

Alternative Fire Truck Backing for Metro78

The diagram on the following page shows an alternative exit for fire trucks from the new N/S alley behind the Metro78 project. It illustrates the north building, but obviously it is symmetrical and would apply to the south building.

We constructed this diagram by copying the image of the fire truck sweep turning into the alley in the Appendix of the TIA. In this case the fire truck turns left.

The TIA focuses then on how the fire truck exits from the lane. The TIA assumes the fire truck backs south then turns into the plaza between the buildings. It then goes forward as far as it can toward 78 Avenue westbound, then backs again to get a better angle onto 78 Avenue and avoid eliminating on-street car parking.

Backing the fire truck into the plaza took about half the plaza area. This would be a rare event, but would constrain the plaza to have no landscaping, benches, signs, play structures, or trees. It would also very much be accessible to vehicles large and small. Nearby residents would be rightly concerned with the area being used as a parking and loading area, greatly diminishing the plaza's value. Even worse, residents have been long complaining about illegal LRT Park and Hide activity that the City does not enforce.

In a May meeting with residents and the City, A Path Less Travelled requested an alternative backing plan. First, we asked if the plaza was not

an area that Fire Services needs to fight a fire. We were told it was not needed for firefighting.

We then proposed that the truck backs south, fully crossing 78 Avenue to the opposite north/south alley, then pulls forward to turn left to westbound 78 Avenue. At that time the City's engineering representative stated this alternative was already contemplated and rejected because it would eliminate 8 to 10 parking stalls as the truck swung out onto 78 Avenue.

The answer seemed reasonable to us so we moved on, although we did point out that the City chose an alternative that favoured parking over a better streetscaped plaza, without resident input.

Later in June we looked more closely at the issue. We realised that the fire truck makes a left turn coming out of the south lane. So we copied the left turn from the TIA, then moved the image to the south lane (ignore the image of parked cars in the lane, it's because we copied the image from 78 Avenue to get the left turn). When we checked the truck swing, finding that as many as four car parking spots would be lost, but not 8 to 10. In addition, if we were to allow the fire truck to back again to get a better angle onto 78 Avenue, as it did in the TIA, we believe that no car parking would be eliminated.

We asked the City's transportation engineers to examine our evidence and to reconsider their position. We also asked them to provide the evidence that supported their claim of losing 8 to 10 parking stalls. They

refused and simply parroted an email from Fire Services that they were satisfied with the developer's proposal. The parroted response was completely silent on our proposal.

In other words, if we applied the same principles used in the TIA, and accepted by the City's transportation engineers, we could just as easily

turn the fire truck around AND the plaza design would not be significantly constrained by the rare event of a fire truck backing into it. Why are the City's transportation engineers unwilling to revisit this issue, and worse, why are they unwilling to engage legitimate resident questions?

