

From: [Gideon Forman](#)
To: [Budget Committee](#)
Subject: My comments for 2021.BU23.1 on January 25, 2021 Budget Committee
Date: Thursday, January 21, 2021 9:44:40 AM

To the City Clerk:

Please add my comments to the agenda for the January 25, 2021 Budget Committee meeting on item 2021.BU23.1, Public Presentations on the 2021 Capital and Operating Budgets, January 25, 2021 - 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

I understand that my comments and the personal information in this email will form part of the public record and that my name will be listed as a correspondent on agendas and minutes of City Council or its committees. Also, I understand that agendas and minutes are posted online and my name may be indexed by search engines like Google.

Comments:

Jan 21 2021

RE: TTC Budget

Dear Budget Committee Members,

I am writing on behalf of the David Suzuki Foundation. We advocate for strong public transit systems across Canada to reduce air pollution and tackle the climate emergency.

We applaud the TTC for its efforts to electrify its vehicles and congratulate the commission for operating the largest fleet of e-buses in North America.

However, we have concerns about the proposed 2021 TTC budget. In particular, we urge you to:

- 1) **Fully fund the Fair Pass discount:** We appreciate that \$2.9 million has been set aside to expand the Fair Pass to 25,000 people who receive housing support. But many Torontonians will still not be eligible for this discount. We urge you to expand the program so it covers *all* low-income residents. For these citizens the pass is a life-saver, allowing them to attend school, get to work and travel to medical appointments.
- 2) **Improve TTC service levels:** To ensure that residents continue to take transit during the pandemic and beyond, it is crucial that we enhance service. We understand the TTC is proposing some 300,000 *fewer* service hours for 2021. This is the wrong direction if we want to build ridership, as we must.
- 3) **Roll out transit priority more quickly:** We support the city's plan to prioritize buses on 20 routes, but the program's timeline is too long. Only one bus lane is planned before 2023. Again, if we're going to get riders back on transit, we need to make transit attractive — quickly. Our recommendation aligns with the recent report of Toronto's Office of Recovery

and Rebuild.

- 4) **Adopt new revenue tools to pay for transit:** No city of Toronto's size should rely so heavily on property and land-transfer taxes. We require a suite of other revenue tools. Especially useful would be road tolls, a levy on commercial parking lots and a motor vehicle registration tax. Any of these tools would bring the city tens of millions of dollars annually, help bust traffic congestion and assist Toronto in meeting its climate goals.

Thank you for your attention to these urgent recommendations.

Yours,

Gideon Forman

Transportation policy analyst

The David Suzuki Foundation