



TTC Service to Bluffers Park

Date: January 18, 2018
To: TTC Board
From: Chief Customer Officer

Summary

This report is in response to a request to the Board to provide TTC service to Bluffers Park in Scarborough. In response to this request, staff conducted a review of other TTC services to Toronto parks, an estimate of potential ridership, and assessment of operational feasibility.

The TTC is working with City of Toronto Parks, Forestry & Recreation division to implement necessary changes to the park to facilitate safe and reliable bus service. The operation of these services will be dependent on roadway modifications and the provision of accessible bus stops in the park.

A follow-up report will be presented to the Board in December 2018 to evaluate the success of this pilot project.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. A trial for TTC bus service to Bluffers Park be implemented in summer 2018 subject to infrastructure and operational requirements being met.
2. A follow-up report is submitted to the Board in December 2018.

Implementation Points

- The TTC will work with City of Toronto Parks, Forestry & Recreation to identify and make changes to the parks roadways, primarily to remove speed humps to facilitate safe bus operation;
- The TTC will work with City of Toronto Parks, Forestry & Recreation to identify and construct accessible bus stops where feasible to facilitate access to various destinations at Bluffers Park;

- The TTC will work with City of Toronto Parks, Forestry & Recreation, Toronto Police Service, and City of Toronto Transportation Services to develop an operations plan to ensure reliable operation of the trial bus service;
- Weekend service will commence on May 13, 2018 subject to the completion of the above three points;
- The trial service will be jointly promoted by TTC and City of Toronto Parks, Forestry & Recreation; and,
- The TTC will monitor operations and ridership and report back to the Board in late 2018.

Financial Summary

The trial for the seasonal service will cost approximately \$187,500 to operate on weekends and holidays, starting on May 13, 2018 until Thanksgiving Monday, October 8, 2018, as set out in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of Resource Requirements

Service Hours	Peak Buses	Weekly Hours	Bus Operators	Operating & Maintenance Costs
Weekends and holidays from 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m.	0 AM/ 0 PM (weekend service)	Approximately 85 weekly service hours	Approximately 2 to 3 operators	\$187,500 for the seasonal trial service

The TTC and City of Toronto Parks, Forestry & Recreation are working on a cost-sharing agreement to provide a higher level of service than warranted by TTC's Service Standards to increase the attractiveness and viability of the trial service.

The TTC will fund \$125,000 and there are sufficient resources within the 2018 Operating Budget to fund the trial for seasonal service to Bluffers Park as regular seasonal service adjustments are made. City of Toronto Parks, Forestry & Recreation will fund the incremental cost for the enhanced level of service which is approximately \$62,500.

The City of Toronto Parks, Forestry & Recreation will assume responsibility for the capital costs of roadway modifications and the construction of new bus stops within the park.

The Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

Equity/Accessibility Matters

All TTC bus services are provided by accessible, low-floor buses. The trial service will operate from Kennedy Station, which is an accessible station to Line 2 Bloor-Danforth and Line 3 Scarborough. Connecting the route to Kennedy Station will also maximize connections to other bus services throughout Scarborough and the rest of the city to improve access to the park for residents and visitors.

Currently, the primary means of access to the park is by private automobile. The trial transit service will offer an equitable, accessible, and affordable alternative to driving and increase access to recreational opportunities.

City of Toronto Parks, Forestry & Recreation continues to improve accessibility at its parks. Retrofits to parks facilities, including Bluffers Park Beach, are reducing barriers for people with disabilities, and people travelling with strollers to enjoy the park. The trial bus service will complement these efforts.

Decision History

This report is in response to a request to the TTC Board from Councillor Paul Ainslie (Ward 43 Scarborough East) at its meeting on January 18, 2017, entitled “Request to TTC for Bus Service to Continue on Brimley Road to Reach Bluffers Park”

[http://www.ttc.ca/About the TTC/Commission reports and information/Commission meetings/2017/January 18/Reports/9 Correspondence Request for service to Bluffers Park.pdf](http://www.ttc.ca/About%20the%20TTC/Commission%20reports%20and%20information/Commission%20meetings/2017/January%2018/Reports/9%20Correspondence%20Request%20for%20service%20to%20Bluffers%20Park.pdf)

The TTC Board referred the request to staff to report back with recommendations.

Issue Background

Bluffers Park was opened in 1975 to improve public access to the base of the Scarborough Bluffs with an expansion in the 1980s to facilitate more recreational boating and space for private yacht clubs. Bluffers Park Beach anchors the eastern part of the park, a large sandy beach that is a popular destination during sunny summer days.

The park is seeing an increased number of visitors – local and tourist – and with access primarily by private automobile. Demand is exceeding the available parking supply and consequently leading to traffic congestion on access roads approaching the park and spillover impacts on surrounding residential neighbourhoods.

Currently, the primary means of access to the park is by private automobile. The trial transit service will offer an equitable, accessible, convenient and affordable alternative to driving, and will provide increased access to recreational opportunities for a greater number of customers who depend on TTC as their primary means of travel. In addition, it will alleviate a barrier for persons who cannot walk a significant distance from other

parking or transit routes, when accessing the park after 11:00 am on summer weekends when parking lots reach capacity (see “Current Conditions” for more detail).

City of Toronto Parks, Forestry & Recreation continues to improve accessibility at its parks. Retrofits to parks facilities, including Bluffers Park Beach, are reducing barriers for people with disabilities, and people travelling with strollers to enjoy the park. The trial bus service will complement these efforts.

Comments

1. Current Conditions

The nearest TTC service to Bluffers Park is the 12 Kingston Rd service. However, pedestrian access is poor from the nearest stop at Brimley Road and Kingston Road as there is no sidewalk on the park’s access road. Visitors are required to walk in mixed traffic a significant distance – between 1.25 and 2.5 kilometres, depending on the destination.

There are currently 560 parking spaces in Bluffers Park. On busy weekends, these lots are full by 11:00 a.m., after which the access road is closed to vehicular access. This results in spillover parking and traffic impacts on surrounding neighbourhoods. Access to the private uses in the park is maintained during these road closures.

City of Toronto Parks, Forestry & Recreation, working with City of Toronto Transportation Services and Toronto Police Service, has implemented a traffic management plan in recent years to manage access to the park and spillover effects. The closure of the access road is managed by parks staff and Toronto Police Service; in addition, a satellite parking lot was established in 2016 at R. H. King Academy at St. Clair Avenue East and Kingston Road.

2. Precedent Services

The TTC operates increased or seasonal service to three major parks and beaches in Toronto, as set out in Table 2.

Table 2: Seasonal or Increased TTC Service to Major Toronto Parks and Beaches

Beach/Park	TTC Route	Approximately summer weekend daily ridership
Ashbridges Bay Beach	92 Woodbine South	950
Cherry Beach	121 Fort York-Esplanade	500
High Park	30 Lambton	125

These services are enhanced or extended generally between May and September, primarily on weekends. The success of these services is dependent on a number of factors, including:

- Constraints to access, such as distance to existing transit service and the availability of parking;
- Pre-existing transit ridership in the area; and,
- Proximity to the subway and overall travel time on transit.

Ridership on these services is highly variable from day-to-day due to weather and special events. However, the TTC remains an important means of access to the parks they serve. The present conditions at Bluffers Park with limited on-site parking and proximity to the subway at Kennedy Station provide the basic conditions for a successful trial.

Demand Review

City of Toronto Parks, Forestry & Recreation does not have detailed metrics on daily usage of the park. However, based on the utilization of parking and general assumptions on vehicle occupancy and other observations, daily attendance is estimated to be between 4,900 and 6,500 visitors per Saturday or Sunday in the summer months.

Based on the surrounding context, a ridership projection was developed assuming a transit mode share of 5%, resulting in a projected ridership of between 480 and 650 customer trips per day. An hourly arrival and departure profile, based on City of Toronto Parks, Forestry & Recreation staff observations, established the required service levels to inform the service concept and to estimate resource requirements and costs.

Service Concept

The proposed service will operate between Kennedy Station and Bluffers Park, providing an accessible connection at Kennedy Station to Line 2 Bloor-Danforth, Line 3 Scarborough, and 10 bus routes that connect to various parts of Scarborough and beyond.

Approximately 500 parking spaces are available in the South Lot and 200 parking spaces are available in the North Service Road Lot at Kennedy Station. Parking in these lots is free on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays for transit customers.

The proposed route is illustrated in Attachment 1. Buses would operate both ways via Eglinton Avenue East, Brimley Road and Bluffers Park Road. The route would terminate in the parking lot adjacent to the main building at Bluffers Park Beach at the east end of Bluffers Park. All local stops will be served along the route.

The trial service would operate on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays between 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m., approximately every 15 to 20 minutes, depending on the time of day.

The TTC and City of Toronto Parks, Forestry & Recreation are working on a cost-sharing agreement to provide a higher level of service than warranted by TTC's Service Standards to increase the attractiveness and viability of the trial service.

The TTC will fund \$125,000 and there are sufficient resources within the 2018 Operating Budget to fund the trial for seasonal service to Bluffers Park as regular seasonal service adjustments are made. City of Toronto Parks, Forestry & Recreation will fund the incremental cost for the enhanced level of service which is approximately \$62,500.

Operational Requirements

The TTC completed an operational assessment for bus service to Bluffers Park in the spring of 2017. The assessment found that bus service to the park is feasible; however, a number of changes will be required prior to the introduction of the pilot service including:

- The removal of speed humps on the roadway as TTC buses do not operate regular scheduled service on streets with speed humps;
- Modifications to the east end parking lot at Bluffers Park Beach to accommodate turning movements for buses; and,
- Provision of accessible bus stops at two locations identified for potential stops – one at the east end parking lot and the other at the west end of the park.

The TTC is working closely with City of Toronto Parks, Forestry & Recreation to implement these modifications to allow for the operation of bus service to the park.

The TTC and City of Toronto Parks, Forestry & Recreation staff will also be working with City of Toronto Transportation Services and Toronto Police Service to update the Traffic Management Plan for Bluffers Park to maintain access by TTC buses during busy times to the park to provide reliable service.

Alternate service plans will be identified by TTC in the event that the roadway to the park is blocked.

Partnership with Toronto Parks, Forestry & Recreation

The TTC and City of Toronto Parks, Forestry & Recreation are working together to implement, promote, and monitor the trial bus service to Bluffers Park. City of Toronto Parks, Forestry & Recreation will provide an operational subsidy to provide a higher level of service to the park and will make the required infrastructure changes in the park, including bus stops and roadway modifications.

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Signature

Kirsten Watson
Chief Customer Officer

Attachments

Attachment 1 – Map of Proposed Service to Bluffers Park

Attachment 1 – Map of Bluffers Park Trial Service

