

## Programs targeted to ensure residential redevelopment is sustainable

**By Brock Weir**

As debate continues over the future of the proposal to redevelop Highland Gate into a residential development, smaller scale redevelopment projects in the future may need to focus on the impact on the world around them.

This follows the approval of a motion from Councillor Paul Pirri calling for a report on additional fees for redevelopments where lot size coverage would be on the rise with an eye to creating a reserve fund to encourage low impact development ? particularly when it comes to the homes of today being replaced by the monster homes of the future.

In his motion, Councillor Pirri said intensification targets mandated by the Province of Ontario will see an increased emphasis on municipal infrastructure, particularly when it comes to water. Further development would ordinarily see a rise in surfaces impermeable to water, but this could change.

?If you look around to a lot of the communities to the south of us ? Toronto, the City of Hamilton ? those areas where a lot of infill has taken place, the increased surface area of homes does create a greater risk of flooding in these communities,? said Councillor Pirri. ?I would like staff to report on when people are tearing down older homes and putting up newer homes and infilling them to capacity [what the impacts would be] of an extra fee levied on the homes to go towards a reserve fund, ultimately to implement low impact developments either on those properties or properties nearby where it makes sense.

?As more people move into the community in ten to 15 years, personally I see a lot of people buying homes on Murray and looking at homes built in the 1960s, tearing them down and putting up much larger homes. There is a lot we can do to dissuade that type of development from taking place, but I think ultimately people will start doing that at some point and this is something we can do to help preserve the natural environment to ensure natural infiltration happens on site.?

Permeable pavement, for instance, will see infiltration of groundwater back into the soils where it belongs, rather than onto roads and into storm sewers, he said. This would be a step on the road to preventing flooding disasters in Aurora, he added.

For Council, moving forward on this would be a way for the municipality to take the reins, but members questioned whether this should be limited just to housing redevelopment.

?I have been reading up on different ways for municipalities and ownership to do some really great, innovative ways of being able to have the water flow rather than slide out and cause all kinds of problems,? said Councillor Sandra Humfryes. ?I really look forward to staff coming back with perhaps some great ideas, not just for redevelopment fees, but perhaps some additional solutions.?

Building on this idea, Councillor Wendy Gaertner questioned whether such sustainable practices ? including infiltration and grit separators ? could be enshrined in either Aurora's building code or Official Plan.

?I think anything we can do to protect the community and help the environment is definitely worthwhile,? she said.

According to Techa Van Leeuwen, Aurora's Director of Building and Bylaw Services, the building code contains measures for energy efficiency and energy conservation. These are, however, ?minimum standards.?

?If a building permit application is submitted and it meets minimum standards, we are able to issue the building permit,? said Ms. Van Leeuwen.

Added Marco Ramunno, Director of Planning, on Councillor Gaertner's question on whether additional fees could be imposed on developers: ?The Official Plan does [encourage] more environmentally sustainable developments. [The developers] are working with the conservation authorities who no longer want to see stormwater management ponds, so they are encouraging low impact

developments to ensure stormwater can infiltrate into the ground rather than directly into storm sewers.?