

Speed cushions approved for installation on Aurora Heights Drive

Last week, Council ratified a decision that will see the installation of speed cushions on Aurora Heights Drive between Bathurst Street and Delayne Drive (west leg).

The location at Conover Avenue between River Ridge Boulevard and Borealis Avenue was also examined for the installation of speed cushions; however, will be referred to staff for further information to be brought back in September.

The deferral at the Conover Avenue location will enable staff to reach out to residents in the area about the potential changes. Ward 4 Councillor Michael Thompson noted that the Town has had to remove speed cushions in the past as a result of lack of support from residents.

“While I'm supportive of moving forward with the traffic calming measures for Aurora Heights, the requirement for a petition to notify the residents in the area was waived. And talking to some of them, no one knows that this is coming. And so we've seen time and time again, when we take these initiatives, and the residents aren't informed, it sometimes comes back to bite us,” he said.

While Aurora Heights still did a petition at a lower requirement number of 55 per cent as opposed to 70 per cent, the Conover location has had no engagement with residents.

The request for traffic calming measures came around 2021 and the request for a petition was waived because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Councillor Thompson said.

Director of Planning Marco Ramunno said he sees no issue with referring the request back to September so that staff can consult with the area residents. “I think it is appropriate that we continue to conduct the appropriate petitions and surveys of the affected residents,” he said.

In the report to be brought back in September for the site at Conover Avenue, staff will also highlight the effectiveness of speed cushions in a school zone that already includes several traffic calming measures.

Ward 2 Councillor Rachel Gilliland said she believes that the speed cushions will be effective.

“So far, I feel that the speed humps that we have installed seem to work. So, I do believe that your measures, and the works that you have in place, seem to currently match, so I'm looking forward to your report in September,” she said.

She also thanked staff for completing another evaluation at the Kennedy location, between Bathurst and McGee Crescent, which was found not to meet the standards required for speed cushions to be installed.

“They'll be disappointed, I'm sure. But the fact that we did try a couple times to see if maybe there's some variations that didn't occur, then at least we kind of proved ourselves correct in that [assessment].”

Installing traffic calming measures has been a long-time request for residents in the Town of Aurora as Councillors have received many calls of concern. Although the need has been requested since as early as 2009, not all residents have been supportive of the installation at the former sites.

The Region is undertaking a travel safety plan and will notify towns if there are any other particular elements that can be implemented.

By Elisa Nguyen