



Township of Scugog Staff Report

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Report Number: PWIS-2021-022

Prepared by: Carol Coleman, Director of Public Works and Infrastructure

Department: Public Works and Infrastructure Services

Report To: Council

Date: June 28, 2021

Reference: Strategic Plan Direction#1: Roads & Municipal Infrastructure
Strategic Plan Direction#7: Complete Community
Motion CR-2021-086 Re: Dead-End Road Kids – April 26, 2021

Report Title: **Williams Point Road and Beacock Road School Bus Turnarounds**

Recommendations:

1. **That** Report PWIS-2021-022, Williams Point Road and Beacock Road School Bus Turnarounds, be received;
 2. **That** funding not to exceed \$150,000 for the construction of turnarounds on Williams Point Road and Beacock Road to accommodate school buses, be provided through the Municipal Projects Reserve;
 3. **That** the Mayor and Clerk be authorized to enter into Permission to Enter agreements on Beacock Road and Williams Point Road at the location of the turnarounds; and
 4. **That** Council and staff continue to work with Province of Ontario and the local school boards to change their policies to allow 3-point turns or backing up where necessary, to provide safer service to dead-end and private road children and prevent the need for additional turnarounds to be constructed on Township of Scugog roads.
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1. Background:

In June 2020, Durham Student Transportation Services (DSTS) notified the Township of Scugog that due to changes to their policy school buses would no longer service the following roads:

Road	New Bus Stop Location
Whitfield Road 230 m west of Honeys Beach Road	Indian Way and Whitfield Road
Williams Point Road/ Jack Rabbit Run (Caesarea)	Regional Road 57 and Williams Point Road
Beacock Road	Regional Road 57 and Beacock Road

The changes were the result of Section 7.2 of the DSTS Policy that states:

“Generally, school bus stops will not be located in areas such as cul-de-sacs or dead end streets. DSTS does not enter private property and roads, such as long rural driveways, gated communities and townhouse/apartment complexes.

DSTS reserves the right to determine if the roadway is suitable for travel, given road conditions and necessary space requirements factoring in turning radius of large school vehicles.”

Township staff and an adjacent property owner were successful in providing a solution to allow for ongoing use of the existing bus stop on Whitfield Road located 230 m west of Honeys Beach Road. There is currently a small loop on private property where school buses are able to safely turnaround. To meet the requirements of DSTS, a Permission to Enter Agreement was signed between the Township and the property owner in August 2020 for use of this turning loop.

However, on both Williams Point Road/ Jack Rabbit Run and Beacock Road, DSTS requires the construction of new turnarounds before they will return school buses to these roads.

2. Discussion:

2.1 Issues on Williams Point Road and Beacock Road

Williams Point Road/ Jack Rabbit Run runs northeast off of Regional Road 57 and is approximately 2.2 km in length. According to DSTS, 29 students on this road are eligible for school transportation. These students attend Port Perry High School, R.H. Cornish Public School and Cartwright Central Public School.

Beacock Road runs west off of Regional Road 57 and is approximately 2 km in length. There are 3 students eligible for school busing on this road that attend Port Perry High School and Cartwright Central Public School .

After receiving letters from DSTS about the changes to the bus routes, many parents on both these roads were upset and requested review of the transportation arrangements in accordance with Section 7.0 of the DSTS policy. The requests were reviewed by the DSTS Governance Committee in a meeting held on October 28, 2020 and changes to the decision were denied.

Many of the parents have expressed concerns about the school bus changes, including:

- The change in policy although bus stops have been in operation for 25+ years;
- The distance that some children will have to walk to the bus stop exceeds the maximum distance of 800 m in the DSTS Policy;
- The safety of children walking these distances on narrow roads that have no sidewalks or streetlights;
- The likelihood of congestion as the result of parents driving their children to the new bus stops, especially in the winter;
- The safety of children waiting for buses on RR 57; and
- The school bus service on the road was part of the decision making process to move to these locations.

2.2 Policy Change Requests

Despite considerable effort from Council, staff and parents, DSTS has held firm that they will not return the school buses to Williams Point Road/ Jack Rabbit Run or Beacock Road unless suitable turnarounds are available.

In an effort to change the DSTS Policy, at the April 26, 2021 Council meeting, Scugog Council passed the following resolution:

***“That** Dead-End Road delegations be received: from parents, video, site www.durhamdeadendroadkids.ca and attached correspondence and;*

***Whereas** Dead-End Road kids (cul-de-sacs, private roads) busing being moved from long-time residential to highspeed (some 80km) common stop pickups; percentage of 830,000 Ontario bused students impacted as Student Transportation Services (STS) citing buses shouldn’t access private roads, do 3-point-turns, or back up; kids expected to walk 1-2km twice daily (caregivers 4x) in morning dark, on narrow road shoulders, with no “bus stop ahead” warning signage;*

***Whereas** Parents report employment/housing at risk. Must leave work to drop off/pick up children to avoid safety hazards of kids walking on highways*

unsupervised; secondary school youth reporting education at risk as missing class/affecting grades; children with disabilities not helped like double amputee who needs stop moved 160ft; parents told it's their "responsibility to get kids to bus safely";

Whereas *Parents being told busing policy is schoolboard's, but they say it's STS's, who say it's Governance Committee or Ministry of Transportation, but Ministry of Education say it's "transportation consortia who administer policy"; and trustee, governance say cannot change policies, so parents appealing to police, press, & councils re dangers then; oncoming car killed 12-yr-old Cormac and injured sister while waiting at newly relocated bus stop at the base of a hill;*

Whereas *STS have advised road improvements are responsibility of municipalities, yet municipalities don't own needed land, nor have \$ millions to create 77m bus turnarounds, meanwhile;*

Whereas *Ontario Transportation Funding is \$1 billion; Jan 27/20 Ministry said they'd improve student transportation, review funding formula; and given STS gets their funding by scoring well in reviews, and given Ministry establishing "Student Transportation Advisory Group" to hear STS sector expertise, experience and ideas;*

Now therefore be it resolved that the Municipality of Scugog requests:

That *exceptions to allow 3-point turns or backing up where necessary, to provide safer service to dead-end and private road kids, that policies be amended to reflect; when not possible;*

That *exceptions to allow indemnification agreements to access private land for bus turnarounds to keep bus stops safer and closer to prescribed 800 m distance; when not possible;*

That *"Bus Stop Ahead" warning signage be required to notify oncoming traffic, prior to STS moving common stop to main roadway;*

That *STS be comprised of solutions like mini-buses, vans, taxis, or public transit, worked into funding formula so doesn't negatively impact STS funding stats;*

That *Kid KPI "Key Performance Indicator" be included for Ministry "Effectiveness & Efficiency Follow Up Reviews", establishing benchmarks for responsive-problem-solving for kids & parents' busing concerns, and this be an STS factor to receive funding;*

***That** Province provide “Parent Portal” for ongoing busing feedback of their STS, so families and kids can review/provide comments, especially during Ministry STS reviews and revisions to funding;*

***That** Province have GPS tracking software to notify parents when children picked up/dropped off, and*

***That** this motion be distributed to Premier Doug Ford, Honorable Stephen Lecce (Minister of Education), Honorable Caroline Mulroney (Minister of Transport), Durham MPP Lindsey Park, Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock MPP Laurie Scott, all Durham MPPs, Durham Region, all Ontario Municipalities, Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA), Ontario Good Roads Association (OGRA), and Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO).”*

To date, the Township has not received a response from any of these parties regarding the requests.

2.3 Turnaround Designs

In order to assist in returning the school buses to Williams Point Road/ Jack Rabbit Run or Beacock Road, Township staff reviewed options to construct turnarounds on these roads.

On Williams Point Road/ Jack Rabbit Run, DSTS requires a turnaround for the largest size (70 passenger) school bus which requires a 24.5 m (80 feet) diameter turnaround. DSTS indicated that a smaller size bus has difficulty making the sharp turn on Williams Point Road and immediately navigating the incline through snow. Further using a smaller bus would not guarantee service along the roadway during winter months.

The Township considered two locations for the turnaround. The first was at the Williams Point Cottagers Association park property and the second was at the corner where Williams Point Road and Jack Rabbit Run meet. The second location was considered preferable as it would not impact parkland and would shorten the walking distance for children on Jack Rabbit Run. In order to determine whether such a turnaround was feasible, the Township retained a consultant to undertake a survey of the area and prepare a preliminary design. The turnaround was able to be designed primarily within lands owned by the Township but will have require permission to enter for land on the southeast corner of the turnaround. As well, the turnaround will require some trees to be removed and a Bell pedestal to be relocated.

On Beacock Road, DSTS indicated that a smaller turnaround of 19 m (62 feet) m diameter turnaround would be sufficient as a smaller bus could be used for this location. The best location was determined to be the west end of Beacock Road and the adjacent landowner has indicated willingness to enter into a Permission to Enter agreement for this turnaround.

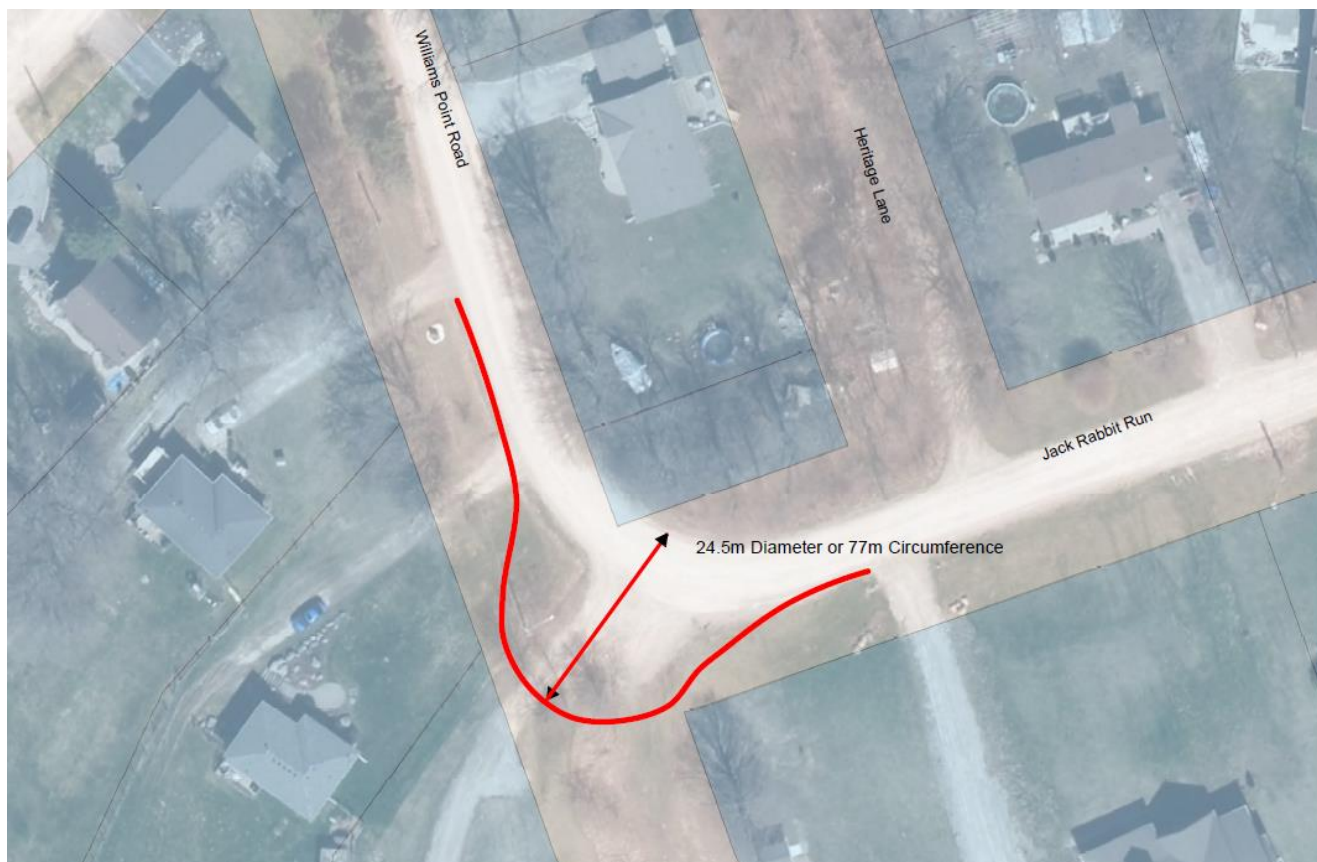


Figure 1: Proposed Location of Turnaround for Williams Point Road/ Jack Rabbit Run



Figure 2: Proposed Location of Beacock Road Turnaround

3. Financial Implications:

As the need for the turnarounds were not known at the time the 2021 Capital Budget was prepared, this work is unbudgeted. The total estimated cost for the design and construction are provided below:

Planmac Engineering Inc.	\$15,000
Williams Point Road Turnaround	\$90,000
Beacock Road Turnaround	\$30,000
Contingency	<u>\$15,000</u>
Total Estimated Cost	<u>\$150,000</u>

The estimated construction costs include:

- Clearing and grubbing
- Removal of bitumous surface, earth excavation (to 500 mm depth), grading
- Supply and place 300 mm of Granular 'B'
- Supply and place 150 mm of Granular 'A'
- New 450 mm culverts
- Ditching and removal of material
- Asphalt and line painting for Williams Point Road (50 mm HL8, 30 mm HL3)
- Restoration of driveways and grass areas
- Mobilization/ demobilization
- Traffic control

The turnaround on Williams Point Road will also require relocation of a Bell pedestal. The cost for this relocation is not yet known.

It is recommended that the above costs be funded from the Municipal Projects Reserve.

4. Communication Considerations:

Township staff will notify DSTS, affected residents and the Williams Point Cottagers Association regarding the timing of the works.

Information will also be provided on our website throughout the length of the project to provide the public with a means to keep updated on the progress of the project and to notify of any closures, detours, etc.

5. Conclusion:

At this time the construction of school bus turnarounds on Williams Point Road/ Jack Rabbit Run and Beacock Road appears to be the only solution to have the school buses return to these roads and provide a much needed service for the children on these roads. Township Council and staff will continue to work with the Province of Ontario and the local school boards to change their policies to allow 3-point turns or backing up where necessary, to provide safer service to dead-end and private road children and prevent the need for additional turnarounds to be constructed on Township of Scugog roads.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Carol Coleman, P. Eng.
Director of Public Works and Infrastructure

Reviewed By:

Ken Nix,
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments:

N/A