

TTC Ridership Growth Strategy 2026-28 Feedback

Transport Action Ontario / More Transit Southern Ontario

1. Background:

On August 20, 2025, TTC presented a draft 2026-2028 Ridership Growth Strategy to its Planning Advisory Committee, with a request for feedback by August 28. This document provides feedback on behalf of two non-government organizations - Transport Action Ontario (TAO) and More Transit Southern Ontario (MTSO).

2. City Population Growth Context means Transit is more Essential than ever

The Toronto City Plan estimates that a million people will move to Toronto in the next decade. That's 100,000 a year. More density is coming to city, as desired in its Official Plan, in the form of a lot more condos and apartments to house these people. Unfortunately, car traffic is already choking the city's streets, avenues, and highways with residents' cars, Uber and Lyft vehicles, construction trucks, and delivery vehicles. A reliable, attractive TTC is essential for both social and economic well being.

Several interventions and programs are discussed below. In our opinion, the single most cost-effective intervention to improve service is transit-only Lanes with enforcement.

3. TTC Ridership Growth Successes Should be Built Upon

The August 21, 2025 presentation stated the successes to be:

- RapidTO: Eglinton East
- Express bus network
- All-Day-Every-Day Network
- 10-minute network
- 2-hour Transfer

TTC is on the right track with these successes. An additional success would be the OneFare GO and 905-agency initiative which provides free transfers and increases some passengers- mobility a lot, cost-effectively.

However, transit passengers really need more of these TTC successes to improve transit times, reliability, bus and streetcar efficiency, and modal share. The 10% decline in TTC mode share cited in the presentation is alarming. Exclusive transit lanes should become the norm on our major arterials, not exceptions.

More RapidTO Lines (reframed as transit and emergency vehicle only lanes)

The city needs many more RapidTO lines to increase bus and streetcar speeds. Five RapidTO lines were promised at the start of the pandemic, but only one was implemented – rather quickly – on Eglinton East. Unfortunately, the other four have completely stalled.

It's good that the Dufferin and Bathurst RapidTO lanes are being implemented, but they've been kneecapped by City Council by being eliminated north of Bloor. Toronto needs many more RapidTO lines.

The city should reframe the RapidTO lanes as transit and emergency vehicle only lanes. This will make it clear that such lanes will save lives and reduce injuries through faster ambulance, fire, and police vehicle travel. We have seen ambulances use the concrete trackway on the Queensway (used by the 501 Queen car) to get to St Joseph's Hospital. Transit-only lanes allows our emergency vehicles to get around the city much more quickly and reliably. Has the city measured how much faster emergency vehicles can travel on such transit lanes?

Express Bus Network

The TTC needs to implement more express buses, and expand express bus hours, where warranted, especially for long routes, to reduce passengers- travel times.

All-Day-Every-Day Network

This is really important for residents who don't have a vehicle.

10-Minute Network

This is also really important for residents who don't have a vehicle, and for people to be able to rely on such routes.

2-Hour Transfer

Given that traffic is worsening in the city, and there are some extremely long bus routes, there are instances when passengers run out of the 2 hour transfer window, and have to pay another fare to complete their journey. Can logic be included in Presto readers to determine if the rider has been on a long continuous trip?

4. Transit Priority at Signals

This is not cited as a ridership growth success but has good potential to improve service, boost reliability and reduce operating costs. Continued emphasis on this program is needed.

5. 2026 Budget Enhancement Recommendations

These are stated as:

1. Replace monthly passes with fare capping.
2. Begin implementation of Wayfinding Strategy.

3. Support increased ridership from change in Work from Home policies.
4. Improve service reliability.
5. Implement outstanding 2024 / 2025 Annual Network Plan proposals.
6. Meet Service Standards (Crowding, Express Network, 10-Minute Network).

This is great, and we support them wholeheartedly.

What is needed next is a matrix of which of the aforementioned successes (and potential new strategies) address which of the above Budget Enhancement Recommendations. This will help prioritize the 2026+ Budget Enhancements.

For instance, additional RapidTO lines will:

3. Increase ridership,
4. Improve service reliability, and
6. Help Meet Service Standards (Crowding, Express Network, 10-Minute Network)

This matrix analysis would demonstrate that more RapidTO lines satisfy numerous Ridership Growth improvement criteria.

6. Conclusions

TTC surface route reliability is often poor and it's mostly because of auto traffic. Whilst more subway, LRT, and GO stations are being constructed and opened in Toronto, we still need buses and streetcars to be able to get around to connect to these rapid transit stations. As well, not everybody lives or works close to rapid transit. Every resident, worker, and visitor needs to have the ability to get around as easily by transit as by car..