



TTC 2021 Annual Service Plan Stakeholder Meeting Summary

Thursday, September 17, 2020

3:00 – 4:30 pm

Meeting held online

Overview

On Thursday, September 17, 2020, the TTC hosted the first of two planned rounds of stakeholder consultation about its 2021 Annual Service Plan. The stakeholder group engaged includes representatives of city-wide and area-specific organizations with an interest in transit and service planning (see Participant List attached). This first round of consultation included both an afternoon session and an evening session, both of which covered the same material and discussion questions, and, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, took place via web conferencing software. This stakeholder meeting summary covers the afternoon session, which ran from 3:00 – 4:30 p.m.

Approximately 25 people attended the afternoon stakeholder meeting, along with staff from the TTC and Swerhun Inc., the third-party facilitation and engagement team retained by the TTC to support the consultation process on the 2021 Annual Service Plan. The purpose of the meeting was to share an overview of the 5-Year Service Plan and a 2020 service update and to present and seek feedback on emerging priorities and initiatives for the 2021 Annual Service Plan. The meeting included an overview presentation, question and answer period, and a facilitated, plenary discussion.

Attachments included: Attachment A. Agenda, Attachment B. Participant List, Attachment C. Post-Meeting Feedback.

Swerhun Inc. prepared this meeting summary and shared a draft with participants for review before finalizing it. The intent of this summary is to capture the range of feedback shared at the workshop; it is not intended to serve as verbatim transcript.

This summary includes four sections:

- Key themes in feedback shared at the meeting
- Questions of clarification
- Detailed feedback
- Next steps

Key themes in the feedback shared at the meeting

The following themes reflect a summary of the feedback received from participants during the meeting. The remainder of this summary provides additional details regarding these and other points participants shared.

Accessibility remains a key priority. Improving accessibility on the TTC needs to continue to be a priority for the TTC. The TTC should continue to make sure it is considering the needs of all customers, especially when making decisions about removing fare collectors from booths, moving streetcar stop locations, or adjusting bus routes.

Find the balance between demand responsive service and regular service. Given the increased importance of crowding during COVID-19, the TTC's approach to providing demand responsive service makes sense. The TTC should be clear on how and when it will adjust demand responsive service to regular service so that routes experiencing regular crowding do not have to rely on day-by-day service adjustments.

Appreciation for the TTC's work, especially during difficult times. The TTC has had to make a difficult pivot and is doing well despite the circumstances. Several said they appreciated the opportunity to learn and share feedback about the plan.

Questions of clarification

Following the presentation and throughout the discussion, participants asked questions of clarification, with the TTC providing responses.

- **What has the TTC learned from its survey on customers' stop pattern preferences for the Eglinton East RapidTO route?** *The survey has revealed a mix of opinions about stop pattern preferences for Eglinton East. The option with the highest customer preference as of September 17 is option 3 — reduce the number of stops on 905 Eglinton — at 37%.*
- **Are you looking at other low ridership routes beyond the ones shared in the presentation? The Province has indicated interest in substituting rideshare services for low performing routes.** *The changes to low performing routes shared in this meeting are the only ones the TTC is currently looking at right now, though we do monitor and evaluate low-performing routes against its service standards on an on-going basis.*
- **Could you elaborate on how the TTC applies an equity lens to service planning? For example, does the TTC consider the socio-economic status of riders impacted by service planning when it considers making changes like removing bus stops or routes?** *In this 2021 Annual Service Plan work, there are two streams of work that reflect an equity lens. The first is in our public engagement process, where we're recruiting local youth leaders to seek feedback on the Annual Service Plan from their peers, who we know are typically under-represented in these discussions. The second lens is one we apply to our service planning work, which considers things like socio-economic status. For example, if we are considering changing or removing service in an equity-seeking part of the city, we apply a different weighting to the key considerations informing our planning so we can be sure we're considering those communities' needs.*
- **Why do the racks on buses no longer hold two bikes?** *The TTC heard concerns from bus operators that having two bikes on the front of the bus created sightline challenges, so we limited them to carry only one. It's been a few years since that change, so there is an opportunity for the TTC to re-examine that policy.*

- **How does the TTC decide when to increase regular service versus provide demand responsive service? Is there a point when it makes more sense to implement a regular service change rather provide demand responsive service?** *Right now, we are bringing in additional operators to provide service until we can provide regular service. In November, we will restore service on a number of busy corridors, and our aim is to provide regular service based on new ridership and conditions and reduce demand responsive. We do want to maintain some demand responsive service since it provides flexibility — some demand responsive service will likely remain through 2021.*
- **Will you share the presentation afterwards so we can take a closer look at detailed slides (like slides listing under-performing routes)?** *Yes, we will share the slides, and we'll also post a video of the presentation on the [engagement website](#).*

Detailed feedback

The TTC asked participants their thoughts on the emerging ideas for the 2021 Annual Service Plan, including the emerging priorities and proposed service initiatives for 2021.

Feedback about the emerging priorities for 2021

No participants raised any significant concerns or objections to the TTC's proposed emerging priorities. Some shared suggestions related the TTC's proposed priority to **sustain demand-responsive service**, including:

- Increase regular service on routes that continue to experience crowding (like on Jane Street) and have demand-responsive service ready when there is crowding. *The TTC replied that part of the reason it has proposed demand responsive service is that it can take some time for scheduling to catch up to data collection. The TTC has been dedicating demand responsive service to busier routes on a regular basis and wants to keep it available as a buffer if cases spike in a second wave.*
- Consider using an app to share information about where there is crowding and where transit service is needed. *The TTC replied that it would look at all options and consider a cost-benefit analysis of using technology or apps this way. The 5-Year Service Plan does include actions focused on facilitating micro-transit and there are a couple of micro-transit initiatives underway, like the shuttles to Ikea and the Brickworks.*

Feedback about specific proposed initiatives for the 2021 Annual Service Plan

Participants shared feedback about some of the specific proposed initiatives for 2021, including RapidTO and service changes related to the TTC's performance review.

Feedback about RapidTO

Participants were happy to see dedicated bus lanes for Eglinton East and Jane Street included in the plan. Some said that enforcement of these bus only lanes will be important to their success and reliability. *The TTC replied that it has been consulting with the Toronto Police, who will be enforcing bus only lane restrictions. Some locations will have cameras to help the TTC identify where compliance is an issue. The TTC will also implement a public education campaign to explain how the lanes work.*

Performance review and bus service adjustments

Some agreed with the TTC's proposal to adjust 121 Fort York-Esplanade bus service and remove the 144 Downtown / Don Valley Express. To better serve Flemington Park residents,

the TTC could consider adding regular bus service to St. Dennis Drive where there are many residents in apartments that would benefit. In Thorncliffe Park, both the 81 and 88 routes are well-used, and there could be service improvements to better connect Thorncliffe Park to Downtown. *The TTC replied that these are helpful insights that could inform the TTC's thinking for 2022 service planning as part of the plans to restructure bus routes to connect to Line 5 Eglinton. The TTC would like to improve the connection from Thorncliffe Park and help customers there connect to rapid transit.*

Other feedback about the 2021 Annual Service Plan and transit service

Participants shared broader advice about accessibility, marketing, and the engagement process about the 2021 Annual Service Plan.

Accessibility

Some of the TTC's recent changes have actually made the system less accessible for some customers, not more. For example, removing fare collectors from booths and moving King Street streetcar stops to the far side of intersections. The TTC needs to make sure that it is considering the needs of people with visual impairments when making these types of changes. Another accessibility issue raised is that some customers with disabilities prefer to take buses over subways, so the TTC should consider extending the 97 bus south to (and beyond) Bloor. *The TTC said that part of the purpose of moving collectors out of fare booths was to have collectors focus on customer service rather than selling fares — helping people customers with visual impairments is part of their job and training. On King Street, there are plans to add tactile features and raised platforms to make it better for all customers, including those with visual impairments. We will make sure to pass these comments on to the TTC's Advisory Committee on Accessible Transit.*

Marketing

The TTC should have a marketing plan whenever it makes changes to routes – marketing can help build ridership and let people know about changes. *That TTC said that marketing is important in restoring ridership, and the TTC wants to focus its messaging on the safety of its service. The TTC is looking to provide a tool so people can see passenger loads prior to boarding and it also has plans to improve and expand on its next vehicle arrival system as a priority over the next 5 years.*

Support for the process and more funding

Several said it's good to see the TTC continuing to consult with stakeholders on the 2021 Annual Service Plan, even in trying times. Some said they hoped various levels of government would fund the TTC consistently so the system can run more smoothly.

Feedback shared after the meeting

Two participants shared additional feedback after the meeting. Their original submissions are included in Attachment 3 and summarized below:

Feedback about the performance review, express routes, and the bus network

- The 142 Downtown / Avenue Road Express may have been unsuccessful due to the premium fare and small number of stops
- Support for new operating hours, express services, and any initiatives that improve reliability. It's unclear how the proposed bus service improvements will happen without an increase to the service budget. The 5-Year Service Plan initially included improvements to

service hours — is the number of planned service hours for 2021 above pre-pandemic levels? The TTC should be careful when removing or reducing bus service since the current bus network of high-frequency corridors offers attractive options to customers.

- Support for prioritizing surface transit, especially the RapidTO initiatives.

Feedback about crowding and COVID-19

- Support for the TTC making relieving crowding a priority for 2021.
- The TTC should recall operators now and increase service on busy routes, like Lawrence Avenue.
- As part of improving the experience at stops, the TTC should consider larger shelters, especially on busier routes, so that customers can physical distance.

Other feedback

- Support for fare integration, since paying multiple, separate fares can be a barrier to people taking transit (especially young people).
- The TTC's plans to improve service are good – is there funding to implement these plans?

Facilitation team note: the TTC shared the following responses to the questions included in the feedback shared after the meeting:

The 2021 service budget will recommend the same level of service budgeted up to March 2020. The additional improvements that were originally expected for implementation later in the 2020 budget year are not part of 2021 service budget. Where possible, service improvements that require additional resources will be made through the reallocation of resources within the network. Moving resources from one service to another will be guided by feedback from customers and stakeholders so that we have alignment on the priorities for the transit system. The additional service hours for improvements that were requested in the 5-Year Service Plan will be deferred until there is more economic and ridership recovery.

Next Steps

Mark Mis, TTC Head of Service Planning & Scheduling, thanked participants for attending and sharing their feedback. He explained that the TTC would be launching a broader, public consultation the following week and that the stakeholder group would receive a notice once that consultation had launched. There will be a second round of consultation with this group later in the year, where the TTC will share its final proposed 2021 Annual Service Plan.

Attachment 1. Agenda

TTC 2021 Annual Service Plan First Round of Stakeholder Meetings

Thursday, September 17, 2020

3:00 – 4:30 pm

Meeting held online



Meeting purpose

To share and seek feedback on emerging priorities and initiatives for the 2021 Annual Service Plan.

Proposed agenda

3:00 Welcome, introductions & agenda review

Mark Mis, TTC

Ian Malczewski, Facilitator, Swerhun Inc.

3:10 Update and overview of the 2021 Annual Service Plan

Mark Mis, Eric Chu, TTC

- 5-Year Service Plan overview and status update
- 2020 service update
- 2021 Annual Service Plan

Questions of clarification

3:40 Discussion

1. What do you think of the emerging 2021 priorities we've identified? To what extent do you think they reflect the TTC's 5-Year Service Plan and the changing realities due to COVID-19?
2. What are your thoughts on the proposed service initiatives for 2021? What, if anything, do you think is missing or off-base? Do you have any suggested refinements?

4:25 Wrap up and next steps

4:30 Adjourn

Attachment 2. Participant List

Listed below are stakeholder groups the TTC invited to participate in the City-wide Stakeholder Workshop. Organizations listed in **bold** attended the workshop. Note that some stakeholder groups had more than one representative in attendance.

1LoveMalvern Transportation Working Group	Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA)
7 Oaks Residents Association	Cross-Cultural Community Services Association
8-80 Cities	Curran Hall Community Association
A Voice for Transit	CycleTO
Access Alliance	CycleTO - Midtown
Access Alliance/Scarborough Cycles	Deep Quong Non-Profit Homes
Access Point on Danforth	East Scarborough Boys and Girls Club
Advisory Committee on Accessible Transit (ACAT)	East Scarborough Storefront/Centre for Connected Communities
Advocacy Centre for Tenants (ACTO)	Eglinton 2020
Albion Neighbourhood Services	Eva's Initiatives
All IN	Evergreen
Alliance for Equality for Blind Canadians (AEBBC)	Fair Fare Coalition
Alliance of Seniors-Older Canadians Network	Federation of Metro Tenants' Associations
Anishnawbe Health Toronto	Federation of North Toronto Residents' Association (FoNTRA)
AODA Alliance	First Capital
Bread & Bricks Social Justice Group	Fred Victor
Canadian Council of the Blind, Toronto Chapter	Free Transit Toronto
Canadian Hearing Society	Friends and Families for Safe Streets
Canadian Pensioners Concerned	Friends of Pan Am Path
Canadian Urban Transit Association	Gilda's Club Greater Toronto
Centennial College Student Association Inc.	Glen Andrew Community Association
Centre for Independent Living in Toronto (CILT)	Guelph-Humber Student Association (Ignite)
Chinese Canadian National Council - Toronto	Guild Renaissance Group
CivicAction	Guildwood Village Community Association
CNIB Foundation / Advisory Committee on Accessible Transit	Highland Creek Community Association
CodeRedTO	Homes First
Community Associations of Northern Scarborough	Housing Connections
Community Head Injury Resource Services (CHIRS)	HousingNowTO
Community Living Toronto	Jane Finch Action Against Poverty
Confederation of Resident and Ratepayer Associations (CORRA)	Jane-Finch Action for Neighbourhood Change
Connect Sheppard East / Scarborough Civic Action Network / 42 Voices	Jane's Walk
ConnectScarborough	KCWA Family and Social Services
	Leaside Property Owners' Association
	Lytton Park Residents' Organization
	Malvern Action for Neighbourhood Change
	Malvern Library
	Ministry of Transportation
	Momiji Health Care Society
	Native Child and Family Services
	North American Native Plant Society

North Bendale Community Association
Older Women's Network
Ontario Active School Travel
Ontario Good Roads Association
Ontario Motor Coach Association
Ontario Public Transit Association
Our Greenway
Out of the Cold. Overnight Hostels
PointA
Polycultural Immigrant & Community
Services
Rexdale Community Hub
Ryerson Students' Union
Salvation Army
Scarborough Campus Students' Union
Scarborough Centre for Healthy
Communities
Scarborough Civic Action Network (SCAN)
Scarborough Community Renewal
Organization/Centennial Community
Association
Scarborough Neighbourhood Action Plan
(SNAP) Committee
Scarborough Residents Unite
Scarborough Transit Action
Seneca College
Seneca Student Federation
Senior Tamils' Centre of Ontario
Senior's Strategy Leader
Serve!
Share the Road Coalition
Smart Commute - North Toronto, Vaughan
Social Planning Toronto
Society of Sharing: Inner-City Volunteers
Sound Times Support Services
South Eglinton Ratepayers' & Residents'
Association (SERRA)
South Etobicoke Transit Action Committee
St Clare's Multifaith Housing Society
Students Association of George Brown
College
Sunshine Centres for Seniors
TAIBU Community Health Centre
Tenblock
The Centre for Active Transportation
The Guild Renaissance Group
The Hub - Mid-Scarborough
The Neighbourhood Organization (TNO)

Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness
Toronto Association of Business
Improvement Areas (TABIA)
Toronto Bicycling Network
Toronto Community and Culture Centre
Toronto Community Benefits Network
Toronto Community Care Access Centre
Toronto Community Housing
Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre
Toronto Council on Aging
Toronto Disability Pride March
Toronto Electric Riders Association (TERA)
Toronto Environmental Alliance
**Toronto Green Community / West
Donlands Committee**
Toronto Pan Am Sports Aquatic Centre
Toronto Seniors Forum
Toronto Trucking Association
Toronto Workforce Innovation Group
Toronto Youth Cabinet
Transport Action Ontario
Transportation Equity TO
Transportation Options
TTCriders
University of Toronto
University of Toronto Scarborough
University of Toronto Students Union
(UTSU)
**University of Toronto Transportation
Research Institute**
Urban Land Institute
Voice for Transit
Walk Toronto
Ward 18 Scarborough Southwest School
Trustee
Ward 19 Scarborough Guildwood School
Trustee
Ward 22 Scarborough - Rouge Park School
Trustee
Ward 7 Trustee for TCDSB
Waterfront Regeneration Trust
West Side Community Council
Woburn Community Residents
York Federation of Students
Youth Action Network
Youth Employment Service
YWCA Toronto Employment Centre

Attachment 3. Post-Meeting Feedback

Following the meeting, Swerhun Inc. received additional feedback from participants in the afternoon session over email. This feedback is included below and is unedited other than to remove any personal identifiable information or adjust formatting.

Emailed submission #1, September 23, 2020

Thank you for the presentation and for the opportunity to send in comments.

1) Avenue Road 142 Express Bus:

If this route were a regular route with regular fares, with more stops along Avenue Rd / University Ave, going from Highway 401 to downtown, it would be well used. There are many people along this route who go to the University of Toronto, the hospitals, Queen's Park buildings, office buildings downtown. If the bus ran all day on a regular schedule and was not premium-priced, it would have many more riders. Even as an express with the same stops, it should have allowed riders waiting at those stops to board and never have charged premium fares.

2) Drivers need to be called back and bus service increased now on crowded routes such as Lawrence Ave, to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

3) The TTC has good plans to improve the experience for users. Is there committed funding to improve TTC service?

Emailed submission #2, September 30, 2020

The Toronto Youth Cabinet would like to thank the TTC for engaging us in the 2021 Service Plan consultation process. We support the emerging priorities of the 2021 Service Plan, more detailed feedback about specific components of the Plan is provided below.

Service Budget

We strongly support the TTC making relieving crowding a key priority of the 2021 Service Plan. We are also excited to see new and improved services such as new operating hours and new express services. We are concerned about how these improvements will be implemented without increasing the service budget. We would be interested to know whether the number of service hours planned for 2021 is above what was provided pre-Pandemic. Improvements were initially planned for 2020, but understandably deferred when COVID began. Will these additional operating hours budgeted for in 2020 be implemented in 2021 to meet the goals of the 2021 service plan? If not, the 1% annual increase in service proposed in the 5-Year Service Plan may be necessary.

Pillar 1 - Service Proposals for 2021

Crowding

The Toronto Youth Cabinet is pleased to see that addressing crowding is a key component of the draft 2021 Service Plan. The survey which shows riders are more concerned with crowding than before, is consistent with concerns we have heard and with our priorities. Addressing crowding is even more important than before as the COVID-19 Pandemic is not over and being in close proximity to other people makes customers feel uneasy about taking transit. We support both addressing crowding and lower crowding standards as proposed in the Draft Plan.

Express Service

The Toronto Youth Cabinet supports restoring the express bus network, expanding operating hours and improving the frequency of express routes on key corridors and adding new express routes. When riders have the option of taking an express or local route, many would prefer to take the express route if it is a convenient option as it can shorten customers' commutes.

We understand that recent surveys have shown that customers tend to prefer a trip with less transfers, even if this leads to longer travel times. While we generally support following transit users' preferences, we would also caution against making any significant changes to the existing bus network, as the current bus network with its grid of many high-frequency corridors makes the bus an attractive option.

Pillar 2 - Enhance Customer Experience at Stops

Larger shelters should be explored for implementation at major bus stops where space permits. In many cases space is very limited inside shelters at key stops. With social distancing the shelters will be able to accommodate even fewer people. Protecting riders waiting for the bus or streetcar from precipitation and to an extent cold weather can improve the overall experience of using surface transit.

Pillar 3 - Improving Service Reliability

As crowding has become an increasing concern for riders, reliability is more important than ever. Ensuring that buses are evenly spaced to the greatest extent possible can significantly reduce crowding compared to when vehicles bunch. The Youth Cabinet fully supports efforts to improve service reliability through all feasible measures.

Pillar 4 - Prioritize Surface Transit

We have strongly supported the implementation of bus lanes in Toronto for several years. We are excited to see that the Eglinton East corridor will be completed next month followed by the Jane corridor in 2021. These projects will improve reliability and reduce travel time for transit customers in equity-seeking neighbourhoods. It is our hope that bus lanes will also allow the TTC to maintain service using fewer vehicles which will make available buses for service improvements on these routes or elsewhere in the system.

Pillar 5 - Integration with Transit Partners

The Youth Cabinet has long supported improved integration with 905 transit agencies in order to enhance cross border travel. Double fares remain a large barrier for young people wishing to use local transit for cross border travel. We would welcome any efforts towards reducing this barrier. Eliminating unnecessary transfers and/or reducing redundancy are also areas to explore. We have advocated in the past for an increase in secure bicycle parking facilities at stations to encourage people to ride their bicycles to the subway.