Haliburton Traffic Calming Pop-up Demonstration Report

September 27, 2016

A temporary, or 'pop-up' traffic calming demonstration was created at the driveway entrance/exit of the municipal parking lot off of County Road 21. During community consultations that took place as part of a larger Active Neighbourhoods Canada project, this location was identified as a problem spot for pedestrians due to high traffic volume, traffic speed, and traffic coming in and out of parking lots.

Traffic calming is a system of design and management strategies aimed at slowing down motor vehicle traffic in order to make an environment safer and friendlier for people on foot and on other modes of transport. Strategies can be simple and inexpensive – e.g. painting lines, colours or patterns on pavement; using planters, bollards or other removable barriers; or they can be more involved and require more investment – e.g. installing curb extensions, building traffic circles or making corners tighter.[1] The results of traffic calming measure could be some or all of the following: reduced vehicle speeds, reduced traffic volume, reducing number of conflict points between users, improved visibility of vulnerable road users or increased driver alertness. All of these contribute to reducing the likelihood of collisions and improving road safety.[2]

'Pop ups' are temporary installations that use easy-to-install props to demonstrate possible changes to a location. They are way to show how the environment can influence activity and behavior. For this pop-up, the purpose was to observe how defining and narrowing the entrance to the municipal parking lot affected both driver behavior and the pedestrian crossing experience. The hypothesis was that the pop-up would calm traffic driving through and turning into and out of the parking lot, thus making it safer and easier for people to cross the road.

Existing Conditions

There is significant foot traffic in this area, with people crossing to and from the parking, usually for access to a busy restaurant or a dentist's office. There is also a high volume of in and out vehicle traffic, including trucks pulling boat trailers as the driveway provides access to the town docks. The parking lot is very well-used and often full, especially during peak summer days and when events are held in Head Lake Park.

The driveway location presents challenges for crossing the road. The parking lot driveway is quite wide (approximately 15 metres), and has no lane markings or edges. The width and lack of visual boundaries or defined space mean that it can be unclear who is going where, creating a sometimes confusing and unpredictable environment. Often vehicles entering the parking lot from the west drive very fast because of the generous space. There is lack of refuge or protected space on the parking lot side of the road for people crossing or waiting to cross. Adding to the complexity of the location are high volumes of through traffic, and in addition to the municipal parking lot, there are vehicles entering and exiting the restaurant parking lot on the opposite side of the street.

On a busy day, pedestrians may wait for extended periods of time before there is a large enough gap in traffic to cross.

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[1] "Traffic Calming 101". Project for Public Spaces http://www.pps.org/reference/livememtraffic/

[2] "Urban Traffic Calming and Road Safety: Effects and Implications for Practice". National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy. January 2012.

Fig 1- Municipal parking lot entrance

Methodology

Two members of the CIA made a delegation to council in early September to get their approval to implement the pop up. Council noted their support in the minutes of the meeting. The design was also reviewed by the Director of Public Works prior to showing to council.

The pop-up was designed by a landscape architect doing work on the Active Neighbourhoods Canada Project, and adhered to best design practices where required (i.e. lane widths, curb radii). The overall width of 15 m was narrowed to create two lanes of 3.5m each. Curb radii were measured to be at least 8'. The design intentionally did not include a crosswalk. The demonstration sidewalk was not set up for the pop-up.

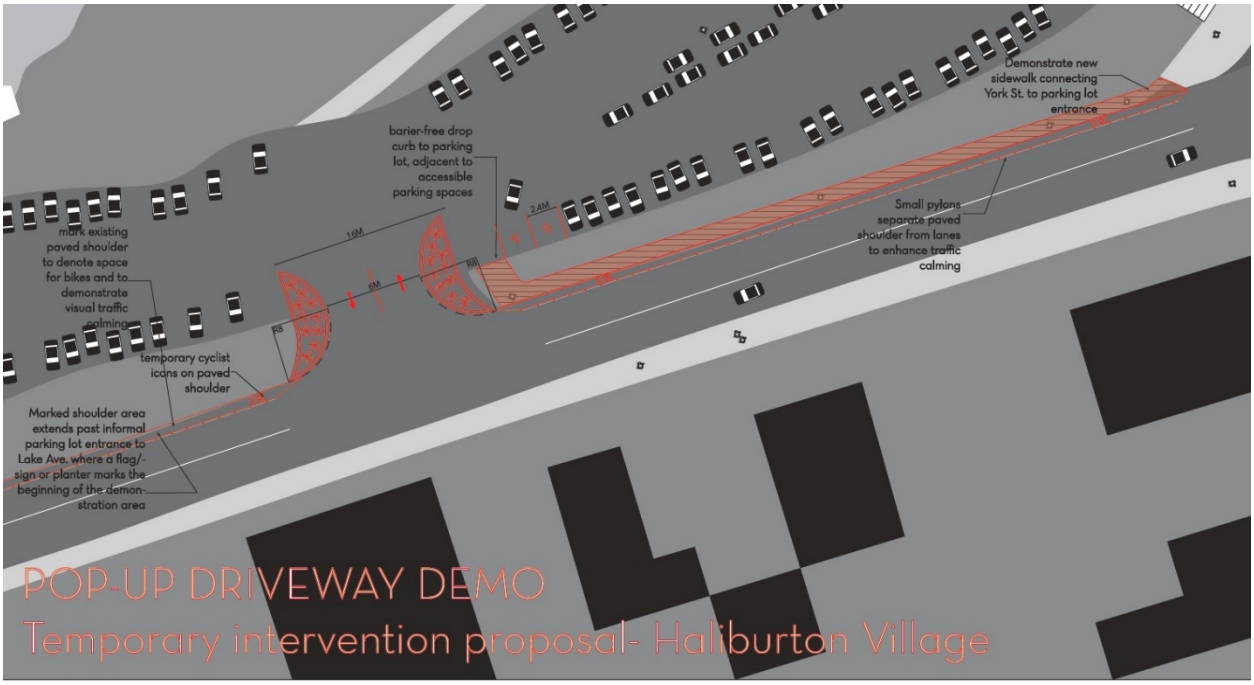

Fig. 2 Pop up design

The pop up was held on September 27. This date was selected because although it was after the peak tourist season (July-August), there would still be a lot of activity due to the presence of the Farmer's Market in the in park from 12 – 4 pm. The installation was created using simple props (duct tape, flower pots, hay bales, cones, coloured tarps), and set up from 8 am to 4 pm. Members of the CIA recorded numbers of people crossing the road on foot, vehicles entering and exiting the parking lot, and comments from passers-by. They also made general observations about driver and pedestrian behavior.

For comparison, counts and observations were also done the following week, October 4, without the pop up. This was also a Farmer's Market day. Counts were not done for the full day; they were done during peak periods as observed on September 27.

Figs. 3 to 6 are images of the site both with and without pop up set up.