



Re: IE20.3 - Congestion Management Plan - 2025 Update

April 8, 2025

Infrastructure & Environment Committee
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West Toronto, Ontario, M5H 2N2
Sent via email: iec@toronto.ca

Dear members of the Infrastructure and Environment Committee,

More Transit Southern Ontario (MTSO) is a grassroots organization of riders advocating for more connected, affordable, frequent, and reliable transit across Southern Ontario. **We support TTCriders' call for full active transit signal priority on the Eglinton Crosstown and Finch West LRTs, and urge its adoption at all current and future TSP-equipped intersections citywide.**

As transit riders await the opening of Toronto's new surface rail lines, the newly installed signals at their surface intersections will not be effective in keeping trains moving. According to the Toronto Star, the new Eglinton Crosstown will not be equipped with the ability to trigger green lights at intersections¹. Instead, it will rely on the same limited form of Transit Signal Priority (TSP) used across the city that only prioritizes vehicles when they are behind schedule.

The current form of transit signal priority in Toronto

Despite the installation of TSP at 420 intersections since 1990, buses and streetcars are still routinely delayed by red lights, left-turning cars, and inefficient signal cycles. Intersections are equipped with Advanced Transit Signal Priority (ATSP), a limited transit signal priority system that detects transit vehicles running behind schedule and extends green times by a maximum of 30 seconds when necessary to accommodate. In practice, this system is passive and insufficient.

In 2020, trip savings were found to have **~10 minutes round trip savings on a typical route with 40 ATSP equipped intersections**², but by design, transit vehicles can only benefit from this when on a late schedule. For example, on Spadina Avenue, a single vehicle waiting to turn left during a dedicated signal phase can hold up an entire streetcar carrying hundreds of passengers. Elsewhere, many transit vehicles are still treated as general traffic or lack signal priority entirely.

¹ https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/a-closer-look-at-eglinton-crosstown-lrt/article_d1f42d79-e70d-54b6-be19-e28d9dff6c2b.html

² <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2020/ie/bgrd/backgroundfile-157804.pdf>

The Congestion Management Plan – 2025 Update outlines that up to 50 additional intersections may receive this same limited form of TSP by 2025, but a system that benefits riders only when service is off-schedule cannot deliver the reliability that Toronto's growing ridership deserves.

Toronto's surface transit network is already too slow

Transit riders are already seeing the consequences of not prioritizing transit. Since 2013, the average speed of scheduled bus service has decreased from 20 km/h in 2023 to 17.3 km/h in 2024³. Streetcar service isn't faring much better: between February 16 and March 29, 2025, weekday average speeds were 11.2 km/h during morning peak periods and 10.34 km/h during afternoon peaks.^{4, 5}

Reductions in speed caused by congestion and construction is actively undermining transit reliability and usefulness for hundreds of thousands of daily riders. For perspective, both bus and streetcar service now average speeds slower than the top speed of an Asian elephant at 20.92 km/h⁶.

Actionable steps that the City can take to prioritize transit

- **Upgrade Existing Intersections to Full Active TSP:** Full active TSP would detect an approaching transit vehicle and modify the traffic signal cycle in order to allow a green by either extending a concurring green phase or truncating a red phase. This allows transit vehicles to pre-empt red lights, even when they are not late, actively minimizing time spent waiting at traffic signals.
- **Upgrade signal priority technology to Full Active TSP on the Eglinton Crosstown and Finch West LRTs,** and ensure its use at all current and future TSP-equipped intersections across Toronto.
- **Toronto can implement independent transit signal phases at key intersections,** especially for high-frequency routes like the Spadina and St. Clair streetcars.

We urge you to push for a city where our surface transit network is fast, frequent, and reliable—and no longer left waiting at red lights.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Lee How Cheong
Co-Executive Director, More Transit Southern Ontario

³<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.TTC2.13#:~:text=Between%202013%20and%202024%2C%20average,for%20the%20TTC%20to%20operate>

⁴ (509B Exhibition-Spadina, 510B Spadina-Queens Quay, 511B Exhibition-Queen were excluded due to bus replacements)

⁵<https://cdn.ttc.ca/-/media/Project/TTC/DevProto/Documents/Home/Transparency-and-accountability/Service-Summary-2025-02-16.pdf?rev=84cf76cef6d347f4aa06d7994a7f3>

⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fastest_animals