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## 2023 OPERATING BUDGET BRIEFING NOTE

### Toronto Transit Commission Investment in Service, Accessibility, Affordability and Safety

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#### Issue/Background:

At its January 13, 2023 meeting, the Budget Committee requested a briefing note regarding TTC investments relating to the following matters:

- a. A summary of all the measures implemented in the last eight years to keep the TTC accessible and affordable;
- b. A summary of the current status of the Fair Pass and the expansions towards greater eligibility for the program;
- c. Information on the City Subsidy over time and the increase in funding year over year; and
- d. An explanation of, and any data pointing to, the need for investments in safety measures on the TTC.

Each matter is addressed below.

#### Key Points:

***A: Summary of all the measures implemented in the last eight years to keep the TTC accessible and affordable.***

#### System and Service Accessibility

90% of people and jobs are within a five-minute walk of public transit in Toronto. Over the past eight years, several targeted measures have been implemented to expand system access and provide faster and more reliable service to people in Toronto. These include:

#### 2015-2018

- **Opening of the Toronto-York Spadina Subway Extension:** This 8.6-kilometre extension to Line 1, with service to six new subway stations, improved connections to the bus network and regional transit, and reduced travel times to key destinations, including York University.
- **Restoration of All-Day, Everyday Service:** Prior to 2015, approximately 40 routes did not operate at certain times of the day, mostly on evenings and weekends. With

the all-day, everyday initiative in 2015, service now operates on these routes from approximately 6 a.m. (8 a.m. on Sundays) to 1 a.m. everyday.

- **Express Bus Network:** A network of express buses on key corridors was introduced to provide customers with faster and more comfortable travel on 27 routes throughout the city. This network introduced express bus service in off-peak periods and improved express service in peak periods.
- **10 Minute Network:** Implementation of a network of key bus and streetcar routes which operate, every 10 minutes, all day, every day.
- **Expanded Blue Night Network:** Prior to 2015, after the conclusion of subway service each night, a network of 22 Blue Night routes provided a core service for overnight hours. In 2015, this network was expanded to a total of 31 routes, with improvements also made to the existing network, enhancing the scope and reach of overnight service to more parts of Toronto.
- **Earlier Sunday Opening:** Prior to 2016, subway service and most surface routes started operation at 9 a.m. This was changed to 8 a.m. in 2016 to reflect changing travel patterns and customer needs.
- **Service Reliability Improvements:** Additional service was provided to address crowding in both peak- and off-peak periods.
- **All-Door Boarding on Streetcar Routes:** Through the implementation of all-door boarding on streetcar routes, dwell times at streetcar stops was reduced, enabling faster travel times for approximately 50 million customer trips per year.
- **Signal and Track Reliability Improvements:** Maintenance personnel were added to improve the reliability of signals, track and communications systems within the subway system.

## 2019-2022

- **Service Reliability Improvements:** Operators were added to improve on-time performance and mitigate the impact of construction and traffic congestion by adding “run as directed” vehicles that enable the TTC to respond to changes in service demand in real time.
- **Seasonal Service Improvements:** Service was introduced or expanded to key seasonal destinations in Toronto, including the Toronto Zoo, Distillery Winter Market and Bluffer’s Park.
- **RapidTO:** Implementation of a dedicated bus lane along Eglinton Avenue East, from Kennedy to University of Toronto Scarborough campus, facilitating a more reliable service for up to 47,000 daily customer trips that resulted in travel time savings of up to five minutes.
- **Vehicle Reliability Improvements:** Maintenance personnel were added to focus on preventative maintenance activities of vehicles, supported by the establishment of new apprenticeship programs to support recruiting efforts and train employees on new light rail vehicles (LRVs).

Furthermore, preparatory work is ongoing to prepare for the operation of both Line 5 Eglinton and Line 6 Finch West, which will add 17 stations and nearly 30 route kilometres of rapid transit along dedicated rights of way in these key transit corridors.

In addition to the above-noted Conventional System service improvements to the, various accessibility improvements were made that include:

- The streetcar network becoming fully accessible with the completion of 204 low-floor streetcar order;
- The continued progress on the Easier Access program with 56 TTC subway stations now accessible and 14 stations are currently under construction;
- Expansion of the Wheel-Trans eligibility criteria in alignment with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), including the assessment of cognitive disabilities and categorization of customers' eligibility as unconditional, conditional and temporary; and
- Wheel-Trans call centre capacity was increased through the addition of a contract to handle overflow calls and reduce call wait times for customers.

### **System Affordability**

In addition, several actions were taken over the past eight years to keep the TTC affordable for riders. These have included:

- Introduction of children under 12 riding free in 2015.
- Introduction of 2 Hour Transfer in 2019 to facilitate stop-overs or completion of appointments within a two-hour window on just one fare.
- Partnered with Social Development Finance and Administration to introduce the Fair Pass program that has enabled eligible recipients to receive a 33% discount on adult single fares and 21% discount on adult monthly passes.
- Across-the-board fare freezes in 2018, 2021 and 2022.
- Targeted exemptions to fare increases in other years, including:
  - Adult Cash (2015, 2017-2022)
  - Monthly Passes (2016, 2018, 2021-2023)
  - Seniors (2018, 2021-2023)

Cumulatively from 2014 to 2022, fare increases have been set at or below the rate of inflation across all fare categories. This progress on affordability for Toronto residents, at the same time as the considerable service improvements noted above, has been facilitated by the substantial increase in City funding, which is summarized in Part C below.

### ***B: A summary of the current status of the Fair Pass and the expansion towards greater eligibility for the program.***

In 2022, 43,283 Fair Pass clients used their discount on the TTC, and the program provided more than 5.6 million subsidized rides. In November and December, the Fair Pass program surpassed pre-pandemic ridership by having the most Fair Pass clients using their discount in a single month.

The Fair Pass Transit Discount Program was designed to be implemented in three phases, progressing as the program was evaluated and as budget considerations allow.

Currently, the Fair Pass Transit Discount Program is in Phase 2 of implementation. Phase 2 eligibility includes Toronto residents aged 20-64 that participate in one or more of the following programs: Ontario Works, Ontario Disability Support Program, Child Care Fee Subsidy provided by Toronto Children Services, and Rent-Geared-to-Income subsidy. Subsidy recipients must also meet income eligibility criteria based on the Low-Income Measure After-Tax +15% (LIM-AT+15%) threshold.

Pending approval of the 2023 Budget, Phase 3A will extend to low-income residents with an income below 75% of the Low-Income Measure After-Tax (75% of LIM-AT) in mid-2023.

**Phase 1** was designed to provide the discount to Ontario Works (OW) and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) recipients.

**OW and ODSP recipients started receiving Fair Pass in April 2018**

- OW and ODSP recipients live in deep poverty and on fixed incomes that are far below the program's income threshold.
- Toronto Employment and Social Services (TESS) administered the program in Phase 1. They had the infrastructure in place to inform clients of their eligibility, process applications in-person at OW/ODSP offices and had access to the Social Assistance and Management System (SAMS) client database to verify eligibility and provide seamless service delivery for clients.
- The annualized budget for Phase 1 approved in 2018 was \$8.2 million.

**Phase 2** of the Fair Pass Transit Discount Program was designed to extend eligibility to Toronto residents receiving child care fee subsidy and/or housing supports whose household income fall under the Low-Income Measure +15% (LIM+15%) threshold. The Fair Pass budget was increased by \$2.4 million to implement Phase 2 in 2019.

**Child Care Fee Subsidy recipients were added in September 2019**

- Initially, TESS and TCS administered Phase 2 of the program.
- In 2020, the administration role was transferred to Social Development Finance and Administration (SDFA), made possible through the Human Services Integration Project and the establishment of the Application and Support Centre.

**Rent-Geared-to-Income subsidy recipients were added in March 2022**

- As directed by Council in 2021, SDFA was asked to extend Phase 2 eligibility to residents receiving housing supports.
- Working with SSHA, an administrative solution was identified for Rent-Geared-to-Income recipients and additional program costs were funded through the existing base budget.

**Phase 3** was designed to extend eligibility to all remaining low-income residents with an income below LIM+15%.

- **Pending approval of the 2023 Budget, Phase 3A will extend to low-income residents with an income below 75% of the Low-Income Measure After-Tax (75% of LIM-AT) in mid-2023** at a cost of \$2 million.

Phase 3A will mark the beginning of Phase 3 Fair Pass implementation as eligibility will be based on low-income criteria rather than participation in specific income assistance and subsidy programs (Phase 1 and 2).

**C: Information on the City Subsidy over time and the increase in funding year over year.**

Between 2014 and 2023, base operating funding (City subsidy) has increased by \$411.8 million, to \$958.7 million in 2023 from \$546.9 million in 2014, representing a 75% increase over this time period. These amounts exclude the COVID relief funding from the provincial and federal governments that have formed part of the TTC’s overall funding for the years 2021 to 2023, as summarized in the following table.

<b>City Operating Funding Budget 2014-2023 TTC Conventional and Wheel-Trans Service</b>			
<b>(\$Millions)</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>City Subsidy: Base Operating Funding</b>	<b>COVID Relief Funding</b>	<b>Combined Total</b>
2014	546.9		546.9
2015	582.5		582.5
2016	610.3		610.3
2017	689.5		689.5
2018	740.9		740.9
2019	762.9		762.9
2020	789.8		789.8
2021	807.4	796.4	1,603.8
2022	905.7	561.1	1,466.8
2023	958.7	366.4	1,325.1
Change 2014 to 2023	411.8		
% Change	75.3%		

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the ability to fund transit operations from passenger revenue has diminished significantly. Prior to the pandemic, in 2019 passenger revenue accounted for 62.6% of the TTC Conventional service expenditures and 5.4% for Wheel-Trans service and 58.5% on a combined basis. For 2023, the amounts proportion of expenditures funded from passenger revenue is 41.6% of the

TTC Conventional service expenditures and 4.5% for Wheel-Trans and 39.4% on a combined basis.

Over the same time period, the City subsidy to the TTC has increased from 37.0% to 40.3% of total funding, with the balance of the passenger revenue shortfall being supported through COVID relief funding.

**D: An explanation of, and any data pointing to, the need for investments in safety measures on the TTC.**

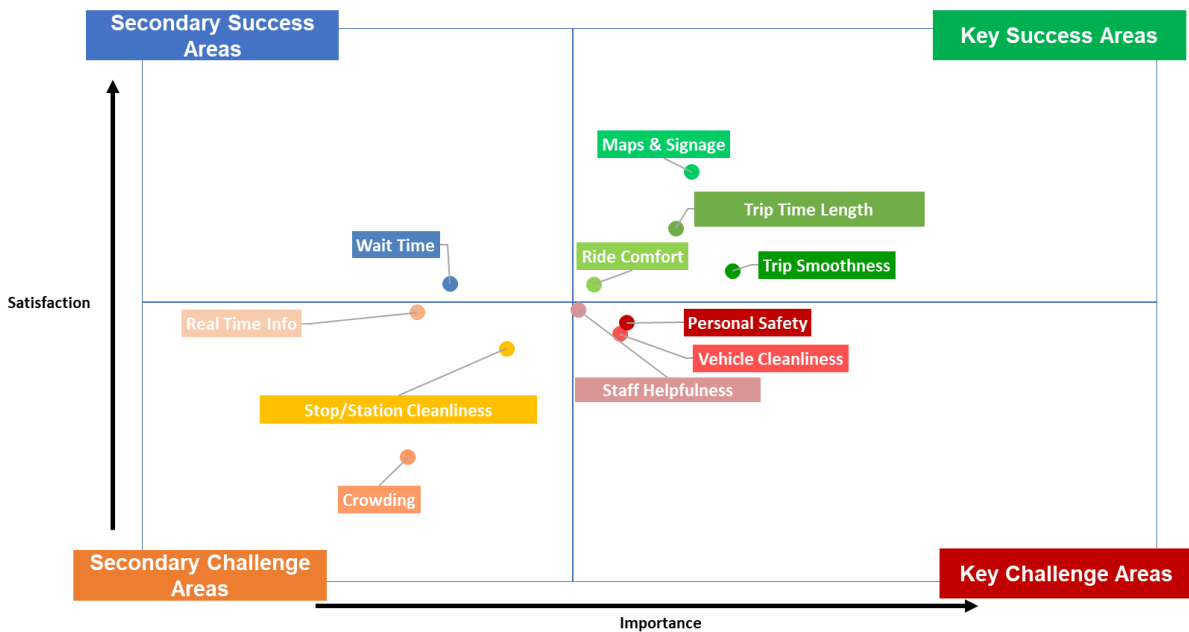
The rationale for investments in safety measures in 2023 is driven by the following three factors:

1. Diminished customer satisfaction with personal Security on the TTC.
2. Overall increase in Offenses to Employees and Customers.
3. Safety Related Calls within TTC Network

**1. Diminished customer satisfaction with personal Security on TTC.**

- Demonstrated in the TTC’s continual Customer attitude surveys.
- Personal safety is more important to customers than it ever has been.
- We are ranking relatively low on satisfaction with personal safety issues.
- Increase in customer complaints about personal safety.

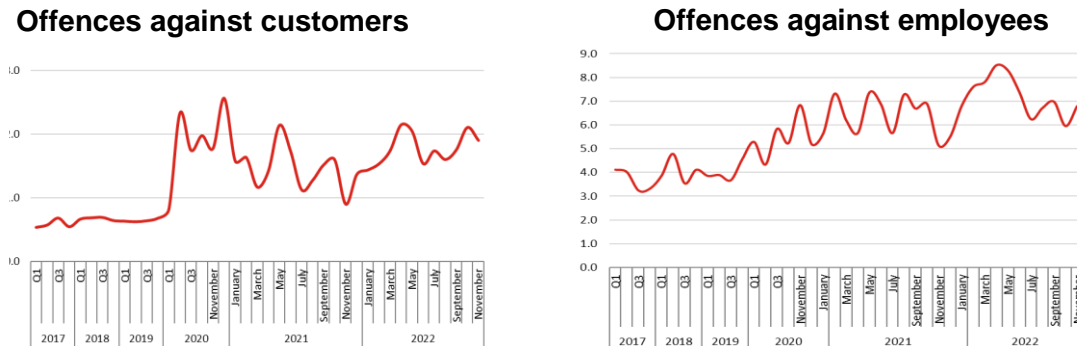
**Chart 1: Key Customer Satisfaction Drivers, Past Three Months**



**2. Overall increase in Offences to Customers and Employees.**

- Consistent with other cities with major rail-based systems, the number and rate of offences related to social disorder, assault, etc. has increased since the start of the pandemic.
- Both Offences Against Customers per one million customer boardings and Offences Against Employees per 100 employees have increased since the end of 2019, as shown in charts below:

**Chart 2: Offences Against Customers and Employees 2017-2022**



**3. Safety Related calls within the TTC Network.**

- Transit Special Constables have been experiencing an increase in calls.
- The following recent information is offered to begin to understand the frequency and types of related safety instances in the TTC network.

**Chart 3: Special Constables Safety Related Calls per Month September to November 2022**

Call Types	Sep	Oct	Nov	3mth Total
Public Disturbance	234	233	176	643
Sleeper	208	219	167	594
Mischief - All Types	177	196	214	587
EA (Emergency Alarm)	120	118	93	331
Person in Crisis	93	69	92	254
Intoxicated Customer	31	38	37	106
MHA Apprehension	32	36	22	90
Harassment	6	5	10	21
Unsanitary Patron	1	7	5	13
	902	921	816	2639

- Special Constable Service is not extensive enough to address all calls for service. Some go to Toronto Police Service if weapons or violence are involved.
- Furthermore, there is increased customer concerns related to comfort and cleanliness with 1,380 complaints of Safety and Security in the last three months.
- 2023 requested funding that will provide an additional 25 Special Constables will augment TTC's capacity to address safety and security issues in the transit system.
- Additionally, 2023 requested funding will provide an additional 10 Streets to Homes outreach workers will enable the TTC to expand its partnership with the City and to have up to 20 Streets to Homes outreach workers in our system. This co-ordination, with increased Streets to Homes outreach workers, will connect more individuals with appropriate services and supports.

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**Date:** January 18, 2023