

Adam Roy Cohoon M5A 0J5 arcohoon@gmail.com 416-710-0817

To: The Infrastructure and Environment Committee (IEC)
& Transportation Services, City of Toronto
Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen St W
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

SUBJECT: Request for a Comprehensive, City-Wide Ban on Right-Turns-on-Red (RTOR) to Protect Vulnerable Road Users

Dear Members of the Infrastructure and Environment Committee,

I would like to begin by thanking the committee for recommending the elimination of right-turns-on-red (RTOR) at specific high-risk intersections, such as Victoria Park Avenue and Kingston Road. While these localized interventions are a step in the right direction, a piecemeal intersection-by-intersection strategy is insufficient. To truly protect Toronto's most vulnerable residents, the city must implement a blanket, city-wide prohibition on right turns on red lights.

Allowing right turns on red creates systemic, documented dangers for pedestrians, cyclists, and mobility device users due to a combination of driver behaviour and evolving vehicle designs:

- **The "Left-Look" Blindness Hazard:** When a driver prepares to turn right at a red light, their primary focus is on looking left to scan for an opening in traffic. Because their attention is directed entirely away from the direction of travel, they frequently fail to see pedestrians or wheelchair users entering the zebra crossing from their right. This behavioural pattern is a primary driver of frequent near-misses and collisions at our crosswalks.
- **Increasing Vehicle Dimensions and Higher Hoods:** The physical composition of vehicles on Toronto streets has changed drastically. The city features a high volume of massive personal SUVs, pickup trucks, and heavy construction vehicles. The hood heights on many modern consumer trucks are as high as an adult's chest or head, creating severe front-end blind spots. Drivers in these elevated positions cannot see short adults, seniors, children, or wheelchair users crossing directly in front of them at close range.
- **The Confusion of a Piecemeal Approach:** Relying on selected, intersection-specific bans creates an unpredictable and confusing landscape for road users. It causes visual sign overload for drivers and makes it incredibly difficult for vulnerable pedestrians—especially those with visual or cognitive impairments—to predict vehicle behaviour at any given crossing. A uniform city-wide ban establishes a clear, predictable standard of safety, while eliminating the substantial municipal costs associated with manufacturing, installing, and maintaining

custom prohibition signs at thousands of separate junctions.

Other world-class metropolitan regions have already recognized that allowing vehicles to turn on red lights is incompatible with dense urban pedestrian safety. Cities like Montreal, New York City, and Mexico City maintain highly successful city-wide restrictions. Furthermore, Toronto remains completely out of step with global standards; the vast majority of European nations, along with countries like Australia and the UK, explicitly forbid turning on red signals unless an auxiliary sign explicitly permits it.

While a blanket restriction may add a negligible minute or two to longer cross-city vehicle commutes, the trade-off is directly measured in human lives. Motor vehicle RTOR maneuvers account for 13% of all pedestrian injuries and fatalities in Toronto, occurring overwhelmingly when pedestrians have the legal right-of-way.

If Toronto is truly committed to its Vision Zero mandates, the onus of safety must be integrated into our systemic infrastructure design. It is time for city staff and council to move past a fragmented strategy and enact a clear, city-wide ban on all right turns on red.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and continued dedication to making Toronto's streets accessible and safe for everyone.

Sincerely,

Adam Roy Cohoon

Toronto Resident and Accessibility Advocate

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