

Support not there for trails: Environmentalist

I think it is important that the Citizens of Aurora know the reasons for my resignation from the trails committee.

It is with regret, particularly to the Citizens of Aurora that I tendered my resignation from the Trails Committee. I have been the Environmental Advisory Committee's representative on the committee for almost eight years, working closely with Town staff and members of the previous and present Council on planning and implementation of the Town's Trail Master Plan.

I came reluctantly to the conclusion that most members of Council, with the exception of our two Councillor representatives on the Trails Committee, and a few other Council members, have provided little or no support for the implementation of the Trails Master Plan or trails policy.

The majority of Council only support the construction of trails on public or future publically owned lands. Where vital trail links are located on developable land most have supported the developers' position to eradicate these links rather than supporting the citizens' need to have a comprehensive trails network in Aurora. There are several situations where this has occurred:

Even when the Town owned the property, they didn't secure a vital trail link before they sold it to Bulk Barn. Following objections from the purchaser, they eradicated a section of trail that would have become part of a trail linking the northern industrial area of the Town to the proposed new railway station at Bloomington and the 404. It is unlikely that this missing link can be replaced, even if the rest of the trail route is secured.

I was concerned when the Mayor voted to eradicate the Kwik Kopy trail easement that was secured by a previous Council as part of a planning rezoning agreement to provide a vital link between the Willow Farm Trail Network and the Nokiidaa Trail via the McKenzie Marsh boardwalk. After four years, we are still no closer to constructing this important section of this legally agreed trail link due to landowners' objections.

The critical off-road trail links through the developable portions of the 2C lands would have linked the extensive trail network on the future publically owned lands into the Newmarket off-road trail system, but these were opposed by the developers. They suggested that these off-road trails should be relocated along the road sidewalks rather than along narrow traffic-free passageways between the houses that had been recommended as a compromise by the Trails Committee ? a solution that was quite common in some of the older subdivisions in Town. Most of the Town Council supported the developers' position so that these vital off-road trail links have also been lost forever.

I cannot see the point of Council unanimously approving an off-road Trail Master Plan and policy if they absolutely no intention of implementing it. Therefore, I had no alternative but to resign from the Trails Committee.

David Tomlinson
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