

Safety Concerns With Proposed Grade 7-12 School At 20 Woolner Trail

SPEED (REGION OF WATERLOO)

Coming out of the Fairway Road/Fountain Roundabout the speed limit on Fairway Rd North increases to 80kmh. The image below shows the approximate 700 metre 80kmh area and where it decreases to 60.

This is close to Eden Oak Trail and the school property. Drivers don't always slow down right where the 60kmh sign is located. It is also close to the Roundabout where students will be crossing.

School Zones where speeds can be decreased are currently not permitted on major arterial roads. This is also an issue for Chicopee Hills School at the corner Fairway and Lackner Road, close to this property.

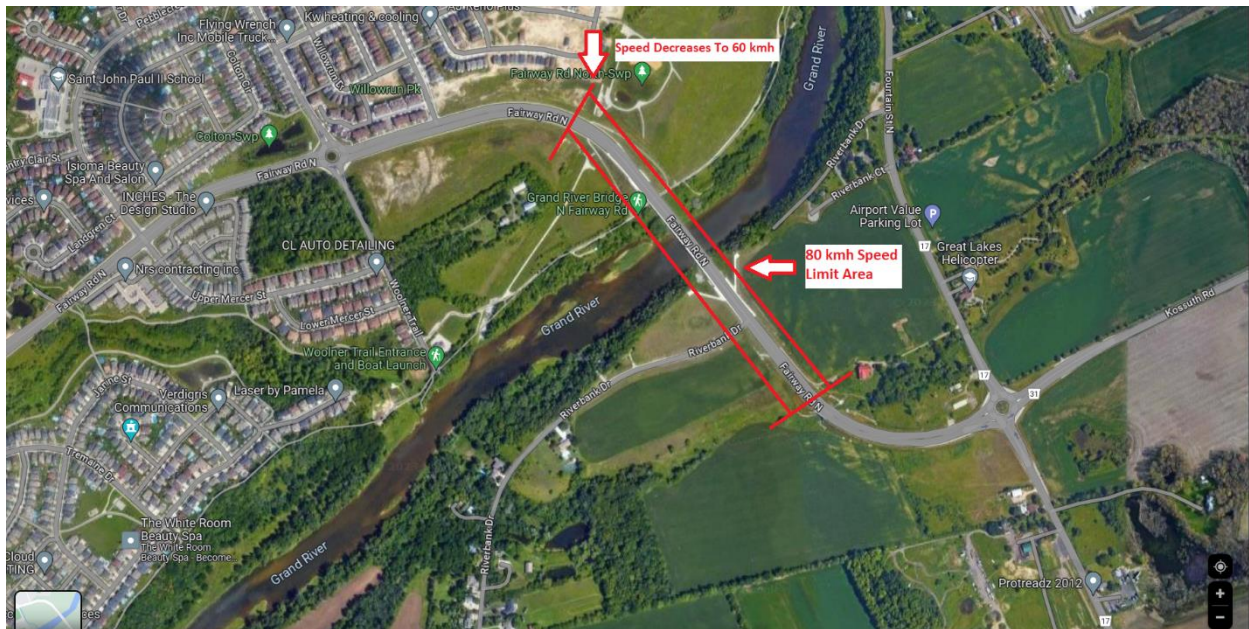
A Community Safety Zone is an option for the Region of Waterloo to implement. Could one be established from Upper Mercer Drive to Eden Oak Drive?

For St. Mary's High School serviced by a Roundabout at Homer Watson and Bleams Road, the speed on Homer Watson is 70kmh with a drop to 50kmh well ahead of the Roundabout and a further decrease to 30kmh at the Roundabout.

Could the St. Mary's model be replicated here with the speed coming from the Fairway and Fountain Roundabout reduced to 70, with a reduction to 50kmh where the current 60kmh limit begins and a 30kmh at the Roundabout established.

Could a 50kmh limit also be in place right through to, and past Fairway and Lackner to mutually benefit Chicopee Hills School and create a safer zone around and between these 2 schools?

See the image for Crossing Guard section for an illustration of this.



VEHICLE ACCESS TO & FROM WOOLNER TRAIL & CROSSING FAIRWAY RD. AND WOOLNER TRAIL

The roadway distance between the entrance and exit lanes to the school and the roundabout is short. Congestion in this area will be a reality.

To relieve vehicle congestion on Woolner Trail and increase student safety, could the main vehicle access to and from the site come from right in, right out driveways on Fairway Road? (See image below)

Residents request vehicle access on Woolner Trail be right in, left out.

Students will need to cross either Fairway or Woolner Trail to get to this school. Crossing Fairway involves crossing 4 lanes of traffic at a Roundabout.

A signaled PXO across Fairway at Eden Oak Trail is needed for student safety.

Crossing Woolner Trail would involve dealing with cars and buses coming through the roundabout to access the school from its entrance/exit on Woolner Trail and from vehicles exiting the school onto Woolner Trail

There may be issues with some students crossing Fairway at Eden Oak Trail.

The traffic lighted intersection at the Fairway and Upper Mercer/Pebblecreek (see image below) has a crossing guard and may be a location where students chose to cross Fairway. They would still have to cross Woolner Trail to get to school.



Some parents, for safety reasons or due to backups on Fairway Road may choose to turn right onto Upper Mercer Drive and drop their child off on Upper or Lower Mercer drive or on Woolner Trail.

The student would have to walk down Upper or Lower Mercer to Woolner Trail and cross it to get to the school.

Upper Mercer Drive has been flagged for seasonal traffic calming consideration for spring 2024 so safety issues are already there even without the school being built.

Residents on these streets will face safety challenges seeing pedestrians as they try getting in or out of their driveways with cars are stopping to drop students off.

It will also be a daily safety concern residents and students. The opening day student population is projected to be 1,400 students. The school site has plans for future portable classrooms, so the student population and safety concerns will continue to grow.

The image below shows the location of the traffic lighted intersection at Fairway Rd and Upper Mercer, the proximity of the school and the likelihood of Upper & Lower Mercer and Woolner Trail being used for student drop off.

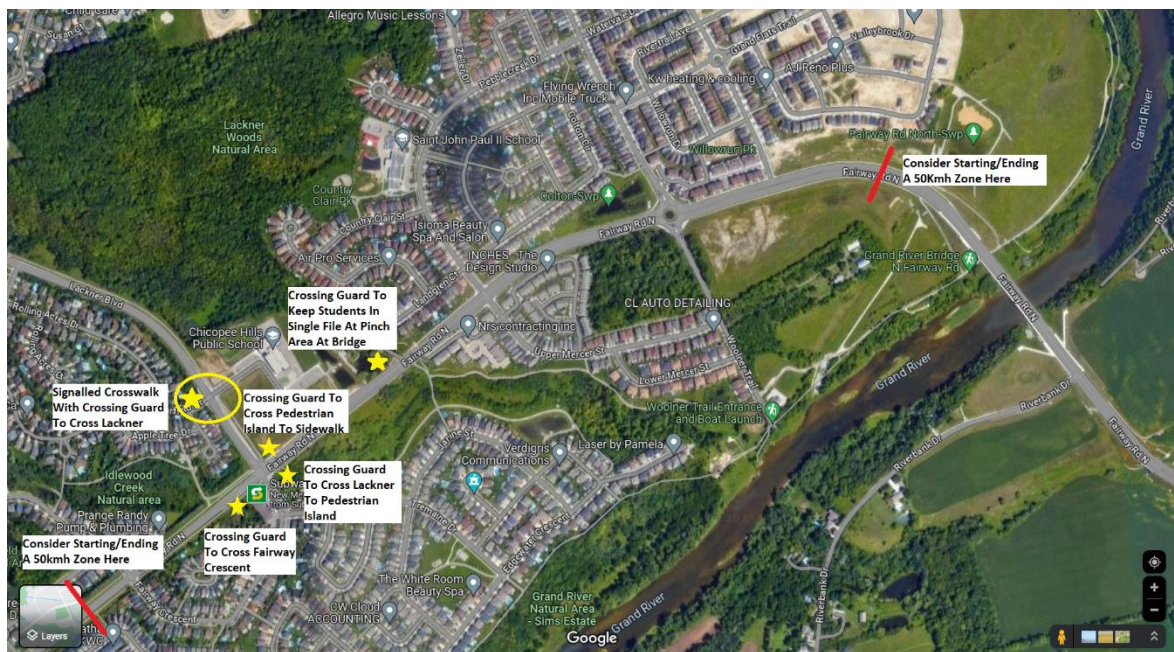
It also shows where students would need to cross Fairway Rd and Woolner Trail at The Roundabout, a potential vehicle access area from Fairway Road, an area where students may chance crossing Fairway, and the vehicle access point area for the school proposed on Woolner Trail

There is no sidewalk on the side of Woolner Trail where the in and our access points are located. There are hydro polls on that side and adding a sidewalk would be challenging.

CROSSING GUARDS

This image below shows the crossing guard locations for Chicopee Hills School and the signalled crosswalk at Lackner and Corfield. The Fairway/Lackner intersection has traffic lights. It also shows a potential 50kmh zone to benefit this new school and Chicopee Hills School.

5 crossing guards are used for student safety at this JK to Grade 8 school. This new school proposed at 20 Woolner Trail will be a Grade 7 to 12 school. Crossing will be done at a Roundabout area.



CONCLUSION

Safety measures and site plan approval are not part of the granting of a zone change. Once Council grants a zone change, they have no further say on if or when safety measures will be in place.

Residents do not have a concern with a school at this location. They feel it is a much-needed asset in their community.

Safety concerns were shared during an onsite resident meeting with school board officials, members of Kitchener and the Region's traffic teams and Councillor Schnider.

Concerns were acknowledged, but residents were told safety measures they brought up proactively.

Residents hope their concerns and suggestions will be considered, more investigation and discussion can take place and that safety measures will be in place before the school opens.

Residents are concerned that if the zone change is granted, that issues brought forward in these safety discussions will no longer be considered.

Residents hope a promise and list of safety measures from the Region of Waterloo and the City of Kitchener can be part of the approval mechanism for the zone change application.