

TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION REPORT NO.

MEETING DATE: July 14, 2010

SUBJECT: OPEN DATA – STATUS UPDATE

INFORMATION ITEM

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Commission receive the attached report for information.

BACKGROUND

The City of Toronto Open Data initiative involves making all collected data available to the public via City's Open Data website (<http://www.toronto.ca/open/>). The overall goal of this initiative is to provide unfiltered access to information subject to privacy, security or privilege/confidentiality limitations.

The TTC is committed to serving the public and ensuring that its operations are transparent and high service standard levels are maintained. The TTC supports the City of Toronto's Open Data initiative, as one component of ensuring transparency and accountability. Important steps have already been taken towards making TTC data available to the public, in support of the Open Data initiative.

- TTC staff has worked with the City of Toronto staff to provide transit schedule and stop data for publication on the City's Open Data website.
- The redesigned TTC website includes a vast amount of information related to transit service and TTC operational data.

Additionally work is underway towards developing policies and systems that will allow the TTC to provide more data based on processes that can be sustained in the long term. TTC staff has also held preliminary discussions with Google representatives towards developing a Google Transit trip planning application. This will largely involve establishing a process and infrastructure to provide Google with TTC transit schedule and stop data, similar to data used for the TTC's trip planner application.

DISCUSSION

Open Data Policy

Staff is in the process of developing a policy for providing digitized transit data to external sources. The overall goal of the policy is to ensure that there is a consistent review and approval process for any data that is released to the public. The policy will also address the following best practices for Open Data.

Completeness. All public data is made available. Public data is data that is not subject to valid privacy, security or privilege/confidentiality limitations.

Primary. Data is as collected at the source, with the highest possible level of granularity, not in aggregate or modified forms.

Timely. Data is made available as quickly as necessary to preserve the value of the data.

Accessible. Data is available to the widest range of users for the widest range of purposes.

Machine processable. Data is reasonably structured to allow automated processing.

Non-discriminatory. Data is available to anyone, with no requirement of registration.

Non-proprietary. Data is available in a format over which no entity has exclusive control.

License-free. Data is not subject to any copyright, patent, trademark or trade secret regulation. Reasonable privacy, security and privilege restrictions may be allowed.

Currently, the data provided to the City of Toronto Open Data initiative includes static information only. This would include geographical coded data (transit stops, routes, trips, scheduled arrival and departure times, etc.) typically used in transit trip planning software applications. This information is also available on the TTC's website (<http://www3.ttc.ca/>). There is other static data that may be provided in the future – fare attributes, fare rules, frequencies, transfers, passenger counts. The release of this additional data will be determined once the Open Data policy has been completed.

Data Exchange System

We are in the final stages of completing the development of an automated data exchange system. This system will provide an automated mechanism for external sources to be able to access and download TTC data. The system will provide data to the City of Toronto Open Data initiative, Google, and any other third parties in a standard and widely accepted data format. This leverages the current system and process established for the TTC trip planner application and minimizes the level of additional resources required to make the data available to external sources.

This also addresses some of the concerns and the requirement to provide data that is consistent with the TTC transit service changes (i.e. board period changes).

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