Submission – Wendy Van Loon

Item No. 4 Wellington Crescent (Academy Road to Stradbrook Avenue) Bike Lane Pilot Project – formerly Speed Limit Reduction on Wellington Crescent

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
Item No. 4 Wellington Crescent (Academy Road to Stradbrook Avenue) Bike Lane Pilot Project – formerly Speed Limit Reduction on Wellington Crescent

Support or oppose recommendations
I am opposed to the recommendations

Submit comments in writing checkbox
Submit comments in writing

Comments
I express my opposition to the 220-day delay of the Wellington Crescent bike lane pilot project.

My name is Wendy Van Loon and I'm the wife of Rob Jenner, the cyclist killed on Wellington Crescent last summer on June 6, 2024.

I would like to thank the Mayor and the many Councillors who have offered their condolences, particularly to Councillor Sherri Rollins for addressing my call to action in July 2024. Councillor Rollins has been instrumental in keeping our efforts to make Wellington a safer street for everyone. I also want to thank Councillor Janice Lukes for her support of the 30 km/h speed limit and for voicing her support.

I know that some of you have experienced a tragic loss, death and you understand how it can change your life forever. For those who have not faced such a tragedy, – my heartfelt hope is that you never will. I have experienced it and I live with that reality every day.

In July 2024, with my permission, the biking community installed a ghost bike at the site of Rob’s collision. I didn’t know what a ghost bike was, but after some research, I learned that it is a bicycle painted entirely white in memory of a cyclist who has been killed by a motor vehicle, placed at the location of the incident. Unfortunately, some cities have multiple ghost bikes installed; however, in Winnipeg, Rob’s ghost bike is the first in Winnipeg. Let’s ensure that there are no other tragedies like this.

Installing the ghost bike was an unusual experience. A group of people I had never met before offered to host a memorial gathering for my husband, and in June 2025, we held another memorial. The biking community reached out to me so quickly that it made my head spin. I didn't know a single person who reached out to me from that group in the early days. I am incredibly thankful for the kind and compassionate individuals who have entered my life. They came to my home, and they cried with me, fed me, and listened as I spoke about Rob-how much he loved to cook, what a talented artist he was, and how much he enjoyed his bike rides. They welcomed me into their community, helped me buy a bike, and took me on group rides. I hadn't been on a bike ride in ages, and it felt amazing to grieve Rob in this way.

This past year has been filled with grief, court hearings, and city hall meetings. I am exhausted. Many people tell me, Wendy you don't have to do this; step back and take a break. How can I? For me, it is knowing that I have done everything possible to ensure safety on this road and to honour Rob's memory so that his death is not in vain. After a year, the hope of having the court hearings completed has not materialized as the trial for the passenger in the car that struck Rob is set to begin in fall 2025. Additionally, the city hall meetings in Winnipeg are ongoing on the Wellington bike lane project. I retired in 2024 after more than 35 years as an administrative Provincial Civil Servant, working primarily for Ministers and Deputy Ministers. I understand the complexities of delays, voting and processes.

However, I do not understand the delays we have encountered installing the temporary bike lane on Wellington. In December 2024 it seemed that the call to action was progressing positively, six months after Rob's death. While many argue that this tragic killing is not a city issue, I challenge that as it is. Yes, it was a reckless driver traveling at high speeds, which is true, but a bike lane might have provided him with a chance. The car could have hit the curb and veered off; the driver might have noticed a narrower street and chosen not to speed. Unfortunately, we will never know. Designing roads for slower speeds and educating young drivers about safe driving practices will help.

I drive down Wellington each Wednesday at 7:30 a.m. to meet my grandchildren in Osborne Village. Rob was killed at 7:00 am on a Thursday morning while riding to work. Currently, on the Wednesdays, when I drive down Wellington motorists are tailgating my bumper or speeding past me. Each time this happens, I tense up and look around hoping that there are no cyclists or pedestrians nearby when these speeders zoom around me. Therefore, I believe that the suggested 40 km/h isn't a safe speed for this street, only 30 km/h, a road diet and dedicated bike lanes would significantly enhance safety.

I have attended all the meetings here at city hall, both in person and via zoom where delegations have passionately advocated for safer streets. The beautiful biking community, concerned citizens of Winnipeg and residents of Wellington have spoken for hours, presented global studies,

shared deeply very personal experiences, and bared their souls to you. Their dedication to making our city a safer place for everyone is truly remarkable.

Yes, we need to implement lower speed limits, but we also require dedicated bike lanes. I refer to “we” because now I’m a cyclist as well, often riding with my granddaughters in a bike buggy at times. I want them to be safe, too.

Mayor and Councillors you are the ones who can bring about this change.

Thank you, Councillor Lukes and Councillor Rollins, for your hard work in advocating for this issue and for bringing it this far. You both understand that the status quo is not good enough, we need to do better.

I am not going away; I will see this through. I know that once the temporary lanes are in place, we will recognize that we all did this together in making Winnipeg a better place to live.

Thank you.

Public engagement (optional)

I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.
Yes