

Dear Mayor Nuttall and Members of Council,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the continued expansion of Barrie's Automated Speed Enforcement (ASE) program. I believe this program, as it currently stands, is not delivering the safety improvements residents are being led to believe, and that the City should abandon it in favor of proven infrastructure upgrades that actually address the root causes of dangerous driving.

This Program Is Not About Real Safety

The stated purpose of ASE is to improve safety in school zones, but that goal is being undermined by how the program is being implemented and evaluated.

- **Cameras were issuing fines in front of closed schools.** This past summer, four ASE cameras were operating in school zones despite those schools being closed. If this program is about protecting children, why was it enforced when no students were present for a significant portion of the summer?
- **There's no public data showing the program is making people safer.** So far, the only metric being used to claim success is a reduction in average speed. We have seen no public data on before-and-after statistics for pedestrian injuries, school zone collisions, or near-misses. A lower average speed does not automatically mean a safer street, and it certainly doesn't mean this program is working. The city has provided no data to prove a connection between its cameras and a reduction in actual harm.
- **Council expanded the program without asking for key safety data.** At the June 4, 2025, meeting where the program was made permanent and expanded, not a single councillor asked about accident statistics, summer enforcement, or how the program would be evaluated moving forward. The vote passed without scrutiny, just before Council's summer break.
- **Provincial leadership is now speaking out against these cameras.** I am sure you are aware that Premier Doug Ford has recently called for municipalities to "get rid of the speed cameras." This is a direct result of the public frustration that arises when cities implement these programs without providing transparent, hard data on their effectiveness.

The Money Tells a Different Story

The ASE program generated \$1.25 million in fines during the pilot and a surplus of over \$535,000. These financial results were quietly included in the staff report (DEV023-25) but never discussed during the vote to expand. It's hard not to conclude that the financial success of the program was a factor—especially when it was never publicly acknowledged or debated.

What Barrie Should Be Doing Instead

If Council is serious about safety, it should be investing in real, lasting infrastructure improvements that protect pedestrians and calm traffic at the source:

- Relocate school drop-off zones away from busy roads.

- Add physical traffic calming like raised crosswalks and curb extensions.
- Improve signage and visibility at high-risk crossings.
- Prioritize enforcement and redesign in locations with a documented history of accidents or injuries.

My Request

I urge Council to:

- **Suspend any further expansion of ASE** until real safety impact data is released to the public.
- **Publicly report on pedestrian injuries and traffic incidents** at all current and proposed camera sites.
- **Redirect funding toward permanent safety infrastructure** that addresses the actual causes of risk—not just speeding.

Barrie residents want safer streets. But safety is not achieved by a program that hands out fines without providing a single piece of evidence that it has made our streets safer. It's achieved by thoughtful, visible, and community-supported solutions that solve the root problem—not just punish the symptom.

Sincerely,

Andrew Colvin