

Residents delay road reconstructions, want more options

By Brock Weir

Residents of Hunters Glen Road and Fox Point should brace themselves for six weeks of road reconstruction beginning next month, but those living on adjacent streets have won a bit more time in fending off the plans.

While the reconstruction of Hunters Glen, Fox Point, Hilddale Road, Hillside Drive, and Kenlea Court have been part of Aurora's 10 year Capital Reconstruction Program slate for this year, Councillors voted to hold off on approving reconstruction of Hilddale, Hillside, and Kenlea until next week after pleas from residents.

The roads currently have gravel shoulders and ditches and plans included pulverizing the existing asphalt and resurfacing the roads and refurbishing the shoulders, while paved shoulders pulling double duty as bike lanes are part of the plans, specifically for Hunter's Glen.

Residents of Kenlea Court, however, appeared before Council last month to speak out against the plans, arguing that further public consultation should take place.

"We have a concern we weren't consulted," said Diane McGregor, a Kenlea resident. "I understand that when it is a simple resurface, the community may not be consulted. However, there are substantial changes to the design we were only made aware of recently."

Their concerns, she said, related to a guardrail. The neighbourhood, she added, is very "countrified" and putting guardrails on both sides of the road would "denigrate" the area. Roads such as hers should be "urbanized" like many of the other roads in Aurora, she argued, noting neighbourhood residents would prefer grass shoulders rather than gravel.

For neighbour Judy Templin, the roads as they are have served the community well and if the best way to avoid a guardrail is to urbanize the street, get rid of the shoulders and ditches and install storm sewers, that would be the way to go.

"If the Town can't afford to do it immediately and it has to be put off a year, we don't see the problem with that either," said Ms. Templin.

Ilmar Simanovskis, Aurora's Director of Infrastructure, said the shoulders were concerns his department was aware of, but replacing the gravel with grass on a permanent basis would "not allow for proper road design" and reduces the life of the surrounding asphalt. Responding to their concerns over the proposed guardrail, he said that is something that could be reviewed with project designers.

"There is no guardrail there right now and we are trying to bring the road up to current standards and that is why that was included," he said. "The lighting was also reviewed due to substandard lighting similar to what we brought forward earlier this year to Hunters Glen and Fox Point, however the changes are minimal."

Councillors ultimately supported the residents' requests for more time to hear from staff about the project. Councillor Wendy Gaertner said she agreed with the residents that the guardrail would be "unattractive" and asked if any other solutions could achieve the department's objectives. Mr. Simanovskis said a review would look at whether or not that can be left out for the design but cautioned that alternatives could come at a higher cost.

Speaking against the deferral to August 13 was Councillor Evelyn Buck, who argued that the money had already been spent on the designs and it would be a waste of money to simply scrap the whole project. That viewpoint, however, was not shared vocally by others.

"If residents on these three streets are adamant and sincere they don't want the work done right now and we have the month to check

with them and make sure that is the case throughout [the neighbourhood], it seems really simple to me,? said Councillor Pirri.