

TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION REPORT NO.

MEETING DATE: October 23, 2008

SUBJECT: LAKE SHORE BOULEVARD WEST EXPRESS BUS SERVICE

ACTION ITEM

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Commission:

- 1) Note that the introduction of a premium-fare express bus service on Lake Shore Boulevard West would not meet the TTC's minimum financial standard and, therefore, should not be implemented; and
- 2) Forward this report to Councillors Grimes and Milczyn, and to Metrolinx.

FUNDING

This report has no effect on the TTC's operating or capital budgets.

BACKGROUND

A premium-fare express bus service from Lake Shore Boulevard West near Park Lawn Road to downtown has been requested by local councillors and the community on a number of occasions. Most recently, a proposal was evaluated in the report on *Service Improvements for 2008*, and was not recommended, because it does not meet the TTC's minimum financial standard. An excerpt from this report is attached as Appendix A.

When the Commission considered the report on *Service Improvements for 2008* at its meeting on July 18, 2008, the Commission approved a motion that stated:

"That staff be requested to report back at a future meeting on a Lake Shore Boulevard express service to downtown, including the cost implications of a trial service and full implementation."

This report responds to that request.

DISCUSSION

As described in Appendix A, a proposal to operate a peak-period, premium-fare, express bus service from Lake Shore Boulevard West to downtown was evaluated. In the morning peak-period from Monday to Friday, the service would operate eastbound along Lake Shore Boulevard to downtown. Some trips would begin eastbound at Kipling Avenue, and other trips would begin eastbound at Park Lawn Road. In the afternoon peak-period from Monday to Friday, the service would operate westbound from downtown. Five trips would be operated in the morning, and four trips would be operated in the afternoon. Service would be scheduled to meet peak commuting times into and out of the downtown core. The service would be a premium fare service, identical to the TTC's other four existing premium fare downtown express routes. The fare for adult travel on these services is two tokens; or a transfer or cash fare with a \$2.25 supplement; or a Metropass with a \$32.00 per month additional Premium Fare sticker.

It is projected that the service would be used by approximately 380 customer-trips each weekday, of which approximately 40 would be new to the TTC and would be attracted by the new express service. The total amount of new fare revenue attributed to the service would be \$153,000 per year, of which approximately \$30,000 would be from the regular fare and premium fare from new customers, and approximately \$123,000 would be from the additional premium fare paid by existing customers who would switch, primarily from the existing 501 QUEEN and 508 LAKE SHORE streetcar services.

The service would require three buses in the morning peak-period and two buses in the afternoon peak-period. The additional direct operating costs, net of the additional fare revenue, would be approximately \$96,000 per year. The service would generate 0.10 new customers per net direct dollar spent. This is below the TTC's minimum financial standard of 0.23 and, for this reason, the new service is not recommended.

There are no resources in the 2009 Operating Budget to implement this service change. If this service were to be introduced for a trial period, it would have to use buses and resources which are budgeted to be used on other regular-fare TTC bus routes to prevent overcrowding. A trial implementation would cost about \$96,000 because it usually takes about a year to operate a new service for a "settle in" period, take counts of ridership, analyze the counts, and prepare an evaluation report for the Commission.

There are several other service changes that are already committed or planned for the Humber Bay Shores neighbourhood -- the area which would be served by a Lake Shore Boulevard premium express service. Starting on November 23, 2008, bus service on the 66 PRINCE EDWARD route will be revised and expanded. Buses will provide new service on a clockwise loop via Lake Shore Boulevard, Marine Parade Drive, and Park Lawn Road. This service will operate to Old Mill Station on the Bloor-Danforth Subway, at all times of the week, from approximately 6:00 a.m. (9:00 a.m. Sundays) to 1:00 a.m. This service will provide a new all-day link from the residential communities along Lake Shore Boulevard to the subway. This change is being made as part of both the report on *Service Improvements for 2008* and the TTC's *Ridership Growth Strategy*.

Significant improvements are also planned for the streetcar services along Lake Shore Boulevard. Improvements are already underway on the 501 QUEEN route to make the service more reliable (see applicable report also on this agenda). An environmental assessment is nearing completion for the rebuilding of the TTC loop at Park Lawn Road and Lake Shore Boulevard to include new streetcar tracks. This work is anticipated to be carried out in 2009 and when complete, streetcar service on the 501 QUEEN route east of Park Lawn Road will be doubled, as streetcars that now are scheduled to turn back east at Humber Loop will be extended to the new loop. Planning studies for the Waterfront West Transit City light rail line are underway and, when built, this new *Transit City* light rail line will provide Lake Shore Boulevard west of the Humber River with a new quick and reliable light rail service to downtown Toronto, operating entirely on a dedicated transit right-of-way. This will provide convenient service from the Humber Bay Shores area at a much-higher frequency than could ever be provided on a premium-fare express bus.

SUMMARY

New premium express bus service from Lake Shore Boulevard West to downtown is not recommended, because it does not meet the minimum financial standards. Other service improvements will be implemented shortly that will serve much of the area that would benefit from a Lake Shore express bus service.

September 2, 2008
11-31-57

Attachment: Appendix A – Excerpt from *Service Improvements for 2008*

Appendix A

Excerpt from *Service Improvements for 2008*

Lake Shore Boulevard

Express service to downtown

Origin of proposal: Councillor Grimes, Customer suggestions, City of Toronto staff

City wards: Ward 6 Etobicoke-Lakeshore, Ward 19 Trinity-Spadina,

Ward 20 Trinity-Spadina, Ward 28 Toronto Centre-Rosedale

Results: Does not meet minimum financial standard

Councillor Grimes, a local residents' association, and City of Toronto staff proposed that a peak-period downtown express bus route be operated from the Lake Shore Boulevard/Humber Bay Shores area. The route would provide new express bus travel, at a premium fare, to and from downtown. The same request has been evaluated several times in the past, most recently in 2005; however, the projected increase in ridership on the proposed service at that time did not meet the TTC's minimum financial standard.

TTC staff have reviewed and updated this request, taking into account the increase in population in the area. Approximately 380 customer-trips would be made during the peak-periods on this new service, of which approximately 40 customer-trips would be new to the TTC. The majority of customers would be attracted from existing 501 QUEEN and 508 LAKE SHORE streetcar services. Premium express fares would be charged on the new bus service, compared to the regular fare charged on the existing streetcar services. Three buses would be required to operate this service, and there would be an increase in operating costs. A financial assessment was carried out and this showed that the comparison of operating costs with the projected increase in ridership does not meet the TTC's minimum financial standard. For this reason, the proposal is not recommended.