

4.10 (at)

Mayor and Members of Council:

Last winter, my family witnessed the near-death of a child on Aberdeen Avenue.

A mother with young children had just moved in a few doors down from us on Aberdeen, between Queen and Kent. One afternoon, just before the start of rush hour, one of her children unlatched the backyard gate and walked toward the street. The child, who looked to be about three years old, ended up walking directly onto Aberdeen, right into traffic.

We didn't realize that a child's life was in danger until we saw a car travelling eastbound suddenly pull across the westbound lanes of traffic. A quick-thinking motorist saw the child and used his own car to block traffic, preventing the child from getting hit until his mother ran out of her backyard to find him. This whole episode took place within the span of roughly two minutes. If that motorist hadn't intervened, the result would have been catastrophic.

When we purchased our home on Aberdeen three years ago, we were prepared for the volume of traffic we would encounter on the street – but what we weren't prepared for was the speed.

Our stretch of Aberdeen sees speeders every day. It's not uncommon for motorists to rev their engines as they begin their trip westward from Queen onto Aberdeen. The experience for pedestrians, cyclists, and even other drivers can only be described as harrowing. The plan council has approved for Aberdeen will help prevent the sort of dangerous and destructive driving we see daily.

The incident I described above was the most frightening near-accident we have witnessed on Aberdeen, though it's far from the only one. We have witnessed dozens of accidents and near-accidents on our three years on this street. I watch kids walking to and from school, joking and laughing of the sidewalk, and know that it would only take one wrong step to end in tragedy. I see parents pushing strollers literal inches away from speeding cars (in fact, I do this myself). I truly feel that if the status quo is maintained on Aberdeen, it's a matter of if – not when – someone will get hurt.

In 2017, when a 10-year-old child died on Evans Road in Waterdown after being struck by a speeding car, council voted to install traffic-calming measures on that road. On Aberdeen, council has the opportunity to instill those measures before such a tragedy occurs.

I understand that some residents and councillors have concerns about traffic movement in the neighbourhood. However, I do not feel that the quest to keep traffic moving on Aberdeen should come at all costs – especially when the cost could be someone's life.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this important issue.

Emma Reilly McKay