



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Torontonians reject TTC plan to eliminate subway guards, new poll reveals

The majority of riders would feel unsafe in a train operated by just one crew member.

Riders insist on public consultation before this and other safety-related decisions are made

Very few agree with TTC "One Person Train Operation" scheme

Findings have electoral implications for city councillors

TORONTO, MARCH 15, 2021. In a new poll by Corbett Communications, commissioned by Toronto's transit workers union, among 2715 randomly selected Toronto residents, it is abundantly clear they do not agree with (68%), nor approve of (71%) TTC management's plan to eliminate the subway guards, one of only two crew members on the city's subway trains. In fact, many residents (26%) feel there should be more than two crew members per train during the pandemic.

Two thirds of Torontonians believe this is an unwise decision (65%), as many as more than a third think it a "very/extremely unwise decision" and one fifth regard it as an "extremely unwise decision" (21%).

Among the most common reasons respondents find this to be an unwise decision are that the subway guard is necessary to evacuate the train if there is an accident (41%), that the guard backs up the operator in case accident or illness befalls him or her (39%) and that the guard protects against people or bags being caught in closing subway doors (30%).

The wide majority say they would feel unsafe on a subway train crewed by just one individual (60%), and as many as 3-in-10 say they would feel "very/extremely unsafe" (29%), while fully one tenth adopt the most negative position ("would feel extremely unsafe" - 12%).

In addition to disagreeing with the TTC's decision to eliminate the guard (68%) and disapproving of the decision (71%), respondents are equally clear that they disagree with TTC management's decision not to seek public input into this decision (69%). A similar proportion say they disapprove of this decision not to consult the public (67%).

In explaining their level of disagreement and disapproval with these decisions, the wide majority of Torontonians say it is important that public consultation must occur before important safety-related decisions like eliminating the guard are made by TTC (84%), as many as two thirds think it is "very" or "extremely important" (66%) while more than 4-in-10 think it is "extremely important" (42%).

As many as 6-in-10 residents say they would support public consultation on this and other safety-related decisions (60%), while one third say they would "strongly support" it (32%).

In a demonstration of their commitment to transparency by the TTC on this file, fully 4-in-10 Torontonians say they would be less likely to vote for a city councilor who did not support public consultation on this safety decision and other (43%), while one fifth say they will be "much less likely" to vote for a councilor who doesn't publicly support public consultation on important TTC safety decisions (17%).

"The findings couldn't be clearer; Toronto residents are surprised and shocked that TTC management would make a decision with such profound safety implications for riders without consulting the public first. Moreover, they are consistent in their opposition to the decision to eliminate the subway guards, a position they see as critical to the safe and smooth operation of the subway" said John Corbett, principal at Corbett Communications. John may be reached at (416) 702 5582, or at john@corbettcommunications.com.

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Methodology

This poll was conducted by Corbett Communications, using Interactive Voice Response (Smart IVR) calling technology, among a randomly selected sample of 2715 Torontonians, 18 years and older. The margin of error for findings on a sample of this size is plus or minus 2%, 19 out of 20 times asking (the 95% confidence level).

Corbett Communications is a Canadian-owned, full-service, Toronto-based market research and polling firm.