

Campaign to improve King City's core

By Mark Pavilons

A campaign to increase safety and encourage off-peak parking in King City will transform the core into a people-friendly place to shop.

That's the idea of the King City Business and Community Association.

Their campaign is gathering support from businesses and residents with the goal of encouraging off-peak hours on-street parking and increased police enforcement of vehicles speeding on King Road.

The KCBCA will work collaboratively with King Township and York Region on this campaign to achieve their objectives of 'a vibrant, prosperous, livable and walkable place!'

Most drivers may not realize that parking is permitted on King Road.

Anna Raeli, KCBCA president, said currently the area is a thoroughfare for commuters and truck traffic. Residents have to be made aware of options and various solutions have to be explored to make it a safe and people-friendly core.

'We need to take ownership of our village not unlike what other municipalities are doing to create a sense of pride in their community. The businesses need it and so do our current and future customers,' Raeli observed.

She said they've already seen how parking on King Road has slowed down traffic. The group has received considerable positive feedback. Drivers need to adhere to the 50-km/h speed limit in the core.

More visible signage will clearly inform commuters that parking is permitted.

To make it all work, the KCBCA will inform businesses and citizens about free three hour off-peak hour on-street parking on King Road and Keele Street.

With that comes more visible parking signs. They suggest replacing the current signs on posts with larger ones coloured green with permitted times. These can be posted on hydro meters, lanterns or bicycle racks.

The group also recommends that stall markings or white painted curbs point to on-street parking.

They would also suggest that York Regional Police enforce speed limits on King Road.

Sidewalk repairs and maintenance is also urged to ensure improved accessibility, safety and improved snow removal.

They would also like to see attractive garbage bins, benches and flower pots throughout the village, to give it that personal touch.

Council has been requesting relief in the core since 2007 when a motion was passed requesting that the Region build a bypass for King City. This was subsequently requested again by the current council, according to Councillor Cleve Mortelliti.

As an interim measure, council requested the Region's approval for off-peak parking on King Road in both King City and Nobleton, and this was granted, however, even though parking is permitted, few people know about it as the Region has not posted sufficient signage.

Mortelliti said both he and Councillor Schaefer, at the recent Transportation Master Plan public information session, requested that the Region provide line painting for parking stalls, or at least allow King to paint the stalls. He stressed this is a regional road and King is awaiting their approval to do this.

In addition, the Township is wrapping up its streetscaping project at King and Keele, which is designed to create a more pedestrian friendly environment, with an updated aesthetic with interlock paving stones, landscaping planters, pedestrian canopies and a ceremonial gathering place with a large ceremonial tree at the southeast corner where the Christmas in King City tree lighting will take place this year.

Mortelliti admitted there have been delays as the contractor has run into multiple utility conflicts which is common with re-construction in existing old roads. It's expect to be completed by September.

Chris Fasciano, director of parks, recreation and culture, said they are exploring additional opportunities with York Region and will have a better idea of the project's status in a couple of weeks.

The King City Business and Community Association (KCBCA), founded in December 2011, is a group of business owners and residents in King City. The KCBCA hosts and participates in a variety of community initiatives and events including the annual Christmas in King City event and the King City Street Festival. Through such events and future plans, the KCBCA hopes to foster a sense of community pride and encourage local business patronage. The KCBCA also strives to improve the curb appeal, making King City a more beautiful place for everyone to live, work, shop and play.