



Dear Mayor Olivia Chow and Members of Toronto City Council,

More Transit Southern Ontario strongly supports item **MM35.15 - Speeding Up Light Rail Transit and Streetcars.**

When the Finch West LRT opened earlier this month, transit riders were excited for the promise of a faster, smoother, and more reliable ride on Finch Avenue West. However, this excitement quickly faded away as riders realized that the new LRT was slower than the old buses it was meant to replace. Over the last week, transit riders have watched as their trains routinely get stopped at red lights, wait for left-turning cars before moving forward, and regularly move at half the speed limit while cars, trucks, and shuttle buses zoom by.

We support this motion to pursue aggressive signal priority on the Finch West LRT and the soon-to-be-open Eglinton Crosstown LRT to significantly reduce the scheduled travel time and improve reliability.

We want the city to allow for phase insertion at intersections for a dedicated transit phase so light rail vehicles carrying more than 300 passengers aren't stuck waiting for a few single-occupancy vehicles making left turns. Additionally, we want the city to give aggressive permission for light rail vehicles to shorten red lights crossing LRT routes, and extend green lights for longer and more often to allow light rail vehicles to make it through intersections before the red light.

We also want to bring attention to the operating practices impacting the Finch West LRT and urge that updates to these practices be included in this motion. These practices include a 25km/h speed limit through intersections, as well as the CBTC signalling system being used to functionally limit light rail vehicles to 30km/h for most of the route. We urge that these restrictive speed limits be removed so that light rail vehicles can travel at 60km/h along Finch West as the city allowed for in item **IE23.17 - Designation of Reserved Lane and Speed Limits on Reserved Lane for Finch West Light Rail Transit Segregated Right of Way.** We urge that any similar practices to also be eliminated on the Eglinton Crosstown LRT before it begins service.

While the subpar travel speed on Line 6 was a shock for residents along the route, regular users of the existing streetcar network are all too familiar with poor reliability and slow service. More Transit Southern Ontario strongly support the measures in this motion that improve streetcar network speed and reliability, including signal timing adjustments, a more aggressive transit signal priority policy, deploying traffic agents at key intersections to prevent blocked streetcars, and recommendations for removing on-street parking and restricting left turns during high-peak periods on key streetcar routes, as well expediting transit signal priority activations at intersections on the surface transit network where the required technology is not currently installed.



Additionally, we want to bring attention to the outdated and broken system used to align track switches on the streetcar network, which significantly slows down service and reduces reliability. Due to unreliability, this system forces operators to come to a complete stop before a track switch to confirm it is aligned properly, limits streetcars to 10km/h through track switches and track junctions, and doesn't allow two streetcars to pass through an intersection at the same time. We also want to bring attention to the fact that the city uses and continues to install one-hundred-year-old single-point track switch technology rather than modern dual-point track switches.

Streetcar systems around the world, as well as the Finch West LRT, Eglinton Crosstown LRT, and Waterloo's LRT system, all use modern track switch technology and do not face these operational challenges. We urge that a review of the outdated track switch system on the TTC streetcar network be included in this motion.

Toronto's streetcar network and LRT lines move hundreds of thousands of transit riders each day, and we must ensure that these riders can get to their destinations quickly and reliably.

Sincerely,
Haadhi Faizal
Co-Executive Director, More Transit Southern Ontario