

Railways not accountable to city, Edmonton council told

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The City of Edmonton has been told it has no say over the movement of trains that cause delays for drivers during rush hour.

Last year, councillors asked city administration to meet with Canadian Pacific Railway and CN Rail to see if freight trains could be scheduled to avoid the morning and afternoon rush hours, particularly at 50 Street, 75 Street and 99 Street.

The subsequent report prepared by city administration states that they were told by railway officials said nothing could be done.

Coun. Ben Henderson says people need to contact their MPs about traffic delays caused by freight trains since railways are a federal issue. (CBC)

“National railways are governed through the federal government and city staff were respectfully instructed that their rail operation has no direct accountability to municipal governments,” the report says.

The companies said that changing schedules would create a need to renegotiate labour agreements, create delays and force more goods to be shipped by truck.

The response irritated Coun. Ben Henderson.

“It’s a federal issue so we need to talk to our MP’s and if we’re getting complaints on this we need to say, ‘You need to get in touch with your MP because that’s who has the power to deal with this.’”

Mayor Don Iveson says he’s been told that Ottawa is close to changing the regulations around this issue.