

Pilon, Janet

Subject: Margins for Safer Streets

From: Heather Ohrt

Sent: Monday, May 9, 2022 4:25 PM

To: clerk@hamilton.ca

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Hello,

I wrote this about margins for safer streets after the death of the pedestrian on Main Street last week and shared it on my facebook page, and a couple of neighbourhood group pages. A few people suggested that I share it with city council. I sent it to Maureen Wilson and she suggested that I forward it to you to be put onto the agenda for Wednesday's agenda. Here it is:

It was May 5th, and Hamilton now had 10 pedestrians die from collisions this year. This is so tragic. My sincere and deep condolences to the family and friends of the woman who lost her life that day, and to all those who have lost loved ones in collisions. I lost my Dad due to a collision on the streets of Hamilton and I feel your pain. What does it take to make changes for safer streets?

Margins, for one.

While learning about margins years ago, I found out that lined paper has margins, in part because rats and mice used to eat the edges of paper and people would lose some of their writing if they used the whole width of the sheet of paper to write on. So they began to add a margin to protect the writing from being destroyed by the rodents.

Where is the margin on the streets of Hamilton?

Five lanes of traffic on Main, tractor trailers, buses, cars, in lanes so narrow that I am nervous driving. Our sidewalks are as narrow as they can be in places, with pedestrians walking right beside the vehicles. Sometimes the buildings are so close to the road that inching out from the side streets is risky because the oncoming traffic is out of sight. Where are the margins to protect the people from the vehicles destroying them? Where is the margin for error?

Five lanes of traffic, we must get the vehicles through the city as quickly as possible! Hurry! But what about the people? Well, margins cost money. Reducing Main and King by 1 or 2 lanes each, to build buffers of grass between the street and the sidewalk, sometimes called a boulevard, well, that will need to be built, maintained, that will cost so much! Traffic will be slowed down, that will cost so much! Tractor trailers won't have enough room to make a turn and will have to use the ring roads around the city, and that will cost their companies more money! What about the cost of the lives of people?

Margins can also be made of time. Leaving more time to get to our destinations can mean less racing through lights, less speeding, more time to check blind spots, and to notice pedestrians and cyclists. This is something that every single person can do, whether driving, cycling, walking, using a scooter or wheelchair, etc. Leave more time! Margins of time can also mean more time for the walk sign for pedestrians and cyclists, etc., to cross the street. But that would hold up the drivers and time is money.

Lack of margins of time and space means injuries and loss of life. I know it's not the whole picture, or the cause of all collisions. But I think it's a big part. Better margins mean safer streets. That will cost money and time. People's lives are at risk. Margins are worth the time and money. Some of these things will require more from each of us. Some of them are in the hands of the city leaders.

To each one of us, please: make margins!

Blessings, Sincerely,

Heather Ohrt