



CITIZEN COMMITTEE REPORT

To:	Public Works Committee
From:	Hamilton Cycling Advisory Committee _____ Chris Ritsma, Chair
Date:	February 6, 2023
Re:	Bicycle Yield at Stop Signs (Idaho Stop)

Recommendation

That 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

At its February 1, 2023 meeting, the Hamilton Cycling Committee reviewed and discussed the Idaho Stop (Bicycle Yield at Stop Signs) and passed the following motion:

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.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

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.

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.