

Chrisanne Finnerty
Director of Commission Services

Delivered Electronically

May 22, 2026

RE: ADMINISTRATIVE INQUIRY- COMMUNITY BUS ROUTES

Dear Ms. Finnerty,

I am submitting this administrative inquiry under Section 40 of the *By-law to Govern Board Proceedings* for the June 3 2026, meeting of the Toronto Commission Board (TTC) to clarify the ridership of the Community Bus program, the cost of continuing to provide the Community Bus service, and the per ride subsidy for offering the service.

The Community bus service was launched in 1990 with the then 107 Lawrence Manor route (now the 400) to improve local transit accessibility to local medical facilities and shopping malls for people with mobility challenges, especially Seniors, in the Bathurst and Lawrence area. It was intended for those individuals “whose limitations were not severe enough to allow them to qualify for specialized transit service (Wheel-Trans)” and it was intended to attract customers away “from more expensive Wheel-Trans door-to-door services” (“Community Bus Services” report, March 26, 2014). The cost of the subsidized service was \$14.63 per trip (2013) in contrast to the \$33.60 subsidy for a Wheel-Trans trip. However, as TTC staff explain in a 2014 report only 9% of customers who used the service were eligible for Wheel-Trans services and “the service has not been successful in attracting demand away from Wheel-Trans door-to-door service” and “none of the TTC’s current five Community Bus Services meet the TTC’s minimum productivity standards for conventional bus services.” Between 2002 and 2014 the ridership of the service had dropped by 50%, especially given the introduction of accessible conventional bus services. Nevertheless, in 2014, staff were reviewing and updating the eligibility requirements due to updated AODA accessibility regulations and were asked to report back on the future of the community bus service in 2015 within the context of a comprehensive plan to integrate Wheel-Trans and conventional TTC services.

In 2017, the TTC and the TTC Board tried to once again determine the “feasibility of returning the community bus routes to sustainability” with a 9-month Community Bus pilot that once again had the goal of improvements to service, increase ridership, and reduction in Wheel-Trans

City Councillor

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trips. Staff reviewed and improved the routes and headways with the goal of “diverting Wheel-Trans door-to-door trips and attracting a sustainable level of ridership in accordance with the revised service standards” (“Community Bus Service – Follow-up Report,” March 22 2017).

Staff at the time again suggested 5 causes for the decline in Community Bus ridership: 1) the TTC’s investments in accessibility improvements to buses, streetcars, and stations had successfully resulted “a significant portion of the lost community bus ridership [moving] to conventional TTC services” 2) TTC conventional services offered higher service frequencies and wider hours of operation; 3) travel patterns and demographic changes for riders on the routes; 4) “headways of some existing community bus services have been lengthened in recent years to accommodate additional stops and/or because of worsening traffic congestion, and as a result, service levels have declined”; and 5) poor advertising of the service meant that the target audience of the service were unaware of the ridership.

Given this background to the Community Bus service:

- 1) Can staff please provide the TTC Board the year each community bus started?
- 2) Can staff please give the TTC Board the ridership data disaggregated annually for each community bus route and the overall ridership data for community buses for 2025?
- 3) Can staff please give the TTC Board the 2025 costs of running the community bus service for each route, the overall costs of the community bus service for 2025 and the effective subsidy per rider using the service per route for 2025?
- 4) Can staff please give the TTC Board the estimated diversion rate from Wheel-Trans to the Community Bus service or what percentage of Community Bus riders would be eligible for Wheel-Trans service?

Kind Regards,

Jamaal Myers
TTC Board Chair



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