

Signals coming to Highway 9 intersection with The Gore Road

By Bill Rea

The northern portion of The Gore Road in Caledon is likely to see some changes, bringing things in line with what has already been done to the south.

And signals at the intersection with Highway 9 is going to be part of the work too.

Peel Region recently hosted an open house session to explain what's to be done to the stretch of road between Highway 9 and Patterson Sideroad.

An environmental assessment (EA) is being conducted on the stretch of road. The purpose of the study is to address the deteriorating condition of the road and identify opportunities to enhance it.

The Region characterizes the road as a two-lane rural arterial, according to material supplied at the open house. The road provides access to residential and farm properties. Heavy trucks are not allowed on the road, except for local deliveries. The road also has narrow shoulders and open ditches, with the speed limit generally being 70 km-h.

Project Manager Sally Rook said there are a couple of areas along the road where the limit goes down to 60, such as through the S? curves around Finnerty Sideroad.

The study area takes up about 6.3 kilometres, with five intersections and no turn lanes.

There are no traffic signals along this stretch of road.

The Region reported a number of concerns have been raised in the community including poor visibility on Finnerty. Excessive speeding has also been cited, but the Region stated there are no plans to reduce the speed limit. Caledon OPP?has been informed, and speed-calming tools might be used.

There have also been concerns that the improvements will attract heavy trucks, but Rook said the prohibition will remain in place.

The Region has a bylaw stating heavy trucks aren't allowed there. ?The intent is to keep it that way,? she declared.

Concerns have also been expressed regarding pedestrian safety, as well as matters involving entering and exiting driveways. These concerns have been incorporated into the study, according to the Region. The plan is to have paved shoulders to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists, along with rumble strips. Driveway sightlines will be addressed where possible.

As well, stormwater drainage issues are being addressed in the study.

The region has stated the study is aimed at maintaining the existing cultural and aesthetics of the area.

The problems with the road include deterioration of the pavement, according to the Region. There was reference to the need for and improved base, as well as slope stabilization.

A safety review, conducted in 2010, revealed there had been 41 traffic accidents on the stretch of road between 2005 and 2009, and most of them involved animals.

The preferred plan, according to the Region, is a full two-lane reconstruction, along with improving the shoulders for safer stopping, as well as road stability. The improved shoulder will be a benefit to cyclists, pedestrians and people riding horses.

Rook explained the stretch of road south of Patterson was addressed about four years ago. It required similar work, with a new base of pavement and no widening.

She also pointed out most of this area is on the Oak Ridges Moraine, which puts restrictions on what can be down.

?We're only doing what's required,? she said.

In addition, the study involves the intersection with Highway 9, which is under the jurisdiction of the Province. The Ministry of Transportation (MTO)?is conducting an EA of the highway in the area, and signals at the intersection are in the works.

Rook said the two studies are not connected, although they are taking place at the same time. ?It really was coincidental, she remarked.

She added it's MTO that makes the call as to whether signals go up at the intersection, and they have indicated that they are warranted.

Also possibly in the works is the closing of the nearby intersection of Highway 9 and Coolihans Sideroad, but Rook couldn't say if anything definite had been decided in that regard.

But Councillor Richard Whitehead, who lives on The Gore Road in the study area, understood the intersection will be closed.

?It represents a significant travel hazard because of serious sightline problems,? he observed, adding the intersection will be closed, with Coolihans ending in a cul de sac. ?That's a huge improvement to the safety of the road.?

Addressing the issue of shoulders. Rook said this project ties into the Region's Active Transportation Plan with the addition of 1.5 metres of shoulder.

Despite that, she said there are no plans to widen the road or add capacity. She did say there will have to be some land acquisition, along with some grading.

Actual construction is likely to take place around 2017, Rook said, adding the cost is expected to be about \$13 million, not counting land acquisition.

‘It’s a major project,’ Whitehead agreed, adding it’s more than just a case of repaving.

He added dealing with projects like this is always a challenge.

‘It’s a scenic Regional Road,’ he said. ‘It’s also a truck restricted road.’

That means in order to keep things safe, it’s important to maintain the rural characteristics of the road.

‘The twists and turns and scenic value of the road have to be protected, at the same time making it safer,’ he commented.