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Pilon, Janet

Subject: Regarding Aberdeen Ave. lane reduction

From: Alex Beer

Sent: September 15, 2020 8:43 AM

To: clerk@hamilton.ca

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Subject: Regarding Aberdeen Ave. lane reduction

September 15, 2020

Dear Mayor and Members of City Council:

I am writing to reiterate the main concerns of our “Keep Aberdeen Moving” group, which I presented at the Public Works Committee meeting on September 11, 2020, and also to respond to the arguments made by the delegations and council members in support of the Aberdeen lane reduction.

We appreciate that, for several years, concerns have been raised about speeding traffic along Aberdeen - and we shared these concerns. In recent years, a number of measures have already been taken to address this problem, including adding two pedestrian traffic lights so there are now five traffic lights in a 10-block stretch to allow pedestrians to safely cross this road. Just this past year, other measures have included designating the Dundurn to Queen street section of road as a 40-km school safety zone.

While Councillors Wilson and Nann argue that the lane reduction will make Aberdeen safer for children walking along this roadway, council should note that most of the 710 residents of the affected wards who signed our petition are also parents and grandparents concerned with the safety of children.

We are worried that the added congestion caused by the lane reduction will add more traffic speeding through the neighbourhoods on both sides of Aberdeen. These are streets where people walk dogs and ride bikes. These are streets where children live and play.

We note that no proper traffic study has been done to justify the lane reduction. By this we mean a Transportation Impact Study which reports on the current traffic flow throughout the neighbourhood – not just along Aberdeen - and what is anticipated after the lanes have been reduced. At the very least, a baseline study should have been conducted in advance of the change, along with a follow-up study after the pilot period to provide the council with an accurate assessment of the impacts.

We also note that while there have been concerns raised about traffic safety along Aberdeen over several years - along with some community meetings where this and other issues have been discussed - there’s been no community consultation specifically on this blunt instrument of a lane reduction - neither by the Ward 1 councillor nor by the Kirkendall Neighbourhood Association. In responding to a question posed by Councillor Danko at a Public Works Committee meeting in June of 2019, Transportation director Edward Soldo admitted that the lane reduction was not part of the scope of work that was originally contemplated for Aberdeen.

According to the city's Transportation Department, at the current morning peak period, the back-up heading west along Aberdeen at a red light stop at Dundurn is now 26 metres. The department predicts this will increase to 291 metres after the lane reduction. At Locke Street the line-up will grow from 5 metres to an incredible 279 metres.

Not only does this represent considerable congestion, but the idling of these lined-up cars will add to greenhouse gas emissions in the area. It will also restrict side street residents from turning to and from Aberdeen.

While officials in the city's Transportation Department estimate the lane reduction will only add one minute of travel time along Aberdeen, we find this hard to believe, given the estimated backup at red lights once the change has been made. Also, there has been no accounting for human behaviour. We suspect that rather than track the time it takes to drive along Aberdeen before and after the lane reduction, motorists will simply cut through neighbouring side streets to avoid the congestion. We've all experienced getting stuck in a traffic jam on the highway, and noticed people changing lanes in an effort to keep moving forward - only to find the other lanes are very soon backed up as well. Rather than wait for traffic to begin moving again, they try to find a faster way, even if staying in their original lane would have gotten them to their destination sooner.

Aberdeen is designated as an arterial road and the city describes the purpose of such roads as being "to move traffic efficiently to reduce the amount of traffic and speeds on lower classification roads."

We are opposed to using congestion as a means of reducing speeding on Aberdeen.

Last year, council approved four separate roadway safety measures for Aberdeen. Our group is objecting to only one of these. The others have already been implemented and we are fine with them.

We are asking that council overturn the decision on the lane reduction.

Thank you.

Yours truly,

Alex Beer

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