

# TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION REPORT NO.

**MEETING DATE:** February 24, 2014

**SUBJECT:** STAFF RESPONSE TO AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT –  
REVIEW OF WHEEL-TRANS SERVICES – SUSTAINING LEVEL  
AND QUALITY OF SERVICE REQUIRES CHANGES TO THE  
PROGRAM

## **ACTION ITEM**

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the TTC Board:

- 1) Receive the staff response to the Auditor General's Report on the Review of Wheel-Trans Services – Sustaining Level and Quality of Service Requires Changes to the Program; and
- 2) Approve the forwarding of the attached staff response for information to the Audit Committee of the City of Toronto.

### **FUNDING**

This report has no effect on the TTC's capital or operating budgets.

### **BACKGROUND**

At the December 19, 2012 Board Meeting, Jeff Griffiths, Auditor General, City of Toronto, Alan Ash, Auditor General's Office, and Jane Ying, Auditor General's Office provided a presentation on the results of an audit conducted in 2012 on Wheel-Trans operations entitled "Review of Wheel-Trans Services – Sustaining Level and Quality of Service Requires Changes to the Program". The Board received the presentation and report for information.

The report was forwarded to the TTC Audit Committee meeting on February 19, 2013 and to ACAT on February 28, 2013.

At its meeting on February 11, 2014, the TTC Audit Committee received the staff response to the Auditor General's report and approved forwarding the report to a regular meeting of the Board and then to the Audit Committee of the City of Toronto.

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Toronto Public Transit  
**AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS – NOT FULLY IMPLEMENTED**  
 Reporting Period: June 30, 2013

**Report Title:** Review of Wheel-Trans Services - Sustaining Level and Quality of Service Requires Changes to the Program  
**Report Date:** 12/6/2012  
**Project Code:** 11-TTC-02

**Contact Name:** Jane Ying

**Phone No:** 392-8480

**Recommendations:**

No#	Recommendation	Has Recommendation Been Implemented? (Yes, No or N/A)	Management's Comments and Action Plan/Time Frame
001	1. The Commission request the Chief Executive Officer, in consultation with the Advisory Committee on Accessible Transit, to explore various short-term options, including a free-ride program on a pilot basis, to encourage Wheel-Trans customers to use the accessible conventional transit system.	No.  This item has not been implemented but options including a free ride program are being considered as part of a corporate integration plan. (see Item 002)	TBD
002	2. The Commission request the Chief Executive Officer, in consultation with the Advisory Committee on Accessible Transit, to develop and implement a comprehensive plan for integrating Wheel-Trans customers into the accessible conventional transit system. Such an action plan should include but not be limited to: a. Identifying and addressing potential safety and service issues that can	No.  TTC has begun the development of a corporate integration plan which includes all recommendations in a, b and c.	Completed by: TBD

present barriers to Wheel-Trans customers in using the accessible conventional system;

b. Education, communication and training programs for Wheel-Trans customers and transit passengers; and

c. Customer service training to TTC staff with particular emphasis on assisting people with mobility difficulties.

003 3. The Commission request the Chief Executive Officer to expedite the planning and implementation of an eligibility classification system for Wheel-Trans services in accordance with requirements set forth in the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation made under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

No.

The TTC intends to expedite the planning and implementation of an eligibility classification system well before the required January 2017 date.

Completed by:  
December 2015

004 4. The Commission request the Chief Executive Officer, in consultation with the Advisory Committee on Accessible Transit, to review and enhance the Wheel-Trans eligibility assessment process and criteria to ensure that applicants' abilities to use the conventional transit system are objectively and credibly appraised. Steps to be considered should include but not be limited to:

Yes

With the exception of point a. (requiring a medical or health certification) TTC intends to review and enhance Wheel-Trans process in conjunction with Item #003.

Completed by:  
December 2016



a. Requiring a medical or health certification regarding mobility conditions as part of the application process;

b. Considering the merits and cost-effectiveness of incorporating functional evaluations into the eligibility assessment process; and

c. Evaluating the effectiveness of the assessment criteria, scoring scheme, and threshold points for eligibility.

The review should also take into consideration the process used by other providers throughout Canada and the United States.

a. The issue of requiring a medical certificate was brought forth and discussed at the March 7, 2013 ACAT Wheel-Trans Operations Sub-Committee. The issue was brought forth in the March 28, 2013 ACAT Meeting where members voted unanimously to not support this Auditor General recommendation.

005 5. The Commission request the Chief Executive Officer, in consultation with the Advisory Committee on Accessible Transit, to consider initiating a photo identification card program to applicants eligible for Wheel-Trans services.

No.

The issue is to be placed on an upcoming ACAT Sub-Committee agenda.

(Preliminary estimates suggests a upfront pay out would be approximately \$80,000 with an annual cost of \$20,000 thereafter)

Completed by:  
March 2014

006 6. The Commission request the Chief Executive Officer, in consultation with the Advisory Committee on Accessible Transit, give consideration to the establishment of a policy to discourage repetitive late cancellations and “no-shows” for Wheel-Trans eligibility assessment or

No.

A draft SOP is under review and will be put forth to ACAT at its next scheduled Operations Sub-Committee which is to occur in February 2014.

Completed by:  
Spring 2014

appeal appointments.

Completed by:  
November 2013

007 7. The Commission request the Chief Executive Officer to develop and implement procedures to maintain an up-to-date Wheel-Trans registrant database. Steps should also be taken to systematically identify and cancel inactive passes in a timely manner.

Yes

The system automatically moves the customer to an inactive status when there has been no activity for a period of time.

When a customer re-activates (if) then SOP WT-CS 051 details the "Reactivating of an Inactive Customer.

Completed by:  
April 2014

008 8. The Commission request the Chief Executive Officer to review Wheel-Trans call center operations and call response capacity. Such review should include but not be limited to:

Yes.

- a. Shortening reservation line operating hours to allocate more staff resources to the afternoon hours;
- b. Enhancing internet booking capacity by removing the address change and time booking restrictions;
- c. Dedicating more staff resources to the priority line to ensure timely call response;
- d. Addressing the high absenteeism rate among call center staff; and

- a. Seven (7) additional staff positions have been requested in the yet to be approved '14 Budget.
- b. Customers can now book for same-day rides and will soon be able to edit or add to their pre-registered destination addresses.
- c. A revised work schedule has been implemented to enhance response time.
- d. More rigorous efforts are being developed with HR.

e. Consulting 311 Toronto on ways to improve Wheel-Trans call center response capacity and reduce staff absenteeism

e. Completed 2013

rate.

009 9. The Commission request the Chief Executive Officer, in consultation with the Advisory Committee on Accessible Transit, to review the Wheel-Trans policy regarding late cancellations and no-shows with a view to increasing its flexibility. Consideration be given to including formalized processes for customers to request re-consideration based on unusual circumstances.

Yes.

The policy was brought forth and discussed in the March 7, 2013 ACAT Wheel-Trans Sub-Committee and before ACAT in their July 25, 2013 meeting. Staff presented a modification to the process which involved the issuance of a letter to customers alerting them of policy violations that reach a level of concern.

The Sub-Committee made a recommendation that ACAT support the measure.

Changes to the policy will be discussed further with ACAT.

Completed by:  
June 2014

010 10. The Commission request the Chief Executive Officer, in consultation with the Advisory Committee on Accessible Transit, to consider developing procedures to identify and contact Wheel-Trans customers who consistently miss their scheduled trips to ensure they have a clear understanding of the pick-up and wait time rules.

Yes.

Although the SOP is yet to be finalized an automated messaging protocol is in the process of being developed. This message will be sent to customers at their 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> late cancellation to remind them of the policy and hopefully prevent them from violating the policy.

Completed by:  
June 2014

011 11. The Commission request the Chief Executive Officer, in consultation with the Advisory Committee on

Yes.

The policy has been reviewed and possible

Completed by:  
June 2014.



Accessible Transit, to consider adopting a more restrictive Wheel-Trans late cancellation and no-show policy after successfully implementing the four-hour cancellation allowance, and incorporating the provisions for re-consideration.

changes will be discussed with ACAT.

Completed by:

012 12. The Commission request the Chief Executive Officer to monitor the extent of overtime incurred by Wheel-Trans bus operators and where possible steps be taken to reduce the level of overtime.

Yes.

There has been a 30% decrease in Operator OT from 2012 to 2013.

This decrease is in part due to efforts to solidify the workforce to ensure sufficient Spareboard level. And, improved Operator attendance has lessened the burden of filling runs with OT.

December 2013

013 13. The Commission request the Chief Executive Director to continue to monitor and where possible steps be taken to reduce Wheel-Trans bus preventable collision rate.

Yes.

There has been a 10% decrease in preventable vehicle accidents from 2012 to 2013.

A preventative poster campaign was implemented to encourage Operators to be more attentive to situations that can cause accidents. A more intense refresher training session has been implemented.

The 2014 Budget asks for 8 hour refresher certification

Completed by:

December 2013

classes and prioritizes Operators who have been identified as needing special attention.

014	14. The Commission request the Chief Executive Officer to monitor and refine the Wheel-Trans route scheduling system to improve efficiency. Ongoing monitoring should include processes to encourage customers and bus operators to report inefficient route scheduling for further investigation.	Yes.  Wheel-Trans has a formidable process to attain feedback from operators and customers relating to concerns and suggestions  Improvements include monitoring and adjusting travel time to improve on-time performance.  Extended the afternoon rush hour by two hours to improve and reflect true travel patterns of Toronto and to improve on-time performance.  Created and adjusted numerous Landmarks to improve the booking process and provide operators with more details on common pickup/drop-off locations.  Updated the network map with new streets to improve travel times. Corrected existing streets (major	Completed by: December 2013
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intersections, geo-codes, building description, and entrances) to ensure the scheduling system is reading the correct location which provides operators with better information.

Scheduled additional backup runs to improve and maintain on-time performance.

Improved monitoring of major construction projects (such as Queen's Quay and Centrepoint Mall) and adjusted Landmarks accordingly.

Optimizing template (regular) trips at the start of major board periods and over the holiday season to improve share-riding and scheduling directionality and reduce costs.

Addition attention given to trip backloads from contracted services to buses to reduce costs, improve share-riding and improve scheduling directionality.

Added additional time to vehicle set-up, Customer board and De-boarding.

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| 015 | 15. The Commission request the Chief Executive Officer to re-assess the needs for the existing Wheel-Trans community bus routes, and cancel or develop alternate routes to ensure the services are cost efficient and effective.   | Yes.<br><br>TTC is currently assessing the routes and a report to the Board is to be presented in early 2014.                   | Completed by:<br>June 2014    |
| 016 | 16. The Commission request the Chief Executive Officer to ensure that all future Requests For Proposal for Wheel-Trans contracted taxi services are designed to seek competitive bidding on price components as well as non-financial factors.                                 | Yes<br><br>Attachment reflects that all AG recommendations (016 through 020) have been incorporated in the RFP recently issued. | Completed by:<br>October 2013 |
| 017 | 17. The Commission request the Chief Executive Officer, in developing future Request For Proposal for Wheel-Trans contracted accessible taxi services, to ensure that the monthly management fee is adequately structured to obtain the best overall value for the Commission. | Yes<br><br>(see response in (016))  | October 2013                  |
| 018 | 18. The Commission request the Chief Executive Officer to take the necessary steps to enhance the procurement process in future acquisitions of Wheel-Trans contracted taxi services. Such steps should include but not be limited to:   | Yes<br><br>(see response in (016))  | October 2013                  |

- a. Ensuring all terms and conditions in the Requests For Proposal and contract documents are reviewed for clarity and consistency;
- b. Ensuring all concerns identified in the previous procurement process and contracts are addressed; and
- c. Retaining a Fairness Commissioner to oversee the entire procurement process, from finalization of the Requests For Proposal to the final award of the contracts.

019	19. The Commission request the Chief Executive Officer, in developing future Requests For Proposal for Wheel-Trans contracted taxi services, to replace the bonus entitlement with a financial penalty clause to deter inadequate contractor performance or non-compliance with contract terms and conditions.	Yes  (see response in (016))	October 2013
020	20. The Commission request the Chief Executive Officer, in developing future Requests For Proposal for Wheel-Trans contracted taxi services, to incorporate requirements for contractors to inform drivers of their rights and responsibilities as prescribed in the contracts, and how drivers may report inappropriate contractor practices to Wheel-Trans.	Yes  (see response in (016))	October 2013



021	21. The Commission request the Chief Executive Officer to develop and update Wheel-Trans standard operating procedures in a timely manner, including those relating to taxi contract administration and monitoring.	Yes.	<p>Completed by: December 2014</p> <p>A total of 211 SOPs were reviewed or created since the issuance of the AG report.</p> <p>78% have been completed while the remaining 22% are in the process of being completed.</p>
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022	22. The Commission request the Chief Executive Officer to reduce the annual printing and mailing costs of Wheel-Trans quarterly newsletters and bulletins to customers. Consideration should also be given to allowing advertisements in the publications to generate revenue.	Yes	<p>Completed by: January 2014</p> <p>Newsletters distribution has been reduced from 4 per year to 3.</p> <p>Newsletter information will be available by email, via web and call-outs. Email-able version available in early 2014. Staff will seek feedback on other formats and provide if possible based on each individual needs.</p> <p>The suggestion to solicit advertising has been rejected,</p>
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023	23. This report be forwarded to the City Audit Committee for information		<p>Completed by:</p>  <p>Completed by:</p>
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