

Round One Stakeholder Engagement Summary

TTC 2025 Annual Service Plan



Tuesday, July 30, 2024

Overview

On Tuesday, July 30, 2024, the TTC hosted two stakeholder meetings as part of the first of two planned rounds of consultation about its 2025 Annual Service Plan. Both meetings covered the same information and discussion topics (see Appendices A and B for agendas). The purpose of the meetings was to share and seek feedback on:

- **Broader service initiatives**, including Community Bus service, the One Fare Program, and construction
- **Various service adjustments and improvements**, including Downtown and East York service, Etobicoke service, Scarborough Blue Night service, and Etobicoke Blue Night service.

The stakeholder group includes a broad range of transit-interested organizations with both city-wide and area-specific mandates. 15 people participated across both sessions. Also participating were staff from the TTC and Third Party Public, the engagement team retained by TTC to support the engagement process on the 2025 Annual Service Plan. See Appendix C for a full list of participating staff and organizations.

Third Party Public prepared this summary, which includes feedback shared both in and after the meetings. The intent of this summary is to capture the range of feedback shared; it is not intended to serve as verbatim transcript. Third Party Public shared a draft of this summary with participants for review before finalizing it.

This summary includes two sections:

- Key themes in feedback
- Detailed summary of feedback

Key themes in feedback

The following themes emerged in feedback across both meetings.

The Community Bus service has potential but needs a re-think. Suggestions on improving the Community Bus service included suggestions to add more direct and more frequent service, add connections to transit hubs, and revisit the “vision” for the Community Bus service. The Community Bus Service could potentially be re-positioned as a “last mile” service connecting the inner suburbs or quieter neighbourhoods to transit hubs.

The One Fare Program has been successful and there are opportunities for TTC to take better advantage of it. One Fare has made a big difference for many customers. TTC could take better advantage of the program by better promoting it near other agencies stations, advocating for improved connections between TTC and other agencies stations (especially GO and TTC stations), and making sure it is not missing out on revenue due to customers not tapping when transferring to TTC.

There has been progress on construction-related diversions, with more improvements needed. TTC could build off its progress by further improving how it communicates about diversions (from notices to e-alerts to messaging given to operators), continuing to pursue transit priority measures, and doing everything possible to make sure construction work is happening as fast as possible.

The other proposed service adjustments and improvements generally make sense. Improvements to Blue Night service are welcome (and should be expanded upon), and several of the proposed changes should help shift workers. TTC should be cautious when implementing proposals that remove service from key audiences or vulnerable populations and make sure service remains for these customers.

Detailed summary of feedback

Participants shared feedback about Community Bus service, the One Fare Program, construction, and other service adjustments and improvements.

Feedback about the Community Bus service

TTC shared an overview and review of its Community Bus Service, explaining that the service's current ridership has not been meeting its minimum service standards on various routes and that TTC is exploring opportunities to improve it. TTC asked participants for their thoughts on how it could improve Community Bus Service.

Several participants said that, while they do not personally use the Community Bus service, they know it is important for some customers. They had questions and suggestions on how TTC could improve this service.

Questions about the Community Bus service

- **Question: Is the Community Bus service in danger of being eliminated?** *Answer: No, not as part of this 2025 Annual Service Plan. TTC's current focus is making sure the service is well used through a combination of changes to routing and communications.*
- **Question: What criteria does TTC use when determining Community Bus routes and what are the thresholds (if any) for removing a route?** *Answer: TTC determines routes based on an assessment of where it can divert door-to-door Wheel-Trans service and where there are destinations people can connect to. TTC targets a minimum ridership TTC of 4 boarding per hour for Community Bus service.*

Suggestions on how TTC could improve the Community Bus service

Some participants said they like the idea of Community Bus service and think it has great potential. They said it has several issues, including: the routes are too meandering, the service too infrequent, many customers don't know the service exists, and the standalone routes seem random and do not actually form a network.

Suggestions on how to improve this service included:

- **Add more routes and offer more direct and more frequent service**, including operating them 7 days. *TTC said one of its challenges is that, since the current routes are not performing well, the organization is not willing to invest additional resources to add more. Adding new Community Bus routes requires additional resources and is not currently the focus of the Annual Service Plan review.*
- **Add connections to transit hubs** — like connecting the 405 Etobicoke to Weston Go Station — to increase awareness and ridership and take advantage of One Fare.
- **Revisit the “vision” for the Community Bus service** to better articulate what it's supposed to do, who it's supposed to serve, and how to make best use it. For example, it might make more sense to operate this service in the inner suburbs to serve customers living in neighbourhoods that weren't designed for walking. Or it might make sense to think of it as a “last mile” service connecting quieter neighbourhoods to transit hubs.
- **Use Community Bus service to “fill in gaps” when routes are diverted or adjusted** due to construction (such as 403 Don Mills during Ontario Line construction).
- **Review how nearby agencies (like York Region) provide and operate similar services.**

One specific suggestion was for TTC to review the routing of 403 Don Mills South for 2025 in light of other routing changes associated with the Line 5 opening.

Feedback about the One Fare Program

TTC shared a brief overview of the One Fare Program and explained that it is exploring opportunities to improve cross-boundary trips and introduce new connections between neighbouring transit agencies. It said that its focus in the 2025 Annual Service Plan is “quick win” changes it can implement easily, adding that the agency will continue to advocate for longer term infrastructure upgrades like tunnels and other physical connections between agencies.

TTC asked participants about their experience with One Fare, how it has impacted their or others' travel behaviour, and the kinds of changes they thought TTC could make to take better advantage of the program.

Participants had a range of levels of experience with the One Fare program, with some saying they had no direct experience with it and others saying they use it occasionally or frequently. Regardless of their experience, participants said the program is an improvement and they are glad it exists. A few said One Fare has been particularly beneficial to post-secondary students, many of whom are saving significant amounts of money and who are making different decisions about things like where to live.

Suggestions on how the TTC could better take advantage of the program included:

- **Make sure customers are tapping on when transferring to TTC.** TTC is losing fares in places where customers can bypass tapping on to a TTC vehicle. For example, at Sheppard West Station, some customers transferring from York Region Transit's 105 Dufferin North route take the most direct route to the subway platform (across the bus bay), skipping TTC fare gates. If TTC takes enforcement action, it should do so in accordance with its [Anti-Racism Strategy](#).
- **Add more signs promoting the One Fare program,** especially at stations serving post-secondary institutions, like York University.
- **Improve connections between TTC and other transit services.** Sometimes these connections are too far or not comfortable, such as:
 - between Main Street Subway Station and Danforth GO Station
 - between Leslie Subway Station and Oriole GO station
 - between Don Mills Subway Station and Agincourt GO Station
- **Advocate for a better interface between GO stations in Toronto and “the outside world.”** Other than Union Station, GO Stations in Toronto are largely focused on customers coming and going via car. TTC could advocate for these stations to focus more on their surrounding environment and better connect to TTC service.
- **Clarify how One Fare is supposed to work for CNIB (Canada National Institute for the Blind) customers.** Right now, CNIB customers who use their CNIB PRESTO card to make cross-jurisdiction trips are required to pay both fares. *Response added after the meeting: The TTC provides a special transit card for legally blind customers who hold a CNIB card and live in Toronto. This card allows them to travel for free on the TTC. However, this benefit is specific to the TTC. CNIB cardholders who do not live in Toronto can show their CNIB photo ID to receive free transit on participating GTHA transit agencies, such as GO Transit, but this benefit does not extend to the TTC. Regarding the Ontario One Fare program, which allows passengers to transfer between different transit systems (e.g., TTC, GO Transit) without paying double fares, there is no current indication from the Province that CNIB cardholders will be included in this program. This program is primarily focused on making inter-agency travel seamless for passengers using PRESTO cards, debit, or credit cards, but it doesn't extend to the specific fare policies for CNIB cardholders. However, TTC will pass along this feedback to the Province.*
- **Advocate for a new GO Station in the east end.** The 8km gap between Danforth GO and Union Station means the One Fare program is of little use to most residents in the east end.

Feedback about construction

TTC shared an overview of select 2024 construction projects, including how it had applied the principles developed in the 2024 Annual Service Plan process to those projects. It then asked participants for their thoughts on service detours and how TTC could improve.

Some said that the TTC has generally improved how it plans and implements construction-related service detours. A few said that one of the main impacts of construction — congestion — is outside of TTC's control and acknowledged that TTC has a tough job providing good service when its vehicles are in mixed traffic.

What is going well with service detours

Participants said several things are going well with service detours, including:

- **TTC communications are improving.** Construction notices and updates are more legible and consistent with what's actually happening on the ground.
- **The speed of adjustments once detours are underway.** The TTC and City were able to quickly adjust when replacement busses on Spadina were stuck in traffic.

- **Traffic wardens, temporary transit priority measures, and parking removals.** Traffic wardens made a noticeable improvement to the 504 King. Removing parking and temporary transit priority measures have been helpful on other routes.

Suggestions on how TTC could improve service detours

Participants' suggestions on how TTC could improve service detours included:

- **Continue improving communications**, such as:
 - Making sure there it is easy to find and accurate information about diversions and changes on TTC's website – there are still problems with different information appearing in different places. On a similar note, TTC URLs should be consistent with the name of associated services — "TrackTTC" should not have a URL with a different name (bustime.TTC.ca).
 - Communicating clearly and honestly why a closure, diversion, or change is needed. Customers get frustrated when they either don't understand the reason for a change (like slow zones on Line 1), or it looks like "nothing is happening" (like the lack of visible work on the Spadina right-of-way during the current construction).
 - Making more colourful, eye-catching notices (like Metrolinx' Ontario Line signs)
 - Ensuring consistent and clear communication when many projects are unfolding concurrently. For example, in Thorncliffe Park, residents are confused and worried about the combined impact of Ontario Line work with City-led projects on Overlea and the Leaside Bridge.
 - Using stop names instead of stop numbers in service alerts.
 - Ensuring operators know and can give accurate information about where detouring routes go.
- **Continue to pursue transit priority measures**, like traffic wardens and transit-only lanes. Ideally, TTC would proactively install transit priority measures in places where it might have to make detours or "unusual routings." While outside the focus of the Annual Service Plan, this type of change could help make the transition to detours smoother. For example, had there been signals already installed at Queen Street East and Broadview Avenue when re-routing streetcars last year, TTC would have been able to activate transit priority at this intersection more quickly.
- **Make sure work is proceeding as tight and fast as possible.** Sometimes bundling of projects means transit service is impacted by work outside of TTC's scope (such as the King-Queen-Queensway work) – TTC should be cautious about embarking on these types of projects. When all aspects of construction work are under TTC control (like the current work on Spadina), TTC should strive to make sure there is strong rationale for doing the work in phases (as opposed to concurrently) — with the aim of pushing for concurrent work so things can "go back to normal" faster.
- **Make sure replacement service is reliable.** For example, a few years ago the replacement bus service serving the Distillery District was very unreliable.

Other proposed service adjustments and improvements

TTC shared several other proposed service adjustments and improvements, including to services in Downtown and East York, Etobicoke, Scarborough Blue Night, and Etobicoke Blue Night. It asked participants for their thoughts on the proposed adjustments.

Participants were generally positive about the proposed adjustments and improvements, especially Blue Night services. One participant said that Flemington Park is a big gap in the Blue Night network and asked TTC to look at adding Blue Night Service there in the 2025 Annual Service Plan. Another said they would like to see Blue Night frequency improvements done earlier in the 5-Year Service and Customer Experience Action Plan.

Feedback about specific adjustments and improvements

Participants shared feedback about several of the specific service adjustments and improvements planned in the 2025 Annual Service Plan. This feedback included:

Proposed service

Feedback

Scarborough Blue Night Services

Support for this proposal, especially the addition of the 386 Scarborough and 334B Eglinton East.

Etobicoke Blue Night Services	Since Islington Avenue north of Eglinton has a working class profile with many apartments and warehouses, it's important to preserve as much service there as possible. Of the two options, Option 2 may be better since it better serves this area.
13B Avenue Road	TTC's rationale for removing this service makes sense, but there should be a lot of caution making any change that might require people to walk further to get service near hospitals.
22 Coxwell	Support for the proposed changes, with some saying route management has been unreliable on shorter routes like 22 Coxwell and increasing the route's length could help. Others said that, while they liked the change, the increased route length could also increase the risk of delays. TTC should be aware that the removal of 22 Coxwell weekend and evening service on Kingston Road hasn't been well-received and that the route may benefit from a southern destination as opposed to an on-street loop. Service on 70 O'Connor is currently unreliable due to construction.
49 Bloor West	This service will benefit many apartments on Mill Road that don't currently have service. Renforth Station is a good terminus. Consider whether Rathburn Road or Rentforth Drive could provide better access to Centennial Park than Centennial Park Boulevard. In parallel, consider whether it also makes sense to route 48 Rathburn and 50 Burnhamthorpe to Renforth Station and/or Centennial Park.
87 Cosburn	TTC's rationale for the proposed change makes sense, but it will be important to consult the customers who rely on it. TTC might need to improve 404 East York service so that the vulnerable population that relies on this service still has service.
145 Belfield	Many shift workers work in the area served by this route, so it's important the route has long hours of operation. They also said TTC should make sure it locates stops in places where there are sidewalks (since there may not be sidewalks everywhere in this area).

Other feedback

Participants shared other feedback throughout the meetings and in post-meeting feedback, including suggestions to:

- Split out the number of budget hours used to deal with congestion to explain how much of TTC's resources go to dealing with congestion (as opposed to improving congestion)
- List outstanding improvements and adjustments from the 2024 Annual Service Plan so that people know these changes are also planned.
- Consider changing the definition of "on time." The current definition is based on when vehicles leave terminus points but does not reflect that big gaps can happen despite vehicles being "on time."
- Review the availability of benches in the subway – some areas like the southbound platform at Bloor Station have only one bench.

Appendix A. Afternoon Session Agenda

TTC 2025 Annual Service Plan Round One Stakeholder Meetings

Tuesday, July 30, 2024

2:00 – 4:00 pm

Meeting held online



Meeting purpose

To share and seek feedback on the draft initiatives and priorities for the 2025 Annual Service Plan.

Proposed agenda

2:00 Welcome, land acknowledgement, introductions, agenda review

Laurence Lui, TTC

Ian Malczewski, Facilitator, Third Party Public

2:15 Update and overview of the 2025 Annual Service Plan

Laurence Lui, Jasmine Eftekhari, TTC

- 5-Year Service and Customer Experience Action Plan
- 2024 Service Update
- 2025 Annual Service Plan overview

Questions of clarification

2:40 Discussion: broader service initiatives

Community Bus Service

1. Given our review of the Community Bus service (along with your experience of this service, if any), what thoughts do you have on how we could improve it?

One Fare Program

2. What has your experience with the One Fare program been? How easy is it to understand, and how has it impacted your (or others') travel behaviour?
3. What kind of changes do you think TTC could make to better take advantage of the One Fare program?

Construction

4. To the extent that you're familiar with the construction projects currently happening, what do you think is going well with the service detours for these projects and what can we improve on? Do you have any other advice for us to consider when planning for service adjustments and detours due to construction?

3:20 Overview of proposed service adjustments and improvements

Jasmine Eftekhari, TTC

Questions of clarification

3:35 Discussion: proposed service adjustments and improvements

1. What are your thoughts on the proposed service adjustments and improvements? Is there anything you particularly like or find concerning?

3:55 Wrap up and next steps

4:00 Adjourn

Appendix B. Evening Session Agenda



TTC 2025 Annual Service Plan Round One Stakeholder Meetings

Tuesday, July 30, 2024
6:00 – 8:00 pm
Meeting held online

Meeting purpose

To share and seek feedback on the draft initiatives and priorities for the 2025 Annual Service Plan.

Proposed agenda

6:00 Welcome, land acknowledgement, introductions, agenda review

Laurence Lui, TTC
Ian Malczewski, Facilitator, Third Party Public

6:15 Update and overview of the 2025 Annual Service Plan

Laurence Lui, Jasmine Eftekhari, TTC

- 5-Year Service and Customer Experience Action Plan
- 2024 Service Update
- 2025 Annual Service Plan overview

Questions of clarification

6:40 Discussion: broader service initiatives

Community Bus Service

1. Given our review of the Community Bus service (along with your experience of this service, if any), what thoughts do you have on how we could improve it?

One Fare Program

2. What has your experience with the One Fare program been? How easy is it to understand, and how has it impacted your (or others') travel behaviour?
3. What kind of changes do you think TTC could make to better take advantage of the One Fare program?

Construction

4. To the extent that you're familiar with the construction projects currently happening, what do you think is going well with the service detours for these projects and what can we improve on? Do you have any other advice for us to consider when planning for service adjustments and detours due to construction?

7:20 Overview of proposed service adjustments and improvements

Jasmine Eftekhari, TTC

Questions of clarification

7:35 Discussion: proposed service adjustments and improvements

1. What are your thoughts on the proposed service adjustments and improvements?
Is there anything you particularly like or find concerning?

7:55 Wrap up and next steps

8:00 Adjourn

Appendix C. Participants

Stakeholder organizations

A Voice for Transit
Canada National Institute for the Blind (CNIB)
Centre for Spanish Speaking Peoples
Danforth East Community Association
House Canada
Leaside Towers Tenants Association (Thornccliffe Park)
Ontario Public Transit Association
stevemunro.ca
Taibu Community Health Centre
Toronto Community and Culture Centre
TTCriders
University of Toronto Students' Union
Walk Toronto
York Community Housing Association
York University

TTC

Jasmine Eftekhari
Jason Genee
Lawrence Lui
Aisha Malik
Kristijan Naelapea
Erika Vilmanis

Third Party Public

Khly Lamparero
Ian Malczewski