

MOTION

Declaring the TTC an Essential Service

Moved by: Councillor Palacio

Seconded by: Councillor Jenkins

SUMMARY:

The chaos and disruption caused by a full-scale transit strike is comparable to that of any large natural disaster and has the potential to bring about severe social, economic and environmental repercussions for our City. This disaster however, is political in origin. It can and should be avoided.

City Council should express its strong desire that The Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) have transit service in Toronto declared essential. This is an issue of highest importance to the residents of the City of Toronto on which strong leadership is expected from City Council from the public.

The Toronto Transit Commission carries over 1.3 Million passengers daily, including 80% of transit trips in the Greater Toronto Area and is the hub of the GTA inter-regional transit network. In fact, one subway line in Toronto takes 53,000 automobiles per hour off the road during rush hour, and the TTC carries the equivalent of 365 million automotive trips annually, helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by more than 8 megatonnes per year.

Hundreds of thousands of Torontonians rely on the TTC to get to work, school and conduct their lives each day, and the City of Toronto is simply not designed to function without an operating public transit system. Wheeltrans is the only means of transportation for many of Toronto's elderly and physically disadvantaged residents.

Furthermore, any transit stoppage costs the City of Toronto Millions of dollars in lost economic activity in addition to the excessive inconvenience for hundreds of thousands of residents. The reliability of Transit service has also consistently been cited as the primary factor in a potential rider's decision whether or not to take the TTC, which any type of work stoppage completely undermines.

As required under the Act for the declaration of an essential service, a stoppage in TTC service does indeed create a "danger to life, health or safety" and "serious environmental damage". Other essential services have a very strong bargaining position and typically secure very favourable agreements through arbitration and mediation.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That in response to the Premier's comments made on April 18th, 2008, in which he said he would consider deeming transit an essential service if the City of Toronto asked, that City Council formally request the Provincial Government to designate transit in Toronto

an essential service.