

MOTION

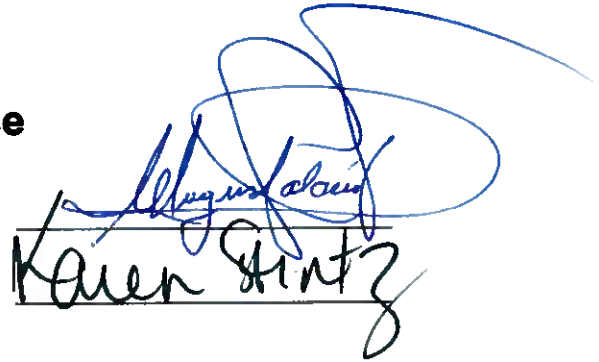
Toronto Transit Commission

December 15th, 2010

Declaring the TTC an Essential Service

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SUMMARY:

The time has come for the Toronto Transit Commission and Toronto City Council to formally request the Premier of Ontario to introduce legislation deeming transit service an essential service in Toronto. On December 9th, 2010 the City of Toronto's Executive Committee endorsed a proposal to declare the TTC an Essential Service in Toronto (EX1.8).

What the TTC Means to Toronto

The TTC carries approximately 1.5 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.

Over one million Torontonians rely on the TTC to get to work, school and conduct their lives each day. The City of Toronto is simply not designed to function without an operating public transit system.

The Social, Economic and Environmental Cost of Transit Strikes

TTC strikes are an economic, social and environmental disaster that grinds the entire GTA to a standstill. The cost of transit strikes in Toronto has been estimated to be \$50 Million per day in lost economic activity. The environmental harm caused by the complete absence of transit and thousands of additional vehicles on the road is incalculable. 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.

The TTC is Already a *De Facto* Essential Service

When a strike occurs the Province quickly legislates the TTC back to work forcing both parties into some form of binding arbitration. Formally declaring the TTC an essential service merely acknowledges this fact and spares the City the social, economic, and environmental damage and disruption caused by the strike.

Provincial legislation that deems transit an essential service can be worded to make the TTC's ability to pay a paramount consideration.

The Message from Torontonians is Clear

Recent polls have consistently shown that over 75% of Torontonians support declaring the TTC an essential service (sometimes as high as 90%), and in the recent election over 83% of Torontonians voted for Mayoral candidates who included declaring the TTC an essential service as an important part of their transit platform. In particular, declaring the TTC an essential service is a central part of the strong mandate Torontonians have given to Mayor Rob Ford. The Toronto Star, Toronto Sun, National Post and Canadian Federation of Independent Business have all repeatedly expressed their view that this is long overdue and in the best interests of the City of Toronto.

Premier Dalton McGuinty has made it clear that if the new Toronto City Council asks, his government will act quickly and work with the City to deem the TTC an essential service. This has become urgent because of upcoming labour negotiations in the spring. Toronto cannot afford a winter 2011 strike in the midst of difficult economic times.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The Toronto Transit Commission hereby formally expresses its support for Transit to be declared an essential service in Toronto.