

## Water plans could challenge Tamarac Trail residents: Councillor

**By Brock Weir**

Aurora's drinking water system may have weathered the storm during this particularly harsh winter, but underground elements might cause undue challenges for one particular Aurora street, argue some Councillors.

Councillors were responding this month to a review of Aurora's Drinking Water Quality Management System, which was compiled at the end of January. In a town-wide review of how Aurora's drinking water system was performing, results were generally favourable.

Out of 895 water samples taken over the course of 2013, for instance, only two samples, both taken in July on Earl Stewart Drive, came back negative before they were deemed positive following a system flush and re-test.

This station at 201 Earl Stewart Drive has often posed challenges to the keepers of Aurora's water, and it is something on which Iimar Simanovskis, Director of Infrastructure and Environmental Services, says his department will keep a close eye.

Responding to questions from Councillor Wendy Gaertner on how the system fared during the December ice storm, Mr. Simanovskis said it passed with flying colours.

"From a system performance aspect, we actually performed well," he said. "We had backup power at our main stations, so we didn't have any issue with our power supply. The challenge we have with any backup system is ensuring power and that is the only thing we had to take action on in this ice storm."

Looking ahead, future tasks moving forward to ensure the quality of Aurora's water include continued monitoring of the Earl Stewart Station, a repainting of Aurora's fire hydrants from yellow to red, coupled with reflective markers, and continued water replacements, but one task which raised the ire of some Councillors is the relining of water mains on Tamarac Trail, near Henderson Drive, in 2015.

Last year, the street experienced three water main breaks and Councillor Michael Thompson questioned why rectifying the problem is at least a year-and-a-half away.

"There seems to be a history of breaks every year, yet we're not going to address it this year," he said. "We're going to wait until 2015, so it almost seems to me that we are setting ourselves up for another break this year and we're not going to do anything."

Funding for the project, said Mr. Simanovskis, was at issue. Money earmarked for construction work on the water system has already been allocated for 2015, but should the funds become available this year, his department would be more than willing to do the work.

"I believe we had three failures in that section, so it is a problematic area," agreed Mr. Simanovskis. "It is something we will be addressing as soon as we get funding for it."

From Councillor Thompson's perspective, however, that time for review is now.

"It is almost saying to the residents who live [on Tamarac] that we know you're going to have a water main break this year, we know there is going to be inconvenience, but we have decided to wait a year," he said. "It almost seems like history will repeat itself and because we don't want to make that decision, we're letting it go and I don't think that is fair to the residents of Tamarac Trail."

Water loss from water main breaks and other pipe leaks have also been of interest to Councillor Evelyn Buck. When the drinking water quality report came up for review by committee earlier this month, before it is due to be formally accepted by Council this

week, she suggested the onus should be put on the developers of subdivisions to come up with better solutions to these problems.

?If these pipes are not adequate to do the job, and we have to go in and spend close to \$1 million every year to inset something [to reline them] and make them adequate, are we requiring developers to put in different water mains when they put in new subdivision? Tamarac is not an old street.?