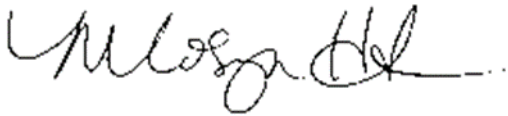




INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Mayor and Members Public Works Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	May 30, 2022
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Bayfront Park – Transit Service Extension (PW22027(a)) (Ward 2)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	Ward 2
PREPARED BY:	Jason VanderHeide (905) 546-2424 Ext. 2390
SUBMITTED BY:	Maureen Cosyn Heath Director, Transit Public Works Department
SIGNATURE:	

COUNCIL DIRECTION

Public Works Committee at its meeting on May 2, 2022, were provided within Report PW22027, the following staff recommendation as it relates to extending transit service into Bayfront Park:

- a) That staff be directed to modify the routing of Route 99 Waterfront Shuttle, effective date June 25, 2023 to provide daily service from 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. at a 30-minute frequency between downtown and lower Bayfront Park.

Public Works Committee then heard a delegation presentation, provided by a resident, expressing concern with the staff recommendation while providing an alternative routing option for Public Works Committee to consider.

Public Works Committee deferred Report PW22027 to the May 30, 2022 Public Works Committee with direction to staff to assess and take into consideration comments brought forth by the delegate on the staff recommendation, inclusive of reviewing and assessing an alternative approach to the routing for the Route 99 Waterfront Shuttle, provided by the delegate.

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

INFORMATION

BACKGROUND

The purpose of Report PW22027 was to respond to motion 11.2(a), brought forth during the November 15, 2021 Public Works Committee meeting. The motion is as follows:

WHEREAS, the enjoyment of Bayfront Park by residents across the City has noticeably increased during COVID which has resulted in an increased demand for parking despite Council's dedication to and implementation of dedicated cycling infrastructure and pedestrian trails to this destination; and,

WHEREAS, residents have expressed concerns that auto traffic on the winding Harbourfront Drive (descending into and out of the main park area) is increasing in both volume and speeds with the 20 km limit increasingly not adhered to;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED

- (a) That staff from Hamilton Street Railway be requested to explore expanding bus service into the lower park and report back to Public Works before end of Q2, 2022; and,
- (b) That Transportation Operations be requested to explore options using a Vision Zero lens on Harbourfront Drive with the objective of further enabling appropriate vehicle speed limit compliance and enhancing the safety and comfort of vulnerable road users and report back in Q1, 2022.

The intent of the motion was to explore bringing transit service down into the lower park, specifically along Harbourfront Drive as it descends going into and coming out of the main park, west of the intersection of Bay Street North at Strachan Street West. In providing a direct transit connection to the lower park, it could encourage more park users to arrive by transit and as a result reduce the number of cars arriving to the park and lessen demand on parking. This is anticipated to alleviate some of the safety concerns cited in the motion.

The specific area of Harbourfront Drive was identified within the motion as a problem statement, and as the primary access point into Bayfront Park it presents a unique transit accessibility barrier not because the distance to the nearest transit route is significantly far, but due to the difference in elevation between the lower park and the upper entrance to the park.

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The recommendation provided in Report PW22027 meets the intended objective set forth in the motion. When staff are presented with a problem such as this, they take into consideration many factors and criteria when assessing options for potential solutions and recommendations. These include:

- Council Priorities
- Strategic Alignment
- Service Standards
- Service - design, delivery, and reliability
- Environment – built and conditions
- Financials – operating and capital
- Accessibility and the AODA
- Timing
- State of service in the area – present and future
- Root of the problem – where, when, and why
- Objective – meeting it with a solution

Staff looked at the three existing routes that operate in the vicinity of Bayfront Park and in the vicinity of Pier 8 as options for a potential solution. At present, two of the three routes operate directly to Pier 8; a weekday only service that operates 252 days of the year (Route 20 A line) and a seasonal route that operates 72 days each year during the summer months (Route 99 Waterfront Shuttle). The third route operates 365 days of the year to within reasonable walking distance of Pier 8, but not directly to the Pier. None of the three routes operate directly to the lower Bayfront Park and all provide the same stop profile along James Street, and therefore they all present with the same walking distance and barrier to transit access highlighted in the motion. Maps and route information of current service in the area are attached to Report PW22027(a) as Appendix “A”.

As the problem itself is primarily seasonal in nature, staff determined that the best solution should also be seasonal, and therefore focused the full assessment on options to modify the Route 99 Waterfront Shuttle service. An expansion of the Route 99 Waterfront shuttle has never been contemplated within the 10-Year Local Transit Strategy, and as such, bringing service down into lower Bayfront Park could be achieved by a route modification.

While considering potential options for a recommended solution, staff looked at two alternatives. The first was provided to Public Works Committee as the recommendation in Report PW22027 and the second was a route modification to provide service to both Bayfront Park and Pier 8. Staff did not bring the latter alternative option forward to Public Works Committee as a recommendation as it did not meet the factors and criteria that the recommended modification did and therefore would not be feasible. A map of

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the recommended modified routing for Route 99 Waterfront Shuttle, as well as the alternatively assessed, but deemed unfeasible routing, are provided in Appendix “B” attached to Report PW22027(a).

The timing of the staff recommendation is particularly important to consider as it accounts for continued investment made by Council in the 10-Year Local Transit Strategy to support the growth of the Route 20 A line service as the primary transit route to connect the waterfront to the airport. By summer 2023, Route 20 A line will be in operation with improved frequency and span to 304 days per year, and by summer 2024, with Council’s continued investment, will be in operation 365 days per year. Maps of future service coverage in the area are provided in Appendix “C” attached to Report PW22027(a).

ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED ROUTING BY THE DELEGATE

Public Works Committee heard a delegation presentation, provided by a constituent expressing concern about the staff recommendation and citing that in the delegate’s opinion, staff were proposing to cut service and to remove access by transit to Pier 8. The delegate proposed within their presentation an alternative routing option for Public Works Committee to consider.

Staff have reviewed the proposed routing provided during the delegation presentation compared to the same factors and criteria that were used in the assessment of the previous considerations by staff.

Staff value the benefit of the reduced walking distance achieved within the proposed routing provided by the delegate, and while staff would agree that some of the factors and criteria have been considered within the proposal, many are not. Staff would also agree there are some similarities within the proposal to both the staff recommendation and the alternative option that staff deemed unfeasible. Unfortunately, the proposed routing does not provide a solution to the intent of the motion as it does not propose providing service into lower Bayfront Park, with the goals of reducing parking pressures.

A map of alternative routing option provided by the Delegate is provided in Appendix “D” attached to Report PW22027(a).

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix “A” to Report PW22027(a) – Current Transit Service Information

Appendix “B” to Report PW22027(a) – Recommended and Assessed Alternative
Routing

Appendix “C” to Report PW22027(a) – Future Transit Service Information

Appendix “D” to Report PW22027(a) – Delegate Proposed Route Modification