

Traffic calming measures coming to Pedersen Drive following plea from neighbours

By Brock Weir

Action shouldn't be spurred by tragedy, according to residents of Pedersen Drive pushing for traffic calming measures their neighbourhood.

This was the message they delivered to Council last week, and it was a message that was listened to.

Starting as early as this summer, traffic calming measures, most likely speed bumps, will be installed on the east Aurora street from Kirkvalley Crescent to Gateway Drive. In addition, speed bumps currently on Golf Links Drive will be replaced.

Council's decision went against recommendations made by staff, who said Pedersen fell just shy of meeting the three requirements outlined in Aurora's Traffic Calming Policy to evaluate whether such measures would be appropriate.

Studies indicated that the first warrants ? community support and safety ? were met, but the technical requirements, including excessive speed and traffic volumes, were still outstanding.

But area residents said they have seen both speeds and traffic increase over the years and the current situation was an accident waiting to happen.

?The best way to understand the issues the electorate is going through is to actually walk in their shoes,? said delegate Garth Browne. ?For us residents, we see it. In the last five years, traffic has increased twofold.?

Mr. Browne pointed Council's attention to nearby McMaster Avenue, which has a series of speed humps in a relatively short stretch of street.

?It behoves me to understand why it is too difficult to get the very same thing on Pedersen Drive that is three times the length, that is far more dangerous, has far more cars coming from Bayview, all the way down to the roundabout. That is difficult for me to understand. We do not want it to get to a point where someone has to die for there to be action.?

Mr. Browne was supported at the podium by neighbours Frank Felicci and Michael Hudson.

A four-year resident of Pedersen, Mr. Felicci told Council he has seen the road become a thru-way for drivers looking to avoid Bayview Avenue and St. John's Sideroad.

?Not only are we dealing with the speed factor, we're also dealing with more vehicles on our road,? he said. ?It is no secret there has been a lot of development in the area both commercial and residential; population density has increased in the four short years that I have lived there and I don't think it is unreasonable to ask Council to have traffic calming measures to reduce the average speed on Pedersen Drive and I hope Council sees fit with this motion and we can do something about it before someone is injured or killed.?

Added Mr. Hudson: ?I run a small business from my home, I am in the neighbourhood very often through the day, which some of my neighbours are not. I consistently see people using our neighbourhood as a bypass to get around lights, to get through the neighbourhoods as quick as possible. It is true that both residents of Bayview Greens and the rest of Aurora do speed too much down our street, but the increased traffic flow is creating a real problem through the day. It is not just a 5.30 ? 7 p.m. rush at night, it is all through the day.?

Their delegations were received positively by local lawmakers and when time came to discuss the matter thoroughly amongst themselves, Council members were in unanimous agreement that something had to be done, particularly, as Councillor Michael Thompson said, all three warrants were nearly met.

?I certainly support our policies and the use of warrants but when I look at prior reports and I look at current reports, to me I think 1,500 vehicles is certainly something that can be met on certain days,? said Councillor Thompson on the matter falling short of the traffic volume requirements to spur action.

Added Councillor Sandra Humfries: ?It is just at the tipping point. It is just too close. I think the traffic calming measures work really well and it will protect the residents in this area, particularly the children who are out there playing. The volumes are really, really high.?

From the perspective of Councillor Tom Mrakas, a contributing factor in the rise of both traffic volumes and speed is the opening of the bridge on Hartwell Way, which has connected Pedersen, via Bayview Avenue, to communities eastward to Leslie Street.

?It has definitely made it a thru-way because you can go from one end to the other now, so I think more residents now are using Hartwell and Pedersen right through,? he said. ?I think if you were to do it today, I think those numbers would change in front of us. I am in full support of moving forward with this.?

Councillor John Abel, who has pushed for speed humps in other areas of Aurora, added that, at the end of the day, the only people

who are adversely impacted by such measures are those who are actually speeding.

?If you're going to the speed limit, you can go over the speedbumps just as you do on McMaster easily, calmly, and safely for the residents,? he said. ?I think safety for our residents is the most important consideration we have here at the Council table, so I am in full support and I appreciate everyone coming forward to ensure you were heard.?