

Bicycles Yield at Stop Signs (Idaho Stop)

Recommendation

- 1) The City of Hamilton request the police to discontinue enforcement of requiring cyclists to make a full stop at stop signs.
- 2) The City of Hamilton correspond with the province to encourage the enactment of a law where cyclists can yield at stop signs, known as an “Idaho” stop.

Background

WHEREAS dangerous operation of a bicycle is already an enforceable policy;

WHEREAS the Idaho stop allows for cyclists to slow and still stop if required, but allows continuation of momentum;

WHEREAS the City of Hamilton is trying to encourage use of bicycles and other modes of transportation and reduction of the use of personal automobiles;

WHEREAS the City of Hamilton has declared a Climate Emergency;

And;

WHEREAS these recommendations are in line with the following mandates of the Hamilton Cycling Advisory Committee:

- To advise City Council, through the Public Works Committee, on all matters related to cycling.
- To encourage citizens to cycle instead of drive.
- To educate on the benefits and necessities of cycling.

Analysis/Rationale

Most cyclists are observed to already treat stop signs as yield signs with no appreciable increase in injury to cyclists, pedestrians or motorists.

Reducing enforcement of this generally safe act will improve the efficiency of police forces to act on more significant issues, reducing unnecessary stops that could lead to biases inherent in an officer.

Enshrining this common action in law would allow motorists, pedestrians and cyclists to understand the actions of others in an intersection, allowing those involved to better understand the potential actions of each other.

Stop signs as they currently exist are designed only with motorists in mind, providing an unnecessary hinderance to cyclists where no significant danger exists, while a danger could possibly exist for an automobile. The average speed of bicycles is much slower than automobiles as well with far less mass. A compact automobile has a weight of 1400kg, while most bicycles with a

person on them weigh around 100kg. Bicycles also have far fewer blind spots and far more maneuverability than automobiles.

The Idaho Stop has been found to increase intersection safety as well, allowing cyclists to keep momentum rather than crossing an intersection at a slower pace. Places where this policy is implemented have universally seen a reduction in collisions through traffic studies.

References

[Bicyclist "Stop-As-Yield" Laws and Safety Fact Sheet | NHTSA](#)

[The Idaho Stop Law and the Severity of Bicycle Crashes: A Comparative Study](#)

<https://www.cycleto.ca/safeyieldlaw>

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