

June 3, 2021
Saint John Common Council
City Hall
15 Market Square
Saint John, NB E2L 4L1

Dear Mayor and council,

I am writing to you in the interests of public safety. On May 24, 2021, I drove up Pugsley Avenue and stopped at a red light at the intersection with Somerset Street. The light turned green. I paused and looked both ways before proceeding. As I started to advance, a car came up the hill on Somerset and ran the red light. Fortunately, I was able to stop in time as the car zipped past me, its young driver's head down as if he were texting or was otherwise distracted. Had my light changed to green a few seconds before I arrived and I had proceeded without stopping, my car would have been t-boned and there would have been serious injuries.

This was not the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, or seventh time that I have witnessed cars running red lights on Somerset Street. It was the 8th time in 3 months, at this particular intersection (3 times), at the intersection of Somerset and Wellesley Avenue (3 times), and at the entrance to the Atlantic Superstore (twice). That's 8 violations of this nature on just one street, witnessed by just one driver. One can only imagine how often this happens across the entire city!

Among the events that I witnessed was a driver who came down Somerset towards the Superstore and, seemingly oblivious to anything, passed cars on the right hand side of the road (in a designated bike path) that had already stopped for the red light. As well, I was horrified to witness the driver of a school bus appear to deliberately step on the gas and run a red light at the corner of Somerset and Wellesley.

I am assuming there is a history of this behaviour, particularly at Pugsley and Somerset, as I have on several occasions noticed a police car parked opposite the church, apparently monitoring traffic. If this is the case, this 'watching and waiting' has clearly been ineffective. As well, with budget cuts to the police force, the officers who remain on duty have little time to deal with traffic violations.

As you are no doubt aware, the New Brunswick government has tabled legislation to allow municipalities to use photo radar and red-light cameras with automated license plate readers to gather evidence of potential violations of the Motor Vehicle Act. **I would like to receive an assurance that Saint John Common Council will support this legislation and, when passed, will join other cities across Canada that have chosen to use this technology to make our streets safer.**

There is an abundance of evidence that red light cameras effectively reduce the number of vehicles running red lights. No further study is needed. Hundreds of communities across North America have recognized that this initiative can save lives. I trust that this Mayor and council will agree that this is an important public safety issue that must be addressed.

Yours sincerely,

Doug James

Pugsley Avenue