

King won't close Toll Road

By Mark Pavilons

King Township wants alternatives to closing Toll Road.

Councillors didn't buckle to a request by Metrolinx to close Toll Road, and instead, want to explore other options. Councillors also felt Metrolinx was being a little presumptuous in asking the municipality do close the road to meet their requirements.

The major problem is the level crossing, permitting access to Highway 11 (Yonge) presents ongoing safety, maintenance and cost burdens. Metrolinx wants the level crossing removed and the road closed, since it doesn't meet Transport Canada guidelines.

Township staff actually supported the removal of the existing railway infrastructure, allowing Metrolinx to close the road. Staff noted the cost of removing the crossing will be offset by the removal of the annual maintenance fees.

Closing the Toll Road crossing will be financially responsible, as it will eliminate maintenance costs and fees to Metrolinx for the railway crossing and eliminate the concerns related to the non-compliance of the transport guidelines for roadway approaches at this crossing, staff noted.

But councillors weren't so quick to side with staff on this one.

Several residents appeared before council to register their opposition, and point out the public was never consulted on the matter.

One resident noted the road's closure will mean a detour for fire trucks and school buses, causing safety issues.

Mayor Steve Pellegrini agreed that one entrance could cause problems. He's also surprised that there was no public consultation on the matter by Metrolinx.

The road's closure is premature, and councillors asked staff to prepare a motion that asks for consultation with Metrolinx on the matter, to find some solutions.

Councillor Avia Eek said this issue is a 'perfect storm of traffic' since Toll is used as a bypass route. Dead-end roads, she pointed out, become magnets for illegal dumping. She also said the new owners of the nearby marina have spent a lot of time and effort revamping the facility and Toll is one of the only ways to access the marina.