



# Corporate Report

NO: R183

COUNCIL DATE: September 11, 2006

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## REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: Mayor & Council DATE: August 31, 2006  
FROM: General Manager, Engineering FILE: 5400-80 (09600)  
SUBJECT: ACORN Request for Crosswalk/Signal Light at 126 Street/96 Avenue

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Engineering Department recommends that Council:

1. Receive this report for information.
2. Authorize staff to forward a copy of this report to ACORN Canada, Cedar Hills Chapter.

## INTENT

To provide Engineering's assessment and next steps in response to the delegation ACORN Canada, Cedar Hills Chapter, regarding a pedestrian crossing at 126 Street and 96 Avenue.

## BACKGROUND

ACORN Canada representing local residents in an effort to achieve an improved pedestrian crossing opportunity at 96 Avenue and 126 Street, appeared as a delegation to Council-In-Committee on April 3. The Engineering Department has advised them that the City cannot at this time support a crossing measure, but that it would be re-evaluated later this year in conjunction with a City-wide study of pedestrian crossing needs.

## DISCUSSION

### Pedestrian Crossing Evaluation Practices

The City currently uses a nationally accepted standard based on vehicular volumes, pedestrian volumes, number of through travel lanes and distance to next protected crossing. The analysis is based on the average volumes over a 7-hour period (except at schools where it is based on the peak hour for the school).

Although not implicit in the pedestrian crossing warrants, safety is also assessed and taken into consideration in our decisions for all crossing requests. There is also a requirement for a minimum of 20 pedestrian crossings per hour. This component of our evaluation is important as it shows there is real demand for the crossing. Further, without this requirement, virtually any crossing location requested across 4-lane, and even many 2-lane, arterials would be warranted for a pedestrian signal, based solely on the vehicular volumes. The installation of traffic control lights at all of such locations would have unreasonable impacts to traffic flow on our arterials notwithstanding the capital and operating budgets required for these measures.

The installation of a marked crosswalk (without some form of traffic control light) in locations with low pedestrian volumes cannot be supported as research has shown that the pedestrian safety would actually be worse. This is a result of the traffic volumes and speeds combined with relatively low pedestrian crossing volumes. In these situations, drivers do not expect to have to stop but pedestrians tend to be less cautious as the crosswalk tells them that they have the right-of-way and gives a false sense of security.

### **96 Avenue/126 Street Pedestrian Crossing Evaluation**

Pedestrian crossing volume:	2 to 4 per hour (min 20/hr required)
Safety (based on latest ICBC data available):	1 pedestrian injury in past 6 years (1999-2004) 3 pedestrian injuries in past 9 years (1996-2004)

Staff agree that in order to cross safely, pedestrians will encounter delays at this location; however, based on the demand and safety history, pedestrian crossing measures cannot be supported at this time.

Residents have noted that the crossing demand would increase if some form of crossing measure were installed. There could be a nominal increase due to the bus stops on 96 Avenue at 126 Street, but staff were unable to identify any land uses on the opposite side of 96 Avenue that would generate a significant increase in crossing demand. Appendix 1 shows the intersection of 96 Avenue/126 Street and the surrounding area with all facilities and amenities identified.

Cedar Hills Elementary School is on the north side of 96 Avenue, but 96 Avenue is the catchment boundary and there is a pedestrian signal at 123A Street immediately adjacent to the school. Robson Park and the convenience store would be the only other amenities, both of which are about the same walking distance by crossing at the 128 Street signalized intersection instead.

### **SUMMARY**

- Crossing measures at this location were evaluated by the City and could not be supported at this time, based on low crossing demand and no history of safety problems relative to other locations throughout the City.

- Several discussions have been held with ACORN explaining the City's position, next steps planned, and inviting them to meet to discuss the issue and review improvements planned for 96 Avenue in this area that could improve the pedestrian crossing situation.
- The City has hired a Consultant to undertake a comprehensive review of our pedestrian crossing practices which will allow us to set City-wide priorities. ACORN was advised that this review would include a new assessment of the 96 Avenue/126 Street intersection. Results of the study are anticipated by December of this year.

### **Next Steps by City**

As the City receives many such requests for pedestrian crossings and there are now a number of types of "special" crosswalks available that can improve pedestrian safety with reduced impact to traffic, the City has hired a Consultant to undertake a comprehensive review of our pedestrian crossing practices.

This study is evaluating crossing warrants used elsewhere, all types of crossing measures available and assess a sampling of all the different types of pedestrian crossing situations in Surrey (e.g., schools, 4-lane vs. 2-lane road, etc.). The result will be new criteria for assessing pedestrian crossing situations and a prioritization method.

The City is including 96 Avenue/126 Street in the crossing evaluations included in Phase 1 of this study. Results of the study are expected in September/October of this year. A second phase to the study is envisioned where all of the elementary schools in the City are assessed for addition of or modification to crossing opportunities.

In addition, the City is designing for safety and capacity improvements along 96 Avenue between Scott Road and 128 Street. This involves the introduction of raised median and additional left turn lanes. The section from just west of 126 Street to 128 Street is planned as Phase 1 of this project and is being considered for construction in 2007. However, budgets are still being finalized and thus the construction timing is not yet definite. This project will provide improved crossing opportunity at 126 Street by introducing a raised median refuge across the west side of the 96 Avenue intersection.

### **Communications with ACORN**

Staff have had an informal discussion with representatives of the ACORN group on this issue immediately following the January 25, 2006, Public Meeting at Holly Park Elementary School and again following their delegation to Council on April 3, 2006.

Subsequent to this, staff have had telephone conversations with the head organizer of ACORN further explaining the City's position and next steps. The design for 96 Avenue at 126 Street has been explained to the ACORN representative and they have been invited to meet with staff to review the design drawings.

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