



24 June 2019

Dear Deanna Green,

Subject: Review Comments draft Vision Zero - Kingston Road Safety Plan (RSP)

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the draft Vision Zero - Kingston Road Safety Plan (RSP). We are encouraged and supportive of the proposed approach to enhance public safety through the Active Transportation Master Plan (ATMP). The neighbourhood centric approach of the ATMP will ensure the engagement of residents and bring important road safety benefits across the city. Improved road safety, particularly for vulnerable users, is critical to achieve the goal to increase the modal share of active transportation in Kingston.

We have the following comments for your consideration.

This work was initiated by the previous City Council with the goal to develop, for the first time in Kingston, a comprehensive road safety plan based on the principles of the internationally recognized Vision Zero approach. Since this work began a new Council has been elected. The new Council has reinforced this commitment, responding to the strong City-wide public support for increased road safety, by identifying it as second on their list of strategic priorities to address during their four year mandate.

In this regard, we suggest that the goal as proposed in the draft RSP needs to be strengthened to reflect the high priority as committed by City Council in 2019. We recommend the stated five year goal of at least a 10 per cent reduction in fatal and injury collisions involving any type of road user and at least a 10 per cent reduction in collisions with vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists, be increased to a 25 per cent reduction in fatal and injury collisions, including vulnerable users over the next five years; and a 50 per cent reduction at intersections and other locations where there is a known historic pattern of high risk for collisions and speeding vehicles. You will recall discussions during the Road Safety Advisory Group (RSAG), it was mentioned that the historical record of collision data has a range of 10 percent variation over time, without the benefits of the implementation of the RSP. We have serious concerns about the length of time it will take to realize safer roads if we only aim for a goal of a 10 per cent reduction over five years, when it is clear the current City Council and the public expect to see meaningful results sooner than later.

An increasingly common complaint from residents is the inappropriate speeds of drivers on roads across the city. In recent years, Councils have responded to these complaints

by lowering the posted speed limit. However, speed monitoring studies of these changes have consistently shown this has not had the desired effects. In our review of the draft RSP, we have noted the lack of focus on what will be done to address this. Best practices around the world are clear that speed is the critical factor to address in making roads safer for everyone, especially vulnerable users. We are disappointed that the draft RSP seems to still approach the challenges of road safety from a car centric approach vs a vulnerable user centric approach. We recommend that greater emphasis in the RSP on ways to change the roads to effectively reduce speed, that rely less on expensive police enforcement, and more on road design.

We note the draft RSP recommends the installation and operation of red light running cameras at ten high risk intersections. Based on a 2015 staff report, we understand this program was estimated to generate a profit of about \$450,000 annually. In our review of the draft RSP it was not clear how this revenue would be spent. We note in a recent media report that “any profits would be directed into traffic education programs”. (<https://globalnews.ca/news/5366065/red-light-cameras-kingston/>) While education is important to raise awareness and help shift behaviours of road users, we strongly recommend, based on the experiences of other cities, most recently in Toronto, that the money would achieve greater results if spent on evidence-based measures that reduce injuries/deaths (e.g. infrastructure designed to lower speeds), not just on education.

The involvement of the Kingston Coalition of Active Transportation (KCAT) and other user groups, such as Cycle Kingston, the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee (MAAC), Drivers Against Distraction (motorcycle safety), Tri-Board Transportation, Canadian Automobile Association and the Young Drivers of Canada, working along with municipal, provincial and police staff was an important component of the process that led to the development of the draft RSP. It has been a pleasure, and a capacity building experience for members of KCAT and the other user groups, to have been active participants in the process leading to the development of the RSP. It provided an important forum, filling a gap, where users are actively involved in learning about the challenges, and sharing ideas and feedback on the tool kit and strategies to make roads safer. We are very disappointed to see this approach will not be used in the implementation stage. We think it a serious mistake to not include these user groups, and build on the continued involvement fostering and strengthening the relationships that have proven an asset to this work. There is considerable value added by including road users. We recommend to continue the Road Safety Advisory Group, including user groups, as part of the implementation work.

Over the course of this work, we realized there is a need to increase public awareness about the range and locations of road safety issues across the city and the solutions and plans to address these challenges. Also the many success stories where improvements have been achieved are not always known by the public. The development of the online collision map tool is a welcome source of information to help address this. In this regard we encourage and recommend City staff and Kingston Police work together on annual reports to be made public, as is common in cities across Canada. For example, an annual report on the Top 10 intersections with the highest number of collisions, and

annual action plans, as done by cities such as Edmonton and Ottawa. And the use of innovative crowdsource tools, like bikemaps.orgs that involve the input from vulnerable users to map cycling safety challenges.

In summary we recommend:

1. the five year goal be increased to a 25 per cent reduction in fatal and injury collisions, including vulnerable users over the next five years; and a 50 per cent reduction at intersections and other locations where there is a known historic pattern of high risk for collisions and speeding vehicles.
2. greater emphasis be given in the RSP on ways to change the roads to effectively reduce speed, that rely less on expensive police enforcement, and more on road design.
3. that any profits from a red light running camera program be directed into evidence-based measures that reduce injuries/deaths, particularly infrastructure designed to lower speeds, not just on education.
4. to continue the Road Safety Advisory Group, including user groups, as part of the implementation work.
5. City staff and Kingston Police work together on annual reports to be made public, such as an annual report on the Top 10 intersections with the highest number of collisions, and annual action plans. And use innovative crowdsource tools, like bikemaps.orgs, to involve vulnerable users to map cycling safety challenges.

Again, many thanks for the opportunity to review the draft Vision Zero RSP. We look forward to a continued involvement in this important work and are available at your convenience to discuss these ideas as this is brought to City Council for approval.

Sincerely

Bruce Bursey
Kingston Coalition of Active Transportation