

From: Hugh Sibbald
Date: November 19, 2023 at 6:09:05 PM EST
To: Dale Kerr
Subject: Lake Drive Functionality Study

Dale Kerr Genge
Councillor Ward 4

Hi Dale,

Thanks for letting me know about the Lake Drive study coming to Council Wednesday. I was back and forth with Ryan Post during the study period and completed the questionnaire but was unable to attend the Public session and am just now going through the complete study. This letter is my personal viewpoint as we have yet to gather feedback from the Briars Community Association. It would be great if you could send these comments to the appropriate place to be included as an addendum to the Agenda.

I have lived on Hedge Road, or within a stone's throw for over sixty years, driven, walked and cycled its entire length thousands of times. As owners of The Briars Resort, our family often worked with the Town to make portions of the road safer for our guests. During our time at the resort we had very busy crossing points at the Inn, at the Cottages and at the adjacent beach.

I'm very pleased to see the Town and consultants focused on making the road safer for pedestrians. The details of the study note a number of sight line issues on Hedge Road but it's not clear anywhere how these could be addressed.

Without further study and detail, as presented it misses some particular challenges of this tricky road and feels like a bit of a broad brush stroke approach that may fail without careful planning.

I also note in the summary attached to the Council Agenda the solution for Hedge Road makes particular mention of cyclists while pedestrians don't even get a mention, when they are currently at the highest risk.

Despite the increased pedestrian and automobile traffic, the Hedge Road is in an unusually safe period, partly due to nimble pedestrians jumping out of the way and perhaps because so many locals have quit walking the road as traffic has increased.

The road has a long history of incidents.

During the 1960s to 90s there were numerous accidents, both single vehicle and pedestrian. To mention just some, a young girl was hit and badly injured while riding her bicycle, a man was hit and dragged over 100 feet in front of The Briars Inn, numerous cars launched off the road at the S turn in front of The Briars, a number of cars drove over the high embankments at the blind corners west of where the current embankment remediation is being carried out by the Town. In the more recent period, a man with a walker was forced off the road and fell down into the gully in front of The Briars.

Changes have gradually been made to the road to help - cabled guard posts on the high embankments, flashing light at the S bend and trees planted on the Briars lawn to improve drivers' perception of the corner, and share the road signs among many small changes - and perhaps most helpful - reduced speed limits. A cross walk was added at one area by the Inn.

These changes have been very helpful in improving safety, partly I believe because they have been carefully applied on a sort of micro level - watching where problems occur and dealing with them to prevent future problems.

I can't imagine yet, on reading the study, how the proposed changes will work without widening the travelled portion of the road in appropriate places. Most of the accidents have been on the blind corners. I shiver at the perils of driving down the centre of any of these numerous blind corners. It couldn't be done safely without responsible drivers going in both directions, something which can't be counted on.

At each corner - by no means the worst are featured in photos in the full study - the only safe way to proceed in an automobile is to hug the right side of the road, and proceed with vigilance. While perhaps a mixed traffic advisory shoulder might be effective on the straighter portions, that system must surely be interrupted numerous times on the blind corners. Can that really be solved with driver education, signage and traffic calming?

I'm pleased to see proposed timelines for this section moved to the end of the implementation period allowing for greater study. I would be pleased to take part in discussions if further citizen input is considered.

In addition to the study, I looked at several other sources on-line. I have included two I found helpful - a link and attached document. I was unable to find examples of windy roads, although they may be there and perhaps additional traffic calming, signage, etc. may be able to be deployed to make the system work:

<https://ruraldesignguide.com/mixed-traffic/advisory-shoulder>

Of course I am still wading through the links provided by the Town's consultants too.

In summary, I feel it's great news to see this new approach being studied for Hedge Road. The need for a solution is imperative.

More detail and work may be needed before a system like advisory lanes can be made safe for this road. And the question remains: can they be safe without widening the travelled portion at the numerous places where sight lines are problematic?

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