

**ST.CLAIR AVENUE WEST TRANSIT IMPROVEMENTS  
CLASS ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT STUDY**

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**PHASE 2B PUBLIC MEETINGS  
SUMMARY OF FACILITATED DISCUSSION SESSIONS**

**April 13, 2004**

**April 14, 2004**

Prepared by:  
Hardy Stevenson and Associates Limited

April 22, 2004

# St. Clair Avenue West Transit Improvements Class Environmental Assessment Study

## ST. CLAIR AVENUE WEST TRANSIT IMPROVEMENTS CLASS ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT STUDY

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### PHASE 2B PUBLIC MEETINGS: SUMMARY OF FACILITATED DISCUSSION SESSIONS

#### Introduction

This report provides a summary of the public comments and questions received during the facilitated discussion session at the Phase 2b public meetings for the St. Clair Avenue West Transit Improvements Class Environmental Assessment (EA) Study. **This report does not provide a verbatim transcript of the discussion at the public meetings.** Nor does this report include comments submitted by comment sheets, emails or by telephone during Phase 2 of the study.

The Phase 2a public meetings were held on February 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>, 2004. A summary of the facilitated discussion sessions for those meetings are documented separately from this summary. A comprehensive Phase 2 public consultation report will be prepared that will include all the advertised notices for those meetings and input received from the public during Phase 2a and 2b of the Study.

#### Background: Purpose of the Class EA Study

The City of Toronto and the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) are undertaking a Class EA Study to identify and evaluate options for improving transit operations on St. Clair Avenue West, between Gunns Road and just east of Yonge Street. The study is being undertaken according to Schedule C of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment. The study has been undertaken as the streetcar tracks on St. Clair Avenue West are in poor condition and are scheduled for replacement in 2005. The new tracks will be in place for up to 30 years. This provides the opportunity to review possible enhancements to transit operations as part of the broader overall improvements planned for St. Clair Avenue West.

#### Phase 2 Public Meetings

A total of 4 public meetings (2 during Phase 2a and 2 during Phase 2b), and one community stakeholder workshop, were held during Phase 2 of the EA study, which involves the identification and evaluation of alternative solutions. By the end of Phase 2, a preferred alternative solution will be identified.

The Phase 2b public meetings were advertised in community newspapers and the GTA Metro. Notices were also placed in public libraries and community centres in the study area, on the City of Toronto's website for the study, within the two St. Clair Avenue subway stations and at streetcar stops along St. Clair Avenue West.

The Phase 2b public meetings were held in two locations within the study area:

- Tuesday, April 13, 2004 at the Holy Rosary Parish Centre;
- Wednesday, April 14, 2004 at the Joseph J. Piccininni Community Recreation Centre.

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Project team members who participated in the public meetings discussion session include:

### **Staff**

Mitch Stambler, Manager of Service Planning  
Rod McPhail, Director of Transportation Planning

Joanna Musters, Project Manager

### **Affiliation**

Toronto Transit Commission (TTC)  
City of Toronto,  
Urban Development Services (UDS)  
City of Toronto,  
Urban Development Services (UDS)

### **Consultants**

Jim Gough, Project Manager

### **Affiliation**

Marshall Macklin Monaghan (MMM)

### **Facilitator**

Marc Rose

### **Affiliation**

Hardy Stevenson and Associates

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## **Purpose**

The purpose of the Phase 2b public meetings was to provide an update on the progress made by the study team since the previous public meetings held in February. This information update included:

- An overview of the study process and schedule
- Comments and concerns raised by the community at the Phase 2a public meetings and at the second stakeholder workshop (held on March 30, 2004);
- Presentation of the results of the evaluation of alternatives, and
- Presentation of the draft short-list of alternatives.

## **Open House**

The public meetings began with an Open House from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., followed by a presentation by City of Toronto and TTC staff at 7 p.m. and a facilitated discussion session from 8:00 p.m. onwards. Members of the public were asked to sign in upon entering the Open House/discussion session venue.

During the Open House portion, project displays were available for viewing and City and TTC staff, and members of the consultant team were present to receive comments and answer questions.

All display and presentation materials were provided to participants along with blank comment sheets. The study team requested that completed comment sheets be returned to the project team by Wednesday, April 21, 2004.

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### **Presentations**

The facilitator for the public meetings, Marc Rose of Hardy Stevenson & Associates Ltd., welcomed the audience and provided an overview of the purpose of the public meetings. Presentations were then made by the following members of the project team:

- Joanna Musters, City of Toronto, UDS;
- Mitch Stambler, TTC;

**Joanna Musters** provided a brief overview of the study problem and the EA process. She explained that the project team was currently completing Phase 2 of the EA, moving onto Phase 3 where the preferred designs for St. Clair would be modified and evaluated. Joanna reminded everyone that the final decision on the project design would be made by the City Council at the completion of the study and submission of the Environmental Study Report (ESR). Joanna further discussed the outcomes of the St. Clair customer surveys and future transit and auto travel conditions on St. Clair Avenue.

**Mitch Stambler** presented the evaluation of broad alternatives based on community input. Mitch discussed the evaluation of criteria, categories presented in the criteria as well as ranking and importance of criteria as developed by the project team and the community. Mitch presented a detailed evaluation of each of the proposed alternatives.

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**Phase 2 Public Meeting: Tuesday, April 13, 2004, Holy Rosary Parish Centre**  
**356 St. Clair Ave. West**  
**7:00 p.m. – 9:15 p.m.**

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Recorded attendance at the first Phase 2b public meeting totaled 250 individuals based on the sign-in sheets. Councillor Joe Mihevc was also in attendance.

### Questions, Answers and Comments

The following comments and questions were noted from the facilitated discussion session. The comments are attributed to individuals in cases where the speaker identified him or herself (e.g. resident, business owner) or specified that he or she represents a specific group or association. Responses from the project team are indicated in *italics*.

#### 1) Question from local resident:

At the last Workshop the project team and the community evaluated all of the presented alternatives. It appears that Alternative #8 is now presented in a negative light. The project team suggested that 43 per cent of shoppers on St. Clair Avenue travel by public transit. Is the study team prepared to share the information on how this data was obtained?

*Response from Jim Gough: The evaluation of Alternative #8 resulted in a community consensus that no one wants to see the roads widened around St. Clair Avenue. The assessment of this alternative did not change after the last Workshop. This EA is a traceable process and the project team is prepared to share the data with the community.*

#### 2) Comment from local resident:

St. Clair Avenue is unique in its character. It is different from Spadina Avenue. St. Clair Avenue is a community shared by residents and businesses where many people travel by cars as well as walk and take public transit. We need sidewalks and we need streetcars. We also need parking spaces. There is no need for the dedicated right of way throughout the whole of St. Clair Avenue. The dedicated right of way should be only implemented during rush hours. We need a balanced solution to a balanced environment.

#### 3) Comment from local resident:

It is vital to St. Clair that we have a strong public transportation system. In your study there seems to be, however, a lot of preconceived notions. There is lack of a policy goal. The team should redesign the left turn lane on Keele Street all the way to Old Weston Road to eliminate traffic congestion. The streetcars on St. Clair travel in groups and are often packed with people. There needs to be a design that would provide information allowing transit travelers for a decision to wait for a less crowded streetcar. We need incremental, simple solutions.

#### 4) Comment from local resident:

There appears to be a number of pieces of conflicting information. The surveys you carried have not been conducted by independent individuals. This indicates the research you conducted is biased in your favor. The surveys conducted on people living close to the public transit lane produced biased results. 140 people is not a sufficient sample. The increased business and

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tourism on Spadina Avenue is due to the expansion of the residences at the University of Toronto campus.

**Response from Jim Gough:** *The increase of students living in residences at the University of Toronto happened over a period of ten years, from 1993 to 2003, and thus does not affect the period in which the streetcar surveys were implemented. The Fall and Spring 2004 surveys account for a valid sample for the purposes of this project. The resident surveys were conducted within 500 meters of St. Clair Avenue along the study corridor. This data is completely consistent with an independent transportation survey of the GTA conducted in 2001, and is statistically valid.*

### **5) Question from local resident:**

In your presentation you indicated a biased statement on the part of TTC: “transit must have a competitive advantage”. We need to optimize the use of limited resource on St. Clair Avenue. If you implement the dedicated right of way on St. Clair Avenue you will squeeze our resources as business owners. There needs to be a balance of different uses of the street.

**Response from Mitch Stambler:** *One streetcar has a carrying capacity equivalent to 52 cars. The public transit is intended to service everyone in the city. Optimizing space for personal use may benefit car drivers also.*

### **6) Question from local resident:**

Businesses on St. Clair Avenue employ people who live in the neighbourhood, they travel by cars and public transit. The people that visit St. Clair Avenue arrive by cars, TTC and tour buses from as far as Niagara Falls and New York. The small businesses pay taxes and are an engine force for Toronto’s economy. This project will eliminate 660 parking spaces. The loss of parking would be detrimental to the residences and businesses community. We need to be accommodated with sufficient parking space for our businesses and residences. How is the TTC going to accommodate the businesses’ parking requirements? Is the City of Toronto going to remove the on street parking prior to the replacement of streetcar tracks?

**Response from Joanna Musters:** *At the next stage of this process we will be able to better understand how many parking spaces will be affected. We are working with the Parking Authority to ensure parking needs for St. Clair Avenue are met. There are currently 550 on-street parking spaces and we never suggested we would remove all of them. The Parking Authority identified four new lots for additional parking and are awaiting approval, they also are continuing to search for more space for potential parking in this study area. The Parking Authority is waiting for the study team to provide them with exact information that will be developed in Phase 3 of this EA process, so they can provide a cost estimate.*

### **7) Comment from local resident:**

Thank you to the project team for a superb EA process. The St. Clair streetcar replacement issue is not just about the streetcars. We are looking at 20 years into the future and yet the community appears to be divided over choosing the best option to satisfy the needs of St. Clair. Spontaneous change is necessary for the benefit of this community. The proposed right of way will benefit increasing number of TTC travelers as well as business owners.

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### 8) Comment from local resident:

The dedicated right of way will cause more pollution and traffic. It will force cars onto neighbouring streets and will make these streets less safe for children.

### 9) Comment from local resident:

The business owners are very concerned, especially about clean air and the impacts of an exclusive right of way. We are unclear on the proposed exclusive right of way option. I ask those who support the right of way to take a closer look at the impacts in light of fair choice. We are looking forward to a revitalized, holistic approach.

### 10) Question from local resident:

Is St. Clair Avenue as wide as Spadina?

**Response from Jim Gough:** *No, it is not. The plans for St. Clair Avenue are specific to St. Clair Avenue.*

### 11) Question from local resident:

Is it possible to approach a preferred design as an electric/wireless design?

**Response from Mitch Stambler:** *We are currently working with engineers at the University of Toronto, but there are no wireless streetcars currently built and they are not in plans of this project for the future. It is, however, possible to have a centre power pole as a design option. It would be less of a clutter on streetscape design.*

### 12) Question from local resident:

If a chosen solution presents a physical and psychological barrier between the north and south of St. Clair, would pedestrian bridges be considered?

**Response from Jim Gough:** *It certainly is an option to be considered, however, a more economically viable option would be curb extensions or wider platforms in the centre of the road.*

### 13) Question from local resident:

St. Clair used to have a dedicated streetcar lane; are any of the reasons for abandoning it still relevant today?

**Response:** *The dedicated streetcar lane was removed as part of a make-work project during the Depression in the 1930's.*

### 14) Questions from local resident:

Is it feasible and desirable to elevate or sink the streetcar lane at selected spots along St. Clair Avenue (ex: Dufferin/ Old Weston Road) as it is done at the St. Clair West Station? Is there any difference between the various types of businesses on Spadina in relation to how they were impacted? Do streetcar tracks always have to run in the centre of the roadway? Is it feasible to have a turning lane between tracks, or will this interfere with traffic? It took a long time to

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redesign Spadina, how much is the construction part of the St. Clair going to cost? Has the TTC considered two- hour passes/transfers to encourage frequent stops for shoppers?

*[Note: Additional flip chart comment - no response provided]*

### 15) Comment from local resident:

The long-term and short-term benefits are not in any way connected to a single solution such as the dedicated right of way. The benefits, as presented in Alternatives #2 and #3, call for an increased TTC control of the traffic flow. There are many other ways to achieve these benefits.

### 16) Question from local resident:

There was a report in the media indicating that the dedicated right of way would save five minutes of transit travel on St. Clair from Yonge St. to Gunns Road. Is this true?

***Response from Mitch Stambler:*** *The University of Toronto is currently studying the area via detailed computer modeling and will soon know how the various alternatives affect the flow of traffic, including streetcar traffic, along St. Clair.*

### 17) Question from local resident:

Have you considered a soft barrier option? Have you considered implementing the dedicated right of way solely as a rush hour option?

***Response from Jim Gough:*** *Yes, part of Alternative #6 presents this option. We can also study it as a separate option.*

### 18) Comment and Question from local resident:

Since the EA process began we have not seen any data supporting your findings, or analysis that would allow us to conclude what the best option is for St. Clair Avenue. It seems that the data will be available to us when the final decision is made. We should build consensus through dialogue and then make judgments rather than have the project team make decisions for us. We want to continue to build this neighborhood not fight amongst each other. We should have a rigorous Social Impact Assessment to the businesses and residents on the St. Clair area. There is not enough congestion on St. Clair to support a 24-hour dedicated right of way. We need more data and analysis on alternatives #2, #3, and #4. We need an open, traceable process so we can believe the outcome will benefit everyone sharing the street.

***Response from Jim Gough:*** *We have put a lot of sincere effort to support this community. Our Workshop findings show that the project team and the community were in close agreement and continuing to work to choose a preferred solution.*

### 19) Comment from local resident:

There appears to be lack of feedback from the community's perspective. It also looks like this process is biased. Why not consider another innovative technology to replace the dedicated right of way? Where and when are the main impediments of through traffic? The problem spots should be discussed with the community to obtain their objective input.

*[Note: Additional flip chart comment - no response provided]*

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### 20) Comment from local resident:

Emissions kill people. Let us get moving with the dedicated right of way.

### 21) Question from local resident:

I am a representative of SCRIPT and believe the dedicated right of way is the answer. This has been a good consultative process but it has been going on for too long. It is now dividing our community. This process needs to begin with the design stage now. How can the proposed Alternative #9, combination of proposed alternatives, work if the dedicated right of way requires continuity to deliver the expected results?

**Response from Mitch Stambler:** *Consistent with the team's commitment and to be fair to the community we will continue to model and test all alternatives. We do not currently have detailed answers. The project team is going through this EA process step by step as required by the Environmental Assessment Act and we ask for your patience.*

### 22) Comment from local resident:

Alternative #6 seems most sensible. In the 1950s there was a dedicated right of way on St. Clair Avenue and we need to bring it back.

### 23) Comment from local resident:

Alternatives #2 and #3 are calling for temporary relief; we need a long term solution. Alternative #6 focuses on businesses where it should look at the community as a whole. We need more people to take the public transit. We need the dedicated right of way to address the reliability issues of public transit. Reliable transit will benefit both the residents and the businesses on St. Clair.

### 24) Comment from local resident:

The public transit service in this area has declined significantly, over the past few years. The traffic has increased. Looking into the future, Alternatives #2 and #3 are short-term solutions. We need to look into long-term solutions. At the end of this process we could all have big street festival to celebrate all the hard work as well as a preferred design.

### 25) Question from local resident:

We need a balance between cars and public transportation. Public transit will never be feasible to everyone in the community. Cars and trucks are important for delivery. As well, why not consider widening the street and improving the sidewalks with platforms to accommodate wheel chairs?

**Response from Jim Gough:** *We are looking at the delivery issues within specific locations on St. Clair Avenue. We are also looking at setting aside areas for trucks to improve accessibility. The proposal for wheel chair platforms is not technically feasible.*

### 26) Question from local resident:

I have been involved in more than fifteen EAs and this is one of the most open and fair process I have witnessed. People who shop via cars mainly shop in the "905" area, not downtown Toronto.

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I shop downtown Toronto and I would like to see an improved transit system. Will you study the TTC travel needs of the community?

**Response from Jim Gough:** *The “Transportation for Tomorrow” survey looks specifically at the travel needs of the whole City in detail. In addition, the City has also done a number of surveys (Resident, business, and customer) to better understand the St. Clair Avenue West community.*

**27) Question from local resident:**

In order to improve the performance of the public transit on St. Clair we need to re-focus the goal of this exercise. The word “minor” should be removed from Alternative #2. We need a solution to address specific problem: to increase the speed of streetcars. Which of the proposed alternatives would achieve this goal?

**Response from Mitch Stambler:** *Our study criteria are set up to measure how effective the public transit service is on St. Clair Avenue. Experience and analysis completed so far identifies that increased reliability of service on St Clair can be achieved best under an exclusive streetcar lanes option.*

**28) Questions from local resident:**

The surveys you conducted did not capture all of the people that use cars as their main mode of transportation. Out of all the people living on St. Clair, how many do you think rely on the public transit as their main mode of transportation? Why wasn't a subway considered as one of the alternative solutions in your study? What is the capacity of the four future parking lots currently considered?

**Response from Joanna Musters:**

*The area surveyed within 500 meters off the study area on St. Clair Avenue was not a cut and dry evaluation. The results depend on the destination of travelers. People who travel to downtown Toronto would most likely take the public transit option as opposed to people traveling to Scarborough, who would choose a car.*

**Response from Mitch Stambler:**

*The City of Toronto does not have the budget to provide 1 billion dollars for a six kilometer subway stretch. If the funds were available, St. Clair Avenue would not be on the top of the list of major avenues to have a subway extension implemented.*

**Response from Joanna Musters:**

*The total number of spaces planned by the Parking Authority is 100 spaces. We do not currently know how many parking spaces might be eliminated. This depends on a chosen alternative design. The project team is aware of the issue of laneways in the community, and we also need to address the needs of truck deliveries.*

**29) Comment from local resident:**

People oppose this project because the issues presented today affect their livelihood. Many business owners on St. Clair are looking for short term solution that will benefit their businesses. Many who oppose this project do not have the resources to conduct the proper research

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themselves. There is also a sense of biased opinion and lack of objectivity to the presented information. There is a need to demonstrate a fair and democratic process that considers all issues in question.

### **Conclusion**

**Joanna Musters** thanked the participants for coming and reminded everyone to provide comments by April 21, 2004 to the project team. She also announced that the next public meetings would follow at the end of May where the team will present the preferred design concepts and evaluations of the design concepts.

The meeting ended at 9:15 p.m.

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**Phase 2 Public Meeting: Wednesday, April 14, 2004**

**Joseph J. Piccininni Community Recreation Centre, 1369 St. Clair Ave. West**

**7:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.**

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Recorded attendance at the second Phase 2b public meeting totaled 350 individuals based on the sign-in sheets. Councillors Joe Mihevc and Cesar Palacio were also present.

### **Questions, Answers and Comments**

The following comments and questions were noted from the facilitated discussion session. The comments are attributed to individuals in cases where the speaker identified him or herself (e.g. resident, business owner) or specified that he or she represented a specific group or association. Responses from the project team are indicated in *italics*.

#### **1) Comment from local resident:**

The most effective approach to transit problems on St. Clair Avenue is the dedicated right of way. I believe there is a great potential to improve businesses along St. Clair Avenue, just like on Spadina.

#### **2) Comment from Councillor Cesar Pallacio (Ward 17):**

I am a big supporter of a fast, reliable public transit system. There have been many meetings with the community representatives regarding this project in the past few months. Understanding the concerns of St. Clair Avenue residents I would like to remind the project team that in the November 2002 joint City of Toronto- TTC Report, Feasibility of Reserved Streetcar Right-of-Way on St. Clair Avenue, three alternatives for the dedicated right of way for St. Clair Avenue were identified. The community should have been consulted on these alternatives. This community is very much opposed to the dedicated right of way. We cannot allow this project to destroy the character, spirit and the vitality of this neighbourhood.

*Response from Mitch Stambler: The study team is undertaking an objective study process and has not proposed a dedicated right of way and is evaluating various alternative solution.*

#### **3) Questions from local resident:**

St. Clair Avenue is not Spadina. Alternative #6 has a significant number of presentation slides as compared to the other proposed alternatives. None of the photographs presented reflect commercial streets with small businesses. How much is the TTC spending on this study? Who are the members of the Workshop groups that provided us with evaluations?

*Response from Jim Gough: The study team recognizes that St. Clair Avenue is unique in character. We intend to develop a model specific to address the needs of St. Clair Avenue. However, Spadina is appropriate to compare the effects of the proposed project on small businesses. The photographs presented are of commercial streets with many small businesses and residential areas, much similar to the make up of St. Clair Avenue.*

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*The Workshop participants were representative of wide commercial and residential sectors on St. Clair Avenue. The City of Toronto has a list of commercial representatives. The project team contacted the representatives to obtain a wide representation of the St. Clair community.*

**Response from Mitch Stambler:** *The study budget was originally \$325,000 but as a result of additional detailed work and community consultation, the budget has increased to \$500,000.*

### **4) Question from local resident:**

I choose to ride my bike over taking a streetcar due to reliability issues. Keele Street and St. Clair Avenue are congested due to streetcars short turning. When considering Alternative #9 and the separation of traffic, would the streetcars need to short turn?

**Response from Mitch Stambler:** *The study team did not decide what option should be pursued. Any alternative which allows for the public transit to move faster will certainly improve the reliability and service. However, with Alternative #9 there is a possibility of left turns causing some congestion and delays.*

### **5) Question from local resident:**

The study's problem statement does not speak to the safety of our community. We need to protect our communities.

**Response from Mitch Stambler:** *The statement was developed to promote sustainable neighbourhood growth. The project team is committed to this statement. Anything that affects your community affects the TTC and the City. People need and want improved transit in suburban areas. We have done extensive studies and concluded that people are attracted by better service than by reduced taxes.*

### **6) Question from local resident:**

I would like to see a solution in favour of public transit that maintains the well-being of this community. What is the best long-term solution that we have currently available?

**Response from Mitch Stambler:** *The team is committed to look at all of the proposed alternatives considering the input provided by the community. The team is not in a position to say which of the alternatives would present the best options for transit improvement. The answer to this question will come from the community as the process continues.*

### **7) Question from local resident:**

In the summary of Alternative #6 why are the workshop rankings either positive or marginal and most of the comments are negative?

**Response from Jim Gough:** *The comments are taken directly from the summary of responses from previous workshops. They represent the stakeholder's preferences.*

### **8) Question from local resident:**

Why can't seniors ride the public transit for free in Toronto?

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**Response from Mitch Stambler:** Any decision to provide special fares to seniors or students would result in revenue loss to the TTC and City Council would have to provide additional funding for maintenance of the public transit system.

### 9) Comment from local resident:

Only the plans that will keep private cars off the streetcar tracks will serve the purpose of increasing the public transit performance of St. Clair Avenue. There are numerous collisions that occur every year on St. Clair resulting in constant delays of the streetcar service and the thousands of people who rely on this service. For the TTC it is also a great cost to re-route streetcars.

### 10) Question from local resident:

How will the dedicated right of way benefit pedestrians on St. Clair Avenue, especially people getting on and off streetcars at stops that have no refuge islands?

**Response from Jim Gough:** We have not developed a detailed design yet; this is because no preferred design was selected. If an alternative with refuge islands is selected, it will improve pedestrian safety.

### 11) Comment from local resident:

This room holds approximately the equivalent number to fill four to five streetcars. During rush hours the TTC moves thousands of people along St. Clair. The TTC users are not well represented in this meeting.

### 12) Comment from local resident:

Upon entering this meeting, I felt very much harassed by the representatives of "Save Our St. Clair". Could the staff please address this complaint at the next meeting.

### 13) Comment from local resident:

We should be looking at ways to make the dedicated right of way work on St. Clair. A dedicated right of way design having addressed all of the community's concerns is the best way to revitalize business on St. Clair. I would like to thank the project team for their efforts and ask the community to trust the process.

### 14) Comment from local resident:

Local politicians should be listening to all concerns regarding this project, rather than focusing only on those who oppose the streetcar right of way.

### 15) Comment and Question from local resident:

I have no faith in this process and I feel the community is being lied to. Alternative #1 should have been called "track replacement" rather than "do nothing". There were conceptual drawings of three options for the dedicated right of way in 2002, why are they being hidden?

**Response:** The project team is evaluating the 9 Alternatives that have been identified as part of this EA process, this option includes dedicated right of way options (Alt 6). The three options that were presented in 2002 were part of a preliminary exercise to assess the possibility of doing

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*a study. The project team is committed to evaluating all the options identified in this phase of the study.*

### 16) Comment from local resident:

We need a long term solution that will help us create prosperous neighbourhoods. More cars and traffic will cause more pollution. Clogged roads are unsafe and unattractive to customers who shop in the St. Clair commercial strip. Improved public transit will guarantee profit for local businesses, as well as increase property value. We should work together.

### 17) Comment from local resident:

The project team is proposing a local solution to a regional problem. The traffic comes from the suburbs to the centre of Toronto. The subway is the only solution to take away the traffic congestion from downtown Toronto.

### 18) Question from local resident:

This community should have been consulted from the very beginning of this process. We recognize that the improvements to public transit are a vital element in the creation of a great city. We are not against the TTC. The question is: How will this improved public transit system revitalize this community?

***Response from Mitch Stambler:*** *We are carrying out a detailed study on how the proposed alternatives would affect this community. The project team is going through an extraordinary effort to get input from the community on the preferred design solutions. This is our sixth public meeting. We consistently and regularly receive input via telephone, surveys, mail and e-mail.*

*The project represents an excellent opportunity to improve the streetscape of St Clair through tree plantings, benches, medians and public art initiatives.*

### 19) Comment from local resident:

Smog days in Toronto have increased 26 times in the last decade. If we are presented with an opportunity to improve our public transit system we should gladly accept it. We need to plan and think of future generations.

### 20) Comment and Question from local resident:

TTC obviously has insufficient funds to be able to repair our public transit system. Our subway needs major repairs. We also need a reliable “on-time” streetcar service on St. Clair. When allowing for a dedicated right of way, have you considered the access for emergency vehicles?

***Response from Mitch Stambler:*** *Emergency vehicles are allowed to bypass traffic and congestion at all times. According the Fire and Police servicing Spadina Avenue, the dedicated right of way allows the emergency vehicles to respond faster than before the right of way was constructed.*

### 21) Question from local resident:

If the study team is objective about this process, why was the majority of this presentation spent on Alternative #6?

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**Response from Jim Gough:** *The study team allocated more time to the presentation of Alternative #6 because through our previous consultations, the community displayed most interest in this option.*

**22) Question from local resident:**

As a resident and a business owner, I am very worried that we will not survive the construction period. How do you plan on addressing business fears during the construction?

**Response from Jim Gough:** *The study team is extensively and comprehensively looking at the construction process and its potential negative effects on local businesses. We are consulting with the community and trying to come up with ways to mitigate the negative effects and keep the disruptions resulting from construction activities to a minimum.*

**23) Comment from local resident:**

St. Clair Avenue is not as it used to be in the 1960s. The dedicated right of way is the way to improve the vitality of the commercial neighbourhood on St. Clair. The dedicated right of way is not a barrier; it is an opportunity for better public transit, environment and increased safety.

**24) Comment from local resident:**

We would like to see a detailed analysis from the Emergency Services on how the dedicated right of way would benefit their services on St. Clair Avenue.

**Response from Mitch Stambler:** *We are working together with the Emergency Services officials. However, they are currently unable to provide any comments regarding the benefits of the dedicated right of way on St. Clair Avenue to the emergency vehicles because they need to look at the details of the design first. The study team has not yet reached the stage of this study process where an alternative design has been selected for the St. Clair Avenue.*

**25) Comment from local resident:**

Last Fall, the residents of this community provided the study team with their concerns and issues. We have not yet had a response to our concerns. Where is the justification for the dedicated right of way? Where is the data? The information we have been provided with by the Emergency Services officials seem to be conflicting with your statements on the benefits of dedicated right of way to the emergency service vehicles on St. Clair West. We need accurate data and justification for the dedicated right of way.

**Response from Jim Gough:** *The study team presented a great deal of information to the community and we will be happy to review it if required. When looking at social impact assessment, the team focused on Spadina data to allow us to look at the effects of the proposed project on local businesses.*

*We are unsure where the different information is coming from regarding the Emergency response vehicles' access on a dedicated right of way. We are working closely with the Emergency Services officials and on Spadina, they are allowed to by pass traffic and congestion at all times.*

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26) Comment from local resident:

Streetcars on St. Clair have the capacity to bring more shoppers to local businesses. We need to consider the air quality in Toronto. There are 2,000 deaths in Toronto every year due to smog! How many parking spaces are guaranteed on St. Clair Avenue?

**Response from Jim Gough:** *The next stages of this study will look at details on space and parking availability. The preferred alternative will be designed specifically to address the parking needs of St. Clair Avenue.*

27) Question from local resident:

How much of this study is being paid for by taxpayers?

**Response from Mitch Stambler:** *We have some funding from the Provincial as well as the Federal governments to improve our public transportation system. The taxpayers' money provided for this project will be spent to the benefit of this community.*

28) Comment from Mike Foderick (Councillor Palacio's Executive Assistant):

St. Clair is a diverse ethnic community where people speak many languages. The community does not feel that they have been allowed an opportunity to understand the project adequately due to language barriers.

29) Question from local resident:

How much is this EA process costing you? The TTC and the City is not listening to the community's concerns. We do not want a dedicated right of way on St. Clair Avenue. We have not received any new information to address our needs since the beginning of this process.

**Response from Mitch Stambler:** *There was \$325,000 budgeted for this process. The project is being extended at the request of this community and will approach \$500,000. We are following a process dictated by provincial legislation. There is no clear evidence of what the community wants, only what certain representatives want.*

30) Question from local resident:

It is evident that this community is divided with regards to options for preferred design. Is the City going to provide a solution that will address the needs of this community as a whole?

**Response from Rod MacPhail:** *It is a provincial requirement that we follow this process and the project team asks for your patience. We are currently involved in six environmental assessments across the City that all involve public consultations. We are now moving into a Phase of this process that will look at the details of short-listed alternatives. There may be various solutions for various parts of the St. Clair Avenue and they will be chosen based on your comments. We are conducting this study because the City will invest 25 million dollars to replace streetcar tracks on St. Clair Avenue and we want this project to present opportunities to St. Clair Avenue. The City of Toronto is a streetcar service leader and we would like to set a unique precedent on St. Clair. We ask for your patience so that we may come up with a solution that*

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*will best address the needs of the St. Clair community. We want to make an informed decision that will serve this community for decades to come.*

### **31) Comment from local resident:**

The public transit improvements are a very good way to improve life on St. Clair Avenue. To eliminate cars is a foolish idea; people who drive to St. Clair have their reasons for using them. If we need to replace streetcar tracks then we should do it, but without building barriers. Maybe barriers can be considered 10 years from now. We need incremental changes on St. Clair.

### **32) Comment from local resident:**

We are tired of all the delays due to traffic and accidents along St. Clair Avenue west of Lansdowne. The dedicated right of way is the only solution and it should be implemented from Yonge Street all the way to Gunns Road.

### **33) Comment from local resident:**

When people visit a great city like Toronto they take the public transit. The dedicated right of way will bring more tourists to the St. Clair area. Most people that oppose this project complain about the lack of detailed information. How can anyone oppose something that they do not have information available on? Please do not pass judgments and create opinions if you do not have enough facts.

## **Conclusion**

**Joanna Musters** thanked everyone for coming and reminded everyone to provide comments by April 21, 2004 to the project team. She also announced that the next public meetings would follow at the end of May where the project team will present the preferred design concepts and evaluations of the design concepts.

The meeting ended at 10:00 p.m.