Sept 13, 2021

Your worship

Members of council

As a downtown business community, we have a few concerns on the decisions you have made and acted upon in the past few months.

We understand that you have been left with making decisions based upon studies provided by outside sources.

 As residents and business owners, we feel these decisions have not taken into consideration, the actuall performing business or residents living in this community on a day to day basis. Residents and Business Owners are the basis of this community tax base and it is for this reason we feel we need to address the positive and negative changes that have been acted upon.

We need to acknowledge the recent positive changes that benefit our community:

 -The pedestrian cross walks on Wallace and Elma streets by the Trails.

- The 4 way stop at the intersection of Elma and Wallace

Our concerns are the following:

-The one-way section of Wallace – The largest new subdivision of all Listowel comes down Wallace to shop downtown or proceed to the North side of Town – the removal of this traffic flow for only EMS, has residents turning left or right onto Elma and then turning left or right back onto Main Street adding to the congestion you are concerned with. The safest passage is always by a traffic light and now residents are forced to proceed into or through an intersection to merge and add to traffic flow congestion or beat an oncoming line up of traffic.

-Taking away downtown parking spaces to make traffic move through at a faster rate is not safe. Parking is a buffer zone for safety, and now the traffic is closer to the side walk, leaving the potential for an unsteady senior to fall or quick toddler to dart too close to fast moving traffic.

With current Covid regulations of 6ft apart, we have witnessed most people walking closer to the road when passing people on the sidewalk. Most vehicles intend to catch the light instead of waiting, which means that speed does not decrease the closer you get to a green light.

-Seven parking spaces were removed including accessibility parking in front of our store. With accessibility a mandatory requirement, we assume that this will be installed again, but it has been 4 weeks and there has not been any activity on making our downtown accessible.

-With new accessible spots taking the existing parking for all other shoppers, we have even less parking available for those who do not have an accessibility permit.

The lack of parking affects seniors and young families. We need these business patrons to feel that our downtown is available to them. Asking our customers to walk a greater distance will only deter them from coming downtown.

Customers have already been vocal about their difficulty, and we have noticed an increase in customers defying the no parking and just parking out of frustration, because they are seniors, because they have health issues, because they cannot find a place to park, because they have little ones that need to accompany them.

We are concerned with the change in seasons, that this will only magnify this issue.

-Another safe passage cross walk zone has been removed from Main street East and Wallace. This requires pedestrians from TenPas or Watson to now go up to the Post Office, or cross over to Telus then to CIBC then to Scotia Agri Bank just to proceed to the businesses located on Wallace East side.

This causes frustration for the customers we need downtown. We have witnessed more jay walking in the past 3 weeks. This is extremely dangerous, especially when we witness seniors and young parents with toddlers in hand.

-Traffic is an issue, we recognize this. We have heard this issue for all 54 years we have owned and operated Bakelaar Jewellers in the downtown. Traffic is an issue all over the province and city centres.

We have been to a few small communities and they leave their downtown parking alone. Many communities have created Truck bypasses. We all understand the difficulties in infrastructure, and we understand it is a constant discussion for those that govern our municipality. It may not be an easy answer to create a bypass, but changing existing infrastructure in an old town is not possible. Buildings are buildings.

We can relocate trucks that come through at excessive speeds, that shake our buildings when they speed through, some that leave incredible lingering odours.

This fast drive through traffic never makes a downtown core a great shopping and dining experience.

The majority of truck traffic that moves through the town does not contribute to the tax base of the community or give back to the community. Your downtown businesses all do.

We believe in this community, we live in this community, we contribute to this community and we love it. As downtown businesses, we ask our Town Council to consider what we have lost over an outside study. We ask you to come downtown and listen and talk to business owners.

Many businesses are struggling with the past covid lockdowns, labour shortage, and now we have to face issues like parking and pushing customers away from the downtown.

Downtown is the heart of every community.

Town council has worked hard to attract new growth in our community, and to provide the needed services to encourage growth.

Many new subdivisions

More industry

New Steve Kerr Memorial Arena, New Schools, New Day Cares, New North Perth Fire Hall,

consistent updates at the Listowel Memorial Hospital,

Refurbished Parks, Trail Improvements, North Perth Façade Improvements Program just to name a few.

 All of these are incredible assets to a growing community, and the result of a Municipal Council and community working together. All these community Public areas are needed and supported by our community and by our downtown businesses.

As a business community, we need the tools to serve this new influx of population and to help us encourage a great shopping and dining experience. We need to grow our downtown experience.

We all have to work together to encourage our community to live, work and shop here.

Creating a quick fast track to move traffic by taking away downtown parking is not encouraging this.

Thank you