

## Parking worries, SARC access still concerns surrounding Wellington Street proposal

Plans for a housing development on Wellington Street East, just a stone's throw from the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex, are set to be discussed at Council this week amid ongoing concerns over a lack of parking and making the SARC's driveway an access point.

Zoning amendments for 1425 and 1452 Wellington Street are on Council's agenda this week after being discussed earlier this month at the Committee level.

At issue is the plan for 74 townhouses, 32 of which are back-to-back units, with access onto Wellington Street East and the SARC.

The proposal allows for units with 1-car and potentially 2-car garages, but the lack of formal driveways and on-street parking has been a concern for residents and Council members alike, as has the plan to offer just 14 visitor parking spaces and access to the SARC parking lot.

While staff have advised Council they have no concerns with the SARC access 'in principle,' local lawmakers have shared residents' worries that this will not only result in parking spillover into the Complex area, but create a liability issue for the Town if the driveway becomes a thru-road.

'I urge Council to please take a proactive look ahead to the outcome of this development and weigh the cost and benefits of this proposed development as it is being presented here today,' said resident Lita Dayfoot, noting concerns over road configurations, lack of parking within the development area, and access to the SARC, which she said 'poses a number of issues and hurdles for a townhouse division this size.'

'Sixteen proposed townhouses have no driveway, just a garage that goes directly onto the street. 16 units will only have garage parking. There's no parking on the street. Will they be using the 16 guest parking spaces?'

These questions were shared by Council members, including Ward 1 Councillor Ron Weese who requested traffic study information come forward to this week's meeting looking at weekend use, and what work has been done to this point on further traffic signals at the SARC.

Marco Ramunno, Aurora's Director of Planning, said conditions would be made where the intersection signalization would be required with the property owners sharing the cost of installation.

Parking was also a concern for Ward 4 Councillor Michael Thompson, who said while the proposal might meet municipal standards on paper, the reality could prove a different story.

'I think you only have to look around Town to get a good sense of how many cars are at people's townhouses,' he said. 'It's great that they're going to help pay for the traffic signal lights at the intersection, but, again, it comes back to the whole conversation [which] is that they need access into the SARC. Is this really good planning? If it is not good planning, are we really getting enough benefit for the community to allow this?'

These worries were echoed by Ward 3 Councillor Wendy Gaertner, who said traffic in the SARC parking lot has only increased since the Town opened a full-size gymnasium at the Complex.

'There is a lot going on at the SARC. That parking lot, that road, are extremely busy. We need the parking, especially as we've got a new gym. We want to do sports tourism,' she said. 'We just cannot allow this residential parking to come into the SARC parking area. We have to do what's best for our residents.'

?I'm not going to vote in favour of this. I don't think it's appropriate.?

One positive, she noted, was potentially redesignating the SARC driveway as a ?highway? in the municipal sense of the word to take some of the liability off the Town should there be an issue.

?If the property is a parking lot then it is not covered under the Municipal Act for limited liability to the Town,? said Town Solicitor Patricia De Sario. ?If it is considered private property, and if somebody would fall or would there be an accident or something on the property, it would be considered under the Occupiers Liability Act and the Town as owner would have to provide a defence of the property. If the Town actually dedicates it as a public highway, there are mechanisms in the municipal act that provide the municipalities with the defence.

?It would be? simpler to prove that there was not any negligence or that we followed our standards.?

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