

Speed cushion pilot moves forward for Kennedy, Mavrinac and McMaster

By Brock Weir

Aurora's speed cushion pilot project will move forward on three streets, following long advocacy from neighbours.

Council approved temporary speed cushions be installed on Kennedy Street West from McGee Crescent to Murray Drive, Mavrinac Boulevard from Borealis Avenue to Spring Farm, and McMaster Avenue from Hollidge to Hollandview Trail.

The decision came despite recommendations from Town Staff not to proceed with the project as warrants for the speed cushions were not met, but residents on Kennedy Street West and Mavrinac Boulevard took it upon themselves to go door to door with petitions to prove the buy-in was there.

'I listened to what every one of you said last week: you have to get a champion, you have to find someone to go out and do the work and get the support of the community,' said Mavrinac resident Brian Wilson, who said he knocked on the 27 doors between Borealis and Spring Farm and got 24 favourable responses, with two doors unopened and one resident declining to respond because he worked for the Town. 'Everybody was very, very positive of me taking the time and going out to knock on doors and very supportive of getting these speed cushions to put on Mavrinac.

'I learned that if I came to you and got the signatures and support of the street, and the streets that were directly affected, that based on Kennedy, you would probably take positive actions. I hope you will take action and protect the people on our streets.'

Take action they did, approving three of the five streets originally proposed for the pilot project, while deferring similar works for Stone Road and Conover Avenue to a newly re-created Traffic Safety Advisory Committee, also approved last week.

For some, the approval was long-overdue.

'Driving in our community has changed drastically, and so have calming measures, and so has policing and enforcement,' said Councillor John Abel, the original proponent of the speed cushion pilot, suggesting existing traffic warrants are outdated. 'I don't believe that those warrants are set to meet the concerns of our residents. This is a pilot project to see if it works, see if there is an impact and any push-back, and then we can evaluate it.

'We should make some decisions. That is our job. The feedback here is do the evaluation and move forward from there while the Traffic Advisory Committee is being set up. We have all this here before us except for the will to say, 'let's do it' and that is what I think we should be doing, and instructing staff to get this done quickly so we can assess it and move on.'

Although all Council members but Councillor Paul Pirri supported moving ahead with the three projects, some said they were uncomfortable moving the project forward without receiving input from the newly-restored committee. Councillor Sandra Humfries, who brought forward the notice of motion creating the committee, shared these concerns.

'When I championed Golf Links [as a resident] it took me 18 months to get those speed bumps,' she said. 'I understand Councillor Abel did put a perfect project in front of us which is absolutely extraordinary, and if you want to go ahead and do it, that's great. Mr. Wilson did a great job in providing us the information that we need.

'I feel we need to approach this in the right manner. If everyone else is for it, and that is why we vote, please move it forward. I am just concerned with the way we are doing it. We're not traffic safety people, we're not engineers, we're not designers of traffic calming. It is all for the right reasons, but I am just afraid of the process at this point.'

Councillor Wendy Gaertner expressed a similar view, adding this is not the normal process.

?On the other hand, last week at Council I believe we gave Mr. Wilson the impression that if he went out and did this work, he would be satisfying a process,? she added. ?He has done this work and the residents are probably expecting Council to give them some help this evening and I think we need to do that, although Councillor Humfries is right, perhaps we weren't clear enough last week.?

Councillor Harold Kim agreed, noting Mr. Wilson, along with the dozen other residents in the audience for the previous week's General Committee meeting, heard Council members speak about protocol, process and warrants.

?He certainly went out there and took the initiative to champion his street and obtained the necessary requirements,? he said. ?I don't think it is necessarily fair for him or the residents in that stretch of Mavrinac [to go back on that] because as far as I can tell he exceeded the requirements from my perspective. Going forward, we should probably put in a moratorium. I think it is great that we are going to put in place a Traffic Safety Committee that will do all this.?