
**TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION
REPORT NO.**

MEETING DATE: August 30, 2006

SUBJECT: 320 Yonge Extension To University Avenue: Post-Implementation Review

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Commission:

- 1) approve the elimination of the 320B YONGE overnight service west of Bay Street to Queen's Park, seven days a week, effective November 26, 2006, because of low ridership and unacceptable financial performance.
- 2) forward this report to Councillor McConnell and Councillor Rae.

FUNDING

The elimination of this service would result in annual savings of approximately \$90,000 in net direct costs.

BACKGROUND

It was recommended in the report on *Service Improvements for 2004* that overnight service be improved to the entertainment district by extending every second 320 YONGE bus west on Front Street and north on University Avenue. The report was approved by the Commission at its meeting on March 24, 2004. An excerpt from that report is attached, as Exhibit 1. The service was introduced for a trial period on September 5, 2004.

This report is the post-implementation review of overnight service on the 320B YONGE route, along University Avenue and Queen's Park Crescent.

DISCUSSION

Post-Implementation Reviews

The TTC uses a formal process for planning and evaluating service changes based on a set of Commission-approved service standards. Every new service that the TTC introduces is initially operated on a trial basis. After a minimum six-month trial period, when ridership on the service has approached a mature state, passenger counts are taken, the performance of the route is reviewed, and a recommendation is made regarding its future. All service changes are reviewed to ensure that the original objective of better service for customers has been met. New routes and extensions, which have been introduced at an additional cost,

undergo a ridership and financial review to check that the service has met established standards of acceptable ridership and financial performance. The overall review also considers comments that have been received from customers and the community, and the experience that has been gained in operating the service.

A service change, which has met its performance objectives, is recommended to be made a regular part of the TTC system. If a service change has been unsuccessful in some way, then a recommendation is made to either make further changes for another trial period or to remove the service. The compulsory post-implementation review of every trial service change ensures that the success or failure of every service change is assessed consistently and fairly, and that there is full accountability to the Commission on matters which affect the service that is provided to customers.

Most service changes implemented through this process have been successful. Of the 63 trial service changes made since 1998, 45 of the changes attracted sufficient ridership that they meet the TTC's financial performance targets, and are now a regular part of the TTC system.

320 YONGE – Extended routing along University Avenue

The 320 YONGE overnight bus route is an important part of the Blue Night Network and operates between approximately 2:00 a.m. and 5:30 a.m. (9:00 a.m. on Sundays), at the times when the Yonge Subway is closed. The main part of the service operates on Yonge Street between Queens Quay and Steeles Avenue, as frequently as a bus every seven-to-eight minutes.

As a result of suggestions from customers and from former City Councillor Chow, it was recommended in the report on *Service Improvements for 2004* (excerpt attached) that a new 320B YONGE branch be operated west on Front Street, north on University Avenue as far as Queen Street to improve overnight service to the nearby entertainment district. Buses would turn around by making a U-turn at Armoury Street, and would then operate south on University Avenue, east on Front Street, and north on Yonge Street. Approximately every second bus on the route would be operated via this new 320B YONGE branch to University Avenue, providing service approximately every 30 minutes. There would be no change to service on the main part of the route, on Yonge Street north of Front Street. It was expected that this change could be made with no additional operating costs.

The TTC's standard for overnight service is that a basic network of overnight routes will be provided throughout the city within a 15-minute walk of as many residents as possible. The new 320B YONGE service along University Avenue, however, provides new overnight service for residents who were already within a 15-minute walk of the previously-existing all-night network. Since this service extension cannot be justified on a walk access-to-service basis, it is required to meet the same financial standard for the introduction of new routes and services as would apply to any other non-overnight service.

During detailed scheduling prior to the implementation of the route change, it was determined that operation of the new service to Queen Street would require the addition of a bus to the route in order to maintain the previously-established required level of service along Yonge Street north of Front Street. Since the addition of this bus would allow the route to be further lengthened, the new service that began in September 2004 has been operated to Queen's Park Crescent, providing additional new north-south overnight service to the nearby hospitals and the University of Toronto, and further replicating the daytime service provided by the University Subway. The route is shown in Exhibit 2. Operation of the new service costs approximately \$90,000 per year in net direct operating costs.

Counts of passengers on the trial service show that fewer than 50 customer-trips are made each night on the new service, which is significantly less than the ridership required to meet acceptable financial standards. The number of customer-trips which are new to the TTC is estimated to be less than 10 per night. The

financial performance of the new service is 0.04 new customers per net direct dollar of operating cost, which is below the minimum standard of 0.23.

There is no opportunity to reduce the operating costs of the new service. One bus was added to operate the service, and so less service cannot be operated. Operation of service over a shorter distance would not substantially reduce costs, as one additional bus would still be required.

Three options were investigated to revise the route to increase ridership, improve service, or reduce operating costs. These were:

- Extension of the existing 320B YONGE (Queen's Park-Steeles) branch to operate directly to the entertainment district by operating south on Yonge Street, west on Richmond Street, south on Peter Street, east on Adelaide Street, and north on Yonge Street, using one bus fewer than the present service;
- Extension of the existing 320B YONGE branch to operate via south on Yonge Street, west on King Street, north on Peter Street, east on Queen Street, and north on Yonge Street, using one bus fewer than the present service;
- Extension of the existing 320B YONGE branch to operate to St George Station via Queen's Park Crescent and Bloor Street, replicating the daytime University Subway service, using the same number of buses as at present.

In the first two options, the change in weighted travel time shows that the inconvenience of a longer wait for service south of Front Street would outweigh the benefits for customers using the new service. In the third option, the number of new customers who would be attracted by an extension to St George Station would be too low to meet the minimum financial standard. For these reasons, none of these additional options are recommended.

Because the new service does not meet the minimum financial standards and there is no prospect of reducing costs or improving the financial performance of the service, it is recommended that overnight service on the 320B YONGE route west of Bay Street to Queen's Park be eliminated, effective Sunday, November 26, 2006. The last day of service would be Saturday, November 25, 2006.

With this change, overnight service on the 320 YONGE route would operate to Queens Quay over the usual route, via south on Yonge Street, west on Queens Quay, north on Bay Street, east on Front Street, and north on Yonge Street. There would be no change to the service frequency provided on this main part of the route. Customers who used the 320B YONGE service on University Avenue would have to walk to the 320 YONGE service on Yonge Street, or to the 301 QUEEN, 306 CARLTON, or 300 BLOOR-DANFORTH overnight routes.

JUSTIFICATION

The post-implementation review of the operation of new service is an important part of the TTC's service standards. The 320B YONGE route is recommended for elimination because it has unacceptable ridership and financial performance and does not provide additional overnight service coverage to customers beyond a 15-minute walking distance to existing overnight services. Further changes to the service have been evaluated, and proposed changes would not improve the financial performance of the route and would not provide a net convenience for customers.

August 10, 2006

11-55-51/ML

Attachment: Exhibit 1 – Excerpt from report on *Service Improvements for 2004*

Exhibit 2 – Existing routing on 320 YONGE

Exhibit 1 – Excerpt from report on *Service Improvements for 2004*

Exhibit 1 – Excerpt from report on *Service Improvements for 2004*

