

Speed cushion pilot project should be expanded: Councillors

By Brock Weir

Aurora's recently-approved pilot project to install a series of speed cushions in five areas of Town where speeding has been identified as an issue hasn't been implemented yet, but Councillors are already considering areas where the program can be expanded.

Councillors John Abel and Wendy Gaertner raised the issue at last week's General Committee meeting, noting they have been receiving feedback from other parts of Aurora looking to get in on the action.

The speed cushion pilot was spearheaded around the Council table last year by Councillor Abel and received widespread support from Council.

Since it was approved, however, it has been proven there is an appetite for more, he said.

‘There are other streets, like the Valhalla area on Old Yonge Street, that are very keen on seeing this move forward,’ he said. ‘The intent of the Notice of Motion was a trial basis on a few spots to see how it would run and then expand on it, if that would be the case.’

For Councillor Gaertner, another problematic area is Henderson Drive, which goes for considerable stretches without traffic measures such as lights and stop signs to allow for easy travel on adjacent streets.

‘There are residents coming out of the woodwork, it seems, on Henderson and Henderson isn't a street we considered,’ she said. ‘People who don't front onto Henderson have concerns and I have had three in the last week from people who cannot get out from the side streets during rush hours. I tried it and it is true. You really have to push on the gas in order to get out.’

Crosswalk lights allowing pedestrians to get across the street is in place in one area, but consideration should be given to drivers, she added.

‘We are in the process of doing the service for the sites that have been identified by Council,’ replied Ilmar Simanovskis, Aurora's Director of Infrastructure. ‘My suggestion would be a motion to include [Henderson] as well and then we will look at some of the [intersections] as well.’

But, for Councillor Sandra Humfries, the concerns rolling in are symptoms of wider problems ‘problems which might be addressed by the reinstatement of Aurora's defunct Traffic Safety Advisory Committee, which provided a venue for area residents to sound off on their traffic concerns and have them addressed by Council and municipal staff.’

Its reinstatement is something Councillor Humfries has long-advocated for around the table and she will now bring it forward in a Notice of Motion this spring.

‘I know there is not enough interest around the table for a Traffic Advisory Committee, but I think I need to just do what I need to do and we can vote on it,’ she said. ‘Our growth is unbelievable and I believe an advisory committee could focus on the need. There is a criteria [for traffic calming measures] and I believe that criteria is something we need to live by. If it doesn't go forward, we tell the residents this is why and then we can come to Council at that point, argue their point, and we can make a decision. I have been whining about this for a year-and-a-half now, so I will put out a Notice of Motion and see if there is a will around the table.’

Over time, however, Council might be warming up to the idea.

‘This was just a pilot project to try a couple of neighbourhoods to see if it was effective [with] a report back after a year,’ said Councillor Abel. ‘This could have all been done and ready for analysing but we're not nearly at that stage. There may be some merit in Councillor Humfries' way of doing it [to clear up misconceptions from residents on the impact of speed cushions] because all it is

doing is setting up for a lot of misunderstanding.

?It has taken us a lot of time to get to a very confusing state. Would we do it better? Well, I'm game!?

Added Councillor Gaertner: ?I think it really is something that needs serious attention. I look forward to that motion.?