

Downtown Streetcar Routes – Extended Peak Period Regulations

Date:	August 27, 2015
To:	Toronto and East York Community Council
From:	General Manager, Transportation Services
Wards:	Wards 14, 18, 19, 20, 27, 28
Reference Number:	P:\Cluster B\TRA\Toronto and East York District\ROW\Te2015031 te row.docx

SUMMARY

As part of the Congestion Management Plan and continuing efforts by the City and the TTC to reduce traffic congestion and improve the operations of surface transit, City staff have been analyzing the TTC Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) data to determine where it may be feasible, and supportive of vehicular movement, to change the current 'No Stopping' regulation times.

The proposed changes, which consist primarily of extensions of peak-hour restrictions in several locations, reductions in others, and very limited new left-turn restrictions, are intended to improve streetcar operations and service reliability and to assist vehicular traffic and cyclist flow on these three streets. They also include minor changes to parking and loading restrictions along Ossington Avenue near Dundas Street and near College Street.

The study area included Queen Street, Dundas Street, and College/Carlton Streets, from Roncesvalles Avenue in the west to Parliament Street in the east. The proposed changes arising from this study are based on two major observations supported by the travel time data:

1. High traffic volumes (and associated congestion) extend beyond the currently signed peak hours in many locations; and
2. Peak hour regulations vary widely throughout the downtown; where possible, given the available data, the hours should be made more consistent to improve clarity to motorists.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Transportation Services recommends that:

1. City Council enact the traffic and parking by-law amendments as set out in Appendix B.
2. City Council authorize and direct the appropriate City officials to take the necessary action to give effect to Council's decision, including the introduction in Council of any and all bills that may be required.

Financial Impact

The cost of implementing all signage changes associated with the introduction of extended peak period traffic and parking restrictions along major downtown streets with streetcar service, as recommended in this report, is estimated to be approximately \$33,500 for parking control and \$4,500 for turn prohibitions for a total of \$38,000. These funds are available in Transportation Services' 2015 Capital Budget in account CTP715-27 (Signs and Markings Asset Management).

The extended peak period parking restrictions between Roncesvalles Avenue and Parliament Street are expected to result in a reduction in the revenue generated by the metered parking along this section of King Street. The Toronto Parking Authority (TPA) has estimated a maximum potential net revenue loss of \$182,360 per year based on the estimated utilization of these parking meters during these additional periods. There is also an expected one-time cost to TPA to reprogram the pay parking machines of \$26,100.

The Deputy City Manager & Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

COMMENTS

On an average weekday, approximately 53,000 motor vehicles use Queen, Dundas, or College/Carlton Streets through the central section of the city. The streetcar routes on these streets also carry approximately 115,000 passengers on an average weekday. With high traffic volumes and associated traffic congestion occurring during extended hours beyond the existing peak periods (hours during which stopping, parking, and in some cases left turns are prohibited, often from 7 to 9 a.m. and 4 to 6 p.m.), there are frequently delays to general traffic and transit vehicles during the 'shoulder' periods immediately before or after these peak hours. Figures from TTC operations in late 2014 indicate that there is an opportunity to reduce these delays and improve the reliability of streetcar service, as well as general traffic flow and the ability of cyclists to travel free of parked cars in the curb lane, by selectively extending peak hour restrictions.

In each case of an extension (for example, extending the existing 4 to 6 p.m. restriction in a segment to 3:30 to 6:30 p.m.), travel time savings based on the available data are being

estimated at approximately one minute per segment. Collectively, it is expected that the travel time savings on each corridor will amount to several minutes, similar to the existing headway (time between transit vehicles). In addition to facilitating the flow of all traffic during this extended period, there is the opportunity for the TTC to provide more reliable service, and possibly with fewer vehicles – or increased service with existing vehicles.

In a few cases, the proposal is to reduce existing peak hour restrictions in order to better align restrictions across previous divisions such as ward boundaries. Also, in two locations (Dundas Street West at Beverley Street and Queen Street West at Gladstone Avenue), a left-turn prohibition during peak hours is being recommended instead of a general 'no stopping' restriction, since delays are concentrated at the intersections.

Other operational changes to improve transportation conditions downtown continue independent of this effort, and include new streetcars (now on Spadina, and rolling out over the next few years on the rest of the streetcar routes), off-board Proof of Payment fare collection and all-door loading (King Street currently; all streetcars by the end of 2015), select transit stop consolidation, arterial road cameras, LED Blank-Out signs in select locations highlighting turn restrictions, and others recommended in the previous DTOS report and King Street Operations reports.

All changes are to 'No Stopping' regulations, and at two intersections, to left-turn regulations. Also, they are in addition to changes already implemented as part of the Downtown Transportation Operations Study on King Street and on Queen Street east of Bathurst Street.

All amendments to Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 903 (Parking for Persons with Disabilities), Chapter 950 (Traffic and Parking) and Chapter 910 (Parking Machines) required to implement this change are outlined in Appendix B.

CONSULTATION

Throughout the months of May and June 2015, City staff consulted with all affected Councillors, Business Improvement Areas (BIAs), and the public regarding the proposed peak-hour changes.

Councillors and their staff were briefed, while BIAs were offered a choice between an in-person meeting (often via their Board of Directors meeting agendas) or a review of proposed changes in writing. Public meetings were held in three locations throughout the study: the first at Mary McCormick Community Centre for Wards 14 and 18 (June 17); the second at Scadding Court Community Centre for Wards 19 and 20 (June 25); and the third at City Hall for Wards 27 and 28 (June 29).

Comments received from stakeholders are documented in the Consultation Report (Peak Hour Extensions Report), and were considered in the proposal. Key messages included the following:

- There was some concern that reduced on-street parking could negatively affect some businesses (and a desire to keep parking on at least one side of the street where the extended peak hours were proposed)
- Some expressed support based on the expected benefits to transit, traffic flow, cyclists, and pedestrians (with others emphasizing the need for a comfortable pedestrian experience)
- Many were interested in the data – both looking at how the proposal was developed, and monitoring post-implementation
- Others emphasized the need to continue accommodating deliveries – while some deliveries could be made at different times, parking availability on one side of the street would assist others
- There was some concern about shifting street parking to residential streets
- Consistency is important – for examples, avoiding changes in peak hours at Ward boundaries

The full public consultation report can be found on the project website, at www.toronto.ca/peakhours.

The feedback has resulted in a number of changes to the original proposal. Specifically, in recognition of the unique needs of certain locations (particularly facilities used by those with limited mobility), the proposal now includes the addition of a limited number of parking spaces and loading zones along Ossington Avenue near Dundas Street and near College Street as a mitigating measure. The loading zone near West Neighbourhood House, which serves people with limited mobility, will be extended with the addition of two new spaces. North of College Street, five parking spaces will be added on the west side of Ossington. Also, new extended restrictions are not being proposed for both directions on a street at the same time: the extended 'no stopping' period is only for the peak direction for each time of day (morning or afternoon), allowing for some street parking during the extended periods on one side of the street where regulations have not already prohibited parking on both sides for extended hours.

CONTACTS

David Kuperman
Manager
Surface Transit Operations, General Manager's Office
Transportation Services
Tel: (416) 395-0189
Fax: (416) 395-7544
E-mail: dkuperm@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Stephen M. Buckley
General Manager, Transportation Services

ATTACHMENTS

APPENDIX A – Location Plan – Limits of Existing and Proposed
Extended Downtown Peak Period Traffic and Parking Regulations
APPENDIX B – Traffic and Parking Regulations to be Amended