



Toronto Youth Cabinet
100 Queen Street West
15th Floor, East Tower
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2
Email: info@thetyc.ca
Website: thetyc.ca

Eglinton East Corridor - Priority Bus Lanes

Dear Members of the Executive Committee

The Toronto Youth Cabinet strongly supports the implementation of bus lanes in Toronto. We are excited to see the Eglinton East corridor accelerated to this Fall and the Jane corridor planned for the Spring. We support any measures that can further accelerate the installation of bus lanes on all five corridors identified in the TTC 5-year Service Plan.

Buses carry roughly half of all trips taken on the TTC. The Fair Pass evaluation has shown that low income TTC customers use the bus for a greater proportion of TTC trips than other adult customers. Student and senior transit customers also have a greater reliance on the bus. Poverty is concentrated in the inner suburbs where there is limited access to rapid transit which results in a high reliance on bus routes. Ridership figures since the start of the COVID-19 Pandemic have shown bus passengers' greater dependence on transit than subway and streetcar passengers.

While many of the TTC's suburban bus routes provide excellent frequency, unreliable travel times and unpredictable wait times for passengers result from operating high frequency and high ridership routes on congested roadways.

The Bus Lane Implementation Plan will dramatically improve bus service and the commutes of those who rely on it.

Eglinton East, the first corridor proposed for installation has the potential to improve transit access in all seven Scarborough Neighbourhood Improvement Areas. In Scarborough, 47% of youth primarily rely on transit to get around. Improved reliability and faster travel times will increase access to opportunities. This corridor already serves 42,000 bus customers a day. Highly visible, curbside lanes restricted to buses only 24/7 will improve the 4 bus routes that serve this corridor. Enforcement of the dedicated lanes will be key to the success of this project.

Bus lanes also result in significant efficiencies. As traffic increases on a bus route, trip times increase, therefore increasing the number of buses the TTC must assign to the route to maintain frequency and on-time performance. Dedicated lanes reduce trip times for buses allowing the TTC to maintain frequency with fewer vehicles. It is estimated that this will result in savings of \$2.5m per year and future capital savings of \$6.5m. With a construction cost of \$7.8m the TTC could quickly realize net savings. The surplus of buses during rush hour, when

the fleet is most constrained and the potential for financial savings can be used on this corridor or others to further improve frequency and reduce crowding.

Jane Street, the second corridor proposed for construction will bring significant transit improvements to an additional 7 Neighbourhood Improvement Areas in the City's northwest. The first two corridors to be rolled out within a year will improve transit service in 14 of Toronto's 31 Neighbourhood Improvement Areas.

It should also be noted that these bus routes will support decreased travel times for Toronto's students, particularly with Eglinton East accelerating commutes to the University of Toronto's Scarborough Campus, the Jane Street corridor serving as a route for many York University students, and all 5 routes including local public schools.

This will have long-term benefits of greatly improving transit reliability and speed for students, but in the short-term will provide enhanced capacity vital for the social distancing needs of a pandemic. Given that K-12 schools and some post-secondary institutions look to be resuming some form of in-person instruction for the fall, safe transportation to and from school is essential to allowing Toronto's students to resume their learning.

Additionally, the reality is that as Toronto begins to recover and rebuild from this crisis, the TTC is going to have to work to rebuild customer confidence in transit in order to restore ridership. Reducing the crowding commonly seen on buses in particular pre-COVID will be a key aspect to this, and so Toronto should use this early recovery stage to implement bus lanes.

The bus lane implementation plan will result in improved reliability and faster travel times, provide the opportunity to increase service and focus improvements on equity seeking neighbourhoods at an affordable cost. The Toronto Youth Cabinet is proud to be supporting Toronto's Bus Lane Implementation Plan.

Sincerely,

Amin Ali
Transit Lead
Toronto Youth Cabinet