

**Appendix 2 – Philadelphia Deputy Mayor’s remarks on successful streetcar/Emergency Vehicle coordination**



**CITY OF PHILADELPHIA**

MAYOR'S OFFICE OF TRANSPORTATION  
Municipal Services Bldg., Rm. 930  
1401 John F. Kennedy Boulevard  
Philadelphia, PA 19102-1667

DENISE L. GOREN  
Deputy Mayor

March 16, 1999

Professor Franklyn P. Salimbene  
Assistant Professor of Law  
51 Eliot Street  
Boston, MA 02130

Re: In-Street Streetcar Operations and Emergency Vehicles; Your Letter of 25 February 1999

Dear Professor Salimbene:

SEPTA's City Transit Division (CTD) currently operates five streetcar routes which, as is the case with Boston's streetcar system, are referred to collectively as the Green Line and converge into a common downtown subway. The non-duplicative round-trip mileage for these five routes is about 45 miles, of which 5 miles are in subway, with another 2 miles located in a surface reservation parallel to the vehicular roadway. The remaining 38 route-miles share travel lanes with vehicular traffic. Of these 38 route-miles, 36 miles are situated in narrow two-way streets, with one travel lane and one parking lane in each direction. The curb-to-curb widths of these streets vary between 34 and 50 feet. One mile is situated in a wide two-way street (about 60 feet wide) with two travel lanes and one parking lane in each direction. One mile is situated in narrow one-way streets (about 26 feet wide) with one travel lane and two parking lanes.

SEPTA's CTD also includes three other streetcar routes which are being operated temporarily with buses pending acquisition of new light rail vehicles. These three routes comprise a total of 57 non-duplicative round-trip route miles. Of these 57 route-miles, 13 miles lie in wide two-way streets (about 60 to 80 feet in width) with two travel lanes and one parking lane in each direction (in some sections streetcars have dedicated lanes). Another 33 miles lie in narrow two-way streets (34 to 50 feet in width) with one travel lane and one parking lane in each direction. The remaining 11 miles lie in narrow one-way streets (26 to 30 feet wide) typically with one travel lane and two parking lanes.

A summary of the mileage characteristics of these eight streetcar routes is as follows:

SUBWAY	5
SURFACE RESERVATION	2
WIDE TWO-WAY STREETS	14
NARROW TWO-WAY STREETS	69
NARROW ONE-WAY STREETS	<u>12</u>
TOTAL ROUTE-MILES	<u>102</u>

**Appendix 2 (cont'd) – Philadelphia Deputy Mayor’s remarks on successful streetcar/Emergency Vehicle coordination**

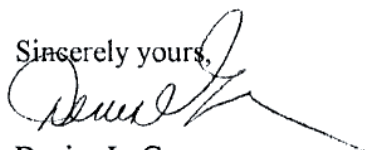
Professor Salimbene  
March 16, 1999  
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As for streetcars causing delays to emergency vehicles responses, let me reiterate that I am not aware of any such criticism having been leveled here in Philadelphia during my tenure, which commenced in 1984. No street, particularly those with narrow widths commonplace in an older city such as Philadelphia, can efficiently accommodate all the usual functions: vehicular traffic, transit operations, taxi service, auto parking, truck deliveries, utility and service vehicles, vending, pedestrians, emergency (police/fire/rescue) vehicles, etc. It is also axiomatic that stakeholders in each of these particular functions want their activities prioritized, even to the extent that other functions are restricted or even prohibited. My observations are that queues of general traffic, consisting mainly of autos, trucks, and taxis, cause more delay to emergency vehicles than do buses or streetcars. And, of course, if transit vehicles were replaced entirely by private autos, the congestion would be exponentially worse.

I am aware that some fire departments dislike streetcars or trackless trolleys because of overhead wires. But this strikes me as not terribly different than other overhead utility lines, trees, aerial traffic signal and roadway sign hardware, and other obstructions. Parked vehicles also are a chronic impediment. If energized trolley wires pose a problem to fire fighting activity, modern transit communications systems allow central power dispatchers to de-energize the wires promptly.

Sometimes police and fire equipment at an emergency scene block vehicular and transit travel needlessly or for duration longer than necessary. Clearly, a streetcar route is more seriously impacted under such circumstances. But all street users can benefit from internal policies that require emergency personnel to minimize intrusions into the neighborhood, consistent with the bona fide needs in carrying out their duties. A fire truck shouldn't block a street for an hour while a tree-bound cat is being rescued.

In all candor (and under the rubric of what one might call dishonor among thieves) transit managers who dislike streetcars (because it makes their work somewhat more difficult, regardless of the ridership and external benefits) are not beyond co-opting others, such as police, fire, or traffic officials, in expressing opposition to continuance of streetcar service. It seems to me that, with very few exceptions, the debate over whether streetcars or buses should serve a particular route should pivot around the market for and economics of transit service, rather than the extraneous agendas of other entities with no direct stake in transit service planning and operation.

Sincerely yours,  
  
Denise L. Goren  
Deputy Mayor  
Transportation

**Appendix 2 (cont'd) – Toronto Transit Commission remarks on successful streetcar/Emergency Vehicle coordination**



**TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION**



HOWARD MOSCOE  
CHAIR

ROB DAVIS  
VICE-CHAIR

BRIAN ASHTON  
BLAKE F. KINAHAN  
CHRIS KORWIN-KLUCZYNSKI  
JOE MIHEVC  
DAVID MILLER  
COMMISSIONERS

DAVID L. GUNN  
CHIEF GENERAL MANAGER

VINCENT RODO  
GENERAL SECRETARY

March 3, 1999

Franklyn P. Salimbene  
Assistant Professor of Law  
Bentley College  
51 Eliot Street  
Boston, Massachusetts  
02130

Dear Franklyn,

I received your letter today and as discussed on February 16, 1999, offer the following responses to your query.

Like Boston, Toronto has routes where streetcars operate along streets that are only wide enough for one travel lane in each direction and one parking lane on each side of the street. Fire trucks and other emergency response vehicles also operate on these streets. Although Streetcar Operators cannot pull over to the side of the road, they are trained to position the streetcar to best accommodate approaching emergency vehicles, for example; not stopping beside another streetcar, or stopping at a gap in the parked cars.

I chair the Emergency Procedures Committee, which is comprised of representatives from municipal Police, Fire and Ambulance services, as well as several TTC departments. This committee meets regularly and provides a forum to: develop joint operating procedures; develop, test, evaluate, review and revise emergency response plans and procedures; test and evaluate emergency equipment; and discuss items of mutual concern. The committee has been meeting since 1981 and the issue of streetcars obstructing emergency vehicles has not been raised.

I have polled several representatives from each emergency response agency, as well as several TTC authorities, to determine if the presence of streetcars, on any route has ever delayed emergency response to an incident. They all responded; not that anyone could remember.

I have 24 years experience in the Fire Prevention Section at TTC and liaising with emergency response agencies. I support your belief that good fire service and good streetcar service can co-exist and hope that my responses aid you with your research.

**Appendix 2 (cont'd) – Toronto Transit Commission remarks on successful  
streetcar/Emergency Vehicle coordination**

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If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at 416-393-3016  
or by fax, at 416-397-8204.

Yours sincerely,



Duncan Harrop  
Superintendent - Fire Prevention

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Appendix 2 (cont'd) – San Francisco Fire Department remarks on successful streetcar/Emergency Vehicle coordination

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO  
**SAN FRANCISCO FIRE DEPARTMENT**

ROBERT L. DEMMONS, *Chief of Department*  
HAROLD E. GAMBLE, *Deputy Chief of Operations*  
PATRICK W. WHITE, *Deputy Chief of Administration*



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SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94107-2015  
(415) 558-3400

March 30, 1999

Mr. Franklyn P. Salimbene  
Assistant Professor of law  
Bentley College  
51 Eliot Street  
Waltham, Massachusetts 02130

Dear Mr. Salimbene:

Your letter of February 25, 1999, regarding streetcar operations and emergency vehicles has been referred to me for handling. I directed three of our fire suppression assistant chiefs to give their input and opinions on this matter as well as drawing on my own experience during my time in the San Francisco Fire Department.

In the City of San Francisco streetcars and cable cars operate on in-street tracks. Most of the streets where these systems operate provide at least one lane in each direction for vehicle traffic. Other streets have two lanes of traffic, one in each direction, accommodating street cars, cable cars and vehicle traffic.

Our experience is that delays during emergency response caused by in-street street car or cable car operations are very rare. For such a delay to occur, two streetcars or cable cars, traveling in opposite directions, would have to be stopped adjacent to each other at the time an emergency vehicle approached. Additionally, our apparatus and vehicle drivers are aware of such possibilities, and avoid traveling on streets with in-street tracks whenever possible. As you can see, this type of situation can and probably does occur, but very seldom.

Regarding whether or not the issue of response times along narrow streets has been raised within the Fire Department, we do not track response time by the route traveled, and the issue has not come up in discussion in the Department, to my knowledge.

Thank you for your interest in the San Francisco Fire Department. If you have any further questions, I can be reached at 415-558-3411.

Very truly yours,



Patrick White  
Deputy Chief, Administration