

David Borsellino

Presentation Regarding Modifications to Aberdeen Ave.

Good morning, my name is David Borsellino. I am a resident of Ward One. My concern is that major financial resources are being spent in my ward based on the personal agenda of our councillor and The Kirkendall Neighbourhood Association. There seems to be no attempt to seek consultation with a wider variety of constituents to reach a consensus that addresses the needs and concerns of all residents. This is a flawed process which divides our community.

When reviewing the recent council's vote concerning Aberdeen Ave., I was shocked at the lack of objective traffic data on which the decision was based. Modifications around the area of "Complete Streets" and "Zero Vision" must be based on information objectively gathered over a period of time. If implemented, they should be monitored as to their effectiveness with the understanding that readjustments may need to be made.

Unfortunately, in my ward, it seems that the perceptions of a few take precedence over the rights of many. Our neighbourhood association represents approximately 1% of our 30,000 residents. In no way do they reflect, or more importantly, respect different perspectives. A recent poll indicated over 75% of citizens feel the changes to Aberdeen Ave. would be counter-productive, yet their concerns were dismissed because of the feelings of a vocal minority.

As we seek to develop more complete streets, it is imperative that all stakeholders be heard to ensure greater co-operation and success. Addressing the concerns of pedestrians need not mean you ignore the reasonable expectations of drivers.

I am a pedestrian, a cyclist, and a driver. As a tax-paying citizen, I have a legitimate right to expect that all of my choices be respected.

Commuters consist of hard-working residents who, for a variety of reasons, must use their vehicles to get to work. They deserve the same respect as everyone else.

After reviewing the data concerning incidents on Aberdeen Ave., I do not understand why Edward Soldo would refer to it as a "High Risk" street. From 2005-2018-over 13 years there were 18 incidents involving pedestrians/cyclists. This averages to approximately 1.5 a year. Surely, this cannot be considered HIGH RISK!

The majority of pedestrian injuries occurred at crosswalks. How does reducing the number of lanes have any impact on this issue?

May I also point out, from someone who has lived in the neighbourhood for 27 years, contrary to the narrative presented by our councillor:

Aberdeen Ave. is not a primary route used by students to get to the 3 elementary schools in the area. Students who live south of Aberdeen must *cross* Aberdeen safely at some point to proceed to school. There are also 5 such crosswalks: Queen, Kent, Locke, Cottage, and Dundurn. If the rules are followed, Aberdeen Ave. is currently very safe. No amount of modifications will ensure public safety unless all stakeholders commit to obeying laws. Any local concerns should be addressed by increased police enforcement.

When discussing lane reductions with Mr. Ferguson, he indicated (claimed?) commute time from Queen to Longwood would only increase by 1 minute. Then, after admitting the Queen St. Hill, at 19,000 vehicles daily, was "Over Capacity" and "little would be done about it.". Further lane reductions will only exacerbate this problem along with creating unnecessary congestion for EMS, Fire Trucks, and Garbage collection. How can this be justified?

I presume all those councillors who supported these changes took the time to drive down the Queen St. Hill during rush hour to better understand why, for commuters, this is a contentious issue. With regards to our own councillor, recently, enhancements were made to a T-intersection that I live right next to, at the corner of Kent and Glenfern. We now have 4 double white lines, 8 Stop signs and 8 "tiger tails". In 27 years, I have witnessed no incidents at this intersection. Sight lines are excellent and there are very few cars access Glenfern from Amelia, a dead-end street. By comparison, the busier intersection at South St. And Dundurn remains untouched. When questioned, my councillor assured me that she had requested the changes and a "traffic audit" had been conducted. After investigating, I discovered the "audit" consisted of a one-time "drive-by". Coincidentally, our councillor lives one block away! These changes were unnecessary, costly and contribute to a growing problem of sign pollution in our city.

It is time that our City Council stop taking for granted the good will and tax revenue generated from the silent majority in our city. I sincerely believe we are approaching a "tipping point". We are hard-working Hamiltonians, who love our city and are willing to make reasonable compromises to make it a better place for all. We belong to no marginalized group, are part of no Code Red Study and will never make the front page of The Spectator, but in reality, we the backbone of Hamilton. And in my mind, increasingly it seems, we have no real voice in civic decisions and the manner in which our tax dollars are spent. This culture needs to change.

It is my view:

1. Councillors have a responsibility to listen to as many perspectives as possible. They need to actively consult with all affected parties. Even though each represents one ward, decisions made need to consider the impact on the city as a whole.
2. We need to acknowledge that, given our current tax revenue problem, we have a spending problem. Too much hard-earned tax dollars are being spent on unnecessary projects! Our Inner City Discretionary Spending Fund, originally allocated to fix our decaying infrastructure, is too often used to curry favour with those who make the most noise. As a resident, it is extremely frustrating to see the proliferation of speed bumps (\$5, 000), bump out sticks (\$100 each), pedestrian initiated crosswalks (\$100,000). Tiger tails (\$75 each), etc., as my taxes continue to rise. For too many residents, "Taxes have become the New Mortgage". As a retiree, I pay over \$600 a month on property taxes. My home has become a liability!! The current level of Property Taxes and spending is clearly unsustainable, yet I seldom hear any councillor talk about this, or even acknowledge there is a crisis. Our city needs to deal with this issue in a serious way, and through thoughtful decision-making, and prudent spending, begin fostering an attitude of respect for the concerns of all its citizens.

Thank you for your patience. Special thanks to Alicia Davenport for facilitating my appointment with you.