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A no stopping zone for restricted times will be installed on the south side of Danby Rd. W., from Barber Dr. to a point 75m west of Silver Pond Dr. Hopefully this will encourage further use of the Gardiner Public School drop-off area.
Photo by Ted Brown

Traffic restrictions established to improve safety near schools

By **CYNTHIA GAMBLE**
Staff Writer

The Town, working with the two school boards and Halton Regional Police, will implement plans starting today (Tuesday) to improve safety around five local schools.

No stopping and no parking zones and speed limit reductions will be imposed in areas around McKenzie-Smith Bennett, Harrison, Stewarttown, Gardiner and St. Catherine of Alexandria Schools.

"There's considerable congestion in those areas," said Ward 4 Councillor Bob Inglis referring to his ward schools, Gardiner and St. Catherine. He described parents stopping their cars on the side of the road opposite the school, and then children darting between parked cars and moving cars to get to the school on the other side.

"We're thankful that it's going to be much safer, we believe, by what's being done," he said.

Town Traffic Co-ordinator Matt Roj said he is working with schools to communicate the new rules to parents. As well, Halton Police will be on hand after a two-week learning period, to enforce the new rules. He said similar rules are being imposed in front of schools around the province.

Ward 3 Councillor Moya Johnson said this is being done as a solution to a problem that occurred around schools last school year when there was a number of hits and near misses. For example, last spring there were three incidents where Acton youths, on foot or on bike, had been involved in collisions.

Ward 1 Councillor Michael O'Leary said when they were looking at solutions at McKenzie-Smith Bennett (M-SB) they noticed that parents were stopping on the west side of the road, getting the kids out of the cars, and leaving them in the traffic lane while pulling out backpacks and lunch bags. The new rules will now allow children to climb out of the vehicle onto school property while waiting for their gear, he said.

Also the north parking lot at M-SB will be expanded to help alleviate the congestion that's been there since the school opened, he said.

Wards 3 Councillor Dave Kentner said similar traffic rules will be dealt with in his ward in the next phase of traffic bylaw amendments. "Their turn is coming and coming quickly," he said.

"There's no question that traffic is a major issue and certainly congestion around schools is a significant issue for all of us in this community," said Ward 4 Councillor Ann Lawlor. "It's something that's a work in progress and probably always will be... but these recommendations will make big improvements."

McKenzie-Smith Bennett School

- No stopping zones will be imposed during restricted time on the west side of Acton Blvd. from Queen St. to the Norman Ave. It's intended to eliminate children being dropped off on the opposite side of the street from the school and then subsequently darting across the road, often between parked cars.

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