



September 26, 2024

Toronto City Hall
Infrastructure and Environment Committee
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON
M5H 2N2
Re: IE16.4 – Congestion Management Plan 2023-2026 – Fall Update

Dear Chair McKelvie and committee members,

As per the Walk Toronto submission of February 26, 2024 (IE11.1), we would like to highlight that the update continues to emphasize congestion over safe passage. While Walk Toronto recognizes that easing congestion will benefit pedestrians by possibly lowering driver rage and improving air quality, much of the emphasis of this update implies the minimization of irritation to operators of vehicles in the city.

We appreciate the efforts made by Transportation Services to engage the public in this issue of congestion management and construction site obstruction to the public right of way. Still, it is our experience walking around the city that this long-term planning needs immediate resolution of dangerous sites, and we continue to wait for suggestions that will see effective change happen within weeks on the streets.

Toronto culture remains one that prioritizes the movement of vehicles. Walk Toronto would like to see reports such as this emphasize safe passage of PEOPLE, not vehicles. The concept of the safe passage of vulnerable road users especially must be vigilantly reinforced at every opportunity.

If we are to change this culture, we may find the conversation changes in unique ways. For example, we may find we are talking more about the space that is allocated more generally to vehicles. Perhaps we could recognize that a trend toward oversized SUVs and trucks are endangering citizens and taking up a disproportionate amount of space while driving and in parking lots.

More specifically, we would like to address two items out forward in the plan update.

Item 5. The automated cameras to fine people who block the box is somewhat helpful to pedestrians, but it should be installed in conjunction with a *no-right-on-red* policy that has been long requested by Walk Toronto. Such a restriction at every intersection might be better for both safety and reducing block the box situations. Drivers making rights on red frequently slide surreptitiously into the space that was available to a driver moving through the intersection with the green light, leaving that driver moving with the green stranded in the box.

Item 7: Traffic agents. When Transportation Services and other enforcement agencies do not consistently and continuously emphasize the priority of vulnerable road user safety, the CULTURE remains firmly embedded in prioritizing the movement of vehicles. This is true of traffic agents (and construction workers responsible for directing vehicles around construction sites). It is common for these agents and construction employees to be focussed on directing the drivers of vehicles without awareness of pedestrians or cyclists. One member of Walk Toronto experienced close calls just this summer. First, at Liberty Street and Dufferin Street, a traffic agent directed a car to turn right into our member crossing westbound from Liberty Street to Dufferin. Second, at the intersection of Portland Street and Front St.W., a construction employee directed the southbound driver of an SUV waiting at a red light to drive through that red light, just as our east-bound walking member stepped in front of the SUV at the NW corner of Portland and Front Street following the Leading Pedestrian Indicator signal.

To reiterate, SAFE PASSAGE of pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road users MUST be baked into the culture and into these plans.

As per our past submissions, we include photos below of situations we have witnessed in recent weeks blocking sidewalk access at or near construction sites or short-term repair work.

Sincerely,

Daniella Levy-Pinto & Lee Scott, Members: Steering Committee, Walk Toronto info@walktoronto.ca

cc. Cllrs McKelvie, Colle, Morley, Pasternak, Perruzza, Saxe





