



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

November 4, 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 September 25, 2020 to the November 16, 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. 357

Meeting Date: Friday, September 25, 2020
2:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Location: Virtual meeting via Webex

Present: Mazin Aribi, Chair
Marian McDonell, Co-Vice Chair
Igor Samardzic, Co 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, Wheel-Trans
Charlene Sharpe, Manager - Planning and Policy, Wheel-Trans
Lema Salaymeh, Senior Community Liaison Officer
James Ross, Chief Operating Officer
Angela Gibson, Head – Strategy and Foresight
John Beynon, Chief Instructor, Operations Training Centre
Stephan Boston, Chief Instructor, Operations Training Centre
Courtney Laidlaw, Human Rights Consultant

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 August 27, 2020 Minutes
6. Business Arising Out of Minutes/Outstanding Items
7. Deputation: Nil
8. Wheel-Trans 10-Year Strategy Update
9. Subcommittee Reports and Updates
 - Communications
 - Design Review
 - Service Planning
 - Wheel-Trans Operations
10. ACAT Subcommittee Meeting Highlights for the Next TTC Board Meeting
11. Report on TTC Board Meeting and Accessibility Matters
12. Report on ACAT Executive Quarterly Meeting with CEO and Chair
13. Review of Correspondence
14. Other Items / New Business
15. Next Meeting – October 29, 2020
16. Adjournment

1. Call to Order / Attendance

The meeting was called 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 Bobbi Moore, seconded by Jessica Geboers, the agenda was approved.

ACAT Chair Mazin Aribi indicated that Agenda items #6 and #8 will be deferred to allot more time for the in-camera session following the General meeting.

4. Remarks from ACAT Chair, Mazin Aribi

Mazin Aribi reported that he attended a meeting on September 8, 2020 for the TTC's Third Delivery of an eBus event at the Eglinton Division, including a bus ride to and from Warden station. The honourable Minister of Public Safety Bill Blair realized that Mazin was stranded on this bus platform because Warden is not an accessible station. Mr. Blair thanked Mazin for pointing this dilemma out to him.

On September 24, 2020, the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee (TAAC) had a virtual meeting. One of the items discussed was the access and waiting area at City Hall for people with disabilities. TAAC members made two recommendations:

- (1) City Council direct the Deputy City Manager, Corporate Services, to hold public consultations with specific outreach to people with disabilities regarding decisions on any proposed public safety and security measures at City facilities that would impact access and accessibility and report back to the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee in the first quarter of 2021;

City Council request the Toronto Transit Commission Board to request the Chief Executive Officer, Toronto Transit Commission to hold public consultations with people with disabilities to seek feedback on how to improve the safety and accessibility of the small outdoor shelter at the Bay Street entrance near City Hall and to make a presentation to the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee to seek feedback on the findings of said public consultations.

The next TAAC meeting will be held on November 16, 2020.

On September 22, 2020, ACAT members learned that, as part of the Easier Access Program, the elevators at Chester station were put into service ahead of schedule. It became the 48th accessible subway station. On September 24, 2020, Dupont station elevators were put into service, so there are now 49 accessible subway stations in total.

Mazin Aribi reminded the members that the TTC Public Forum on Accessible Transit will be held virtually on October 1, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. and encouraged everyone to attend.

5. Review and Approval of Minutes of August 27, 2020 Minutes

On a motion by Angela Marley, seconded by Sam Savona, the minutes of the August 27, 2020 meeting were approved with the following amendments:

- Item #9, Communications Subcommittee, 1st bullet to be changed to Line 2 Subway Announcements
- Item #9, Communications Subcommittee, under Questions and Comments from Committee Members, 1st paragraph to read: "There was a consensus among ACAT members in sending one mass email to Wheel-Trans customers with an active registered email address, asking them to email or mail Wheel-Trans Customer Service if they want to get a paper or an electronic copy of the ACCESS newsletter."

6. Business Arising Out of Minutes / Outstanding Items

Deferred.

7. Deputation

Nil.

8. Wheel-Trans 10-Year Strategy Update

Deferred.

9. Subcommittee Reports and Updates

Communications Subcommittee (CS) – Bobbi Moore, Chair

A CS meeting was held on September 3, 2020 via Webex.

- Line 2 Subway Announcements

Staff advised that the Subway Transportation team had no update at this time. CS members inquired why this was still pending and agreed this item should be a priority. The subcommittee agreed this would be put on our agenda at the next meeting and invite staff from Vehicle Engineering to attend the next meeting.

Tests of Line 2 announcements on the platform were conducted. Staff advised that parts would need to be ordered and will provide an update at the next CS meeting.

- TTC Public Forum on Accessible Transit

The Public Forum will be held on October 1, 2020, from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Customers will be able to watch by livestream format or by calling in. Closed captioning and ASL interpreters are available.

The general public will be directed to the TTC website for the livestream link and call in options. An invitation letter will go out to stakeholders as well as ACAT members.

In terms of asking questions ahead of time, a member suggested, as in previous years, for questions to be collected from customers through emails or phone calls. Staff advised that there would be 100 lines available for people to call in. The members raised concerns for customers who are not technologically equipped.

- Family of Services Promotional Video

Dean Milton presented the video and stated the idea only came up a few weeks ago because there was a need for someone to be able to see a Family of Service trip in action. The video will be about 3 to 5 minutes in length. The completion of the video will be approximately by the first quarter of 2021. All modes of transportation will be featured. CS members will provide feedback as work continues with this project.

- Promotional Video for New Eligibility Self-Serve Portal

Dean Milton presented the promotional video for the New Eligibility Self-Serve Portal. The video will take the customer through the portal and show them where they have to click to register. It will have screen captures with voiceover as the customer is moving through the different screens. The video is planned to be completed before the end of September or early October prior to the portal opening.

This video needs to be ready before the portal opens so it is planned to be completed before the end of September or early October at the latest. CS members will be updated by Cameron Penman or Lodon Hassan for feedback.

- Fall Access Newsletter

Staff are hoping to have a draft ready for the committee's input and review by mid-October. This will be the last newsletter of the year 2020.

- Welcome to Wheel-Trans Booklet

A draft copy should be ready for CS review in early October.

- Family of Services Handbook

The purpose of the Handbook is to help customers feel safer when travelling. A draft should be completed by late September or early October.

- Updated Station Descriptions

A lengthy discussion about updated Station Descriptions and the history around the process was held. Staff are going to follow up and invite the appropriate staff to the next CS meeting on October 8, 2020.

- COVID-19 Wave 2 Campaign Update

Milly Bernal looked into complaints received surrounding COVID-19 and a discussion was held.

- Update on ACAT Recruitment Communications

Staff advised that communications have been sent out and posted. A member suggested that ACAT members get an invite so that they can distribute to their contacts.

- Update on New TTC Website

The new website will not be ready until the first quarter of 2021.

Design Review Subcommittee (DRS) – Chris Stigas, Chair

A DRS meeting was held on September 9, 2020 via Webex.

A presentation was given by Josh Greenhut on the New Subway Train features and design consultations, focused mainly on accessibility and capacity based on the items put forth by ACAT members in June. This process was paused during the summer and has now currently restarted. Josh's team also worked with a focus group of customers and a third of them were people with disabilities. DRS asked how this focus group was chosen and staff responded that they were picked through other local advocacy groups as well as a call to participate on the TTC website.

Some of the features that were discussed were:

- Tactile tiles
- Excessive noise from the subway HVAC
- Vertical and horizontal gap on platform
- Exterior gap between subway cars and people using walking canes
- Full glass vs. partial glass subway doors
- Front design of the train cab
- Interior door indicator LED colour and function design elements
- Priority seating and mobility area capacity
- Flip down seating
- Transverse vs longitudinal seating,
- Feasibility of Perch seating
- Seat covering options
- The use of centre poles on the interior of cabin trains
- The feasibility of live transcription of TTC audio announcements onto video screens

There was a lot of discussions around all these items and some of them were left to be discussed at a later time.

The next DRS meeting will be held on October 14 2020 which will be a site visit.

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

Deferred to next meeting.

Service Planning Subcommittee (SPS) – Anita Dressler, Chair

A SPS meeting was held on September 9, 2020.

A presentation was provided by Vincenza Guzzo, Director of Property Planning and Development, on the update and background in the process of goals of the TTC and gaps in the current policy regarding third party entrances. This change in policy was to deal with concerns regarding concourse third party entrances, being accessible and TTC accessibility standards relating to entrances and elevators.

A discussion ensued regarding that the standards are not consistent in design. There was a proposal to restructure policy based on accessibility and proximity to the station including signage elevator buttons, etc.

- Typical Entrance Connection

The first entrance connection from a third party development to the station will be deemed as primary and must be accessible. Secondary convenience connections that are not accessible are permitted only when a primary entrance connection has already been provided by a third party. Secondary entrance connections from development are usually further away from the station than the primary connection.

All entrance connections must be signed as to their accessibility status. The new policy includes description of unacceptable and non-applicable entrance connections also direct and indirect connections.

There will be an Entrance Connection Guide made available as a tool for developers, and a technical review to ensure compliance with policy and accessibility requirements.

Numerous questions were posed by SPS members, and Matt Hagg added that discussions will be held in the near future with the subcommittee on further refinements to the policy.

- Streetcar Operations During COVID-19

Edward Zahra, Streetcar Operations, attended and discussed issues during COVID-19. When the State of Emergency was announced by the City, complaints ensued and various issues arose regarding Operators deploying ramps. Standard operating procedures were not being followed due to fear of the COVID virus. During Phase one, a variance to the usual procedure was put in place. Operators were allowed to deploy the ramp from the inside using the external PA system asking customers if ramp was required. During Phase two, the original standard was put back in place. Operators were leaving their cab to deploy the ramps, and failure to do so resulted in disciplinary action. Notices were posted to ensure AODA compliance, and Supervisors were sent out to speak to Operators. Personal protective equipment was supplied to all Operators. Complaint procedures went into effect and customers were asked to provide day, route, location, direction of travel, and if possible vehicle number. TTC continued to take all complaints seriously.

The next SPS meeting is scheduled on October 7, 2020.

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

CS:

- Station Descriptions update

- TTC Public Forum
- COVID-19 Wave Two Campaign

DRS:

- New Subway Train Features and Design Consultations

SPS:

- Third Party Entrance Connection Policy.
- Operating Procedures for Deploying Ramps during COVID-19

11. Report on TTC Board Meeting and Accessibility Matters

A TTC Board Meeting was held on September 24, 2020 via Webex.

The approved ACAT minutes from for June 19, and June 25, 2020 were received by the Board.

Mazin Aribi gave a general update noting that all ACAT subcommittee and general meetings have resumed virtually. ACAT is working with TTC staff to ensure that COVID-19 policies and protocols continue to be implemented with accessibility in mind. He stressed the importance of keeping people with disabilities and seniors at the forefront of the decision-making process during this time.

Mazin reported that ACAT is currently in the process of interviewing new members for 2021 membership.

Mazin stated that ACAT is looking forward to the first virtual TTC Public Forum on Accessible Transit on October 1, 2020. ACAT encouraged the Board Members to attend.

TTC staff presented a report and presentation on the Wheel-Trans Reservations Call Centre Overflow Contract, which obtained TTC Board approval.

The next TTC Board Meeting will be held on October 22, 2020.

Questions and Comments from the Committee

Regarding the Wheel-Trans Reservations Call Centre Overflow contract, a member stated that Wheel-Trans customers should be made aware that their calls might be answered by a third party agency.

James Ross, Chief Operating Officer, explained that this is a good news story for Wheel-Trans customers and that the call wait times should now be significantly lower. The goal is that customers will not be able to tell the difference between the level of service in-house and that of the contract. Penalties had been put in place in the contract if the third party does not provide an exemplary service.

A member expressed a concern regarding the privacy of Wheel-Trans customers since the call contains private information such as name, home address, and trip destination. Dwayne Geddes explained that TELUS representatives have to sign a non-disclosure agreement, a similar agreement that the contracted taxi services signed with the TTC. The more detailed information will stay with Wheel-Trans and will not get disclosed to the third party. If a third

party representative has a question that they cannot answer because they require more information, Wheel-Trans will follow up with the customer.

12. Report on ACAT Executive Quarterly Meeting with CEO and Chair

An ACAT Executive Quarterly Meeting was held on September 22, 2020 via conference call.

The ACAT Executive raised concerns about T4As being issued starting in 2021 for transit passes and honoraria received by members. ACAT members noted that the implications of receiving a T4A would cause significant distress to them.

ACAT members are encouraging TTC to enforce policies to minimize COVID-19 impacts on vulnerable populations. TTC staff who are working indoors cleaning vehicle stations are now required to wear masks.

A concern was raised about the increased ridership with more individuals using the TTC. Staff provided an update on the new measures that will help with the current issues. Extra buses were added during peak times to routes with high ridership.

The ACAT Executive stated that there should be more consistency in the provision of accessible features for private third party entrance connections. Staff are working on revisions to the existing policy before they are presented to the TTC Board.

The ACAT Executive stated that they have witnessed missed opportunities for improving accessibility standards in the past, and it would be in the best interest for any new buildings to have the ability to make connections to the TTC that follow TTC standards.

13. Review of Correspondence

Nil.

14. Other Items / New Business

Matt Hagg advised ACAT of the new Strategy and Foresight department which will be responsible for long-term policy and planning, including accessibility. Angela Gibson who is the Head of Strategy and Foresight introduced herself to ACAT.

15. Next Meeting – October 29, 2020

The next meeting of ACAT will be held on Thursday, October 29, 2020 from 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. via Webex.

16. Adjournment

On motion by Debbie Gillespie, the meeting was adjourned at 3.55 p.m.

Valentine Benichou
Recording Secretary