



THE STATE OF PUBLIC TRANSIT IN TORONTO

A REPORT CARD BY TTCRIDERS / JULY 2012

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report card evaluates the TTC’s performance, over roughly the past 12 months, in meeting five goals set by the TTCriders. These goals are based on key principles from the TTCriders’ vision statement, that articulate the public transit system TTCriders want for our city¹.

We hope this report card provides public transit users, TTC Commissioners, Toronto City Councillors, and the general public an opportunity to discuss the direction taken by the TTC in the previous year as well as the direction it should take in the future.

HERE ARE THE RESULTS:

PUBLIC TRANSIT PRINCIPLE	STATUS	RATIONALE
Fair and Affordable Fares	 DERAILED	TTC fares cover a higher percentage of operating costs than fares in any other major city in North America. The TTC must look to other sources for operating funds instead of raising already too high fares.
Building Modern, Fast Transit into All Corners of the City as Fast as Possible	 ON TRACK	Public transit expansion in Toronto is back on track, after being derailed for 16 months. Since June, talk has turned to investing Toronto tax dollars in even more transit expansion. The next step is to insure that transit expansion paid for by the Province remains publicly accountable and controlled.
Making Public Transit Fully Accessible Transit	 DELAYED	While the TTC is on the right track to make our public transit system truly accessible, it’s taking too long. The TTC must invest the money required to build an accessible TTC.
Frequent Service that Connects All our Neighbourhoods	 DERAILED	Service levels that connect our neighborhoods are worsening. The TTC must, at minimum, increase service levels to match ridership growth. Not doing so means paying more for less.
Environmental Sustainability	 UNKNOWN	The TTC is missing an opportunity to promote the environmental benefits of public transit by not publishing reports showing how using public transit reduces greenhouse gas and other smog emissions.

¹See <http://www.TTCriders.ca/Become-a-Member-of-TTCriders/>

INTRODUCTION

This report card evaluates the TTC's performance, over roughly the past 12 months, in meeting five goals set by the TTCriders. These goals are based on key principles from the TTCriders' vision statement, that articulate the public transit system TTCriders want for our city.

THESE KEY PRINCIPLES INCLUDE:

- Fair and affordable fares
- Building modern, fast transit into all corners of the city as fast as possible
- Making public transit fully accessible transit
- Frequent service that connects all our neighbourhoods
- Environmental sustainability

TO EVALUATE THE TTC'S PERFORMANCE, WE USE THE FOLLOWING SIMPLE APPROACH:



ON TRACK TTC is on the right track and moving forward.



DELAYED TTC is on the right track but not moving forward.



DERAILED TTC is not going where it needs to go.



UNKNOWN There is not enough information to grade performance at this time.

We expect this report card to become an annual accounting of TTC performance. We will continue to monitor the TTC year round and aim to work with the TTC, City of Toronto, Metrolinx, and others to see more and better public transit for TTC riders across the GTA.

This report is written by TTCriders, a public transit advocacy group that gives transit riders a voice. We are transit users who want more and better public transit in Toronto. TTCriders was incubated by an alliance of environmental, labour, and community organizations. These groups include the Canadian Federation of Students – Ontario, Social Planning Toronto, Toronto ACORN, the Toronto & York Region Labour Council, and the Toronto Environmental Alliance (TEA).

To learn more about TTCriders and to become a member, please visit WWW.TTCRIDERS.CA

PRINCIPLE 1: FAIR AND AFFORDABLE FARES



STATUS: **DERAILED**

TTC fares cover a higher percentage of operating costs than fares in any other major city in North America. The TTC must look to other sources for operating funds instead of raising already too high fares.

In 2012, the TTC increased the price of a single token by \$0.10 and increased the price of other fare media at a similar rate (an Adult Metropass now costs \$126 per month.) The TTC stated this increase was necessary and that they intend to hike fares every year by at least 10 cents.

TTCriders believes riders already pay too much and that more funding for public transit operations must come from other sources.

Presently 70% of the cost to operate the TTC is paid for by riders' fares. This is the highest such "fare box ratio" in North America. While this figure has been heralded as proof of the efficiency of the TTC, in reality it is the greatest example of how poorly public transit in Toronto is funded.

FARE BOX RATIOS - NORTH AMERICA

TTC	70%	New York	54%
Atlanta	29%	Ottawa	43%
Boston	42%	Philadelphia	38%
Chicago	40%	Vancouver	48%
Los Angeles	29%	Washington	45%
Montreal	56%		

Source: CITY OF TORONTO/ TTC 2011 Recommended Operating Budgets & 2011 – 2020 Capital Plan
http://www.toronto.ca/budget2011/pdf/presentation11_ttc.pdf
All ratios are for 2009, except for the TTC which is for 2011

Before additional fare hikes are considered, the fare box recovery ratio must fall more in line with the North American average. This means all Torontonians, through provincial and municipal taxes and/or new revenues tools, must help pay for operating the TTC. This is only fair, given that everyone benefits from good public transit.

PRINCIPLE 2: BUILDING MODERN, FAST TRANSIT INTO ALL CORNERS OF THE CITY AS FAST AS POSSIBLE



STATUS: **ON TRACK**

Public transit expansion in Toronto is back on track, after being derailed for 16 months. Since June, talk has turned to investing Toronto tax dollars in even more transit expansion. The next step is to insure that transit expansion paid for by the Province remains publicly accountable and controlled.

In December 2010, a fully funded plan that would have delivered 52 km of light rail across our city was declared dead by the Mayor. This declaration was not challenged by most Toronto Transit Commissioners nor discussed at City Council. Public transit expansion was in limbo. In response, TTCriders organized and spoke with tens of thousands of Torontonians who supported more and better public transit and building rapid transit now.

In February and March 2012, City Council approved the light rail transit (LRT) plan that had been declared dead by the Mayor. This happened because Councillors listened to Torontonians. For over 14 months, people from every ward in the city expressed their support for transit expansion now by sending tens of thousands of emails, letters and phone calls to their City Councillors. In February 2012, the TTCriders submitted nearly 25,000 petition signatures at a special council meeting in support of building rapid transit now.

In March 2012, Council also agreed to begin exploring additional transit expansion options. Then, in July 2012, Council agreed to work with the Province to develop new revenue tools to pay for transit expansion.

With transit getting back on track at City Hall, the focus now changes to Metrolinx, the provincial agency responsible for building the four light rail lines. Metrolinx plans to build all of the LRT lines using a public-private partnership process, known as Alternative Finance and Delivery – Design, Build, Finance and Maintain. TTCriders is not in support of this decision because this approach will further delay the Sheppard East and Finch West LRT expansion and likely increase costs.

We're also concerned about the potential lack of community consultation. Important considerations like station location and design are typically subject to public consultation, but this could change with Metrolinx's proposed contracting out process. Torontonians need to have a say in how these transit lines are rolled out. We get a bigger say if the TTC operates as a project manager and community liaison for all the LRT projects, and has greater control over the design of the transit expansion plans we've been waiting so long for.

PRINCIPLE 3: MAKING PUBLIC TRANSIT FULLY ACCESSIBLE TRANSIT



STATUS: DELAYED

While the TTC is on the right track to make our public transit system truly accessible it's taking too long. The TTC must invest the money required to build an accessible TTC.

A fully accessible public transit system must have two characteristics: full access to the overall system; dedicated vehicles for mobility-challenged people.

The TTC continues making annual improvements in overall system accessibility. For example, the TTC fleet is becoming accessible: in 2010, 97% of TTC buses were accessible. New subway cars and new LRT vehicles, which will replace the TTC's aging streetcar fleet, will be much more accessible. Unfortunately, the new LRT vehicles won't start coming into service until 2013. Moreover, it will still take many years before these new vehicles replace all the older, less accessible subways and streetcars.

Making subway stations more accessible is also taking too long. Today, 29 of the TTC's 69 subway stations are accessible. In 2006, the TTC committed to having all new and existing subway stations accessible by the end of 2020. In early 2011, the date was pushed back to 2024 due to budget constraints. In early 2012, the date was pushed back to 2025.

Wheel-Trans is vital for the accessibility of mobility-challenged Torontonians. In 2011, demand for Wheel-Trans once again increased over the previous year. Yet, in February 2012 the TTC Commission was contemplating making cuts to Wheel-Trans Service. Fortunately, the Commission did not make any service cuts. Unfortunately, how they avoided the cuts sets a very bad precedent: the Commission reallocated to the Wheel-Trans budget \$5 million that City Council made available to avoid service cuts to existing peak and off peak service regular transit service. **In other words, the Commission pitted transit users against each other by diverting funding from regular ridership to cover Wheel-Trans expenses.** Transit riders waiting for their bus to appear should not be told that it was cancelled to pay for Wheel-Trans operations. TTC riders cannot and will not accept policies and funding decisions which pit riders against each other.

PRINCIPLE 4: FREQUENT SERVICE THAT CONNECTS ALL OUR NEIGHBOURHOODS

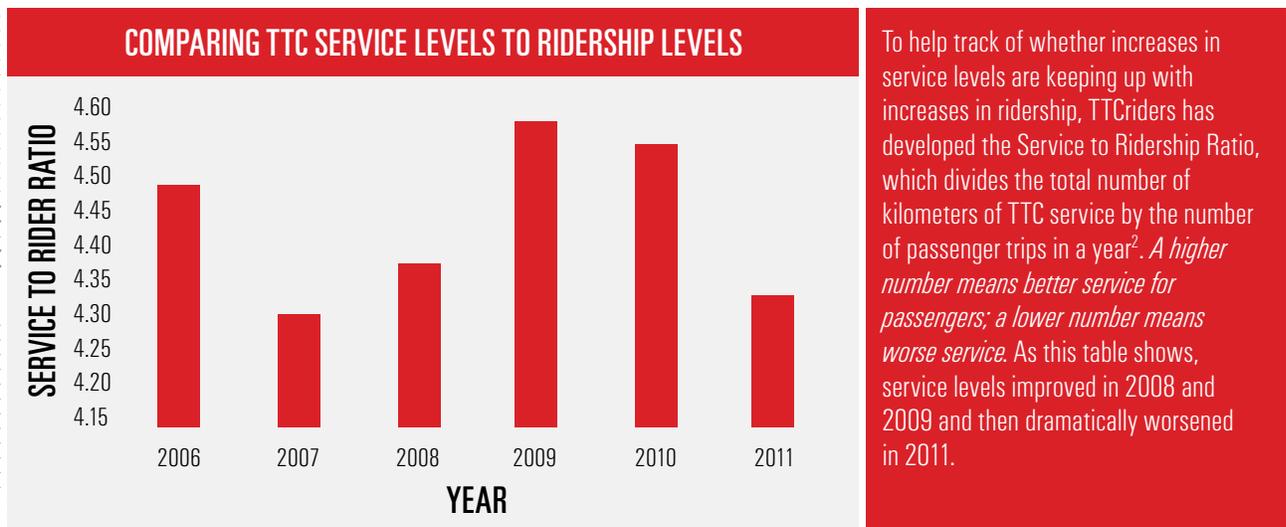


STATUS: **DERAILED**

Service levels that connect our neighborhoods are worsening. The TTC must, at minimum, increase service levels to match ridership growth. Not doing so means paying more for less.

For our transit system to truly connect all of Toronto's neighbourhoods, the TTC must deliver services both where they are needed and frequently enough to meet demand. The challenges facing the TTC are as much about insufficient services on existing routes as they are about a lack of routes into particular neighbourhoods.

Comparing 2006 to 2011, ridership went up by 12.5%, or 56 million more trips. Yet, service levels (measured by the number of kilometers of TTC service in a year) only increased by 8.4%. Because service levels did not keep pace with increased ridership, today's system is providing less service per rider than in 2006.



If the TTC wants to provide sufficient, frequent service to connect all of Toronto's neighbourhoods, it is heading in the wrong direction. Service standards are going down while ridership growth is going up. This is a result of the TTC (and City Council) not investing enough in TTC services. The only way to reverse this worrying trend is to invest in the very services people increasingly use.

²Compiled from TTC Operating Statistics found at http://www.ttc.ca/About_the_TTC/Operating_Statistics/2011.jsp

PRINCIPLE 5: ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY



STATUS: **UNKNOWN**

The TTC is missing an opportunity to promote the environmental benefits of public transit by not publishing reports showing how using public transit reduces greenhouse gas and other smog emissions.

Properly assessing the environmental sustainability of the TTC is no simple matter; it involves measuring the amount of waste it produces and calculating the greenhouse gas (ghg) and smog emissions that result from operating and maintaining the TTC fleet and infrastructure. However, these TTC-generated ghg and smog emissions have to be offset by the *avoided* ghg and smog emissions that result from people using the TTC. Put simply, while TTC operations pollute the air, they also avoid much larger pollution that would result from people using private vehicles instead of the TTC.

In 2010, TTCriders and the Toronto Environmental Alliance (TEA) published *Clearing the Air on the TTC: Recommendations to Increase the Environmental Benefits of the TTC*. Below is what the report said about the environmental sustainability of the TTC:

Surprisingly, the TTC has never published any information that identifies current greenhouse gas (ghg) and smog emissions, nor the avoided ghg emissions and smog emissions resulting from people using the TTC instead of private vehicles. Without such public baseline estimates, it becomes effectively impossible to calculate and track how future changes to existing operations may help or hinder attempts to reduce ghg and smog emissions.³

In *Clearing the Air*, TEA and TTCriders developed a simple, first-generation methodology to calculate the avoided ghg emissions thanks to people using the TTC instead of private vehicles. Based on this methodology, the report estimated that in 2009, Torontonians avoided emitting roughly 357,000 tonnes of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere by using the TTC instead of private vehicles.

Unfortunately, the TTC has yet to publish any information on current greenhouse gas (ghg) and smog emissions, nor the avoided ghg emissions resulting from people using the TTC instead of private automobiles.⁴

Torontonians help create a cleaner environment by using the TTC. It's time the TTC started collecting important data about its environmental impact and letting us know how good the TTC is for our environment.

³See <http://www.torontoenvironment.org/campaigns/transit/clearingtheair>. ⁴Based on the simple methodology from *Clearing the Air*, we estimate that in 2011 Torontonians avoided emitting roughly 379,146 tonnes greenhouse gas by using the TTC.