

Growth sparks traffic concerns at Bayview and St. John's

By Brock Weir

A growing number of homes and businesses in the Bayview Avenue and St. John's Sideroad area, have sparked concerns over traffic in this bustling area of Aurora.

Following the recent approval of a McDonalds Restaurant and a new car dealership in the area, and the opening of L.A. Fitness, neighbouring residents are concerned about traffic and speeds on adjacent streets, particularly Pedersen Drive and Earl Stewart Drive.

"The residents have some very serious concerns with the area as it is today without the addition of a motor vehicle establishment that is going to be built in this specific area," said Councillor Sandra Humfries at a recent Council meeting where she called for a further review of traffic volumes in the area. "The residents came here and it wasn't necessarily that they were against [the dealership] being built, but it was more the impact of the additional traffic and safety issues. I would just like to revisit the area, take a look with the Region to see if there are other issues right now. It appears residents are saying there is."

The call was supported by a majority of Council, who said they too had worries about the neighbourhood on a number of fronts.

"Maybe the studies don't show there is a concern, but the residents feel there is a concern," said Councillor Wendy Gaertner, in response to existing traffic studies that were presented to Council at the public planning level with each proposed addition to the neighbourhood. "What can we do to make sure there is no actual concern and what can we do to address the perceived concern?"

Councillors Tom Mrakas and Harold Kim had similar concerns. Traffic studies in these cases are often site-specific, said Councillor Mrakas, and don't look at the neighbourhood as a whole.

"It is a perceived accident waiting to happen," added Councillor Kim. "I do welcome a further review of existing data. Even though it is perceived accidents by residents, it is by no means not important because that fear shouldn't be there in a residential neighbourhood."

The resulting review was released this month. In a report to Council from Ilmar Simanovskis, Aurora's Director of Infrastructure, reviews of vehicular and pedestrian traffic on Bayview, St. John's, Pedersen, and Earl Stewart show the streets are well-equipped to handle future growth and do not meet warrants for any additional traffic control measures, whether they be additional stop signs, traffic signals, or changes in speed limits, that have not already been approved by Council.