

Pilon, Janet

Subject: Aberdeen Avenue

From: Rhoda Hassmann

Sent: August 9, 2020 12:32 PM

To: Wilson, Maureen <Maureen.Wilson@hamilton.ca>; Eisenberger, Fred <Fred.Eisenberger@hamilton.ca>

Cc: [REDACTED]; clerk@hamilton.ca

Subject: Aberdeen Avenue

Dear Maureen and Mr. Eisenberger,

Yesterday my husband, Peter McCabe, and I signed a petition circulated by Mr. Alex Beer against changing Aberdeen Avenue to one traffic lane from two. We live at 60 Homewood Avenue, between Locke and Kent Streets.

I understand from Mr. Beer that you have already seen the petition, and have also undoubtedly seen his earlier op-ed piece in the Hamilton Spectator, which I read at the time. Nevertheless, I attach them both for your information.

I do not recall having seen your point-by-point refutation of Mr. Beer's editorial in the Spectator, even though you had adequate time to prepare and publish it. Nor apparently, have you sent him a point-by-point refutation of the information in the petition. Yet surely, if Mr. Beer is wrong in his claims, you should have provided such a refutation. Policies should be made on the basis of empirical evidence.

If indeed, as of 2018, 558 streets in Hamilton were less safe than Aberdeen, then why is reducing the number of lanes on Aberdeen such a priority? Moreover, since there are now 5 traffic lights between and including Aberdeen and Queen Street, what is the danger to children of crossing south? Before the city installed a pedestrian-controlled light at Kent, I did indeed observe many people, adults as well as children, jay-walking across Aberdeen at Kent. Since that light was installed, however, that problem has been rectified.

Mr. Beer mentioned that streets south of Aberdeen will be clogged with traffic trying to avoid jams on Aberdeen if this policy is implemented. So will streets north of Aberdeen. Our particular concerns about our neighbourhood are threefold.

- 1) There are at least a dozen children on our block who are aged 12 and under. Many of them ride their bikes, scooters, etc. up and down the street, I have already observed what happens when Queen/and or Aberdeen is blocked. Cars rush down Homewood, a one-way street, often going the wrong way. This problem will increase dramatically once Aberdeen is reduced to one lane and cars are avoiding the clogged Queen/Aberdeen corner.
- 2) The city has already endangered the lives and health of all of its West-end residents by reducing access to and egress from St. Joseph's hospital on Herkimer and Chariton to one-way streets, making it very difficult if not impossible for cars to pull over for ambulances. Now access to and egress from St. Joseph's via Aberdeen is also likely to be blocked.
- 3) 3) As a driver, I will find it more difficult to pull out of my driveway when there are more and more cars rushing down Homewood Ave, many going the wrong way, to avoid Aberdeen. I will also find it more difficult to turn left on Aberdeen at Locke. Already, the advanced green light for people turning left at Locke only allows two cars to turn at a time. With all cars driving west merged into one lane on Aberdeen, this will be even more difficult.

All the people who live in the neighborhoods south and north of Aberdeen are citizens, voters and taxpayers. We deserve a detailed point-by-point refutation of Mr. Beer's careful research (if indeed it is possible for you to refute it), and a point-by-point justification of why you are willing to clog traffic south via Queen, north via Beckett, and west to

and east from the 403, all because of the empirically unjustified claim that it will improve the safety of the children who live south of Aberdeen. These children, I further note, live on streets which will be crowded by drivers avoiding the clogged Queen and Aberdeen corners. Their safety will now be endangered by cars clogging their previously relatively quiet streets. They may well be less safe than before you mandated the change to Aberdeen Avenue.

I am copying this message to Mr. Beer for his information. Again, as a citizen, taxpayer and voter, I look forward to your detailed, point-by-point answer to this message, just as I look forward to your detailed, point-by-point refutation of Mr. Beer's research and arguments, and a detailed, point-by-point justification of your policies. You are elected officials: your responsibility is to make policies on the basis of evidence, both in favour of and against the policies you propose and mandate.

Yours sincerely,

Rhoda Hassmann

Alex Beer
May 28, 2020
(775 words)

We need to keep Aberdeen Avenue moving

What are the most dangerous, and safest, streets in Hamilton?

The City of Hamilton's traffic department in 2018 compiled a comparative list of street safety by locating and counting traffic events. Starting with the most dangerous street, they numbered our streets in terms of safety.

So, what do you think the 559th most dangerous street was?

A leafy lane in Dundas?

A quiet crescent on Central Mountain?

A residential street in East Hamilton?

Step forward four-lane Aberdeen Avenue, which is due to be reduced to a single lane each way this fall.

Why? Because city council was told last year that the stretch from Dundurn Street to Queen Street posed great danger to the many schoolchildren who cross it every day.

So let's look at this street a little more closely. I live eight houses south of Aberdeen, and that's close enough to be concerned about the increase in air pollution as cars sit idling during peak hours.

And idle they will, because Aberdeen is an important access to Highway 403 in one direction and the Queen Street hill in the other. It sure is a vital traffic link.

In the mornings Aberdeen Avenue carries students, staff, parents and commuters to the Queen Street hill (Beckett Drive) then upwards to Mohawk College, Hillfield-Strathallan College and points beyond.

In the other direction it takes commuters from the Mountain, Kirkendall and Durand to Highway 403 and their jobs in Oakville, Brantford, Mississauga or Toronto. In the evenings it's the same again, coming the other way.

None of these drivers want to sit idling in a traffic jam, so what will they do?

To answer that we need to become kids again and head to the woods to find a little rivulet of water, or to the top of our street after a downpour.

Now, because we're kids, we try to block the flow of water. We use earth and twigs in the wood, perhaps a brick and dirt on the street. And yes, we do block the water, but only for a little while. Then, without a channel to run in, it begins to flow to the left and right of our blockage.

So back to adulthood and Aberdeen Avenue. Drivers have been sitting idling with little progress. Time is ticking away so just like that rivulet they begin spreading into the side streets to try and beat the jam.

They spread into the streets where the children live who are supposedly endangered while crossing Aberdeen. And these drivers are probably running late and are possibly a little frustrated.

This is safer for children?

Homeowners who live south of Aberdeen between Dundurn and Queen will also need to make more vehicular trips through their local neighbourhood, since it will be extremely difficult to make turns to and from Aberdeen.

This is safer for children?

And while on the subject of safety, as someone who lives within earshot I can tell you that Aberdeen is well used by emergency vehicles. Will they too have to find their way through side streets? Even worse, will delays endanger those they are responding to?

The stretch of Aberdeen between Dundurn Street and Queen Street has a drug store, a convenience store and a car repair shop, all clustered at Dundurn Street. It then stretches east for nine blocks with no retail businesses.

Not surprisingly it does not have heavy pedestrian traffic on the east-west axis, but does have the previously mentioned elementary and senior public students travelling north-south.

These children cross at traffic lights on the corners of Dundurn, Locke and Queen streets, all of which are also patrolled by traffic guards, and there are self-activated lights at Kent and Cottage streets. Five crosswalks within 10 blocks might explain why the street has such an outstanding safety record.

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic it would now be possible to claim that the planned lane reduction is part of making the neighborhood more pedestrian friendly. But Aberdeen Avenue is not where the pedestrians are, nor will be. Not surprisingly they are on streets such as Locke, which has a thriving retail and service mix.

When we emerge from the pandemic, the city will have a tight budget. It has, quite rightly, been spending money on public health and will undoubtedly face

other costs, some anticipated some not.

For similar reasons, it's unlikely that other levels of government will be able to help.

If we are going to spend resources on pedestrian safety and social distancing, which we should, let's spend it in retail areas where the pedestrian and business experiences can be enhanced.

Not on Hamilton's 559th most dangerous street.