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

August 31, 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 meetings of June 19, 2020 and June 25, 2020 to the September 24, 2020 Board Meeting for information (attached).

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Mazin Aribi
2020 ACAT Chair

Attachments

TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION

COMMITTEE MINUTES

Minutes of Meeting: Advisory Committee on Accessible Transit
Meeting No. 353 Special Meeting

Meeting Date: Friday, June 19, 2020

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
Sam Savona
Mahendan Sivabalasundaram
Chris Stigas

ACAT Pool Members: Ann-Marie Cole
Hans Winther

Regrets: James Pyo

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
Cameron Penman, Manager – Customer Service, Wheel-Trans

Copies:

Rick Leary, Chief Executive Officer
Kirsten Watson, Deputy CEO – Operations
Kathleen Llewellyn-Thomas, Chief Strategy and Customer Officer
Orest Kobylansky, Executive Director – Operations
Gary Downie, Chief Capital Officer
Josie La Vita, Chief Financial Officer
James Ross, Chief Operating Officer
Dwayne Geddes, Head of Wheel-Trans
Deborah Brown, Head of Marketing
TTC Board Members

Items Discussed:

1. Call to Order / Attendance
2. Declaration of Conflict of Interest
3. Approval of Agenda
4. Report on TTC Board Meeting / Updates from the Head of Wheel-Trans, Dwayne Geddes
5. Remarks from ACAT Chair
6. Report on ACAT Executive Quarterly Meeting with CEO and Chair
7. Restart ACAT General and Subcommittee Meeting Schedule and Logistics using Webex
8. Other / New Business
9. Next Meeting
10. Adjournment

1. Call to Order / Attendance

Chair Mazin Aribi called the meeting to order at 11:05 a.m. and attendance was taken.

2. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Nil.

3. Approval of Agenda

On a motion by Debbie Gillespie, seconded by Jessica Geboers, the agenda was approved.

4. Report on TTC Board Meeting / Updates from the Head of Wheel-Trans, Dwayne Geddes

Report on TTC Board Meeting and Accessibility Matters:

A TTC Board meeting WAS held on June 17, 2020 via Webex.

The approved ACAT minutes for January 30, 2020 were received by the Board.

The ACAT Chair raised two items to the TTC Board's attention:

Mandatory Masks: ACAT appreciates that the "mandatory" status does not apply to riders under the age of two or anyone with a medical condition. However, seeing as many medical conditions are invisible and the use of the word mandatory will inevitably contribute to an increase of harassment already experienced by people with disabilities, ACAT strongly encourages the TTC, the City of Toronto, and other customer-facing departments to consider their marketing of this message, their choice of wording, placement and its effect on the public.

COVID-19 Financial Cuts: ACAT speaks strongly against any cuts to Wheel-Trans or any decrease in funding for accessibility-related capital, service planning or design projects and initiatives. The TTC has a goal of achieving full accessibility by 2025 and ACAT strongly encourages the TTC Board and City Council to honour this commitment.

TTC CEO Rick Leary responded in full support of both concerns and will communicate this with the staff going forward. He assured ACAT that there will be no cuts in the Wheel-Trans budget.

Staff presented a lengthy presentation to the TTC Board titled "COVID-19 – Transitioning from Response to Restart and Recovery."

ACAT members were encouraged to review the TTC Board meeting agenda, reports and presentations made at the June 17 meeting at:

http://www.ttc.ca/About_the_TTC/Commission_reports_and_information/Commission_meetings/2020/June_17/Agenda/index.jsp

Recorded video of the entire meeting is online at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-geHQUqZMEc>

The ACAT Chair informed the TTC Board Members of the next special virtual meeting of ACAT on June 19, 2020 via Webex.

The next TTC Board meeting is scheduled on July 14, 2020.

Questions and Comments from the Committee:

ACAT members raised concerns about a *Toronto Star* report on possible TTC cuts that had been shared among committee members. In figures attributed to Mayor Tory, possible TTC conventional staff cuts of/to 50% and Wheel-Trans cuts of/to 73.6% were floated if no additional funding support was provided to the City of Toronto by other levels of government.

A member stated that any cuts to the TTC budget should be exclusive to the conventional system. Questions were asked about why any inequitable cut to the Wheel-Trans system had been considered or reported, and how such a figure had been reached.

Dwayne Geddes, Head of Wheel-Trans, advised that he did not have an answer for that question. He indicated that, as TTC CEO Rick Leary stated at the June 17th TTC Board meeting, there are no current plans to cut the Wheel-Trans budget.

It was suggested by some members that they accept this, and address any Wheel-Trans budget or service cuts if and when they become an issue. However, questions and concerns remained among the committee about how media came to report a specific and high Wheel-Trans cuts figure that was attributed to the City and the Mayor.

A member suggested that ACAT make a formal recommendation for no cuts to the Wheel-Trans budget, and at bare minimum, accept only the same percentage in cuts as the conventional system. Despite reassurance from the TTC CEO, there was concern that while the TTC may not be considering the reported cuts, the City of Toronto might be. Because these figures have been reported by the media, there was worry that if ACAT does not put forward a recommendation, it could look like the committee is okay with it.

The ACAT Chair noted that the committee would definitely not be okay with such Wheel-Trans cuts, and took note of the points made, including a possible formal ACAT recommendation on the issue.

Updates from the Head of Wheel-Trans, Dwayne Geddes:

Restarting ACAT General Meetings – June 25, 2020: Dwayne Geddes advised that staff would recommend going ahead with the regularly scheduled ACAT General Meeting on June 25, 2020 via Webex, if today's special meeting using the platform went well.

TTC Response to COVID-19 and Impacts to Accessibility: An overview had been emailed to all members in advance of the meeting. Members were encouraged to review the document and bring forward questions, comments and suggestions to the appropriate ACAT subcommittees, as those meetings would also be resuming.

Resumption of Some TTC Operations/Features on July 2, 2020: There were plans to resume some features of TTC operations on July 2. Further updates could be provided at the June 25, 2020 ACAT General Meeting. Some major highlights included:

- Implementing front-door boarding
- Accepting fares – Including tokens and cash
- Working on a plan for transfers

- On the conventional system, possibly a folder/envelope/compartment just outside where the driver sits for customers to take their own transfer. If customers need assistance, the operator would assist.
- On a Wheel-Trans community bus, there would be something behind the operator's area. Customers could take a transfer or be assisted by an operator.
- Wheel-Trans drivers will have paper transfers and can hand them out directly to customers who may want one.

Specific Wheel-Trans highlights:

- Opening up some aspects of the self-booking website on July 2 – Allowing people to book occasional trips using the site, noting the likelihood the Province will reopen much more of Toronto by the end of June
- Putting the pre-screening questions currently asked by Reservations on the self-booking website
- Increasing the possible advance time for booking a trip from two to seven days
- Continuing with solo rides – One customer at a time in a vehicle
- Continuing to provide operators with personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Continuing to provide special trips for customers who might have COVID-19 – Identifying them and ensuring operators have the appropriate PPE
- Continuing with mid-day cleaning of vehicles

Dwayne Geddes added that Wheel-Trans was considering changing the time that customers are called to advise about their ride times from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. This would allow Wheel-Trans to schedule rides a bit better. They were seeking ACAT's feedback on this possible change.

Wheel-Trans was also working on a plastic barrier between the Operator and customer on Wheel-Trans vehicles to add an extra layer of protection during these times. They will seek ACAT members' feedback on a prototype and aim to roll it out shortly.

Dwayne Geddes thanked ACAT for its great feedback on things Wheel-Trans has been doing. He noted that it had been collected and consolidated, and some of the recommendations had been implemented.

Questions and Comments from the Committee:

Restarting ACAT General Meetings: The committee clarified staff's recommendation that ACAT general meetings resume starting on June 25, rather than in July as had been discussed. This was confirmed, noting the TTC's commitment to seek ACAT's feedback as recovery plans ramp up, and recognizing the recent pandemic-related delays in meeting.

It was agreed the ACAT Design Review Subcommittee meeting that had tentatively been scheduled for June 25 would be rescheduled. The ACAT agenda review committee was asked to prepare an agenda for a general meeting on June 25, to be held via Webex.

Pre-screening Questions on Self-Booking Website: A member asked if customers would need to answer yes or no to each pre-screening question on the self-booking website. She suggested that it should not just be a list of questions that one could skip and then book their ride.

Cameron Penman, Manager – Customer Service, Wheel-Trans explained that there would be a similar questionnaire to the one now used to screen customers over the phone. If customers do not pass the questionnaire, because they answered yes to questions about exposure to COVID-19 and/or symptoms, they will be taken to the bottom of the page. They will be unable to advance to the booking section and will be advised they are required to call Reservations to book their trip

It was noted that the Wheel-Trans Operations Subcommittee would likely have more feedback and advice on this item.

Wheel-Trans Recovery and Re-Opening Plan – Consultation with Public Health Officials:

A member asked if the timeline for the Wheel-Trans services recovery and re-opening plan had been consulted with, and informed by, public health professionals. It was not clear from the staff presentation to the TTC Board if this was the case. This consultation is incredibly important, especially given the demographics of the people who use Wheel-Trans. There was concern that an entire timeline had been created for opening things back up, but it was unclear if it was guided by public health advice.

Dwayne Geddes advised that there is consultation with Toronto Public Health on every major thing Wheel-Trans does at this time, including the reopening plan and timeline, which Toronto Public Health approved.

They are trying to stop the spread and don't know exactly what the future holds, including the possibility of a second wave. The TTC will also work with ACAT, and the Wheel-Trans Operations Subcommittee will be an important part of this, regarding recommendations and timelines moving forward.

Mandatory Conditional Trip-Matching – Status and Timeline: A member requested an update from staff on the status and timeline for mandatory conditional trip-matching. The “COVID-19 – Transitioning from Response to Restart and Recovery” presentation made at the June 17 TTC Board meeting includes a section on Wheel-Trans. It says that mandatory conditional trip-matching will be evaluated in Q4 (the fourth quarter – October to December) of 2020. The member wondered if this timeline would be extended further, or if not, if more details could be provided on it.

Further to his response above, Dwayne Geddes advised that they are working very hard to keep everyone safe and consulting plans regularly with Toronto Public Health. That being the case, they don't know exactly what the future holds, including the possibility of additional waves of COVID-19. That is why there is a plan to review the timeline for mandatory conditional trip-matching in Q4 of 2020.

Request for further ACAT follow-up – TTC Board presentation on “COVID-19 – Transitioning from Response to Restart and Recovery” and overview of “TTC response to COVID-19 and impacts to accessibility”:

The ACAT Executive encouraged ACAT Subcommittee Chairs to review these two documents, extract anything related to their subcommittee and ensure it is addressed at upcoming subcommittee meetings. It was also suggested that perhaps staff could review the “TTC response to COVID-19 and impacts to accessibility” at the next ACAT general meeting. The TTC restart and recovery plan includes a specific section on Wheel-Trans, which all members were encouraged to read.

5. Remarks from ACAT Chair

The ACAT Chair welcomed everyone to ACAT's first special virtual meeting. He recognized that the last few months had been very difficult for all as they dealt with the COVID-19 pandemic. In their lifetime, these are unprecedented circumstances.

He flagged that Queen and Osgoode subway stations are apparently not accessible at this time. These are third-party accessible entrances. Osgoode is through the Canadian Opera Company building and Queen is through the Eaton Centre, both of which are currently closed.

The Chair noted this demonstrates the importance of an issue ACAT frequently raises with the TTC – its responsibility to keep the public informed about its accessible subway features, including access to elevators. There did not appear to be any TTC announcement of this change on the TTC website or elsewhere. He hoped staff would take note of this.

The Chair indicated that in the days, weeks and months to come, ACAT would need to be more active and vigilant in advocating for accessible transit. He wished everyone to be well and safe.

Questions and Comments from the Committee:

Milly Bernal, Communications Specialist agreed to look into the Queen and Osgoode accessibility issue and ensure it was announced on the TTC website if the situation was going to continue, which it likely was.

The ACAT Chair noted that a sign on the Canadian Opera House / Osgoode entrance says that the building was closed effective April 19, two months ago. They should have informed the TTC. There should be a communication mechanism between the TTC and third parties where there is only that one accessible entrance to a subway station.

The Chair requested that Milly and Matt Hagg, Senior Planner – System Accessibility re-establish this. He also pointed out that there is likely an agreement between the TTC and third parties that an elevator should be open as long as the subway is open. Milly agreed that staff would look into these points.

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

The ACAT Chair reported on the ACAT Executive's quarterly meeting with the TTC Board Chair, Vice-Chair and TTC CEO held on June 11, 2020 via conference call.

Construction of New Stations and Design: The ACAT Executive followed up on an action item from the last quarterly meeting held on March 11, 2020. Dwayne Geddes agreed to work with Gary Downie, the new TTC Chief Capital Officer, to prepare a motion.

Updates on Bike Lanes and their Impact on Accessibility: The ACAT Executive flagged the increased speed and priority with which bike lanes are now being built out in Toronto as a result of the pandemic. The ACAT Executive noted the specific effects bike lanes have on people using Wheel-Trans, especially safety risks for customers and drivers during pick-ups and drop-offs. They recalled that Wheel-Trans staff had been actively involved in recent, pre-pandemic bike lane project discussions with the City. They requested that special efforts be made for this to continue, amid the increased speed and urgency of current bike lane projects. Dwayne Geddes and the ACAT Executive agreed to follow-up on this issue.

COVID-19 Impact on Accessibility: The ACAT Executive expressed concerns about the communications on wearing masks on the TTC. They underlined that some people cannot use masks for a range of reasons -- they have problems physically taking masks on and off, mobility issues, medical issues, etc. However, there is a risk that other members of the public may not see or understand this, and single these people out for intimidation, harassment or policing their behaviour.

The ACAT Executive recommended that all public statements about mask usage on the TTC include a strong, positive message that if a person cannot wear a mask for health reasons, it is okay, so that people have greater protection from harassment.

The ACAT Executive also highlighted some challenges with using the term “mandatory”, with the recommendation that a phrase or concept such as “strongly encouraged” be considered instead. Dwayne Geddes agreed to bring these concerns and recommendations to TTC Corporate Communications and report back.

The ACAT Executive flagged a systemic concern that the accessibility lens is lacking in TTC Communications. They stated that the accessibility lens should be embedded in communications at all times and for all projects. They pointed out that missing these key points in this campaign is an example of the structural problem with TTC Communications lacking an effective accessibility perspective.

The ACAT Executive requested that before any communications are produced and distributed, they need to have an accessibility lens and there needs to be consultation with ACAT. Orest Kobylansky, TTC Executive Director – Operations agreed that he and Dwayne Geddes would speak with Corporate Communications about this issue.

Review of Outstanding Items List:

- Item: Harmonization of Accessibility Features between Metrolinx LRT stations with existing TTC Accessibility Standards – The Wayfinding report anticipated at the March 11 quarterly meeting had been tabled and included this.
- Item: Accessibility (Provincial) – Subways, Elevators, AODA Legislation – Ongoing.
- Item: Need for Elevator Redundancy at Interchange Subway Station – Ongoing.
- Item: Impact of Curbside Bike Lanes on Wheel-Trans Customers and Operators in Accessing Certain Pick-Up/Drop-Off Locations and Subway Stations that Do Not Have Bus Platforms – Ongoing.
- Item: Alternative Service Providers for Wheel-Trans Contracted Accessible Taxi Services – Ongoing. Next update: Q1 of 2022

Questions and Comments from the Committee:

An ACAT member asked about training for TTC staff to address potential situations in which a customer with a disability cannot wear a mask and another customer takes objection to that. She expressed concern about how TTC staff would manage this and if there would be specific training for them on it.

She noted that in her experience on the TTC, there is some discrimination against people with disabilities – not often, but it does happen. She had also witnessed an incident on a streetcar in which a customer got really angry about another customer not wearing a mask.

She wanted to reinforce the importance of the messaging and language on masks, so that customers understand that some people with disabilities cannot wear a mask for reasons that may or may not be obvious.

Dwayne Geddes advised that staff have *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)* training on how to work with customers with disabilities. Operators are also trained on how to handle incidents on a vehicle. The protocol involves contacting transit control, and TTC constables or the police are sent. Operators' job is not to stop the abuse – they observe and report it, and let the appropriate people come in. They have handled these situations in the past and will continue to do so.

Dwayne encouraged members to bring forward any suggestions on how to better communicate the messages on wearing masks to customers.

The ACAT Chair noted that it is important to have Operators on board in understanding that there are people with visible or invisible conditions that cannot wear masks. People who are vulnerable and who are not wearing masks will look for a certain protection or support from operators to prevent or address abuse. The protocol about contacting TTC constables or police is recognized, but it is the Operators who are first to acknowledge and act on such a situation.

It was agreed that this issue, and the specific training of TTC Operators/staff, would be pursued further at the next ACAT general meeting and/or the Service Planning Subcommittee.

7. Restart ACAT General and Subcommittee Meeting Schedule and Logistics using Webex

It was agreed that the schedule of ACAT general meetings and subcommittee meetings would be restarted using Webex, beginning with the ACAT General meeting on Thursday, June 25, 2020.

The committee and staff will work on improving the use of Webex, including the closed captioning function.

Questions and Comments from the Committee:

A member recommended that the committee would need to be very vigilant of possible cuts as governments seek to recoup money spent during the pandemic.

8. Other / New Business

Nil.

9. Next Meeting

The next meeting of ACAT will be held on Thursday, June 25, 2020 via Webex.

10. Adjournment

On a motion by Chris Stigas, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:18 p.m.

Stephanie Power
Recording Secretary

TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION

COMMITTEE MINUTES

Minutes of Meeting: Advisory Committee on Accessible Transit
Meeting No. 354

Meeting Date: Thursday, June 25, 2020

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

ACAT Pool Members: Ann-Marie Cole
Hans Winther

TTC Representatives: Milly Bernal, Customer Communications Specialist
Heather Brown, Manager – Customer Communications
Ricardo Couto, Division Manager – Bus Transportation
Dwayne Geddes, Head of Wheel-Trans
Matt Hagg, Senior Planner – System Accessibility
Lodon Hassan, Assistant Manager – Customer Service, WT
Marco Iorfida, Scheduling and Policy Specialist, Wheel-Trans
David Lo Presti, Manager – Contracted Taxi Services, WT
Dean Milton, Manager – Strategic Initiatives, Wheel-Trans
Cameron Penman, Manager – Customer Service, Wheel-Trans
Steve Stewart, Project Manager – Easier Access Program

Copies: Rick Leary, Chief Executive Officer
Kirsten Watson, Deputy CEO – Operations
Kathleen Llewellyn-Thomas, Chief Strategy & Customer Officer
Orest Kobylansky, Executive Director – Operations
Gary Downie, Chief Capital Officer
Josie La Vita, Chief Financial Officer
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 February 27, 2020 Minutes
6. Business Arising out of Minutes / Outstanding Items
7. Deputation: Nil
8. 2020 Accessibility Plan Status Report
9. Easier Access Phase 3 Update Report
10. Wheel-Trans 10-Year Strategy Update
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 / New Business
16. Next Meeting – July 30, 2020
17. Adjournment

1. Call to Order / Attendance

Chair Mazin Aribi called the meeting to order at 1:04 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 Chris Stigas, the agenda was approved.

4. Remarks from ACAT Chair

ACAT Chair Mazin Aribi welcomed everyone to the first ACAT General virtual meeting, noting that, for the foreseeable future, this may become the new way of conducting meetings. He emphasized that in the days and weeks to come, ACAT members would need to be more active and vigilant as they establish the ACAT subcommittee work. ACAT is looking forward to advocating for accessible transit. The Chair wished everyone to be well and safe.

5. Review and Approval of February 27, 2020 Minutes

On a motion by Angela Marley, seconded by Jessica Geboers, the minutes of the February 27, 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. A presentation was given by the City of Toronto Cycling and Pedestrian Infrastructure team to WTOS and sought the feedback of members.
- Item: Give Higher Priority to Resolving Inconsistencies with Wheel-Trans Pick-Ups and Drop-Offs at Subway Stations in support of Family of Services. – Ongoing. Marco Iorfida, Scheduling and Policy Specialist, advised that all outstanding items from the previous working list have been addressed, except the additional northbound stop at the northeast corner of Dundas that had been requested by ACAT. The stop has been approved by Wheel-Trans and has gone to Service Planning for review of the stop and signage, etc. Additionally, updates have been made to subway landmarks. The specific bus bay where the Wheel-Trans stop is located has been included for each accessible subway station. When the self-booking website goes live again, these changes will be there. The team will continue to make changes and improvements that ACAT requests.
- Item: GTHA Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) Joint Meeting – Ongoing. This meeting has been cancelled until further notice. ACAT members will be informed as soon as it is rescheduled.
- Item: Subway Platform (Vertical and Horizontal) Gap – Ongoing. There are plans to build on six more platforms in 2020 and 10 more platforms in 2021, as per the lists previously reported to ACAT. Updates will be reported to the ACAT Design Review Subcommittee.

- Item: Motion – Need for Dual Elevators at Finch West Interchange Station to the LRT Platform Level – Ongoing. TTC staff are preparing a motion to be brought by TTC Board members to the TTC Board on this issue. The progress of the motion is being tracked.
- Item: Motion – TTC Second Elevator at Subway – LRT Interchange Stations – Ongoing. TTC staff are preparing a motion to be brought by TTC Board members to the TTC Board on this issue. The progress of the motion is being tracked. Also, an Easier Access Phase 4 study has begun. Draft criteria for prioritizing stations for future accessibility features, which could include second elevators, will be discussed with the ACAT Design Review Subcommittee later this summer.
- Item: TTC Service on Kilgour Road (Deputation from Meenu Sikand and Dennise Carrasco) – Ongoing. Closer to the time of opening the Eglinton Crosstown in 2022, this will be reviewed with the possibility of service. ACAT has asked that TTC staff meet with the deputants ahead of this to share information and discuss solutions. Staff have agreed to consult with health facilities in the area to see if there is a better way to serve them and to also include this consultation/consideration in the annual service plan for that year.
- Item: Update on the New TTC Website and Updated Station Descriptions which have been on hold – Ongoing. The TTC website had been scheduled to go live in Q2 of 2020 (the second quarter – April to June). The updated station descriptions will be included in the new site as soon as it goes live. Heather Brown, Manager – Customer Communications advised that there are no new updates on this. She will report again on it at the next meeting.
- Item: PRESTO Card Registration and whether it can be activated without an email/online process – Ongoing. Heather Brown advised that she reached out to the PRESTO team who are aware of ACAT's concerns and feedback, and looking into it. The PRESTO team has not advised if they are taking any action or on what timeline. Heather Brown agreed to follow-up again to seek an update for the Communications Subcommittee meeting on July 2. ACAT repeated its strong equity concerns about this process. It recommended that the TTC, as the user of the Metrolinx-designed PRESTO system, can demand equity changes such as this and advocate for their customers.

7. Deputation

Nil.

8. 2020 Accessibility Plan Status Report

Matt Hagg, Senior Planner – System Accessibility provided an overview of the 2020 Status Report on the *2019-2023 TTC Multi-Year Accessibility Plan*.

The plan contains 52 objectives to improve and expand TTC's accessible transit services in four areas: stations, vehicles, Wheel-Trans and customer experience. Fifteen objectives (27%) have been successfully completed. Twenty-seven are in progress, including 10 that are planned to be completed by the end of 2020. Five were related to the Line 2 East Extension project and have been transferred to Metrolinx. Five are ongoing activities with no set end date.

Achievements – 2019 to June 2020

Stations:

- Royal York station made accessible
- 46 of 75 stations are now accessible
- Easier Access construction started at four stations
- TTC began a program to improve “platform gaps”
- Study for Phase 4 of the Easier Access Program has begun

Vehicles:

- All high-floor streetcars were retired by the end of 2019
- Completed delivery of the new fleet of 204 accessible streetcars
- Completed VISION system rollout on buses
- Deployed pre-boarding announcements on all subway trains
- Completed Line 3 train retrofits for improved accessibility

Wheel-Trans:

- Access Hub program to be completed Q3 2020
- Family of Services routes and stops continue to be expanded each year
- Improvements to telephone booking and significantly reduced wait times
- Remainder of Wheel-Trans objectives will be completed between 2020 and 2023

Customer Experience:

- Trial tactile signs at transit stops
- Prototype tactile signs at public washrooms
- Launch of a new Streetcar Operator refresher program with assistance from ACAT
- Rollout of PRESTO payment on Wheel-Trans contracted sedan taxis

Timelines have shifted for certain objectives due to project schedule changes. Of these objectives originally planned for 2019, two have moved to 2020 and three to 2021:

- Community bus changes
- Wheel-Trans mobile app
- Accessible streetcar stop program
- Fair Pass Discount Phase 3
- PRESTO Support Person Card

Three objectives originally planned to be completed by 2023 will be achieved earlier in 2020:

- Start the Easier Access Phase 4 Study
- Start centre platform tactile wayfinding upgrades
- Rebuild four elevators for improved reliability

Easier Access – Station Completion Schedule

Station elevators in service by:

- 2020: Dupont, Wellesley, Wilson, Runnymede, Bay, Chester
- 2021: Yorkdale, Sherbourne, Lansdowne, Keele
- 2022: King, Donlands, Spadina
- 2023: College, Lawrence, Greenwood, Christie, Castle Frank, Summerhill, High Park
- 2024: Museum, Rosedale, Old Mill, Glencairn
- 2025: Warden, Islington

Progress on the *2019-2023 TTC Multi-Year Accessibility Plan* will be continuously monitored, with annual updates to the TTC Board on the status of the 52 objectives.

Questions and Comments from the Committee:

Members raised questions, concerns and recommendations regarding tactile signs during the COVID-19 pandemic. They noted that anything customers touch with their hands at this time, and perhaps for the next year or so, is an issue.

Matt Hagg agreed to request extra sanitization and cleaning of all tactile signs on a regular basis, and confirmation on how frequently this is being done. He also agreed to follow up on a request to place hand sanitizers next to tactile signs in stations, noting this would be much harder to do at street bus stops. Matt noted the point that rollout of tactile signs might be problematic at this time.

A member advised she had been involved in some testing of various gloves for reading tactile signage. The advice being given by some agencies is for customers to bring their own gloves and hand sanitizer and to sanitize after they read the material. While supplying hand sanitizer in obvious locations was agreed to be a positive step, people won't necessarily know where to look for it.

A member noted a seeming heavy emphasis on service issues in the TTC Accessibility Plan, and suggested that it should be broadened to include important accessibility features such as the website and communications. Matt Hagg confirmed that the website is one of the 52 objectives to be completed as part of the plan, which also includes some other communications items such as priority seating campaigns.

9. Easier Access Phase 3 Update Report

Steve Stewart, Project Manager – Easier Access Program provided an overview of the Easier Access Phase 3 Update Report scheduled to be presented at the July 14, 2020 TTC Board Meeting. It is an update on the Easier Access Phase 3 – Feasibility of Acceleration report produced in 2016 and is closely correlated with the 2020 Accessibility Plan Status Report.

Highlights included:

- There are currently 10 stations in construction. There is a definitive plan to get another 10 stations in construction over the next year to the end of 2021. Thus, by the end of next year, 20 of the remaining 26 stations will be well on their way to being accessible.
- The Accessibility Plan identified a goal of getting four stations in construction in 2019 and completing accessibility upgrades at Royal York. The four stations started are Keele, Bay, Lansdowne and Sherbourne.
- Of the 10 stations in construction this year, the TTC is committed to completing and putting four of them into service this year. These are Wilson, Wellesley, Dupont and Chester. A couple of other stations will follow closely, either towards the end of 2020 or early 2021.

- The Easier Access Phase 3 plan had stated that three stations per year needed to be put into service to meet the goal of making all stations accessible by 2025. The TTC is on schedule to do that, and still on schedule for 2025.
- The challenges involved in making these stations accessible, and having this many stations concurrently under construction, still exist and are being managed. Steve Stewart noted that ACAT members who were part of the Design Review Subcommittee in 2016 might remember working on the language in the Feasibility of Acceleration report that addressed this.
- Updates in the report include the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Easier Access projects. These are not significant and the TTC is assessing opportunities for recovery and advancing the work, with low ridership presenting some options. For example, access to Chester Station was closed to do some work at the front of the station.
- The Easier Access Phase Four study has begun. The consultant has been engaged and information gathering is taking place. Over the next couple of months, the team will start putting together criteria for selecting priority stations for redundant accessible paths. They will be coming to the ACAT Design Review Subcommittee with findings, to discuss the selection criteria and seek ACAT's input.
- A key takeaway of the report is that there are some schedule changes:
 - Glencairn Station will be in service in 2024 rather than 2025.
 - College Station is delayed. It will start later this year and the plan is to have it in service in 2023. The construction at Yonge just south of College will be very challenging and securing the approval has been a struggle.
 - Yorkdale Station was expected to be in service in 2020 and is being pushed to 2021, hopefully early 2021 rather than later. There have been a number of challenges, including the escalators and other issues throughout the station.

Questions and Comments from the Committee:

At ACAT's request, Steve Stewart and Matt Hagg agreed to share the report with the ACAT Design Review Subcommittee for its upcoming meeting scheduled on July 8, 2020.

A member asked if the report would be presented to the TTC Board as an update for informational purposes, or if there is some type of action item associated with it. Steve Stewart clarified that the report is an update and the Board's action item is to receive it.

A member asked if staff had identified any new items or features as a result of the COVID-19 changes that would need to be incorporated into designs from an accessibility perspective, for example related to physical distancing. It was suggested this might be a good opportunity to identify or raise such items because some contracts and projects were just starting. Steve Stewart indicated that no such changes to designs or contracts related to the COVID-19 experience or physical distancing had been made. However, if ACAT has recommendations for more permanent changes based on lessons learned from the pandemic, the TTC is absolutely open to hearing about them and how they might apply to these projects going forward.

A member asked a follow-up question about COVID-19 impacts on construction timelines. Steve Stewart advised that there were some impacts on projects due to availability of equipment and

materials, as well as physical distancing and health and safety concerns. However, the projects were designated essential and work did not stop. Overall, the effect on timelines has not been significant and they are hoping to have opportunities to recover.

10. Wheel-Trans 10-Year Strategy Update

Update on Start of New Wheel-Trans Taxi Service Contracts

David Lo Presti, Manager – Contracted Taxi Services, Wheel-Trans provided an update on the start of the new Wheel-Trans taxi service contracts. He noted that customer feedback and feedback from ACAT would assist with continuous improvement of the service. He encouraged ACAT to contact the team with issues and recommendations and agreed to investigate and report back.

Wheel-Trans Accessible Taxi Service: The new contract for Wheel-Trans Accessible Taxi service commenced on May 31, 2020. The TTC Board awarded service contracts at its February 25, 2020 meeting to five contractors. Four contractors began service on day one of the new contract: Scarborough City Cabs, Co-op Cabs, Royal Taxi and Checkers Taxi. The fifth contractor, Beck Taxi AT, has been granted a relief extension to approximately Q4 2020 to facilitate workforce requirements related to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is hoped that they will begin service at about November 1, 2020 and ACAT will be kept informed as more information on this is available. All other legal, procurement, technical and financial requirements of the contract have been satisfied

Highlights of the new Accessible Taxi service contract include:

- Vehicles and Operators dedicated solely to Wheel-Trans
- Improved training
- Standard business attire
- Industry reporting
- Technical link for on-demand dispatching (Q2-2021) and vehicle tracking
- Increased liquidated damages for contract violations
- Smoke- and scent-free vehicles
- Safety barrier (COVID protocols)
- Enhanced lost item policy

Wheel-Trans Sedan Taxi Service: The new contract for Wheel-Trans Sedan Taxi service commenced on June 14, 2020. The TTC Board awarded service contracts at its February 25, 2020 meeting to three contractors. Two contractors began service on day one of the new contract: Co-op Cabs and Beck Taxi. The third contractor, Scarborough City Cabs Sedan, has been granted a relief extension to facilitate workforce requirements related to the COVID-19 pandemic. They are scheduled to begin service in Q3 2020. All other legal, procurement, technical and financial requirements of the contract have been satisfied.

Highlights of the new Sedan Taxi service contract include:

- Improved training
- Standard business attire negotiated
- Industry reporting
- Technical link for on-demand dispatching (Q4-2021) and vehicle tracking

- Increased liquidated damages for contract violations
- On-street supervisors
- Smoke- and scent-free vehicles
- Enhanced lost item policy
- Vehicle decals (Wheel-Trans and FOS)
- Presto capability

Update on Transfer Distribution Methods

Ricardo Couto, Division Manager – Bus Transportation provided an update on transfer distribution methods. All-door boarding, cash fare collection and transfer distribution are scheduled to resume on July 2, 2020.

At first, transfers will be available from an elastic riveted to the Operator's lower barrier until the more permanent solution is manufactured and installed. This will be a yellow transfer tray with a cut-out in the middle. Operators will tear off and load the transfers into these new distribution methods and direct any customer who pays a cash fare to take a transfer from there. If a customer requires a transfer and is unable to obtain it through this method, it is still the Operator's responsibility to exit their seat and hand over a transfer to the customer.

Dwayne Geddes, Head of Wheel-Trans added that this will also be the transfer distribution system on Wheel-Trans community buses.

Wheel-Trans Updates

Dwayne Geddes, Head of Wheel-Trans provided several additional updates:

Plastic Barrier on Vehicles: A new, soft plastic barrier is currently being installed on Wheel-Trans vehicles to help reduce the transmission of viruses. It is made of clear, medium-weight plastic fastened with turn-buttons for easy installation and removal. There is easy access to the rear of the vehicle through a Velcro opening. The plastic is thin enough to allow for verbal and visual communications. It is currently being drive-tested by the Joint Healthy and Safety Committee and Wheel-Trans will be seeking ACAT's feedback on it.

Hand Sanitizer on Vehicles: Hand sanitizer will be available from metal holders installed by the side door entrance of Wheel-Trans vehicles.

New 7-Metre ProMaster Vehicle: The TTC has been having weekly meetings with the vendor, Creative Carriage, discussing all the design review comments. This meeting is also attended by Arboc Specialty Vehicles, the manufacturer of the vehicle. A total of 52 comments were received from ACAT members during several visits of the pilot vehicle. Immediate next steps include distributing TTC/manufacturer responses to the 52 ACAT comments by email to ACAT members in June/July 2020, requesting feedback. The pilot vehicle is expected to be delivered in July 2020, with ACAT to review it and the TTC to test it in August 2020. ACAT will be kept updated.

Upcoming Changes on July 2, 2020: An e-blast will be sent out regarding upcoming changes on July 2, 2020, including resumption of fare collection and mandatory masks, which were covered at the last TTC Board meeting in June.

Wheel-Trans Transformation Update to TTC Board: There will be an upcoming Wheel-Trans transformation update to the TTC Board that focuses on progress and achievements in the last year. Highlights include:

- Phase 2 launch of scheduling and software system, including a mobile app – The ACAT Chair currently has access to the app. When the Wheel-Trans self-booking website reopens on July 2, 2020, further testing of the app will be done.
- Family of Services – Continued expansion of routes
- Mandatory conditional trip-matching – This has been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and will be reassessed at the end of 2020 / start of 2021.
- Re-registration – Up to 5,000 customers have re-registered. The process is continuing and all customers are being asked to re-register.
- Travel Training – Currently on hold
- Access Hubs – Expected to be completed in 2020
- Cross-border initiative – Continuing interagency work with the GTHA group to ensure collaboration among agencies and similar policies and procedures, to help make travel across regions (including Durham, York, Peel) more seamless
- Contact Centre review – Wait-time improvements and continued efforts, including an upcoming Request for Proposals for a contract to handle overflow calls at peak periods

Questions and Comments from the Committee:

Requirement for Side-Entry, Low-Floor Ramp Vehicles: In response to member questions, staff confirmed that rear entrances/loaders will not be permitted under the new Wheel-Trans Accessible Taxi service contract.

Contract taxi service penalties: Members raised a number of questions and concerns about the penalties under the new Wheel-Trans taxi service contracts. They noted that it appears companies tend to blame the driver when it is often the company that has a problem. The Committee questioned whether drivers have an effective complaints and reporting process, if they are aware of their options in this regard, and if Municipal Licensing and Standards had been engaged to help clarify and improve the process.

“On-street supervisors” in new Sedan Taxi service contract: Members asked for clarification about the “on-street supervisor” requirement in the new Sedan Taxi service contract. Staff explained that trained supervisors from the contracted companies will be required to attend the scene of an incident within two hours.

Wheel-Trans and FOS Decals for Sedan Taxis / Access to Bus Terminals: The committee followed up on the discussion of new Wheel-Trans and FOS decals for Sedan Taxis under the new service contract. If Sedan Taxis will be allowed to go inside bus terminals as the Family of Services approach is implemented, as they never have before, members felt that information, education and agreements would be required to support this. David Lo Presti advised that Transit Control and Bus Operations and Enforcement are being engaged on the issue. He agreed to return to ACAT for feedback and input into the process.

Plastic Barriers on Wheel-Trans Vehicles: In response to member questions, staff confirmed that plastic barriers are being installed on Wheel-Trans Friendly and 6-metre ProMaster vehicles and contracted Accessible Taxis. Health and safety issues regarding temperature control (heat

and air conditioning) had been identified for installing the barriers in Sedan Taxis. However, staff agreed to explore this further and follow-up with ACAT.

Staff also clarified that the barriers are made of soft plastic that is not very thick, so they should not impede visual and verbal communication. The intent of the barriers is to prevent prolonged close interaction between customers and Operators and reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19.

Use of Front Seat in Contracted Accessible Taxis and Sedan Taxis: Staff confirmed that the practice of customers using the front seat in contracted Accessible Taxis and Sedan Taxis has been stopped for the time being to reduce prolonged exposure between customers and Operators.

Wheel-Trans Solo Rides: Currently, Wheel-Trans is only providing solo rides on all vehicles for one customer, or one customer and support person, at a time to reduce exposure risk. As ridership returns, Wheel-Trans will return to ride-sharing which will make mask-wearing important.

Location of Hand Sanitizer on Wheel-Trans Vehicles: Members highlighted concerns about the proposed location of hand sanitizer dispensers on Wheel-Trans vehicles. The suggested front-right corner location is a tight area that might hit some mobility devices with joy sticks on the right side. ACAT questioned whether it could be relocated and/or tested to see if it is a problem. Staff agreed to arrange for this testing with ACAT.

Barriers on Conventional Buses: A member pointed out that the current barriers at the front of conventional buses are easily pushed through and could potentially pose a trip risk for persons who have vision loss, a cane or a guide dog. Staff advised that these barriers would be removed as of July 2, 2020.

Clarification of Language – “Essential Trips” and “Mandatory Masks”: A member raised concern that the term “essential trips” has not been clearly understood by Wheel-Trans customers and Reservations staff during the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff welcomed any recommendations on this wording for incorporation into communications planning going forward and asked members to share their suggestions with Lodon Hassan.

The communication around “mandatory masks” was also flagged as not clear to all stakeholders, including drivers and customers. There was concern that exceptions for people who cannot wear masks for health reasons are not being clearly articulated and understood. Staff encouraged ACAT’s recommendations on how to communicate this more effectively and asked members to share these with the Communications team.

Milly Bernal, Communications Specialist, advised that the TTC was adding language to its website and other communications encouraging respect among customers and emphasizing the mask exceptions. The committee agreed to discuss these issues further at upcoming Wheel-Trans Operations and Communications Subcommittee meetings.

Testing of Wheel-Trans Mobile App: Members queried the testing of the Wheel-Trans mobile app and expressed their interest again in participating in it. Lodon Hassan, Assistant Manager – Customer Service, Wheel-Trans agreed to send a request to all ACAT members for their interest in testing the app and their current device information. Wheel-Trans will also be seeking

additional customer volunteers to test the app as the self-booking website goes live again in July 2020.

Presentation Guidelines: The committee provided a reminder on the ACAT guidelines for presenters, found in the ACAT Manual. Virtual meetings with some members calling in make these even more important. All presenters were reminded to provide presentations ahead of time in an accessible format, including an alternate text version for any PowerPoint presentation. Presenters were reminded if they reference something in a presentation to remember some meeting participants cannot see it, and thus to describe what they are talking about.

11. Subcommittee Reports and Updates

Deferred to next ACAT general meeting on July 30, 2020.

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

Deferred to the next meeting.

13. Report on TTC Board Meeting and Accessibility Matters

A TTC Special Board Meeting was held virtually via Webex on, May 13, 2020.

TTC Board Member Julie Osborne verbalized the importance of not losing ACAT's voice going forward.

The ACAT Chair acknowledged the very difficult time that the TTC Board and staff have endured during this pandemic, and the commendable efforts made to keep customers and staff safe and well.

Regarding any future plans, procedures or policies -- whether short- or long-term -- that may impact accessibility, the ACAT Chair emphasized that ACAT would like to continue being at the table and part of these discussions before final decisions are made.

As well, on any financial decisions that would impact accessibility of Wheel-Trans and/or the conventional system, ACAT should be consulted prior to approval. It is important that accessibility continues to be at the forefront of TTC planning.

The ACAT Chair underlined that the TTC and Wheel-Trans are the only mode of transit for many people with disabilities. Many customers cannot easily find alternative methods of travel.

Finally, ACAT would like to have a sense of what provisions are being made for its continued involvement with the TTC.

Staff made several presentations to the Board. ACAT members are encouraged to review the TTC Board meeting agenda, reports and presentations made at the May 13, 2020 Board meeting at:

http://www.ttc.ca/About_the_TTC/Commission_reports_and_information/Commission_meetings/2020/May_13/Agenda/index.jsp

Recorded video of the entire meeting is at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BomVkeb7WPM>

The ACAT Chair informed the TTC Board of the next ACAT General virtual meeting scheduled on Thursday, June 25, 2020 via Webex.

The next TTC Board Meeting is scheduled on Tuesday, July 14, 2020.

Questions and Comments from the Committee:

It was noted that the TTC Board elected a new Vice-Chair, Joanne De Laurentiis, at this meeting. She will replace Alan Heisey as Vice-Chair and will chair the TTC Board meetings until TTC Chair, Councillor Jaye Robinson returns.

14. Review of Correspondence

Nil.

15. Other / New Business

Protocol for Streetcar Operators to come out and lower ramp: It was agreed that the protocol for Streetcar Operators to come out and lower the ramp for customers would be added to the agenda for the next Service Planning Subcommittee meeting. Members noted that Operators not doing this was an infrequent problem prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is now a regular occurrence. ACAT has received complaints from customers and complaints have been made to the TTC.

Opportunity for Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Audit: It was agreed that the opportunity for the TTC to undergo an accessibility audit by the Rick Hansen Foundation would be discussed at the Service Planning Subcommittee. The Ontario government has allocated specific funding for public spaces and buildings to receive these audits. The committee highlighted that now might be a great opportunity for the TTC to receive this feedback and see how it would score given that the audit would be free.

Impact of COVID-19 on ACAT and its Work: It was flagged that the pandemic has had multiple impacts on ACAT and its work. Many members have not been able to use the TTC or connect with each other or TTC staff in-person, which has affected their ability to effectively provide advice. It was noted that virtual meetings are a good new solution and should continue. However, opportunities to connect with TTC staff, and build understanding and relationships to improve accessibility are missed. The open question of how to address this was raised. Special thanks were expressed to TTC staff, and to the ACAT Executive particularly, for their work to keep a focus on accessibility and open up opportunities to provide advice.

Problem with Curb Cut at Carlton and Church: Matt Hagg agreed to arrange for Operations staff to investigate a problem with a curb cut at the northeast corner of Carlton and Church. A member reported that a new building was being constructed at that corner and is almost completed. There is a new sidewalk, but it has no curb cut for access to the streetcar.

Buttons and/or Cards About Mask Exemption: A member raised the "Please Offer Me a Seat" buttons and cards as a possible option or idea to help communicate that some customers cannot wear masks for health reasons which are sometimes not visible. Milly Bernal, Communications Specialist, advised that the TTC is tentatively exploring a similar approach to buttons/cards like this on mask exemption. A member requested that specific measures be

taken to communicate that these buttons and cards are available and how to obtain them, including signage in stations. It was agreed that these items would be discussed at the Communications Subcommittee.

16. Next Meeting – July 30, 2020

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

17. Adjournment

On a motion by Sam Savona, the meeting was adjourned at 3:42 p.m.

Stephanie Power
Recording Secretary