



Advisory Committee on Accessible Transit

February 7, 2023

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 November 24, 2022 to the February 28, 2023 Board Meeting for information (attached).

Please note a motion was brought to have the TTC Diversity Department conduct a review of ACAT meeting times. A report is expected to be presented to ACAT by April 2023.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Anita Dressler
2023 ACAT Chair

TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION
COMMITTEE MINUTES

APPROVED

Minutes of Meeting: ACAT General Meeting

Meeting Date: Thursday, November 24, 2022
1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Location: Virtual meeting via WebEx

Present: Debbie Gillespie, ACAT Chair
Bobbi Moore, ACAT Vice Chair
Carmen Galvan, SPS Chair
Angela Marley, CS Chair
Craig Nicol, DRS Chair
Lauri Sue Robertson, WTOS Chair
Gwyneth Dalzell
Anita Dressler
Robert Hampson
Sean Hollingsworth
Lorraine Le Camp
Wangari Muriuki
Erica Tanny
Howard Wax

Absent: Lauren Foote

Deputants: Jane Rowan
Adina Lebo

TTC Representatives: Keisha Campbell, Chief Diversity and Culture Officer
Natalie Poole-Moffatt, Chief Corporate Affairs Officer
Cameron Penman, Head of Wheel-Trans
Heather Brown, Director of Customer Experience
Marlon Merraro, Director of Diversity
Dean Milton, Manager of Strategic Initiatives, Wheel-Trans
Mohammed Shaikh, Divisional Manager of Operations,
Wheel-Trans
Natalie Francis, Manager of Planning and Policy, Wheel
Trans
John Boucher, Lakeshore Garage Manager, Bus
Maintenance and Shops
Matt Hagg, Manager of Customer Policy, Strategy &
Foresight
Lodon Hassan, Acting Manager of Customer Service,
Wheel-Trans
Ross Visconti, Project Manager, Wheel Trans

Cyril Cromwell, Engagement Consultant, Racial Equity Office, Diversity Department

Chris Hong, Customer Experience Analyst, Strategy & Foresight

Levenson Lincoln, Customer Service Supervisor, Wheel-Trans

Oliva Laskarzewski, Human Rights Consultant

Natashia Singh, Customer Experience Analyst, Strategy & Foresight

Stephen Cartaciano, Special Events & Program Specialist

Adrienne Isaac, Administrative Assistant, Wheel-Trans

Firuz Makhmudova, Administrative Coordinator

Augusta Ferguson, Co-op Student, Strategy & Foresight

Invited Guests:

Jeffrey Short, Senior Advisor, Universal Design, Metrolinx

Items Discussed

- 1/ Call to Order / Attendance
- 2/ Land Acknowledgement
- 3/ Declaration of Conflict of Interest
- 4/ Approval of Agenda
- 5/ Deputation: Family of Services – Jane Rowan and Adina Lebo
- 6/ Remarks from TTC Executive
- 7/ Review and Approval of October 27, 2022, Minutes
- 8/ Remarks from ACAT Chair
- 9/ Outstanding Items – Review of ACAT meeting times, noise alerts, operator announcements, accessible events
- 10/ Review of Correspondence: Nil
- 11/ Wheel-Trans Transformation & COVID-19 update from Cameron Penman
- 12/ Subcommittee Reports, Highlights and Updates
 - Communications
 - Design Review
 - Service Planning
 - Wheel-Trans Operations
- 13/ New Business:
 - a. Eglinton Crosstown Preview Visit – Craig Nicol
 - b. Wheel-Trans Appeal Panel Functional Assessors Evaluation
- 14/ Next Meeting – December 15, 2022
- 15/ Adjournment

1. Call to Order/Attendance

Debbie Gillespie, ACAT Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:04 p.m. and attendance was taken.

2. Land Acknowledgement

The Land Acknowledgement was read by Debbie Gillespie.

3. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Nil.

4. Approval of Agenda

One item was added to the agenda under New Business

- a) Eglinton Crosstown preview visit

Wangari Muriuki brought a motion to approve the Agenda as amended, Angela Marley seconded. Carried.

5. Deputation: Family of Services – Jane Rowan and Adina Lebo

Jane Rowan addressed members about issues she has had while using the TTC's Family of Services, specifically at Broadview Station, Sheppard-Yonge Station, Woodbine Station and Jane Station. Her comments included having issues with seating at Family of Service transfer points, between Wheel-Trans and conventional transit; routes that take her out of her way; contracted taxi drivers refusing to enter stations to pick up; and transfer point locations being poorly marked. Jane discussed the distance customers must walk to get to drop off and pick up points and suggested it can be difficult to find TTC staff at stations if a customer has questions. She stated that access to buses is sometimes challenging when stops are poorly cleared due to snow build up and getting priority seating is limited when other able-bodied passengers are using the seats.

Adina Lebo shared she is a member of the Toronto Seniors Forum and suggested walking long distances, climbing stairs, standing while waiting for transit and uncleared sidewalks are obstacles for customers, specifically seniors, and can cause these customers to become exhausted. Adina asked for exhaustion to be considered when conducting eligibility appeals.

Questions and Comments from the Committee:

A member asked Jane which stations caused the most issues in her experience, what her expectations are for Wheel-Trans pick up to be useable, and asked whether Jane spoke with a customer service agent or collector at each station. Jane Rowan responded that Woodbine, Jane, Bay and Bloor-Yonge stations were difficult and noted that Bloor-Yonge

does not have an accessible door at the entrance to the station. With respect to expectations, Jane suggested having seating in the building, heated areas, better signage, and for customers to be provided instructions about which stop number and where Family of Services taxis will pull up to for pick up. The member suggested the passenger assistance intercom could be used for assistance if a customer needs to speak with TTC staff and also asked Jane whether she had participated in travel training. Jane replied she had trained twice and did not know about the option to press the passenger assistance intercom.

A member suggested inconsistent staff coverage at TTC stations has been an issue for customers over the past few years. Another member suggested many bus platforms are outdoors and questioned whether Jane had concerns about seating being outdoors. The member also suggested the issue of taxis not entering stations when picking up Wheel-Trans customers should be addressed. Another member questioned whether the Family of Services (FOS) assessments accurately reflect actual customer experience.

Debbie Gillespie, ACAT Chair, asked for TTC staff to follow up with Jane and assigned the following issues to the Wheel-Trans Operations Subcommittee:

- a) Computer trip planning
- b) Seating at subway stations and walking distance to Wheel-Trans location, fatigue from walking
- c) Taxis not entering stations to pick up Wheel-Trans customers
- d) Passenger Assistance Intercom included as part of travel training and awareness

A member highlighted the passenger assistance intercom is an example of an effort from the TTC to assist customers and suggested travel training should emphasize the intercom availability to customers.

A member suggested quieter and smaller stations being used for FOS transfer points, for example using North York Centre Station instead of Sheppard-Yonge Station. Another member suggested adding minimal walking to the algorithm. Dean Milton, Manager of Strategic Initiatives, confirmed that a maximum walking distance of approximately 250 metres is used when scheduling FOS trips. Within subway stations, additional time is added to the overall trip duration to allow customers to make their connections, and there are benches along the way should a customer need to rest. TTC encourages customers to provide feedback on FOS trip scheduling solutions; and this feedback will be used to improve the travel experience.

6. Remarks from the TTC Executive

Keisha Campbell, Chief Diversity & Culture Officer, expressed appreciation for the Committee's work. Keisha leads the Diversity and Culture team and the Human Rights and Investigations Department is part of the group. Keisha discussed the Diversity Department is in the process of hiring an accessibility consultant who will address staff matters with respect to accessibility.

Natalie Poole-Moffatt, Chief Corporate Affairs Officer, discussed being responsible for internal and external communications, stakeholder communications and media relations for the TTC. Natalie expressed appreciation for ACAT's partnership and discussed the efforts TTC is making with respect to delivering on the commitment to build a barrier-free transit system by 2025 in accordance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*. Natalie shared she is passionate about accessibility options and suggested that International Day of Persons with Disabilities on December 3, 2022 is a prime opportunity to reflect on the strides ACAT has helped make towards creating a more accessible and equitable system for all. Together TTC and ACAT have made significant progress towards making public transit more accessible for everyone.

7. Review and Approval of October 27, 2022, Minutes

Craig Nicol brought a motion to approve the October 27, 2022, minutes. Angela Marley seconded. Carried.

8. Remarks from ACAT Chair – Debbie Gillespie

Debbie Gillespie, ACAT Chair, acknowledged the previous ACAT Chair, Jonathan Marriott, and expressed appreciation for the time he spent preparing for and conducting ACAT meetings with respect for members and handling his work demands as Director of Accessibility with the Rick Hanson Foundation. TTC staff and the ACAT Co-Vice Chairs discussed the role of ACAT Chair for the remainder of 2022. Debbie has assumed the role of ACAT Chair for the remainder of 2022. Debbie announced Pool member, Lorraine Le Camp, will fill this remaining ACAT position until December 31, 2022.

The interviews for the 2023 to 2025 ACAT term membership are complete and the candidates have been selected. Jonathan, Debbie, and Bobbi Moore, ACAT Vice-Chair participated in the interviews. The new members will be announced following approval by the TTC Board. The ACAT Chair's year-in-review presentation is being prepared and will include ACAT initiatives and transit concerns addressed in 2022. This is the second time the ACAT Chair provided a year-end summary to the TTC Board and staff. The 2021 ACAT Chair provided the inaugural year-end presentation. Highlights provided by each Subcommittee are an integral part of the presentation.

9. Outstanding Items – Review of ACAT meeting times, noise alerts, operator announcements, accessible events

The ACAT Chair advised that a review of ACAT meeting times is the only remaining outstanding item as noise alerts have been assigned to the Communications Subcommittee, and the issues of Operator announcements and accessible events have been assigned to the Service Planning Subcommittee.

ACAT Meeting Times

Debbie reported that Wheel-Trans staff spoke with the TTC Diversity and Culture Group after receiving the ACAT members' responses about ACAT meeting times. The Diversity Department offered to conduct a review of ACAT meeting times, ACAT Terms of Reference and ACAT as a whole.

Questions and Comments from the Committee

Members discussed whether they were comfortable with having a review conducted by the Diversity Department. A member was supportive of a review and suggested while meeting times during business hours can make it difficult for people who work fulltime to contribute, it is difficult to schedule outside of business hours. Another member was supportive of having a review conducted and noted the purpose of a review was for future equity rather than for current members or incoming 2023 members.

A member suggested that staff, presenters, and managers should be considered as ACAT relies on them and later meeting times could be a barrier for future meetings. Another member suggested TTC staff should not be heavily weighted in a review or assessment. Cameron Penman, Head of Wheel-Trans, explained the review would be looked at through a diversity, equity, and inclusion lens and both TTC staff and ACAT members would be considered. The process would involve a review being done, the Diversity Department would then report their findings to the Committee and then members would discuss the findings.

Members emphasized any decisions would rest with ACAT solely and that the Diversity Department would only be consulting with ACAT as experts in diversity and inclusion. Cameron discussed that if a review is conducted, the Diversity Department would prepare a report and present it to ACAT. ACAT will then decide what, if anything, from the suggestions they would like to act on. Cameron also suggested members decide whether a review would be of ACAT as a whole or only ACAT meeting times.

Motion – Diversity Review of ACAT Meeting Times

Wangari Muriuki brought a motion for ACAT to request that the TTC Diversity Department prepare a report, including the factors considered on the subject of ACAT meeting times only, to be presented to ACAT at a later date and for the final decision making with respect to whether meeting times should be changed to be made by ACAT in its exclusive and sole discretion. Howard Wax seconded. Carried.

Recorded Vote: 9 in favour, 1 abstain, 1 opposed.

10. Review of Correspondence

Nil.

11. Wheel-Trans Transformation & COVID-19 Update from Cameron Penman

Cameron Penman, Head of Wheel-Trans, provided an update about the solution assessment report received for the next phase of the Wheel-Trans Transformation. The report findings were presented to the Wheel-Trans Operations Subcommittee at their November 2022 meeting. Key recommendations were to continue to upgrade the Hastus on Demand (HoD) software for the self-booking website and dispatch systems, replace and upgrade vehicle mobile device terminal (MDT)/Automated Vehicle Location (AVL) systems and interactive voice response (IVR) systems for Wheel-Trans phones. Wheel-Trans is ahead of others in the paratransit industry in terms of technological offerings for customers. Wheel-Trans will consult with TTC Executives to decide how to proceed and procurement is expected to begin in early 2023. The mobile app pilot has been expanded and now has approximately 140 users. There are now 48 7M ProMaster vehicles in service. Health screening questionnaires and wearing masks on Wheel-Trans vehicles continue. Shared rides in sedan taxis will be rolled out in the future.

12. Subcommittee Reports, Highlights and Updates

Communications Subcommittee (CS)

There was no meeting in November. The next CS meeting is December 1, 2022.

Design Review Subcommittee (DRS)

Craig Nicol, DRS Chair, provided a summary of the DRS meeting held on November 1, 2022 and the site visit to the Eglinton Crosstown stations on November 2, 2022.

Craig Nicol explained that TTC is working to have all stations accessible by 2025. Islington and Warden stations will be accessible but the bus terminals will not be completed in time. King Station risks delay due to complications involving surrounding properties. For Old Mill Station, easements are usually the method used however condo owners in the area have refused to grant easements. This has resulted in the City needing to conduct an expropriation for the properties required, which could affect the completion timeline.

The Osgoode Station connection was reviewed by DRS in August 2021 and there was no further consultation from Metrolinx until October 2022. To date, DRS has only been consulted about completed design projects. The Subcommittee has asked TTC staff to assist with ensuring their perspective is considered in discussions with Metrolinx.

On November 9, 2022 a number of members attended Finch Station to test a contactless elevator control system. Members found the app worked well overall. There was an activation range variation between devices and an issue with controlling the elevator after exiting was identified and will be addressed with the developer. The testing was conducted with smartphones. Tablets will be used for further testing.

The next DRS meeting is November 30, 2022.

DRS Highlights for next Board meeting:

- Easier Access III update concern about King and Old Mill Stations risking missing the 2025 target
- Concern about side lining of ACAT by Metrolinx during the design process for TTC rapid transit projects.

Service Planning Subcommittee (SPS)

Carmen Galven, SPS Chair, deferred the report as minutes from the last meeting were not available and she did not attend the meeting held on November 2, 2022.

Wheel-Trans Operations Subcommittee (WTOS)

Lauri Sue Robertson, WTOS Chair, provided a summary of the September, October and November meetings.

September 21, 2022 WTOS Meeting

Natalie Francis, Manager of Policy and Planning, provided an update on Wheel-Trans stops and landmarks, including hospital and subway landmarks. Staff continue to improve stops and landmark information based on customer and operator feedback. Dean Milton, Manager of Strategic Initiatives, discussed the Family of Services transfer stops and how many trips are taken daily. Cameron Penman, Head of Wheel-Trans, provided an update about Family Services with a new implementation timeline of 2024. A bus familiarization day is planning for October 13, 2022 at Mt. Dennis Garage and some ACAT members will be participating. Arlen Orellana, Wheel-Trans Travel Specialist, was introduced. In addition to training customers, Arlen assesses conditions at various stops and identifies issues in an attempt to remove barriers to access. Dean presented the 2022 Mode/Diversion customer survey results that indicated the percentage of FOS trips (Wheel-Trans in combination with Conventional TTC or Conventional TTC exclusively) taken by customers was 28% of all trips. The goal of FOS is to provide Wheel-Trans customers with more flexible and spontaneous accessible travel options. Dean also reviewed the current procedure for accommodating customers who use mobility devices on conventional buses. The protocol is for customers using mobility devices to be boarded first when there is room. If there is insufficient space the next bus will take the passenger. Wheel-Trans will only be called in to relieve when the headway of subsequent buses is more than 20 minutes. Customers are to contact the Priority Line if there is a further delay. Under New Business a member asked for clarification about automated call-out times. Ross Visconti, Project Manager, explained call outs are automated to call to remind customers of pick up times between 8:30 a.m. to 10 p.m.

October 14, 2022 WTOS Meeting

Robert Hampson is now a member replacing Janice Shachter who resigned from ACAT. . Marco Iorfida, Scheduling and Policy Planner, provided an update on Wheel-Trans stops and landmarks. Natalie Francis, Manager of Policy and Planning, discussed the location of

the Peel Region transfer point. There was a discussion about the location of pylons at temporary bus stops in relation to where passengers wait to board. These are used when the change is less than 48 hours when a regular stop is not serviceable due to last minute operational issues. A member discussed a bus schedule frame that was covered in graffiti. These frames are no longer used for schedules but some might be repurposed as “No-Show” boards. David LoPresti, Manager of Contracted Taxi Services, presented an update on the use of shared rides and asked for feedback on the issue of removing plastic partitions in contracted vehicles as well as the timeline for resumption of shared rides in all modes. Members suggested wearing masks should continue and discussed the retention of plastic partitions, with opinions on both sides. This will be reviewed in December 2022 and will be considered in 2023. Arlen Orellana, Travel Specialist, presented the Family of Services update. Usage is steadily increasing but there are 11,200 customers who need to re-register with Wheel-Trans. Dean Milton, Manager of Strategic Initiatives, will be asking the Subcommittee for advice on strategies to increase the rate of re-registering of legacy customers; customers that registered before January 1, 2017. Members suggested there is confusion for some customers on how to re-register and why it is now mandatory. Some customers are hesitating because they fear that they might lose access to Wheel-Trans door-to-door service. A member suggested sending a notice about re-registering when a trip is booked but Dean explained the booking system does not currently have the ability to recognize legacy customers.

Questions and Comments from the Committee

A member questioned as to when trip information is removed from Ride Line after a customer has been picked up or no-showed. Another member asked if customers can be notified when a vehicle is delayed as it is currently left for customers to check if a ride time has changed and not all customers have access to a cellphone. Ross responded that late vehicle and vehicle arrival notifications will be included in future phases. All vehicles require GPS for the late callout feature so once all vehicles have GPS this can be implemented. Currently any changes on the day of service the system defaults to calling out to a cell phone however if a customer does not have a cell phone calls can be sent to a specific number which can be entered at the time of booking the trip. Customers are encouraged to call the priority line when they have been No-showed to ensure any associated trips that are still required do not get automatically cancelled by the system.

Another member asked about the benefit of re-registration and timeline for re-registration. Cameron responded the goal for re-registration completion is 2024. Dean and his team continue to work on re-registering legacy customers. It is important to ensure every customer is assigned an eligibility, the AODA mandates all customers to be assigned one of three categories: Unconditional, Conditional or Temporary. The aim is to provide equitable transit based on a customer’s abilities. Anyone registered before 2017 is required to re-register.

November 16, 2022 WTOS Meeting

Natalie Francis, Manager of Planning and Policy, provided an update on Wheel-Trans

stops and landmarks. Lodon Hassan, Acting Manager of Customer Service, presented about the customer complaint and commendation process. Complaints can be submitted by phone, online chat, email or regular mail. If a customer requests feedback on an issue a Customer Service representative will respond. A member suggested there is no way to request feedback when comments are submitted by mail or email. The website has a form that is checked off to note a response is required. No-show reports were discussed and TTC staff confirmed customers will not receive a no-show report if they have left the site before an operator arrives and there has been an extreme delay. Respect and dignity should be reciprocal between customers, TTC staff and Operators.

Omar Jabbar, Project Manager, Wheel-Trans Transformation Program, presented about the solution assessment report. The report suggested a number of upgrades to the scheduling and dispatch system. TTC Board approval is needed to commit funding to improvements. A member questioned how contracted taxis are maintained. David LoPresti, Manager of Contracted Taxi Services, explained inspections by the Metro Licensing Standard are scheduled for the first quarter of 2023 and TTC is also hoping to add cameras to the outside of vehicles in the future.

Dean Milton, Manager of Strategic Initiatives, presented the results from the bus familiarization review and an update about FOS. Five buses were evaluated for ease of boarding and exiting, assessing wheelchair procurement and safety features. Weekly Family of Services usage is up approximately 60% in 2022 vs 2021.

WTOS Highlights for next Board meeting:

- October 13, 2022 Bus Familiarization to review ease of use of mobility devices on different bus types
- FOS implementation update and Mode/Diversion study results
- Operator protocols for accommodating customers using mobility devices on conventional transit
- Share ride resumption and timeline for resumption on all modes
- Plastic partitions in taxis
- Re-registration of Wheel-Trans legacy customers and strategies to encourage re-registration
- Wheel-Trans Customer Complaint and Commendation Process
- October 13 Bus Familiarization results
- Wheel-Trans Transformation Program solution assessment report
- Maintenance of Contracted Taxis
- FOS update

The next WTOS meeting is February 8, 2023.

13. New Business:

- a) Eglinton Crosstown Preview Visit
- b) Appeal Panel Functional Assessors Evaluation

Eglinton Crosstown Preview Visit

Craig Nicol, DRS Chair discussed a preview visit some ACAT members attended on November 4, 2022 with Metrolinx and TTC staff. Members attended Science Centre Station and O'Connor Station and gave feedback. There will be a meeting with Metrolinx and the DRS to discuss concerns from this review.

Questions and Comments from the Committee

A member who attended the review discussed there are design flaws and concerns regarding wayfinding guidance. Jeffrey Short, Senior Advisor, Universal Design, Metrolinx, responded that key items from the site visit have been noted and project is almost fully constructed. The main purpose of the preview tour was to determine if there were any items that did not align with the requirements. Metrolinx is in the process of developing a design project standard and ACAT's feedback will be considered for future projects. A member asked if Metrolinx can use a similar tracking method that TTC uses. Jeff asked for TTC staff to share a template of what is used to track items.

A member asked when DRS will receive further communication about completing the station descriptions. Jeff asked for DRS to provide an update about the follow up meeting and keep him updated about how station descriptions are being shared between Metrolinx and ACAT.

Appeal Panel Functional Assessors Evaluation

Sean Hollingsworth asked how functional assessors are evaluated for Wheel-Trans Eligibility Appeals. Sean participated in the appeals panel and the panel had concerns about the assessor not completing a full assessment. People may get discouraged from their functional assessments and are unwilling to go through the appeal process if the process seems flawed. Sean suggested considering other locations for appeals as the current location is accessible but the building is under construction and not welcoming. Excessive construction noise can affect the people who are appealing but could also affect ACAT members who are participating on the panel.

Questions and Comments by the Committee

The ACAT Chair assigned the issue of appeals to WTOS. Members agreed Sean will be invited to the meeting when this topic is addressed.

14. Next Meeting

The next ACAT General Meeting is on December 15, 2022.

15. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned on a motion by Angela Marley at 3:48 p.m.

Cindy Edwards
Recording Secretary