



Raise the Hammer
Citizens for a livable Hamilton

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Ryan McGreal

Phone: 905-525-1221

Email: editor@raisethehammer.org

Website: www.raisethehammer.org

Make Hamilton's Streets Two-Way Today

November 7, 2006 - Raise the Hammer calls on the City of Hamilton to create a safe pedestrian environment by **converting Hamilton's streets to two-way today**. This weekend, Matthew Power was killed when one of two cars that appeared to be racing hit him so hard that it cut him in two. He was crossing King St. E. close to his home.

Cindy Smith, a resident of the area where Matthew Power was killed, told the *Hamilton Spectator* she is afraid to let her child walk to school alone. Hamilton will never be "the best place to raise a child" as long as our streets remain too dangerous for children. Our eagerness to provide maximum convenience for motorists has created a hostile environment for anyone not 'protected' inside a car. Wide, multi-lane urban expressways like Main St. and King St. are a bonanza for speeding drivers.

So far this year, 22 people have been killed in vehicle accidents in Hamilton. In their 2005 report, "Child- and Youth-Friendly Land Use and Transport Planning Guidelines", Richard Gilbert and Catherine O'Brien found that the risk of death increases exponentially with increasing speed. Below 25 km/h, the death rate rapidly approaches zero. Also in 2005, Eric Dumbaugh of Texas A&M University conducted a study called "Safe Streets, Livable Streets" and found that wide-open corridors encourage motorists to speed and cause more crashes. The best way to reduce speeds is not through enforcement but engineering: **two-way traffic flows, narrow lanes, non-synchronized traffic lights, and tree-lined roadways**.

In 1997, a downtown revitalization charette sponsored by Architecture Hamilton recommended converting Hamilton's streets back to two-way. When James St. N. was converted in 2002, opponents predicted a disaster of gridlock and boarded-up windows. In fact, James North has seen a significant renaissance, with new investment, increased business, more pedestrian traffic, and a vibrant street life. John Dolbec, CEO of the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce, recently admitted that the two-way conversion helped spur the revival.

Last year, the renowned architect Donald Schmitt, who is designing the McMaster Innovation Park, gave a lecture in Hamilton on downtown revitalization. In an interview after the talk, he explained:

Two way streets slow cars down. The environment on the sidewalk, particularly if they are widened with parallel parking and street trees, becomes more protected from traffic and more conducive to window shopping, outdoor food and sidewalk life.

Pedestrians cross the street more safely and both sides of the street start to work together as a true retail strip.

The City of Hamilton already plans to convert Main St. and King St. to two-way - eventually. Raise the Hammer believes we should not have to sit through another decade of urban decay and needless deaths before doing the right thing. In 1956, Hamilton's streets were converted to one-way overnight. There is no reason why we cannot act swiftly today to restore the pedestrian-friendly streets Hamilton needs and deserves.

About Raise the Hammer

Raise the Hammer is a group of Hamilton, Ontario citizens who believe in our city's potential and are willing to get involved in making the city a more vibrant, livable, and attractive place to live and work.

We are non-partisan and our members come from diverse political backgrounds. Our common interest is revitalizing our city, a goal that benefits everyone.

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