



Walk Toronto is a grassroots, volunteer pedestrian advocacy group that works to improve walking conditions and pedestrian safety in Toronto.

January 25, 2018

Allen Pinkerton, Manager, Signs and Markings, Traffic Management Centre, Transportation Services
City of Toronto
40 Toryork Drive
Toronto, Ontario M9L 1X6

Dear Mr. Pinkerton,

Re: Installation of Maximum Speed Limit Signs on Bayview Avenue Prior to City Council Approval (ref. 2017.PW24.5)

Thank you for your prompt reply to our letter of December 19, 2017, to Barbara Gray, General Manager, Transportation Services, and for your explanation of why 60 km/h speed limit signs were installed along Bayview Avenue prior to City Council's consideration of item 2017.PW24.5 and its passage of Bill No. 1410 (By-law No. 1412-2017) on December 8, 2017.

Walk Toronto can appreciate how creating Work Orders in advance of City or Community Council decisions may help to speed implementation, yet we have concerns about such practice. In this instance, councillors put forward motions at City Council that could have changed the outcome of item 2017.PW24.5. One such motion was narrowly defeated: 19-20, meaning that a single vote in favour, rather than in opposition, would have kept the speed limit at 50 km/h. The prematurely installed 60 km/h signs would have been without legal standing. How would the City have dealt with such an obvious error? What would the legal consequences have been? We assume a new Work Order would have been necessary, to immediately reverse the work. How long might the unauthorized signs have remained in place?

Moreover, we are surprised that lead time for sign fabrication and utility locates would have been needed for the installation of the 60 km/h signs, since the signs were changed only months earlier, on June 6, 2017 (according to the staff report dated October 3, 2017).

The creation of Work Orders prior to City or Community Council approval also highlights another problem, which is the issue of good governance and the democratic process, real or perceived. The current practice assumes that a particular decision will be taken, which may have the effect of subverting citizen participation. Why would citizens make deputations or submit comments to committees, Community Councils or City Council if they perceive that decisions are made in advance and their voices are not being listened to? Procedural fairness, or the principle of natural justice, is fundamental to good governance.

Your reply noted, "Given that deferrals are uncommon in traffic related issues, the tracking of completion of the required work [approval of the bills/by-laws] became that much more difficult and unfortunately the signs were installed early." Again, we acknowledge the challenges of managing large volumes of Work Orders, including those coupled to bill/by-law approvals. Actions must nevertheless be tied to real-time decisions (i.e., votes at committees or Community Councils or City Council, and any related bills/by-laws), rather than anticipated outcomes.

You've indicated that in light of this specific situation, practices will be reviewed, "with specific attention on the tracking of approval by City or Community Councils." For all the reasons noted above, we feel that this situation has highlighted that such a review of current practices is vital. We are pleased to hear about your planned review, and hope that it will be conducted soon. We ask that you please keep us advised of what changes to practices are implemented regarding coordination with the political approval process.

We are also heartened by your statement that "staff will be undertaking a detailed review of this corridor early in the new year." As we are all no doubt aware, Toronto's first traffic fatality of 2018 occurred on Bayview Avenue just north of Pottery Road (southerly intersection).

Again, please keep us informed of the safety improvements being considered (e.g., sidewalks, crosswalks, wayfinding, lighting, signage, accessibility measures, increased protection for the multi-use trail and shoulders) and the proposed implementation schedule. We wish to further highlight that there is no safe pedestrian (or cyclist) infrastructure at all on Bayview Avenue between Rosedale Valley Road and the River Street ramp – this situation needs to be addressed.

Finally, it has been our impression, and one that is shared by other active transportation groups and some councillors' offices, that measures that benefit pedestrians (and cyclists) often take much longer to implement than measures that benefit motorists. We ask that Transportation Services expedite pedestrian-friendly (and cyclist-friendly) measures, especially in light of the ongoing high number of pedestrians being struck and/or killed by motor vehicles: as of January 24, 2018, Toronto's count of traffic fatalities has already reached 8, of which 6 were pedestrians.

We need timely implementation of safety measures to protect Toronto's vulnerable road users.

Yours truly,

Vivien Leong, Adam Cohoon and Michael Black
on behalf of Walk Toronto (Steering Committee)

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