

# TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION REPORT NO.

**MEETING DATE:** July 23, 2014

**SUBJECT:** FREE WI-FI ON ALL TTC BUSES AND STREETCARS

## **INFORMATION ITEM**

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Board receive this report for information.

### **FUNDING**

The funding requirements will be determined once the technology and the funding model have been identified as part of the CAD/AVL project and a business determination has been made on the business purpose of customer Wi-Fi.

### **BACKGROUND**

At the June 24, 2014 Board meeting, staff were directed to report back to the July 23, 2014 Board meeting with more information regarding the potential costs and opportunities for private/public partnership for providing customers with free Wi-Fi services on all TTC buses and streetcars.

### **DISCUSSION**

Wi-Fi on buses and streetcars is technically feasible to provide. There is, however, little customer demand and significant cost implication in both the capital provision of equipment and the on-going operating costs of providing bandwidth for customers' mobile devices. Customers that use Wi-Fi capable mobile devices on buses and streetcars almost certainly have a personal data plan of some kind.

There appear to be no major transit agencies that have rolled out customer Wi-Fi to buses and streetcars for these reasons. Wi-Fi is typically a technology that is used to link to cheaper terrestrial bandwidth (via, say, your home internet) than the more expensive cellular bandwidth. Putting Wi-Fi on buses and streetcars not only uses the more expensive cellular network it also transfers the costs of providing the data from the customer that is using a mobile device to the TTC. Costs of such an initiative cannot be known until a business model is determined. As the TTC continues to develop its overall solution, it will continue to monitor the evolution of this service and, through procurements, explore the feasibility of public/private partnership opportunities.

Notwithstanding the above, in 2014 the TTC began the budgeted work to replace its CIS (bus and streetcar communications system) with a modern Computer Aided Dispatch/ Automatic Vehicle Location (CAD/AVL) system and that project is underway. The project scope includes the

identification and installation of the base technology required to enable Wi-Fi on all buses and streetcars making them essentially 'Wi-Fi ready' – namely a cellular modem on all streetcars and buses. This technology will enable connectivity for operational data including real-time route management, safety and vehicle health data.

The estimated start date for the production deployment of the CAD/AVL systems including the necessary Wi-Fi technology to the bus and streetcar fleets is scheduled for first quarter 2016. Given the critical importance of this work, it would be neither prudent nor effective to consider partnerships before this time.

**JUSTIFICATION**

This report is for information only.

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