

Accident involving youngster prompts safety improvements

By **CYNTHIA GAMBLE**
Staff Writer

After digital petitions, residents' meetings and a staff operational review, safety improvements will be made to the intersection on Eaton St. at Huffmann Dr.

The Town will install a three-way stop sign at the T-intersection, including sidewalk extensions, paint a crosswalk and stop line on the south leg approach and prohibit parking on the north side of Eaton St. in the vicinity of the intersection to improve sight-lines on the curving roadway. As well, the Town will request Halton Regional Police do stop sign enforcement and approach Silver Creek School to educate parents and students to reduce illegal crossing on Eaton St.

The cost of the improvements: \$3,000.

Director of Infrastructure Services Chris Mills said the hope is to have the signs and line painting completed this week—weather dependent. It will then take a few additional weeks to have the curb and sidewalk work completed.

The actions were prompted after a three-year-old boy was hit by a car about 8:30 a.m. at the Eaton St. and Huffmann Dr. intersection on Sept. 16. He received minor injuries.

The boy's mother said at the time, "they were very lucky everything turned out the way it did" and urged drivers in school zones to slow down and be extra cautious.

This intersection on Eaton St. is located between two elementary schools: Silver Creek and St. Brigid Catholic (on Miller Dr.).

"This is something that this council takes seriously, the safety of everyone in the municipality, and in particular our children," said Ward 4 Councillor Bob Inglis, who represents that area.

An operational review showed while most of the children cross Eaton St. under the supervision of crossing guards, located at Miller Dr./Eaton St. and in front of Silver Creek public school in the morning, that stat drops significantly in the afternoon. Approximately 40 per cent of both parents and children chose not to use the controlled crossing locations in the afternoon.

"I find that to be unacceptable personally," said Inglis. "And I think education will go a long way and hopefully we can bring that number down, and zero would be ideal obviously."

The review also showed non-compliance with the current stop sign. In the morning hours, 4 per cent failed to stop, 69% came to a rolling stop, 19% were stopped by traffic, and 8%

came to a voluntary full stop. In the afternoon hours, 3% failed to stop, 38 %came to a rolling stop, 53% were stopped by traffic and 6% came to a voluntary full stop. Based on these results, Town staff say the majority of motorists do not obey the one-way stop sign control that's in place now. Staff also stated that the number of cars do not yet meet the warrants for a three-way stop.

"We're hoping the three-way is something we can do quite quickly, and I think would add a considerable amount of safety to the intersection, especially in a comprehensive way with the other recommendations," said Inglis.

Town staff, instead of a three-way stop, had recommended the installation of speed bumps, installed during the spring/summer/fall months, at an annual maintenance cost of \$2,000.

But Inglis said the majority of residents did not want the speed bumps, and most wanted something done now—not six months later in the spring. The mayor, Ward 4 councillors and Town staff met with neighbourhood residents' representatives on-site on Oct. 12 and again at the Civic Centre on Oct. 17.

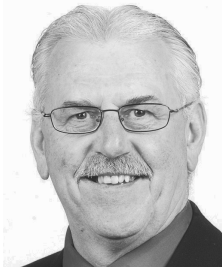
"There are issues at that intersection right now and school is in session right now," said Inglis. "The mayor and ward councillors have been down there and seen it first hand. So the sooner the better is something that we're looking for here."

Ward 3&4 Regional Councillor Jane Fogal felt the speed bumps were the best solution, but the wait was unacceptable. She noted, however, the warrants are pretty close to getting a three-way stop.

"So in the end, we have to go with getting some action right away," said Fogal. "(The stop signs) is what the community is really saying what they want and will certainly make great improvements to the intersection."

In his report, traffic co-ordinator Matt Roj warned that traffic studies show that unwarranted all-way stop intersections could reduce road safety by increasing speeds at mid-block locations, reducing stop sign compliance and requiring regular police enforcement.

During the Sept. 19-26 time period, the annual average daily traffic (AADT) was 2,288 vehicles on Eaton St. at that location, and 1,085 on Huffmann. About 85 per cent of the drivers exceeded the speed limit of 40 km/h with an average speed of 45 km/h in the morning and 47 km/h in the afternoon.



BOB INGLIS

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