Chair and Members, General Issues Committee,

I ask you to please give your full support to the motion by Councillor Brian McHattie and Jason Farr to establish a one-way to two-way implementation team.

I love Hamilton - I was raised in this city and I hope to die in this city... but hopefully not on Cannon St under a large truck.

My wife and I moved downtown over four years ago and have never regretted our decision to get involved in its on-going renewal. In the last four years we have opened two local businesses, moved into our second downtown home, and been part of forming a church which I have the honor of pastoring. One of the great things about pastoring a local church I get to hear stories from people in the congregation, nearly all of whom live between Locke and Ottawa St. Most of them bike to work, church, to each others homes, and nearly all of them live near one of the major one way arteries that send high speed traffic through our downtown.

The stories I hear are filled with energy and hope. Many of them are working hard to keep their lives focused on the geography of downtown Hamilton, and all of us want to see the neighborhoods in this city flourish - we want creative, diverse, and perhaps most importantly safe neighborhoods for everyone. Of course I cannot speak for the entire church when I put my support behind two way conversion, but I can say that on multiple occasions people from our congregation have commented on the negative impact one way streets have on community building, especially in our cities most vulnerable neighborhoods.

The fact is that no one wants a highway in their backyard. It isn't safe, it isn't pleasant, and it isn't good for the community.

I understand that two way conversion may have a negative impact on the commuter speeding through downtown, but ultimately their voice isn't the most important factor in this conversation. The most important voices are those of the people who live, work, play and pray in these neighborhoods. They are the ones investing the most into their neighborhood, they are the ones who have been forced to suffer for others convenience - some of them are our cities most educated and entrepreneurial, and some of them are among our cities most vulnerable and ignored. For the sake of the communities that are suffering because of our highways, please put your full support behind this motion.

Biblical scholar Bruce Waltke wrote: "the righteous are willing to disadvantage
themselves to advantage the community; the wicked are willing to disadvantage the community to advantage themselves" - we are asking Hamilton’s neighborhoods to act righteously towards each other, disadvantaging ourselves for the sake of the other, and for the community. Yes, it may add time to the commute, but ultimately it will advantage the communities most affected by our one-way streets.

Thank you so much for your time, and I hope that you will put your support behind this motion.

Grace and peace,

Kevin Makins