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COMMUTING: Slow down in urban zones

Region approves plan to reduce speed limits

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If well travelled regional roads, such as Hwy. 7 or Bathurst Street, are part of your commuting routine, it's a good time to ease off the accelerator.

York Region has adopted a new speed limit policy that will result in lower speed limits in urban areas in an effort to better improve safety and provide consistency for drivers.

That means multiple lane roads, such as Bathurst, with speed limits of 60, 70 and 80 km/h, will be 60 km/h zones.

The policy, approved by York Region council last week, uses guidelines from the Transportation Association of Canada, a nationally recognized group promoting safe, effective and sustainable transportation services.

The revised rules seek to minimize injuries in collisions by lowering limits to 60 km/h in the region's urban areas. The policy also calls for 70 km/h limits on urban and rural border roads and 80 km/h in rural areas.

-That means heavily travelled roads, including Hwy. 7 from Vaughan to Markham, could have a speed limit reduction from 80 km/h to 60 km/h, once transit, pedestrians and density take hold, the region said.

The new policy proposes appropriate speed guidelines to better reflect the differ-

ences between our rural and urban areas, York chairperson Bill Fisch said. With population densities increasing along many of the region's roads, it is necessary to have consistent speed limits that better balance the needs of motorists and pedestrians, he added.

The policy also incorporates suggestions received by local municipal councils, which wanted more input on proposed speed limit changes.

The region will follow a four-step process before any changes are implemented, including identification of a section of road for potential speed limit change, a review of the road section by York staff, consultation with the local municipal staff and York Regional Police and approval by the region's transportation services committee and council.

The new policy uses a common sense approach to establishing or changing speed limits by balancing motorists' needs with safety. Whitchurch-Stouffville Mayor and committee chairperson Wayne Emmerson said.

Urgently required speed limit changes will be reviewed immediately. All other changes under consideration follow the four-step process and will be brought forward for committee and council consideration twice per year. For more information, visit york.ca

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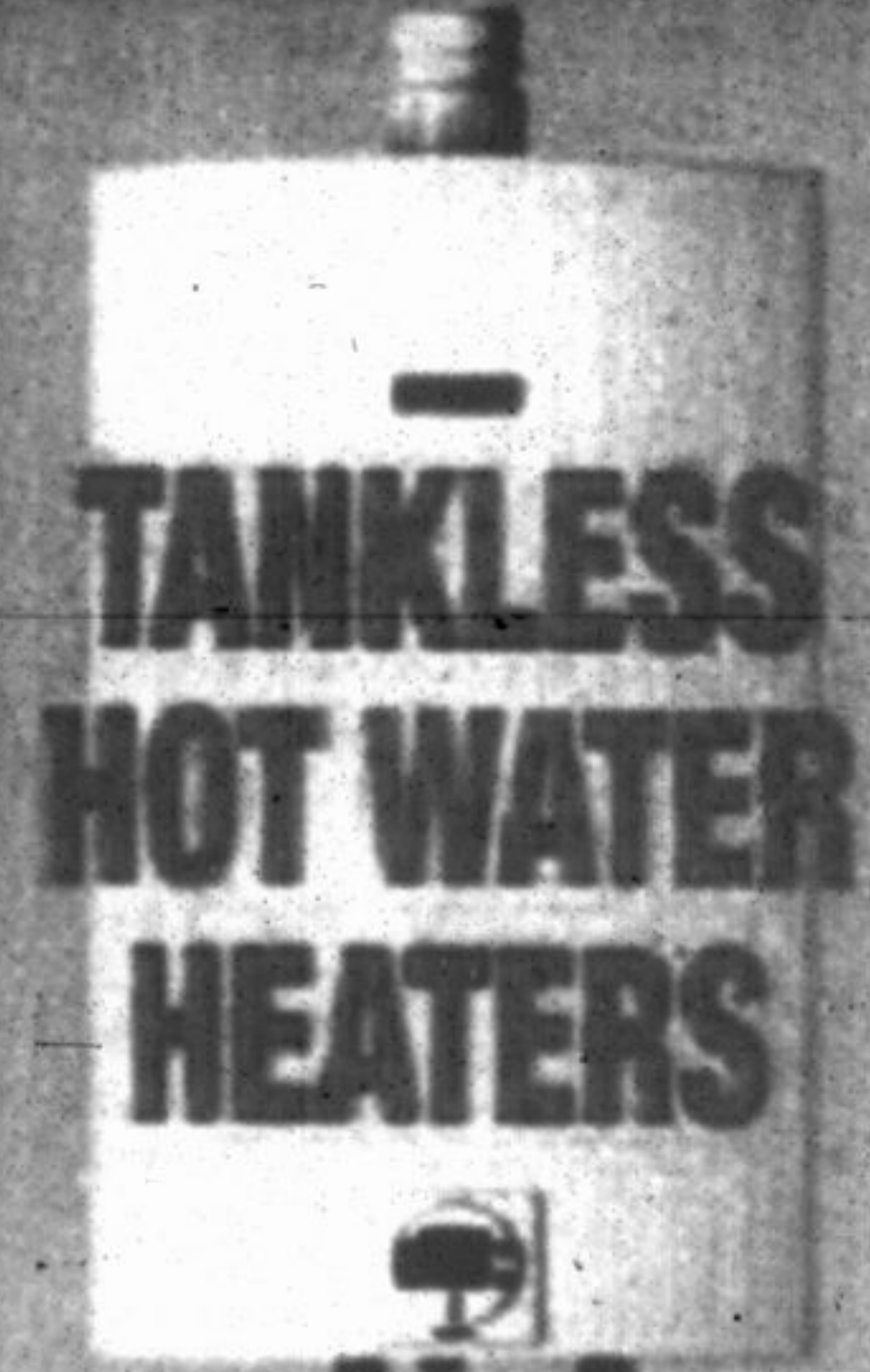


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