



300 Dufferin Avenue
P.O. Box 5035
London, ON
N6A 4L9

London
CANADA

July 22, 2013

Chair and Members
Community and Protective Services Committee

**Re: Distracted Driving Law:
Municipal Bylaw to allow Police to Issue Fine and Seize Cell Phone**

The Canadian Press reported in August of 2012, that Canadians send nearly 10 million text messages an hour or 227 million texts per day on their cellphones. The popularity and use of cell phones while driving, has had some unintended and dangerous consequences. Distracted driving, particularly texting while driving has damaged property and endangered lives and the current levels of injury and loss are unacceptable. Over the past decade, texting or using a cell phone while driving has become a serious cause for concern.

Based on a recent CAA time trial, replying to a text message on a residential road, takes an average of 33.6 seconds. In that time, you can pass 85 parked cars, 36 houses or 5 intersections. You may not see a vehicle backing down a driveway or a young cyclist suddenly turning into your path. The statistics captured by leading motor vehicle and health organizations around the world concur - driving while operating a cell phone is a dangerous combination that can end in an auto accident or even death of one or more passengers in a motor vehicle. Statistics show ...

- Drivers talking/texting, are shown to be 18 percent slower to react to brake lights
- Drivers take 17 percent longer to return to regular speeds after breaking
- In Canada, 6 people die every day in road crashes with more than 218,000 injuries and 2,900 deaths, **as a result of cell phone use while driving**, just since January 1, 2011.
- One out of 4 car crashes is **caused by distracted drivers** using a cell phone
- **Texting while driving is equivalent to drinking 4 beers** and then getting behind the wheel

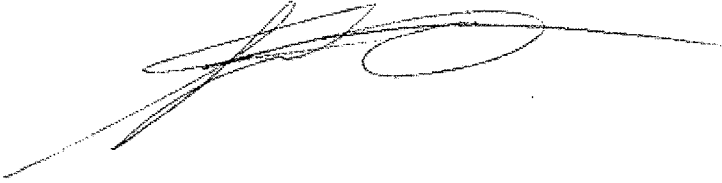
All Canadian provinces now have some form of *Distracted Driving Law* in place. We are now beginning to realize that legislation alone will not solve this issue. **Greater enforcement is necessary. Fines alone are not curbing this serious issue.** Statistics on the numbers of drivers who have received tickets and lost three demerit points for doing so, indicate the current Distracted Driver Law is not having much of an effect across Canada.

Therefore, I would like to request that the Civic Administration **BE REQUESTED** to review and report back, in liaison with the London Police Service, on steps that could be taken to give Police the authority to seize a cell phone when an officer stops a driver for talking or texting while driving, until such time as the fine is paid, or in the event of related court proceedings, the court case has been heard and a decision rendered. Further if a decision is rendered such that the defendant is found guilty of an offense arising from illegal use of the cell phone while driving, I would like the Civic Administration to advise what steps could be taken to ban the guilty party from using a cell phone altogether.

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In the event that some or all of these safety measures are able to be implemented, I would also ask for a report back on the necessary steps to petition the Province to allow for any monies collected from the fines to be directed to the local Police Service budget in order to offset the cost of enforcement.

Drivers need to realize, especially young drivers, that using a cell phone while driving, is indeed dangerous and that texting is not worth taking lives, often times their own.



Stephen Orser
Councillor, Ward 4
(519) 851-4968

Resources:

Cell Phones and Driving: A Killer Combination

Karen Bowman • Guest Post March 23, 2012
www.dropitanddrive.com

Canadians send 10 million text messages an hour: Distraction problem grows

The Canadian Press • LuAnn LaSalle
www.driving.ca/life/Distracted

Still texting while driving?

René Bruemmer • The Gazette December 22, 2011
www.montrealgazette.com/news