

## Caledon joins Mono in declaring road safety emergency?

Municipalities coming together to advocate for safer roads

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The Town of Caledon has joined neighbouring municipality Mono in declaring a road safety emergency.

At a recent meeting of Mono's Town Council, it passed a motion calling on other municipalities, and the Province of Ontario, to declare a road safety emergency.

The motion also calls on the Province do the following: launch an Ontario-wide road safety education campaign; review and increase Highway Traffic Act (HTA) fines to a "deterrent amount" that sends a message that driving is a privilege subject to conditions; and permit municipalities to deploy Automated Speed Enforcement (ASE) cameras without having to declare community safety zones or meet "onerous conditions."

Further, the motion asks the Province to: establish a working group with municipalities to eliminate "red tape" associated with the use of ASE cameras; develop mechanisms that ensure Provincial Offences Act (POA) fines and penalties do not lose their deterrent effect over time; and work with municipalities to create better means of collecting outstanding POA fines and victim surcharge monies.

The motion passed by Mono's Council said road safety is of continuing and increasing concern to Ontarians. The motion said that the number of traffic collisions, and resulting injuries and fatalities, in the province is unacceptable.

In 2023, the number of fatalities from motor vehicle collisions in Caledon more than doubled.

Mono Council's motion said speeding is a contributing factor in many accidents and that fines for speeding have not increased in decades.

Caledon Council received Mono's motion at its January 30 meeting.

In discussion about the motion, Mayor Annette Groves said municipalities need to come together to advocate to the Province, and get the Ministry of Transportation at the table to help.

Ward 1 Councillor Lynn Kiernan said traffic safety is her number one focus and that Caledon Council's voice will continue to be raised on the issue. She said the Caledon OPP say drivers are coming to Caledon where there's less congestion and driving more recklessly than they would anywhere else.

Ward 2 Councillor Dave Sheen said traffic safety is the number one concern of residents in his ward and that it's the number one complaint he hears. He said he sees so many drivers on Caledon roads driving with no care for those around them.

Caledon Council unanimously supported Mono's motion to declare a road safety emergency and call on the Province to take action to increase road safety.

Two Caledon residents delegated to the motion at the January 30 meeting, sharing their thoughts on road safety in Caledon.

Kate Hepworth said in Caledon Village where she lives, many people won't walk anywhere because the roads are too dangerous.

Recently, Hepworth's husband was almost hit by a transport truck that ran a red light.

Kiernan said those kinds of close calls are all too common in Caledon.

Hepworth said traffic safety is everyone's problem and has been for a long time. She said people need to join together to find solutions, because we can't afford to have any more fatal collisions in Caledon.

Joanna Valeriani said we live in a time where people feel like they're entitled to drive recklessly on our roads; that it's something she experiences daily on her commute on Highway 10. She said drivers are the problem.

?We need everyone at the table? engage the province to make these changes. We need reform to happen,? said Valeriani. ?We are at war with bad drivers.?