

## ?Accelerated? 2C development leads Councillors to question whether Town, Region are ready

**By Brock Weir**

Building developments in Aurora's 2C developments are marching along at a pretty fast clip, but the speed in which the development is progressing is causing some Council members to wonder whether Aurora is ready for it.

These concerns were voiced at July's Council meeting by Councillors John Abel, Wendy Gaertner and Michael Thompson while reviewing a site plan application for two four-storey condo developments in the area from Brookfield Homes.

The two condo blocks are slated to be mixed use development combining residential space with retail, both connected at the ground level.

While some questions were raised around the table by the plan's shift from providing retail in both blocks to concentrating the designated retail space into just one side of the complex, Councillor Gaertner questioned whether the amount of amenity space slated for the incoming residents was adequate.

30,000 square feet of the complex are designated for amenity space, according to Marco Ramunno, Aurora's Director of Planning. This translates into 160 square feet designated per unit, but this number takes into account indoor and outdoor space, as well as private balconies, which Councillor Gaertner said she found unusual.

?I can't approve this application until I know future residents are going to have the proper amount of amenity space,? she said. ?Maybe we approved [that use] in the bylaw, but I am sorry I didn't catch that because I have never heard of including balcony space as amenity space. We're talking about common amenity space. That is the purpose of amenity space.?

With regards to the commercial space, she added: ?The intent was to make this a complete community and having the commercial space downstairs for the area was the intent, but it doesn't seem we followed through in the planning.?

Once the 2C development is complete and all the infrastructure is installed, Aurora can expect to see its population to swell by the thousands. With more residents, increased traffic is an inevitability, and other Councillors questioned whether Aurora and, in particular, the Region of York, is truly prepared for the onslaught as far as infrastructure needs are concerned.

?When we first approved 2C, [it was thought it would take] five to seven years to complete build-out and we're well ahead of that pace right now,? said Councillor Thompson. ?During election time, there was a lot of talk about ensuring as we grow we do it in a responsible and balanced manner and ensure infrastructure is in place. As this is accelerated, I look at Leslie Street and I look at St. John's, and I am concerned about the timelines there.?

Council has addressed the potential need for an interchange with Highway 404 at St. John's Sideroad in the past, he noted, but reconstruction plans for Leslie Street are slated for next year, and St. John's next on the docket for 2017. This may not be quick enough, he said.

?We need to get ahead of this and push the Region a little bit more, otherwise we're looking at some significant congestion and transportation issues on that side of Town. If we don't do it now, it will be after the fact and too late. If the development is happening faster than we anticipated, then it is reasonable to go to the Region to see if we can move up the timelines on St. John's and do these kinds of things. That is our responsibility to residents because, as we know, traffic and congestion are big concerns we have heard over and over.

?We already know St. John's from Leslie to the 404 is not even in the 10 year horizon, neither is the interchange with the 404, but the other two we need to continue to push to make sure as we approve these sites that the infrastructure is in place so the residents don't see an impact.?