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ADVERTISING 905-640-2612 lassified: 1-800-743-3353 Eas. 905-640-8778

DISTRIBUTION 905-294-8244

EDITORIAL Editor /im Mason

ADVERTISING
Advertising Manager
Stephen Mathieu
smathieu@yrmg.com

Marketing Manager
Mike Banville
mbanville@yrmg.com

ADMINISTRATION
Regional
Office Manager
Melanie Attridge
mattridge@yrmg.com

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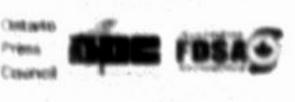
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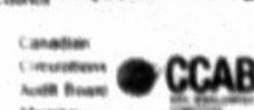
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Letters to the Editor,
The Sun-Tribune
6290 Main St.
Stouffville, ON
LAA IG7
jmason@yrmg.com





OPNION

Sun-Tribune

6290 Main St. Stouffville, ON. L4A 1G7 www.yorkregion.com

PUBLISHER lan Proudfoot

GENERAL MANAGER
John Willems

EDITOR IN CHIEF Debora Kelly

Business Manager Robert Lazurko

> DIRECTOR, PRODUCTION Jackie Smart

OPERATIONS
Barry Black

DIRECTOR,

ADVERTISING

Nicole Fletcher

DIRECTOR, DISTRIBUTION

Tanya Pacheco

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Road tolls will be burden to motorists

Re: Don't put all costs on backs of motorists, editorial April 25.

The idea of road tolls may sound effective in promoting environmentally friendly transportation, but it also would inhibit many drivers from being able to get to work or school.

There are certain areas in the York Region that simply do not have access to public transit and by applying road fees to all the roads in Ontario, the time and efficiency to travel, for some people, would grind to a halt.

Drivers in these areas usually do not have any other reliable forms of transportation and access to points of transit can range from one kilometre to more than 30.

I would recommend applying tolls only on high-

HAVE YOUR SAY, WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE

▶ What do you think of these issues or others? E-mail letters to the editor to jmason@yrmg.com

ways, leaving local roads for those who cannot afford this method.

This may not increase the use of public transit, but would likely spread out traffic across the city, giving urban drivers less to deal with.

BALLANTRAE

You can read letters, columns and stories from The Sun-Tribune on yorkregion.com



Speed limit decision won't help road safety

e're surprised sometimes by the things you don't get upset about. We wait in anticipation after publishing a scandalous story, only to be met with silence.

Often, when politicians are caught flushing money down the toilet—we haven't received one letter about the ORNGE air ambulance flasco, for instance—or once, even when accusations by female employees of inappropriate behaviour from a councillor were swept under the rug.

"What?" I'll say to my editors.
"They're OK with this?"

There are also occasions when we're surprised by what upsets you.

For instance, we now know bags matter—letters poured in when stores banned plastic bags and again when the region mandated biodegradable bags in green bins.

It has always been clear, however, that anything to do with traffic — from stop signs, speed bumps and road closings to speed limits, fines, red light cameras and road tolls — will generate an avalanche of reaction.

We are commuters. We are busy. We need to get to lots of places and we



Debora Kelly

need to get there fast because we are late or busy.

To this day, I recall weeks of debate on our Op Ed pages after a reader begged slow drivers to stick to the right lane. I recall the response from Mr. Albert, who considered it his civic duty to drive at the speed limit in the passing lane.

I think of him when I'm stuck behind an old man, with his fedora-topped head barely reaching over the steering wheel, crawling along like Superman on sedatives.

But I admit to being surprised by the number of letters and outrage expressed over York Region's decision to lower some speed limits. Last year, council decided to lower speed limits to 60 km/h in urban areas and "harmonize" them on portions of roads that were once rural but are now urban corridors.

Our letter writers challenge the claim lower speed limits make roads safer, seeing it merely as a bid to hand out more tickets. They've changed my mind on the issue.

While we need low speeds in neighbourhoods, where children play and pedestrians abound, most research refutes the idea slower is safer on major roadways.

An extensive U.S. Department of Transportation study collected speed and accident data in 22 states at 100 sites on rural and urban highways before and after limits were altered.

The study found raising or lowering speed limits had little effect on speed or accidents.

Rather than bolster the theory that accident severity is proportional to vehicle speed, studies blame the Mr. Alberts of the world for roadway chaos.

The risk for being in an accident is highest when you're travelling at a speed much lower or higher than the majority of motorists.

Speed limits should be set with practicality and regard of basic human behaviour:

 Most of us drive in a safe and reasonable manner, with consideration of conditions, to reach our destination without endangering ourselves, others and our vehicle;

 Laws should penalize the few individuals whose behaviour jeopardizes the majority of the public;

 Laws can't be effectively enforced without the voluntary compliance of the majority;

 Research and experience show effective speed limits are those at which the majority of motorists naturally drive and that raising and lowering speed limits doesn't substantially influence that speed.

While the region's decision to lower speed limits likely comes from a well-meaning but misguided attempt to make our roads safer, its arbitrary and unrealistic actions will only create more havoc on our roads and reinforce a socially acceptable disregard for speed limits.

We await your letters.

Debora Kelly is editor in chief of the York Region Media Group.