

Traffic calming measures aren't doing the trick in Tamarac Trail neighbourhood: residents

A stop sign installed last year to help calm traffic on Tamarac Trail and surrounding streets is not having a significant impact on the problem it aimed to solve, according to residents.

Neighbours recently delegated to Council asking the Town to consider further traffic calming measures in the community as the street continues to experience heavy volumes.

The number of vehicles travelling through the neighbourhood, however, is below the established threshold for such traffic calming measures, according to municipal staff, leaving Councillors questioning whether it's time to review the warrants themselves.

'Tamarac was not designed [for] heavy traffic and only has one sidewalk. This creates a serious safety concern for residents on the opposite side who must cross the street to access the bus stops, the mailbox, or the park,' said resident Katelyn Harris. 'It's especially dangerous for children, seniors and families. The curve at the east end creates a severe blind spot and drivers come around with little time to react and at excessive speeds.'

The neighbourhood saw two 'serious accidents' this past winter alone, she contended, and in another instance a school bus lost control.

'These incidents should not be happening on a residential street with a 40-kilometre limit,' she continued. 'On Halloween, my two daughters and I were nearly struck while crossing the street after trick-or-treating. Incidents like this are far too common and deeply concerning. We're asking for additional guidance and support. The stop sign has not been enough. We need effective traffic calming solutions, whether it's speed humps, curb extensions, or other proven measures to make our streets safer for everyone.'

Ten-year-old Mika added: 'I really love my street, but I'm not allowed to walk to the park by myself or even walk my dog because it's not safe. There are too many cars and they go really fast, especially around the big curve. My parents and I are scared that cars won't see in time to stop. There's only a sidewalk on one side of the street and we live on the side without one. That means I have to cross the road just to go to the park. Last Halloween, my mom, my sister and I were almost hit by a car and we were crossing the street to go home. It was really scary. I just want to be able to walk to the park or walk my dog like everyone else without having a high chance of getting hit.'

'And if you do need a fundraiser, I could sell baked goods or anything for more money. I would do anything to save my street.'

But, as the traffic volume didn't meet the criteria required, Councillors suggested it might be time to review the numbers and the courses of action they can take to solve the problem.

'As a Council, we need to take it seriously when residents come forward and say they feel unsafe,' said Ward 3 Councillor Wendy Gaertner. 'I don't know what the solution is, but I think we should try something other than the warrants.'

Director of Planning Marco Ramunno said that staff are in Council's hands when it comes to warrants, and lawmakers can direct them to put traffic calming measures in place at their discretion.

'If we can have some conversation about [warrants] offline to see what solutions we can have for some of these smaller streets that don't have the volume and so they don't pass the warrants, but they still have safety issues that they need to address,' said Ward 1 Councillor Ron Weese. 'I think there's some work that needs to be done here.'

While Ward 2 Councillor Rachel Gilliland considered the residents' concerns, she questioned the value of the warrants.

?Anybody can come up the street and decide they want some sort of traffic calming,? she said. ?We have to really decide whether or not we're going to adhere to the policies we have in place.?

By Brock Weir