

To: Shawn Menard

CapitalWard@ottawa.ca

Cc: Ottawa City Council Transportation Committee members; City of Ottawa, Director of Traffic Services; OSCA Traffic & Safety Committee

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Dear Councillor Menard:

The Hopewell Avenue Public School Parent Council would like to raise the issue of traffic safety with you and your Council colleagues. As you are aware, pedestrian safety has been an ongoing concern in our community, particularly for children crossing Bank Street at Glen, Sunnyside, and Aylmer. The Parent Council appreciates that certain efforts have been made to study these intersections, but we would like to respectfully suggest that the study of individual intersections, particularly in relation to speed, is not the right approach for two reasons. First, vehicle speed and collision seem to be the priority concerns of these studies, whereas pedestrian-vehicle collisions are a danger at any speed, particularly when they involve children. Second, it seems as though pedestrian safety around schools should be considered on a larger scale, rather than on a case-by-case basis.

Pedestrian-oriented neighbourhoods, where children come and go to school on foot, need traffic measures that decrease the risk of vehicle-pedestrian collision as much as possible. Even a low-speed collision could cause serious injury or death where children are concerned and speed is just one concern. Another is distracted driving. Just one morning, recently, one of our crossing guards reported to a parent that they had witnessed four separate drivers texting while driving through the intersection at Bank and Sunnyside. Similarly, impatient drivers make poor decisions, such as those who routinely edge around cars making lefthand turns, such as from Bank to Sunnyside. Finally, innocent driver error is also a concern—drivers going through red lights along Bank is a common occurrence. An accident involving a child is only a matter of time, either in this neighbourhood or another.

You may recall that in December, a 7-year-old girl—a refugee from Ukraine—was hit and killed in Montreal. Local residents told the media that they had been calling for traffic calming measures in the area for a long time and that nothing had been done. The onus cannot be only on individual drivers. It only takes a single irresponsible or distracted driver to cause a tragedy.

This Parent Council would like to suggest that the City take a broader look at pedestrian safety around schools. There are many examples, both internationally and in Canada, of measures that can be taken. School/playground zones can be strictly enforced, but again, these measures rely on individual driver behaviour. Instead, we would propose bolder measures, such as scramble crossings, which prioritize pedestrian safety. As you are probably aware, this model has been implemented in parts of Canadian

cities, including Banff, Edmonton and Toronto. There is a trade-off when it comes to traffic flow, but it's time to prioritize pedestrian safety over the fast movement of cars.

As you will see, we are copying members of the Transportation Committee, the City of Ottawa's Director of Traffic Services, and the Ottawa South Community Association Traffic and Safety Committee, in the hopes that this matter will be addressed, not just in Old Ottawa South, but in other pedestrian-oriented neighbourhoods.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this issue, which is of great concern to members of this community.

Respectfully,

The Hopewell Avenue Public School Parent Council