



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Improved Transit in East/Central Downtown: 72 PAPE and 121 FORT YORK-ESPLANADE Bus Routes

Date:	March 23, 2015
To:	TTC Board
From:	Chief Executive Officer

Summary

This report recommends route and service changes to improve service from Pape Station to Union Station, and in neighbourhoods in southern downtown Toronto. If approved, these changes would be implemented starting June 19, 2016.

The recommended changes, shown in the attached map and detailed in this report, include:

- Introduction of revised 72 PAPE (Pape Stn-Union Stn via Queens Quay) service between Pape Station and downtown Toronto;
- Introduction of a new 121 FORT YORK-ESPLANADE bus service, operating between the Fort York Neighbourhood and the Distillery District via Union Station; and,
- Elimination of the 172 CHERRY STREET bus route.

These changes would:

- Restore direct bus service between Pape Station and downtown Toronto;
- Introduce new bus service to new and fast-growing areas of downtown Toronto including the Fort York Neighbourhood, CityPlace, East Bayfront, St. Lawrence, Distillery District, and West Don Lands; and,
- Provide new east-to-west accessible bus service in downtown Toronto.

The service changes recommended in this report are complementary to the introduction of new streetcar service on Cherry Street and King Street, which is the subject of a separate report, entitled “Improved Transit in East/Central Downtown: 514 CHERRY – Streetcar Service on King Street”, which is also on today’s agenda.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board:

1. Approve the recommended changes to transit services, as detailed in this report, effective June 19, 2016; and,
2. Forward this report to the City of Toronto Planning Department, Transportation Services, and the affected City Councillors.

Financial Summary

The proposed changes would result in net additional operating costs of approximately \$388,000 from June to December, 2016. This net operating cost is included in the 2016 Operating Budget. On an annualized basis in future years, the service changes would cost approximately \$678,000 per year, net of additional fare revenues.

No additional buses are required to operate this service.

The proposed changes meet the TTC's financial-performance and productivity standards and represent a cost-effective means to improve service for over 7-million customer-trips per year, address gaps in the accessible transit network, and support transit-supportive growth in downtown Toronto and the waterfront.

The Chief Financial & Administration Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

Accessibility/Equity Matters

The TTC has made significant progress in moving towards providing barrier-free, accessible transit services for all customers. All TTC bus services are operated using accessible, low-floor buses. New accessible low-floor streetcars are currently being put into service, as they become available, in order to make all TTC streetcar routes accessible. So far, new accessible low-floor streetcars have been deployed on the 510 SPADINA and 509 HARBOURFRONT routes.

There is presently no east-west accessible transit service between the 94 WELLESLEY bus route and Queens Quay. The service changes recommended in this report, if approved, would introduce a new accessible bus route between the Fort York Neighbourhood and Distillery District, connecting to LINE 1 at Union Station. This would provide more options to connect to existing north-south accessible services and, therefore, facilitate more-spontaneous travel for people who require accessible services.

Issue Background

Between 2010 and 2013, construction-related traffic congestion, road closures, and diversions in the downtown, negatively affected service reliability on the 72 PAPE route, between Union Station and Pape Station. In early 2014, in order to improve service reliability, the route was temporarily split into two routes at Commissioners Street: 172 CHERRY STREET between Commissioners Street and downtown, and 72 PAPE between Commissioners Street and Pape Station. This service change resulted in more-reliable operation of the route by isolating operational issues on each part of the route and minimizing their effects on the other. However, the change meant that customers who previously travelled past Commissioners Street had to transfer between the two routes.

In July 2014, the 172 CHERRY STREET bus route was extended from Cherry Street/Commissioners Street to Carlaw Avenue/Commissioners Street, in response to customer feedback regarding concerns over personal safety at the transfer location with the 72 PAPE route. The route extension also provided a more-direct service for employees along Commissioners Street (See Map 1).

Construction around Union Station was completed in summer 2015. At that time, TTC staff initiated a review of transit service in the Pape/Carlaw corridor, connecting to downtown, taking into account:

- Population and employment growth along the corridor;
- Emerging new neighbourhoods along the eastern waterfront, such as East Bayfront; and,
- Crowding on existing east-west streetcar services.

An initial service concept was developed in fall 2015 and presented, for feedback, to TTC customers and neighbourhoods along the corridor. The results of this customer consultation are presented in Appendix A. The service changes recommended in this report reflect the comments and suggestions received from customers and community stakeholders.

Recommended Changes

The recommended bus route changes would improve service for approximately 11,000 customers each weekday. The changes would also provide new transit service to Fort York and CityPlace, neighbourhoods which have experienced rapid growth and change over the past several years. In addition, the changes would introduce transit service to the new West Don Lands and East Bayfront neighbourhoods, supporting the “transit-first” principles of Toronto’s Official Plan. When ridership matures in future years, service in these areas is projected to attract approximately 211,000 new customers to the TTC annually.

Map 2 shows the recommended revised services, which include:

- Shortening 72 PAPE to Eastern Avenue, and maintaining frequent service on the busy part of the route;
- Introducing a new 72B PAPE (Pape Stn-Union Stn via Queens Quay) branch to provide direct service from Pape Station to Union Station, travelling along Queens Quay East, to provide faster travel than the previous routing via The Esplanade; and,
- Introducing a new 121 FORT YORK-ESPLANADE bus route which would maintain bus service on The Esplanade, but also extend service west to CityPlace and the Fort York neighbourhood, thus providing new, accessible bus service to these areas.

The proposed changes would have the following benefits and trade-offs for customers and adjacent neighbourhoods:

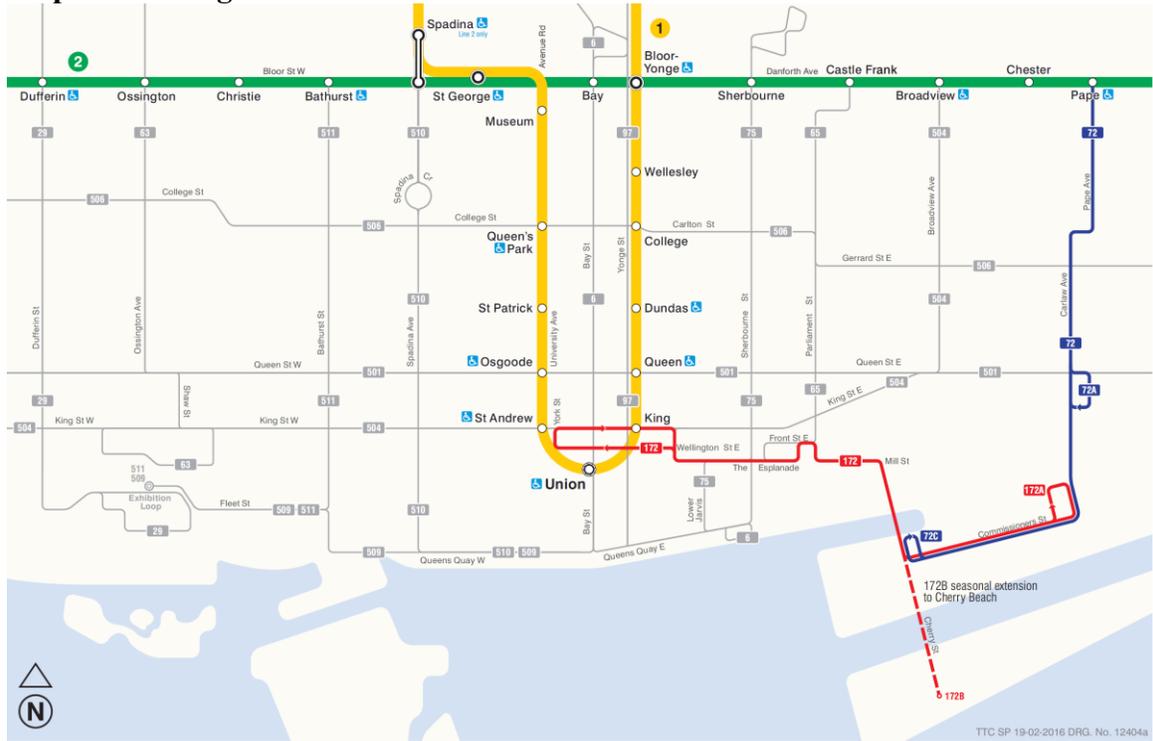
Benefits

- A faster trip and one fewer transfer for customers travelling between Pape Station and Union Station (approximately 400 customers daily);
- A shorter wait for customers of 172 CHERRY STREET on The Esplanade and in areas adjacent to Distillery Loop (approximately 350 customers daily);
- New service on Queens Quay, east of Sherbourne Street;
- New service in CityPlace and Fort York neighbourhood ; and,
- New accessible service and accommodation of growth in these new neighbourhoods.

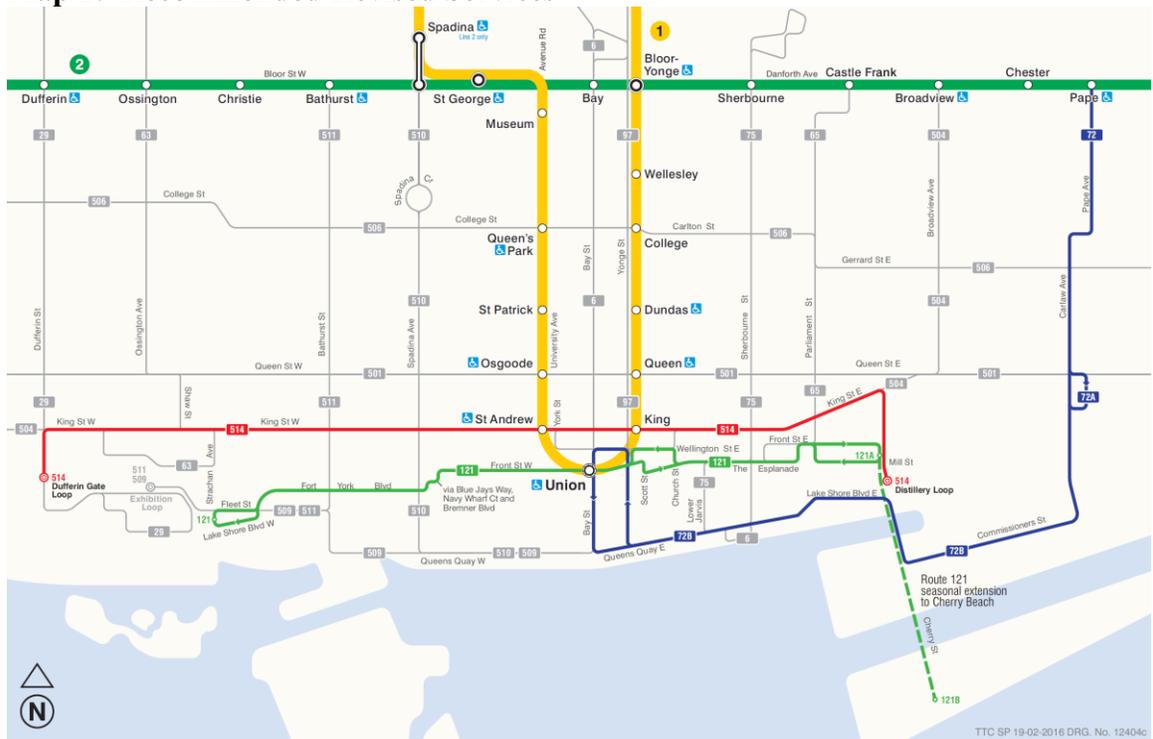
Trade-Offs

- A longer wait for customers of 72C PAPE south of Eastern Avenue (approximately 150 customers daily);
- A longer walk for customers of 172 CHERRY STREET on Mill Street (approximately 120 customers daily).

Map 1: Existing Services



Map 2: Recommended Revised Services



Route Details

72 Pape

The 72 PAPE bus route would return to a two-branch structure, with a shorter 72A (Pape Stn-Eastern) branch, and a longer 72B (Pape Stn-Union via Queens Quay) branch to reinstate direct service from Pape Station to downtown.

Service north of Eastern Avenue would continue to operate every 10 minutes or better, all day, every day. Service between Pape Station and Union Station on the 72B PAPE branch would also operate all day, every day.

Overnight service would continue to operate north of Eastern Avenue, provided by the 325 DON MILLS route.

Approximately 400 customers each weekday would benefit from the re-instated direct service and a faster trip via Queens Quay. The combined 72 PAPE service, north of Eastern Avenue, would be more frequent during most times of the day.

121 Fort York-Esplanade

A new 121 FORT YORK-ESPLANADE bus route would be introduced between the Fort York Neighbourhood and the Distillery District, via Fort York Boulevard, Front Street, and The Esplanade. This would introduce new bus service west of Union Station to connect with, and complement north-south streetcar services on Spadina Avenue and Bathurst Street.

The route would operate all day, every day. Between May and October, the route would be extended to Cherry Beach via Cherry Street.

When ridership matures in future years, the route would be projected to carry 7,200 passengers each weekday, of which approximately 500 would be new to the TTC, primarily from the CityPlace and Fort York neighbourhoods. Approximately 250 customers per day would benefit from more-frequent service on The Esplanade.

172 Cherry Street

The 172 CHERRY STREET bus route would be eliminated and replaced by the new 121 FORT YORK-ESPLANADE bus route.

Customer Engagement and Feedback

An important aspect of the planning of these service changes was an extensive public consultation component, intended to ensure that the changes reflect the preferences and travel needs of people in the area. This is part of a 2015-2016 pilot program intended to expand the TTC's customer engagement processes for route and service changes.

Staff presented a proposed concept plan, and solicited feedback from existing customers and community stakeholders. The activities in this plan, including key findings, are described in **Appendix A**.

The engagement plan included:

- **Online survey** – An online survey was developed and placed online via TTC.ca, between November 23 and December 14, 2015 with 1,631 responses received
- **“Meet the Planners”** – Informal engagement sessions were conducted at:
 - Pape Station (November 25 and 27, 2015)
 - Dockside Drive (December 1, 2015)
 - King Station (December 9, 2015)
- **Contact with local community groups and stakeholders**
- **Contact with local Councillors**



“Meet the Planners” session on Dockside Drive

The engagement plan was positively received, particularly by customers and neighbourhood groups that appreciated the opportunity for meaningful input. Further engagement activities are planned for later in 2016 to consider service changes associated with the opening of the Toronto-York Spadina Subway Extension and a review of transit services in East Scarborough.

Feedback to Proposed Changes

Overall, the majority of respondents (72%) to the online survey indicated that the proposed changes would make service the same or better for their travel. Notably, of those respondents who currently use the TTC infrequently (once a week or less), over half (55%) indicated that they would use the TTC more often with the proposed changes.

Feedback from the customer engagement process led to the extension of the proposed 121 FORT YORK-ESPLANADE to the Fort York neighbourhood in the west and to Cherry Street in the east. These changes would result in new connections to the 509 HARBOURFRONT and 514 CHERRY streetcar routes, and increasing coverage of the new bus route. The feedback received was also used to inform analysis of ridership and the development of the service plan.

Conclusion

The recommended route changes outlined in this report would improve service for approximately 11,000 customers each weekday. The changes would also provide new transit service to Fort York and CityPlace, neighbourhoods that have experienced rapid growth and change over the past several years. In addition, the changes would introduce transit service to the new West Don Lands and East Bayfront neighbourhoods, supporting the “transit-first” principles of Toronto’s Official Plan. When ridership matures in future years, service in these areas is projected to attract approximately 211,000 new customers to the TTC annually.

If approved, the service changes would be implemented starting on June 19, 2016.

Contact

Mitch Stambler
Head of Strategy and Service Planning
416-393-4460
mitch.stambler@ttc.ca

Attachments:

Appendix A: Summary of Customer Engagement for this Planning Initiative

APPENDIX A

Summary of Customer Engagement for this Planning Initiative

A pilot customer engagement plan was developed and implemented to pro-actively seek feedback and comment about the proposed changes. Existing customers, local residents and businesses, and Councillors were contacted in the affected neighbourhoods. The primary objectives of the engagement plan were to:

- Present the initial service concepts for feedback and suggestions;
- Verify the customer benefits and trade-offs analysis; and
- Inform the development of a preferred service plan for the affected area.

There were four elements of the engagement plan:

- **Online survey:**
An online survey was developed and placed online via TTC.ca, between November 23 and December 14, 2015. The survey was promoted via Twitter and signage at bus stops along the 72 PAPE and 172 CHERRY Street routes. Over the survey period, 1,631 responses were received, of which 67% (1,097) were fully completed.
- **“Meet the Planners”:** Informal engagement events were conducted at:
 - Pape Station (November 25 and 27, 2015)
 - Dockside Drive (December 1, 2015)
 - King Station (December 9, 2015)
- **Contact with local community groups and stakeholders:** contact was initiated with various community groups in the affected area including:
 - St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association (SLNA)
 - Gooderham and Worts Neighbourhood Association (GWNA)
 - Corktown Residents and Business Association (CRBA)
 - CityPlace Residents Association
 - Fort York Neighbourhood Association (FYNA)
 - Smart Commute – City of TorontoPresentations were provided to the GWNA and SLNA in February 2016, and the FYNA in March 2016, to present revised proposals for further feedback.

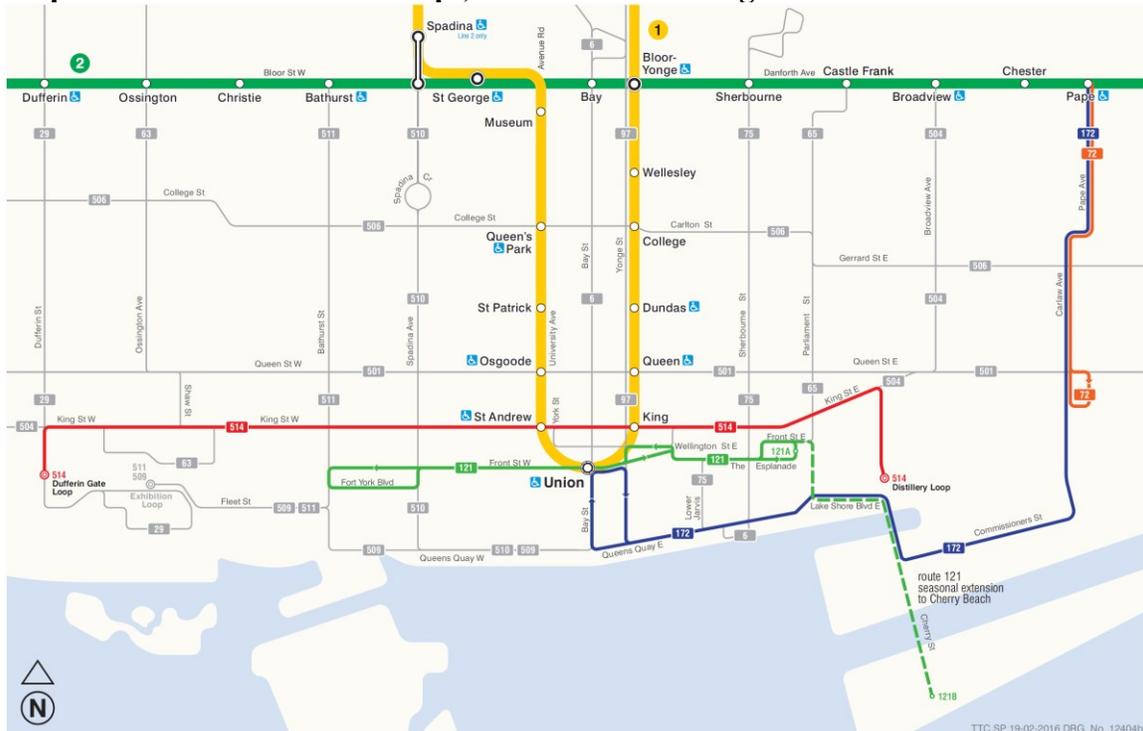
- **Contact with local Councillors:** local councillors in the affected wards were contacted, including:
 - Councillor Mike Layton (Ward 18 Trinity-Spadina)
 - Councillor Joe Cressy (Ward 20 Trinity-Spadina)
 - Councillor Pam McConnell (Ward 28 Toronto Centre-Rosedale)
 - Councillor Mary Fragedakis (Ward 29 Toronto-Danforth)
 - Councillor Paula Fletcher (Ward 30 Toronto-Danforth)

Initial Service Concept

Map A-1 shows the initial service concept. This initial proposal provided the basis for feedback to be received through the customer engagement plan. The proposal included:

- Shortening 72 PAPE to Eastern Avenue, to maintain frequent service on the busiest part of the route;
- Introducing a new bus route 172 to provide direct service from Pape Station to Union Station, travelling along Queens Quay East to provide a faster travel time than existing 172 routing via The Esplanade;
- Introducing a new bus route 121 to maintain bus service on The Esplanade and also extending service west to CityPlace to provide new, accessible bus service; and,
- Introducing a new streetcar route 514 on new tracks on Cherry Street from Distillery Loop to Dufferin Gates Loop via King Street and maintaining transit service to the Distillery District.

Map A-1: Initial Service Concept, as Presented During Consultation



Online Survey Results and Key Themes

The objectives of the online survey were to:

- Measure customer perceptions of the 72 PAPE and 172 CHERRY STREET routes;
- Present the initial service concept;
- Gauge whether different aspects of the route change proposals would make the respondent's TTC trip better or worse; and,
- Gather general comments and suggestions on the proposed changes.

The online survey received 1,631 responses, and 1,097 of those were fully completed. Respondents were referred to the survey by several means:

- 8% respondents via TTC.ca
- 18% respondents via bus stop/subway station signage
- 6% via "Meet the Planners"
- 27% via Twitter/Facebook

Respondent Profile

Of the 1,631 respondents to the survey, 83% identified themselves as regular TTC riders, using the system several times a week, or more often. 66% of respondents use either the 72 PAPE or 172 CHERRY STREET routes.

Of the respondents who use either route, 57% live along the routes, 47% work along the routes, and 6% go to school. Approximately 39% of respondents use the routes primarily to get to and from the subway, 39% to get to a destination along the route, 18% to get downtown, and 4% to transfer to an east-west streetcar route.

Feedback to Proposed Changes

Respondents were asked to review the proposed changes so that they could comment on the potential benefits and trade-offs of different aspects of the changes. Respondents would indicate if each of the aspects would make the TTC "Better", "Worse", or "No Change" for them. The overall rating for each set of proposed changes is presented in Table A-1. This approach was taken to complement the technical analysis for the route change, which assesses the changes in overall weighted travel time caused by changes to the walk time, wait time, travel time, and number of transfers.

Table A-1: Overall Response to Proposed Changes by Route

Route	<i>The proposed changes to the route would make my experience...</i>		
	...better	No Change	...worse
72 PAPE	22%	39%	39%
Route 172	61%	23%	16%
Route 121	49%	37%	14%
Route 514	68%	24%	7%
Overall	53%	29%	18%

Overall, the majority of respondents (72%) indicated that the proposed changes would make the TTC “Better” or have “No Change”, with a majority (53%) stating the changes would make their TTC experience “Better”. The proposed Route 172 and Route 514 had a large majority (over 60%) of respondents indicating the changes would make service better for them.

For the proposed changes to the 72 PAPE route, about 39% of respondents indicated that the shortening of the route and the longer wait south of Eastern Avenue would make TTC service worse for them. However, the other 61% respondents indicated that there would be no effect or better service. The results are consistent with ridership on the 72 PAPE route, where the majority of ridership north of Eastern Avenue would not be impacted by the proposed changes to the route (“No change”). The survey response provides an indication of the importance of frequent service for customers, but this must continue to be considered alongside ridership, available budget, and approved service standards.

Approximately 68% of respondents indicated that the reinstatement of direct service from Pape Station to downtown Toronto would make TTC service better for them. Most respondents (55%) indicated that the direct service via Queens Quay, to provide a faster trip, would also make service better. A large majority (64%) preferred that the direct service operate to Union Station rather than King Station.

Response to the proposed bus Route 121 was favourable, particularly in providing new bus service west of Union Station and to CityPlace, where 55% of respondents said it would make TTC service better for them. Approximately 15% of respondents said it would make service worse, consistent with ridership on Mill Street, where bus service would be removed and replaced by new streetcar service at Distillery Loop.

Considering the full package of changes, 42% of respondents indicated that they were more likely to use the TTC. More importantly, of the 16% of respondents who currently use the TTC once a week or less, over half (55%) indicated that they would use the TTC more with the proposed changes.

Written Comments

Respondents to the online survey were also provided an opportunity to provide written feedback about the proposed changes. A total of 513 written responses were received; some of the key themes included:

- Support for the reinstatement of direct service to downtown Toronto from Pape Station;
- Complaints about crowding and service reliability, particularly related to streetcar service on King Street and bus service on 72 PAPE;
- Frequency of the proposed new services would be important to determine use;
- Concerns about parts of proposal where areas would have longer waits or longer walks to service;
- Stop spacing needs to be reviewed on the 72 PAPE route; and,
- New bus Route 121 should be extended further east to the West Don Lands and further west to Fort York and Liberty Village.

With the feedback received from customers and additional analysis of potential ridership, a revised proposal was developed. The key changes to the initial proposal include:

- Extension of the proposed bus Route 121 to the Fort York neighbourhood in the west and to Cherry Street in the east. This would add connections to the 509 HARBOURFRONT and 514 CHERRY streetcar routes;
- The seasonal extension to Cherry Beach would be operated by Route 121 between May and October; and,
- The looping of the direct service from Pape Station to downtown would be reversed, to enable the sharing of the southbound stops on Bay Street with 6 BAY buses.

The feedback received also informed the development of the service plan for the changes, including service levels. The input will be balanced against available resources and analysis of existing ridership.