

Public meeting set for speed cushion pilot project

By Brock Weir

Members of the public will have their first formal chance to weigh in on a new pilot project that could see new speed humps installed on five area streets in a pilot project designed to address traffic worries of residents.

A meeting is set for Town Hall this Thursday, October 1, in response to a decision made by Council earlier this year to explore options for speed cushions on five area streets identified by neighbours as particularly problematic.

Among the streets now subject to this pilot project, pending public input, are Kennedy Street West from McGee Crescent to Murray Drive, Stone Road from Cliff Road to Hawtin Lane, McMaster Avenue from Hollidge Boulevard to Hollandview Trail, Mavrinac Boulevard from Borealis Avenue to Spring Farm Road, and Conover Avenue from River Ridge Boulevard to Borealis Avenue.

As part of the work plan, staff conducted traffic volume counts and speed studies in 20 locations, said Ilmar Simanovskis, Aurora's Director of Infrastructure. The selection of the location was based on Council recommendation, staff experience of problematic areas throughout the Town, and residents' complaints.

The selection of locations was based on the highest 85% speed that vehicles were travelling at these locations. To meet the technical requirements of the Town's traffic calming policy, the minimum speed on the street where traffic calming is proposed, the 85th percentile speed must be a minimum of 15km/h over the posted speed limit.

At last week's General Committee meeting, Mr. Simanovskis stressed the future of this pilot project will be largely influenced by the results of this week's meeting, invitations to which have been sent out to residents in the most immediately impacted neighbourhoods.

[Residents can speak with staff] about how we came up with this, what the criteria are and next steps, he said. That is the place where we can hear from the community and understand what other issues that may exist and take that into consideration. Council must also realise that the criteria for making these traffic decisions are based on policy. We do have our policies and our recommendations, as staff, will be based on policies with any modifications as directed by Council.

If the speed cushion pilot project moves forward, it does so with a yet-to-be-determined time window. Mr. Simanovskis said the pilot project could last anywhere from six months to a year, as directed by Council.

Additional consultation will need to be undertaken with Central York Fire Services and York EMS to make sure there are no objections on that front, and, of course, Council will also need to determine how to pay for the project.

It is estimated to clock in anywhere between \$75,000 to \$100,000.

There is no budget for this, noted Mr. Simanovskis. I would suggest this come from [Aurora's] Repair and Replacement Reserve. This is typical when we do maintenance work. Probably as part of that funding recommendation, I would have to seek approval for that funding, or we could bring that up at budget time depending on timing.

The report was received for information by Councillors sitting last week at the committee level. While many questions centred on the methodology applied in determining the best of the worst of all the Aurora streets on which complaints had been received, others questioned the cost of removing the speed cushions above and beyond the costs to install them should the pilot project ultimately prove unsuccessful.