

April 8, 2025
Toronto City Hall
Infrastructure and Environment Committee
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON
M5H 2N2
Re: IE20.3 Congestion Management Plan — 2025 Update

Dear Chair McKelvie and committee members,

As per the Walk Toronto submissions of November 27, 2023 (IE9.9), February 26, 2024 (IE11.1), and September 26, 2024 (IE16.4) we would like to highlight that the update still has little to offer pedestrians to ease safety concerns.

We appreciate the efforts made by Transportation Services to engage the public on this issue of congestion management and construction site obstruction to the public right of way. We are pleased to note Transportation Services response to the TRBOT Breaking Gridlock report: “Moving bike lanes to secondary roads/side streets is not feasible and increases the risk of collisions on arterial streets. The City remains committed to safely and efficiently moving all modes of traffic through the City”.

Still, our pedestrian experience remains frustrating and raises safety concerns. We continue to wait for acknowledgement that pedestrian safety should be a priority and that steps are being taken to mitigate danger. The safe passage of vulnerable road users must be vigilantly reinforced at every opportunity.

Regarding **ROAD RESTRICTION WEB SITE and QR CODE SIGNS ON CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS**: While communication of any sort is appreciated, we note that having access to information on construction site management does little or nothing to create a safe walking environment at the site of construction.

Regarding **TRAFFIC AGENTS**: We note the suggested increase in the number of traffic agents around the city. Again, we emphasize our points made in our September 2024 submission: when Transportation Services and other enforcement agencies do not consistently and continuously emphasize the priority of vulnerable road user safety, our car-centric culture remains firmly embedded and prioritizes the movement of

vehicles. This is true of traffic agents (and construction workers responsible for directing vehicles around construction sites). We have considerable anecdotal evidence that it is common for these agents and construction employees to be focused on directing the drivers of vehicles without awareness of pedestrians or cyclists.

Walk Toronto hopes that the IEC will further engage Transportation Services to investigate these additional concerns:

NO RIGHT ON RED: If you walk this city, every day you see drivers inching their vehicles forward looking left while trying to make a right turn on a red light. These drivers encroach on pedestrian crosswalks risking the safety and lives of those trying to cross on foot or by mobility device. This behavior is especially dangerous when drivers are responsible for large construction vehicles. The conversation around the number of construction vehicles does not seem to be recognized as a significant contributor to our city-wide congestion and injuries and deaths of pedestrians and other vulnerable road users. Walk Toronto believes the time for waiting for studies on the efficacy of a complete ban on right turn on red is over. The current policy of banning right turns on selected intersections only (and some at specific times only) is confusing and increases the risk of injury and death to vulnerable road users across the city.

PEDESTRIAN BUTTONS: Walk Toronto believes that the use of pedestrian buttons must be reviewed as part of the congestion management plan given the continued emphasis on the movement of vehicles, the intense congestion experienced everywhere in the city, and the excessive acceleration and road rage exhibited by vehicle drivers at intersections because of this congestion. The pedestrian buttons across the city continue to disrespect the safe movement of pedestrians. Semi-actuated type 2 (SA2) buttons require that pedestrians push the button to get across a road. The signal is not synchronized with the vehicle signal and doesn't necessarily change when the vehicle light turns green. These signals are hazardous to pedestrians because pedestrians may not realize or be able to press the button, they may hesitate and be confused by the resulting conflicting signals and then may try to cross without having enough time. Furthermore, these SA2 buttons can encourage poor behaviour on the part of drivers who believe that pedestrians should not walk without the walk signal. These buttons are reflective of the city's continued sacrifice of pedestrian safety for a few seconds of driver time.

Also, SA1 signals can be found across the city and are activated only where a car is waiting, or a pedestrian has pressed the button but do not synchronize the vehicle and

pedestrian signals. These SA1 signals have no place in densely populated areas of the city and should be reviewed for conversion to automatically rotating signals. Existing automatic signals should never be converted down to semi-actuated signals.

SIDEWALK SIGNAGE and STATE OF REPAIR: We continue to see dangerous pedestrian detours around construction sites. Even in situations where effort has been made to detour pedestrians, these are often built assuming that all users can navigate curbs. There are many situations where people who need mobility devices cannot navigate the detour safely.

As an example of the low prioritization of pedestrian safety that we see consistently across the city, we attach two photos taken recently.

The first is the “sidewalk” on Dundas Street West at the Scarlett Road intersection taken just this past weekend. Recent construction appears to have been completed. The replacement asphalt sidewalk leaves pedestrians, and anyone else using the sidewalk, vulnerable to injury by tripping and possibly death as the identification between “path” and roadway is unclear, making it likely that a vehicle could drive over the path.



The second photo below shows the blocked pedestrian passage because of construction on Merton at Yonge Street. Note the dreaded “Please use other side



walk” sign.

Sincerely,

Lee Scott and Dylan Reid, Walk Toronto Steering Committee Walk Toronto
info@walktoronto.ca

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