

2049.2



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

December 3, 2020

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 October 29, 2020 to the December 15, 2020 Board Meeting for information (attached).

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Mazin Aribi
2020 ACAT Chair

Attachment

TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION

COMMITTEE MINUTES

Minutes of Meeting: Advisory Committee on Accessible Transit
Meeting No. 358

Meeting Date: Friday, October 29, 2020
1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Location: Virtual meeting via Webex

Present: Mazin Aribi, Chair
Marian McDonell, Vice Chair
Igor Samardzic, Vice Chair
Margo Brodie
Anita Dressler
Carmen Galvan
Jessica Geboers
Debbie Gillespie
Sean Hollingsworth
Angela Marley
Bobbi Moore
James Pyo
Sam Savona
Mahendan Sivabalasundaram
Chris Stigas

Pool Members: Anne-Marie Cole
Hans Winther

TTC Representatives: Milly Bernal, Customer Communications Specialist
Dwayne Geddes, Head of Wheel-Trans
Matt Hagg, Senior Planner - System Accessibility
Lodon Hassan, Assistant Manager - Customer Service, Wheel-Trans
Dean Milton, Manager - Strategic Initiatives, Wheel-Trans
Cameron Penman, Divisional Manager - Customer Service
Charlene Sharpe, Manager - Planning and Policy, Wheel-Trans
Lema Salaymeh, Senior Community Liaison Officer
Ian Dickson, Manager - Design and Wayfinding
Loris Dametto, Program Manager - Vehicle Programs
Stephan Boston, Chief Instructor - Operations and Training
Nitin Pardal, Human Rights Consultant - Diversity & Human Rights

Guests: Commissioner Julie Osborne, TTC Board Member

Copies: Rick Leary, Chief Executive Officer
Kirsten Watson, Deputy CEO - Operations
James Ross, Chief Operating Officer
Kathleen Llewellyn-Thomas, Chief Strategy and Customer Officer
Gemma Piemontese, Chief People Officer
Orest Kobylansky, Executive Director - Operations
Gary Downie, Chief Capital Officer
Josie La Vita, Chief Financial Officer
Deborah Brown, Head of Marketing and Customer Experience
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 Minutes of September 25, 2020 Minutes
6. Business Arising Out of Minutes/Outstanding Items
7. Deputation: Nil
8. Wheel-Trans 10-Year Strategy Update
9. New Safety Measures Between TTC Vehicles and Cyclists / Motorists
10. ACAT Safety Concerns from E-scooters and E-bikes on Sidewalks and Transit Stops
11. Subcommittee Reports and Updates
 - Communications
 - Design Review
 - Service Planning
 - Wheel-Trans Operations
12. ACAT Subcommittee Meeting Highlights for the Next TTC Board Meeting
13. Report on TTC Board Meeting and Accessibility Matters
14. Review of Correspondence
15. Other Items / New Business
16. Next Meeting – November 26, 2020
17. Adjournment

1. Call to Order / Attendance

Chair Mazin Aribi called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m. and attendance was taken.

2. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Nil.

3. Approval of Agenda

On a motion by Sam Savona, seconded by Bobbi Moore, the agenda was approved.

4. Remarks from ACAT Chair

ACAT Chair Mazin Aribi thanked all members in attendance, as well as TTC Board Member Julie Osborne.

Mazin thanked all TTC staff who organized the first virtual TTC Public Forum on Accessible Transit on October 1, 2020. Many people from the community were able to participate in the Forum using a variety of communication tools.

On October 3 and October 7, 2020, Mazin attended the Chester and Wellesley stations elevators ribbon cutting events which are part of the Easier Access 3 Program.

On behalf of all members, Mazin expressed his appreciation to CEO Rick Leary for his thank you letter which thanked all ACAT members for their contribution during the COVID-19 pandemic.

5. Review and Approval of September 25, 2020 Minutes

On a motion by Jessica Geboers, seconded by Carmen Galvan, the minutes of the September 25, 2020 meeting were approved.

6. Business Arising Out of Minutes/Outstanding Items

- Item: Review of the Impact of Curb-Side Bike Lanes on Wheel-Trans Customers and Operators in Accessing Certain Pick-Up / Drop-Off Locations – Ongoing.
- Item: GTHA Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) Joint Meeting – Ongoing.
- Item: Motion – Need for Dual Elevators at Finch West Interchange Station to the LRT Platform Level – Ongoing. The motion will be discussed at an upcoming TTC Board Meeting.
- Item: Motion – TTC Second Elevator at Subway – LRT Interchange Stations – Ongoing. The motion will be discussed at an upcoming TTC Board Meeting.
- Item: Update on the New TTC Website and Updated Station Descriptions which have been On Hold – Ongoing. Updates will be discussed during the Communications Subcommittee Report.

- Item: PRESTO Card Registration and Whether it can be Activated without an Email/Online Process – Ongoing.

Milly Bernal spoke with PRESTO staff and PRESTO is still looking into the option of telephone registration. However, there are legal issues that needs to be sorted. Although the registration form states that email is mandatory, if somebody was to print and fill out the form to register by mail, and not include an email, they would still be able to register the card. Milly will work with PRESTO on communicating to customers that an email is not mandatory in order to register a card; however, there are significant benefits for customers to include an email when registering their card.

Milly will invite someone from PRESTO to an upcoming ACAT General Meeting for further explanation on the benefits of including an email when registering a PRESTO card. Members suggested that the PRESTO representative bring a clear comparison between the benefits received when a customer includes an email address when registering their card vs. registering without including an email address.

Several members pointed out that not having a computer does not necessarily mean not having an email address, as many people use email on their mobile device or through other means.

7. Deputation

Nil.

8. Wheel-Trans 10-Year Strategy Update

Dwayne Geddes, Head of Wheel-Trans, provided an update.

The overflow call contract was approved at the TTC Board Meeting held on September 24, 2020. The implementation of this contract will help improve customers' wait time. Staff are currently working with TELUS to make sure that all systems are in place and that training is done for all the employees that will be answering the calls. The goal is for customers not to notice a difference in the level and quality of service that they are receiving from TELUS and Wheel-Trans. The overflow contract is to be implemented for the end of November.

Staff are also currently working on the mobile app which has already been tested by some ACAT members and Wheel-Trans customers. Staff has received feedback and are encouraging people to continue reviewing the app.

Wheel-Trans is currently averaging about 5,000 customers per day as opposed to 15,000 pre-COVID. The lower ridership allows Staff to provide solo rides for customers at least until the end of the 2020. Once ridership returns to normal, Wheel-Trans will go back to ride sharing. Most customers have been wearing masks appropriately and Operators have been handed the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

The Wheel Transformation Program is on track with its different deliverables. More importantly, 16 access hubs are now operational.

Customer re-registration has been paused due to COVID-19 pandemic. Wheel-Trans is not currently making Family of Services conditional trip matching mandatory; however, trips are still being booked which is very encouraging. Customers are also re-registering; 6,000 out of the 24,000 that are required to re-register have done so.

The Self-Serve Portal is a new online option to apply for Wheel-Trans service; this does not replace the paper application. Similarly, the mobile app and the self-booking website are available for tech savvy customers.

Loris Dametto, Program Manager - Vehicle Programs, gave an update on the 7M Pro Master Pilot vehicle. The vehicle is a quite a bit bigger than the than the 6m bus, both wider and longer in the passenger area. The seats are all flip-up style, except for one permanent seat at the rear corner on the curb side. If all the seats are in the up position, the premise would be to fit between three and five wheelchairs depending on sizing of the wheelchair devices.

Next Steps

The Engineering department is measuring the ride quality, specifically the noise and lighting levels.

Charlene Sharpe sent out an email to ACAT members to book their rides on the vehicle for testing. Following the test ride, Staff will call ACAT members within 24 hours and ask them to complete a questionnaire over the phone.

If members are unable to book a ride on that same week, they are encouraged to speak to Charlene and other Wheel-Trans staff to book a ride the following week.

After the solo rides with ACAT members, the vehicle will be put into service. Staff will then solicit feedback from the broader community. Following that, preliminary results will be presented at the November 26, 2020 ACAT Meeting. The summary results will be presented to ACAT in December. At that point, the Wheel-Trans team is hoping to get an endorsement from ACAT to proceed with the remaining 90 production units of the 7m ProMaster vehicle. An option is also to ask for endorsement with conditions on the vehicle, as it is not a final configuration but it will be the premise of the 7m ProMaster vehicle.

Questions and Comments from the Subcommittee

A member asked about the noise and lighting quality, Dwayne Geddes explained that engineers have different types of equipment that they can put on the vehicles for testing. For the ride quality, engineers are using accelerometers. The premise of the engineering testing is to improve the noise, lighting and ride quality levels from the 6M Pro Master vehicle. Dwayne explained that he had sent an update in April or May, including the actual steps taken for each one of these tests.

Members asked what would happen if ridership returns to normal. Staff explained that ridership has been pretty steady. In August, TTC thought that ridership would come back in September, but it has not yet and ridership numbers are still about 40% lower than the pre-COVID numbers. Funding is closely tied to ridership. Wheel-Trans is currently working with the Finance department to determine budget projections for next year, and there is a fleet replacement program in place. Friendly buses are supposed to last seven to eight to nine years. The 7m vehicles that are replacing the aging Friendlies have been approved in the budget. Since the

Friendlies are reaching the end of their life, Wheel-Trans is planning to order about 80 7m vehicles for 2021. The decision is pending ACAT's review before going to the TTC Board, but the budget has already been approved.

A member commented on the testing of the 7m bus. Individual reviews cannot compete with group reviews of a vehicle on site which usually produces richer recommendations. The change in review process due to COVID-19 is also an opportunity for learning about how to review items. It is also an opportunity to learn about accessibility needs and features and adoptions. Staff offered to organise a meeting after the solo rides have been completed to go over the results and have an open forum.

9. New Safety Measures Between TTC Vehicles and Cyclists / Motorists

There were a few members who have been observing that there has been an increase in bike lanes throughout the city. Some bike lanes have been quickly implemented by the City of Toronto without a consultation with all stakeholders, such as the bike lanes on University Avenue. The bike lanes have brought a safety concern with the interactions of cyclists in bike lanes and customers boarding or alighting from TTC vehicles.

Currently, there is a big "Do Not Pass" logo and an attached light at the back of the streetcars that alerts motorists and cyclists to be careful especially when streetcar doors are open. ACAT members suggested that this extra feature could be added to other TTC vehicles as well as a "Stop" or "Do Not Pass When Doors Are Open" signs at the back of other TTC vehicles (buses, Wheel-Trans buses, Community Buses).

Members recall that this issue has already been raised in Subcommittees meetings. TTC was involved with the implementation of previous bike lanes and City Staff have presented at previous ACAT meetings.

Although it is more of a City of Toronto issue than a TTC issue, members acknowledged that TTC has representatives who work with the City on bike lanes. Staff stressed the fact that TTC needs to protect and ensure the safety of its customers.

Members stressed that TTC needs to offer the same level of safety and security to all riders across the board including people with disabilities. They have been in situations when ramps are deployed while a bicycle passes by without stopping.

Members recommended to combine agenda items #9 and #10 for the purposes of this discussion because they both represent a safety issue that should be reported to people who designed and implement bike lanes.

Staff advised that representatives from the City will be attending the December Service Planning Subcommittee meeting to discuss this matter further.

10. ACAT Safety Concerns from E-scooters and E-bikes on Sidewalks and Transit Stops

A number of organizations and people with disabilities have already submitted their concerns about e-scooters and e-bikes to the City. Although the renting of e-scooters is currently banned, the City of Toronto is considering allowing people to ride e-scooters and e-bikes in public places. Those vehicles would be made available near curbsides to rent. A person who is unlicensed, untrained and uninsured could ride these silent motorized vehicles that can reach a

speed of approximately 20 kilometers an hour or faster. E-scooters could be parked in bus shelters and stops and could be abandoned on the sidewalk causing a hazard to TTC customers. More and more persons with disabilities and seniors will be finding themselves at conventional service bus stops that are attached to pedestrian sidewalks or accessible seats on bus shelters. TTC needs to provide an equal level of safety and security to Wheel-Trans Family of Services customers as to those who are receiving door-to-door services. In fact, the safety applies to all TTC riders. Members recommended to voice their concerns to the TTC Board so they can bring it up to City Council.

11. Subcommittee Reports and Updates

Communications Subcommittee (CS) – Bobbi Moore, Chair

A CS meeting was held on October 8, 2020.

Interchange Station Announcements

Staff are looking into implementing Line 2 interchange station announcements as well as announcements to tell passengers which side the doors will be opening.

A member suggested repeating the announcements to provide more time for passengers to get to the correct door. Staff noted this may not be possible as there are some places where stations are too close to each other.

Staff will check to see if the technology on Line 3 trains could handle the longer announcements. The next steps will be to determine whether the announcements need to be shortened, schedule a second test with ACAT members and, once approved, implementation will be scheduled which will take about 4 to 5 weeks.

Staff advised that the delivery of parts to fix the exterior announcement distortion on Line 2 trains has been delayed.

Updated Station Descriptions on TTC Website

Alicia Fowlie provided an update on the station descriptions including Chester Station and members provided their feedback. A member suggested leaving the station description update work to members and the current working group as they have the most knowledge on this topic.

Line 2 Subway System Maps

Ian Dickson provided a history of the work being done on this issue. The system map was meant to be beside the subway and streetcar map with a full map on the left but it is always not possible due to advertising contract obligations. Instead, the full system map is posted on two subway car doors in each car and the Line 2 maps are located above the other two doors.

Members provided their feedback. The next major map update will be in 2022 when Line 5 opens.

Priority Seating Decals Update

Ian Dickson reported that the decal design has been updated to include language around people with invisible disabilities and to use more inclusive language. Some examples of the wording are to include someone who is pregnant and does not self-identify as a woman and “the elderly” was changed to “seniors”.

Family of Services Video

Filming of the video will be delayed until spring 2021 due to the rise in COVID-19 cases.

Video for New Eligibility Self-Serve Portal

Members reviewed the video and asked what the solution would be to the issue of submitting medical information. Staff will provide an update at the next meeting.

Fall Newsletter

The process of having customers being able to opt out of receiving the newsletter by mail was discussed. Staff have created a database and the Fall newsletter will be mailed out, but those who wish to opt out of the mailing list will begin to receive copies by email only in early 2021.

LED Indicator in sync with the First Train Announcement on Line 1

A member suggested that staff look into the possibility of getting the LED indicators on Line 1 trains point to decide where the doors open at the first time each “next station” announcement is played. It was pointed out there may be an issue with AODA legislation, and making the visual indicator earlier may require it to be available with audio at that time.

The next CS meeting will be held on November 5, 2020.

Design Review Subcommittee (DRS) – Chris Stigas, Chair

A DRS meeting was held on October 28, 2020 via Webex.

A presentation was provided on the next procurement for conventional buses, with goals/aims towards a goal of a zero emissions fleet. Buses from four different manufacturers were demonstrated, including the current hybrid buses and three models of electric buses. Some features that were demonstrated include:

- Centre yellow stripe on the kneeling ramp
- Stop request button options including mounting options
- ADA stop request button options and mounting options
- Attendant/companion seating
- Mobility device positions and securements
- LCD infotainment next stop display
- Visual and audio interior/exterior ramp deployment warning options
- Stanchion, grab bar, and hanging strap loop options
- Discussions around exterior audible vehicle approaching warning

Some of these features are readily available from some manufacturers while others are not at the time of this presentation.

ACAT members also asked about the opportunity to add a safety alert to motorists, cyclists and alike, similar to a school bus style stop sign to the exterior of the vehicles, to combat the issue of ramp deployment encroaching on raised bike lane platforms.

The next DRS meeting will be held on November 18, 2020.

Service Planning Subcommittee (SPS) – Anita Dressler, Chair

A SPS meeting was held on October 7, 2020.

A.J. Takarabe, Operations Planner, provided an update on the ActiveTO bike lanes implementation. The members provided their feedback regarding Wheel-Trans issues, as follows:

On Danforth Avenue, there had been issues since bike lanes were implemented. Charlene Sharpe guided City staff block by block to determine where the Wheel-Trans stops should be included in future plans.

On University Avenue, outside of hospitals, spaces are provided with raised platforms to allow curb access.

Encroachments onto sidewalks for patio use, as per ACAT recommendation. A.J. Takarabe reached out to CafeTo and indicated that there are positive results, along Yonge Street and the Danforth as issues with obstructions have been acted on.

The members pointed out the issue of bike lanes running through the platform area. It was suggested that reusing the ramps on King Street would be more effective, regarding accessibility than the new infrastructure that has been proposed.

A concern of the Subcommittee was that no consultation with ACAT members took place before the ActiveTO project was launched. Staff assured members that a more typical consultation program will occur in the future. Feedback regarding consultations from ACAT to the TTC, needs to be strengthened.

Another issue was the identification of major destinations for drop off/pick up locations along the corridors to be adopted.

The TTC is reviewing the corridor lanes along Bloor Street West, block by block to identify high frequency drop/pickup locations. TTC will ensure that all drop off/pickup zones are within 70 meters of destination. There will be protected curb cut at locations for easier access to the roadway.

A suggestion was made that Wheel-Trans vehicles be equipped with a stop sign similar to school buses, in order to ensure safety, on shared routes. Cycling education is needed to ensure safety on shared routes.

The members also discussed Third Party Entrances Connection Policy. An update was provided by Pam Kraft, Head of Property, Planning and Development.

The members had a concern about the accessibility of all third-party entrances for equity and equality and compliance with AODA requirements.

A discussion and review of the TTC Public Forum on Accessible Transit produced favourable responses regarding the online format. Over 200 people joined in which was an increase over last year's in-person attendance.

The next SPS meeting will be held on November 4, 2020.

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

A WTOS meeting was held on October 15, 2020.

Marco Iorfida, Marco Iorfida, Scheduling and Policy Specialist, worked with Angela Marley on updating all of the subway landmarks as well as other updates on the landmark system. Angela Marley, provided an update on Dupont station description. She worked alongside with Craig Nicol on the station description.

TTC Mobile Supervisors went to the locations and recommended the Wheel-Trans stop would be preferably placed at the bus stop in front of the subway entrance on Dupont Street. The final decision on the stop location will be done by Service Planning.

Staff provided an update on the Wheel-Trans self-booking site. Subway stations were suggested as default destination for the Wheel-Trans stops.

Loris Dametto, Program Manager - Vehicle Programs, provided an update on the 7m Pro Master Vehicle Pilot. Eleven vehicles have been received so far, and the 9 remaining vehicles are expected to be delivered in Q1 of 2021.

The TTC Board also approved the procurement of 91 7m ProMaster vehicles, which included one pilot vehicle and 90 production units.

Staff provided an update on the Wheel-Trans Application Portal. The presentation focused on how to apply on the portal and how to manage all the necessary steps through various menu features that have been changed. The how-to video was uploaded to the portal which advises customers on how to use the site and to submit an application.

Staff provided an update on the contact centre. For the month of September, the average speed of calls answered was 6 minutes which is below the current target. In Customer Service, the average speed of calls answered was 1 minute which is also below the current target.

For eligibility decisions, 150 new applications were received in September. A total of 560 eligibility decisions were made and half of them were conditional.

A total of 240 customer service complaints were received, as follows:

- 45% - vehicle operations complaints
- 24% - Call center complaints
- 18.9% - Service Delivery complaints
- 11% - Accommodations complaints

Wheel-Trans recently awarded a contract for overflow calls in Reservations to TELUS Communications to help reduce customer wait time. The contract will start at the end of November. TELUS representatives will receive a full AODA training.

The next WTOS meeting will be held on November 12, 2020.

12. ACAT Subcommittee Meeting Highlights for the Next TTC Board Meeting

CS:

- Updating the Station Descriptions
- Priority Seating Decals language to be more inclusive for people with invisible disabilities

DRS:

- Next Procurement Phase for e-Bus option

SPS:

- Discussion on Safety Concerns with Bike Lanes
- Discussion on Third Party Entrances Connection Policy

WTOS:

- Discussion on Wheel-Trans Stops and Landmarks
- Testing of 7m ProMaster Vehicle

13. Report on TTC Board Meeting and Accessibility Matters

Nil.

14. Review of Correspondence

Nil.

15. Other Items / New Business

Nil.

16. Next Meeting – November 26, 2020

The next meeting of ACAT will be held on Thursday, November 26, 2020 from 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. via Webex.

17. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

Valentine Benichou
Recording Secretary