

700 Lawrence Ave. W., Suite 310
Toronto, Ontario M6A 3B4

Tel: (416) 367-3313
1-800-267-6817 (Ont)
Fax: (416) 367-2844
E-mail: info@opha.on.ca
www.opha.on.ca

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Lieutenant Governor of Ontario

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Carol Timmings
E-mail: ctimmings@opha.on.ca

Executive Director

Connie Uetrecht
E-mail: cuetrecht@opha.on.ca

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Professionals in Public Health

Public Health Research, Education
and Development (PHRED)
Program

September 24, 2004

To: **David Miller, Mayor of City of Toronto**
Toronto City Hall
2nd Floor, 100 Queen St. West
Toronto ON M5H 2N2

Dear Mayor Miller,

I am writing on behalf of the Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA) to applaud the decision to approve the proposal to construct designated streetcar lanes along St. Clair Avenue, made by the Planning and Transportation, Works, and Policy and Finance Committees and the Toronto Transit Commission the week of September 13, 2004, and to encourage you to vote for the designation of streetcar lanes for St. Clair Avenue on September 28, 2004. Similar requests have also been issued to all Toronto City Councillors.

Founded in 1949, the OPHA is a volunteer, non-profit, charitable organization established to provide leadership on issues affecting the public's health and to strengthen the impact of people who are active in public and community health throughout Ontario. The OPHA represents over 3000 individuals and constituent societies from various sectors and disciplines working in public and community health throughout Ontario. Public health includes health promotion, disease prevention, health protection and population health strategies aimed at improving the determinants of health for individuals and communities.

The OPHA supports the designated streetcar lane proposal for St. Clair Avenue because we support public policies that promise to relieve traffic congestion, improve air quality and promote physical activity by encouraging a shift from single-passenger vehicles to public transportation and alternative modes of transportation, such as walking and biking.

Toronto Public Health has estimated that air pollution contributes to approximately 1700 premature deaths and 6000 hospital admissions each year in the City of Toronto. It has also reported that cars are one of the more significant sources of air pollution within the City. In its report, "Agenda for Action on Air and Health", Toronto Public Health observes that "to reduce air emissions from the transportation sector in Toronto, there must be a significant shift from single-passenger vehicles to public transit" (TPH, July 2004).

We also believe that the designated streetcar lanes will calm traffic along St. Clair Avenue.

The OPHA would be pleased to provide comment on future planning with respect to transportation strategies and public health issues such as air pollution, noise pollution, access and equity and physical activity.

Sincerely

Peter Wiebe
President

cc. Theresa Schumilas, Chair, OPHA Environmental Health Workgroup