



## **TTC Wayfinding Strategy**

**Date:** October 6, 2025

**To:** TTC Board

**From:** Chief Strategy and Customer Experience Officer

### **Reason For Confidential Information**

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This report contains information about a position, plan, procedure, criteria or instruction to be applied to any negotiations carried on or to be carried on by or on behalf of the City or local board.

### **Recommendations**

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It is recommended that the TTC Board:

1. Approve the TTC Wayfinding Strategy, including:
  - a. Whole system approach extending wayfinding standards beyond signs and maps to all customer navigation points throughout the customer journey.
  - b. Continued use and expanded development of TTC Signage and Wayfinding Standards.
  - c. Integrated standards with Metrolinx in interchange stations.
  - d. Increase of traditional wayfinding and immediate commencement of digital tools.
2. Support Year One Implementation Plan including integration of the Wayfinding Strategy into TTC's capital and operational budget frameworks for future years.
3. Direct staff to Develop a 10-year roadmap, including,
  - a. Formal estimates for inclusion in Capital Investment Plan.
  - b. Expanded role for partnerships.
  - c. Explore the opportunity to build a Centre of Excellence/consulting services for other transit systems following the significant deployment of the strategy modelling integrated wayfinding in a growing multicultural environment.
4. Receive the estimate for French wayfinding in Attachment 4 for information.
5. Authorize that the information in Confidential Attachment 1 remain confidential until the completion of negotiations.

## Summary

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The TTC's Wayfinding Strategy redefines how customers navigate Toronto's transit system by transforming wayfinding from a static signage approach into a dynamic, multi-sensory, and integrated experience. Rooted in customer-centric design, the strategy aims to eliminate barriers to navigation – ensuring that every rider, regardless of familiarity or ability, can travel with confidence and ease.

The broadened scope was endorsed by the TTC Board through the Interim Wayfinding Strategy Report in January 2025. The Wayfinding Strategy can be found in **Attachment 1**.

Key pillars include:

1. **Customer Experience:** Deliver seamless, intuitive navigation from trip planning through to final destination, ensuring clarity and confidence at every step.
2. **Universal Iconography:** Apply a consistent, fully integrated system of universal-language icons across the TTC, leveraging established Wayfinding design standards.
3. **System Integration:** Harmonize wayfinding across all TTC modes and align with regional partners such as Metrolinx to ensure a unified transit experience.
4. **Enhanced Station Visibility:** Improve station lighting and illumination of suspended signs to support visibility and safety.
5. **Digital Transformation:** Expand and enhance digital tools, real-time information systems, and user-friendly interfaces to support modern navigation needs.
6. **Inclusive Accessibility:** Engage in ongoing consultation with diverse user groups to embed accessibility into the development of wayfinding standards.
7. **Cross-Agency Coordination:** Align wayfinding initiatives across TTC departments, the City of Toronto, and regional partners to ensure cohesive implementation.
8. **Strategic Implementation Priorities:** Focus upgrades at high-impact stations, while laying the groundwork for future digital capabilities.

Delivering the Wayfinding Strategy in full will require an additional \$173–\$210 million to be incorporated in the TTC Capital Improvement Plan. Year One Implementation plan is preplanned including initiatives in all pillars and submitted for consideration in the TTC's 2026 budget process.

## Background and Analysis

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In 2012, TTC introduced redesigned and updated *Signage and Wayfinding Standards*. These standards focused on the physical signage in stations, on the surface network, on our vehicles and incorporated signage best practices for accessibility and universal design at that time. Internal and external stakeholders, customers, our regional transit

partners and third-party advertising partners were consulted and the Advisory Committee on Accessible Transit (ACAT) have provided valuable insights that led to dramatic improvements for accessibility across the system.

Since 2012, the TTC has continued to enhance the universal iconography and leveraged a range of partnerships and resources to implement wayfinding across the network. Developer connections, construction initiatives and transit partnerships have enabled significant updates to signage. **Attachment 2** illustrates current wayfinding standards and iconography. **Attachment 3** illustrates the range of ongoing wayfinding initiatives, funded through existing TTC capital projects and 3<sup>rd</sup> party developers currently underway, in addition to partnership with TMU in rebranding Dundas Station.

While the implementation of the *TTC Signage and Wayfinding Standards* has resulted in meaningful improvements across the network, significant gaps in consistency, coverage and overall user experience persist. To address these challenges, TTC staff undertook comprehensive research and analysis to evaluate the current state of wayfinding and define the scope and priorities for future enhancements.

Wayfinding, as a discipline, extends beyond physical signs and maps – it encompasses the entire system that enables customers to orient themselves and navigate confidently through complex transit environments. While signs and maps are essential tools, effective wayfinding integrates real-time data, mobile technologies, universal iconography, and accessibility features to deliver a seamless and inclusive navigation experience.

A presentation to the TTC Board in January 2025 endorsed this foundational work, which has informed the development of the TTC Wayfinding Strategy. This meeting also raised a motion for coordinated wayfinding through Union Station. This motion is answered throughout the Wayfinding Strategy

The following section outlines the key findings that emerged from the review process and highlights the strategic opportunities ahead.

**Key findings include:**

- TTC's universal-language iconography standards reflect best-in-class principles of universal design, tailored to the needs of multimodal transit systems and diverse user groups.
- Implementation efforts, primarily delivered through broader capital projects, have achieved a 39% rollout since 2012. However, the lack of full deployment across the customer journey remains the top concern among riders, posing a significant barrier to effective wayfinding.
- Strategic alignment of TTC and Metrolinx signage standards, particularly those incorporating real-time next-vehicle arrival information, presents clear advantages. Harmonizing these systems will enhance wayfinding consistency and facilitate seamless navigation across key interchange stations and major transit hubs.
- Standardized iconography at surface stops has improved visual consistency; however, the lack of dynamic information and reliance on manual updates during

service diversions results in inconsistent customer messaging and increased operational burden for staff.

- The implementation of GTFS-RT (General Transit Feed Specification – Real Time) in 2024 establishes a universal digital framework, enabling enhanced real-time information delivery and expanding opportunities for open data integration to support customer journeys.
- Mobile technologies and platform interoperability are playing an increasingly critical role in delivering personalized navigation experiences at scale, meeting evolving customer expectations.
- Establishing and maintaining internal and multi-agency coordination tables is essential to harmonize wayfinding efforts across the many touchpoints that shape TTC customer journeys.
- Anticipated updates to the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) wayfinding standards are expected to incorporate digital components. TTC's current initiatives are well-positioned to align with these evolving national standards, ensuring agility in the face of advancing digital wayfinding practices.
- TTC Capital Project and 3<sup>rd</sup> party developers play a significant role embedding wayfinding enhancements within TTC Capacity Expansion and Development projects. Continuing this approach ensures alignment with broader infrastructure and service improvements, while also enabling the expansion of strategic partnerships to support integrated transit solutions
- Securing dedicated funding is vital to support the sustained development, implementation across the rest of the network, and refinement of a cohesive Wayfinding Strategy across the network.

The TTC's Wayfinding Strategy redefines how customers navigate Toronto's transit system by transforming wayfinding from a static signage approach into a dynamic, multi-sensory, and integrated experience. Rooted in customer-centric design, the strategy aims to eliminate barriers to navigation – ensuring that every rider, regardless of familiarity or ability, can travel with confidence and ease. The TTC Wayfinding Strategy is fully described in **Attachment 1**.

### **Why wayfinding matters to customers:**

- Reduces confusion and stress: Customers feel more confident navigating unfamiliar routes or stations.
- Improves accessibility: Universal design helps diverse users, including those with disabilities, and alternative linguistic orientations.
- Enhances perceived safety: Clear directions reduce wandering and hesitation, which make environments feel safer.
- Encourages exploration and more efficient use of the system: Good wayfinding invites riders to try new routes or transfer points they might otherwise avoid.
- Familiar intuitive systems increase likelihood of repeat trips.
- Fewer enroute questions to staff, mean more independence for customers and more time for staff to support complex customer needs.
- Digital and modular signage reduce long-term maintenance costs

Wayfinding is a strategic investment in customer experience, operational efficiency and long-term growth. When done well, it can measurably improve ridership, safety perceptions and efficiency.

### **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Matters**

A cornerstone of the TTC's Corporate Plan 2024-2028 is Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility (EDIA), and as a proud leader in providing accessible public transit in the City of Toronto, we are committed to ensuring reliable, safe and inclusive transit services for all our customers.

As part of this commitment, extensive customer consultation has been integral to the development of the Wayfinding Strategy. This process has included comprehensive Customer and Employee Surveys to identify key issues and opportunities. Ongoing consultations with key stakeholder groups, such as the TTC's Advisory Committee on Accessible Transit (ACAT) and TTC Riders, ensure that the needs of cross-boundary customers, nighttime travelers, individuals with language and literacy requirements, and newcomers and visitors are thoroughly considered.

Ongoing user feedback and stakeholder consultation will remain a cornerstone of the Wayfinding Strategy, ensuring that TTC innovations are firmly rooted in real-world needs and lived experiences.

Engagement with key stakeholder groups during pilots enables critical evaluation of our approach. By involving these voices early and consistently, we foster equity, build trust, and surface challenges – creating space to co-develop solutions that are inclusive, practical, and effective. These insights will be embedded into the expanded TTC Wayfinding Standards, guiding design and implementation, and further consideration will be given to emerging CSA Wayfinding Standards, as these roll out over the next two years.

### **Innovation and Sustainability Considerations**

In addition to enhancing traditional wayfinding, the Strategy embraces innovation and emerging technologies to meet the evolving navigation needs of TTC customers. Following the TTC Board's approval of the agency's first Innovation and Sustainability Strategy in September 2024, new digital pathways are being actively explored to enrich customer journeys and support operational excellence. These initiatives will form the foundation of TTC's next-generation digital wayfinding system.

The Strategy underscores the growing importance of mobile devices in transit navigation. TTC has already begun leveraging the GTFS-RT feed to provide real-time service updates and is utilizing open data channels to encourage third-party development and system integration. The universal accessibility of GTFS-RT is key to building digital wayfinding solutions that complement personal mobile technologies and extend the reach of TTC services.

This forward-looking approach will enable intuitive, icon-based navigation across both physical and digital environments. Designed with resilience in low-connectivity settings, the system will maintain the clarity and consistency of TTC's established wayfinding

iconography while expanding access through modern digital platforms.

### **Corporate Plan Alignment**

*Pillar 2 – Attract New Riders, Retain Customer Loyalty*

*Pillar 3 – Place transit at the Centre of Toronto's Future mobility*

*Pillar 4 – Transform and Modernize for a Changing Environment – 4.3 Embrace Technology to Drive Efficiency and Improve Employee and Customer Experience*

**Wayfinding plays a critical role in supporting the TTC's highest priorities** including ridership growth, accessibility, and customer satisfaction. Clear, consistent, and intuitive navigation helps reduce barriers to transit use – especially for new riders, tourists and equity-deserving communities by making the system easier to understand and more welcoming supporting growth strategies. Improved wayfinding also contributes to operational efficiency and safety by minimizing confusion and delays. Moreover, well-designed signage in station environments align with the city's "Beautiful City" vision, enhancing connectivity between public spaces and key destinations, reinforcing civic pride in Toronto's transit infrastructure.

### **Implementation**

To fully deploy this Strategy requires an additional \$175-\$210M to be added to the Capital Investment Plan. In anticipation of approval of the Wayfinding Strategy, Year One Implementation Plan is pre-planned and submitted for consideration into the TTC's 2026 Budget process.

The foundational year focuses on:

- 1. Pilot implementations:** Launching three pilot stations each representing a distinct use case:
  - a. Finch West Station – A vital interchange between TTC and Metrolinx, offering an ideal environment for piloting integrated wayfinding solutions across transit agencies.
  - b. Dundas Station/TMU – A high-traffic urban hub positioned for collaborative partnerships, rename transformation, and digital wayfinding innovation
  - c. St George Station – A critical multimodal interchange, well-suited for piloting transfer-focused wayfinding solutions and advancing accessibility innovation.
  - d. Surface stop pilot at Exhibition (Strachan Ave. and Fleet St.) to prototype new technology, static signage and requirements for surface stops in the future.
- 2. Digital enhancements:** Expanding GTFS.RT open data feed to include elevator/escalator alerts and piloting Digital Stop Displays for 50 locations, with a long-term vision of 2000 displays across the TTC network, and initiating station-based digital wayfinding – in order to deliver, real-time navigation tools within transit stations to enhance passenger experience, improve accessibility, and support seamless multimodal transfers.
- 3. Layered accessibility:** Commencing platform boarding mats, and accessibility signage at six stations. Together, these foundational accessibility features contribute to a layered approach to inclusive station navigation. Platform boarding mats offer tactile guidance and boarding alignment, serving as a cost-

effective precursor to full platform edge doors. Accessibility signage ensures clear, multilingual, and symbol-based communication for diverse users.

4. **Station exit numbering systems** will introduce a standardized spatial reference framework at six stations to support traditional wayfinding and lay the groundwork for future digital wayfinding tools to deliver precise, real-time directions through complex transit environments.
5. **FIFA 2026 readiness:** In addition to FIFA specific signage, enhancing wayfinding at six FIFA-related stations, including Union, with new station route maps, accessibility signage, while piloting enhanced tools for station customer service agents.
6. **Interagency collaboration:** Strengthening coordination with Metrolinx, regional transit partners, and the City through *Interagency Wayfinding Tables* to support integrated wayfinding across transit hubs and key urban destinations, enabling sustained dialogue towards ensuring alignment on infrastructure, signage and digital tools while delivering a seamless, unified customer experience across systems.
7. **Updated wayfinding standards:** Insights gathered from pilot implementations (#1) and digital enhancements (#2) will directly inform the development of updated TTC wayfinding standards. These updated standards will guide system-wide implementation, ensuring consistency across physical signage, third-party infrastructure, audio announcements and digital tools, supporting cohesive, intuitive wayfinding experience that enhances the customer journey from end to end.
8. **TTC wayfinding implementation roadmap** – Planning for subsequent years will be done following insights from pilots and broadened Wayfinding Standards. The roadmap will establish a phased plan to guide the rollout of the TTC Wayfinding Strategy over ten years, aligning infrastructure upgrades, digital navigation tools, and accessibility enhancements. This roadmap will enable coordinated implementation across agencies, support funding and policy alignment, and ensure that short-term pilots contribute to long-term system-wide transformation.

## Financial Impact

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### Financial Summary

The Wayfinding Strategy outlines actions requiring capital investments that are not included in the TTC 2025–2039 Capital Investment Plan (CIP). The Wayfinding Strategy report identifies the purpose, approach and base requirements to deliver the program; further studies are required to advance the plan. Based on the scope of work identified, additional resources and capital funding will be required to build out the implementation of the program and will be considered through the 2026 Budget process.

## **Capital Investment Plan (CIP)**

Investments made in the maintenance, renewal and growth of transit assets advance innovation while aligning with emerging best practices and navigation experience for our customers for the next 15–20 years.

Capital cost estimates for the Wayfinding Strategy were not included in the TTC 2025–2039 CIP. Total costs for system-wide implementation are in the range of \$175M–\$210M. Staff will continue to update the scope and cost definition for the Wayfinding Strategy for inclusion in the CIP as they become available over the coming years. This will include updates to the 2026–2040 CIP.

## **New Staff Requirements**

Investments required to fund the resources to support, plan, manage and deliver this project have been identified in the range of \$500K to support increased capabilities in Digital design and will be considered by the Board through the TTC's 2026 Capital and Operating Budget submission.

## **Operating Funding Implications**

Actions requiring ongoing operating funding or that result in financial savings to the Operating Budget will be accounted for in future TTC Conventional and Wheel-Trans Operating Budget submissions.

**Attachment 5 (Confidential)** provides a range of Wayfinding Strategy Investment Options across key investment levels, to inform the scope of Wayfinding Strategy included at different investment levels.

The Executive Director, Finance has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

## **Contact**

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## **Attachments**

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Attachment 1 - TTC Wayfinding Strategy  
Attachment 2 - TTC Signage and Wayfinding Standards  
Attachment 3 - Existing Supporting Projects  
Attachment 4 - Responses to Motions  
Confidential Attachment 1 - Wayfinding Strategy Investment