



REPORT FOR ACTION

Feasibility on Pedestrian Priority Phase at Yonge Street and Eglinton Avenue

Date: September 12, 2025

To: Infrastructure and Environment Committee

From: General Manager, Transportation Services

Wards: 8 – Eglinton-Lawrence and 12 – Toronto-St. Paul's

SUMMARY

This report is prepared in response to a request from the Infrastructure and Environment Committee regarding the feasibility of implementing a Pedestrian Priority Phase (PPP), also known as a 'Pedestrian Scramble', at the intersection of Yonge Street and Eglinton Avenue following the commencement of the Eglinton Crosstown Light Rail Transit operations.

Transportation Services staff conducted an analysis and reviewed the feasibility of implementing a PPP at this location with the goal of reducing pedestrian delay and eliminating conflicts between pedestrians and turning vehicles, thereby enhancing safety and comfort for vulnerable road users. The investigation determined that a PPP at this location is warranted, as the intersection observed over 5,000 pedestrians per hour in November 2024, making this one of the busiest pedestrian intersections in the City based on the past five years of data collection. Field observations confirmed pedestrian crowding at the street corners, further emphasizing the need for the City to implement a strategy that minimizes delay for pedestrians at this location.

Although the intersection exceeds the first numerical warrant criteria of more than 3,000 pedestrians crossing per hour, a further analysis found that implementing a PPP at this location would not result in significant benefits to pedestrians when compared to the existing operation. In fact, implementing a PPP was shown to increase pedestrian delays, rather than reduce them, given the need to add additional signal time for other modes of travel to clear. Furthermore, the existing vehicle turn-restrictions at this intersection already eliminate pedestrian-vehicle conflicts, meaning a PPP would not provide any additional safety benefits.

It is also important to note that when the Eglinton Crosstown opens, there will be additional pedestrian crossing capacity available for transit riders transferring between

transit lines underground. This will reduce some of the pedestrian demands at the intersection as well.

For these reasons, while the numerical warrant was met, Transportation Services staff do not recommend implementing a PPP at this location and advise that the City should maintain the existing signal operation even after the Eglinton Crosstown is in operation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Transportation Services recommends that:

1. City Council receive this report for information and not proceed with the installation of a Pedestrian Priority Phase (PPP) at the intersection of Yonge Street and Eglinton Avenue.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The adoption of this report's recommendation is not anticipated to result in any financial impact to the City.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial implications as contained in the Financial Impact Section.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on November 13 and 14, 2024, City Council adopted MM23.13, requesting Transportation Services to report back on the feasibility of implementing a PPP at Yonge Street and Eglinton Avenue, following the completion of the Eglinton Crosstown Light Rail Transit project. The Council decision can be found at: <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.MM23.13>

COMMENTS

A Pedestrian Priority Phase (PPP), also known as a scramble crossing, is a type of signal operation that allows pedestrians exclusive access to the intersection for a portion of the signal cycle. A PPP operation is intended to reduce pedestrian waiting times and sidewalk crowding and reduce conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles during some portions of the signal. A PPP operation has the potential for improving the overall safety and walkability for pedestrians.

City Council requested Transportation Services to investigate the feasibility of implementing a PPP type of traffic signal operation at the intersection of Eglinton Avenue and Yonge Street after the completion of the Eglinton Crosstown Light Rail Transit with the hopes of reducing pedestrian delay and minimizing conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles at the intersection.

The following sections outline the City's current warrant analysis for implementing PPPs at intersections and provides the outcome for the investigation at this particular location.

Numerical Warrant for PPP Operation

City of Toronto currently adheres to specific criteria for implementing a PPP operation. The criteria include reviewing the following conditions:

1. High pedestrian volumes average > 3,000 pedestrians per hour for an eight-hour period on a typical weekday.
2. Moderate pedestrian volumes average > 2,000 pedestrians per hour for an eight-hour period on a typical weekday.
3. High turning vehicle volumes > 35% of total vehicular approach volume.
4. High concentration of pedestrian-vehicle collisions > three left-turn and right-turn collisions where pedestrians had the right-of way over a three-year period.
5. There is a desire by at least 15% of pedestrians to cross diagonally.
6. Unusual intersection geometry (five or more legs) that precludes normal pedestrian crossing operation

A PPP is warranted if any of the following conditions or combinations are met:

- Condition 1 alone
- Conditions 2 and 3 combined
- Conditions 2 and 4 combined
- Conditions 2 and 5 combined
- Condition 6 alone

Findings from the Analysis at Yonge Street and Eglinton Avenue

The intersection of Yonge Street and Eglinton Avenue meets the City's numerical warrant for a PPP based on pedestrian volume alone, satisfying Condition 1 of the approved criteria. Several counts were taken in May, September and November of 2024, with the pedestrian counts ranging from ~3,900 to over 5,000 per hour. All counts exceeded the 3,000 pedestrians per hour criteria.

However, further operational analysis shows that a PPP type operation at this intersection would result in higher pedestrian maximum delay and increased delay to all vehicles and cyclists due to longer signal cycle lengths with everyone stopped to accommodate the pedestrian only phase. The detailed modelling analysis showed that the maximum pedestrian delay would increase from approximately 46 seconds under

the current conditions to approximately 52 seconds if a PPP were implemented reflecting a 13% increase in terms of delay for pedestrians.

Despite meeting the technical warrant, the safety and operational benefits typically associated with PPPs are minimal at this location. Existing left and right turn restrictions at the intersection effectively eliminate vehicle-pedestrian conflicts, thereby achieving many of the intended safety outcomes of a PPP without the need for an exclusive pedestrian phase. In addition, the current signal configuration supports efficient pedestrian movement.

For pedestrians wishing to cross diagonally, the existing operation crossing first in the east-west direction and then north-south results in shorter overall delay than waiting for a dedicated diagonal phase, which would require a longer cycle length under a PPP configuration.

With the opening of the Eglinton Crosstown, the underground pedestrian crossings will likewise be available for transit users. This would reduce the number of pedestrians at the above grade crossing and potentially to the extent that the numerical warrant is no longer being met in the future.

Given these factors, Transportation Services concludes that maintaining the current signal operation at this intersection remains the most efficient and effective approach for both pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

Transportation Services will continue to very closely monitor the Yonge and Eglinton intersection following the opening of the Eglinton Crosstown and will revisit these recommendations in the future if deemed warranted.

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SIGNATURE

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