

All-way stop, traffic calming measures coming to Tamarac Trail

A new suite of traffic calming measures will soon be implemented on Tamarac Trail.

Council last week, following pleas from residents, voted to install a four-way stop at Tamarac and Alberty Crescent, as well as flexible traffic signs. Lawmakers have also left the door open to urban shoulder traffic calming measures and the painting of a centre line if deemed necessary going forward.

'Tamarac Trail has a significant curve near the bottom close to Henderson that greatly reduces visibility. This lack of a proper line of sight is a constant danger, especially for my children who must cross the road to reach the sidewalk where they catch the bus or walk to the park,' area resident Caitlin Harris told Council on May 28.

Tamarac, she said, is being 'increasingly' used by drivers coming off McClelland Way to access Yonge Street, she contended, 'resulting in heavy traffic and rampant speeding.'

'This daily reality puts everyone at risk, making it nearly impossible for my children to enjoy the same carefree experience I had in this very Town,' she continued. 'We're not asking for much - just a stop sign on Tamarac, [which] has no stop signs currently. This simple addition would slow down traffic and significantly improve the safety for all residents. It would provide peace of mind for parents like me who want [their children] to grow up in a safe environment.'

Harris' views were bolstered by neighbour Anne Harrison, who said the traffic conditions have been a community concern for 'upwards of 18 years.'

'I am truly scared to live on that street right now the way the speeding is going on,' she said.

Added neighbour Joyce Mikros: 'It's a nightmare to live there'. It's not safe, people are driving too fast, we have a new generation of drivers who aren't really considerate and don't take into account safety and children. It's a different time but we do need to put in really strong measures. I don't think the slow-down measures are enough. I think we need to put in two hard stops.'

Municipal staff initially recommended against the traffic calming measures that were ultimately approved by Council as the street didn't meet prescribed traffic thresholds. While lawmakers agreed that safety was paramount, they had different views on what would prove effective on Tamarac.

Ward 2 Councillor Rachel Gilliland, for instance, said she 'worried' that the stop signs would create a 'false sense of security crossing the road.'

'I want to make sure we're making the right decision here. It might be a good first step with the traffic calming,' she said, suggesting a speed hump might be more impactful.

Ward 5 Councillor John Gallo offered a similar perspective, adding that while he had 'no issue' with the stop sign, he didn't feel 'that alone' is going to solve the issue.'

Ward 4 Councillor Michael Thompson noted that while he was supportive of flexible signage in a bid to better control traffic, he was opposed to speed humps and cushions.

Mayor Tom Mrakas agreed that one measure will not solve all the issues, but said Council has set precedents in the past of implementing traffic calming measures where warrants have not been met.

'Sometimes it's not going to 100 per cent solve it, but I think if it makes life a little bit better or a little bit safer in the area for our

residents, it's our obligation to see how we move forward and provide those safety measures for residents," he said. "Ultimately they (the residents) are the ones living it every day - just because it doesn't meet the warrants doesn't mean it's not happening."

The all-way stop was approved on a vote of 6 - 0, with Ward 1 Councillor Ron Weese not present at the meeting. Flexible traffic signs were approved 5 - 1 with Ward 6 Councillor Harold Kim voting against. The option of urban shoulders and centre lines got the green light on a 4 - 2 vote, with Councillor Gilliland joining Councillor Kim in opposition.

By Brock Weir