

PW2.2.14

From: Frederick Emrich [REDACTED]
To: Public Works and Infrastructure Committee <pwic@toronto.ca> [REDACTED]...
Date: 02/23/2015 7:36 AM
Subject: Re: Comment for meeting on the Bay-Bloor scramble

I wish to add the following to the public comments on the issue of removal of the pedestrian priority phase signal at Bay-Bloor intersection. (This comment is in addition to my one previous comment.) Please make the comment publicly available at the agenda item link.

Thank you.

Dear Committee Members:

This comment adds to my previous comment on this agenda item and is based on examination of the staff report, "Evaluation and Changes to Pedestrian Priority Signal (Scramble Crossing) at Bay Street and Bloor Street."

I am a parent of two young schoolchildren at Jesse Ketchum school and live south of Bay Street and Bloor Street. Like many other parents living near me, we use the Bay-Bloor priority phase crossing daily to and from school, as the priority phase provides a safe moment for crossing without conflict from automobile traffic. Walking to school other than through Bay-Bloor would involve a substantial additional amount of time to our commute.

On the way to school we experience hazards at many intersections. Although it is the largest of the intersections we cross, the Bay-Bloor intersection seems like one of our safer crossings due to implementation of the pedestrian priority phase. Removal of the signal would likely make it the least safe intersection in our daily walk.

There is a crossing guard provided at a much smaller intersection on the way to school, Bay-Yorkville. I consider the priority phase signal an acceptable alternative to a crossing guard at Bay-Bloor, and am greatly concerned that removing the phase would significantly increase the risk to schoolchildren crossing at Bay-Bloor, and possibly necessitate implementation of a crossing guard to ensure student safety.

I observe that the report on this issue assumes that pedestrians only benefit from the pedestrian priority phase when crossing diagonally across the intersection. This is not the case. Because the signal stops all traffic in the intersection, pedestrians who cross north-south and east-west also benefit from the phase through greatly reduced risk of conflict with vehicle traffic. Your report should take account of all crossing during the pedestrian priority phase, but it seems only concerned with diagonal crossing. As a result it appears to understate usage of the pedestrian priority phase.

The report notes a drop-off in use of the pedestrian priority phase on weekends. It does not appear to attempt to account for this. One possible factor is that parents crossing the intersection with children to and from school constitute a significant portion of users. This is important information that bears further examination.

The report indicates stakeholder groups were consulted on this issue. Parents of students at Jesse Ketchum who use the pedestrian priority phase

are surely stakeholders, yet from my perspective we were neither consulted nor adequately informed about this issue. We only learned of the issue from a story in the Toronto Star less than one week ago. The report seems only to have been issued less than two weeks ago.

It seems a reasonable process on this issue would be to inform users with reasonable time to respond. I would think this would include posting signs at the Bay-Bloor intersection asking for comment, and/or making an announcement and allowing for public comment through Jesse Ketchum school.

I ask the committee to delay a decision on this issue for one month in order to allow for sufficient consultation on this issue.

Sincerely,

Frederick Emrich

[REDACTED]

On Fri, Feb 20, 2015 at 4:07 PM, Frederick Emrich [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] wrote:

> I wish to have the following entered as an official comment for the
> meeting considering terminating the Bay-Bloor diagonal intersection cross:

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> Dear Committee Members:

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> I am a parent of two small children attending Jesse Ketchum Elementary
> School. Each day we use the diagonal intersection crossing at Bay-Bloor at
> least twice, on the way to and from school. We have many neighbors with
> children at Jesse Ketchum who do the same.

>

> I learned just a few days ago, from a story in the Toronto Star, of the
> proposal to end diagonal crossing at this intersection. I am very concerned
> to learn of this so suddenly, and not to have enough time to mount a
> community response.

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> I consider it a safety issue to have a short period in the Bay-Bloor
> intersection during which no automobile traffic can cross. My kids and I
> have had several close calls in the intersection when competing with
> traffic moving through the intersection. We have had no such close calls
> when crossing during the so-called 'scramble', when no auto traffic can
> pass.

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> Having read the recommendation report, I am very concerned that the issue
> of student safety has not been adequately considered, that there has not
> been adequate notification to affected parents on this issue, and that
> insufficient time has been made available for response on the issue.

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> I ask the City to grant a 30-day period (before a decision is taken on
> this issue) in which specifically to consider the issue of safety of
> elementary school students using the intersection and to allow parents and
> school officials to comment on this issue.

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> Sincerely,

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> Frederick Emrich

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