

October 2, 2023

HAND DELIVERED

****TIME SENSITIVE****

Hamilton City Hall
 71 Main Street West, 2nd Floor
 Hamilton, ON L8P 4Y5

Attention: City Clerk

Dear Mayor Horwath and Councillors:

RE: PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE – OCTOBER 2, 2023

The lives of pedestrians and people on bikes matter.

The death of an as yet unidentified cyclist at the intersection of York Boulevard and James Street North on Thursday, September 28, 2023 was as always shocking but not remotely surprising.

As the City is aware, I represent the Estate of Herman Ohrt, his widow, his children and his grandchildren.

You will recall Mr. Ohrt was killed by the driver of a cement truck at the corner of King Street West and Queen Street North on the morning of August 17, 2018 as he rode his bike to a medical appointment.

Based upon preliminary reports from the scene of Thursday's fatal crash, the remarkable similarities between these two incidents are manifestly obvious.

The evidence is clear. Street infrastructure in Hamilton kills vulnerable road users.

Some changes can be made immediately that don't require traffic studies, engineering approvals or construction. One is the banning of right turns on red lights by drivers. In the wake of the death of Sherri D'Amour by road violence on Main Street West approaching its intersection with Locke Street on May 5, 2022, Council wisely enacted changes to that streetscape in an attempt to regulate drivers' speeds prior to the long-overdue conversion of King Street to two-way traffic. One of those changes was the banning of red turns on red lights within a designated portion of the City.

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There is no reason why vulnerable road users deserve protection at some corners, and not others. For over two years, I have stopped turning right on red lights save in exceptional circumstances. I created the enclosed magnet to affix to the trunk of my car to inform drivers behind me that my “failure” to turn right on red was intentional, not inattentive.

Enclosed please find one of my magnets for use on your own vehicle. Should you require more, I would be pleased to provide them.

Whether it be the death of Jay Keddy, Sherri D’Amour, Herman Ohrt, the most recent victim of Hamilton’s street infrastructure or many others, it is indefensible that these tragedies had to happen in order to provoke change.

That, is a different conversation for a different day, albeit one in the very near future.

Today, I write to support the motion before the Public Works Committee, *inter alia* seeking a staff report on the implementation of a ban on right turns on red lights citywide. I trust such a report will be requested on an assertive timeline.

Such a ban is common sense. The only cost is the convenience we as drivers have been indoctrinated to expect.

It is long past time drivers, myself included, are indoctrinated instead to consider the welfare of others who choose active transportation ahead of the speed with which we can navigate our City.

Please contact me in the event I can be of any assistance on this issue or any other issue related to the public health crisis that is vehicular traffic in the City of Hamilton.

Yours very truly,



IAN BRISBIN
VELOLAW

/encl.