

Speed cushions could be coming to a neighbourhood near you

By Brock Weir

Speeding concerns brought forward by residents could result in an increase of speed cushions throughout Aurora in 2015.

Municipal staff are due to report back to Council in the weeks ahead on the viability of installing speed cushions in at least five locations around Aurora following a motion from Councillor John Abel.

In his motion, Councillor Abel said York Regional Police do not have 'adequate resources' to patrol all local streets all the time and speed cushions are a practical solution. Particular areas that could be examined are Laurentide Avenue, Conover Avenue, Mavrinac Boulevard, and Kennedy Street West.

'I am not saying, 'Let's do this with the whole town', but I am just listing the areas [I heard while canvassing] that had a real problem there,' said Councillor Abel. '[These streets] are heavily travelled and they present a danger to our residents and their children. If they are not paying attention, they could become a statistic.'

The motion was largely supported by Council, with members suggesting further areas where speed cushions could be used, including Stone Road by Councillor Wendy Gaertner, and Cranberry Lane and Timberline Trail by Councillor Paul Pirri.

'I want to make sure we are hitting all of those areas,' said Councillor Sandra Humfries, adding she wanted to know of other areas that had specific concerns and what traffic management methods were already in place. 'I want to understand how we are gauging the overall situation. Are we implementing the speed and traffic guidelines and doing things proactively, or do we wait for residents to complain?'

It is a little bit of both, according to Ilmar Simanovskis, Aurora's Director of Infrastructure. Aurora's recently completed Transportation Master Plan looked at opportunities for community improvement, particularly on Yonge Street and other strategic areas.

'Typically, we also do traffic counts on a regular basis in conjunction with the Region to monitor key intersections to make sure the warrants are being met,' said Mr. Simanovskis. 'A good example there is the installation of lights planned for 2015 at Mary Street and Industrial Parkway South. When there is a complaint or a concern, we have a policy in place that is approved through Council, which provides for a process to validate any requests based on warrants, traffic counts, or whatever the criteria are to bring those recommendations forward to Council for direction as to whether or not they should proceed with traffic improvements.'

Some of the streets proposed by Councillors this time around, he added, have come up as possible areas of concern in the past and, following the approval of the motion, reports will be coming forward.

Although Councillor Harold Kim said he was 'all for the motion', he wanted to ensure that all details would be tackled from a safety perspective, including talking to stakeholders like emergency responders because such traffic control measures could have an impact on response times.

Mayor Geoff Dawe noted that stakeholders are, of course, residents as well.

'Devins Drive School Council came here with concerns of speeding around their school and Councillor Abel and I went there [for] a couple of mornings and most of the stop sign running were parents dropping their kids off,' said Mayor Dawe. 'I think education is a component of what is needed here because, quite frankly, most of the speeders are the residents. I think we have to keep that in mind as well.'