

# TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION REPORT NO.

**MEETING DATE:** November 26, 2008

**SUBJECT:** 33 FOREST HILL BUS ROUTE – POST-IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW

## **ACTION ITEM**

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### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Commission:

1. Approve the elimination of the present trial north-end on-street looping on the 33 FOREST HILL bus route via Eglinton Avenue, Chaplin Crescent, Roselawn Avenue, Bathurst Street, and Eglinton Avenue, and that the route be restored to its previous routing using Elderwood Drive and Vesta Drive, effective March 29, 2009; and
2. Forward this report to Councillors Mihevc and Walker.

### **FUNDING**

This service change has no effect on the TTC's operating budget.

### **BACKGROUND**

As directed by the Commission at its meeting on July 19, 2006, a routing change to the 33 FOREST HILL bus route was introduced in October, 2006, for a trial period. The change extended the route farther north to loop via Eglinton Avenue, Chaplin Crescent, Roselawn Avenue, and Bathurst Street, and removed service from Elderwood Drive and Vesta Drive.

A report on the post-implementation review was submitted to the Commission on May 8, 2007 recommending the elimination of the extension and the return of the previous routing. The Commission directed that *"...the present routing of the 33 Forest Hill bus be extended for one year, with a staff report back at the end of the extension period on the performance and continuance of the service."*

This report responds to this direction.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Post-Implementation Reviews**

The TTC uses a formal process for planning and evaluating service changes based on a set of Commission-approved service standards. Every new service that the TTC introduces is initially operated on a trial basis. After a minimum six-month trial period, when ridership on the service has approached a mature state, passenger counts are taken, the performance of the route is reviewed, and a recommendation is made regarding its future. All service changes are reviewed to ensure that the original objective of better service for customers has been met. New routes and extensions, which have been introduced at an additional cost, undergo a ridership and financial review to check that the service has met established standards of acceptable ridership and financial performance. The overall review also considers comments that have been received from customers and the community, and the experience that has been gained in operating the service.

A service change, which has met its performance objectives, is recommended to be made a regular part of the TTC system. If a service change has been unsuccessful in some way, then a recommendation is made to either make further changes for another trial period or to remove the service. The compulsory post-implementation review of every trial service change ensures that the success or failure of every service change is assessed consistently and fairly, and that there is full accountability to the Commission on matters which affect the service that is provided to customers.

Most service changes implemented through this process have been successful. Of the 86 trial service changes made since 1998, 64 of the changes attracted sufficient ridership that they meet the TTC's financial performance targets, and are now a regular part of the TTC system.

### **33 FOREST HILL Bus Route – Revised routing at Chaplin Crescent and Roselawn Avenue**

The extended 33 FOREST HILL bus route operates between St. Clair West Station and Eglinton Avenue at all times of the week. Prior to Sunday, November 23, 2008, service operated only during the peak periods and midday from Monday to Friday.

Previously, buses operated north on Spadina Road, west on Elderwood Drive, north on Vesta Drive, east on Eglinton Avenue, and south on Spadina Road (see attached Exhibit 1). As directed by the Commission, the route was changed for a trial period, starting on October 16, 2006. The new trial routing is via north on Spadina Road, east on Eglinton Avenue, west on Chaplin Crescent, west on Roselawn Avenue, south on Bathurst Street, east on Eglinton Avenue, and south on Spadina Road (the direction of operations at the north end loop was temporarily reversed to a clockwise direction in early August, 2008, to reduce delays resulting from bridge reconstruction on Eglinton Avenue).

The change was made without adding any buses to the route and, because the new routing is longer, the interval between buses was changed from every 20 minutes to every 30 minutes. There was no change in operating costs as a result of this routing change.

Recent ridership counts taken in October, 2008, show that ridership on the entire route is lower than in 2007. The number of customer-trips made on the route has declined by approximately 10 per cent, compared to March, 2007. Ridership in March, 2007, was approximately 35 per cent lower from the pre-extension counts. Therefore, ridership on the present trial route during the peak periods and midday from Monday to Friday is approximately 48 per cent lower than before the route was changed in October, 2006. This ridership loss occurred over a period when system ridership increased by approximately 5 per cent.

The service has been made worse for all customers on the route because the waiting time for the bus is longer, and this likely accounts for the significant loss of ridership. Approximately 125 customer-trips each day are made at stops along the new part of the route, and these customers have a shorter walk or one less transfer. The majority of these trips were previously made at the stops on Vesta Drive at Eglinton Avenue, and on Spadina Road at Eglinton Avenue. It is estimated that fewer than 10 new customer-trips each day have been attracted to the TTC by the revised service.

Shortly after the route was extended in October, 2006, comments were received from TTC customers regarding the routing change. Eight people called or e-mailed the TTC directly about the change. Four were opposed to the change because of the longer wait for the bus, and others were concerned about bus stop location issues, customer information, and lack of consultation. Councillor Mihevc's office has also referred to the TTC several requests from customers to improve the frequency of service. In the past year, several additional customer requests for more-frequent service have been received.

An option was examined that would add one bus to the route. Service would be improved from every 30 minutes to every 15 minutes. This change is not warranted by the level of crowding on the route because the average number of customers per bus is well within the Commission-approved maximum levels. The number of new customers that would be attracted by the reduction in waiting time would not be high enough to justify the additional operating costs of a second bus.

There has been a significant decrease in route ridership as a result of the trial route extension, and very few new customers have been attracted to the route. The routing change has made service worse overall for customers. As a result, it is recommended that the trial routing be eliminated, and that the route be restored to its previous operation via north on Spadina Road, west on Elderwood Drive, north on Vesta Drive, east on Eglinton Avenue, and south on Spadina Road. Service would operate every 20 minutes. This change would begin on Sunday, March 29, 2009.

### **JUSTIFICATION**

The post-implementation review of service changes is an important part of the TTC's service standards. The routing change on the 33 FOREST HILL bus route has, overall, made service worse for customers and so the service should be restored to its previous routing.

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November 7, 2008

11-31-43

Attachment: Exhibit 1 – 33 FOREST HILL Bus Route– Revised Routing

# Exhibit 1

