

Date: November 19, 2021
To: Budget Committee
Re: BU35.4 - 2022 Rate Supported Budgets - Toronto Parking Authority (Ward All)

Dear Members of the Budget Committee,

Toronto Environmental Alliance (TEA) appreciates the environmental and climate considerations that Toronto Parking Authority (TPA) has put forward in its 2022 budget, and encourages TPA to go further in its adoption of emissions-reducing technologies and goals.

We heard TPA's President describe a transformational view of TPA's role in transitioning to a low-carbon city, not only through the addition of EV charging at public lots, but through the growth and expansion of the Bike Share network, and by envisioning TPA's role in bridging residents and visitors to the City's transit ecosystem.

TPA's new focus on *mobility solutions*, and particularly *low-emissions* mobility solutions, is very welcome.

Next week we anticipate the release of the City's Net Zero Strategy, with a significant step up in Toronto's climate action ambition. Given TPA's new articulation of its purpose and vision with this budget, we can see its clear role in helping achieve the following climate actions;

- *100% of transportation options - including public transit and personal vehicles - use low or zero-carbon energy sources, and active transportation accounts for 75% of trips under 5 km city-wide by 2050 (TransformTO)¹*
- *implementing car-free zones (85% of TransformTO consultation participants agree or strongly agree with this action)²*

In alignment with these TransformTO goals, we urge TPA to aim higher on the following aspects of its plan:

- On Bike Share, we believe a faster rate of expansion is needed to achieve the City's active transportation goals. While ridership grew vastly over the last two years (ridership increases of 500,000 in both 2020 and 2021 (projected)), the target ridership increases for the *next* two years are only 100,000 and 200,000 respectively. Further, the 38 new Bike Share stations slated for mid-2022 are a welcome addition, but this is also a slower pace of expansion than previous years. We are concerned that the Bike Share network is only distributed across 20 of the City's 25 wards, and hope that presence in each ward can be achieved in this budget year. The addition of e-bikes to the Bike Share fleet will be a game-changer in parts of the city

¹ [TransformTO: Climate Action for a Healthy, Equitable and Prosperous Toronto - Report #2 - The Pathway to a Low Carbon Future](#)

² [TransformTO Implementation Plan 2021-2023 Consultation Summary Report](#)

where destinations are further apart, and where the topography is more challenging, however with just 500 units to start, we anticipate there will be more demand than availability. **We encourage TPA to set its Bike Share expansion targets higher and consider ways it can support sustained ridership growth at the rate it has seen in the last two years and to apply an equity lens in designing its distribution plan for Bike Share stations and e-bikes.**

- We heard TPA articulate its role as a bridge to the City's transportation ecology, including subways, buses, streetcars, bikes, and other last-mile mobility solutions. Through the work of TransformTO and the Toronto Office of Rebuild and Recovery, car-free zones and less car dependency in the city have been identified as positive and popular climate actions with significant co-benefits. We suggest that now is the time for **TPA to consider the supportive roles it can play, and how its assets may contribute, to the implementation of car-free zones in Toronto**, whether they take the form of annual events like Open Streets Toronto, responsive programs like ActiveTO and CafeTO, or more permanent car-free zones, as are being planned and implemented in cities around the world.
- Lastly, we encourage the rapid implementation of the two pilot projects demonstrating EV charging at City-owned lots. **We ask that the TPA ensure that such demonstration projects highlight, not only EV charging technologies, but also design improvements specified in the Toronto Green Standard and the Green Streets Technical Guidelines** including: permeable surfaces; trees; good quality soil and generous landscaped areas; enhancing pedestrian and cycling infrastructure; managing stormwater on-site; reducing the urban heat island effect; and using sustainable materials and technologies.

In summary, we would like to see Bike Share rolled out across the city rapidly and equitably, we would like to see TPA considering how it can support the implementation of car-free streets in Toronto, and we would like to see a holistic approach taken when integrating EV charging stations in City-owned lots, responding to other environmental issues that typical parking lots can exacerbate.

We look forward to seeing TPA's evolution from a parking authority to a *provider of mobility solutions*, as Toronto transitions to a low-carbon city.

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