

Surface Transit Network Plan - Consultation Plan

Date: March 23, 2021

To: Executive Committee

From: General Manager, Transportation Services

Wards: All

SUMMARY

This report details the proposed approach for public consultation of the Surface Transit Network Plan (STNP) and responds to Recommendation #2 of EX18.1 - Surface Transit Network Plan Update, adopted by City Council with amendments on November 25-26, 2020.

The Surface Transit Network Plan is a roadmap to guide the planning, implementation, operation, maintenance, and monitoring of Toronto's transit priority measures. The development and delivery of the Surface Transit Network Plan will involve a three-phased consultation approach. Consultation in Phases 1 and 2 will focus on the evaluation framework used to identify and prioritize surface transit corridors and develop the plan.

Once Council approves the Surface Transit Network Plan, City staff will undertake corridor-specific studies to determine the feasibility, benefits and impacts of various transit priority measures, informed by community consultation (Phase 3).

In this third phase of consultation, more localized and targeted consultation will be undertaken along individual corridors to gather public input on the proposed transit priority measures for all road users and any potential relocation or removal of bus stops in conjunction with the TTC. The form and frequency of these corridor-specific consultations will be determined at a later stage of the project.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Transportation Services recommends that:

1. City Council direct the General Manager, Transportation Services, to report back to Council on the outcome of the consultation and final Surface Transit Network Plan program in Q4 2021.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The estimated costs to complete the consultation activities for the Surface Transit Network Plan is \$310,000. Funding is available within the 2021-2030 Capital Budget & Plan for Transportation Services in account CTP821-01.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial implications as identified in the Financial Impact section.

DECISION HISTORY

City Council, at its meeting of November 25-26, 2020, adopted, as amended, Executive Committee Item EX18.1 "Surface Transit Network Plan Update" as the basis for initiating local Councillor briefings and community consultations. City Council directed the General Manager, Transportation Services, to bring the consultation plan for the Surface Transit Network Plan to the Executive Committee in the first quarter of 2021. <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.EX18.1>

City Council at its meeting of July 28-29, 2020, adopted, as amended, Executive Committee Item EX15.1 "Eglinton East Corridor - Priority Bus Lanes", which Council requested the City of Toronto and Toronto Transit Commission to conduct robust community and stakeholder consultations when considering dedicated bus lanes on Sheppard Avenue East, Lawrence Ave East and Dufferin Street as part of the Surface Transit Network Plan. <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.EX15.1>

At its July 14, 2020 meeting, the TTC Board adopted the Bus Lane Implementation Plan which presented the prioritization of five priority bus corridors, an accelerated integrated work plan and an implementation plan for Eglinton East. [https://www.ttc.ca/About the TTC/Commission reports and information/Commission meetings/2020/July 14/Reports/5 Bus Lane Implementation Plan.pdf](https://www.ttc.ca/About%20the%20TTC/Commission%20reports%20and%20information/Commission%20meetings/2020/July%2014/Reports/5%20Bus%20Lane%20Implementation%20Plan.pdf)

City Council at its meeting of February 26, 2020, adopted, as amended, Planning and Housing Committee Item PH13.3 entitled "Official Plan Review: Transportation - Recommended Official Plan Amendment", which recommended policy amendments intended to strengthen the existing policies and provide greater clarity regarding the City's goals related to transportation and the tools endorsed for use to achieve them. <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.PH13.3>

At the December 12, 2019 TTC Board meeting, the Board approved the 5-Year Service Plan & 10-Year Outlook: [https://www.ttc.ca/About the TTC/Commission reports and information/Commission meetings/2019/December 12/Reports/Attachment%201%20TTC 5 year SP web accessible R3.pdf](https://www.ttc.ca/About%20the%20TTC/Commission%20reports%20and%20information/Commission%20meetings/2019/December%2012/Reports/Attachment%201%20TTC%205%20year%20SP%20web%20accessible%20R3.pdf)

EQUITY STATEMENT

The Surface Transit Network Plan proposes using tools such as intersection and signal improvements, reserved lanes, and customer comfort improvements at transit stops to provide priority to surface transit in the City's expansive road network. An integral component of this plan is implementing transit priority measures that improve transit reliability, speed and reduce transit crowding in neighbourhoods with vulnerable populations, such as persons with low income, women, youth and racialized groups. An enhanced surface transit priority corridor can improve access to economic opportunities, City and other government services and spaces, food, health services and recreation. Using the recommended Neighbourhood Equity Index (NEI) from the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020, the Surface Transit Network Plan established equity as one of the five criteria in evaluating transit priority corridors. The objective of the consultation plan detailed in this report is to confirm broad public support of the Surface Transit Network Plan while specifically targeting City residents whose input has been historically underrepresented in citywide initiatives. The implementation of surface transit priority measures along corridors identified in the Surface Transit Network Plan can directly benefit residents in several Neighbourhood Improvement Areas in the City of Toronto through improved transit service.

COMMENTS

The design and operation of surface transit corridors are of interest to a broad range of stakeholders and road users across the City. This report provides additional details about the consultation approach that will be used to gather public feedback on the development and implementation of the STNP and addresses specific recommendations by City Council regarding consultation, notification, and stakeholder engagement.

Consultation will be carried out in three phases to provide the public and stakeholders with opportunities to provide feedback on the selection and prioritization of surface transit corridors citywide and the specific transit priority measures and designs proposed for each corridor. In each phase, the public will be provided with the information needed to participate fully in the consultation process, opportunities to ask questions, and multiple channels to provide feedback.

Consultation will be carried out virtually according to recommendations from the Chief Medical Officer of Health to reduce the spread of COVID-19 until City staff receive guidance that it is safe to organize in-person public gatherings.

During all three phases of consultation, the City will use multiple media channels to inform the public about the plan and promote consultation opportunities, including web-based advertising (both paid and organic), social media, radio, and direct email notification. Notification and promotion of consultation activities will aim to solicit participation from a broad range of stakeholders, residents, businesses and various road users in all parts of the city, with a particular focus on Neighbourhood Improvement Areas and on historically underrepresented and marginalized groups, following guidance from the City's Data for Equity Strategy. Translation of notices and

consultation materials will be considered for all phases of consultation, following guidance from the City's Multilingual Information Provisions Policy. The selection of languages is based on demographic data identifying the most common languages in use across the City, including Cantonese, Mandarin, Tagalog, Tamil, Spanish, Portuguese, Farsi, Italian, Korean, French, and Russian. Services will be provided for residents requiring accessibility assistance throughout the consultation process.

The Surface Transit Network Plan represents a collaborative effort between the City and TTC, with teams working seamlessly together to improve surface transit across the City now and into the future. In the near term, the teams will coordinate and work together to support continued development and delivery of RapidTO corridors, evaluation of Scarborough Rapid Transit line replacement options, and public consultation efforts supporting these and other surface transit issues. The Surface Transit Network Plan will be updated accordingly, as needed.

Phase 1: City-Wide Consultation on Evaluation Criteria

The purpose of consultation in Phase 1 will be to gather public input on the draft evaluation framework that will be used to identify and prioritize surface transit corridors for further study and future implementation. The public and stakeholders will have the opportunity to comment on the focus and weighting of evaluation criteria and recommend additional criteria.

The following criteria are proposed to identify and prioritize surface transit corridors for further corridor-specific study and consultation, leading to implementation:

- **Existing transit ridership**
 - Considers current ridership demands, service reliability, and crowding issues
- **Equity**
 - Ensuring fast, high quality, and equitable transit access to City services, economic opportunities, life necessities and recreation for all Torontonians, particularly for vulnerable populations and marginalized communities
 - Providing safe and efficient transit options for essential workers residing in areas of the City disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 infections
- **Ease of Implementation**
 - Ranging from small, low cost improvements to more capital intensive options
- **Connectivity to higher-order transit**
 - Connecting the surface transit network to subway, GO Transit commuter rail / future SmartTrack services to improve transit access and fully leverage City and Provincial investments in higher-order transit services
- **Population and employment growth**
 - Ensuring investments in surface transit priority meet the current and future needs of our growing City

Phase 1 consultation activities will be conducted virtually and will include:

- **Project web page:** A web page on the City's website will host all consultation materials, presentations, and information about the study

- **District-based Virtual Public Meetings:** Four public meetings (Etobicoke-York, North York, Toronto and East York, and Scarborough) will be held on the Webex online meeting platform to provide an opportunity for residents and stakeholders in each district to ask questions of the project team. Attendees will have the option of joining online or by phone. Each meeting will include a presentation and Question & Answer session led by City staff and project consultants. A summary of questions and comments raised will be prepared after each meeting
- **Key stakeholder engagement:** City staff will engage a range of key stakeholders through targeted emails to solicit their participation in the consultation. Engagement activities will be focused on outreach to community groups and agencies in Neighbourhood Improvement Areas through a number of channels including, but not limited to Community Clusters established as part of the City's response to COVID-19, as per Recommendation #5 of EX.18.1 - Surface Transit Network Plan Update
- **Feedback survey:** An online survey will be the primary tool used to gather public opinion on the focus and weighting of evaluation criteria and input on additional evaluation criteria. The survey will remain open for a total of five weeks. The comment period will close two weeks after the final district-based meeting;
- **One-window contact:** The public and stakeholders will have the option to submit questions and comments by phone, mail or email. Staff will track and respond to all communication.

In response to Council Recommendation #2 of EX18.1, City staff will deliver presentations and respond to questions at ward-based meetings organized, promoted and hosted by local councillors.

Feedback received through all channels during Phase 1 consultation will be summarized in a Consultation Summary and shared publicly on the project web page. Following Phase 1, the focus and weighting of evaluation criteria will be refined to reflect public feedback. The revised evaluation framework will be applied to all surface transit corridors to generate a prioritized list of 20 corridors.

Phase 1 is currently scheduled between May and July 2021.

Phase 2: City-Wide Consultation on Evaluation Results and Draft Plan

Consultation in Phase 2 will focus on the outcome of the evaluation, the resulting list of prioritized surface transit corridors, and an initial schedule for further study and implementation of each corridor as informed by Phase 1.

Phase 2 consultation will be carried out virtually and will include similar activities to those in Phase 1:

- **Project web page:** The web page will be updated to include new consultation materials, information and presentations, including the priority corridors list.
- **District-based Virtual Public Meetings:** Four virtual meetings with presentations and Question & Answer sessions led by City staff and consultants
- **Feedback survey #2:** A second online survey will be the primary tool used to gather feedback and comments on the evaluation results

- **One-window contact:** The public and stakeholders will have the option to submit questions and comments by phone and email. Staff will track and respond to all comments and questions.

In response to Council Recommendation #2 of EX18.1, City staff will deliver presentations and respond to questions at ward-based meetings organized, promoted and hosted by local councillors.

Feedback received in Phase 2 will be captured in a Consultation Summary and considered by staff in developing the final Surface Transit Network Plan.

Phase 2 is currently scheduled between July and September 2021.

A final report will be submitted for approval to Executive Committee by Q4 2021. The report will include a summary of public feedback received through Phases 1 and 2, a list of the surface transit corridors identified and prioritized through the evaluation process, a preliminary implementation schedule for advancing corridor-specific studies and priority ranking of each corridor as informed by the consultation process.

Phase 3: Corridor-Specific Studies and Consultation

Once approved by City Council, City staff will initiate Phase 3 of the STNP, involving corridor-specific studies and consultation. Phase 3 will be carried out in 3-year cycles, undertaken annually until all surface transit corridors in the STNP have been completed. Timelines may be adjusted depending on each corridor's complexity, capital project coordination, and other approval processes.

- **Engineering studies (Year 1):** City staff will undertake one or two corridor studies to determine the benefits and impacts of various transit priority measures.
- **Public consultations (Year 2):** The public will have an opportunity to review and provide feedback on proposed design options and transit priority measures for the corridor under study. The format and frequency of consultation will be determined at a later stage of the project.
- **Project delivery (Year 3):** Implementation will be coordinated with other construction projects to minimize disruption to the community.

Consultation in Phase 3 will focus on the potential surface transit priority measures being considered for each corridor and the benefits and impacts of the design options. Phase 3 consultation materials will include analyzing various metrics such as travel times, traffic volumes, delays and transit capacity, using pre-COVID data. City staff will work with TTC to consult the public on the potential relocation or removal of bus stops.

Public consultation for each corridor will strive to engage residents and stakeholders through online and in-person consultation activities, where possible. Staff will work with councillors' offices to identify key stakeholders, such as residents, business and community groups that should be included in outreach and notification efforts.

Multiple channels will be used to promote consultation opportunities. As part of corridor-specific studies and consultation in Phase 3, the notification will include notices sent by mail to addresses in each surface transit priority corridor's vicinity. The details of notice

distribution will be determined in consultation with the local councillor and the specific context of each corridor study.

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SIGNATURE

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