

January 30, 2024

Toronto City Hall
Executive Committee
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

RE: EX11.8 - RapidTO: Surface Transit Network Plan

Dear Members of the Executive Committee,

The Toronto Environmental Alliance is calling on the Executive Committee to significantly expedite the implementation of transit priority RapidTO surface lanes in Toronto. More specifically, **we are calling on the City of Toronto to prioritize, the Jane, Steeles West, Finch East, Dufferin, and Lawrence East RapidTO surface lanes, and to speed up the implementation of dedicated surface transit lanes throughout the City.**

The majority of TTC users rely on surface transit routes. According to the report before you today, 70% of all TTC journeys include at least one surface transit boarding. **Despite being the most popular form of transit in Toronto, surface transit routes are the slowest and least reliable in the system,** according to the TTC's 2023 Budget Note.¹ This leads to Torontonians being late for work, late for school, and late for picking up children and for family appointments.

The majority of Toronto City Councillors, including Mayor Chow, have made public commitments to implement 10 bus and streetcar priority corridors by the end of this Council term.² To reach that goal, the City must set implementation timelines and accelerate the installation of the five priority corridors that have already been delayed – some by as much as three years.

Toronto's TransformTO plan calls for 75% of trips under 5km to be by transit, bike, or by walking. Surface transit priority lanes are critical to achieving this goal, but this goal is unlikely to be achieved at this pace of implementation.

Many cities around the world have surpassed Toronto in the number of bus lanes that have been implemented. While Toronto has installed about 10.3 km of priority bus lanes in the city (Eglinton East,

¹ Source: <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2024/bu/bgrd/backgroundfile-242096.pdf>, Page 5.

² 13 of the 25 councillors elected in 2022 committed to implementing dedicated buslanes, as did Mayor Chow during the 2023 mayoral by-election. Source: <https://www.ttcriders.ca/newcouncil>.

plus the remaining 1.8km portion of the York University busway), cities like London, New York, Montreal, and Vancouver have far more robust priority surface transit routes than Toronto currently has.

Dedicated surface transit lanes in select cities

City	kms of lanes	Source Year	Notes
London, UK ³	290 km	2018	In 2023, London announced plans to build an additional 25km of bus lanes by 2025.
New York, USA ⁴	241 km	2022	NYC operates traffic cameras on their buses to fine vehicles violating bus lane regulations.
Montreal, CAN ⁵	306 km	2023	Recognizing that transit carries more people per hour, the greater Montreal area has implemented dedicated bus lanes on bridges to and from the island, which are major traffic choke points.
Vancouver, CAN ⁶	138 km	2022	Vancouver's Translink regularly publishes a public-facing report on bus speed and reliability. The 2023 report is 107 pages, indicating significant resources dedicated to surface route reliability.
Toronto - Bus	10.3 km	2023	Includes Eglinton East (8.5km) and the remaining portion of the YorkU busway (1.8km). Figure does not include the temporary Scarborough RT replacement busway recently approved by council.
Toronto - Streetcar	14.5 km	2023	Includes Spadina (5.4km), Queens Quay (2km), and St.Clair (7.1km, currently not operating due to construction)

Conclusion

The Toronto Environmental Alliance calls on the Executive Committee to accelerate and set implementation timelines for the city's Surface Transit Network Plan, and to focus short- and medium-term implementation on five priority lanes – Jane, Steeles West, Finch East, Dufferin, and Lawrence East.

Sincerely,



How-Sen Chong
Climate Campaigner
Toronto Environmental Alliance

³ Source: https://www.racfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/Bus_Lane_and_Moving_Traffic_Enforcement_in_London_2016-17_Leibling_final.pdf

⁴ Source: <https://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/bus-lane-camera-report.pdf>

⁵ Source: <https://montrealgazette.com/news/montreal-adds-three-new-reserved-bus-lanes-modifies-others>

⁶ Source: https://www.translink.ca/-/media/translink/documents/plans-and-projects/bus-projects/bus-speed-and-reliability/2023_bsr_report_wit_hout_appendices.pdf