

Establishing a Chief Congestion Officer for the City of Toronto

Date: June 25, 2025

To: Infrastructure & Environment Committee

From: Deputy City Manager, Infrastructure Services

Wards: All

SUMMARY

Toronto continues to be the busiest city in North America in terms of construction due to increased private development activity, major infrastructure renewal, and the implementation of higher-order transit. This continues to be the most challenging factor towards congestion in the City. At its meeting on April 23 and 24, 2025, City Council considered item IE20.3 – Congestion Management Plan – 2025 Update and directed the City Manager to establish a congestion lead position to focus on creative, cross-divisional solutions to tackling congestion and pre-emptively identifying challenges and recommending solutions to get Toronto moving.

The purpose of this report is to outline the key responsibilities of the Chief Congestion Officer and Executive Director of the Strategic Capital Coordination role. The Chief Congestion Officer and Executive Director, Strategic Capital Coordination will oversee the Strategic Capital Coordination Office (SCCO). The largest contributor to congestion is construction and as such, it is critical that this position have the authority and accountability for capital coordination across the city to help manage congestion. The position will report directly to the Deputy City Manager, Infrastructure Services and will play a pivotal role in managing and mitigating congestion across the City.

While the creation of this role will not eliminate congestion, the leadership it will provide will help to enhance how the City actively manages congestion against the ongoing pressures of growth and development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Deputy City Manager, Infrastructure Services recommends that:

1. Infrastructure and Environment Committee receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Initial funding for the new leadership position of Chief Congestion Officer and Executive Director, Strategic Capital Coordination in Infrastructure Services will be funded from the existing approved 2025 budget. The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact statement.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on April 23 and 24, 2025, City Council considered IE20.3 – Congestion Management Plan – 2025 Update that was adopted with amendments by the Infrastructure and Environment Committee on April 9, 2025. Council adopted the report with further amendments and directed the City Manager to report to the July 10, 2025 meeting of the Infrastructure and Environment Committee on establishing a position of a congestion lead, to focus on creative, cross-divisional solutions to tackling congestion and pre-emptively identifying challenges and recommending solutions to get Toronto moving with information on the individual selected and their specific responsibilities. The direction of City Council for item IE20.3 can be found at: <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.IE20.3>

COMMENTS

At its meeting on April 23 and 24, 2025, City Council considered item IE20.3 – Congestion Management Plan – 2025 Update and directed the City Manager to establish a congestion lead position to focus on creative, cross-divisional solutions to tackling congestion and pre-emptively identifying challenges and recommend solutions to get Toronto moving.

The Chief Congestion Officer and Executive Director, Strategic Capital Coordination will be a senior strategic cross-divisional leadership role, reporting directly to the Deputy City Manager, Infrastructure Services. They will lead and ensure cross-divisional and external collaboration and coordination and will have direct accountability and authority to review programs and projects to minimise congestion and mitigate impacts. This will include working closely with many city divisions and agencies including Transportation Services, Engineering & Construction Services (ECS), Toronto Water, City Planning, Development & Growth, Toronto Transit Commission (TTC), Waterfront Toronto (WT) and Toronto Police Services (TPS) in addition to external bodies, including but not limited to Metrolinx, MTO and the Toronto Board of Trade.

Given the major cause of congestion in Toronto is construction, the Chief Congestion Officer and Executive Director, Strategic Capital Coordination will also have direct oversight of the Strategic Capital Coordination Office (SCCO). The SCCO was established in 2024 in response to Council's direction to strengthen capital planning and coordination across City divisions, agencies, utilities, and private developers. The goal of the SCCO is to reduce public disruption, improve project delivery, and support a more

integrated, city-wide approach to managing Toronto's right-of-way space. In its first year, the SCCO has laid the foundation for long-term improvements in how the City plans and delivers construction projects. Improved collaboration with utilities, the TTC, and other stakeholders to identify and address issues before they impact construction schedules has already started to yield results.

This position will play a pivotal role across the organization in managing and mitigating congestion in the city.

The key responsibilities of this role will include:

1. Strategic Support and Advice
 - Provide strategic advice and guidance to the City's Senior Leadership Team, the Mayor, City Council and relevant standing committees, enabling evidence-based decision making to reduce traffic congestion.
2. External Communications
 - In partnership with Strategic Public and Employee Communications, ensure a comprehensive multi-channel congestion and coordination communications strategy is developed and implemented, keeping stakeholders and the public informed of ongoing initiatives and progress.
3. Right-of-Way Governance
 - Review staff advice to Council and Committee that can impact congestion, including construction and special events. Serve as the key authority in ensuring that potential congestion impacts have been considered and that appropriate and effective mitigation and minimization measures have been developed and included.
4. Cross-Divisional and Agency Collaboration
 - Coordinate with relevant city divisions such as Transportation Services, Engineering and Construction Services, Toronto Water, Development & Growth, City Planning, Transit Expansion, the TTC, and Waterfront Toronto to ensure integrated efforts and that congestion minimization and mitigation are considered at the early stages of program and project development so that impacts are eliminated or mitigated.
5. Strategic Capital Coordination Office (SCCO) Oversight and Leadership
 - Responsible for review of all projects and programs within the Strategic Capital Coordination Office's (SCCO) scope to ensure alignment with SCCO processes.
6. Reporting and Analytics Framework
 - Develop and manage a comprehensive reporting framework, including dashboards, KPIs, analysis, and reporting frequency.
7. Stakeholder Engagement
 - As it relates to the City's congestion management work, serve as the primary liaison for relationship management and engagement with external partners, including industry stakeholders and the Board of Trade.
8. Best Practices Implementation
 - Lead the review of best practices from other jurisdictions and develop plans to implement strategies that positively impact congestion in Toronto.
9. Lessons Learned and Strategic Foresight

- Lead initiatives to identify successful strategies from past projects and proactively apply them to future projects. This may include integrating effective practices into contracts, securing additional funding, or enhancing resources.

We have initiated the competitive recruitment process to hire the Chief Congestion Officer and Executive Director, Strategic Capital Coordination and are currently exploring opportunities for an interim.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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