# **TTC 2021 Annual Service Plan**

# **Youth Engagement Team Reports**

November 2020

# **Attachments**

- 1. West Team Report by Shenali Don and Roda Warsame
- 2. East Team Report (Scarborough East) by Hiwot Belai
- 3. East Team Report (Flemingdon and Thorncliffe Park) by Bilal Munir

# **TTC WEST TEAM REPORT**

TTC Annual Plan Youth Engagement Team

**Shenali Don & Roda Warsame** 

11.04.2020

#### INTRODUCTION

Throughout the course of the last 6 weeks, the TTC Youth Engagement Team has been working on collecting information that will help improve the service provided by TTC on the Jane route. The purpose of the study is to collect resourceful opinions from first-hand community members and customers of the specific route in order to make authoritative opinions. The study is focused specifically on the improvement of service on the 35 Jane bus route and the 935 Jane Express Bus route. There was a total of 61 participants who shared their opinions on the preferred number of stops, safety, times of most frequent use, wait times, consistency, as well as any other suggestions for the TTC. The surveys were predominantly shared through social media, but also shared to multiple well-known Jane-Finch community organizations such as *Success Beyond Limits, Jane-Finch Action Against Poverty,* and *Jane Finch Community Research Partnership*. All the information collected will be used to help make decisions for the 2021 TTC improvements.

#### **KEY FINDINGS**

- 935 Express to only stop at Major Intersections North of Eglinton
- 935 Express to continue going to existing stops South of Eglinton
- Safety Improvements to be made to bus shelters
- Consistency of bus schedule needs improvement

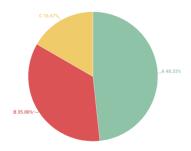
#### **FEEDBACK**

Question 1.

We started off the survey by asking, "For the bus service on Jane Street Priority Bus Lanes (north of Eglinton to Steeles) - which one of the following would you prefer". There were 3 options given:

- A. If the 935 Jane Express bus only stops at Major Intersections (ex. Wilson, Sheppard, Finch)
- B. If the 935 Jane Express bus maintains its existing express stops
- C. If the 935 Jane Express bus was to go to all consolidated stops

**Question 1** 



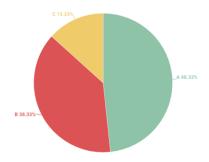
This chart shows the results of the question, majority of the surveyors supported option A, which was the 935 Jane Express bus only stopping at Major Intersections.

#### Question 2.

We asked," For the bus service south of Eglinton to Jane Station (outside of the Jane Street Priority Bus Lanes) - which one of the following would you prefer". There were 3 options given:

- A. If the 935 Jane Express bus was to continue going to existing express stops
- B. If the 935 Jane Express bus only stops at Major Intersections (ex. Dundas West, Eglinton)
- C. If the 935 Jane Express bus becomes an express to Jane Station

**Question 2** 



Results show similarity to question 1, most people prefer option A which states the 935 Jane Express bus continues going to existing express stops.

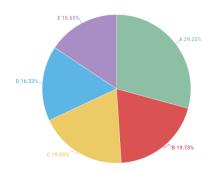
#### Question 3.

The next question asked was, "What time(s) do you most frequently take the 35 or 935 bus (select all that apply)?" The options given where as follows:

- A. 3-5pm
- B. 1-3pm

- C. 5-7pm
- D. 7pm-Midnight
- E. 11am-1pm





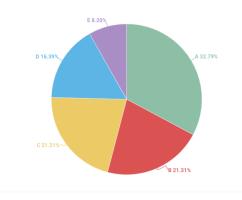
After analysing the data responses, we concluded that for this question the majority of people ride the bus around 3-5pm. And around 11am-1pm less people tend to ride the TTC.

#### Question 4.

The following question asked surveyors, "How often are there no bus shelters on-site when waiting for the 35/935 bus to arrive?" The options included:

- A. Sometimes
- B. Often
- C. Rarely
- D. Never
- E. Always

**Question 4** 



As expected, many surveyors said that they "sometimes" encounter no shelter on-site. Whereas a very small number of surveyors believe that they never see shelters on-site while waiting for the 35/935 bus to arrive.

#### Question 5.

Another important question asked was, "Which bus stop has no shelter on-site while waiting for your bus to arrive?". This was an open-ended question which allowed surveyors to explain their reasoning for their answer in question 4. Responses included:

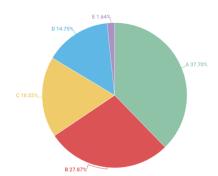
- "All"
- "Majority of the bus stops on the main intersections"
- "Jane and shoreham" 2 other responses support this
- "35b"1 other response support this
- "Jane and Wilson"
- "I don't remember" 9 other responses support this
- "Jane and Foxwell"
- "Downsview Avenue"
- "Most in the areas that aren't always frequently used, usually around Hullmar"
- "Jane & steeles"
- "William Cragg Drive East Side"
- "Giltspur Dr West Side"
- "Jane and Finch"
- "Jane & Wilson stops | 4717 Jane Street all the way to Pioneer Village"

#### Question 6.

We than asked the surveyors," Do you feel satisfied with the wait times for the 35/935 buses?" The options included:

- A. Sometimes
- B. Rarely
- C. Never
- D. Often
- E. Always

#### **Question 6**



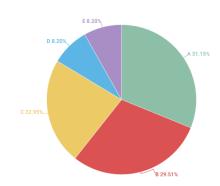
Results showed that most people are "sometimes" satisfied with the wait time. While others where rarely satisfied. These results were not surprising due to the constant delays in the 35/935 buses.

#### Question 7.

We also asked, "Do you feel safe while waiting for the 35/935 bus?" The following options were given to surveyors:

- A. Sometimes
- B. Often
- C. Rarely
- D. Always
- E. Never

#### **Question 7**



After looking at the data, majority of people feel safe while waiting for the 35/935 bus. On the other hand, a great amount of people rarely feels safe.

#### Question 8.

The next question asked surveyors, "Why does the bus stop not feel safe? Or what makes the bus stop feel safe? What could the TTC improve to make you feel safer while waiting at bus stops?" The responses where:

- "Make the bus shed bigger, so it can have two exit/entrance. For any emergency."
- "Crackheads"
- "35a takes so long"
- "Too crowded"
- "I feel like majority of the time in areas with no visible cars could be scary. But if there's shelter and people around that's when I feel safer"
- "Some of the bus stops are in secluded areas"
- "It is sometimes not located near large buildings or areas, and some bus stops are in dark neighborhoods"
- "No light" 15 people had similar answers
- "I feel safe, however, I don't feel safe letting my kids ride alone"
- "I feel unsafe when strangers proceed to talk to me out of nowhere and try to get close to me at the bus stops."
- "Sometimes homeless people board the stop or harass me while I am waiting for it"

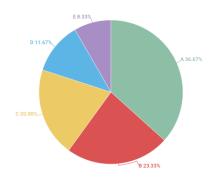
- "Too many sketchy/suspicious individuals take the 35/935 bus route, from Jane Station to Finch Avenue West. Having to wait at most stops or be on the bus with people who are consistently ignorant and disrespectful to myself and others is incredibly alarming and worrisome, as it makes both the wait and ride unenjoyable and unsafe. Most of the sane and respectful passengers are the ones that have to leave to another stop or exit the bus in these cases, as those who are causing the problems refuse to do so (or do so sporadically though rarely). This causes more problems for most folk, as they now have to take longer to get home as they are forced to again wait for another bus, which is routinely packed as it is a busy route."
- "I've had men following me at the Lawrence and Jane bus top several times late at night around 10 pm"
- "Separated seats"

#### Question 9.

For the next question we asked surveyors if, "the 35/935 buses are on time and consistent?" The following options were given to surveyors:

- A. Sometimes
- B. Often
- C. Rarely
- D. Never
- E. Always

#### **Question 9**



Responses from the data tells us that most people feel that the 35/935 buses are 'sometimes' consistent. While the rest believe that the buses are rarely or never consistent.

#### Question 10.

Lastly, we concluded the survey by asking surveyors if, "Do you have any suggestions for the TTC that would make your ride more efficient, faster, or comfortable? The surveyors stated that:

- "Just have the operators not skip certain stops"
- "Keep a consistent schedule with the buses, not just 935s coming every 2 min and 35s coming every 20"

- "TTC Needs to maintain better timing and understanding of their riders. We need more efficient bus rides asap"
- "I feel like the buses need more spaces and as well as more shelters when waiting for the bus"
- "Better screening for intoxicated individuals or people under the influence who ride the bus"
- "More bus drivers" 6 other individuals agreed
- "Come more often in night ppl leave for work"
- "More seats at the bus stop shelters" 2 other individuals agreed
- "There is not enough busses, busses are too full" 1 other individuals agreed
- "Bus times to be more efficient, safer rides by insuring kids are safe"
- "Allowing bigger shelters to have heaters during winter commutes"
- "An issue is that some drivers may pick up too much people at bus stops, causing other stops to be dismissed. Having better awareness would help with that problem. Not having multiple buses stopping at one stop, unless it's necessary based on the circumstances."
- "Live arrival times at each stop and adequate lighting present"
- "If possible, more buses on the route and monitoring of suspicious passengers, at least at major stops or even just stations."
- "Please have the express bus stop at major intersections only (Lawrence, sheppard, Wilson, finch, steeles, pioneer village, etc)"
- "cheaper"

#### **PARTICIPANT LIST**

rieuse Note. Some participants chose to remain anonymous.
Amina Mohamed
Sahra Mohamed

Muna Mohammed

Maymun Jama

Yasmine Warsame

Ayan Ahmed

Amina Ahmed

Aisha Warsame

Yusra Warsame

Amaya Mills

Elwad Gedleh

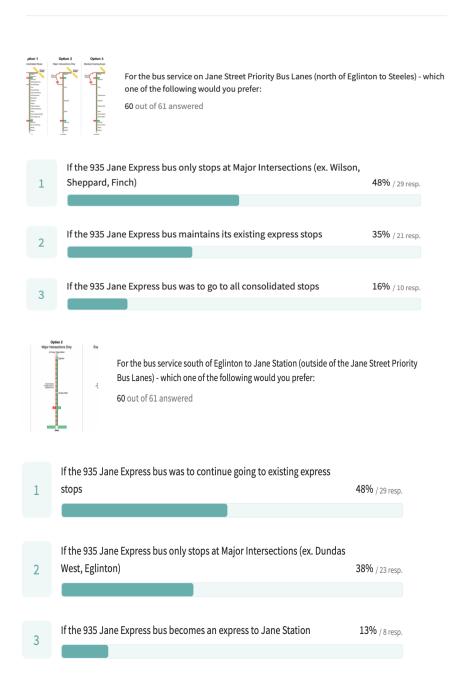
Bilad Diria

#### **APPENDIX**

## **Survey questions:**

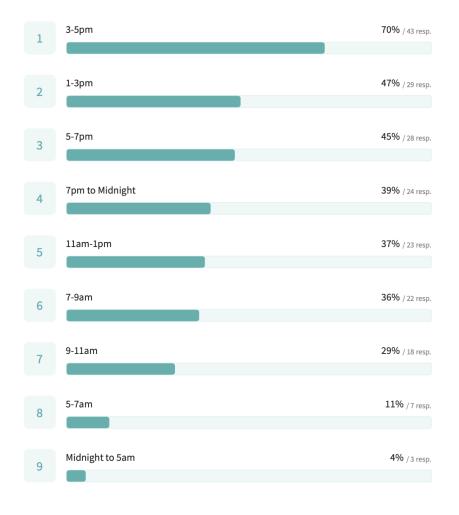
# **TTC Youth Engagement**

61 responses



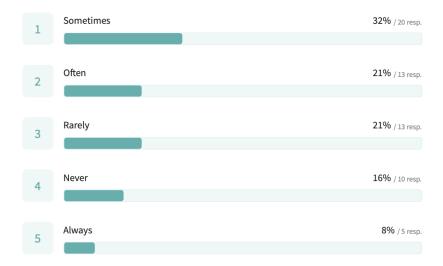
#### What time(s) do you most frequently take the 35 or 935 bus (select all that apply)?

61 out of 61 answered



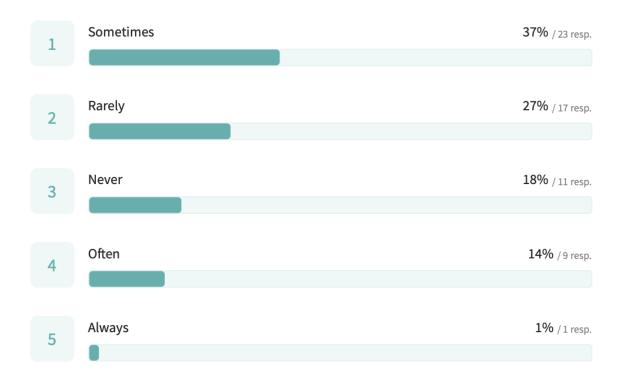
#### How often are there no bus shelters on-site when waiting for the 35/935 bus to arrive?

61 out of 61 answered



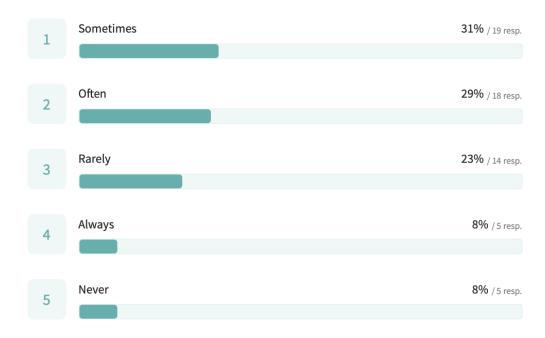
#### Do you feel satisfied with the wait times for the 35/935 buses?

61 out of 61 answered



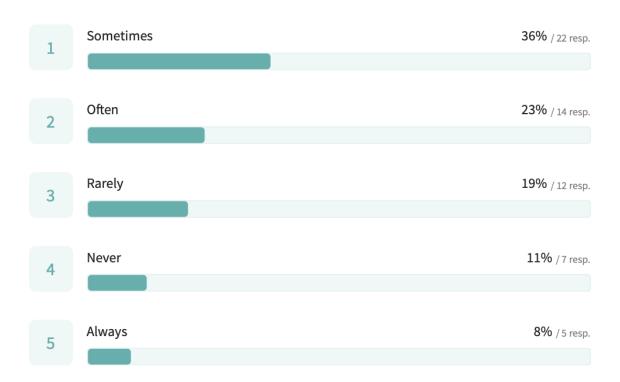
#### Do you feel safe while waiting for the 35/935 bus?

61 out of 61 answered



#### Are the 35/935 buses on time and consistent?

61 out of 61 answered



## **Survey Poster:**

# HELP THE TTC PLAN TRANSIT SERVICE FOR 2021!

TTC YOUTH ENGAGEMENT



HOW TO TAKE THE SURVEY?

To take our survey simply, hold your smartphone over the QR code.



OR Visit

http://bit.ly/3dHDUOm



HELP US UNDERSTAND THE CHANGE YOU WANT TO SEE

# TTC 2021 Annual Service Plan Youth Engagement Team Report: Scarborough East Service

#### Summary

The focus of this consultation is to determine the quality of TTC bus service in the Scarborough East area as judged by community members. The main buses of interest (BOIs) were the suite of 86 buses, 116 buses, express buses 905 and 986 along with the night-shift 334 Eglinton East bus. A two-pronged approach was taken to execute this exploration; primarily, an online survey was conducted by posting a Google Forms link on multiple social media pages such as Facebook groups for Scarborough, class groups for UTSC and personal Instagram stories. To supplement this, an email blast about the survey was sent to local community organizations such as The East Scarborough Storefront and to student councils/guidance counsellors at local high schools (e.g. Sir Wilfrid Laurier Collegiate Institute). The questions included in the survey are attached in Appendix A. Additionally, a brief live chat was facilitated on Discord where similar questions were fielded and some free-form feedback was entertained.

The total number of respondents whose data is included in this report is 45, with 60% of the individuals being 18-29 years old. The next largest group of respondents were high-school-aged teenagers (27% of respondents were between the ages of 14 and 17). The remaining participants were aged 30 and over. These individuals were spread out across Scarborough, with the largest number of respondents coming from West Hill (9 individuals), Morningside (9 individuals) and Malvern (5 individuals). Out of the 45 respondents, 43 completed this online survey and 7 completed the virtual discussion held on Discord. The live chat was held on October 23 at 3:00 PM and during this session, individuals were encouraged to engage verbally in the conversation or write down their thoughts in the chat, in which case the facilitator recorded their responses for inclusion in this report. The four major findings are listed below.

#### Main Findings

- *Unevenly Spread Service*: Respondents explained that many of the BOIs are concentrated at certain times and sparse in others, which make these bus lines only semi-dependable.
- *Inconsistent Bus Times*: An area of concern for many was the fact that bus times and actual arrival times are inconsistent.
- *Slow buses*: A significant portion of the respondents agreed that buses take a very long time and that, more specifically, they stop too often.
- *Fair Pass*: Many people in these neighbourhoods depend on subsidies to take public transport and during the COVID crisis, their travel has been hindered because the Fair Pass program has been paused.

#### Discussion

- Area Coverage & Number of Stops → Of the 45 respondents, 26 of them said that the service provided by the BOIs was adequate and that they were satisfied. 15 of the other respondents, however, said that the buses stopped very frequently, which slows down the service. This is apparently a very big issue around rush hour and many students (both university and high school) cite this as a reason for lateness. It is important to note that these 25 respondents were almost exclusively the individuals who listed the 116 as their most frequented bus.

These individuals' pleas for improved service were as follows:

- Include an express service that runs through the Guild (along the same route as the 116C and 116A).
- Have modified bus service during peak hours that service the busiest stops.

54 bus lines  $\rightarrow$  Although the 54 bus lines were not included in the questions, 5 of

- *Inconsistent Bus Times* → Most respondents reported that they often have to wait at bus stops for long periods of time due to buses that come either too early or too late.
  - the 7 individuals that participated in the live consultation brought them up unprompted and had the following complaints.

    Participants claimed that the 54's service, especially westbound, has very inconsistent times. A pattern that was uncovered during the live chat was that individuals who took the 116 and 86 bus lines less frequently than the 54 reported that the former two had fairly good service and that the service on Lawrence Avenue East is comparatively very poor. It was suggested that, while the BOIs service can use improving, those routes are much better and that attention should be focused on the 54 buses' punctuality, frequency and reliability.

They mentioned that, while the service is mediocre during the slow daytime hours, service during rush hour and night time is unpredictable. Among their major concerns was the fact that the bus 'very rarely shows up' at the times indicated on the NextBus website, the Rocketman app or the text message service. This means that individuals either often miss their buses or mistime their trips and end up waiting at the bus station for long periods of time.

Suggested improvements include:

- Ensuring that next bus reporting times are accurate so that, at minimum, individuals can plan their trip better and do not have to wait at the bus for long.
- Regularising the arrival of the buses so they have a uniform distribution.
- 38 bus lines → Of the 12 people that mentioned the 38 bus, 10 reported that the 38 has very long wait times. Seeing as the bus connects to Scarborough Town Centre, a major LRT stop, respondents expressed that they would expect it to

arrive a lot more frequently. Students who attend UTSC also expressed dissatisfaction with the frequency of the bus.

- *Unevenly Spread Service* → One of the major complaints of the respondents about the BOIs is that they do not have consistent service throughout the day.
  - 86 bus lines → 8 respondents stated that, while the 86 has fairly regular service, there are unpredictable pockets of irregularity where the time in between consecutive buses can be as large as 20 minutes.
  - 116 bus lines → During the slow hours of the day, this bus comes fairly regularly and is one of the more dependable lines in the East, according to most of the respondents. However, approximately 75% of the respondents who commented on the 116's service agreed that, during rush hour, these buses tend to arrive at bus stops successively (respondents said it is not uncommon for 3 buses to arrive at the same time). Consequently, there are long stretches of time with no bus arrivals as they show up in concentrated pockets and are therefore as dependable as infrequent buses. This is a major concern for many of the students attending schools along this route like West Hill C.I., Sir Wilfrid Laurier C.I. and even the University of Toronto Scarborough, who report that they are often late because of this.

On top of this, many participants pointed out that, when it eventually comes, it is often very full and passes by certain bus stops without actually stopping. Most of these stops are concentrated between the Morningside and Kingston Road and Livingston Road stops. For this issue, they requested:

- an increase in the number of 116 buses circulating at peak hours, or
- a regularization of bus arrival times.
- Fair Pass → One of the issues brought up in discussion was the fare subsidy program Fair Pass. Many adults reported that, since the beginning of this pandemic, they have had difficulty getting around as this program has been suspended and they cannot afford to travel. According to a staff supervisor at The East Scarborough Storefront, an open letter is being signed concerning this issue, but some adults still wanted this included in this report to demonstrate the urgency of the matter.
  - To a lesser extent, the same issue was also brought up by four UofT students who are having trouble affording taking public transit to school because bus fare climbs to the full adult fee at age 19. Three of the students explained that, because they had their Presto Cards set to Post-secondary in order to purchase monthly passes during the school year, they now have to pay adult fees for a single fare during the pandemic.

Two of these complaints were brought up during the Discord live chat whereas the other two evolved independently from the Google Forms.

- Semi-Adequate Express Service → Of the 45 respondents, 15 individuals said that they are satisfied with existing express services or, as aforementioned, would like to have an express service run along the 116 route. The remaining respondents had this to say:
  - *Increased frequency* → 29 of the respondents indicated that they do not think that there are not enough express buses, especially during rush hour. Similarly to the situation with the 116 buses, some of these respondents also recounted that they had been passed by an express bus on many occasions because it was too full.
  - *Improved Winter Service* → 5 of these 29 respondents said that they think the express service in winter is even less frequent and that the 986 and 905 can be as rare as two buses per hour. The point about improving winter service was also suggested for the 38, with 3 people bringing up this bus route independently in different surveys.
  - Inadequate Hours/Days of Operation → Respondents expressed that they think
    the hours and days of operation for the 986 and 905 buses are inadequate. 5
    respondents suggested including the service on the weekends for these express
    routes once COVID restrictions have been lifted (specifically emphasized in a
    respondent's comment). Furthermore, these individuals suggested extending the
    service until 8 pm.
- 334 & 86D → The 334 was not selected by any of the respondents as a frequently used bus, so there is no feedback on its service, but the distribution of data for the 86D can provide some useful insights. Although it came in second place as the second least used bus in this sample group, some respondents provided some extensive comments on it.
  - Re-routing → Two individuals independently brought up re-routing the 86D.
     They suggested that it is not very frequently used and as most of its route is overlapped by other buses like the 86A and the 54A, it can be rerouted to serve other areas that currently do not have bus lines running through them.

# Hiwot Belai

# List of Participants

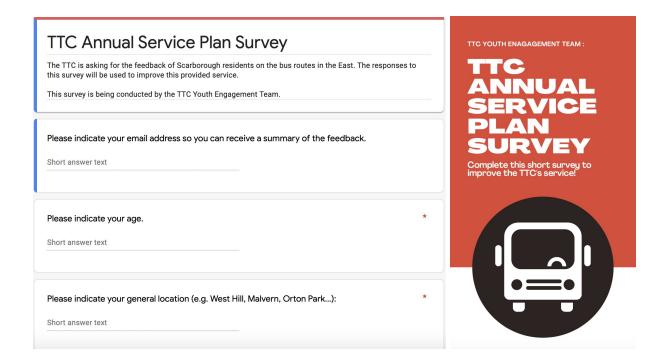
The following list includes only the names of participants who provided their contact and personal identification.

Name	Age
Sara Zawahid	19
Patne Vishwa	21
Nabiha Rana	18
Pradeepta Das	19
Caleb Wee	21
Grace Nash	24
Avishek Ghosh	19
Michelle Fong	20
Mehad Saed	16
Shuchita Das	19
Mehret Gebreyesus	62
Hafsa Azher	19
Kedist Gebrekidan	50
Sureka Rajmohan	19
Margaret Wang	19
Nathan Hasan	16
Zain Khurram	16
Leann Edwards	15
Alexandra Kay	17
Ushananthy Umashankar	17
Blaine Fekade	25
Lilian Kamel	19
Cynthia Wong	24

#### Appendix A: Survey Questions

- 1. Please indicate your email address so you can receive a summary of the feedback.
- 2. Please indicate your age.
- 3. Please indicate your general location (e.g. West Hill, Malvern, Orton Park...):
- 4. Which of the following bus routes do/did you use regularly (approx. 5 round-trips per week)?
- 5. Is the service provided by these routes adequate (more stops, less stops, does/does not cover enough area)?
- 6. Are you satisfied with the current bus times (i.e. how often these buses arrive)?
- 7. Do you think that the number of express buses per hour is enough?
- 8. Are you satisfied with the hours of operation for these buses?
- 9. Do you think the number of stops covered by express buses is enough?
- 10. Should more stops be added to the express bus routes? If yes, please include suggestions.
- 11. Should existing express bus stops be changed to other stops (perhaps busier ones or stops that connect to other bus routes)? If yes, please include suggestions.
- 12. Do you have any additional comments or questions?

## Appendix B: Survey Layout and Promotional Material



# TTC Engagement Feedback

#### Overview

There were 24 people in my community who provided their feedback. I got in contact with The Neighborhood Organizations (TNO's) of Flemingdon and Thorncliffe park. The method that proved to be most effective for gathering feedback was through social media. A google form was created with questions ranging from frequency of usage of the TTC service, service Quality, discussion about some of the emerging priorities of the TTC's 2021 annual service plan all the way to more specific elements of the plan like Priority Rapid TO Bus Lanes.

I first reached out to TNO via email on Oct 20<sup>th</sup>. From there I was able to get in contact with additional groups like the Youth of East York and The Go Green Youth center. I utilized social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram to get additional people to participate in the initiative.

## **Key Messages**

Out of the 24 participants, these are the strongest and most consistent messages people have shared about the **emerging priorities** for the 2021 plan:

- Reduction of crowding/congestion should most definitely be a top priority due to the 2<sup>nd</sup> wave of the COVID-19 pandemic well underway.
- There should be a stronger enforcement of wearing masks in the bus.
- Transit needs to be prioritized instead of cars and hence,
- There needs to be a higher frequency of buses in the neighborhood

\*IT IS IMPORTANT to note that while a portion of people demand for higher frequency of Buses in the neighborhood, others have concerns of higher traffic, making it difficult to commute via car.

In terms of the **Rapid TO initiative**, a percentage of the participants are excited about its implementation while others are not too keen. Their main concerns include:

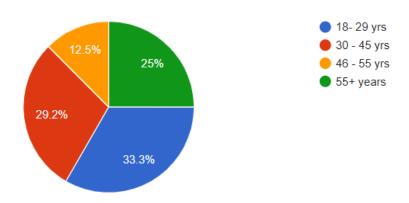
- Overcrowding and slower traffic on routes due to high frequency of Buses
- Implementation of social distancing and wearing face masks within TTC vehicles

Some **route specific** concerns/comments people have in the area:

- More climate controlled bus shelters in Thorncliffe Park.
- Customer friendly service from TTC employees especially during the evening.
- Separate services for disabled people

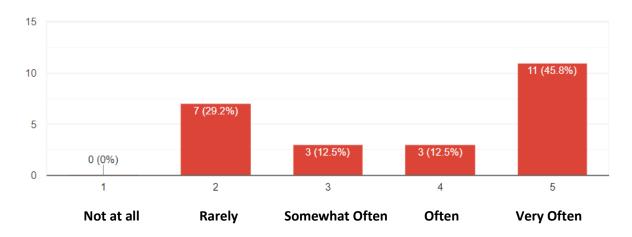
# **Detailed Feedback Section**

## Question 1: Age ranges

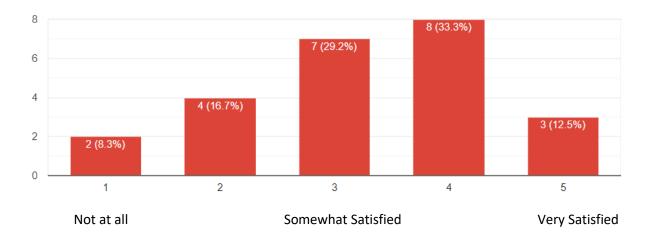


#### **Question 2: Frequency of service usage**

Out of the 24 participants, 11 (45.8%) were using the TTC very often while 7 (29.2%) rarely used the service. There was no participant that DIDN'T use the TTC service.



#### **Question Three: Customer Satisfaction**



This is the one query which clearly displays a more even spread of responses. Out of 24 participants, 8 (33.3%) were satisfied, 7 (29.2%) were somewhat satisfied and only 2 (8.3%) were not satisfied at all.

#### Question 4: Which Bus route do you take?

Since the majority of the Participants reside in North and East York, most of the routes corresponded to that area. The 100 A & B, 25 route to pape, 81, 87 and 88 are some of the more consistent responses to this question.

Question 5: Some of the emerging priorities for the 2021 plan include, sustaining flexible service to respond dynamically to customer demand, reduce crowding to prepare for the potential resurgence of COVID-19 as well as improve surface transit experience through priority RapidTO Bus lanes. What do you think of these priorities and how much do you support them?

Most of the participants strongly support these priorities. However, these are the most consistent concerns that they have listed.

- "Not enough stops for Rapid TO too far to walk the extra miles in the cold weather"
- "Yes good for traffic and more people might opt for TTC services"
- Willing to fully support if there is a stronger focus to reduce congestion/crowding
- Stronger Enforcement of masks since there is a good portion of people still not wearing them while entering the bus.

# Question 6: How do you feel about the RapidTO initiative? Do you think it will be beneficial to you and other TTC customers?

People agree that the RapidTo service will be beneficial and they have more or less the same recurring concerns.

- "Potentially beneficial if it can meaningfully reduce crowding/congestion"
- "Causes more traffic for drivers"
- "Like the idea, hate the execution. Painting patches of the road red is an unpleasant sight and could be a distraction to drivers and pedestrians."
- "We need to prioritize transit over cars. Other jurisdictions have already done this. We need to lead instead of follow."

Question 7: Do you have any concerns/suggestions specific to the route you take? Feel free to list them here in as much detail as you'd like.

- "More bus services could lessen the amount of cars on the road."
- More customer friendly service
- "Still many passengers are without masks and no social distancing"
- "More Climate controlled Bus shelters in High density areas"
- "Separate service for people with disabilities"

# **Participant List Section**

List of participants that provided their emails:

- Abeir Liton
- Hussain ladha
- Joanna Armstrong
- Said Bhagwat
- Sayed Sameer

Organizations that Engaged through the process:





