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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.

HOJIN PARK
BALLANTRAE

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



Speed limit decision won't help road safety

We're surprised some-
times by the things you
don't get upset about.
We wait in anticipa-
tion 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 ORNCE air ambulance fiasco, for
instance — or once, even when accu-
sations by female employees of inap-
propriate 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 neigh-
bourhoods, 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 rea-
sonable manner, with consideration of
conditions, to reach our destination
without endangering ourselves, others
and our vehicle;

- Laws should penalize the few indi-
viduals 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.