

Congestion Management Plan 2023-2026

Date: November 7, 2023
To: City Council
From: General Manager, Transportation Services
Wards: All

SUMMARY

This supplemental report is in response to a request from the Infrastructure and Environment Committee to provide additional information on:

- The status of work regarding MM5.26 "Don't Block the Box," requesting increased fines and best practices for "don't block the box" solutions beyond an increased fine, including the feasibility of leveraging the existing red light camera technology for automated enforcement of blocking the intersection;
- The structure of the dedicated event management team and construction coordination teams; and
- The relationship with the Province of Ontario around events coordination and congestion management.

This report also includes minor amendments to the previously proposed construction hub limits (see appendix 1) as well as providing maps illustrating each of the new construction hubs (see appendix 3) being proposed in the Congestion Management Plan 2023-2026.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Transportation Services recommends that:

1. City Council delete Infrastructure and Environment Committee recommendation 1 and replace it with the following recommendation:

1. City Council amend Appendix C: Construction Hubs to the City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 743, Streets and Sidewalks, Use Of, to include new construction hubs in wards 3, 8 and 19 and the expansion of four (4) existing construction hubs generally as set out in Appendix 1 to the supplementary report

(November 7, 2023) from the General Manager, Transportation Services, and City Council authorize the City Solicitor to make any necessary clarifications, refinements, minor modifications, technical amendments, or by-law amendments as may be identified by the City Solicitor or General Manager, Transportation Services, in order to give effect to City Council's decision.

2. City Council direct the City Manager to request the Province of Ontario to make the necessary amendments to the Highway Traffic Act that will essentially enable all municipalities the ability to leverage automated enforcement technology for offences related to vehicles improperly stopping within intersections.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no changes to the financial impacts noted in the report (October 11, 2023) to Infrastructure and Environment Committee.

DECISION HISTORY

City Council, at its meeting of October 25, 2023 of the Infrastructure and Environment Committee, requested staff to report back on the status or work regarding "Don't Block the Box", and provide a summary on the structure of the dedicated event management team and construction coordination teams as well as a report back on the relationship with the Province of Ontario.

<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2023/ie/bgrd/backgroundfile-239866.pdf>

Members Motion 5.26 requested staff to request the Province of Ontario to review the existing fine structure and consider increasing the current fine of \$85.00 for an improper stop in an intersection to \$450.00 and increase the fine for an improper stop in an intersection in a community safety zone from \$120.00 to \$500.00. In addition, staff were asked to report to the Infrastructure and Environment Committee as soon as possible on best practices for "don't block the box" solutions beyond an increased fine. Members Motion 5.26 requested City Council forward this item to the Toronto Police Services Board to request joining the City's advocacy to the Province of Ontario for the increase in fines for an improper stop in an intersection. Members Motion 5.26 requested City Council direct the General Manager, Transportation Services to report to the Infrastructure and Environment Committee as soon as possible on potentially increasing the set fine applicable to Section 950-901B(1) of City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 950, Traffic and Parking.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.MM5.26>

COMMENTS

Status of the Work Regarding "Don't Block the Box"

Transportation Services has been undertaking several initiatives to assist in mitigating the issue of vehicles illegally blocking intersections creating gridlock, blocking crucial transit routes and essentially making it unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists. The following sections outline the work in progress to date.

Increased Fines for "Blocking the Box"

A letter to the Province of Ontario will be sent following this Council meeting and will be forwarded to Toronto Police Services Board requesting that they join in the City's advocacy for increasing the fines.

Mitigating "Block the Box" Beyond Increased Fines

Key transit routes such as King Street have significantly benefitted from the presence of the City's Traffic Agents and their ability to minimize instances of vehicles blocking the intersection and vehicles prohibiting streetcars from traversing the intersections. Studies to date have shown that Traffic Agents can reduce instances of 'block the box' by 96%. Transportation Services anticipates around 45 Traffic Agents will be ready for deployment by March 2024.

Transportation Services is still in the progress of reviewing other alternative measures that can be made in terms of permanent traffic signal, signage and pavement marking solutions with specific emphasis on reviewing and leveraging how other jurisdictions have tried to mitigate this issue.

Feasibility of Leveraging Existing Red Light Camera Technology for Automated Enforcement of Vehicles Blocking the Intersection

The City needs to request the Province of Ontario to amend the Highway Traffic Act to enable automated enforcement for the offence related to vehicles illegally blocking the intersection. This would likely entail the need to allow for video evidence to be admissible in court as well as indicating that there is no requirement for the charging officer to be present in court when charges are disputed. Most importantly, the request would include consideration for allowing municipalities to enforce this under an administrative penalty system similar to parking, Automated Speed Enforcement and Red Light Camera violations

Given that technology/functionality required to enforce vehicles illegally blocking an intersection is different than the red light cameras, the City can not leverage the existing red light camera contracts. Separate investigation and procurement on available technologies would be required.

Relationship with the Province of Ontario around Events Coordination and Congestion Management

Transportation Services is currently working with the Province on a comprehensive working group to better coordinate major events and ongoing construction initiatives. The working group would put forward effort to minimize congestion while proactively

promoting transit-based alternatives for easier and efficient access to and from events for event attendees.

A similar working group approach was undertaken during the Pan Am Games in 2015 whereby detailed coordination processes were established and complied with to ensure that attendees and athletes could successfully navigate the City despite the considerable ongoing construction and parallel events happening within the City.

Functional Structure of the New Event Management Team

Appendix 2 provides a functional organization chart outlining the various groups and responsibilities that are anticipated in the creation of this new team. The team will be piloted with existing staff resources on a temporary basis until the completion of the ongoing consultant assignment that will help plan the new unit's structure and define staff resource requirements.

Permanent resources for the team will be considered for the 2025 Budget submission.

Functional Resourcing of the Construction Coordination Support Teams

The restructured Work Zone Coordination and Traffic Mitigation team will lead all Construction Coordination Support Teams including 13 existing staff from technical, right-of-way management enforcement, traffic enforcement, and project management backgrounds. Many of these existing staff resources were difficult to retain despite the division's accelerated recruitment efforts; however, it is anticipated all these positions will be filled by end of Q1 2024 as all are under active recruitment or already filled. They will be responsible for:

- Providing oversight and approvals for any infrastructure or road operations works in the existing and new construction hubs;
- Reviewing and approving construction traffic management and congestion mitigation plans;
- Enforcing the conditions established and outlined by the Work Zone Coordination team;
- Observing congestion through the RESCU traffic cameras and making traffic signal timing changes in real-time to mitigate congestion; and
- Specifically support construction related impacts with specific focus on supporting transit on detoured routes.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENT

Appendix 1 (amended): Construction Hubs, Amendments to Municipal Code Chapter 743

Appendix 2: Functional Org Chart-Traffic Event Management

Appendix 3: Construction Hub Maps