

March 15, 2021

Mayor Fred Eisenberger
Hamilton City Hall
2nd floor - 71 Main Street West
Hamilton, Ontario L8P 4Y5

Delivered via electronic mail: mayor@hamilton.ca

Dear Mayor Eisenberger,

During Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board's February 22, 2021 Board Meeting, Trustees heard concerns from numerous community members. The discussion topic of "traffic calming and pedestrian safety on Wilson Street, at the Dr. J. E. Davey Elementary School" was led by Beatrice Ekoko, a Senior Project Manager at Environment Hamilton. After reading and examining various letters and pieces of evidence, Trustees unanimously passed the following motion:

- *RESOLUTION #21-38: Trustee Bingham, seconded by Trustee Miller, moved: That the correspondence regarding the traffic calming and pedestrian safety on Wilson St. for Dr. J. E. Davey Elementary as well as Hess St. Elementary be referred to the City/School Board Liaison Committee. That a letter be written to the City, and copied to Hamilton Police Services, regarding the impact of the truck route on active, safe and sustainable school transportation.*

The purpose of this letter is to honour a commitment made by HWDSB Trustees to bring this matter to the City of Hamilton's attention. It is also being copied to Hamilton Police Services due to the public safety concerns that have been relayed. In addition to this communication, HWDSB will also present community members' correspondence at a future City/School Board Liaison Committee meeting that will take place at a later date. We appreciate the shared commitment from the City of Hamilton and School Boards to Active Sustainable School Transportation (ASST) and hope that we can collaboratively work to address the issues herein.

Here are some of the main concerns and potential solutions that were brought forth by community members and shared by Trustees:

- Truck traffic
 - Wilson Street is a heavily-used industrial truck route. Data from the correspondence shows that very few of these vehicles are making local deliveries, with most just using the street to pass through the city. Along with Dr. J.E. Davey Elementary School, this traffic impacts Hess St. Elementary School, which is located just down the road on York Boulevard. The high volume of truck traffic makes this a dangerous area for students and families to walk or bike to school. The trucks also contribute to air and noise pollution in the area, which impacts students who are playing or learning outside. The harmful side effects of air pollution were stressed by the delegation. Trustees learned that teachers have avoided outdoor classrooms as a result of the two forms of pollution. Community members and Trustees both feel it would be beneficial to reroute this truck traffic to the grade-separated Nikola Tesla Boulevard. The rerouting of truck traffic would immediately make Wilson Street safer and would help address the next two concerns.

- Sidewalks
 - Community members also highlighted issues with the Wilson Street sidewalks near Dr. J.E. Davey. Their narrowness makes it difficult for students and families to pass by one another when travelling to school. This issue has been heightened during the COVID-19 pandemic when people are being asked to be physically distant. It is also important to consider this problem in relation to the industrial truck traffic. Families in the community have said they do not feel safe walking on these narrow sidewalks due to the number of heavy vehicles passing through. Trustees also learned of reports of uneven sidewalks, further contributing to the issue. A proposed solution is to reduce the number of lanes on Wilson Street to allow for more sidewalk development. The surrounding sidewalks would be improved as a result of the redevelopment allowing pedestrians to safely spread out when walking to and from school.
- Pedestrian safety
 - Pedestrian safety can be improved by addressing issues with the sidewalks and truck traffic, but there are still other concerns from community members. The lack of cycling infrastructure and pedestrian crossings are two issues that were brought forth. Dr. J.E. Davey Elementary School is located in a dense population zone. As a result, more families walk or bike to school. It is also important to note that the school population has a higher rate of underserved families. Vehicle transportation is not always an option for them, which points to a greater need for safer streets. Trustees learned that some students run across the road when travelling to school due to the lack of crossings. The narrow sidewalks also make biking difficult and dangerous. Increased cycling infrastructure and pedestrian crossings will make these community members feel safer when travelling to school.

HWDSB and its Trustees feel that the concerns brought forth by this delegation are important and need to be addressed for the well-being of our school communities. We hope to work with the City of Hamilton to find solutions that will result in safer and healthier streets for our students and families. Issues surrounding industrial truck traffic, adequate sidewalks, and pedestrian safety have the ability to be remedied if all parties involved are able to collaborate. We owe it to the students, families, staff, and other community members who feel unsafe when travelling through these areas.

Sincerely,



Dawn Danko, Chair
Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board

Cc: Hamilton Police Services