



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Express Bus Route Network – Study Plan

Date:	March 26, 2015
To:	TTC Board
From:	Chief Executive Officer

Summary

The purpose of this report is to present to the TTC Board the plan and schedule for a study of new and improved express bus services across Toronto.

The study is in response to the March 26, 2014 TTC Board [directive](#) for staff to report back on the feasibility of implementing additional express bus routes in the City of Toronto. In addition, the study will complete the Express Bus Route Network plan that was introduced in the August 2014 report entitled, “[Opportunities to Improve Transit Service in Toronto.](#)” The plan will also provide details of the allocation of the initial funding included in the TTC 2015 Operating Budget to start the expansion of the Express Bus Route Network with new buses, and a temporary facility to accommodate the expansion.

TTC staff is initiating this important study to enhance TTC express bus services. There is widespread support for more and better-quality transit service in Toronto. An enhanced express bus route network, which is fully and seamlessly integrated with the rapid transit network, would offer faster service and more capacity to many areas of the city.

The study will be undertaken by TTC staff from several TTC departments. It will be conducted in two phases, whose objectives and schedules are:

- **Phase 1 – Service Plan:**
 - objective: to develop a new Express Bus Route Network consisting of new and improved express bus routes
 - scheduled completion: October 2015

- **Phase 2 – Communications Plan:**
 - objective: to promote and attract riders to the Express Bus Route Network
 - scheduled completion: early 2016

The Service Plan report will be presented to the TTC Board at its meeting in October 2015. The Communications Plan report will be presented to the TTC Board in early 2016.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board:

1. Endorse the Express Bus Route Network study plan that is presented in this report; and
2. Note that TTC staff will report back to the Board with the:
 - a. Phase 1 – Service Plan in October 2015
 - b. Phase 2 – Communications Plan in early 2016.

Financial Summary

This report has no financial impact beyond what has been approved in the current year's budget.

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. At the August 19, 2014 meeting, the TTC presented the “[Opportunities to Improve Transit Service in Toronto](#)” report which introduced the Express Bus Route Network plan as well as other service initiatives. On March 11, 2015 City Council approved the TTC 2015 Operating Budget which includes \$90 million to enhance TTC service. This includes initial funding to start the expansion of the Express Bus Route Network with new buses, and a temporary facility to accommodate the expansion.

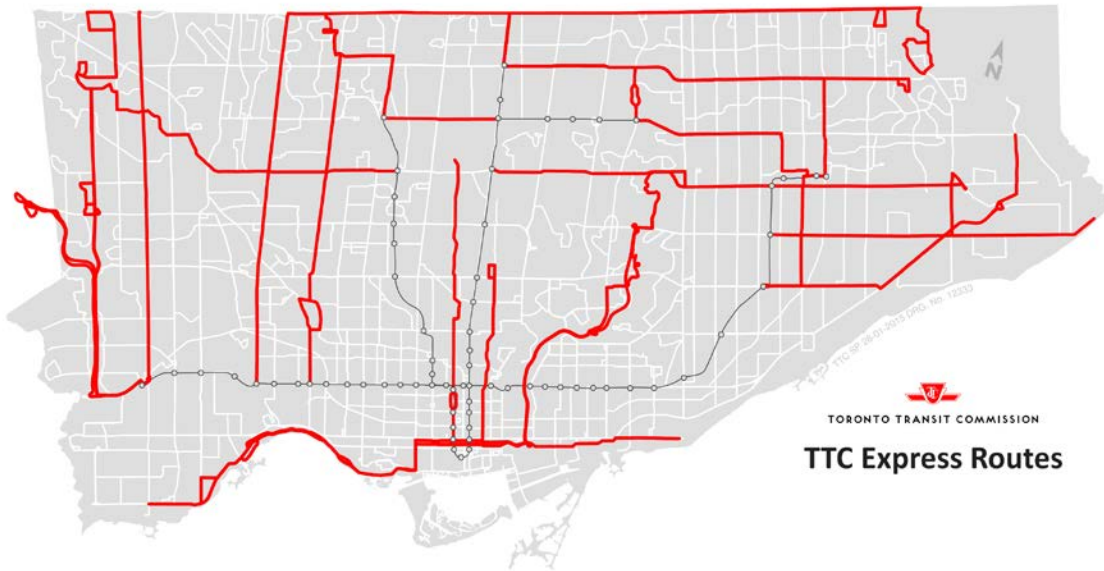
The purpose of this report is to present a study plan that will respond to the aforementioned TTC Board directive, identify new and improved express bus services across Toronto, and allocate the funding approved in the TTC 2015 Operating Budget.

Issue Background

There is widespread support for more and better-quality transit service in Toronto. There are many improvements underway or under study to expand the availability of rapid transit, such as the Eglinton-Crosstown Light-Rail Line, the “Scarborough Subway,” the Sheppard and Finch Light-Rail Lines, and SmartTrack. While high-capacity, grade-separated rapid transit projects are an important part of developing a mature transit system, an enhanced express bus route network, which is fully and seamlessly integrated with the rapid transit network, would offer faster service and more capacity into many areas of the city which may or may not have good access to rapid transit services.

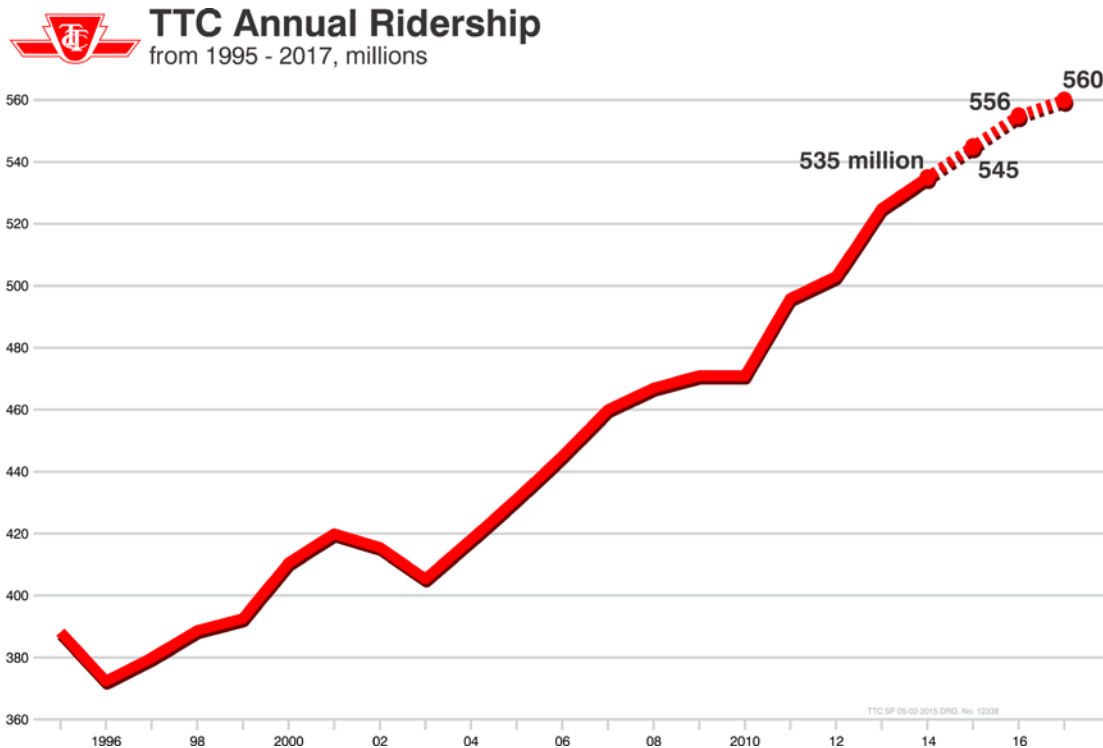
The TTC operates express bus services on 23 bus routes (see **Exhibit 1**), all of which operate during the peak periods from Monday to Friday, and seven of which also operate at off-peak times. These express bus services have been consistently found to be popular with TTC customers, because they provide faster and more-comfortable travel.

Exhibit 1: TTC Express Routes



As TTC ridership continues to increase (see **Exhibit 2**), and with more than 50% of TTC customer-trips occurring on bus services, TTC express services should be enhanced and expanded to ensure that the TTC continues to provide customers with high frequency, reliable, comfortable, and quick travel options.

Exhibit 2: TTC Annual Ridership Growth



Accessibility Issues

All TTC bus services – including all express routes – are operated using accessible, low-floor buses which allow use by people with mobility difficulties or who use mobility aids or devices. Therefore, express bus services are an integral part of the TTC's accessible regular-route service network and contribute to the TTC's long-term goal of making all of its services, vehicles, and facilities accessible to everyone.

Comments

TTC staff is initiating a study to examine the operation of all existing express bus services. The study will evaluate the TTC's various types of express service -- including express branches on regular routes, limited-stop express services, point-to-point express services, and the Downtown Premium-Fare express services -- and will identify possible improvements and expansions to the express bus network which would provide TTC customers with a bigger choice of rapid, reliable, and visible express bus services.

The Express Bus Route Network study will respond to the TTC Board [motion](#), made on March 26, 2014, to direct TTC staff to report back on the feasibility of implementing additional express bus routes in the City of Toronto. In addition, the study will complement the Express Bus Route Network plan that was introduced in the August 2014 report entitled "[Opportunities to Improve Transit Service in Toronto](#)".

The Express Bus Route Network study will be undertaken by TTC staff from the following TTC departments: Strategy & Service Planning, Customer Development, Customer Communications, and Bus Transportation. The study will be conducted in two phases.

Phase 1 – Service Plan

The objective of the Service Plan is to establish an improved and expanded Express Bus Route Network to serve all of Toronto. The Service Plan will identify express bus routes, supporting policies, fleet, infrastructure, intelligent transportation technologies, route management, and financial requirements. The Service Plan will include:

- the costs and revenues associated with existing express routes;
- an analysis of all existing express services to determine the viability of these services;
- an analysis of instituting peak-period express service on the TTC's busiest bus routes which do not already have express service;
- an analysis of possible new "rocket" express routes that would directly link major generators;
- the potential benefits of using articulated buses on existing and/or proposed express routes;
- a cost / benefit analysis of different fare structures for express bus route services;
- potential means of alleviating bunching of buses and short-turns on routes being considered for express bus service;
- the implementation of queue-jump lanes, priority signalling, and dedicated lanes as ways to improve speed and reliability on existing and proposed new express routes; and
- a review of other comparable municipalities or transit systems that successfully operate express bus services

The Phase 1 – Service Plan work will begin in April 2015 and will be completed in October 2015.

Phase 2 – Communications Plan

The objective of the Communications Plan is to identify means by which to promote express services and, thus, attract riders to the Express Bus Route Network. The Communications Plan will address the concepts of developing a new/existing brand identity, reviewing the feasibility and extent of uniquely-branded buses and bus stops, and preparing a program of various communications initiatives, advertising campaigns, and special events to increase awareness.

The Phase 2 – Communications Plan work will begin in the Autumn 2015 and will be completed in early 2016.

Contact

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