

4.11 (ao)

Tuesday, May 10, 2022

Delivered to Council, City of Hamilton at 11:00AM

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cc: ward1@hamilton.ca; ward3@hamilton.ca

Hello,

This is a letter of support for Councilors Wilson and Nann regarding making changes to Hamilton's dangerous roadways. The two, one-way highways running through our city are the worst example of city planning for reasons that everyone is aware of, and this will not be new information to anyone at City Hall, MTO or Metrolinx. Perhaps perspectives of Hamiltonians that actually live and work in the city will help to propel immediate action.

We moved from Toronto to the south end of Strathcona Ave three years ago, and our 7-year-old daughter goes to a school in Kirkendall. We opt to shuffle her across FIVE LANES of traffic - without a light - to cross into residential streets in order to avoid having to walk two long blocks to an intersection with lights, with our backs to five lanes of speeding cars, trucks and buses. Walking along Main St. is like walking along the shoulder of the 401. I am not being dramatic when I say that we are taking our lives in our hands every single school day. The volume, speed, jostling and constricted thru-way of the traffic makes it ripe for accidents to happen.

When we cross at the lights on our way home from school, (because we have the ridiculous advantage of walking toward five lanes of speeding traffic and perhaps a few life-saving seconds to jump out of the way of a car that is pushed onto the curb), we encounter a whole other traffic issue. We have to ensure that drivers of vehicles turning onto Main St. from any of the north-south running streets are aware that we are crossing. Drivers tend to look west, at five lanes of oncoming traffic, to determine when they have the opportunity to pull onto Main St. I assure you, they are not thinking about pedestrians crossing from east to west because they only have to look west to navigate their merge onto the one-way "highway." We have witnessed no less than three vehicle accidents at the bottom of our street alone as a result of a failed merge. Many of these intersections have some amount of an obstructed view, which results in cars pulling up to the very edge of Main St. as they wait to turn, essentially blocking pedestrians from crossing safely, or at all. How often do cars have to reverse to either enable clearance for vehicles to turn left from Main St. onto the side street or to allow pedestrians safe space to cross, assuming they even see us? EVERY. SINGLE. DAY. What if we had already started crossing behind these vehicles because our pedestrian path at the intersection was not clear? I fear for all pedestrians, particularly those unfamiliar with the impacts of the one-way highway, who enter one of these intersections assuming that drivers are looking for them BOTH WAYS, rather than being legitimately distracted by five lanes of traffic coming one way from one direction.

Pedestrians are clearly and tragically casualties of the horribly designed traffic flow, and businesses suffer from people speeding through the city to get from A to B with little thought to stopping and accessing anything along the route. If commerce is more important to this city than people, there's a strong argument that can be made for the harm our city's one-way highways cause to any business that attempts to capitalize on the volume of people that zip along Main or King St. I'll support anyone that

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speaks to that, but I implore the City of Hamilton to act swiftly to correct this horrendous situation before more people get hurt or die.

Councilors Wilson and Nann will be proposing some great temporary improvements, but we *cannot* stop there. I share their vision of making Main St. a two-way street, and we are not alone. Be courageous, save lives, help businesses prosper and build our communities up!!!! It's the only true solution and I think everyone knows that.

Thank you,

Barb Williams and Family, Strathcona Neighbourhood