

Labour's



Transit



Workbook

LABOUR
TORONTO & YORK REGION
COUNCIL

Labour's Transit Workbook

Introduction

This workbook is about labour-oriented transit solutions in Canada's largest urban centre. Public transit is not only the most affordable means of



transportation for many working families, it is also the most environmentally friendly mode of mass transit. As such it is essential to the quality of life and health of our families.

In fact public transit is a huge part of the solution to many of the problems plaguing Torontonians: affordable transportation – especially with gas prices soaring higher; gridlock on our streets and highways; and most importantly smog which has caused an alarming rise of asthma with its attendant costs to our health care system; and the larger environmental danger of global warming caused by greenhouse gas emissions.

Cars generate 40% of Ontario's smog and the problem is getting worse each year. The first smog alert for 2004 was six weeks earlier than the previous year. And the area affected has now extended as far north as Parry Sound and Algonquin Park. Cars are also the main source of greenhouse gases which trap heat causing global warming. This climatic change is wreaking havoc on our planet on an unprecedented scale.

But by increasing transit use we can reduce the smog, which the Ontario Medical Association estimates kills 1900 people, sends another 13,000 to emergency wards and costs our health care system \$1.1 billion every year. We will also be protecting our environment by reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases that cause global warming. At the same time we will be creating local jobs and supporting the unionized workers who build



transit vehicles and maintain and operate the public transit system. These local jobs help protect the environment and stimulate the local economy.

Affordable public transit is a very real financial issue for many union members. Unions can take the lead in shaping transit solutions to keep transit affordable and accessible. Preventing fares increases and improving service will make a real difference to the quality of working family's lives. Participating in the TTC's Volume Incentive Pass (VIP) program and bargaining with employers to further reduce employees' transit costs provides an opportunity to create a tangible "union advantage" for our members. This workbook will outline concrete ways to achieve these goals.

Public Transit: The 'Better Way'

Public transit is accessible to everyone and everywhere in the GTA. It also represents real savings of thousands of dollars to working people. It represents almost \$4000 per year in savings when compared to the CAA's estimated total annual costs of owning, operating, insuring and maintaining a private vehicle.

Ride the Rocket.



THE BETTER WAY

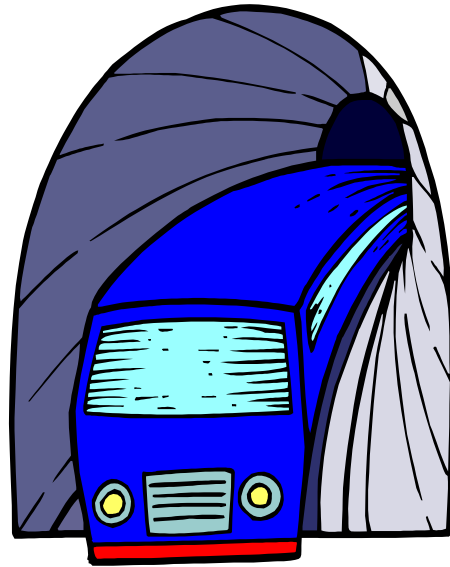
City planners and municipal governments agree that transit has to be maintained and improved if we want our cities to stay healthy and livable. Urban development must take place along transit routes to encourage and increase transit use. Unfortunately, Canada has been the only G-8 member country without a federally funded and developed transit strategy to protect the environment and reduce global warming.

Public Transit: A Sustainable Option

You may have seen public transit described as a sustainable option. This means that transit use causes less damage to the environment than private vehicle use because it moves more people while releasing less contaminants. This helps us to *sustain* our environment.

If we want our families, communities, and neighbourhoods to stay healthy, we have to

start using sustainable transit options. To increase transit use we may have to address service issues. If bus service is infrequent, we need to organize in our communities to improve the service. You can involve friends, co-workers, union members, and neighbours to improve your transit service. All will benefit. In our communities and workplaces we can also promote other modes of sustainable transportation include cycling, walking, and car-pooling.



Who Pays for Transit?

In the last decade, eight years of Conservative government cuts in Ontario have slashed the resources available to the TTC, leading to service cuts, fare increases and halting plans for expansion. The provincial government used to pay part of the TTC's annual operating costs. Now Canada's largest transit system has to rely on fares for about eighty percent of its funding. The other twenty percent comes from the City of Toronto. The operating budget is spent on basic repairs and maintenance of the existing system.

The capital budget, on the other hand, is for expanding and improving the system and implementing new services. But the Conservative's budget cuts have restricted the TTC's ability to respond to new demands. These cuts, which escalated since 1998, also forced huge fare increases - shifting more of the costs to the riding public.

Since the beginning of the new millennium, the TTC is the only public transit service in North America to rely so heavily on riders' fares for the majority of its funding. This is unlike transit in European and American cities which still receives over forty percent of its funding from senior government sources.

The Tories' cuts were intended to starve the transit system in order to open the door to privatization. In York region steps have already been taken towards public / private partnerships in transit.

Labour can use its power and resources to pressure all levels of government to provide adequate funding to support public transit and stop privatization. We can also lobby the federal government to amend the Income Tax Act so that employer subsidized transit passes are exempt from income taxation. This has already been enacted in the United States.

The TTC's VIP Pilot Project: Bulk Discount Transit Passes

The TTC has introduced their Volume Incentive Pass (VIP) Green Pilot Project to increase ridership by offering a discount rate for monthly transit passes purchased in bulk and administered by institutions (companies or unions) in the workplace. The VIP program provides a 10% price reduction to institutions based on a commitment to purchase a monthly minimum of 50 Adult Metropasses for a full year. The percentage of the discount increases (up to 12%) with the number of passes purchased. In effect, the TTC sells the passes to the organization, which then turns around and sells it to its members or employees at cost or lower. The purchasing group covers any costs of administering the program to its own members but has flexibility in deciding how to administer the program. The Labour Council and the Toronto Environmental Alliance were instrumental in extending and expanding the program to allow more groups to participate. The maximum number of groups allowed to participate in the pilot program has been increased from 11 to 30, on a first come first serve basis.

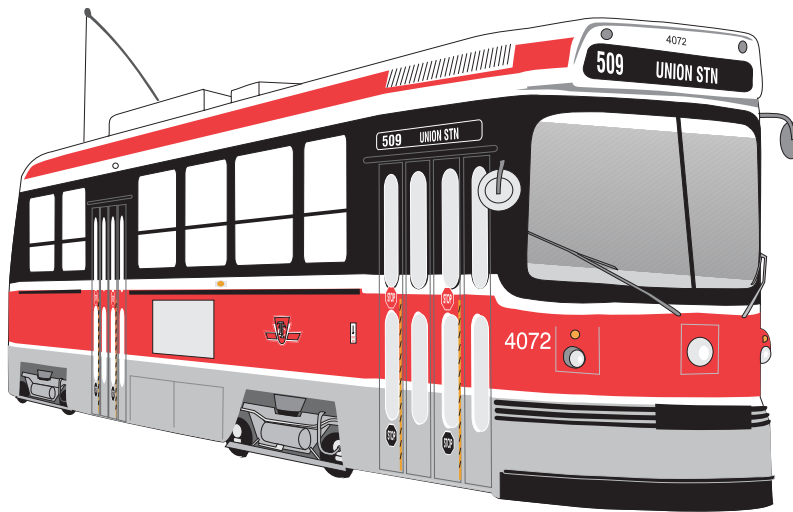
Negotiating Bulk Discount Transit Passes

There are three different options unions can pursue to provide bulk discount transit passes for their members.

OPTION 1: The first and easiest option to establish this benefit is to get the employer to agree to just administer the program. The VIP program immediately gives employees a 10 - 12% savings on the cost of a Metropass. This can be a step towards the third option of negotiating an employer contribution or subsidy to increase the discount on the transit passes. York University and Humber College are an examples of this first op-

tion. First initiated by the student federations, the universities have moved into the program voluntarily, outside of collective bargaining.

OPTION 2: The student federations administer the VIP program directly at the University of Toronto and Ryerson University. There the students, unionized staff, and faculty have all been benefiting since August 2003 in the largest VIP pilot programs to date. Over 12,000 discounted passes have been sold monthly at these two downtown campuses. Some union locals have also pursued this model when, after negotiating with their employer agreement to administer the VIP program, less than the required minimum of 50 employees sign up. One local in this situation got the employer's agreement to expand



the program to include union members at other bargaining units within the Local, with the union taking on the administrative role. This illustrates the flexibility of designing a program to fit the unique situation of various workplaces.

OPTION 3: Local 75 of HERE, was the first union to negotiate employer subsidy to bulk transit pass discounts at the workplace. Thanks to the new Collective Agreement and the discount offered by the TTC, Local 75's members can get their monthly Metropasses for 25% less! Here's what HERE negotiating team member Tord Henry has to say about the VIP Program, "Many of our members that have joined are definitely happy about the savings. We are proud to lead the way on transit savings in the labour movement."

Andrew Cook, Director of Human Resources at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel in Toronto, which administers the program to HERE employees, says, "There has been a seamless administration between the employee, employer and the TTC. The pass works well for all involved."

These bargaining initiatives pave the way for other unions to bring the issue to the table so that union members can take full advantage of the bulk discount transit pass program as a negotiated benefit in the workplace. This is just one model of employers and unions working together to promote increased public transit use through the VIP program.

At the end of the workbook, you will find a sample questionnaire to use in canvassing your the membership to determine interest in the VIP program; as well as sample contract language to bring the issue to the negotiating table. The greater the number of members using public transit in a workplace the higher the priority that can be given to bulk discount transit passes as a bargaining demand.

Improving Transit Service

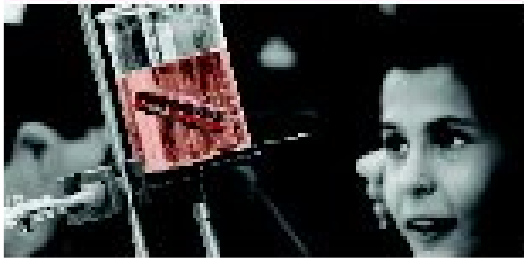
This section of the workbook looks at ways we can organize to improve transit service.

First, we need to identify specific problems with our existing transit service. We can gather this information from members through surveys, or by holding meetings. And then use the information to create a specific list of issues that we want to address. Based on the issues identified, we can do different things to get our

Public Transit for the Public Good Campaign

The Toronto and York Region Labour Council, the Toronto Environmental Alliance (TEA), the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU), have all been calling on the provincial government to put money back into transit. The Labour Council, partnered with TEA and the Canadian Federation of Students to launch the Public Transit for the Public Good campaign early in 2004 to mobilize public support to demand that the federal and provincial governments restore the traditional levels of funding to transit. While the campaign succeeded in securing commitments from both senior levels of government for a substantial infusion of cash over several years, it fell short of the traditional funding levels which is needed to not only maintain the current system but also to expand and improve service.

IT'S HOT ROCKET SCIENCE.



(cont'd from page 6)

Speaking to the summit meeting of the campaign, Labour Council president John Cartwright said, "It's been a terrific campaign with great support from the public. We stopped a fare increase, and got a down payment from senior levels of government. Now we need a long term commitment to secure the future of public transit in this city."

The Labour Council and its partners will continue to press the Premier, MPP's and Cabinet Ministers for a full restoration of transit funding. You can also let Dalton McGuinty, the Liberal Premier of Ontario, know where you and your union stand on transit funding by contacting him at: 416-325-1941 or e-mail him at: www.premier.gov.on.ca/english/contact/

voice heard at City Hall. Unions might decide to write a letter to the local City Councillor, asking for changes to route's schedule—asking that a bus arrive at the workplace earlier in the morning or run later at night, so that it corresponds with our members' shifts. There is a sample workplace / union letter at the end of the workbook. The Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) was able to get a bus schedule changed by directly approaching the TTC.

You might want to send a delegation to the Toronto Transit Commission's monthly meetings at City Hall, to raise issues about aspects of service that affect your members. Your lobbying efforts can include advocating for expanded service, more frequent service, more bus shelters, crosswalks or traffic lights, better lighting for streets at night and designated bike routes.

Improving service makes public transit more reliable and also generates more jobs, which helps the local economy. And if improved service gets more people out of cars and on transit it will keep the air we breathe cleaner. That's why, from every perspective, public transit is a sustainable option and it makes more sense now than ever.

Using Surveys

If your local has decided that you would like to take your concerns about transit service to the Toronto Transit Commission, then you should take the time at one of your meetings for each member to fill out a survey. The survey will provide a lot of information and the experience of completing the survey helps members focus their suggestions. The survey is at the end of the workbook.

Organizing Your Meeting on Transit Service

It is important to organize around a specific and achievable agenda. Making sure meetings are focused, with everybody participating, and coming up with actions that can give the group a sense of progress, are keys to success.

To ensure that the meeting runs smoothly and is productive, select a facilitator who will write down suggestions and ideas from participants. Making a list is a good way of keeping track of all the ideas that are expressed, and it can be reviewed later to determine priorities and assign responsibility for taking action on items agreed on.

The facilitator needs to be able to encourage all who attend to speak so that no-one person dominates the meeting. Remember that shy people have good ideas too, even if they aren't voicing them. Every once in a while, remember to open the discussion to include someone who hasn't spoken yet, especially if a few people seem to be doing all the talking. If the discussion is going all over the place, the facilitator can help focus the discussion by restating the original idea.

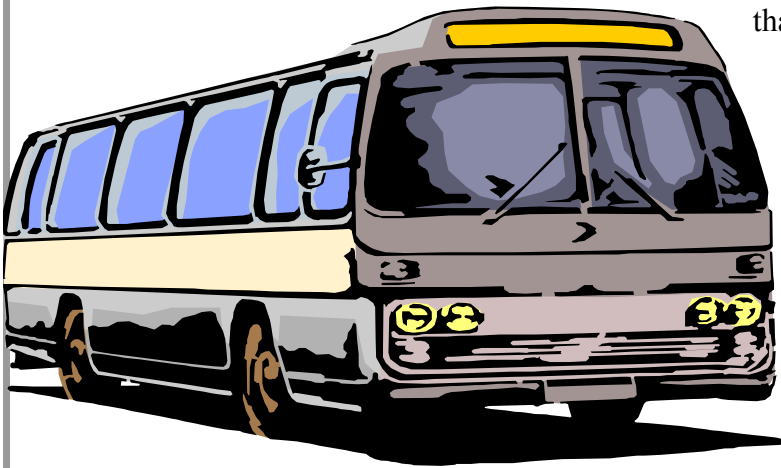
Use the meeting to identify what you actually want. If it's a bus service that needs to be made more frequent, or a stop that needs to be moved for safety reasons, be clear and explain the reasons why. Participants should be encouraged to be specific about their suggestions. Rather than agreeing that transit can be improved for example, specify exactly what should be changed to meet your particular workplace needs. Planning can only be done with reliable and detailed information about what is wrong.

At the end of this workbook you will find a sample letter to the TTC outlining what a workplace's actual transit needs might be. You can use the sample as a way to structure the information that your meeting generates.

Taking your Concerns to the TTC

You can make a deputation, which is a short (maximum 5 minute) speech, to the TTC when the Commissioners have their monthly meetings. The TTC is an agency that derives its power and much of its funding from City Hall, but is independent of daily supervision by the City. The actual decision-makers at the TTC are the nine commissioners, who are

appointed from the municipal politicians that are elected in City elections. They meet every second Wednesday of the month at City Hall at 2 p.m. These meetings are open to the public. The current Chair of the Commission is Councillor Howard Moscoe.



You must book your deputation to get on the agenda, by the day before the meeting you want to attend. Call: 416-393-3698 to book a deputation. And remember to stick to the five minute speaking limit in order to have all your points heard.

Unions can take collective action to support and help improve the TTC by joining groups like the Toronto Environmental Alliance (TEA) Rocket Riders, which is transit-user group that meets monthly. The Rocket Riders is an important group to support because they share labour's perspective on public transit. They see government funding as crucial for the TTC to remain a public service and improve service, thereby providing jobs, supporting the local economy and the environment.

**SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE
FOR BULK DISCOUNT TRANSIT PASSES**

1. Do you take public transit to go to work?

Yes No

2. If yes, would you like to be enrolled in a discount transit pass program that saves you between 10 – 12 % on a monthly Adult Metropass?

Yes No

Please return this questionnaire to _____ by day/month/year.

Your Bargaining Unit will use this information to assess if there is enough interest to apply for the TTC's Volume Incentive Pass program and possibly to negotiate an employer contribution to increase the discount on the monthly transit passes.

SAMPLE BARGAINING LANGUAGE

Letter of Agreement #1

Between:

The Company
and
The Union

Re: TTC Transit Pass

The union and the company agree to co-operate in setting up a group purchase plan through payroll deductions for public transit passes.

Signed in Toronto, ON, this day of month, year

For the Company

For the Union

SAMPLE BARGAINING LANGUAGE

Letter of Agreement #2

Between:

The Company
and
The Union

Re: TTC Pass Allowance

The Company and the Union agree to meet to review the practicability, acceptability and a possible date of implementation of a TTC Pass Allowance. If an agreement is reached between the Company and the Union as to the practicability, acceptability and date of implementation of said TTC pass allowance, full-time employees will be asked to vote on the implementation of the TTC Pass Allowance.

The Company agrees to contribute to the TTC Pass Allowance, based on the outcome of the employee vote, starting month/day/year, 2.25 cents per hour worked by full-time employees and effective month/day/year, 5 cents per hour worked by full-time employees.

Should the employees ratify the TTC Pass Allowance, the Letter of Agreement #2 shall be inserted into the Collective Agreement.

Signed in Toronto, ON, this day of month, year

For the Company

For the Union

SAMPLE WORKPLACE/UNION LETTER

Howard Moscoe, Chair
Toronto Transit Commission
1900 Yonge St.,
Toronto, ON
M4S 1Z2

DATE

Dear Commissioners,

We are writing to bring to your attention some issues related to adequate bus service in our community. As employees of _____, located at _____, many of us have to take transit to and from work. _____ employs _____ people, of which _____ take public transit to get to work.

One of the main issues is that there is not frequent bus service connecting us to the subway, at the most crucial times, at the beginning and end of our shifts. We request that you take our shift schedules into consideration when planning your service for Route(s) _____. In particular we need additional service at _____ a.m. and _____ p.m. both to and from the _____ subway station.

Many people using this bus route work evening and midnight shifts. We request that the hours of service on Routes _____ reflect the fact that working people are trying to get to and from their jobs. Night service is not only for leisure activities but helps people without cars carry out their work obligations. Frequent and timely night service is a safety issue for many women workers, and our workplace is approximately _____ percent female.

We have enclosed a sheet with our shift schedules and hope that you will be able to remedy this gap in service as soon as possible.

Thank you for your attention to this matter,

WORKPLACE TRANSIT SERVICE SURVEY

Thank you for filling out this survey. It will help to find out whether your workplace can benefit from better TTC service on specific routes.

Do You Take Transit to Work?

Put a checkmark (✓) beside Yes if you take the transit to work

Yes No

If you do not use transit to get to work please tell us how you get to and from work:

Car

Bicycle

Walking

Carpool

If you are a transit user, please fill in the following information about your travel to and from work.

Distance from Home or Starting Location

1. Where is your work located?

2. Your starting location (the nearest intersection)? _____

3. Destination (nearest intersection?) _____

4. How long does it take to walk to the stop nearest your home? _____

5. What time of day and what days of the week do you usually use the TTC for this activity?

A.M _____ P.M _____

Days: _____

6. Do you want to change where the stop is? _____

If yes, why, and to where? _____

7. Does the stop have a shelter? Yes No

If not, do you think it should? _____

8. What else is close to the stop nearest your home (e.g. store, phone, library, police station, school, etc.)?

9. What route(s) do you use? For example, you might take a streetcar like the Carlton 504 and transfer to the Ossington 63 bus and transfer to the subway , to reach your activity.

Time Spent on Transit

10. How long do you wait for a transit vehicle to come? _____

11. Do you think the vehicle is on time? Yes No

If not, how late is it? _____

12. Do you want to change the time the vehicle comes? If so, to what time?

13. How long does your trip take?

14. Can you get a seat? Yes Part of the way No

15. Do you want to change which streets the vehicle goes on? Yes No

If you think that vehicle should take another street, please tell us which one and why?

16. Do you have to transfer? Yes No

If you do have to transfer to get to your destination, please fill out and answer the following questions 2. 10 - 2.15.

Section 2: Transferring on the TTC

2.10. How long do you wait for a vehicle to come? _____

2.11. Do you think the vehicle is on time? Yes No

If not, how late is it? _____

2. 12. Would you want to change the time the route stops or begins? For example if the bus only runs until 11 p.m. would you like to increase it until 2 a.m.? Or overnight? Would you like it to start earlier in the morning?

Please tell us why: _____

2. 13. How long does your trip take? _____

2. 14. Do you want to change which streets the vehicle goes on? Yes No

If you think that vehicle should take another street, please tell us which one and why?

2. 15. Do you have to transfer more than once? Yes No

Resources

Here are some other electronic resources that will provide information about sustainable transportation, public transit, and labour initiatives.

Advocacy for Respect for Cyclists

<http://respect.to>

Amalgamated Transit Union

www.atucanada.com

Autoshare

www.autoshare.com

Better Environmentally Sound Transportation (BEST)

www.best.bc.ca

Toronto Cycling Committee

www.city.toronto.on.ca/cycling

Canadian Urban Transit Association

www.cutaactu.on.ca

The David Suzuki Foundation (Climate Change)

www.davidsuzuki.org

Moving the Economy: Business, Labour and Government Initiatives for the Environment

www.movingtheeconomy.ca

Toronto Environmental Alliance

www.torontoenvironment.org

Toronto & York Region Labour Council

www.labourcouncil.ca

Transportation and Land Use Coalition (U.S.A)

www.transcoalition.org

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change: Kyoto Protocol

<http://unfccc.int/resource/convkp.html>



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