

Pilon, Janet

Subject: Aberdeen Traffic Calming Pilot

From: Ryan McGreal

Sent: Thursday, September 10, 2020 3:27 PM

To: Partridge, Judi; clerk@hamilton.ca

Subject: Aberdeen Traffic Calming Pilot

Dear Council,

I understand committee will be considering the traffic calming pilot tomorrow, including a petition that has been drafted in opposition to it.

A group calling itself "Keep Aberdeen Moving" has been circulating a handout in Kirkendall and Durand neighbourhoods against the planned traffic calming pilot project on Aberdeen Avenue and asking people to sign a petition.

A reasonable person who saw the group's arguments and had no other information might conclude that there is legitimate reason for fear, uncertainty or doubt about the project. Unfortunately, their argument rests on objectively false fact claims.

The group claims the City has not done a traffic study on Aberdeen. This is obviously false. Staff have studied Aberdeen extensively, most recently in an Information Update presented on June 25, 2019 as a follow-up to report PW17201a from June 17, 2019.

The group also claims Aberdeen is "not especially dangerous", citing a ranked list of streets that staff prepared ad hoc in 2018 in response to a resident request. That ranked list heavily weights fatalities while discounting injuries, so it is of limited use as a general indicator of danger. Even so, the list ranks Aberdeen as more dangerous than 80% of the 2,740 street segments included.

If the group read the 2019 Aberdeen traffic study, they would learn that staff have determined Aberdeen is 4.7 times as dangerous as the industry threshold for an "area of concern" based on a review of collisions over several years. Clearly, this really is a dangerous street.

The group also claims that the pilot project on Aberdeen will result in "clogged traffic" and a whole host of imagined horrors, including increased air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, plus "drivers cutting through our quiet neighbourhood streets" resulting in danger to children and vulnerable road users.

If the group read the 2019 Aberdeen traffic study, they would learn that staff have determined the impact on traffic flow will be smaller than what was observed on Kenilworth after a similar traffic calming was undertaken. On Kenilworth, rush-hour speeds declined by an average 8-12 km/h, but the speed reduction is likely to be more modest on Aberdeen with Queen converting to two-way.

For the 1.7 km stretch of Aberdeen between Queen and Longwood, we are talking about approximately 30 seconds longer to drive during peak rush hour if the impact is as big as it was on Kenilworth.

The group also claims there are not other similar streets in Hamilton that have already received traffic calming. Again, this is false. If they read the traffic study, they would know about Kenilworth. In addition, we can point to Wilson Street in Ancaster, Mohawk/Rousseau, Governors Road in Dundas, Lawrence Road in the east end, and Beckett Drive as other arterial streets that have one lane in each direction, connect to regional highways and carry traffic volumes similar to - and in some cases higher than - Aberdeen.

The only valid point the group makes is their concern about commuters using residential side streets as a shortcut. However, this is already a problem today. The solution is not to leave the dangerous status quo on Aberdeen but rather to control rat-running with restrictions and traffic calming design.

No matter how earnest or well-intentioned this group might be, we all have the same duty of care to ensure we are not unintentionally misinforming people when we engage on issues of civic importance. As Daniel Patrick Moynihan famously reminded us, we are entitled to our own opinions but not our own facts.

Sincerely,

Ryan McGreal