



## STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

### Community Bus Service – Follow-Up Report

<b>Date:</b>	March 22, 2017
<b>To:</b>	TTC Board
<b>From:</b>	Chief Executive Officer

### Summary

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In 2015-16, TTC engaged a consultant to comprehensively review the TTC's community bus service and determine feasibility of returning the community bus routes to sustainability. This report summarizes the results of that third-party review and proposes a plan of action to move forward with public consultations and a nine-month pilot project on two community bus routes with the goal of overall improvements to the service, increase in ridership, and reduction in Wheel-Trans door-to-door trips.

The community bus service review was undertaken to identify opportunities to increase productivity by integrating community buses with the Family-of-Services approach to specialized transit, in alignment with the Wheel-Trans 10-Year Strategy. The review involved defining what future community bus should look like through the creation of sustainable service standards, which include network design, quality of service and performance standards, based on industry best practices and financial sustainability requirements. Door-to-door trips throughout the City provided by Wheel-Trans were reviewed to determine where it would be possible to create new fixed community bus routes that would perform suitably, in accordance with the service standards.

Success of the community bus enhancements will be gauged, in part, by the number of Wheel-Trans door-to-door trips that are converted to community bus. As an initial step, a pilot project is recommended to validate Wheel-Trans trip diversion projections.

#### Public Consultation

Two routes were selected for piloted changes in 2017 and in January and February staff undertook consultations with residents who would be directly affected by the changes. Wider scale public consultation is also planned in Q2 and Q3 2017 to validate that all of the proposed community bus network routes, reflect the real-world travel patterns of current and potential community bus riders.

## **Pilot Project**

Prior to implementing and committing to permanent changes, Staff recommend initiating a pilot project with the following targets:

- Extend 400 LAWRENCE MANOR northwest to Humber River Regional Hospital while simplifying the routing in the Bathurst/Lawrence area.
- Extend 404 EAST YORK to Coxwell Station at the west end of the route, and to Queen Street East at the east end of the route.
- Improve the headways of both routes to 60 minutes to provide an attractive service for customers.

The two modified pilot routes would take effect in September 2017. If the pilot project is successful in terms of diverting Wheel-Trans door-to-door trips and attracting a sustainable level of ridership in accordance with the revised service standards, it is expected that it would be viable to revise the remaining three existing community bus routes, and eventually implement up to six new routes throughout the City. In mid-2018, staff expect to report back on the results of the pilot project, and recommend whether to continue with, expand, or discontinue the route adjustments. Staff will also report on final route and implementation recommendations at that time for the proposed network as a whole.

## **Recommendations**

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### **It is recommended that the Board:**

1. Approve the service standards for community bus routes, as described in this report.
2. Approve a pilot project to modify and extend the 400 Lawrence Manor and 404 East York community bus routes, as detailed in this report, effective September 5, 2017, to validate Wheel-Trans trip diversion projections and to confirm the viability of implementing additional community bus routes in Toronto.

## **Financial Impact**

Funding to operate the five existing community bus routes, without modifications, is \$1.01M total, or \$926,500 net operating cost, which is included in the 2017 TTC/Wheel-Trans Operating Budget.

To implement the pilot project described in this report, two additional TTC Wheel-Trans buses would be diverted to community bus service from door-to-door service. In the first year of operation, this is expected to result in a net estimated reduction in operating costs of -\$491,000, due to diversion of customers from door-to-door Wheel-Trans service, to less expensive community bus service. In total, approximately 200 Wheel-Trans trips are expected to be diverted to the pilot routes each day in the first year.

Operational cost savings were assumed to be a function of the number of door-to-door trips diverted by the modified pilot community bus routes (less the “break-even” number of trips which could otherwise be performed were the same bus to provide door-to-door service), as well as the Wheel-Trans contracted taxi cost per door-to-door trip (\$19.71). Taxi cost per trip was used on the assumption that the entire Wheel-Trans bus fleet will continue to be utilized and that all cost savings will result from fewer taxi trips being commissioned by Wheel-Trans.

**Figure 1: Financial Savings Calculation**



Funding for public consultations is included as part of the 2017 budget for the Wheel-Trans Transformation Program.

The Chief Financial & Administration Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

## Decision History

In December, 2012, the Board approved the City of Toronto Auditor General’s Report *Review of Wheel-Trans Services – Sustaining Level and Quality of Service Requires Changes to the Program*. Recommendation 15 requested “the Chief Executive Officer to re-assess the needs for the existing Wheel-Trans community bus routes, and cancel or develop alternate routes to ensure the services are cost efficient and effective”.

[http://www.ttc.ca/About the TTC/Commission reports and information/Commission meetings/2012/December 19/Reports/Auditor General%27s Re.pdf](http://www.ttc.ca/About%20the%20TTC/Commission%20reports%20and%20information/Commission%20meetings/2012/December%2019/Reports/Auditor%20General%27s%20Re.pdf)

As a first step, the Board approved an interim strategy in March, 2014, to implement operational changes including revising schedules to better correspond with traffic conditions and changing the level of service provided on the existing five community bus routes, in an effort to stabilize the ridership.

[http://www.ttc.ca/About the TTC/Commission reports and information/Commission meetings/2014/March 26/Reports/Community Bus Services BR 16001.pdf](http://www.ttc.ca/About%20the%20TTC/Commission%20reports%20and%20information/Commission%20meetings/2014/March%2026/Reports/Community%20Bus%20Services_BR_16001.pdf)

The TTC’s implementation of accessibility improvements is guided by the *2014-2018 TTC Multi-Year Accessibility Plan*, which was adopted by the Board in April, 2014. This document outlines the TTC’s long-term vision for an accessible transit system. Item 6.3.2 of the *Multi-Year Accessibility Plan* explains the TTC’s commitment to increase use of the conventional transit system by people with disabilities by developing a service integration plan.

[http://www.ttc.ca/About the TTC/Commission reports and information/Commission meetings/2014/April 30/Reports/2014 2018 TTC MultiYear Accessibility Plan.pdf](http://www.ttc.ca/About%20the%20TTC/Commission%20reports%20and%20information/Commission%20meetings/2014/April%2030/Reports/2014%202018%20TTC%20MultiYear%20Accessibility%20Plan.pdf)

The Wheel-Trans 10-Year Strategy was approved by the Board at its February 25, 2016 meeting, which included recommendations to develop a new service model, including Family of Service (of which community bus is a component).

[http://www.ttc.ca/About the TTC/Commission reports and information/Commission meetings/2016/February 25/Reports/W-Trans 10 Year Strategy Update combined.pdf](http://www.ttc.ca/About%20the%20TTC/Commission%20reports%20and%20information/Commission%20meetings/2016/February%2025/Reports/W-Trans%2010%20Year%20Strategy%20Update%20combined.pdf)

The first status update for Wheel-Trans 10-Year Strategy Update was approved by the Board at its September 28, 2016 meeting, and as part of recommendation 3 includes a review of community bus services as a means to deliver enhanced service to customers as part of a Family of Services pilot project. Community Bus Enhancements are also one of the 13 initiatives included as part of the Wheel-Trans Transformation Program developed to implement the 10-Year Strategy.

[http://www.ttc.ca/About the TTC/Commission reports and information/Commission meetings/2016/September 28/Reports/4 Wheel-Trans 10-Year Strategy - September 2016 Update.pdf](http://www.ttc.ca/About%20the%20TTC/Commission%20reports%20and%20information/Commission%20meetings/2016/September%2028/Reports/4%20Wheel-Trans%2010-Year%20Strategy%20-%20September%202016%20Update.pdf)

## **Accessibility/Equity Matters**

The TTC's community bus routes offer an alternative to Wheel-Trans door-to-door service and provide a safe bridge alternative to traditional conventional bus services for riders with mobility challenges, including seniors and people with disabilities. The community buses are operated by TTC's Wheel-Trans division using the same fleet as the door-to-door service. Community buses provide direct access to seniors residences, and destinations including shopping centres, hospitals, in some cases subway stations, and other useful services. Community bus routes allow customers more autonomy and flexibility in their travel behaviour when compared to door-to-door service by negating the need to schedule a specific trip with restrictive choice of time options. These buses adhere to a fixed route and schedule with frequent stops to board and alight, including the ability to "flag stop" the bus anywhere along the route.

Community bus routes provide an important link to neighbourhood attractions for customers who find it difficult to access and/or travel on conventional transit services. Although community bus ridership has decreased in recent years, customer surveys have found that current riders place a high value on this service and are dependent on it, without other means of getting around. Indeed, tenants of seniors residences served by community bus routes are secure with the knowledge that the community bus provides freedom from the need to drive oneself or rely on more costly transport.

As per the strategy recommended in this report, community bus routes will play a key role in implementing the Family of Services approach. These routes will gradually introduce existing door-to-door customers to a conventional fixed route service in a vehicle they are used to, with Operators who are dedicated to serving the needs of this customer base, while helping to alleviate the demands of the costly TTC Wheel-Trans

door-to-door service. Improved community bus services will also support the recommendations of the City's Toronto Seniors Strategy and the Poverty Reduction Strategy by improving the accessibility of the public transit system, and connecting lower income residents to opportunities and services.

Ultimately, the recommendations of this report will seek to improve service offerings for existing community bus and Wheel-Trans customers, and eventually extend community bus service to areas of the City where this service was not previously offered.

## **Issue Background**

The TTC launched community bus service in 1990 with one route serving the Bathurst and Lawrence area of the City (now 400 LAWRENCE MANOR). This service was introduced prior to the operation of any other TTC accessible conventional services for the purpose of linking seniors residences with places of interest, including medical centres, community centres, and shopping malls. As such, the alignment of community bus routes deviates from the typical grid-like pattern of many of the TTC's conventional bus routes – the vehicles provide direct access to major destinations along a given route, allowing easy boarding without requiring passengers to walk to the nearest conventional bus stop. While seniors are the primary market for existing community bus service, the service has no eligibility requirements.

Currently, the TTC operates five community bus routes:

- 400 LAWRENCE MANOR
- 402 PARKDALE
- 403 SOUTH DON MILLS
- 404 EAST YORK
- 405 ETOBICOKE

The service is delivered by TTC Wheel-Trans operators using the “Friendly” model of vehicle, which has a seating capacity of eight, plus additional 3 to 4 spaces for securement of passengers using wheelchairs and other mobility devices.

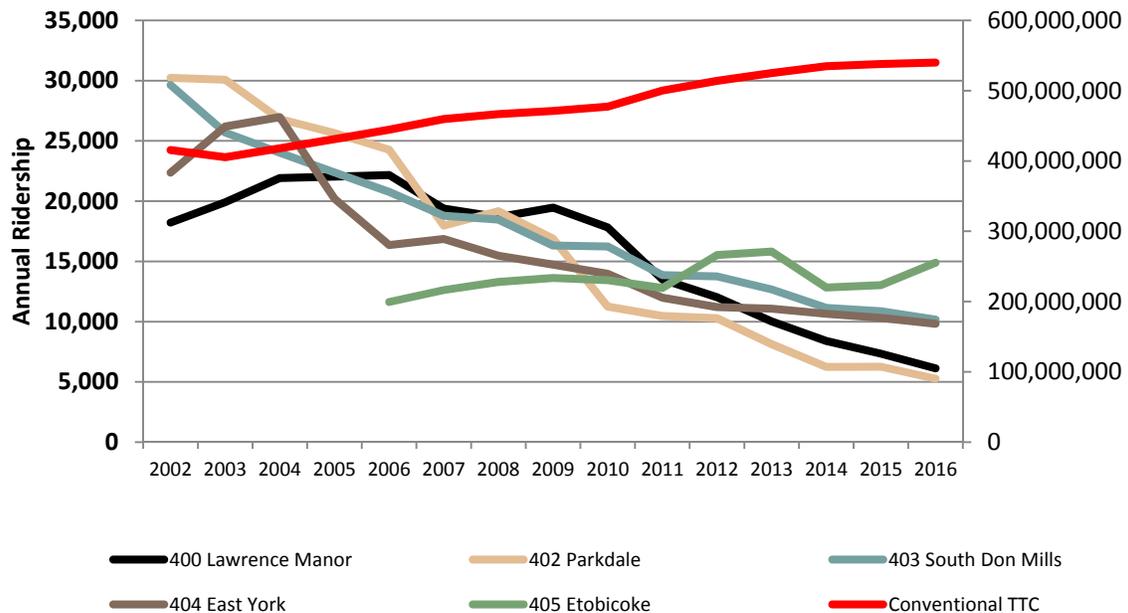
As originally detailed in the March 26, 2014 report, ridership on TTC community bus services has declined significantly on four of the five routes over the past decade. There are several likely explanations for decreasing community bus ridership.

On one hand, a reduction in community bus ridership should be regarded as a success: in the last two decades, the TTC has made significant improvements to the accessibility of the conventional transit system. All buses, over half of subway stations, and one streetcar route are now accessible. Given that community bus services were originally intended for people who did not qualify for Wheel-Trans, but who had difficulty with accessing conventional transit services, it is likely that a significant portion of the lost community bus ridership has moved to conventional TTC services. TTC conventional services offer

high service frequencies and wider hours of operation, which improves accessibility for community bus customers. However, ridership is also likely declining due to the fact that travel patterns and community demographics have changed significantly since the community bus routes last received a material update or improvement in service. Moreover, 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. Finally, community bus marketing initiatives, including vehicle branding, have been limited and awareness of this service is low among the target market of seniors and people with disabilities. Community bus routes also do not appear in the TTC’s online trip planner. Overall, declining ridership places both financial and existential strain on the service.

In June 2014, service levels and schedules were adjusted on the five existing community bus routes, in an effort to stem continuing ridership losses. Unfortunately, ridership has continued to decline on four of the five routes over the past two years (as shown in Figure 1, below), to the point where the cost advantage of community bus service vs. Wheel-Trans contracted taxi service has been erased. Action is required on many fronts to return the community bus routes to sustainability.

**Figure 1: Community Bus Ridership 2002-2016, By Route**



## Comments

### Service Standards

As part of an ongoing review of TTC’s conventional system service standards, the TTC has developed new standards for community bus service, based on industry best practices and financial sustainability requirements. These include network design, quality of service, and performance standards, as follows:

- **Network Design Standards:**
  - Route Design:
    - Limited overlap with conventional service
    - Maximize connections with other TTC services, especially accessible routes and subway stations
    - Avoid one-way loops
    - Must travel along roads with adequate access, including sufficient clearance, road widths, and parking control
  - Coverage:
    - Serve a high level of senior populations
    - Community must include:
      - Major shopping facility with a grocery store, major department store, bank, pharmacy
      - Hospital or major medical centre
      - Community centre
      - Library
      - Other points of interest
- **Quality of Service Standards:**
  - Minimum level of service: 60 minutes or better
  - Minimum span of service: Monday to Friday from approximately 10:00am to 5:00pm
- **Performance Standards:**
  - Productivity: minimum six to eight passengers per hour.
  - Economic: divert a minimum number of Wheel-Trans door-to-door trips to community bus such that each community bus serves no less than the average number of trips performed by a door-to-door vehicle per service hour (“break-even” trips), as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Break-even Wheel-Trans Door-to-Door Trips, Projected 2017-2026**

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Break-even Trips per Hour per Wheel-Trans Vehicle	2.45	2.50	2.63	2.75	2.90	3.02	3.14	3.23	3.35	3.35

To be considered for community bus service, a proposed route must meet these standards. It should be noted that none of the existing five routes currently meets all of these service standards. This emphasises the need to revise the existing community bus routes in order to ensure satisfactory ridership and economic performance.

Based on these service standards, the following guiding principles were used for the community bus service review:

- Community buses should provide high-quality, conventional service for seniors and other individuals with mobility challenges;
- Community buses should provide a net cost savings to the TTC by diverting Wheel-Trans door-to-door trips, and thus remain a good investment of subsidy and fare revenue; and,
- Community buses should function as a component of the Family of Services approach to specialized transit, providing connections to other TTC services, as well as connecting riders with key destinations such as health centres, community facilities, and shopping centres.

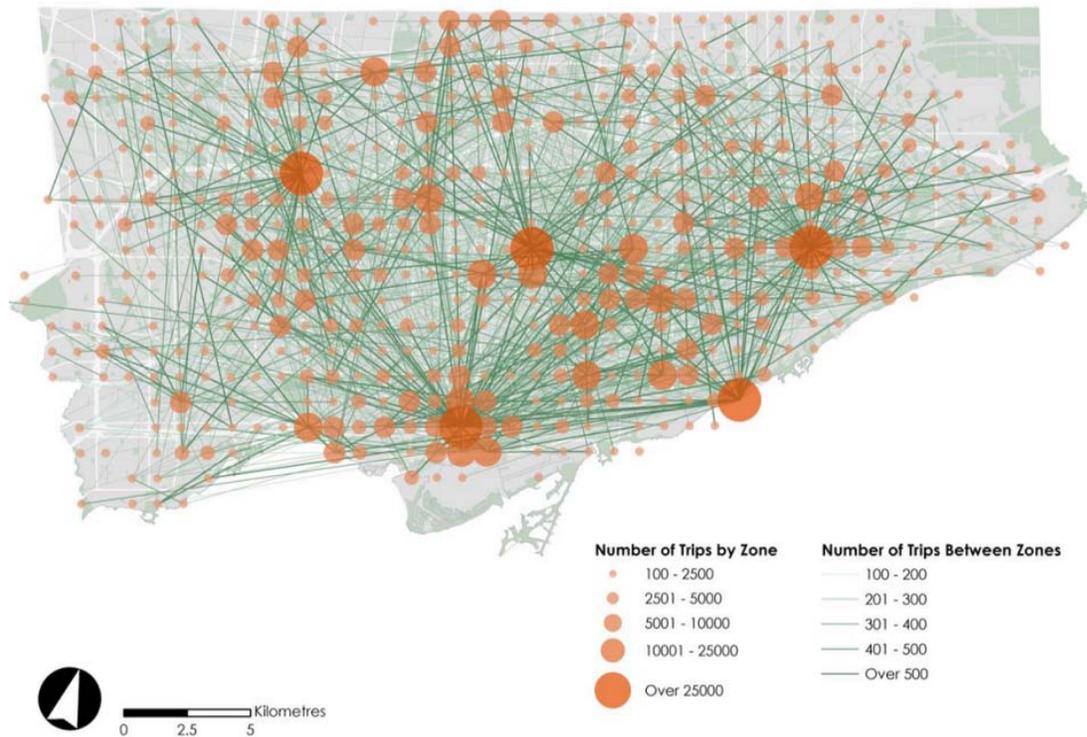
Staff recommend approving these service standards for community bus service. Note that the final proposed service standards for conventional TTC service are expected to be brought to the Board for approval later in 2017.

### **Review Methodology**

The following section outlines the methodology applied to determine modifications to existing routes and to identify new community bus routes.

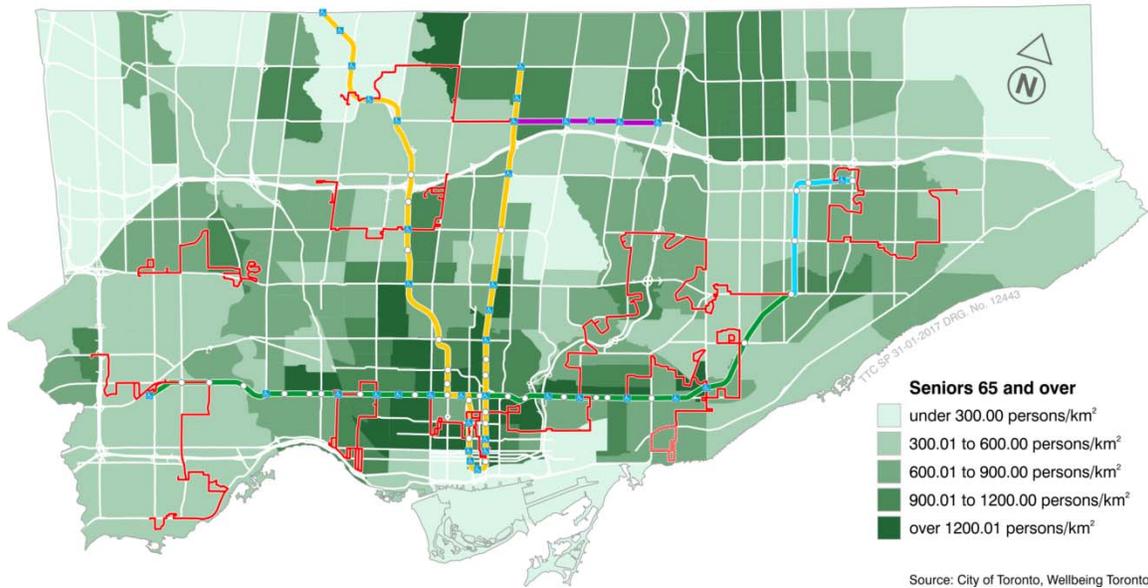
One year of Wheel-Trans door-to-door trips were reviewed. The purpose was to identify top door-to-door origin and destination pairings including areas of high trip demand (refer to **Figure 2**). Based on this trip analysis, the aforementioned service standards, and customer feedback received over the past three years, modifications to existing routes with low ridership and new routes were proposed.

**Figure 2: Annual Wheel-Trans Door-to Door Trips by 1km2 Zone**

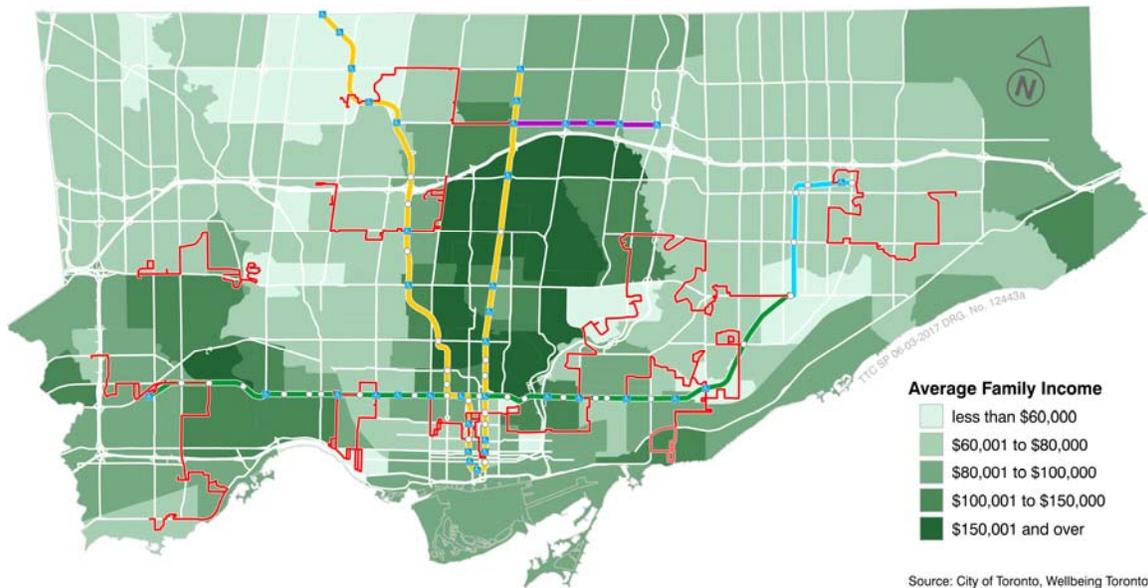


Proposed routes were compared to income and age distributions across Toronto to see if these routes would be more likely to serve areas with high proportions of seniors (Figure 3) and high- or low-income neighbourhoods (Figure 5). Proposed routing is primarily serving neighbourhoods with low- to medium-income families, satisfying both an equity perspective, including the City's Poverty Reduction Strategy (lower income individuals typically have fewer travel options and rely more on public transit services), as well as a ridership perspective (high-income neighbourhoods may not generate high levels of community bus ridership, given the availability of other travel options). Moreover, these routes travel through neighbourhoods with large proportions of senior citizens.

**Figure 3: Seniors Population Density in Toronto with Modified and Proposed Community Bus Routes**



**Figure 5: Average Family Income Levels in Toronto with Modified and Proposed Community Bus Routes**



Estimates of total ridership, ridership diverted from Wheel-Trans door-to-door services, and cost savings were produced for each route. A sensitivity analysis was performed to examine the number of door-to-door diversions and cost savings associated with different diversion rates. Diversion rate scenarios used 15%, 33%, and 50% of current door-to-door ridership within a 50-metre buffer of proposed routes, to recognize that only a percentage of existing door-to-door customers along the community bus corridors will be able to switch to community bus service.

Operational cost savings per community bus were assumed to be a function of the number of door-to-door trips diverted by new community bus routes (less the break-even number of trips which could otherwise be performed if the same bus to provide door-to-door service), as well as the taxi cost per door-to-door trip. Taxi cost per trip was used as the basis for cost savings on the assumption that the entire Wheel-Trans fleet will always be utilized even if efficiencies in the system are found. In other words, as Wheel-Trans vehicles evolve to serve more door-to-door customers than are served today, cost savings will result from fewer taxi trips being commissioned by Wheel-Trans.

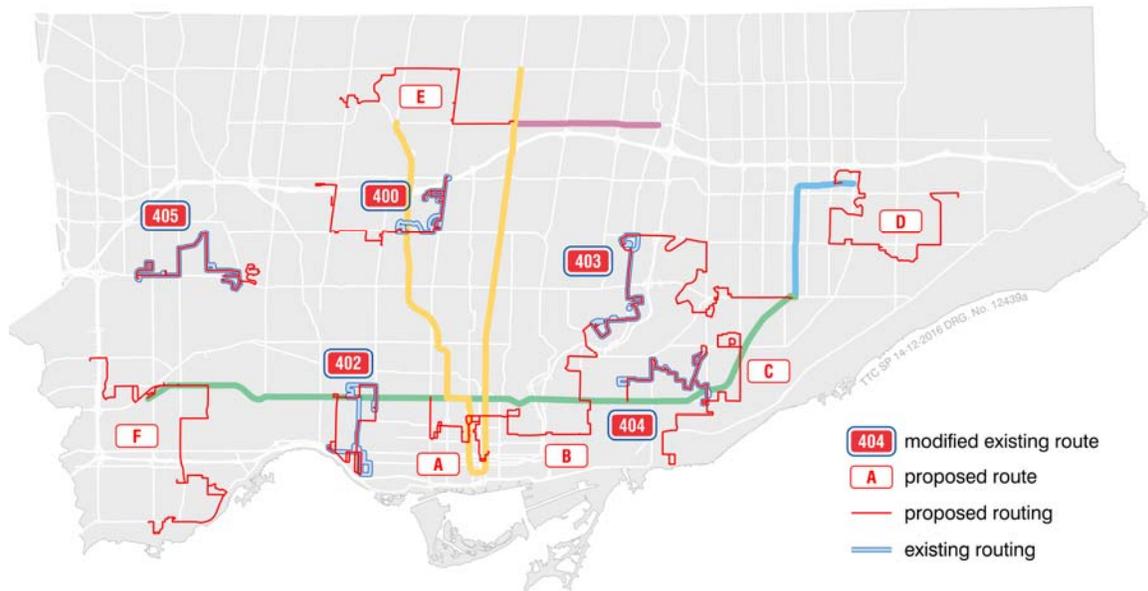
Ridership estimates for each route were ramped-up applying factors of 75% and 90% respectively to projections for the first and second year of implementation for any given route, with the third and subsequent years having full ridership estimates applied, consistent with principles used when planning conventional transit routes.

### **Proposed Community Bus Routes**

Based on the above methodology, a new community bus network is proposed, consisting of modifications to existing routes as well as up to six new routes, as shown in **Figure** below. All of these proposed routes are designed and expected to meet the service standards in terms of ridership and economic performance.

- **Existing Routes:**
  - 400 Lawrence Manor
  - 402 Parkdale
  - 403 South Don Mills
  - 404 East York
  - 405 Etobicoke
  
- **New Proposed Routes:**
  - A - Downtown Hospitals / Kensington Market
  - B - Downtown-East York
  - C - Southwest Scarborough
  - D - Central-east Scarborough
  - E - North York / Bathurst-Finch
  - F - South Etobicoke

**Figure 6: Proposed Community Bus Network Map**



Several additional corridors were also examined in areas of the City not currently served by community bus service, however, no other routes or corridors could be found that would meet the new service standard ridership and economic performance targets.

The expanded community bus routes is expected to serve over 2,200 trips per day once fully implemented, of which approximately 1,600 are expected to be trips that would otherwise be taken using the more costly Wheel-Trans door-to-door service. Cost savings to the TTC could reach roughly \$1.5 million in saved operating costs annually, which could be reallocated to further service improvements or to offset growing costs related to Wheel-Trans eligibility changes, which took effect on January 1, 2017.

### **Pilot Project**

Staff recommend implementing a pilot project to validate the ridership projections which are based on the assumptions used to calculate Wheel-Trans door-to-door trip diversion rates. The two existing community bus routes which are projected to divert the most Wheel-Trans door-to-door trips per additional bus dedicated to the service are 400 LAWRENCE MANOR and 404 EAST YORK. Therefore, it is proposed to conduct the pilot project using these two routes.

In order to meet service standards, an additional bus would be dedicated to each route to operate service at a headway of every 60 minutes, an improvement from every 75 minutes today. The additional vehicle on each route also provides the opportunity to extend these routes, to connect to additional neighbourhoods, seniors residences, shopping opportunities, and medical facilities.

Similar to today, service would operate Monday to Friday from approximately 9:30am to 5:00pm. It is important to note that the two additional Wheel-Trans vehicles used to

operate this service would no longer be used for door-to-door service during these times of day.

#### **400 LAWRENCE MANOR**

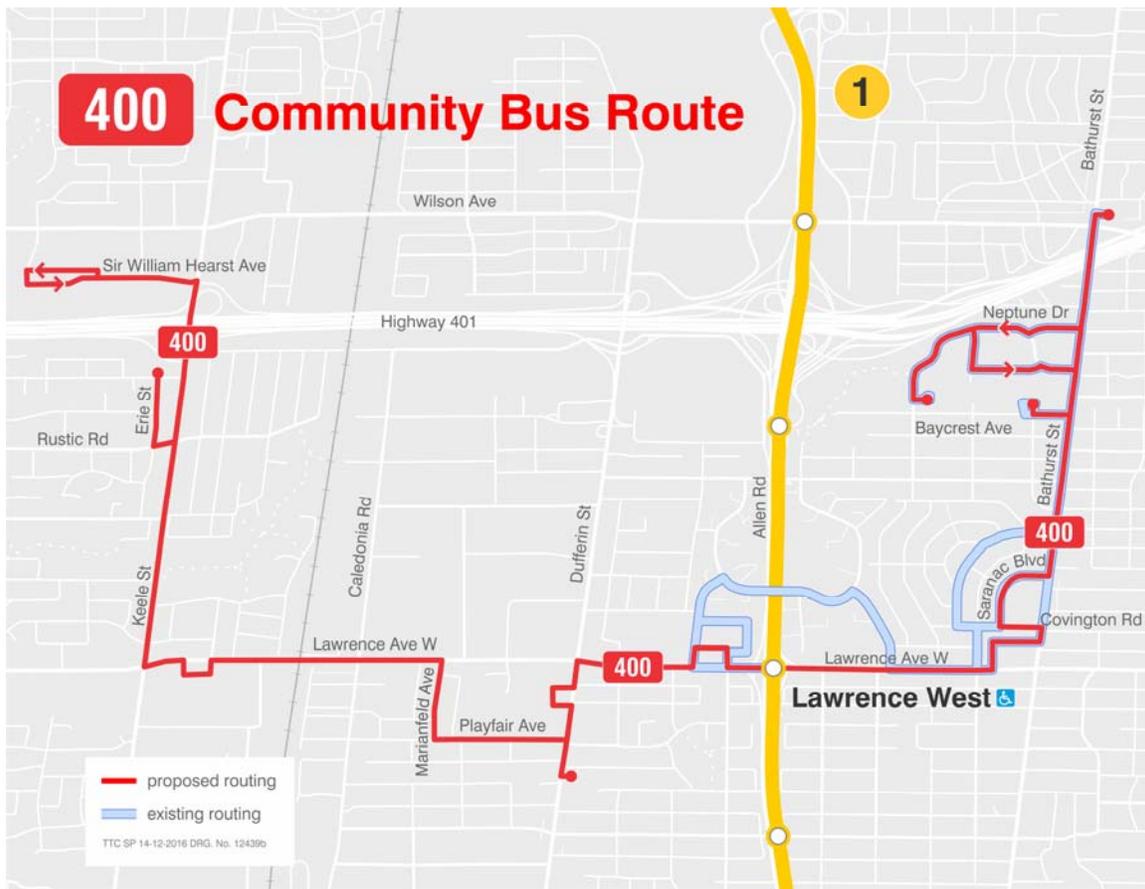
Service would be extended to the new Humber River Regional Hospital as a continuation of the existing route westward from Lawrence Square Shopping Centre via. Lawrence Avenue West, Dufferin Street, Playfair Avenue, Marianfeld Ave, Lawrence Avenue West, Keele Street, Rustic Road, Erie Street, Keele Street, and Sir William Hearst Avenue. New service on Covington Road would also be provided between Saranac Boulevard and Bathurst Street.

The proposed routing will provide new community bus service to the Humber River Regional Hospital, which is the fourth busiest Wheel-Trans destination in Toronto, several seniors residences including the large Villa Colombo residence, and new shopping opportunities in the Keele-Lawrence area.

To allow for the proposed route extension, improved headway, and faster travel times for customers, the route of 400 LAWRENCE MANOR would be simplified by removing service from streets where ridership counts and surveys have found limited to no ridership. Therefore, service on this route would no longer be provided on Bathurst Street between Baycrest Avenue and Hotspur Road, Rajah Street, Wasdale Drive, Prince Charles Drive, Covington Road west of Saranac Boulevard, Brucewood Crescent, Varna Drive, Flemington Road, and Blossomfield Drive.

Concerns were raised during public consultations about removal of community bus service in the Lawrence Heights neighbourhood along Flemington Road and Varna Drive. It should be noted that transit service in this neighbourhood will continue to be provided by 109 RANEE, and that approximately 450 customers per day use 109 RANEE at stops on Flemington Road and Varna Drive which will no longer be served by 400 LAWRENCE MANOR. Ultimately, removal of 400 LAWRENCE MANOR service on these streets is expected to have minimal negative impact to existing customers given that ridership counts and surveys found that very few customers were boarding the community bus on these streets.

**Figure 7: Proposed 400 Lawrence Manor Routing Changes**



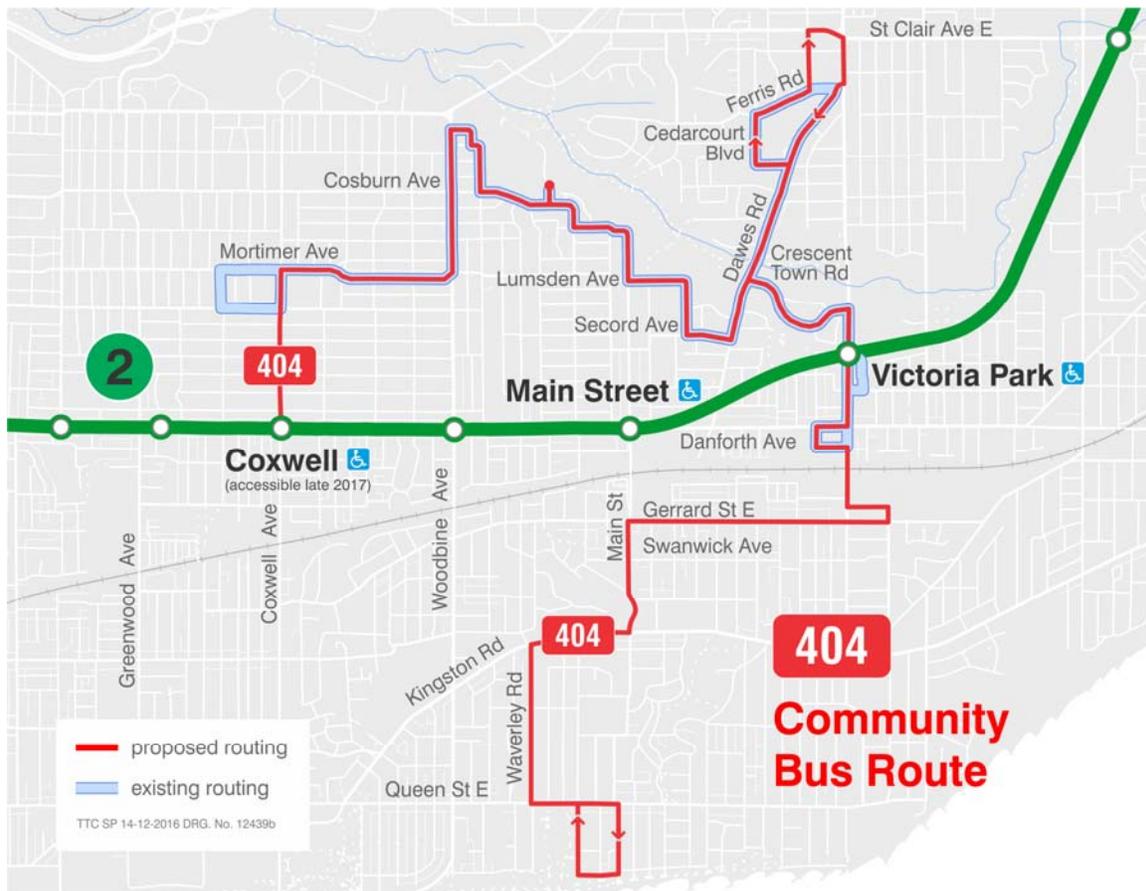
#### **404 EAST YORK**

Service would be extended to Kew Gardens via Victoria Park Avenue south of Danforth, Gerrard Street East, Main Street, Kingston Road, Waverly Avenue, looping at the south end via Wineva Avenue, Alfresco Lawn, and Lee Avenue. Service would also be extended south on Coxwell Avenue south of Sammon Avenue to Coxwell Station.

Service would be removed from the existing west on-street loop of Sammon Avenue, Monarch Park Avenue, and Mortimer Avenue west of Coxwell. No customers are expected to be lost from the elimination of Community Bus service on these streets.

The new proposed route extension will increase access to shopping opportunities at the intersection of Victoria Park and Gerrard and on Queen Street East, community facilities along Main Street and in the Beaches neighbourhood, as well as four additional seniors residences. The short route extension to the newly accessible Coxwell Station will mean that community bus riders connecting to Line 2 westbound will no longer need to travel to the east end of the route to return west.

**Figure 8: Proposed 404 East York Routing Changes**



**Project Performance**

The objective of the pilot project is to validate the predicted Wheel-Trans trip diversion rates. To be successful, a threshold of 75% of the three-year performance and economic targets in the service standards should be met in the first year of operation as, shown in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Project Performance Summary**

Route	Daily Ridership (2015)	Diverted Wheel-Trans Trips (Year 1)	Diverted Wheel-Trans Trips (Year 3)	Daily Forecast Ridership (Year 1)	Daily Forecast Ridership (Year 3)	Additional Vehicles Required
400	29	120	160	175	220	+1
404	41	85	110	130	160	+1

In the first year of operation, it is projected that over 120 daily riders will be diverted from Wheel-Trans door-to-door service to 400 LAWRENCE MANOR, and over 80 daily riders to route 404 EAST YORK. These projections rise to over 160 and 110 respectively by the third year of operation.

A successful pilot project will enable TTC to confidently move forward with progressively implementing extended and new community bus routes elsewhere in the City. However, if the predicted trip diversion rates fail to materialize, it would not be prudent to continue to offer this type of service going forward, as it would be more costly than simply offering door-to-door service.

### **Customer Engagement and Feedback**

Staff held six consultation sessions with affected residents (three along each pilot project route) in January, 2017. Residents provided feedback on their current use of Wheel-Trans, expected use of the revised community bus routes, and suggestions for new destinations to serve. Residents were generally supportive of the proposed changes; however, based on the first round of community engagement sessions, Staff have adjusted the plans for each of the proposed routes in this report to serve new destinations as suggested by the community. It should be noted that some participants also requested lengthy extensions to both community bus routes to serve regional shopping centres and other major destinations; however, these proposed extensions would not be possible due to distance from the route, or without dedicating significant additional resources to the initiative.

Wider-scale consultation with communities served by the network of modified routes or planned new routes is planned for Q2 2017, as part of consultations on the implementation of the Wheel-Trans 10-Year Strategy. Staff intend to present in detail the proposed concept network plan identified in this report, and solicit feedback from customers and community stakeholders to ensure that the proposed routes best meet the travel demand patterns of the intended customers. Destinations served by each of the routes will be adjusted to the extent possible based on the feedback received to best serve the target communities. Staff will also solicit feedback from attendees at the People in Motion Show in May 2017 and the annual TTC Public Forum on Accessible Transit in September 2017.

### **Communications Plan**

In 2017, TTC staff will review means to further enhance the profile and awareness of community bus service in conjunction with the launch of the pilot project. Further details will be available in Summer 2017.

### **Evaluation Plan**

In mid-2018, staff expect to report back on the results of the pilot project and will recommend whether to:

1. continue with the pilot project on the two existing routes to gain more data;
2. expand the pilot project by modifying more of the existing community bus routes, or launching new community bus routes; or
3. discontinue the pilot project entirely.

The pilot project evaluation will be based on compliance with the community bus service standards productivity and economic metrics, including passengers per hour and number of Wheel-Trans trips diverted per hour.

The final recommendations and route network will also include any modifications to routes made as a result of the customer engagement process.

## Summary

Staff have reviewed the existing community bus network with the objective of improving the utility of the service as a key support for the TTC Wheel-Trans 10-Year Strategy.

There is an opportunity to expand the community bus network, ultimately to 11 routes. However, the business case outlined in this report hinges on Wheel-Trans trip diversion. As such, staff recommend that public consultation take place to validate proposed routings, and to undertake a pilot project in 2017 involving extensions to two existing routes at no additional operating cost, to validate trip diversion assumptions. A first round of public consultation has already taken place focusing on the two initial pilot project routes, with destinations served adjusted based on feedback received.

If the pilot project is successful in terms of diverting Wheel-Trans door-to-door trips and attracting a sustainable level of ridership, it is expected that it would be viable to revise the remaining three existing community bus routes, and eventually implement up to six new routes throughout the City.

The expanded portfolio of community bus routes is expected to serve over 2,200 trips per day if fully implemented, of which approximately 1,600 are expected to be trips that would otherwise be taken using the more costly Wheel-Trans door-to-door service. Cost savings to the TTC could reach roughly \$1.5 million in saved operating and maintenance costs annually, which could be reallocated to further service improvements or to offset growing costs related to eligibility changes.

To achieve these benefits, it is important for the route expansions to be piloted before full implementation, and to be marketed through channels with high exposure among current Wheel-Trans registrants. It is also critical for the TTC to continue improving other aspects of its Family of Services offering to promote positive perceptions of the community bus.

With these changes to community bus service, the TTC has the potential to not only divert Wheel-Trans customers from higher cost door-to-door service, but more importantly, to provide all customers with a service option to live flexible, independent, and connected lives.

## Contact

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