

## **PRESENTATION TO ROAD SAFETY COMMITTEE - FEBRUARY 5, 2019**

**Glenn Voakes**, Citizen Member  
Mississauga Cycling Advisory Cmte (MCAC)

Thank you for the opportunity to speak this morning. At the Jan 23<sup>rd</sup> 2019 General Committee (GC) meeting, Councillor Saito moved the matter of crossrides and their perceived safety from the MCAC agenda to the RSC for discussion. Concerns were expressed that the lights at crossrides should not have been bagged. I assume that discussion will take place today.

Please allow me to give you a very high-level background regarding crossrides and how we got to this point followed by several questions I have for you to ponder.

Crossrides have been a very contentious issue for your colleagues on the Cycling Committee and one that has been grappled with for months. It is not one size fits all as it at first might appear. This morning you may well be asked to come to your own conclusion regarding crossride safety in a matter of only minutes, with little background and a list of what might just be opinions. It is important for you to have as much information as possible.

Having myself been knocked off my bike, literally inches away from being run right over while legally crossing on a green bike light in a newly opened crossride in Ward 9, by a city vehicle no less who just drove away essentially leaving the scene of an accident, gives me real life perspective...more than just opinions.

My up front “first hand” incident really opened my eyes about the safety of crossrides as they are implemented today.

To be made and to feel safe cyclists must be made and kept visible. Ideally, they would prefer to be on the road. To date I do not sense the city gets this. If they did, the focus would not be 100% on multi-use trails (MUTs).

It is short-sighted to make the claim crossrides are safe without first considering:

- Overall safe cycling infrastructure
- Boulevard MUTs connected to crossrides and
- Right turns or not on red lights

Only after you have considered these points can you begin to assess “if crossrides are safe”?

Crossrides and bike lights combined with boulevard MUTs make cyclists less visible, so in my opinion crossrides by themselves cannot be deemed safe. Cars are focussed on the road not a bike approaching on a boulevard MUT at a reasonable rate of speed...clearly faster than someone walking. You cannot look at just the crossride and declare it safe without looking at the entire cycling infrastructure. Think back to my incident for a minute. Thank goodness it was not a young carefree cyclist who found themselves in my position. Fortunately for me, and the city, I was cycling defensively.

On a regular basis there are meetings and discussions that take place at the city, and apparently with the police, regarding cycling including crossrides. The MCAC has been shut out of any of these discussions.

Internal communications are not shared equally. It is a selective distribution it would appear.

One recent example is the November 27, 2018 letter by Helen Noehammer to the mayor and councillors explaining the purpose of crossrides and the perceived safe infrastructure they create. The letter was subsequently sent out to the RSC, but even as common courtesy was never sent, nor has it ever been sent, to the MCAC.

Council solicits opinion from staff and the police who proclaim “crossrides” are safe and accept this as fact.

At Council meetings, claims have been made about cycling and safe crossrides, and these claims, for the most part are not backed up with valid facts and regularly go unchallenged. This is so wrong.

So here are but a few of my questions:

“ARE CROSSRIDES SAFE?” QUESTIONS:

- The city has provided no evidence to support the claim crossrides are safe. The police simply claim they are. If evidence exists why has it not been shared publicly or with MCAC? Or is it based solely on a police officer’s opinion? My son is a police officer and when I asked him if he thought crossrides were safe his response was “you are the cyclist you tell me”. But MCAC is not being listened to.
- Do we know if any police officers that were spoken with cycle, or have they ever cycled, to be able to make a claim crossrides are safe or is it made on visual observation of the crossride only?

Same question of city staff. How can any non-cyclists provide insightful input on something they have no experience with? It would be like me asking a plumber to provide his/her opinion whether new electrical wiring in my house is safe.

- Other than Matthew Sweet and perhaps Chris Fonseca (not sure if she ever was consulted), who are both cyclists, how many city staff members that cycle were consulted prior to implementation of crossrides? How many on this RSC were consulted in advance? How many police officers that cycle were consulted in advance? The MCAC was never consulted!!
- Why was the Nov 27, 2018 internal correspondence referencing crossrides and distributed to the RSC, NEVER provided to the MCAC?

### “CROSSRIDES EXCEED STANDARDS” QUESTIONS:

- On what basis is the claim crossrides “exceed standards” made? personally communicated with Geoff Wright, Commissioner, Transportation & Works at the City post the Jan 8<sup>th</sup> 2019 MCAC meeting. In our discussions Geoff never once claimed the crossrides exceeded any standards. He claimed the city referenced the OTM Book 12 published by the Ontario Traffic Council and used it for guidelines...not standards from Ministry of Transportation as suggested by Council in the Jan 23<sup>rd</sup> GC meeting. What I can find is the width of some MUTs do exceed a **standard** (consultant's report) by ½ foot but NO WHERE can I find “crossrides” exceed standards. I have myself called MOT and Jeff Yurek the Minister of Transportation.

Someone kindly direct me to any crossride standards that exist and have been EXCEEDED by the city.

- Has city staff visited and audited the cycling infrastructure of other cities to be able to make the claim “ours is better than theirs”?
- Are there charts, or any information available, comparing Mississauga to any other major cities in Ontario or anywhere in Canada? Perhaps to neighbouring Ottawa, as an example, deemed the safest cycling city in Ontario? Check out the design of Ottawa’s crossrides by the way: on the edge of the road through the intersection and visible to drivers.
- So, no crossride information, if available, was ever shared with the MCAC and/or made public. There is nothing anywhere to be found on the city website that I can find.

### "MCAC WANTS NO TURNS ON RED LIGHTS" QUESTION:

- This is just simply not true. This is not what the MCAC has said. I suggest it is either another case of not listening or perhaps not articulated correctly. In any event my time constraint will prevent me from explaining it in this presentation.

Please watch the Jan 23<sup>rd</sup> 2019 video-archived GC meeting starting at the 49:40 minute mark which supports what I have stated above, at: [www.mississauga.ca/portal/cityhall/council-and-committee-videos](http://www.mississauga.ca/portal/cityhall/council-and-committee-videos)

So, the question remains for you to consider “are crossrides safe”?

Ask yourself if you would feel comfortable letting your minor child use a crossride unaccompanied as they are designed and implemented today? Let the answer to that question serve as your gauge.

The best outcome to my questions this morning is they have been addressed and it a simple matter of missed communications and the information will be shared.

Thank you for your attention and thank you for your time.

Both were greatly appreciated by myself and my current MCAC colleagues.