



c/o Wheel-Trans, 580 Commissioners Street, Toronto, Ontario M4M 1A7

October 2, 2019

TTC Board Members
Toronto Transit Commission
1900 Yonge Street
Toronto, Ontario
M4S 1Z2

Dear Board Members:

The Advisory Committee on Accessible Transit (ACAT) is forwarding the approved minutes of its General Monthly meeting of August 29, 2019 to the October 24, 2019 Board Meeting for information (attached).

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Mazin Aribi
2019 ACAT Chair

Attachment

TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION
COMMITTEE MINUTES

Minutes of Meeting: Advisory Committee on Accessible Transit
Meeting No. 346

Meeting Date: Thursday, August 29, 2019

Location: 1900 Yonge Street, Toronto, ON
7th Floor Boardroom

Present: Mazin Aribi, Chair
Marian McDonell, Co-Vice Chair
Angela Rebeiro, Co-Vice Chair
Margo Brodie
Mary Burton
Anita Dressler
Jessica Geboers
Bobbi Moore
Craig Nicol
James Pyo
Lauri Sue Robertson
Igor Samardzic
Sam Savona
Chris Stigas

Regrets: Thomas Richardson

TTC Representatives: Matt Hagg, Senior Planner – System Accessibility
Lodon Hassan, Assistant Manager Customer Service, Wheel-Trans
Dean Milton, Manager-Strategic Initiatives
Desrienne McIlwrick, Lead Travel Trainer
Cameron Penman, Division Manager - Customer Service
Dwayne Geddes, Head of Wheel-Trans

Copies: Rick Leary, Chief Executive Officer
Kirsten Watson, Deputy CEO – Operations
Kathleen Llewellyn-Thomas, Chief Customer Officer
Orest Kobylansky, Executive Director - Operations
Susan Reed Tanaka, Chief Capital Officer
Josie La Vita, Chief Financial Officer
Susan Sperling, Executive Director – Corporate Communications
James Ross, Chief Operating Officer
Dwayne Geddes, Head of Wheel-Trans
Deborah Brown, Head of Customer Communications
TTC Board Members

Items Discussed:

1. Call to Order / Attendance
2. Declaration of Conflict of Interest
3. Approval of Agenda
4. Remarks from ACAT Chair
5. Review and Approval of July 25, 2019 Minutes
6. Business Arising Out of Minutes/Outstanding Items
7. Deputation: Nil
8. Subcommittee Reports and Updates:
 - Communications
 - Design Review
 - Service Planning
 - Wheel-Trans Operations
9. ACAT Subcommittee Meeting Highlights for the Next TTC Board Meeting
10. Wheel-Trans 10-Year Strategy Update
11. Report on Customer Liaison Panel
12. Report on TTC Board Meeting and Accessibility Matters
13. Update – Improving the ACAT Application Process for 2021 Membership Recruitment
14. Review of Correspondence
15. Other / New Business
16. Next Meeting – September 26, 2019
17. Adjournment

1. Call to Order / Attendance

Chair Mazin Aribi called the meeting to order at 1:07 p.m. and attendance was taken.

2. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Nil.

3. Approval of Agenda

On a motion by Sam Savona and seconded by Margo Brodie, the agenda was approved.

4. Remarks from ACAT Chair

Mazin Aribi began his remarks by congratulating Dwayne Geddes on his new position as Head of Wheel-Trans on behalf of ACAT members.

Mazin informed the members that over 60 people attended the July 26, 2019 ACAT recruitment session at City Hall and over 50 people attended the July 31, 2019 session. The interview process is underway and recommendations will be brought to the TTC Board Meeting in November for approval.

Mazin closed his remarks by reminding members that the next TTC Board Meeting is on September 24, 2019. There will also be a special TTC Board Meeting on September 25, 2019, from 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., followed by the 2019 TTC Public Forum on Accessible Transit from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Beanfield Centre, 105 Princes' Blvd. The Board meetings are open to the public.

Questions and Comments from the Committee

Members wondered if there would be food provided at the Public Forum due to spending the whole day at the meetings. The Chair reminded members to bring food if they can. Lodon Hassan, confirmed that attendants will be present to assist people at the meetings.

Dwayne Geddes, thanked the members for congratulating him on his new position. Dwayne said that there is a lot of work to be done with ACAT, especially during the time of transition, re-registration and Family of Services. Dwayne said he looks forward to working with members and being involved in the work in order for it to be done fairly and equitably.

5. Review and Approval of July 25, 2019 Minutes

On a motion by Anita Dressler and seconded by Lauri Sue Robertson, the minutes of the July 25, 2019 meeting were approved.

6. Business Arising Out of Minutes / Outstanding Items

- Item: Review of the Impact of Curb Side Bike Lanes on Wheel-Trams Customers and Operators in Accessing Certain Pick-Up/Drop-Off Locations – Ongoing. Referred to WTOS. Will be receiving a report back this month and to report at the next meeting.

- Item: Pre-Boarding Announcements on Subway Trains - Third quarter of 2019.
Announcements are being implemented on trains on Line 1 and they will commence on trains on Line 2 shortly.

Questions and Comments from the Committee

Regarding the item on bike lanes, members noted that they saw on the news a mock-up of a new bike lane on Danforth Avenue. Members noted that the mock-up and design implemented a concrete planter that divides the bike lane and the street which can be difficult for people to reach the sidewalk. Members were confused as to why the idea of a bike lane was implemented before bringing it forward with ACAT. Staff advised that the bike lane installation was part of a pop-up installation that lasted two days only and that the purpose was to show how road space could potentially be reallocated for different uses. It was not meant as a permanent installation.

Members noted that the idea of a mock-up could give the wrong impression on the TTC and should be brought to Wheel-Trans in case someone gets the wrong impression and believes there was a new bike lane. Matt Hagg noted that that TTC staff will be present during discussion of implementing future bike lanes.

Regarding the outstanding item of resolving inconsistencies with Wheel-Trans, members suggested to email Charlene Sharpe directly if there is an issue.

7. Deputation

Nil.

8. Subcommittee Reports and Updates

Communications Subcommittee (CS) – Mary Burton, Chair

A CS meeting was held on August 1, 2019.

- International Symbol of Access (ISA) on Pylons Outside of TTC Subway Stations

Laura Lehming, Coordinator, Wayfinding and Signage, presented on the International Symbol of Access (ISA) and what can be done to improve their visibility. The history of the pylon is a keystone logo in front of all subway stations. The pylon initiative was to change the old ones due to them falling apart and typical wear and tear. The purpose of the symbol is so that customers can know where the subway station accessible entrance is located. During nighttime, the symbols are usually illuminated by LEDs.

- Streetcar Rail Map

The streetcar map does not currently show the ISA beside accessible streetcar routes. Subcommittee members had proposed to revise the map to show which routes are accessible. It was noted that all streetcar routes will be made accessible at the end of 2019 and that showing each streetcar route as accessible at that time would then be redundant.

It was proposed to indicate that loops like Exhibition Loop are accessible and treat them like stations. This would help with trip planning in order to know which stops are accessible.

- Design Consistency with TTC Maps

The subcommittee inquired about maps found in the subway, bus, streetcar, etc. that were inconsistent with design, installed improperly or were missing.

Laura pointed out that, if there is an inconsistency or a missing map, they should take note of the train, streetcar, or bus number to address the vehicle directly once it is reported to the shops. Laura noted that the design with maps is decided through the TTC Rail Cars and Shops. She will look into templates for maps and see if they can keep it consistent throughout all platforms.

- PA Announcements on the Subway

At an ACAT meeting, it was brought to the attention of the Subcommittee that the announcements in the subway stations have issues of repetition or are all announced one after the other. For example, if there is a closure or a delay or an announcement to stay off the tracks, sometimes all three announcements will be made one after the other. This can be exceptionally difficult for people who have vision loss and have to wait for the announcements to be made to continue walking.

Hailey Waldman is in charge of scripting the announcements, such as closures or big events, changes to PRESTO, etc. She also scripts ACAT meeting announcements, a current campaign of staying off the tracks, and other announcements that need to take priority. The announcements are then installed by the TTC technical team and then she schedules them through a system that provides limited flexibility for playback times.

- PRESTO Update

An update from Heather Brown concerning PRESTO and the support person card was made. The timing was finalized and will be communicated when available. The support person PRESTO card will be made available in Fall 2019. People who want to apply for a support person PRESTO card need to apply before the TTC Stop Accepting Tickets and Tokens date, around mid-2020. More details about the support person PRESTO card details will be made available in the next coming weeks and months.

- Newsletter Update

Alicia Sgromo was in the process of editing a couple of items from the newsletter and was ready to send out the first draft to the subcommittee for edits. The newsletter will not go out before the first or second week of September 2019, before the TTC Public Forum on Accessible Transit.

Questions and Comments from the Committee

Members who were not present during the CS meeting were vocal about not agreeing with the current ISA placements. All members echoed that they are not content with the current ISA symbol and placements, and that they should advise the TTC Board in order to get some changes.

Members from the CS noted that these concerns and disagreements were brought up during their meeting. It was suggested that staff changes often and that priorities might change when new staff comes in.

Members suggested that the ACAT Executive take this item to the next ACAT Executive quarterly meeting.

Members who were not present during the CS meeting were also vocal about the issues regarding the PA announcements. They pointed out that people with vision loss can have a hard time trying to navigate while announcements are continuous. Members said that the announcements are too frequent and chained together, which can block one's ability to navigate. All members echoed this issue and mentioned that this problem was brought forward at the meeting.

Members proposed that the TTC limit the amount of announcements made, rather than find a way to spread them out. Staff advised that, due to the limitations of the PA system, it was difficult spreading out announcements. Members then proposed to reduce the number of announcements, as some of the announcements help people navigate. Members who proposed limiting the number of announcements clarified that they are only asking to reduce the number of announcements about people taking off their backpacks or staying off the tracks.

Members proposed to take this discussion back to the staff in charge of the PA announcements. They also proposed to invite specific members to subcommittee meetings if they believe an agenda point will relate to their ideas. For example, if one member has a problem with announcements, they should be invited to the meeting.

Design Review Subcommittee (DRS) – Craig Nicol, Chair

No DRS meetings were held since the last ACAT meeting.

The next DRS meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 4, 2019.

Service Planning Subcommittee (SPS) – Anita Dressler, Chair

No SPS meetings were held since the last ACAT meeting.

The next SPS meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 4, 2019.

Wheel-Trans Operations Subcommittee (WTOS) – Sam Savona, Chair

A WTOS meeting was held on July 11, 2019. Lauri Sue Robertson chaired the meeting.

- Community Engagement Unit (CEU)

The TTC's Community Engagement Unit gave a presentation. The CEU was created to focus on Toronto communities who are using the TTC for shelters and other purposes rather than transit. The objective was to help people who use the TTC who are in need of shelter, who are in crisis, who are less fortunate, need housing, and to be able to lend a hand to people needing it.

- Mobile App

Staff provided an update on the mobile app. The mobile app is a way to make it more convenient to book a trip on a regular basis simply by using a phone. Staff stated that, instead of having all the information at once like the desktop website, customers would have to go page

by page for the booking information. The desktop version might have some things that the mobile app cannot provide and vice versa. WTOS members were able to try out the app through their phones.

- Policy Updates:

Dean Milton, Manager – Strategic Initiatives, gave a review of Wheel-Trans policies. The following policies have been vetted through the TTC Human Rights and Legal departments as well as ACAT:

- Do Not Leave Unattended
- Traveling with Infants and Children
- Cross-Boundary Travel
- Fare Payment

Members pointed out that the policy section should state that riders should ensure they are registered through Wheel-Trans Customer Service, otherwise they would not know.

A WTOS meeting was held on August 8, 2019.

Staff reported on the Travel Training Program. WTOS members had concerns that there was a gap between the appeal panel recommending the travel training in writing, and who gets in contact with the appropriate staff to set up a session. Staff reported that they get referrals from Wheel-Trans Customer Service, and follows up with the customer with additional contact details. Members suggested that the system that advises customers that they have conditional travel should also be followed up with recommendations of travel training.

WTOS is still reviewing and to provide amendment suggestions on the Wheel-Trans policies to staff.

Questions and Comments from the Committee

Members asked if there was any data analyzing the success rate of the FOS trips with individuals who have completed travel training. Members pointed out it might be helpful to have statistics of conversions rate and whether or not customers feel more comfortable using the conventional transit after a successful travel training session.

Desrienne McIlwrick noted that she receives anecdotal responses from customers by call, texts or emails. She keeps track of where the customers went for the session and how it went. The data is kept with the customers' file. She stated that she can report back at the next meeting.

Members asked when the policies would be officially updated and posted on the TTC website under Wheel-Trans. Dean Milton said that the policies that have been vetted by ACAT, Human Rights and Legal departments and should be going live in the fall 2019. Dean pointed out that the reason there is no specific date yet is due to some procedures needing to be addressed to ensure proper operating procedures internally. Staff cannot release a policy if they are unable to enforce them.

Members suggested that, once the policies are published on the TTC website, they should be included in the Wheel-Trans self-booking site as a link for customers to access.

Members wondered if the Layover Policy was reviewed at the Communications Subcommittee meeting. Dean answered that the initial idea was to have a joint session with CS and WTOS to discuss the policy; however, no members from the CS attended.

9. ACAT Subcommittee Meeting Highlight for the Next TTC Board Meeting

- CS
 - PA System Discussion
 - Streetcar Rail Map
 - PRESTO Update
- WTOS
 - Travel Training Program
 - Review of Wheel-Trans policies

10. Wheel-Trans 10-Year Strategy Update/Travel Training Update

Dean Milton, Manager - Strategic Initiatives, provided updates that were brought by CS. Alicia Sgromo provided Dean updates to provide to the members.

• Newsletter

The upcoming newsletter should be in customers' mailboxes by September 16, 2019. Family of Services (FOS) and Conditional trip information are to be mailed to customers. Staff have done their due diligence to communicate the initiative through public forums and mail-outs. Eligible customers under conditional trip will be sent a specific letter as to what their conditions are. The plan is to advise customers in advance before the conditional trip policy goes live.

• Fare Booth Collector

Dean noted that the final stages of the fare booth collectors are in place. In case a Wheel-Trans customer traveling FOS runs into an issue at a station where there are no customer Service Representatives, then the fare booth collector will be able to assist.

• Advertising

Continuous work is being done with Desrienne McIlwrick with ads and communication with Travel Training. Staff are always looking for opportunities to promote the program.

• Access Hubs

Currently, the Access Hubs on Jane and Eglinton are under construction as well as the one on Ellesmere.

Questions and Comments from the Committee

Members asked about the FOS trip planning and how they decide which route to bring customers to their destination. It was brought up that sometimes Wheel-Trans vehicles will take a longer route to accommodate all customers which can result in being dropped off at a different transfer point or a longer trip.

Dean pointed out that there are about 15,000 trips a day made by Wheel-Trans customers, and that it is difficult to provide each customer with their own ride while also maintaining schedule. Currently, the technology that is used to calculate which route to take depends on the time of day, distance, traffic, and the ride duration.

Members pointed out a situation where someone was near College Street and requested a ride to Dundas Station. The Wheel-Trans vehicle will make other stops which resulted in a longer ride with the member in the vehicle, rather than a one stop ride. Dean pointed out that it will not be the closest subway station to where the customer lives, but that it depends on where their traveling.

Members expressed that it may be difficult for a customer to be dropped off at different stations in order to make their transfer. Some people might get lost or not know how to get anywhere, which can discourage them from using the conventional service.

Dean stated that this would be a learning opportunity for a customer to get more comfortable with using different routes. Customers have limited transfers. In stage 2, customers will only be allowed 2 transfers to a conventional service.

Currently, those who request a FOS trips are dealt by using Wheel-Trans, transfer to conventional service, and back to Wheel-Trans service. Wheel-Trans will bring customers to a conventional stop that allows them to travel as far as where the conventional service allows, then they are picked up by Wheel-Trans. The next phase would be to let customers use Wheel-Trans, transfer to the conventional system, another transfer within the conventional system, and then Wheel-Trans service. Additional phases will offer more opportunities for conventional transfer.

Dean stated that if a customer books a FOS trip and they do not like the solution they are able to decline once the conditional matching is in place this fall. If a customer is conditional and do not have a condition, they will be offered a FOS trip, and if they do not like the solution they should call Wheel-Trans Customer Service. If a customer is going from point A to point B, there is a possibility that the solution will not always be the same one every time and customers might get transferred to different routes or stations.

Dean added that, through the assessment process, customers will be able to identify what their healthcare professional has provided to their abilities. If they are unable to travel safely, it is recommended they are deemed unconditional or unfamiliar which will allow them to travel door-to-door. Dean stated that members are comparing the time on the conventional service versus the FOS trip; they are not comparing the FOS trip to the door-to-door.

Members expressed that they felt this system was inconvenient for people who request a FOS trip and are dropped off at a different transfer point. Dean asked ACAT to report anything to Customer Service if they feel their trip was deemed illogical.

Members expressed that it was unfair to put an extra worry on Wheel-Trans customers who will possibly be dropped off at an illogical station. People who ride the conventional system rarely use different routes to get to work, school or home etc. It is unfair to expect Wheel-Trans customers to adapt to unexpected drop off locations.

Members suggested to have an option on the booking site where customers can include 2 or 3 alternate routes that they are open to taking during their trip, in order to avoid unexpected drop-off locations. Dean replied that Staff have access to some control and parameters, and are open to make sure these solutions are palpable and make sense.

Dean responded that he hears what the members have to say and that he will do his best to communicate these types of issues and bring back feedback to figure out solutions.

Travel Training

Desrienne McIlwrick, Lead Travel Trainer, provided an update.

Currently, there are 635 customers who expressed interest and all of them have been contacted. 227 customers have participated and 93 have completed a one-on-one session. 18 are currently in the process of booking. 21 have been offered training and declined. There are 276 customers who have not yet replied.

An orientation was held at Bathurst and 5 customers attended. Desrienne noted that the next orientation is still to be scheduled.

Questions and Comments from the Committee

Members pointed out that the date still says "August 22" for the next Travel Training session and it should be corrected. It was suggested that, to facilitate the process, to only change the date and location but keep the message the same.

11. Report on Customer Liaison Panel (CLP) - Anita Dressler, ACAT Representative

No CLP meeting was held since the last ACAT meeting.

12. Report on TTC Board Meeting and Accessibility Matters

The next TTC Board Meeting will be held on September 24, 2019. The Chair encouraged members to attend and support the two motions that ACAT brought forward to the TTC Board.

13. Update - Improving the ACAT Application Process for 2021 Membership Recruitment

Lodon Hassan, Assistant Manager Customer Service, provided an update.

Due to the motion passed at the May 30, 2019 ACAT meeting about membership recruitment, ACAT met with TTC staff on July 12, 2019. After discussion, changes will be made to the application process in 2020 for 2021 membership on a trial basis. Staff will ask the TTC Board to endorse this trial and a final determination will be made after the next application process.

• Changes with the ACAT Information Sessions

Some changes concerning information sessions will be made. Information sessions will be scheduled two weeks apart; however, attendance at the information sessions will no longer be mandatory. By 2020, Lodon would like to have the information sessions streamed online, to aid interested applicants to apply from home. Applications for ACAT membership can be emailed through PDF or paper copies can be sent by mail.

- Application Forms

A new option to fill out applications online will be available. People who apply online will be asked to go through a screening process agreeing to ACAT policies, meeting times, and if they are a Toronto resident. A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document will be developed to give to applicants to answer questions they might have about ACAT.

Questions and Comments from the Committee

Members suggested that, when people do the information session online, they should fill out an agreement that they have watched the whole stream, in order to make sure they understand what type of work ACAT membership entails.

Members suggested that applicants have to be informed that meetings will not be held at night or online, and that ACAT membership is volunteer and not employment. Members suggested to add that in the FAQ.

Members suggested to change the name from "ACAT Information Sessions" to "Recruitment Sessions for ACAT," or something that includes the word "recruitment" in the title.

Members suggested to remind applicants that most of the communication is mainly made through the computer; therefore, they should have access to one and understand how to use it for communication.

14. Review of Correspondence

On August 1, 2019, ACAT received a letter from Tom McElroy, a professor at York University entitled "The New Subway Extension – Don't They Ever Consult the Riders??" which talks about design failures and inaccessibility within the TTC.

Members agreed to refer this item to DRS to extract good suggestions and comments from the letter. It was noted that going forward when Metrolinx start their building projects, to learn from current working accessible subway stations.

15. Other / New Business

Members discussed an issue in the past about announcements on TTC vehicles and not understanding the pronunciation. They also brought up the difficulty of understanding the Wheel-Trans notification about their upcoming ride.

An example was given, that when a member received the phone call to confirm their booked ride with Wheel-Trans, instead of saying "St. Clair," the automated machine pronounced it as "S.T. Clair." The member had to go back on the website to make sure the address is allocated properly.

Members stated that they would receive their calls later or badly timed. For example, if someone booked a ride for the afternoon, as well as within the next couple of days, they would receive the phone call about the furthest booking rather than the sooner trip.

Lodon proposed to take this item back to WTOS for further discussion. He said the speed of the message and the timing of the message can be altered and looked over.

16. Next Meeting

The next meeting of ACAT will be held on Thursday, September 26, 2019, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the 7th Floor Boardroom, 1900 Yonge Street

17. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:12 p.m.

Elaine Genest
Recording Secretary