

?Old Aurora? resident questions turn restrictions

(A letter to Mayor and Council)

I live in Old Aurora with my wife and three young children.

I do appreciate that the Town organized the Left Turn information session, as it allowed me to meet some of the Town staff and get a few more details. I did realize leaving the session that while I probably drive this intersection every day, I usually head east/west and don't pay as much attention to the North South corridor.

I spent some time the last two days, both observing and driving Yonge Street north (NB)/south (SB) so that I could make educated observations about what is going on at the intersection. What I saw really surprised me.

1. Does it make sense to propose identical turn restrictions NB and SB?

The two routes (NB and SB) are completely different scenarios effectively so why are the turn restrictions the same. NB you drive through the downtown corridor first before it opens up and SB is the complete opposite. As a general statement, to my great surprise based on what is being proposed, there is much less traffic than I thought there would be - northbound in particular.

The Yonge Street parking restriction NB from 7 ? 9 a.m. helps the NB morning rush tremendously to the point where one questions why a left turn restriction would even be contemplated NB in the morning.

After the morning rush, NB traffic actually gets worse because the parking restriction is lifted.

SB morning traffic is busier but the left turn signal helps tremendously as does the parking restriction (7-9 a.m.) in the downtown corridor.

I gather there will be a right turn lane in the coming months which will also help SB.

2. There are some simple Yonge Street Parking modifications that could help Traffic flow.

Clearly there are two major factors impacting this intersection: lack of left turn lanes and downtown street parking. It's perhaps an unspoken fact that you could fix any traffic issue on this part of Yonge Street by banning all street parking. Not realistic perhaps, but I didn't hear of any proposed parking changes and I think there are a couple of small changes that would help tremendously.

Currently parking on Yonge Street is allowed to within about two car lengths of the intersection. If the Town were to fix one parking issue, it would be to lengthen the ?no parking? area on both sides of Yonge street south of Wellington Street.

This issue is really hurting NB traffic ALL DAY. As soon as someone parks close to the corner, it closes the right lane whenever there are cars trying to turn left. In other words, even just a three car backup in the left lane because someone is trying to turn left onto Wellington, means that cars cannot move over to the right lane to get through the intersection.

Even another 15 feet would help tremendously.

There doesn't seem to be a SB parking restriction for the afternoon rush south of Wellington.

Way back when, the argument was that SB is not a rush hour event in the afternoon. It is now.

Are the retailers going to be happy? Of course not, but too bad. There are two parking lots serving the downtown. The west side option is great and never full that I have seen.

I feel very strongly that this initiative needs to be re-examined. I worry that the decision makers are confusing what can be done with what should done. It's an important difference and I feel there are other simple and less impactful options that would immediately help traffic flow.

That said, maybe Council should grab a coffee and just hang out at intersection during the rush hours. They might be surprised too.

Steve Hartley
Aurora