



April 15, 2020

Dear TTC Chair Jaye Robinson, Commissioner Brad Bradford, Commissioner Shelley Carroll, Commissioner Jim Karygiannis, Commissioner Jennifer McKelvie and Commissioner Denzil Minnan-Wong,

We hope you and your families are keeping well in these troubling times. We are aware that it is essential that everyone do their part to deal with this pandemic. To that end, we write to you because transit is an essential service that requires urgent and ongoing attention during the COVID-19 crisis.

We are surprised and disappointed that the TTC Board meeting for this month was cancelled, as there are urgent matters that require your attention. This is a time when thoughtful solutions are required of our leaders to meet the stresses and mobility challenges posed by physical distancing requirements.

Public transit is vital for the many workers whose essential duties support the rest of us and for people who have no other way to get to their grocery store, food bank, pharmacy or other essential services. Transit that fails to ensure safe distancing adds an additional layer of risk to essential activities, both for transit workers and transit riders. It must be emphasized as well, that the people who are riding now are largely from low-income, racialized communities. If it wasn't already apparent, life in the pandemic has exposed many structural inequities of life in our city.

While the TTC has introduced some physical distancing protocols, the fact remains that transit riders and workers continue to carry an unacceptable burden of risk and cost. For this reason, we believe it is incumbent on the TTC Board to call an emergency meeting to do its part to implement measures to ensure the safety of public transit for riders and workers. We strongly recommend that the following measures be introduced as quickly as possible.

- Transit be made free
- The cost of March monthly passes be reimbursed
- Extend the deadline to cancel auto renew agreements and the 12 Month Pass
- Ensure that service levels on all modes allow for physical distancing
- Provide personal protective equipment for all transit workers
- Provide paid sick days for all transit workers, including contracted workers
- Prioritize space for buses, cyclists and pedestrians along our roads

And, finally, we ask that you turn your minds to the kind of city we want when the public health emergency is lifted. Our post-pandemic society cannot simply pick up where we left off. Our survival, our environment and our economy cannot afford it. In particular, our leaders must resist those who say we cannot afford to address Climate Change. Just look at the environmental benefits of the reduced vehicles on our streets during these times. Transit is, and will be more than ever, a conduit to a sustainable world. We urge you to immediately move us closer to that world by advancing the planned bus-only lanes to this year. Similar to implementing wide bike lanes, the reduced automobile traffic presents a wonderful opportunity to realize the city's goals.

Sincerely,

Moya Beall,
Scarborough Transit Action

Jennifer Robinson
Connect Sheppard East and 42 Voices

Anna Kim
Scarborough Civic Action Network

Cc. Mayor John Tory