



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Status Update: Express Bus Study, and Introduction of First New Express Routes

Date:	January 21, 2016
To:	TTC Board
From:	Chief Executive Officer

Summary

In 2015, Toronto City Council approved \$95 million for TTC service enhancements. On March 11, 2015, City Council approved the TTC 2015 Operating Budget and 2015-2024 Capital Budget. These budgets included new funding, from the approved \$95 million, for various service enhancements, one of which was the acquisition of new buses to implement peak-period service improvements and new and/or enhanced express bus services in early 2016 when the new buses were to arrive.

On March 27, 2016, the TTC will introduce five new express routes across the city of Toronto on Don Mills Road, Finch Avenue West, Kipling Avenue, Victoria Park Avenue, and Wilson Avenue. These service improvements will provide travellers with new rapid, reliable, and visible express bus services.

The five new and enhanced express routes are the first routes to be introduced as a result of the TTC's Express Bus Network Study. A longer list of recommended new and/or enhanced express routes is currently being finalized and will be presented to the TTC Board in the "Express Bus Network Study Final Report" at the June 29, 2016 Board meeting.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board forward this report to the City of Toronto Planning Department and Transportation Services Department.

Financial Impact

The gross operating cost of the five new and enhanced express routes in 2016 is \$4.2 million (\$5.7 million annually). The express routes are expected to attract approximately 400,000 new customers in 2016 (1.1 million new customers annually when ridership fully

matures in subsequent years). The fare revenue for the express routes is estimated to be \$800,000 in 2016 (\$2.3 million annually when ridership fully matures). Therefore, the net operating cost of implementing the new and enhanced express routes in 2016 is \$3.4 million (\$3.4 million annually) which is included in the TTC's base 2016 Operating Budget approved by the TTC Board on November 23, 2015 and will be considered by City Council on February 17 and 18, 2016.

The 12 buses required to operate this service were acquired in 2015 and, therefore, there are no additional capital costs for this new service.

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

Decision History

At its March 26, 2014 meeting, the TTC Board approved a motion that directed TTC staff to report back on the feasibility of implementing additional express bus routes in the City of Toronto.

http://www.ttc.ca/About_the_TTC/Commission_reports_and_information/Commission_meetings/2014/April_30/Minutes/index.jsp

At its August 19, 2014 meeting, the TTC Board approved the “Opportunities to Improve Transit Service in Toronto” report which recommended, among other things, expanding and enhancing the TTC's express bus services.

http://www.ttc.ca/About_the_TTC/Commission_reports_and_information/Commission_meetings/2014/August_19/Supplementary_Reports/Opportunities_to_Improve_Transit_Service_in_Toronto.pdf

In 2015, Toronto City Council approved \$95 million for TTC service enhancements. On March 11, 2015, City Council approved the TTC 2015 Operating Budget and 2015-2024 Capital Budget. These budgets included new funding, from the approved \$95 million, for various service enhancements. This included the acquisition of 50 new buses to implement peak-period service improvements and new and/or enhanced express bus services in early 2016.

https://www.ttc.ca/About_the_TTC/Commission_reports_and_information/Commission_meetings/2015/February_2/Reports/2015_TTC_AND_WHEEL_TRANS_OPERATING_BUDGETS.pdf

https://www.ttc.ca/About_the_TTC/Commission_reports_and_information/Commission_meetings/2015/February_2/Reports/2015_2024_TTC_CAPITAL_BUDGET.pdf

At its March 26, 2015 meeting, the TTC Board approved the Express Bus Network Study Plan. The Study's objectives include evaluating the TTC's various existing express services and recommending possible improvements and expansions to the express bus network, including a limited number of new express services to be introduced in early 2016.

http://www.ttc.ca/About_the_TTC/Commission_reports_and_information/Commission_meetings/2015/March_26/Reports/Express_Bus_Route_Network_Study_Plan.pdf

Accessibility Issues

The TTC has made significant progress in moving towards providing barrier-free, accessible transit services for all customers. Presently, all TTC bus services are operated using accessible, low-floor buses. Between 2015 and 2019, streetcar services will increasingly use the new low-floor accessible streetcars and, by 2025, subject to funding, all subway stations will be accessible.

New and enhanced express bus services encourage and support more-spontaneous trip-making, which is an important part of making the conventional system attractive to potential new customers, such as Wheel-Trans registrants, and to all travellers in Toronto. This supports the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) objectives of more-spontaneous travel options for customers with disabilities, and the City's Poverty Reduction Strategy of making transit more accessible and attractive to everyone.

Comments

Express Bus Network Study

TTC and City staff are presently undertaking a study to enhance and expand TTC express bus services. An enhanced express bus route network, which is fully and seamlessly integrated with the rapid transit network, will provide Toronto travellers with a greater choice of rapid, reliable, and visible express bus services.

The Express Bus Network Study is organized into four tasks.

Task 1 – Performance Review: Task 1 is a review of the performance of existing TTC express services -- including express branches on regular routes, limited-stop express services, and the Downtown Premium-Fare express services -- and was completed in August 2015. The purpose of this review was to determine what changes, if any, should be made to these existing express services.

Task 2 – Background: Task 2 is a review of relevant provincial, municipal, and TTC policy and planning documents to ensure that the express bus network is developed consistent with long-term plans such as the City's transportation update to the Official Plan. Also, this task includes a review of express bus services at other North American transit agencies to identify industry best practices with respect to service characteristics, transit priority measures, branding, and fare collection. This task was completed in September 2015.

Task 3 – Network Design: Task 3 is a design of a revised TTC express bus network, and is scheduled for completion in February 2016. This task includes the development of a short-term express service network (2016-2019), and a long-term network (2020-2025).

Task 4 – Implementation and Business Plan: Task 4 includes the preparation of a detailed service plan, infrastructure & ITS requirements, communications strategies, and the associated resource requirements to implement the Plan. This task is scheduled for completion in May 2016. Recommendations will be presented to the TTC Board in a Final Report at its June 29, 2016 Board meeting.

Five New and Enhanced Express Routes

On March 27, 2016, the TTC will introduce these five new and/or enhanced express routes across the city (see Map 1):

185 DON MILLS ROCKET: New express service will be introduced in the Don Mills Road / Overlea Boulevard / Pape Avenue corridor, between Pape Station and Steeles Avenue East. This new express service will operate during the daytime and early evening, Monday to Friday, and during the daytime on Saturday, Sunday, and holidays.

199 FINCH ROCKET: New and enhanced express service will be introduced on the 199 Finch Rocket:

- 199A is the main branch, and it will continue to provide express service between Scarborough Centre Station and Finch Station all-day, Monday to Friday, and during the daytime and early evenings on Saturday, Sunday, and holidays.
- 199B is a new branch that will provide express service between Scarborough Centre Station and York University via Finch Station, during the daytime and early evening, Monday to Friday.
- 199C is a new branch that will provide express service between Finch Station and Morningside Heights during the morning and afternoon peak periods, Monday to Friday.

188 KIPLING SOUTH ROCKET: New express service will be introduced on Kipling Avenue between Kipling Station and Lake Shore Boulevard West at Humber College – Lakeshore Campus. This new service will operate during the daytime from Monday to Friday, when demand is greatest at the college.

24E VICTORIA PARK EXPRESS: New express service will be introduced on Victoria Park Avenue between Victoria Park Station and Steeles Avenue East. This new express service will be a branch of the existing 24 VICTORIA PARK route, and will operate between 6:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. in the morning peak period, and between 3:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. in the afternoon peak period.

186 WILSON ROCKET: A new and enhanced express service will be introduced in the Wilson Avenue corridor between York Mills Station and Humber College – North Campus. This new express service will replace the existing 96E WILSON EXPRESS branch, and will operate during the daytime from Monday to Friday, when demand is greatest at the college.

The gross operating cost of the five new and enhanced express routes in 2016 is \$4.2 million (\$5.7 million annually). The express routes are expected to attract approximately 400,000 new customers in 2016 (1.1 million new customers annually when ridership fully matures in subsequent years). The fare revenue for the express routes is estimated to be \$800,000 in 2016 (\$2.3 million annually when ridership fully matures). Therefore, the net operating cost of implementing the new and enhanced express routes in 2016 is \$3.4 million (\$3.4 million annually) which is included in the TTC's base 2016 Operating Budget approved by the TTC Board on November 23, 2015 and will be considered by City Council on February 17 and 18, 2016. The 12 buses required to operate this service were acquired in 2015 and therefore there are no immediate capital costs for this new service.

The five new and/or enhanced express routes are the first routes to be introduced as a result of the Express Bus Network Study. The routes were selected because they are in established, busy transit corridors, they are projected to carry significant volumes of travellers and save them travel time, they connect with, and serve major residential, employment, and educational centres (including four post-secondary institutions) and, therefore, provide valuable improvements to the city of Toronto's surface transit network.

The longer list of future new and/or enhanced express routes is being finalized and will be presented to the TTC Board as part of the Express Bus Network Study Final Report at the June 29, 2016 Board meeting.

Conclusion

On March 27, 2016, the TTC will introduce five new and enhanced express routes across the City. These express routes are the first routes to be introduced as a result of the TTC's Express Bus Network Study. The "Express Bus Network Study Final Report" will be presented to the TTC Board at its June 29, 2016 Board meeting.

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Map 1: Five New and Enhanced Express Bus Routes

