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More four-way stops for Old School Road

By Bill Rea

The Town is planning to make four intersections with Old School Road into four-way stops, and there's now a push to get a fifth added.

Councillors last week voted to direct staff to install temporary stop signs at the intersection with Chinguacousy Road as part of an on-gong environmental assessment (EA) study and to give staff a chance to review updated collision data.

That came after a deputation from local resident Tara Breeze. It came on top of an amendment Councillor Johanna Downey had previously put forth when the matter was before committee, asking that the intersection be assessed as part of the EA to see if a four-way stop was warranted there.

Downey commented that creating the four-way stops was ?very timely,? as both old School and Healey Roads have become more widely used as east-west routes through town. She said both traffic volumes and speeds have increased.

?I'm thankful that staff has come back with such a fulsome review,? she said, but added there have been a lot of accidents in the area of the intersection with Chinguacousy.

The staff report to councillors had called for the intersections with McLaughlin, Kennedy, Heart Lake and Bramalea Roads be made four-way stops. Staff had reported there had been safety concerns expressed by residents near the McLaughlin and Bramalea, and they had concluded four-way stops were warranted at both. Temporary traffic lights have been in place at Kennedy and Heart Lake. With reconstruction of Kennedy complete, they said four-way stops and flashing beacons would be sufficient.

The report stated those lights were put in place in the fall of 2015 as a temporary measure. Traffic had to be diverted north out of the subdivisions when part of the road was closed for construction.

Following that work, staff conducted traffic counts in the area, as well as reviewing collision incidents there over the past five years. It was determined the traffic lights weren't warranted. As well, they said there had only been five collisions at the intersection between 2013 and now. Signals could be justified if there had been 15 collisions over three years, they stated.

Staff also reported there had only been four collisions at the intersection with Heart Lake Road from 2013 to the present. Prior to the temporary lights, the report stated there were signs stopping east-west traffic.

The report also stated staff plans to review the Heart Lake and Kennedy intersections annually to see if traffic lights are warranted.

Breeze told councillors last week she was appearing on behalf of her husband, who's a police officer (not in Caledon) who specializes in major collision reconstruction and fatality investigation.

She cited an email he had sent to the Town June 2 which stated there had been nine collisions on Old School between Highway 10 and Mississauga Road, as well as a more recent email in which he said there had been four more. ?This is 13 too many,? he wrote.

Breeze also pointed out Old School is an appealing road for people seeking to travel east-west, noting Bovaird Drive in Brampton has 16 signalized intersections between Highway 410 and Winston Churchill Boulevard, and Mayfield Road has 13. The only signalized intersection on Old School is at Highway 10.

She also challenged anyone to name a four-mile stretch in Caledon that has seen 13 collisions over nine months, adding those are just the 13 that she and her husband have seen or heard about. She assumed there were some they might have missed.

Eric Chan, manager of Transportation, Finance and Infrastructure services for the Town, told Downey having four-way stops at all those intersections shouldn't cause much of a ripple effect. He said the intersections are far enough apart.

Councillor Gord McClure was not enthused about making all the intersections four-way stops. He said some of the north-south roads are more heavily used than Old School.

General Manager of Finance and Infrastructure Services Fuwing Wong told Councillor Jennifer Innis tenders have been recently awarded for rehabilitation work on Old School for the stretch between Winston Churchill and Heritage Road, and between Mississauga and Chinguacousy Roads. He said he would have to check to see what kind of safety measures were included in the project, but he also told Councillor Annette Groves it's not unusual to have items added after the tender has been awarded.