

Speed cushions could be installed on five Aurora streets in pilot project

By Brock Weir

Speed cushions could soon come to some busy residential streets in Aurora this fall in a pilot project to curb drivers going above the speed limit in residential areas.

Council is set to approve moving forward with a pilot project to install speed cushions on a number of area streets, including potential stretches of Conover Avenue, Laurentide Avenue, Mavrinac Boulevard, Kennedy Street West and Stone Road this week.

The first stages of the pilot project will get underway in May and June with municipal staff monitoring volume and speeds at 20 locations around Town based on Council's recommendations of particular problem areas, as well as residents' complaints and staff experiences before the five worst locations are determined for the next stage of the study.

Following consultations with emergency services, York Regional Police, Central York Fire Services, York Region Transit and local school boards, a public awareness campaign will kick off in August before signage and speed cushions are installed in the select areas.

The pilot project comes from a motion made last winter by Councillor John Abel suggesting the installation of speed cushions on all the listed streets, with the exception of Stone Road, which was added to the list by Councillor Wendy Gaertner.

According to Ilmar Simanovskis, Aurora's Director of Infrastructure, speed cushions are the preferred traffic calming method in the municipal arsenal these days as they can be 'easily negotiated by larger vehicles' like buses and emergency vehicles.

'I think from the experiences we have had in the northeast quadrant [where chicanes were removed in the last Council term following lengthy public outcry], I think this is probably the least intrusive and most effective as far as speed management is concerned,' said Mr. Simanovskis, responding to questions from Councillor Harold Kim on whether other traffic control measures had been considered.

At last Tuesday's General Committee Meeting, Councillor John Abel remained supportive of the pilot project but questioned why things couldn't get underway sooner, regardless of the pending report.

'I would like to move forward,' he said. 'We identified a few spots, but I have heard from other residents that they would like to include McClelland Way along the school and a couple of other areas. I think we should proceed and put a few cushions in some of these identified areas.'

A full study, however, would be beneficial to the pilot's success, countered Mr. Simanovskis.

'We are proposing to investigate those as well as other areas that have come to our attention through Council feedback, resident and community feedback, and areas that have been identified in the past that we can [look at],' he said. 'I can appreciate the Councillor's comment that there is a desire to move quickly with regards to the installation [but] one of the cautions is?it is important we engage the communities within which these speed humps are going to be installed because as much as there are people who want them installed, there are probably just as many people who don't want them installed.'

'It is prudent upon myself and staff to recommend we do follow the process, do the investigation, do the public consultation process, as well as the speed and traffic counts, so we have data to support our decisions and use that information to inform the communities as we move forward.'