

Editorial & Opinions

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WE THINK...

email responses to newsroom@durhamregion.com

Kingston Road sidewalk network's time has come in Pickering

Pickering councillors are thinking with their feet -- to the benefit of citizens from the east side of the Millennium City to the west.

City councillors last week decided it was high time that the Hwy. 2 corridor - Pickering's main thoroughfare -- had continuous, safe sidewalks installed for all to use. The current patchwork has sections of sidewalk here, soft shoulders there and is both hazardous and esthetically unappealing.

It's not uncommon in Pickering to see forlorn bus passengers waiting in or near a shelter on the soft shoulder as traffic whizzes closely by at 80 km/h.

One can routinely see young mothers pushing strollers, struggling in the dirt and casting wary glances at oncoming traffic.

Pedestrians and cyclists must be on high alert as they walk or cycle.

The plan, led by Ward 3 City Councillor David Pickles, will see staff study the existing corridor, identify gaps and recommend priorities in time for next year's budget deliberations.

Included in the staff study will be potential bike routes to encourage alternate forms of transportation within city limits.

A safe, continuous sidewalk network

from Toronto to Ajax will provide many benefits to Pickering residents, particularly if a bike lane component is included in the final plan. It will provide greater separation and safety for pedestrians. It will encourage exercise and fitness and get people out of their cars. It will provide an important link to our urban neighbours to the east and west in both practical and esthetic terms.

Finally, it will help connect businesses along Hwy. 2 with their customers and one another. Surely one of the primary characteristics of a successful community is a vibrant, active and connected main thoroughfare.

Unfortunately, Pickering residents have come to see the stretch of Hwy. 2 in Pickering -- particularly between Whites and Brock roads -- as a ribbon of asphalt that simply carries cars hither and yon as they travel through the city. They don't see it -- though they should -- as a 'main' street that is home to local businesses, merchants and amenities.

As Ward 1 City Councillor Jennifer O'Connell noted in her support of the new sidewalk network, Kingston Road and sidewalks affect every ward in Pickering.

Let's get moving on this much-needed project.