

Council delays Main Street construction

Hoover Park bypass to be built first

BY HANNELORE VOLPE
Staff Writer

Stouffville motorists will have to wait another year before Main Street west is widened.

But councillors believe it's for their own good.

Fearing construction delays will only add to the already busy rush hour drives along Main Street, council decided to stall the work until Hoover Park Drive is turned into a southern bypass.

Councillor Rob Hargrave was adamant Hoover be extended from 10th Line to Hwy. 48 before starting the Main Street work.

Not doing so would lead to traffic chaos he described as "suicide" and "unfathomable".

The Hoover extension is expected to be complete by fall 2006, with the Main Street widening beginning in spring 2007.

Concerns about the congestion that already grips Stouffville's main thoroughfare during rush hours led councillors to alter the construction schedule.

Widening Main Street to four lanes from Ninth Line to Hwy. 48 will cost more than \$6 million, most of it funded by development charges with about \$821,000 coming from the town's capital reserves.

Instead of doing construction in several phases as originally proposed, council voted to have Main Street widened in one continuous operation from Ringwood Drive to Ninth Line. Once this phase is complete, construction would start on the stretch of road from Ringwood Drive to Hwy. 48. Council believes it should reduce the time motorists are inconvenienced by the construction zone.

Not doing so would lead to traffic chaos he described as "suicide" and "unfathomable".

Traffic will be channelled down one side of the road at a time as construction takes place on the opposite side. A concrete barrier would go up on the centre line.

The existing wide pavement and temporary paved shoulders will allow for two-way traffic and let drivers get past cars making left turns, public works director Paul Whitehouse said.

The town is negotiating with owners of properties along Main Street to purchase small pockets of land to relocate utilities.

Storm sewers and catch basins also have to be constructed.

Street widening plan gets mixed reviews

Local business people have mixed feelings about the widening of Main Street.

Whitchurch-Stouffville Chamber of Commerce president Helene Johnson was worried about the safety of the Ninth Line and Main Street intersection with four lanes of traffic merging into two once construction is completed. Traffic is already "creep and crawl" after 3 p.m. along Main Street without construction, she said.

"We'll be having a lot of sidewalk sales," Duncan Giles, owner of Giles Chevrolet Oldsmobile Ltd. said of the prospect of having the sidewalk and road closer to his business.

He has seen so many rear-end

collisions in front of his business (five in one month last summer) that he suggested having an ambulance ready at all times — particularly once the road is widened.

He contacted York Region officials and Mayor Sue Sherban about the already hazardous intersection. He was in favour of having Hoover Park Drive completed before work starts on Main Street, a move council made last week.

Patti-Lynn Card of Patti-Lynn Interiors is looking forward to a widened Main Street, believing it will have benefits for local business once it is completed.

"So many people avoid Main Street because they hate being stuck

in traffic," she said.

The Lion of Stouffville restaurant has a patio on Main Street it wants to keep.

"There are only seven or eight feet between the patio and the edge of the road," restaurant manager Jarrod Purvis said.

But the widening needs to be done to alleviate the "crazy" traffic congestion, he said.

Deborah Macdonald doesn't like the idea of four lanes on Main Street because it might make the street a major thoroughfare for people rushing through town to get to their destinations.

She's worried much of Stouffville's small-town atmosphere will be lost.

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Pellet gun shooting leads to charges

An 18-year-old Stouffville man has been arrested in connection with a pellet gun shooting that left a gash in the leg of a 15-year-old boy.

York Regional Police were called to a doctor's office on Civic Avenue because a boy was being treated for a pellet wound to the lower part of his leg.

The boy was walking home from school Tuesday when he was shot.

An 18-year-old Stouffville man was arrested a few hours later at his home and a weapon was

seized.

He has been charged with aggravated assault and various weapons charges.

Police say the misuse of imitation firearms can cause grave injury and often lead to serious criminal charges.

Anyone with further information about this incident is asked to contact York Regional Police at 1-866-876-5423, ext. 7541, Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS, or leave an anonymous tip online at www.crimestoppersyr.ca