

Enhanced pedestrian crossing approved for Aurora Heights Drive

A signalled pedestrian crosswalk is coming to Aurora Heights Drive near the end of Machell Park and Fleury Park Trails.

Council approved a Level 2 Type B pedestrian crossing at its most recent meeting. This type of pedestrian crossing will include rapid flashing beacons, new pavement markings, and signage both overhead and at street level.

The new crossing retrofits will cost approximately \$110,000, including design, construction and contingency, covered by development charges (DCs).

Implementation could take up to six months.

Going into the last Council meeting, staff recommended a simpler configuration of pedestrian crossing but Ward 2 Councillor Rachel Gilliland said further enhancements were needed.

"I prefer a Level 2 Type B," she said, noting the lighting and signage options, "just to make it a little more safe because we are going in and around the corner. I believe what staff recommended was the most minimal approach and I feel it needs a little bit more indication to make it a little bit more safe."

Marco Ramunno, Director of Planning for the Town of Aurora, cautioned the higher-level features would result in a higher price tag, but Council opted on a 6-0 vote to press ahead, funding it from Aurora's Roads and Related Development Charges. Ward 6 Councillor Harold Kim was absent from the meeting.

At the same session, Council received information on a simpler pedestrian crossing on Hollandview Trail, at Bridgenorth Drive, one that will come with a physical barrier to direct pedestrians to the new crossing.

"Staff reviewed the feasibility of implementing a physical barrier and signage at the end of the walkway to direct pedestrians to cross at the Hollandview Trail/Bridgenorth Drive intersection where a school crossing guard can assist with crossing onto the other side of Hollandview Trail," said Michael Ha, Transportation and Traffic Analyst for the Town of Aurora, in a report to Council.

"The role of school crossing guards is to direct and supervise the movement of pedestrians across a road by creating necessary gaps in vehicular traffic to provide safe passage at a designated school crossing location. Sometimes, it is beneficial to guide pedestrians to nearby intersections that have a school crossing guard so that they may cross under supervision."

Examples of similar configurations cited in the report were on Murray Drive near Regency Acres Public School and St. Joseph Catholic Elementary School.

"Approximately 50m of sidewalk would be required on the south side of Hollandview Trail in order to connect the existing walkway to Bridgenorth Drive. The design and construction would cost approximately \$58,500. The area where the sidewalk would be placed includes five mature trees and utilities that may potentially need to be removed to accommodate the addition of a sidewalk in this area.

"Consideration could be given to adding an additional school crossing guard at the identified location at an annually recurring operating cost. A pedestrian crossing pavement marking would be of benefit at a cost of \$1,500 should this option be considered. The existing school crossing guard at the Hollandview Trail/Bridgenorth Drive intersection costs approximately \$17,000 per year based on the current contract with the school crossing guard contractor, which expires at the end of 2024. The cost to employ a new crossing guard may increase when a new contract is put in place."

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