

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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“TTC Can’t be Allowed to Whitewash Safety Concerns Raised by Toronto Fire Services” – say Toronto Councillors

Councillors Cesar Palacio, Michael Walker and other local Councillors continue to call for urgent action to address community safety concerns raised by Toronto Fire Services regarding the fundamentally flawed TTC St. Clair Avenue West streetcar exclusive Right-Of-Way (ROW) which runs from Yonge Street to Keele Street.

The Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) held a press conference this morning with Toronto Fire Services (TFS) on St. Clair Ave. W. near Yonge Street in response to the report released yesterday from Fire Services which deemed St. Clair West “without doubt unsafe.” Councillor Walker, the Councillor for the area, and Councillor Palacio were not notified of this press conference. Yesterday the Fire Chief stated unequivocally that he stood behind the report and that his department was consulted but that the TTC knows it still had concerns (Globe and Mail article attached). The report from Toronto Fire clearly states “The TTC ROW on St. Clair Avenue West is without doubt unsafe” (Page 10), among many other conclusions, including:

- “The TTC ROW as constructed on St.Clair Avenue West is not useable by Toronto Fire Services for emergency response” (Page 20)
- “There is no doubt that there will be delays in emergency vehicle responses on St.Clair Avenue West” (Page 3)
- “Personal injury to persons at streetcar stops are possible as well as TFS personnel on the apparatus” (Page 5)
- “More likely, it will cause the fire apparatus to move into the poles supporting the traction power lines damaging the side of the apparatus. In the extreme it will cause the apparatus to drive into one of the poles supporting the traction power lines or indeed hit a streetcar head on” (Page 5)
- “There is considerable risk to all if TFS use this TTC ROW as an access route. Adverse climatic conditions will only make the TTC ROW more perilous” (Page 10), among many others.

“This is a huge whitewash of what was until yesterday an unambiguous, extremely thorough report,” said Councillor Palacio. “Obviously political direction has been given for Staff to change their tune when as late as yesterday they were standing firmly behind it. How can something go from ‘without doubt unsafe’ to ‘safe’ in one day?”

“We raised these concerns during the public process and the TTC brushed us off. We made dire predictions about the entire unworkable proposal which have now come true. When will the TTC listen to the public? Changes need to be made now. The TTC cannot afford to keep throwing caution to the wind any longer,” stated an outraged Councillor Walker, “If Firetrucks can mount the curb then why weren’t they there, at the press conference to do so.”

This is an urgent concern of public safety for the tens of thousands of local residents who live near St. Clair Avenue West and who rely on emergency vehicles to be able to get to their homes safely. Councillors Palacio and Walker have submitted an Urgent Notice of Motion to City Council next week to try to get St. Clair West made safe for emergency vehicles by requesting the City Solicitor to assess the City’s increased liability and whether the Environmental Assessment terms have been breached, requesting the Auditor General to investigate, requesting the TTC and emergency service providers to meet and for the Environment Minister’s Liaison Group to meet on this issue.

A full copy of the detailed report from Fire Services is available online at www.cesarpalacio.com and www.michaelwalker.ca

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