

Item 12



Notice of Motion

Fast-tracking Bus Priority Transit Lanes on Five Critical Suburban Corridors

Moved by: **Commissioner** Brad Bradford

Seconded by: **Commissioner** Jennifer McKelvie

Summary

This motion asks for the Board's support to accelerate roll-out of the five bus priority transit corridors identified in our approved 5-Year Service Plan. Advancing these priority corridors on a fast-track basis will help to improve reliability, safety and customer confidence in our transit service.

As our communities continue reopening through the COVID-19 pandemic, the bus network will play a critical role in connecting communities historically underserved by transit, removing barriers to accessing employment, and restarting the economy.

Bus service is already the workhorse of our transit system - moving over 260 million passengers a year and more people than any other transit mode pre-COVID. Buses have been critical in moving essential workers throughout the pandemic and they will play a critical role as ridership surges in the next stages of economic reopening as Torontonians will likely be returning to school, work, and taking longer trips.

There are several important benefits to accelerating the approved bus priority transit corridors:

- Bus service is the most adaptable mode for evolving public health guidelines on physical distancing, and the most flexible for real-time service adjustments to meet changing demand.
- The bus priority transit corridors in the 5-Year Service Plan focus on parts of the city where our service has experienced more acute overcrowding during the COVID-19 pandemic, specifically for suburban transit-reliant communities.
- Many of the communities in the bus priority corridors are home to essential frontline workers with no option to work from home and riding to essential services like hospitals, grocery distribution centres, industrial bakeries and other food production industries.
- These routes could provide relief to many of the communities experiencing some of the highest COVID-19 infection rates in the city, especially compared to wealthier downtown geographies, and achieve important gains for transit equity and access in geographies across all of Toronto.
- Improving the speed and service reliability will increase capacity on the system at no additional operating cost. Bus priority corridors may be a more cost-effective solution to current real-time responsive measures to address overcrowding, while also

improving service. As the routes speed up, the number of buses required for standby decreases, thereby reducing operating costs.

- We have proven that we can quickly mobilize our staff and resources to implement changes within our streets across the City to help Torontonians move about our City safely during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The 5-Year Service Plan has already been adopted by the board and offers a “ready-made” opportunity to meet multiple short-term objectives for COVID-response, and long-term objectives for system enhancement.
- A rapid installation offers an opportunity to pilot a new model and adjust design and operation details while vehicle volumes are low. Adjustments can be made over time.

While work is already underway to advance the roll-out of the 5-Year Service Plan, it is critical that we engage our partners at the City of Toronto to implement bus priority transit by September when many large employers and schools are looking to resume in-person operations. Transit priority measures on the five key corridors can include, at a minimum, painting and signing the curb lane for TTC buses only, optimizing signals for transit priority, placing temporary bollards or cones to identify transit-only lanes, and providing enforcement.

Five Transit Priority Corridors in the TTC's 2020-24 5-Year Service Plan:

- Jane Street: from Eglinton Avenue to Steeles Avenue
- Dufferin Street: from Dufferin Gate to Wilson Avenue
- Steeles Avenue West: from Yonge Street to Pioneer Village Subway Station
- Finch Avenue East: from Yonge Street to McCowan Road
- Eglinton Avenue East/Kingston Road/Morningside Ave – from Kennedy Subway Station to University of Toronto Scarborough

Recommendation

1. The TTC Board request the Chief Executive Officer to identify transit priority measures on all five bus priority corridors in the TTC's 5-Year Service Plan (Section 4.1) with a recommended design and implementation plan for the Board's approval at the TTC Board's July 14, 2020 meeting, with targeted installation for September 1, 2020, working in partnership with the General Manager, Transportation Services, City of Toronto, the Chief Planner & Executive Director, City Planning, and Chief of Police, Toronto Police Service.
2. The TTC Board request the Chief Executive Officer to work in partnership with the General Manager, Transportation Services, City of Toronto to identify funding requirements to implement the transit priority measures in Recommendation 1, for TTC Board consideration on July 14, 2020.
3. The TTC Board forward a copy of the decision on this motion to the General Manager, Transportation Services, City of Toronto, the Chief Planner & Executive Director, City Planning, and Chief of Police, Toronto Police Service for information.

Date: June 8, 2020