

# TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION REPORT NO.

**MEETING DATE:** April 6, 2011

**SUBJECT:** TRANSIT SERVICE TO VARIETY VILLAGE - INTERIM UPDATE

## **ACTION ITEM**

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended the Commission forward this report to Variety Village and Councillor Gary Crawford, noting that:

- the TTC's Wheel-Trans Community Link to-the-door bus service to Variety Village, which has been in operation since 2007, was significantly improved on January 3, 2011, through an expansion of hours to match the weekday hours of Variety Village, through the improvement of the frequency of this service from hourly to every 30 minutes, and through the dedication of this service to operate express and exclusively between Variety Village and Main Street subway station;
- the service is currently carrying a total of approximately 45 customer-trips per day;
- the TTC operates four other transit services to or near Variety Village, including Wheel-Trans to-the-door service for people with disabilities that, which prevent their use of regular-route service;
- it would be possible to modify one of these other services to serve Variety Village, although any such modification is projected to be an overall inconvenience to TTC customers;
- the modification which would have the least detrimental effect on existing customers would be to change the 12 KINGSTON RD bus route so that every second bus operates via Birchmount Road and Danforth Avenue, with the introduction of a new stop on Danforth Avenue in front of Variety Village;
- it would be possible to implement this modified service effective May 8, 2011;
- the 12 KINGSTON RD bus route operates from Victoria Park subway station which is currently undergoing renovations and will become accessible in the summer or early fall of 2011;
- if this route change were to be implemented, it would be prudent to eliminate the Community Link service to Variety Village, once Victoria Park Station is accessible, in order to avoid a wasteful duplication of service and to allow those resources to be re-allocated to other much needed Wheel-Trans operations.

### **FUNDING**

This report has no effect on the TTC's operating or capital budgets.

**BACKGROUND**

At its meeting of December 15, 2010, the Commission received a report and presentation regarding service to Variety Village. The Commission requested that staff provide a follow-up report in six months regarding the service being provided. The purpose of the current report is to provide the Commission with an interim update on service to Variety Village.

**DISCUSSION**

On January 3, 2011, the TTC initiated a new fixed route, fully dedicated, half-hourly 406 VARIETY VILLAGE COMMUNITY LINK bus service operating directly between Main Street Station and the front door of Variety Village. This fully accessible service, which is provided by a Wheel-Trans bus, operates from an accessible subway station and is available for anyone to use (ambulatory and non-ambulatory, Wheel-Trans registrants and people who are not Wheel-Trans registrants). It operates on weekdays from 6:45am till 10pm, to match Variety Village's operating hours. In support of the trial of this improved service, specially designed signage was created and has been placed in prominent and visible locations at both Main Street Subway Station and Variety Village. The service has also been promoted on the TTC's website and through various Wheel-Trans communications.

A number of ridership counts have been taken on the service between January and now, and they show that approximately 45 people per day are using the service, of whom 4%-15% are non-ambulatory. As people become more aware and familiar with the service, it is hoped that this ridership will increase. Since the Community Link service was initiated in January, the TTC has not received any direct customer feedback regarding this service to Variety Village.

The Community Link service is provided in addition to the four other services which the TTC operates to or near to Variety Village, including the 20 CLIFFSIDE bus route and Wheel-Trans to-the-door service. The 20 CLIFFSIDE bus route provides the closest and most convenient regular route service for travel to and from Variety Village. The closest stop on the 20 CLIFFSIDE route to Variety Village is on Highview Avenue at Anneke Street, which is a 280-metre (less than a five-minute) walk from Variety Village. This route, therefore, provides very-nearby access. This route and stop location are not well known to all customers, however, and the TTC is working to inform patrons of Variety Village about the stop and the service. For people with disabilities who cannot negotiate this walk, or who use mobility devices, the TTC also provides door-to-door Wheel-Trans service. Taking this into account, there are three very convenient options for people travelling to Variety Village: the new dedicated to-the-door 406 VARIETY VILLAGE COMMUNITY LINK service, the 20 CLIFFSIDE bus route, and Wheel-Trans to-the-door service.

At the Commission meeting of December 15, 2010, it was noted that it would be possible to serve Variety Village by altering one of the nearby regular route services, though any such modification would make service, overall, worse for TTC customers. The least

detrimental change for existing TTC customers would be to modify the 12 KINGSTON RD bus route so that every second bus, in both directions, would operate via Birchmount Road and Danforth Avenue (stopping in front of Variety Village), and then re-join the regular routing on Kingston Road. Such a change could be implemented starting May 8, 2011. The 12 KINGSTON RD routes operates to and from Victoria Park Station which is currently under renovation and will become accessible in the summer or late fall of 2011.

If this change to the 12 KINGSTON RD route were to be implemented, then it would be prudent to eliminate the Community Link service to Variety Village, once Victoria Park Station is accessible, in order to avoid a wasteful duplication of service and to allow those resources to be re-allocated to other much needed Wheel-Trans operations.

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March 21, 2011

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