

TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION REPORT NO.

MEETING DATE: July 24, 2013

SUBJECT: 53 STEELES EAST AND 95 YORK MILLS – MINOR ROUTE CHANGES

ACTION ITEM

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Board:

1. approve the route changes, as described in this report, to the 53 STEELES EAST bus route, at Pharmacy Avenue and at Markham Road, for a trial period effective September 1, 2013;
2. approve the route change, as described in this report, to the 95 YORK MILLS bus route, at Kennedy Road, for a trial period effective September 3, 2013; and
3. forward this report to Councillors Cho, Del Grande, Filion, Kelly, Lee, Minnan-Wong, Robinson, Shiner, and Thompson.

FUNDING

These route changes would have no effect on the TTC's Operating or Capital Budgets.

BACKGROUND

All TTC routes undergo continual review in order to identify possible improvements to service and operations. Such reviews have been recently completed on two routes, 53 STEELES EAST and 95 YORK MILLS, resulting in recommendations for minor routing changes. These routing changes involve the removal of service from short sections of the routes, and new service on one roadway and, so, require approval from the Board.

DISCUSSION

53 STEELES EAST

The 53 STEELES EAST bus route operates between Finch Station and Staines Road, providing frequent service along the Steeles Avenue East corridor. Most service (53B "To Markham Rd" and 53E "To Markham Rd Express") operates between Finch Station and Markham Road. Some service (53A "To Staines" and 53F "To Staines Express") operates east of Markham Road to Staines Avenue and the Morningside Heights community. During peak periods, a short-turn service (53 "To Pharmacy") operates to Pharmacy Avenue. The route is shown on the attached map, "53 STEELES EAST – Recommended Route Changes".

Elimination of Short-Turn Service to Pharmacy

The 53 STEELES EAST “To Pharmacy” service currently operates during the morning and afternoon peak periods from Monday to Friday only. The service operates from Finch Station to Steeles Avenue East and Pharmacy Road, looping clockwise via Pharmacy Avenue, Gordon Baker Road, and Victoria Park Avenue in the morning-peak period, and counter-clockwise via the same streets in the afternoon-peak period. The service operates every nine-to-ten minutes.

The 53 STEELES EAST “To Pharmacy” service has been operated since 1974, when it was the eastern terminus of the route. As development along Steeles Avenue proceeded, most service on the 53 STEELES EAST route has been extended farther east. The remaining purpose of this branch has been to provide supplemental service along Steeles Avenue between Pharmacy Avenue and Finch Station.

In recent years, increasing development has resulted in increasing ridership on the 53 STEELES EAST route east of Pharmacy Avenue. The present route pattern, with a supplemental short-turn service at Pharmacy, no longer matches current ridership patterns, and additional service is required on the route east of Pharmacy Avenue. Therefore, the 53 STEELES EAST “To Pharmacy” service should be eliminated, effective September 3, 2013, to allow the resources from this branch to be re-used more effectively on the route. Service on the whole route would be reorganised, and all local service on the route would be scheduled to operate to at least Markham Road, thus providing better service east of Pharmacy Avenue. Approximately 3,700 customer-trips are made each day on the 53 STEELES EAST route at local bus stops in the peak periods, east of Pharmacy Avenue to Markham Road. These customers would have more-frequent service and more capacity.

The 53 STEELES EAST “To Pharmacy” service is the only TTC service on Gordon Baker Road, between Pharmacy Avenue and Victoria Park Avenue. Approximately 60 customer-trips are made each day on the 53 STEELES EAST route on Pharmacy Avenue, Gordon Baker Road, and Victoria Park Avenue, of which approximately 50 begin at or end at stops on Gordon Baker Road that would no longer have TTC service. These customers would have a longer walk to the nearest alternate service, or an additional transfer.

Overall, the benefit of a more-frequent service for a larger number of customers is more important than the inconvenience caused to a small number of customers on the Pharmacy short-turn routing. Because the routing change would improve service overall, it is recommended.

This routing change has no direct effect on operating costs.

Routing Change at Markham Road

Service at the east end of the 53 STEELES EAST branch which terminates at Markham Road, currently operates via east on Steeles Avenue, north on McCowan Road, east on Elson Street, south on Markham Road, and west on Steeles Avenue. This routing is used by this branch during all operating hours, except for the overnight period. This routing has been used since 1994, when it was originally implemented on a temporary basis. At that time, there was no development on the south side of Steeles Avenue, and there was no suitable on-street or off-street loop near the Steeles Avenue/Markham Road intersection. The routing via Elson Street was the only feasible

alternative, and it best served customers who, at the time, all originated in the residential area north of Steeles Avenue.

This on-street looping on McCowan Road, Elson Street, and Markham Road is north of Steeles Avenue, in York Region. The service has always been operated by the TTC at its own expense and, unlike other TTC services that operate into York Region, the service is part of the TTC fare zone. Separate York Region fares are not required on this service, and York Region does not contract with the TTC to operate the service. This unusual situation is a legacy of the intended-to-be temporary nature of the routing.

In recent years, development has occurred along the south side of Steeles Avenue in Toronto, and there is now a demonstrated demand for improved two-way service on Steeles Avenue, between McCowan Road and Markham Road. There is also now a suitable on-street looping alternative in Toronto, using Tapscott Avenue, Passmore Avenue, and Markham Road. This routing will come into use in August 2013, for the overnight bus service on Steeles Avenue.

Because a suitable routing alternative is now available in Toronto to replace the temporary routing and, because ridership demand from the south side of Steeles Avenue is now increasing, the 53 STEELES EAST routing via McCowan Road, Elson Street, and Markham Road should be eliminated, effective September 1, 2013, to allow the resources to better serve the main part of the route. All service which currently terminates at Markham Road would be changed to loop via east on Steeles Avenue, south on Tapscott Road, west on Passmore Avenue, north on Markham Road, and west on Steeles Avenue.

Approximately 2,300 customer-trips are made each day at stops on the 53 STEELES EAST on-street loop on Elson Street. Some of these customers, who live on or north of Elson Street, would have a longer walk to or from their nearest TTC bus stop, which would be on Steeles Avenue itself. Some customers who live between Elson Street and Steeles Avenue would have no difference in the overall distance they walk to their nearest bus stop. Approximately 390 customer-trips each day begin at stops on Elson Street to travel westbound, and these customers would have a faster trip, because they would no longer have to travel around the loop before heading west. Approximately 480 customer-trips each day end at westbound stops on Steeles Avenue, between Markham Road and McCowan Road, and these customers would have a faster trip, as they would alight from an eastbound bus on Steeles Avenue, instead of riding around the Elson on-street loop before getting to their stop.

Approximately 700 customer-trips are made on the 53 STEELES EAST service, which currently operates eastbound on Steeles Avenue between McCowan Road and Markham Road. These customers would have more-frequent service. As development increases along and south of Steeles Avenue, the number of customers who would benefit from this routing change will increase.

This route change would have no impact on the TTC's operating budget.

York Region Transit service is currently provided along Elson Street, and this service would continue.

95 YORK MILLS

The 95 YORK MILLS bus route operates between York Mills Station and Kingston Road, providing frequent service along the York Mills/Ellesmere corridor. Most service operates between York Mills Station, U of T Scarborough, and Kingston Road. During peak periods, a short-turn service (95A York Mills “To Victoria Park”) operates between York Mills Station and Victoria Park Avenue, in order to provide additional service along the inner part of the route. The service operates east on York Mills Road, south on Victoria Park Avenue, west on Parkwoods Village Drive, and west on York Mills Road. The route is shown on the attached map “95 YORK MILLS – Recommended Route Changes”. This service operates every seven-to-eleven minutes.

In recent years, longer-distance ridership has been increasing on the 95 YORK MILLS route, east of Victoria Park Avenue. The present route design, with a supplemental short-turn service as far as Victoria Park Avenue, no longer matches current ridership patterns. Additional service is required on the route east of Victoria Park Avenue. Extending the peak-period short-turn branch from Victoria Park Avenue to Kennedy Road would provide additional service at busy stops along Ellesmere Avenue. It is recommended that the 95A “To Victoria Park” service be eliminated, effective September 3, 2013, and be replaced by a new service operating further east to Kennedy Road. The first day of the extended service to Kennedy Road would be Tuesday, September 3, 2013.

Buses on the extended branch would turn around using the public roads on the west side of the Ellesmere Avenue overpass, just east of Kennedy Road. This looping is operationally feasible, and has been previously used for unscheduled short turns. The looping has an added benefit of providing closer service to Ellesmere Station.

Approximately 300 customer-trips are made each day on the 95A YORK MILLS stops on York Mills Road and Victoria Park Avenue. With the removal of 95A YORK MILLS service from these stops, these customers would have a longer walk to their nearest alternative 95 YORK MILLS bus stop.

Approximately 4,100 customer-trips are made each day in the peak periods on the 95 YORK MILLS route at local bus stops between Victoria Park Avenue and Kennedy Road. Additional service is required east of Victoria Park Avenue in order to reduce crowding and provide a more-reliable service. The customers on this section of the route would have more-frequent service and more capacity. Overall, the benefit of more-frequent service for a larger number of customers is more important than the inconvenience of a longer walk for fewer customers who use the 95A stops on the Victoria Park short-turn routing. Because the routing change would improve service overall, it is recommended.

This routing change has no direct effect on operating costs.

JUSTIFICATION

The three routing changes described in this report will make service better overall, for customers, with no net effect on the TTC’s operating expenses or budgets.

11-31-57

Attachments: 53 STEELES EAST – Recommended Route Changes
95 YORK MILLS – Recommended Route Changes

53 Steeles East - Recommended Route Changes



TTC SP 15-07-2013 DRG. No. 12253

95 York Mills - Recommended Route Changes

