

'Tis the season

Regional staff ready for potholes

BY SEAN PEARCE
spearse@yrmg.com

Spring in the GTA is a special time of year.

The snow melts, flowers grow and potholes open on our roadways.

While some older municipalities struggle to fill in the mini-chasms cropping up on their streets, York Region's roads remain in pretty good shape, transportation and community planning department roads branch director Brian Titherington said, adding the region has a couple of advantages over its neighbour to the south.

"We have a road network that is relatively young compared to the City of Toronto," he said. "The other difference is we're a regional municipality, so we build our roads to a different standard."

This winter has seen a number of freezes and thaws, Mr. Titherington said and, unfortunately, that equates to prime pothole conditions.

The good news is the region works hard to stay on top of the issue and tries to fill the potholes as quickly as they appear, he said.

"Whenever our guys aren't plowing, they're out there doing maintenance and taking care of our roads."

All in all, York Region takes decent care of its roadways, CAA South Central Ontario government relations specialist Caroline Grech said.

"I think they do a pretty good job," she said. "You're pretty much at the whim of the weather when it comes to potholes."

Potholes are an oft-cited annoyance for motorists and with good reason, Ms Grech said.

After all, hitting a pothole the wrong way can result in damages to a vehicle ranging in price from \$60 to replace a bent or broken rim to many thousands of dollars to repair broken suspension

components.

Depending on who owns the road in question, drivers can present the municipality or province with a bill for damages, but only if the incident is well-documented and proper procedure followed, Ms Grech said.

Generally speaking, however, it's best for motorists to do their utmost to avoid potholes by driving slowly on rough patches of road and remaining alert at all times, Ms Grech said.

Keeping your tires properly inflated is another plus, she said, while hard braking or swerving are definite don'ts that can result in even greater damage to a vehicle.

"Some of the onus is on the driver," she said. "We know (municipalities) can't keep up with every pothole because of the weather."

It's true the roads crews can't be everywhere at once, Mr. Titherington said and, as such, he encourages motorists to report any potholes they see to

the region's maintenance hotline.

You can call 905-830-4444, ext. 5200 to alert regional staff to any roads issues 24 hours per day, seven days per week.

Motorists ought to be proactive in reporting any trouble spots they see while out on the roads, Ms Grech agreed.

That being said, if drivers report issues and they're not attended to in a timely fashion, they can also vent their frustrations as part of the CAA Worst Roads campaign, which launches in May.

Now in its 10th year, the annual listing of rage-inducing roads definitely draws attention to sub-par streets, Ms Grech said.

"We do get action," she said. "We would certainly hope so after 10 years of doing it."



WEIGH IN

► What do you think of road conditions in York Region?
E-mail editor Jim Mason at jmason@yrmg.com