

## Proposed Leslie and Wellington development raises questions about SARC use

A proposed subdivision of 74 townhouse units on the northwest corner of Leslie Street and Wellington Street East, adjacent to the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex, raised questions around the Council table last week due to plans for an access point to the homes through the SARC's driveway.

At issue is a plan for 74 townhouse units ? 42 standard and 32 back-to-backs ? with a right-in, right-out access point from Wellington Street, and another access point through the municipally-owned SARC driveway.

While Council members praised the development bringing new residential units to the community, particularly some back-to-back units attainably priced starting at \$699,000, questions raised at last week's Public Planning meeting touched upon density and how the SARC access might impact an already-busy public space.

The plan calls for 163 parking spaces for the 74 units, including 15 visitor parking spaces, and some Councillors expressed worry that overflow parking from the development would naturally flow to the SARC.

?In terms of the SARC, I tried to understand maybe the rationale behind it and some of the pros and cons to it. I did a little bit of a cursory [look] to try to understand if there's anything similar in the Town and the only thing I could think of is the Mosaics Avenue subdivision just behind the old Canadian Tire off Murray,? said Ward 5 Councillor John Gallo, who said he wasn't sure if he was for or against the proposal, but trying to understand the impact.

Also raising questions was Ward 4 Councillor Michael Thompson who said back-to-back townhouses with only one allocated space per unit has created parking issues elsewhere in Aurora.

?We already hear enough about people saying that they're using the garage for other things than parking their cars. The practicality of it all makes me think that some of these homeowners are going to use up those visitor parking spaces as permanent, which means? where are they going to park? They're going to park at the SARC,? said Councillor Thompson. ?If the road is open to the SARC, it definitely will encourage them to park in the SARC. In fact, it actually might be closer for them to park in the SARC than park in any of those visitor spots. I'm concerned with only one unit, one parking space available for the back-to-back townhomes in the north because I think it's going to lead to a problem?. I look at all the driveways, I look at the configuration, I don't think there's any on-street parking, either. Where is everybody parking? It's going to be at the SARC.

?We already have concerns about some of the other developments about parking in the SARC and now all of a sudden we could be running into a future issue [with] residents at large wanting to use that facility will have limited parking spaces because of the developments that are happening and going there.?

The benefit of access to the SARC to the developer was clear, said the Councillor, but there needs to be a ?benefit to the community at large.?

Concerns were echoed by Ward 3 Councillor Wendy Gaertner who said if she was one of the homeowners in question she would park as close as possible to the SARC lot.

?I really don't think that they're going to go as far as the east area of the SARC lot, which is true, is often quite empty, but not when there's a lot of activity at the SARC,? she said, adding she also had concerns about liability for the Town if the parking lot became an access point for the subdivision.

Council members agreed that the SARC driveway should be considered by the Region for a future signalized intersection to control traffic flow. But, as this is not yet being considered by Regional Council, the Town could have to go it alone.

?As far as the traffic light, absolutely we need one in this area at some point, but I don't think the Town should be paying for it,? said Mayor Tom Mrakas. ?I think that both developments, there's one that's going to be on the south side [of Wellington] and this one can fully fund the installation and implementation of that signalized intersection.?

One Councillor who was less concerned about the access point was Ward 2 Councillor Rachel Gilliland who suggested she would have liked more vertical density in the area.

?Given the fact that it is a condo-type community, it's not unusual [to have] no parking on the street and rely on visitor parking,? she said. ?In fact, there is a bit of an advantage that of course we have the SARC around the corner, but I don't really foresee that being something that will be abused. Is it something we should be concerned about and speak about today? Absolutely. Do we want to make sure the developer realizes that we want to ensure that the minimums are being presented today and that's not something that you're going to be building the foundation of your application on? Absolutely. Is it a reason for me to say that I feel this application wouldn't be something good to move forward to the next community to hold? I'm not going to hold them to that. I do appreciate the comments around the table on this, but I certainly would not want to hang my hat based on some of those comments.

?I think my biggest bone of contention right now is ensuring that we have some good amenity space and green space for the families that are there because it is something that is very near and dear. We want to make sure that families have a place for the kids to play and walk their dogs, and that is really the biggest bone of contention for me.?

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