

May 18, 2013

C-2

Dear TTC Commissioners:

I am writing to the Commission concerning two, connected, items on the agenda for the May 24<sup>th</sup> Board meeting. Please bring my comments to the Commissioners' attention.

**Item 8.h. Traffic violations and mitigation for transit and**

**Notice of motion : Photo Monitoring and Enforcement on Bay Street Clearway and the King Street East Streetcar Transit Priority Lane.**

As a resident of downtown Toronto and a regular TTC user I have the almost daily opportunity to observe transit operations and write to comment on the Staff Report prepared in response to the Board's request of March 2013 and on the motion from Commissioners Heisey and Colle.

The current situation regarding the enforcement of existing traffic rules in Toronto is, to be kind, lax. There are several traffic rules that are broken daily with little or no action by the Toronto Police Service. Parking, stopping or turning illegally, using reserved transit lanes and, more particularly, blocking intersections. I would also say that in some locations legal parking could usefully be further restricted (at least during rush hours) as it is a poor use of scarce road space to reserve it for parking, especially on TTC streets.

Illegal parking is fairly well enforced (motorists might say too well!) by the Parking Control Officers though, from a public transit perspective, it might be better if they concentrated on the "TTC streets" before tackling residential ones and certainly if they paid more attention to streetcar routes after snowstorms.

Blocked intersections are a particular problem downtown and a 'perfect' example is the junction of King Street East and Jarvis Street which is blocked almost daily, particularly in the afternoons by southbound traffic on Jarvis Street; this delays the 504 streetcar. This intersection actually has (faded) yellow hatching lines painted on the roadway to remind motorists not to enter if they cannot leave it.

I am a Delegate to the St Lawrence Neighbourhood Association, which has been discussing traffic issues in our area over the past few years, and last fall one of our local residents wrote to the City's 311 service to ask that these faded yellow lines at the King and Jarvis intersection be repainted. These hatched lines are an internationally recognised way of reminding drivers that if you cannot exit an intersection you should not enter it.

He received the following response from Troy Caron of the City's Transportation Services.

"In response to your November 17th 311 request, Traffic Operations can offer the following response.

The yellow hatching that was painted in some of the intersections across the City was a pilot project undertaken 5-10 years ago. Basically, the City found that the markings were not effective and as such, no longer paints these markings in intersections. The blocking of intersection issue that exists at some intersections across the City is essentially a driver behaviour issue and most effectively can be dealt with through enforcement."

PRESENTED TO  
THE COMMISSION

MAY 24 2013

It is a chicken and egg situation and is, of course, a driver behaviour issue - the yellow lines are to remind drivers not to block the intersection and Mr. Caron is correct in saying that if there is no enforcement then the lines are simply a waste of time. We need both hatched yellow lines (as a reminder) and enforcement. Clearly if there is no enforcement drivers will ignore the rules and unfortunately, lines or not. I have yet to see ANY enforcement of this offence in Toronto. It is particularly galling not to have the law enforced at this particular intersection because this is an intersection with red-light cameras. If information from red-light cameras could be used to enforce other traffic regulations (as was suggested a decade ago) this would certainly assist with enforcement. I suggest that it is long past time for the City to get Provincial authorisation to allow this. Until then the Police Services Board should be asked to make enforcement of this particular law a far higher priority for the Toronto Police Service, particularly on transit routes.

Though there is supposedly transit priority on King Street during rush hours I have also never seen nor heard of any enforcement of it and there are also many daily examples of illegal left-hand and U turns that block or delay other traffic in general and transit vehicles in particular

Frankly, the Toronto Police Service seem uninterested in enforcing the laws that deal with blocking intersections, making illegal turns or using transit priority lanes. This is possibly due to the amazingly small fines that Mr Heisey noted in his original motion or possibly because the Police have, or think they have, "more important things to do.". Apart from simply asking the Police Services Board to get the police to take this kind of thing seriously, the situation might improve if the fines and penalties were increased.

A further way to improve the enforcement of traffic laws and regulations would be to give Parking Control Officers the authority to ticket motorists for some "moving offences" as happens in many other jurisdictions. The Parking Control Officers are quite efficient at dealing with illegal parking and are on the street daily. We should ensure they are used more and that they are given a mandate to keep traffic moving rather than only enforcing parking regulations. Parking Control Officers should be seen not simply as a revenue source for the City but as the front-line troops in getting Toronto moving and cutting down on the growing traffic delays that cost everyone so much.

At least in the downtown area it is impossible to create more road space and the TTC needs to ensure that the City and the Toronto Police Service put transit first and look at (and, course, enforce) ways (such as transit priority traffic signals, no parking, no blocking intersections and transit priority lanes) to ensure that we make the best possible use of the road space that we have. It is ridiculous to use scarce road space to park vehicles and then see buses and streetcars delayed and short-turned so that they (or their operators?) can get back onto schedule.

A careful review of the traffic and parking regulations on all TTC routes and enforcement of the rules will result in far better use of scarce City roads and provide a far better service for public transit users. Keeping traffic moving will also benefit ordinary drivers and this was well stated in the police report of 2004.

"Technology does exist for to support photo-monitoring for enforcement purposes of traffic clearways and priority lanes. .... Through innovative initiatives the City's roadways will become safer and the quality of life of all Toronto's citizens will be significantly improved."

The time for talk is long past and it is time we actually did something!

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