
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



FOR INFORMATION CALL

June 19, 2019

Ald. Bob Donovan
(414) 531-2096
Ald. Mark A. Borkowski
(414) 286-3768

Letter sent to Mayor urging action on city's reckless driving epidemic

The attached letter from Alderman Bob Donovan and Alderman Mark A. Borkowski was sent today to Mayor Tom Barrett

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CITY OF MILWAUKEE

City Hall, 200 E. Wells Street, Milwaukee, WI 53202 • www.city.milwaukee.gov

June 19, 2019

The Honorable,
Mayor Tom Barrett
City Hall

Dear Mayor Barrett,

We write to ask that your office immediately and aggressively undertake a comprehensive response to the problem of reckless driving that seems to have overtaken large portions of our City.

This problem is not only evident in great tragedies like the death of Officers Charles Irvine, Jr., and Kou Her. It is plain from the stories all of our colleagues on the Common Council hear about red-light running, excessive speed, and other irresponsible behavior witnessed by residents. It comes from news stories about drivers being arrested without licenses or while intoxicated for the fourth time.. And it comes from what each of us called to serve this community see without own eyes while driving through our neighborhoods. Frankly, from north to south and from east to west there are large portions of Milwaukee that are simply unsafe to drive; where law-abiding citizens take their lives in their hands just to get from place to place.

The blame here cannot be placed on the Milwaukee Police Department. For too long stripped of adequate resources, we firmly believe its men and women are doing their best to deal with this problem. Often enough, they are giving us the best information about it. We also think that credit should be given to Chief Morales for his initiative in this area, revising the department's pursuit policy and building partnerships with the Office of the Sheriff and the State Patrol. The contrast with his predecessor is striking.

It therefore falls to us – your own office and the Common Council – to work collaboratively on a response. We would suggest that any response at least consider the following:

*Restoration of officers cut from the ranks of the Milwaukee Police Department with an eye towards returning them to traffic duty. This restoration must include the identification of sustainable resources to pay for them. Given the importance of this problem, an increase to the sales tax would not be out of order.

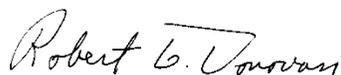
*Implementation of the latest technology to monitor traffic and punish those engaged in reckless driving. The use of “red light” cameras should be reviewed.

*Outreach to local prosecutors and judges to urge them to do more to keep the worst offenders off the road. Even as this letter is being crafted, we read in news reports that the man who allegedly killed Officer Her had no fewer than four previous citations for Operating While Intoxicated and had recently been cited for speeding in the same area. The judicial system must not evade its share of responsibility in this.

*Collaboration with the State of Wisconsin and our fellow municipalities in Milwaukee County to identify resources and responses. This is not our problem alone. There is mounting evidence that it is spreading and we should acknowledge our need to solve it together.

We are confident that you share our desire to do whatever we as a City can to make sure there are no more memorials and no more funerals for those killed by reckless drivers. We do hope, however, that this desire can be translated into real effort. We stand ready to do our part.

Sincerely,



Ald. Robert G. Donovan
Chair, Public Safety and Health Committee



Ald. Mark A. Borkowski
Vice-Chair, Public Safety and Health Committee