

# OPINION



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## Editorial

# Region's red-light cameras only costly to rule breakers

**ISSUE: York Region about to flip switch on 20 red-light cameras at dangerous intersections.**

**Y**ork Region drivers will soon have 20 cameras monitoring your behaviour at intersections.

Red-light cameras, which will improve safety and save lives, according to the region, are just days away from being operational.

But some motorists are simply seeing red at what they view as nothing more than a cash grab.

It appears both sides are correct.

Hamilton, for example, was one of several municipalities to install the cameras in 2000.

During the first eight years, The Hamilton Spectator reported overall collisions at traffic signals fell 32 per cent. At red-light camera locations, accidents fell 41 per cent and dangerous broadside crashes at red-light corners declined 63 per cent.

Rear-end collisions at red-light intersections climbed 75 per cent during the same time, likely caused by drivers stopping quickly for yellow lights.

As for the cash-grab claim, it's true the program is expected to cost \$3.7 million in the first two years, but it will bring in an estimated \$4.5 million in fine revenue during that period.

At the very worst, the region anticipates it will break even.

That means taxpayers will not foot the bill for this program long-term. The only

people who will have to pay are those who choose to break the law and run red lights.

What's wrong with that?

In Waterloo last year, 16 cameras issued 9,257 tickets that put \$2 million into regional government coffers.

In Hamilton, the city paid about \$691,000 to operate its cameras, but fine revenue was more than \$900,000.

That's a lot of money that can be used to finance other municipal priorities, specifically road-safety projects.

So, in reality, it's a cash grab that can save lives.

That can't be a bad thing. More importantly, it appears to be working.

In Hamilton, red-light violations have fallen annually since 2005. By 2008, there were just 30 per cent of the number recorded when the cameras were installed.

There are those who believe a better solution would be extending amber lights by one or two seconds.

But that solution is only successful if we assume people are only running red lights because the amber lights are too short.

Amber lights should be the same length at all intersections so there are no surprises for motorists, but that's not going to stop people from pushing the limits and forcing their way through red lights.

But \$325 fines might.

**BOTTOM LINE: Red-light cameras proven to save lives and only costly to motorists who break the law.**

## LETTER OF THE WEEK

### Pickering Airport bad news for our businesses, environment

*Re: Airport means jobs, business for Stouffville: mayor, June 13.*

I am part of your community and concerned with the wellbeing of our town. Since the announcement of the of the Pickering Airport plan, I worry about our town, our quality of life, quality of employment and what may cause our town to have an economic bust. I therefore joined a group of concerned citizens called Land Over Landings.

I, along with many others, do not want a Pearson-sized airport here — the current plan is to have this airport be twice the size of Pearson. No longer could we claim "Country close to the city" as our motto. We will end up being the Brampton of the east.

The construction jobs will end and we will be left with minimum-wage employment. Big box stores, chain restaurants (think McDonald's, KFC, etc.) and hotels will dot what was beautiful, fertile countryside that once put fresh local food on our tables. Instead, we will welcome smog, noise, strips of hotels, more traffic, wider roads and lower property values.

No longer is there protection for migrating birds. No longer will I hear or see the

herons that fly overhead, the Oak Ridges Moraine Protection is all but destroyed, the silent gliders over head will be replaced by sound of jet engines. Traffic will jam our currently quiet streets and the reasons we all live here will be gone.

If you think this will be good for our economy, you should think again and do your due diligence. Take a drive to the west end and see what it looks like out there. Watch the smog on the horizon as you head west and see how much of a small town feel you get.

Our Main Street stores will not hold up to what will be around the airport. Did you know those living in the southeast could be as close as three kilometres from runways?

Think about it, speak up and learn what is planned. It is not as good as the federal or our municipal governments are making it out to be.

Please think about what could happen. Look at both sides of the coin and if you are concerned, visit landoverlandings.com and get involved with ending this once and for all.

Once the land is gone, there is no turning back.

S. NAGEL  
STOUFFVILLE

### How about dropping Stouffville from name?

*Time to revisit our hyphenated name, Whitchurch-Stouffville, letter to the editor by Arnold Neufeldt-Fast, June 6.*

Before Whitchurch-Stouffville, Whitchurch was a township. Stouffville was a village.

The residents of the northerly part of Whitchurch-Stouffville live closer to Aurora and Newmarket than Stouffville.

Mr. Neufeldt-Fast says "the population in the hamlets of Ballantrae, Vandorf, Musselman's Lake and 13 other Whitchurch hamlets, will decline in the coming years, according to town planners.

Unless developed by Whitchurch-Stouffville as East Gwillimbury has, the boundaries of Whitchurch-Stouffville could change.

Aurora and Newmarket would like to expand, but have very limited space in

which to do so. The land east of Hwy. 404, from Bloomington Road to Green Lane, would be appealing as industrial properties.

*Aurora and Newmarket would like to expand, but have very limited space in which to do so. The land east of Hwy. 404, from Bloomington Road to Green Lane, would be appealing as industrial properties.*

Newmarket and Aurora might very well look to the precedent set by the City of Barrie, which managed to expropriate large tracts of

land from the neighbouring Town of Innisfil.

For 50 years, our address has been Newmarket. It is confusing when I tell people that our address is Newmarket, but we pay our taxes to Whitchurch-Stouffville.

Since the needs of those in the northern part of Whitchurch-Stouffville differ from those of "The Town Close to Markham," maybe like most hyphenated names, the last part of the name should be dropped.

Stouffville can then take its place as a town with the other villages and hamlets in the Township of Whitchurch.

DONA WILLIAMS  
WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE

## HAVE YOUR SAY, STOUFFVILLE

► What do you think of these issues or any others?  
E-mail jmason@yrmg.com

*This is debatable*

**WEIGH IN ON THE DISCUSSION ... e-mail your comments to jmason@yrmg.com**