

Dear Mayor and Councillors,

I am writing on behalf of the Durand Neighbourhood Association (DNA) to express our shock and extreme disappointment that Council has refused to approve the Downtown Transportation Master Plan last week.

This plan has been carefully developed by staff based on extensive input from residents and community groups like the DNA. We are surprised that council would reject both the expert opinion of staff and the practical experience of the residents who have put years of work into developing a comprehensive and balanced transportation plan.

Furthermore, every urban designer and architect who has visited Hamilton has urged immediate two-way conversion of downtown streets. The speakers and participants at the Pedestrian Workshop hosted by the City last year said the same thing. How can Council simply ignore the hard evidence and public input resulting from the process it itself put in place?

In particular, Council should take very seriously the fact that this Plan has strong support from those most affected: the residents of the downtown neighbourhoods (and our Councillor)!

A healthy downtown functions as a people place and needs to encourage strolling, window shopping and street life. The speeding waves of traffic on our one-way expressways have made our downtown dangerous, unproductive and unpleasant.

It is the DNA's opinion that this plan will make downtown safer and more attractive for both residents and businesses. We have already seen the economic payoff of the two-way conversion of James and John: new businesses, growth of the tax base and a flourishing arts scene. Even those initially sceptical of two-way conversion (such as the president of the Chamber of Commerce and some James N merchants) now recognize the boost it has given to the local economy. There is no need for any further study or delay!

We are particularly concerned that some councillors specifically oppose two-way conversion of downtown streets. The DNA has officially supported two-way conversion for many years, and we have been extremely pleased with the results of the two-way conversion of Hess and Caroline streets that has eliminated street racing on Hess and improved safety for residents (without impeding traffic). In addition, the proven economic benefits of two-way conversion mean that the conversions pay for themselves in increased property values and economic activity. We have been disappointed at the very slow pace of two-way conversion, despite its proven success. Stopping further two-way conversion would be a retrograde step for the city and a disaster for downtown!

We urge Council to approve the Downtown Transportation Master Plan, as

developed by staff in consultation with residents, as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

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Vice President
Durand Neighbourhood Association