide feedback on a slide deck that contained the study recommendations and included conceptual drawings showing the future vision for the corridor.

Identified Issues and Corresponding Recommendations

Based on the review of the study area and its characteristics that includes review of traffic conditions, collision history, field investigation and public consultation findings (three rounds of engagement), the following key broad issues and corresponding treatments were identified within the Pleasant Ridge Avenue Corridor.

- **Managing higher turning speeds and ongoing improvement to safety at the all-way stop controlled intersections** through the implementation of curb radius reductions at the Stop controlled intersections along the corridor.
- **Encouraging higher driver compliance at stop-controlled intersections** by installing tiger tails beneath stop signs to provide added emphasis at selected all-way Stop controlled intersections (and left side stop signs) where compliance is low.
- **Addressing uncontrolled pedestrian movements** by adding a pedestrian crossover at Basie Gate/North Thornhill Community Centre with appropriate signs, pavement markings, and a physical narrowing roadway at the crossing location.
- **Providing cycling facilities** by adding a painted bicycle lane with a buffer along the entire length of Pleasant Ridge Avenue (where space permits, the cycling facilities will be in-boulevard).

Addressing unsafe pick up and drop off at Stephen Lewis Secondary School through stopping prohibitions (and bollards if warranted) on the east side of Pleasant Ridge and on adjacent local roads; parents are encouraged to use the parking lot off Autumn Hill Boulevard instead.

Additional minor treatments were identified along the corridor. Upon completion of the study, the City will start a functional design study to improve pedestrian and cycling infrastructure and road safety.