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News Release

June 20, 2008

Fire Chief says St. Clair Avenue West right-of-way safe for fire trucks

After walking along the St. Clair Avenue West right-of-way earlier today, City of Toronto Fire Services Chief Bill Stewart, together with Toronto Transit Commission Chief General Manager Gary Webster, concluded that the route provides safe access for fire vehicles.

"The St. Clair right of way is safe," said Toronto Fire Services Chief Bill Stewart. "I want to assure the residents of St. Clair Avenue West that in the case of an emergency their safety is our priority. Fire trucks will be able to mount the streetcar right-of-way. The walk through the neighbourhood today showed that we had some minor adjustments to address and we are working with the TTC to do that."

"In any major city, emergency services train to respond to obstacles in an urban environment such as building density, heavy traffic, overhead wires, and even snow accumulation along narrow city streets. The centre pole design can work for fire services vehicles," said the Fire Chief.

TTC Chief General Manager Gary Webster said, "An important part of running a safe transit system is preparing for emergencies. We will continue to consult with the City's emergency service providers to ensure that they have access to buildings along the corridor in emergency situations. After the walk-through today and discussions with Chief Stewart, the TTC will make some minor changes to curb heights where required, ensuring fire apparatus can access the right-of-way or street, as necessary."

St. Clair Avenue West is identified in Toronto's Official Plan as one of many avenues for future growth. The Official Plan focuses on city-building, high-quality transit on the city's major avenues and making transit a more attractive option for travel.

In 2004, with City Council approval, the City of Toronto and the TTC began work on a transit improvement project to revitalize St. Clair Avenue West, from Yonge Street to Gunns Road. The project includes streetcar track replacement and an urban design component. A dedicated right-of-way for streetcars with a centre pole configuration is being constructed along the corridor to improve transit frequency and reliability. The \$69.9 million project is expected to be completed in 2009.

Toronto is Canada's largest city and sixth largest government, and home to a diverse population of about 2.6 million people. It is the economic engine of Canada and one of the greenest and most creative cities in North America. In the past three years, Toronto has won more than 70 awards for quality, innovation and efficiency in delivering public services. Toronto's government is dedicated to prosperity, opportunity and liveability for all its residents.

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Media contacts:

Brad Ross, Director, Corporate Communications, TTC, 416-393-3598
Kevin Sack, Director, Strategic Communications, City of Toronto, 416-397-5277