

# TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION REPORT NO.

**MEETING DATE:** June 2, 2010

**SUBJECT:** LAKE SHORE BOULEVARD STREETCAR SERVICE –  
FOLLOW-UP REPORT

## **ACTION ITEM**

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### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Commission:

1. Note that the costs and feasibility of operating revised streetcar services on Lake Shore Boulevard are detailed in this report; and
2. Forward this report to Councillors Grimes, Milczyn, Saundercook, Perks, Giambrone, Vaughan, Rae, McConnell, Fletcher, Bussin, and Ashton and Deputy Mayor Pantalone; and the Lakeshore Planning Council.

### **FUNDING**

This report has no effect on the TTC's capital or operating budgets.

### **BACKGROUND**

At its meeting of May 6, 2010, the Commission considered a report entitled, *Lake Shore Boulevard Streetcar Service* regarding possible route change options for streetcar service on Lake Shore Boulevard.

At that meeting, the Commission requested that staff:

“report to the June meeting of the Commission on reinstating the 507 LONG BRANCH streetcar route in consideration of general service options, including the feasibility of an extension of the route through to Dundas West Station as a pilot, to determine if streetcar service to Ward 6 improves.”

This report responds to that request.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Original options evaluated**

The May 6, 2010 Commission report described two possible changes to streetcar service on Lake Shore Boulevard. The first option would restore the former 507 LONG BRANCH route. This service operated between 1970 and 1995 as a separate service between Long Branch Loop and Humber Loop. The second option would introduce a new service that would operate between Long Branch Loop and Dundas West Station. This would effectively extend a restored 507 LONG BRANCH route along The Queensway and on Roncesvalles Avenue and Dundas Street. Both options are shown in the attached Exhibit 1.

In both cases, the routing changes could be expected to improve service reliability along Lake Shore Boulevard, because the streetcars would operate over a shorter route and would avoid travelling through more-congested parts of the 501 QUEEN route east of Roncesvalles Avenue. For customers along Lake Shore Boulevard, this would be the expected benefit of the proposed changes, and the main reason for the request for a revised route. This benefit would be offset, however, by the inconvenience caused to customers who would be required to make an additional transfer to reach their destination.

### **Separate Long Branch – Humber route**

In the case of the first option, a separate Long Branch Loop – Humber Loop service, all of the 4000 customer-trips that now travel through Humber Loop would have to transfer between streetcars at Humber Loop because there would be no through service. There would be no increase in operating costs but, because of the significant inconvenience to through customers, this option should not be pursued further. This is significant research evidence, and more-than-ample customer communications, indicating customers' strong dislike for being forced off one vehicle and waiting for a subsequent vehicle to travel onward in a single direction.

### **Long Branch Loop – Dundas West Station route**

For the Long Branch Loop – Dundas West Station option, 2,500 customer-trips would be inconvenienced by the loss of a through service and the imposition of a transfer, because a new transfer requirement would be established, this time at Roncesvalles Avenue and Queen Street. Customers who use streetcar stops on The Queensway and on Roncesvalles Avenue/Dundas Street would benefit from more-frequent service; however, from a crowding standards perspective, there is no requirement to provide this additional service. Also, there would be some improvements in available capacity for customers who use streetcars on the 504 KING route east of Roncesvalles Avenue. While this would be a positive by-product of this option, it is not the issue which the proposed initiatives are intended to address and does not justify the additional operating costs of implementing this option.

The Long Branch Loop – Dundas West Station option would increase operating costs by approximately \$825,000 per year. This additional cost would be a result of the extension of

the service east of Humber Loop where it would duplicate the 501 QUEEN service on the Queensway and the 504 KING service on Roncesvalles Avenue/Dundas Street.

Customers who use the service on Lake Shore Boulevard, west of Humber Loop, would benefit from some degree of improved reliability and, as noted before, this is the primary concern of customers on Lake Shore Boulevard. It is not possible to accurately predict how much the reliability of the service would be improved by shortening the route. As a result, the number of customers who would be attracted by the resultant improvement in service cannot be projected. Based on the cost increase of \$825,000 per year, the service change would have to attract approximately 740 new customer-trips each weekday – or an increase of about 13% -- in order to meet the TTC's financial standard of 0.23 new customers per dollar of net direct additional operating cost. Staff's assessment is, however, that it is unlikely that the service would meet this ridership and financial target.

The routing change could be implemented when construction on Roncesvalles Avenue is completed, which is expected to be late in 2010 or in 2011. As noted in the May 6, 2010 report, the operation of this additional service at Dundas West Station would cause operational conflicts with the 504 KING route and, as a result, it would likely reduce service reliability on that route.

Regardless of the specific details of customer benefits and financial performance, the fundamental issues for the Commission to consider about this service change are:

- 1) should additional operating costs be invested in this way to improve, by an unknown degree, the attractiveness and reliability of a service?
- 2) would such an investment in improved service in a particular neighbourhood be an equitable use of scarce TTC operating resources, given that there are other routes and other neighbourhoods which, given the opportunity, would also benefit from additional service resources? and
- 3) there are no funds available in the TTC's operating budget for any such special-purpose service initiatives. Such a provision had originally been included in the (then-proposed) 2010 operating budget, but it had to be removed because of the need to reduce costs in order to develop a balanced budget.

With regard to the first point, there are other options that would involve spending increased operating resources to improve the quantity and quality of streetcar service on Lake Shore Boulevard. For example, one option would be to operate all streetcars on the 501 QUEEN route between Neville Park Loop and Long Branch Loop, instead of scheduling only every second car to operate west of Humber Loop. There would be no forced transfer for customers, as with the other options presented. The service reliability would be improved, by an unknown degree, west of Humber Loop because the operation, scheduling, and supervision of the route would be simplified by eliminating the scheduled short turns at Humber Loop, and because twice the quantity of service would be scheduled to operate west of Humber Loop. The service west of Humber Loop would still be subject to service

disruptions caused on a long route that operates through the congested areas along Queen Street. This service change would increase operating costs by approximately \$2.4-million per year.

The issue of equity relates to the investing of increased resources in the transit service along the Lake Shore corridor, compared to other neighbourhoods in Toronto. There are other bus and streetcar routes where service reliability continues to be a concern to the TTC and to customers. In all cases, investing more resources, above and beyond what is currently supported by the Commission-approved service standards, would improve service quality, and would make transit better for customers. Faced with limited operating resources, however, how should the Commission determine if it appropriate to spend more resources to improve service on Lake Shore Boulevard in particular? In either case, there are no funds for such purposes included in the TTC's 2010 operating budget owing to the current financial pressures facing the TTC and the resulting need to reduce operating costs to address projected shortfalls.

Status of Proposed Loop at Park Lawn Road

Also at the May 6, 2010 meeting, Councillor Grimes and the Commission enquired about the status of the proposed new streetcar loop at Lake Shore Boulevard and Park Lawn Road. Funding for this loop, as well as funding for many other important initiatives, was removed from the TTC's capital program in order to help meet the budget reduction targets.

The establishment of a new loop at Park Lawn Road would allow the provision of improved service levels and capacity further west than Humber Loop, to better serve the dense and growing Humber Bay Shores community. If funding were to be approved, construction of the loop might be able to be started in late 2010, or 2011. However, this loop would be an "improvement" in streetcar infrastructure and, given the current funding constraints for transit initiatives, there is no justification for earmarking precious funds for this initiative when several other important initiatives – many addressing more-urgent state-of-good-repair requirements – are not being funded. The proposed Park Lawn Loop will be considered for funding again when TTC staff and the Commission prepare and finalize the forthcoming 2011-2015 capital program.

**SUMMARY**

Proposed changes to the streetcar service on Lake Shore Boulevard, for the purpose of improving the quality and reliability of streetcar service, would add between \$825,000 and \$2.4-million to annual operating costs for this route. There are no funds in the 2010 Operating Budget for such initiatives. The Commission could approve the expenditure of additional unbudgeted funding to allow implementation of a change to the service.

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11-31-57  
May 13, 2010  
Attachment: Exhibit 1

# Exhibit 1

