

Thorncrest Village Neighborhood Improvements Information Session

An information session was hosted by the City of Toronto and Councillor Stephen Holiday on March 30 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. The purpose of the session was to inform residents of the Thorncrest Village neighbourhood about coordinated infrastructure improvement projects that include road resurfacing, watermain and sanitary sewer replacement and rehabilitation along with installation of green infrastructure at select locations.

Staff presented information on the planned 2021 and 2022 projects and provided an update on the Basement Flooding Protection Program. A copy of the presentation is available online at www.toronto.ca/thorncrest.

1. Welcome & Introductions

Alexa Aiken gave the Land Acknowledgement and ran through housekeeping items.

Councillor Holiday provided opening remarks about his efforts to advance infrastructure improvements in the Thorncrest Village neighbourhood and providing an opportunity for residents to learn more about the work and ask questions of City staff.

City of Toronto staff including Elisa Alby, Devin Coone, Kevin Thudhope and Jian Lei presented the upcoming planned work and this was followed by a question and answer session.

Thirty-four residents were in attendance.

2. Question & Answer Period (Verbal)

The questions below were answered verbally by staff during the meeting.

Q: Thorncrest Village was identified along with the Rockcliffe/Smythe neighbourhood for having issues with basement flooding. I understand that Rockcliffe/Smythe received federal funding. Why did Thorncrest Village not get approved for funding?

A: Toronto Water looks for federal and provincial funding opportunities to offset program costs where possible, however funding does not change how we choose projects.

The difference with the Rockcliffe/Smythe neighbourhood is its proximity to a watercourse, located within a floodplain. The funding received by the City will go towards improving the bridge crossings. Federal funding was approved due to its location of the neighbourhood in a floodplain.

Q: Are we not located within a significant waterway as water traverses our neighbourhood to get to the lake? How are we not in a significant floodplain?

A: A floodplain area is identified by Toronto & Region Conservation Authority and associated with watercourses that run through the city. The Thorncrest Village neighbourhood is a flat neighbourhood and stormwater flows overland in a downstream direction and not in a defined watercourse.

Q: Can we quantify the improvements that will be made in Thorncrest Village?

A: Staff will look into it.

Q: As a community we have had to advocate for ourselves- when it was realized that the City's upgrades were not sufficient and residents were asked for their input on flooding issues and the City performed a further review of the neighbourhood. Because of significant water damages, residents still have flooding and some do not have insurance coverage. Why are we not getting the upgrades we deserve?

A: The cost of basement flooding improvements is \$33 million. The City's policy approach based on the cost per benefitting property seeks to help the maximum number of people possible. This type of work is costly (multi-millions of dollars) and complex. As the Councillor, I have challenged staff about what else can be done.

Q: On Aylesbury Road, previous work performed by Toronto Hydro to bury the cables required the right-of-way to be dug-up and my driveway replaced but the restoration was poorly done. I need to replace my driveway but do not want to do this before the upcoming work. What can I expect will happen and when?

A: No road work is planned on Aylesbury Road. Previous resurfacing was completed in 2013 and there is no foreseeable need to do road work.

Q: Thorncrest Road homes affected by sidewalk - trying to understand why on this section and what does it mean for me? What will it affect?

A: The sidewalk was originally proposed by the previous Councillor as a need identified by the community. During the City's 2018 design work, the section of Thorncrest Road behind the plaza was reassessed and identified as needing reconstruction. It is City policy to incorporate sidewalks on one side of a road where there are none and reconstruction is the best time to do so. The preliminary assessment is to place the sidewalk on the Shopping plaza side, adjacent to the trees between road and plaza parking lot.

Q: We pay a lot of property tax, biggest concern is funds not going to our fair share of our neighbourhood to avoid flooding and issues?

A: The Basement Flooding Protection Program, along with the City's collection, delivery and treatment of drinking water and wastewater are funded through the water rate and not property taxes. Toronto Water must work within its revenue stream to fund all of its programs and upgrades required to improve resilience. The Basement Flooding Protection Program policies and the ordering of construction projects are set by City

Council with the principle of protecting as many properties as possible as soon as possible within available funding.

Q: Will the planned road surfacing include inspection for sink holes? There are many on Thorncrest Road and I know there is one at the end of my driveway on Thornbury Crescent?

A: As part of road resurfacing the top layer of asphalt will be removed and the City will assess the condition of the base layer of asphalt. If any issues or distress are found, then we will remove the base layer and properly reinstate.

Q: Will the green infrastructure make the ditch more shallow?

A: The City will make some adjustments to the ditches for the green infrastructure but since they need to convey stormwater from connected ditches they will not be made shallower as the plan is to continue to have the ditches properly convey flow.

Q: Thank you for answering the question about the extent of ditch reinstatement. In many cases the ditches that have been piped and covered were swamps with weed and insect problems because of water that pooled and didn't flow to catch basins. Is the City going to ensure that this isn't the outcome again?

A: As part of the design of the ditches, the City shall ensure that ditches continue to direct stormwater and do not pond.

Q: Will the fence and trees near the plaza and new sidewalk be removed? My property is beside the plaza and I need a screen between my property and the plaza.

A: The fence, if impacted by the construction, will be removed and reinstalled. The City must first determine the alignment and will consult with professional arborists to determine if any trees will be negatively impacted. If impacted trees will be removed and replanted at an appropriate location nearby.

Q: How will the green infrastructure be maintained and how often?

A: Once built, maintenance of the underground portion will not be required unless water is no longer infiltrating. If that happens, a blockage may have occurred and maintenance by the City will be required. A resolution is to aerate the bioswale similar to a lawn aeration. Even with infiltration not occurring runoff will continue to flow through the bioswale and drain into the storm system, it will not impact conveyance of the swales. For the first two years we want to ensure that the plants grow so the City will conduct watering but once the plants are established regular maintenance will only be required a couple of times a year, including pruning or weed pulling. If a homeowner decides on a garden we encourage them to embrace it as their own, otherwise sod may be a better option for the homeowner.

Q: I have no idea on why a sidewalk is needed at the plaza. There are currently two catch basins located in the area but one does not receive a drop of water as the grate is too high. The other catch basin near the house is overtaxed and often gets clogged. How will the problem of drainage be solved?

A: If the drain system is not functioning, residents should call 311 for crews to investigate.

The road reconstruction provides an opportunity to reassess the drainage issues and the ability to modify the grade of the road and boulevard. The City will also look at if there is a need for additional catch basins.

Toronto City Council approved a policy to install at a minimum one sidewalk when a road is reconstructed.

Q: Will everyone get new culverts?

A: If a culvert is functioning and in a good state (i.e. can convey water properly) it will not be replaced. If the ditch needs to be slightly deepened then a culvert may have to be replaced. The City will assess the culvert condition to ensure proper drainage.

Q: There is no change in sizing of storm sewer. Would an increased size help in reducing basement flooding?

A: Increased sizing adds to the drainage capacity and contribute reduced risk of basement flooding. The upsized storm sewer is being deferred due to cost.

Q: My neighbor had sewer work last summer and an extra drain was placed from the sewer to catch basin. During last week's rain storm, a new direction of flooding occurred and water flowed up to their front door causing a threat of flooding. They called 311 but there was no follow-up. I am concerned about whether the work may cause more problems.

A: Councillor Holyday will visit the property to take some pictures to share with City staff to look into.

Q: If I have a radiant heated driveway who do I contact?

A: Residents can email roadconstruction@toronto.ca.

Q: There is a daily line-up of trucks into the plaza. Are there any features that can inhibit trucks from parking in this zone? There is no enforcement being done.

A: Councillor noted that the City's aerial photos of the neighbourhood show trucks parked at the site. Construction may not stop the activity or change the habit of truck drivers. The issue is an enforcement one. The only way to mitigate the activity is to narrow the road. Unfortunately, the reconstruction will narrow the road to the minimum design standard required for Toronto Fire access.

3. Written Question & Answer Submitted

The questions below were submitted through the Q&A box during the meeting and have been answered by staff

Q: My home is on Aylesbury road. Indications are that storm sewers and road resurfacing will occur on Aylesbury Road. When hydro buried their cables a few

years ago, they tore up my driveway and never replaced it properly such that my driveway is below the street level and asphalt and paving stones were replaced improperly. If Aylesbury is to receive resurfacing, when will that occur and what impact will it have on the homeowner?

A: The City resurfaced Aylesbury in 2013 and it has a road condition rating of "good". There are no plans to undertake any road works until the road condition assessment indicates a need for rehabilitation.

Q: I'm interested to know if there is a standard street width which you are planning to resurface to. On Thorncrest and Thornbury there are areas where the street has become wider with gravel shoulders which entices drivers to speed.

A: For local roads the standard road width is 7 metres of paved surface. Since the Thorncrest Village has a road ditch system which is being reinstated, 0.6 metre (2 feet) gravel shoulders will also be maintained on both sides of the road. The roads may be further narrowed where required to reinstate the ditches in accordance with City standards.

Q: How was the \$68,000 cost per benefitting property value determined?

A: The cost per benefitting property value of \$68,000 was determined considering inflationary cost increases from 2011 when the previous value of \$32,000 was set.

Q: We had the sewer at the end of our driveway marked with pink spray paint as well as the tree at the end of our driveway. Can you please tell me what it's tagged for and what is the city going to do with the sewer and our tree?

A: There is no active design work and staff were uncertain on why the pink dots were made but will investigate.

Q: Are all ditches being reinstated in all locations or is it selective? If selective, when/how do we find out and what is the timing?

A: Ditches will be reinstated along all roads where there are no road curbs. The dimensions (depth and width) of the ditches will vary depending on the existing topography of the road to ensure storm water drains along the ditch system to the existing storm sewer inlets/catch basins. The design of the roads and ditches will be completed in 2021.

Q: There were media reports over the weekend of extensive flood damage on Boreal Road related to a City sewer replacement project and the heavy rain that occurred over the weekend. First, is there a connection between the City project and the flooding? Second, what additional steps should residents take to protect themselves from backup events while this work is being done - both the relining and the sewer replacement projects

A: The flooding of last week are under investigation to determine if the ongoing construction did or did not contribute to the impacts.

Secondly, we require contractors to implement measures to ensure that drainage can be maintained during construction. If specific requirements are needed by the contractor, they will speak directly with homeowners to advise them.

Q: Who do we send the notice too on heated driveways etc.?

A: You can email me at roadconstruction@toronto.ca (Elisa Alby) I will pass the info along to Aziz Haque, who is the Project Manager.

Q: What questions have you received in advance of this meeting that participants might like to know?

A: We had mainly received logistical questions ahead of the meeting. We will be preparing a meeting summary after this meeting to share with participants

Q: We are planning a new house on Thorncrest. The existing house doesn't have a basement. How do we get guidance as to sanitary sewer connection as the drains will be much lower than existing.

A: Please contact Toronto Building to ensure your basement is the proper depth. <https://www.toronto.ca/services-payments/building-construction/apply-for-a-building-permit/toronto-building-contact-us/>. Please see the following link for information on sanitary sewer connections. <https://www.toronto.ca/services-payments/water-environment/your-water-pipes-meter/request-a-watersewer-service-connection-or-disconnection/>

Q: Why does the city not enforce bylaw 1988-196?

A: Could you please outline that specific bylaw and how it isn't being enforced?

Q: Do you have specific house numbers affected by the green infrastructure project?

A: The green infrastructure along Thornbury Crescent will be installed along the right-of-way in front of houses 4, 6 and 8 and 11, 15 and 17.

C: Thank you for arranging this Q & A session, I'm sure many participants appreciate this discussion.

Q: Are you aware of the report geology and groundwater resources of Etobicoke?

A: We are not familiar with that specific report. For the green infrastructure, site specific data was collected at the sites as part of the design process.

Q: How much of the \$68,000 per household is being used on this 2021/22 work?

A: The works that are planned in 2021/2022 will not be using up the \$68,000 per household.

C: The Presenters seem to think that calling 311 results in timely resolution of local maintenance issues. The Thorncrest Boulevards are very poorly maintained in the summer and getting anything done usually requires repeated weeks of emails with

photos and then escalation to the Councillor's office. Once the City makes this infrastructure more complicated, is the service standard going to be improved.

Q: Would speed bumps on Thorncrest between The Wynd and Kipling be considered as part of this project? It's a shortcut from Rathburn to Kipling and speeding is common.

A: Traffic calming measures, such as speed humps must follow the City's Traffic Calming Policy. Information on the policy can be found www.toronto.ca/trafficcalming. The current work does not include the addition of speed humps.

Q: What are other avenues of funding available to our neighborhood as we do not get anything from the basement flooding program?

A: Toronto Water continuously monitors opportunities for funding and pursues available external funding programs, including federal and provincial infrastructure programs as they become available. All potentially eligible projects are considered for these opportunities, within the parameters of the available funding programs. Currently there are no funding programs available for application for the Basement Flooding Protection Program drainage system upgrades.

Q: What is the likelihood of receiving funding under basement flooding program after 2023?

A: Once the studies for all 67 Basement Flooding Study Areas have been completed and projects less than \$68,000 per benefitting property have been advanced to design, all projects with estimated costs per benefitting property greater than \$68,00 per benefitting property will be evaluated and projects will be prioritized in accordance with City Council direction to achieve the greatest impact. It is premature to comment on the likelihood of available funding for projects that are greater than \$68,000 per benefitting property at this time.

Q: Has anyone thought of having someone talk to the Foodland owner on this last issue?

The Foodland owner will be consulted by the City along with other key stakeholders closer to when construction is underway.

Councillor will follow-up with residents about the fence and to get at root of issue about parking. An option is to install a No Standing or No Stopping to address the behavior but it may move the issue elsewhere. It would also leave residents with no opportunity for visitors to park there. Will follow-up with the City's Transportation Service and Parking enforcement staff.

Staff Attendees

Staff from the following City Divisions were in attendance for the meeting:

Engineering & Construction Services

Elisa Alby

Hazel Breton

Devin Coone
Luis De Jesus
Azizul Haque
Jamie Slater

Toronto Water

David Kellershohn
Jian Lei
Kishan Ramkhelawon
Kevin Tudhope

Public Consultation Unit

Alexa Aiken
Mark De Miglio
Tracy Manolakakis