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Sent: Tuesday, January 21, 2025 11:57 AM
To: Office of the Mayor <officeofthemayor@collingwood.ca>
Subject: Collingwood's street patio barriers

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Hello Yvonne,

As a long-time resident of Collingwood, I have a safety concern which I am hoping you will consider. My letter below has also been emailed to our Town councillors.

Collingwood has some fabulous outdoor restaurant patios. And, we could use more of them, opening earlier in the year, and shutting down for the season later.

But, before the 2025 patio season begins, the town of Collingwood needs to get serious about installing meaningful concrete barriers at the left & right sides of patios that extend onto the street. Collingwood is woefully out of step with not only other towns and cities in this regard, but seems to be out of touch with reality (i.e. the reality of road danger, especially distracted/reckless driving... or worse).

During the past few years, the town's on-street patios have had no meaningful barriers between motorized vehicles and the people sitting on those patios. The only items installed by the town have been flexible markers, and short concrete curbs (which are typically used as "bumpers" placed at the end of parking spaces in parking lots). Neither the flexible markers, nor the little curbs, would prevent a vehicle from jumping over them and driving through an on-street patio.

Distracted driving is an international epidemic, and a problem to which Collingwood is not immune. Furthermore, there have been several incidents in our immediate region where vehicles have effortlessly jumped curbs and smashed into storefronts (as reported in local news media). So, with these two unfortunate realities in mind, it might only be a matter of time before a vehicle plows into one of our on-street patios, due to Collingwood's current lack of meaningful barriers.

Beyond distracted/reckless driving, there is another catastrophic possibility that **any** patio could face: that of the vehicular terrorist attack. Collingwood needs to deter against this. Because as it stands right now, it is not difficult to imagine a bad actor viewing our unprotected on-street patios as "soft targets". Here is a related article:

<https://www.dw.com/en/new-orleans-latest-in-string-of-deadly-vehicle-attacks/a-71197624>

I dearly hope that these types of tragedies will never unfold on our streets. But sadly, I witnessed a "near miss" just last year in our downtown. It was on Hurtonario St., when I saw a car heading in the northbound lane, just a few feet past Hume Street. Travelling at speed, the car suddenly took a hard right turn over the curb and onto the sidewalk. The car jumped the curb, and came to a jarring stop in the middle of the sidewalk, directly in front of the Monaco condominium (in exactly the spot where there are now bike racks). If the car had not stopped, and had instead travelled only a few feet further, it would have smashed into the condo. Thankfully, there were no pedestrians in the area at that time.

If the distracted/reckless driver above had made this manoeuvre in proximity to one of our (virtually unprotected) on-street patios, there could have been a human toll.

The town does not seem to recognize that an "accident" such as this could occur at one of our on-street patios, based on the lack of protective barriers that I am seeing. Instead, the town appears to be hoping that flexible markers will attract the attention of texting drivers, in an effort to keep vehicles at a distance.

There is an on-street patio barrier system that might be robust enough to hold back a careening vehicle. The system is primarily comprised of 3 large concrete blocks:

- 1 long concrete "wall", standing a few feet tall, and set at an angle, facing oncoming traffic;
- 1 large concrete block positioned as a reinforcement behind the angled "wall" above; and
- 1 large concrete block positioned at the other end of the patio (not facing oncoming traffic)

These are the barrier sizes, and the configuration, that are positioned beside on-street patios in Toronto. The streets that those patios sit on have the same level of traffic density as our main street of Hurontario. The only difference between Toronto's street patios and Collingwood's is that Collingwood's are virtually unprotected. To put it more bluntly: Toronto is protecting its citizens in this regard, and Collingwood is not.

It is time for Collingwood to get with the program. We need Toronto's concrete barrier system in place for 2025.

Attached are photos of the barrier system described above. As you can see, they have not been left on the street as plain concrete slabs, but are painted with designs that tout the city or neighbourhood that they are located in. Collingwood could do something similar, by perhaps working with local artists (in the same way that the town has done with other municipal features).

Sincerely,
Will Skol







EXAMPLE OF DECORATION