

Residents urged to register concerns on app as parking issues get tackled

By Brock Weir

Aurora residents are being urged to continue identifying potential parking and traffic problems online as Council moves to address just such a complaint on the Town's west side.

This week, Council addressed long-standing sight line issues on Lensmith Drive, off Kennedy Street West, just west of Murray Drive.

The move sees parking restrictions implemented along the south and west sides of the street from the western property limit of 38 Lensmith Drive to the corner to increase the lines of sight.

According to the report before Council by traffic analyst Michael Bat, the changes are a direct response to residents' complaints.

Based on the analysis, sight distance will be effectively reduced by more than 40 per cent for drivers travelling in an eastbound-to-southbound direction when a vehicle is parked along the angle bend on Lensmith Drive, he said. Staff recommends that parking be prohibited at any time on the south and west sides of Lensmith [from the west limits of #38] to a point nine metres south of the corner radius. This will ensure that the sight distance will not be impeded for all road users when navigating around the single bend on Lensmith Drive. As a result, an estimated four existing on-street parking spaces will be limited.

During Council's discussion of the recommendation, it was mentioned the complaints came through Mayor Geoff Dawe's office who, in turn, passed them along to appropriate staff members for investigation. Although that method ultimately brought about results, staff said Council members should encourage members of the public to take advantage of Place Speak, an app launched last year which allows Aurorans to pin their concerns on an online map which are then addressed by Town Hall.

Ideally, we would like Councillors to encourage people to go on and register and put the complaints on themselves, said Stephanie Mackenzie-Smith, Aurora's Manager of Corporate Communications. If they are not comfortable or have concerns with how to do that, they can absolutely contact the Communications Department. We're also training Access Aurora [front desk staff at Town Hall] to add complaints to the system themselves.

From the perspective of many Councillors, there are indeed many issues and problem spots that still need to be tackled.

There are probably a number of streets that very much meet the same criteria with poor sight lines on a sharp bend, said Councillor John Abel.

Added Councillor Tom Mrakas: We need to look right across Town at [addressing these issues] instead of doing it piecemeal just one at a time. I remember two years ago when doing some door knocking on Hackwood Crescent, one resident mentioned to me the same issue coming around the bend: the sight lines are very poor. I brought that to the [Director of Infrastructure at the time and I am afraid] that got lost in the shuffle. I think it is something we need to look at and make sure that whole areas within the Town that fall within the same structure of street and make sure we are providing the same level of service and care for our residents.

For some, including Councillor Sandra Humfries, who has been one of Council's most vocal proponents of bringing back the Town's former Traffic Safety Advisory Committee to listen to and make recommendations on such complaints, the online component is essential going forward.

One of the things I think is really good about PlaceSpeak is that these issues, even those that come to us, will be put on the application and that will be identified as an area of concern as residents go online, they will see that's their street and will want to add some comments too, she said. That will make for an ease of understanding of what's going on at the Town. I believe it will be very good and I believe we have over 500 comments on there right now.