

Walk Toronto

September 25, 2025

To: Infrastructure and Environment Committee, City of Toronto

Re: IE24.3 - Feasibility of Pedestrian Priority Phase at Yonge Street and Eglinton Avenue

Dear councillors,

Walk Toronto asks you to reject the Transportation Services staff report that recommends not implementing a pedestrian scramble crossing at Yonge and Eglinton.

The objections raised by staff make no sense and ignore the distinctive characteristics of the Toronto model of pedestrian scrambles.

Staff admit that the intersection meets the warrant conditions for a scramble intersection by a significant margin, but nonetheless raise various objections to the proposal. None of these objections are valid, for the following reasons:

- 1) Staff claim that “existing left and right turn restrictions” make the crossing unnecessary.

However, **the existing scramble intersections at Yonge and Dundas and Yonge and Bloor have similar turn restrictions.** These turn restrictions were already in place before the scrambles were implemented, as they are at Yonge and Eglinton. If the existing scrambles have this characteristic, it cannot be a reason not to implement a new scramble.

- 2) These turn restrictions are what enable the pedestrian-friendly **Toronto model** of scramble intersections, in which **pedestrians can cross on the regular cycles as well as during the scramble.** The Toronto model is implemented where there are existing turn restrictions and where pedestrian volumes are significantly higher than vehicle volumes, recognizing that pedestrians should have priority in such circumstances – a **basic principle of Toronto’s Vision Zero** approach.
- 3) This model means that the staff argument that “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” is nonsensical. In a Toronto scramble, **pedestrians wishing to cross diagonally do not need to wait for the diagonal phase,** but can cross in two phases if the timing means that is more convenient.
- 4) The argument that pedestrian volumes might drop below the warrant numbers once underground tunnels closed due to LRT construction are open again does not hold water. It ignores prior evidence, recent developments, and the nature of those underground tunnels

- a. Yonge and Eglinton **was already the busiest pedestrian intersection in Toronto before construction began on the LRT**, despite the existence of the tunnels. [Research by Global News in 2011](#) based on City of Toronto pedestrian counts showed that Yonge and Eglinton had the highest pedestrian count of any intersection in Toronto: 42,680 in one day. That was higher than the intersections that did get pedestrian scrambles.
- b. Since 2011, **thousands of new residential units have been built in tall buildings around Yonge and Eglinton**. Many of these buildings have far fewer parking spots than units, or none at all. Those residents will likely **frequently walk to nearby shops and services**, as well as nearby offices and the Eglinton subway/ LRT station, meaning even higher pedestrian volumes at the intersection. They would have no reason to go underground.
- c. The underground passages at Yonge and Eglinton are not particularly convenient, direct, extensive, or easy to navigate. It is unlikely they will be a significant choice for many pedestrians.
- d. In any case, even if some pedestrians move to the underground passages, **the number of pedestrians using the intersection is so high that the warrant conditions would likely still be met**.

In other words, the objections put forward by staff are not convincing and do not overcome the fact that Yonge and Eglinton fully meets the – very strict – warrant conditions for a scramble intersection.

The only reason Yonge and Eglinton did not have a scramble intersection before was the high volume of public transit buses that would have faced delays. But with the Crosstown LRT underground, transit delays will no longer be a significant issue and will not stand in the way of introducing a scramble at one of Toronto's most heavily pedestrian intersections.

What *is* a serious issue is the volume of pedestrians seeking to cross this intersection. That volume is so high that there is **frequently significant crowding** – which the report admits was observed – especially on the south-west corner, which creates danger and which is, as the staff report admits, a primary reason for implementing a scramble.

The intersection at Yonge and Eglinton **meets all of the requirements for a scramble intersection on the Toronto model**. Once there are not a significant number of public transit buses using it, the number of pedestrians crossing there will vastly outnumber the number of people crossing the intersection in vehicles. A scramble intersection on the Toronto model is simply a recognition that, in such a circumstance, pedestrian needs should take priority.

We ask the Infrastructure and Environment Committee to **reject** the staff recommendation. Walk Toronto recommends instead moving a motion along the following lines:

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directing staff to perform multiple counts of pedestrians using the intersection within six months of the opening of the Crosstown LRT and, if the numbers continue to meet the warrant requirements, to prepare a plan to implement a scramble intersection at Yonge and Eglinton.

Walk Toronto is a grassroots, volunteer advocacy group working to make Toronto a better city for walking.

Thank you,

Dylan Reid

On behalf of Walk Toronto