



# Advisory Committee on Accessible Transit

October 26, 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 August 31, 2023 and September 28, 2023 to the November 22, 2023 Board Meeting for information. The topics discussed included the passing of former ACAT Chair and Member, Sam Savona; Wheel-Trans' upgrades to Automatic Vehicle Locator (AVL) and Interactive Voice Response (IVR) systems; resuming ACAT General Meetings in person; Fire Evacuation Procedures; the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee (TAAC) presentation surrounding re-registration and Family of Services (FOS); the release of the Wheel-Trans Mobile App; communication etiquette amongst Committee members; and the creation of the new Appeals working group.

The following is a summary of the main topics discussed at the August ACAT Subcommittee meetings:

## **Communications Subcommittee**

New elevator screens that will assist deaf, non-verbal, and hard of hearing customers were highlighted. A final presentation will be shared with ACAT members to provide feedback. Wheel-Trans' Family of Services (FOS) mobile app is set to be released shortly. Left Turn Right Turn (LTRT) will assist with the consultation process for the 2024-2028 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

## **Design Review Subcommittee**

Positive survey results were presented regarding York Mills' added accessibility features. Pre-boarding announcements on buses have an interval of now 20 seconds as per the Committee's recommendation. Messaging on crosswalk buttons on Line 5 were highlighted and a test location was introduced at Avenue Rd and St. Clair in preparation of the upcoming opening.

## **Service Planning Subcommittee**

Snow clearing at transit stops procedures, duties, area of responsibilities, and timelines were addressed. TTC has 24-hour monitoring of any storms and weather to determine when and where snow clearing equipment should be sent. Left Turn Right Turn (LTRT) provided a consultation overview process presentation highlighting key points from the Engagement Plan to gain input from ACAT members at an early stage in the process. Once it is further developed, it will be brought to all ACAT members. Information on the Photo ID Office at Bathurst Station was addressed.

## **Wheel-Trans Operations Subcommittee**

A presentation on the Appeal Panel was made and the presenter highlighted a few issues to be addressed. It was recommended that a working group is formed for this purpose. All additional information on this working group will be sent to other ACAT members. A Family of Services (FOS) update was provided and a pilot will be held in the Fall. Wheel-Trans now has an optional masking policy for both customers and employees, unless one tests positive for COVID or is symptomatic.

The following is a summary of the main topics discussed at the September ACAT Subcommittee meetings:

**Communications Subcommittee**

A presentation was given to ACAT members regarding TTC's partnership with Subway Sensations and their interactive game. The Community Relations Department is moving forward with giving more prominence to noise and sensory information posted within the orange construction bar. The Family of Service (FOS) pilot began on September 10, 2023 Wheel-Trans' mobile app launched September 25, 2023. There are route changes to Community Bus 443 and the Wheel-Trans newsletter will be available for review shortly. The Communications Subcommittee will now be handling the 2024-2028 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, there is currently no update.

**Design Review Subcommittee**

No meeting was held in September for the Design Review Committee.

**Service Planning Subcommittee**

ACAT members were given a presentation by Rail Vehicles and Buses on subway and bus announcements. The presentation highlighted training on announcements for new operators, reasons for making announcements on subways or buses, and procedures around timeliness in announcing route changes or closures. A Midblock Transit Stop Project presentation was also shared that included reviewing moving and removing stops procedures. The 2024-2028 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan was moved to the Communications Subcommittee and once complete, the consultation plan will come to the Service Planning Subcommittee for review.

**Wheel-Trans Operations Subcommittee**

A presentation on the modal usage and diversion survey was provided which noted that Family of Services (FOS) diversion rate is at 31%, higher than 2022's rate. The FOS pilot began on September 10, 2023 and will run until October 14, 2023 and there has been an increase in the average number of FOS trips taken. There are approximately 6,000 customers left to re-register. Discussion around a customer letter regarding the Wheel-Trans Kipling stop was highlighted and has been dealt with. The Wheel-Trans mobile app is launching September 25, 2023 and marketing will begin on September 27. There is also a mandatory refresher training for accessible taxi drivers where ACAT members were invited to audit and provide feedback.

Please refer to the enclosed minutes for further details.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Anita Dressler  
2023 ACAT Chair

TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION  
COMMITTEE MINUTES

APPROVED

Minutes of Meeting: ACAT General Meeting  
Meeting Date: Thursday, August 31, 2023  
1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Location: Virtual meeting via WebEx

Present: Anita Dressler, ACAT Chair  
Gwyneth Dalzell, ACAT Co-Vice Chair  
Erica Tanny, ACAT Co-Vice Chair  
Betty Rivington-Law  
Bobbi Moore  
Craig Nicol, DRS Chair  
Frank Lockhart  
Howard Wax, SPS Chair  
Jason Osborne, Pool Member  
Lauri Sue Robertson, WTOS Chair  
Lavarnan Mehavarnan  
Maria Marin, CS Chair  
Mei Hung  
Wangari Muriuki  
Rob Lackie

Regrets: Valdo Tammark  
Tammy Adams, Pool Member  
Nicholas Paterson, Pool Member

TTC Representatives: Gary Downie, Chief Capital Officer  
Shakira Naraine, Chief People Officer  
Wendy Reuter, Acting Chief of Strategy & Customer  
Experience Officer  
Cameron Penman, Head of Wheel-Trans  
Mark Biamonte, Director of Emergency Management &  
Fire Life Safety  
David LoPresti, Manager, Contracted Taxi Services, Wheel-  
Trans  
Dean Milton, Manager of Strategic Initiatives, Wheel-Trans  
Mohammed Shaikh, Divisional Manager, Wheel-Trans  
Ross Visconti, Wheel-Trans Project Manager  
Levenson Lincoln, Assistant Manager of Customer Service,  
Wheel-Trans  
Adrian Grundy, Senior Communications Advisor, Corporate  
Communications  
Jeff Short, Senior Accessibility Planner  
Omar Jabbar, Project Manager, Wheel-Trans

Adrienne Isaac, Administrative Assistant, Wheel-Trans  
Alexandra Nicasro, Administrative Assistant, Wheel-Trans  
Oma Okolocha, Coordinator, Human Rights & Investigations  
Sneha Madhuri, Communications Advisor, Corporate  
Communications  
Warren Rupnarain, Accessibility Consultant

Items Discussed

- 1/ Call to Order / Attendance
- 2/ Land Acknowledgement
- 3/ Declaration of Conflict of Interest
- 4/ Approval of Agenda
- 5/ Remarks from TTC Executive
- 6/ Remarks from ACAT Chair
  - a. Memoriam – Sam Savona
- 7/ Review and Approval of July 27, 2023 Minutes
- 8/ Outstanding Items
- 9/ Deputation: Nil
- 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/ Other/New Business
  - a. Fire Evacuation Procedures – Mark Biamonte
  - b. TAAC Presentation – Dean Milton
- 14/ Next Meeting – September 28, 2023
- 15/ Adjournment

1. Call to Order/Attendance

Anita Dressler, ACAT Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. and welcomed attendees and attendance was taken.

2. Land Acknowledgement

A member read the Land Acknowledgement.

3. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Nil.

4. Approval of Agenda

Betty Rivington-Law brought a motion to approve the agenda, Howard Wax seconded. Carried.

5. Remarks from TTC Executive

Wendy Reuter, acting Chief of Strategy & Customer Experience Officer, introduced herself and thanked ACAT members for their contributions. Prior to her current position as Acting Chief, Wendy was the Head of Research & Analytics. Some of the key accessibility activities that the Research & Analytics team does are: customer surveys on accessibility; and passenger counts for elevators, escalators and stairs, which help the TTC to better understand how these features can be used for more efficient and convenient access. She reminded the members of the upcoming 2023 Public Forum on Accessible Transit hybrid meeting on October 23, 2023, between 6:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. at the Toronto Reference Library. The TTC is also hosting a series of consultations for the 2024 – 2028 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, which will begin this Fall.

Questions and Comments from the Committee

Nil.

6. Remarks from ACAT Chair

a) Memoriam – Sam Savona

The ACAT Chair spoke about the passing of Sam Savona and asked for a moment of silence. She noted Sam Savona was a member of ACAT for several years, the first time was 1993 serving as both a Chair and Vice-Chair, his final term ending in 2021. She expressed appreciation for his contributions to accessibility and the TTC.

7. Review and Approval of July 27, 2023, Minutes

Bobbi Moore brought a motion to approve the July 27, 2023 minutes as amended, Howard Wax seconded. Carried.

#### 8. Outstanding Items

##### a) Scarborough Centre Station Motion

This item is pending and updates are expected in Q4 2023.

##### b) Recommendation for Honorarium

This is ongoing and an update will be provided at a future meeting.

#### Questions and Comments from the Committee

Nil.

#### 9. Deputation

Nil.

#### 10. Review of Correspondence

Nil.

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

Cameron Penman, Head of Wheel-Trans, provided a Wheel-Trans update. Wheel-Trans plans to upgrade the Automatic Vehicle Locator (AVL) system, which provides vehicle tracking. TTC staff are working with a consultant to develop a request for information and proposal that will be ready to be issued next year. Steps are also being taken to secure a contract to implement a new Interactive Voice Response (IVR) phone system. Regarding phases 5-8 of the Reservations, Scheduling, and Dispatch software upgrades: Cameron explained that Wheel-Trans is continuing internal discussions regarding a way forward based on the recommendations from our solution assessment.

Cameron explained that the Wheel-Trans mobile app is in its final stages of testing and will be released soon. There is a target release date in late September. The communication is already prepared for release. The re-registration of legacy customers is ongoing and Cameron advised another wave of letters have been sent to Wheel-Trans customers. There are approximately 7,200 left to register.

With respect to the Wheel-Trans fleet, there are currently close to 100, 7 metre ProMaster buses in service.

For the COVID update, it was noted that after discussion with WTOS and aligning with other paratransit agencies around the GTA, mandatory masking was removed for Operators and customers, unless a person has symptoms or tests positive for COVID. When asked how the new variant might affect this, the TTC is ready to revert back to masking if recommended by local public health officials and TTC Safety.

Cameron provided a Wheel-Trans staffing update and introduced Alexandra Nicastro as the new Administrative Assistant, replacing Adrienne Isaac while she is on maternity leave.

### Questions and Comments from the Committee

Nil.

### 12. Subcommittee Reports, Highlights and Updates:

#### Communications Subcommittee (CS)

Maria Marin, CS Chair, provided a summary of the Communications Subcommittee Meeting held on August 3, 2023.

The Communications Engineering group presented about the new elevator intercom screens that will be installed in new elevators. This will allow for non-verbal communication commands in new elevators. They are expected to be ready for release in approximately six months. Prompts on the screen would use a yes or no format and will continue on a path dependent on each question. Transit Control will be trained to ask pertinent questions in order to provide as much information as possible. Voice will also be an option for communication and this was implemented due to changes to elevator code requirements. Jeff Short, Senior Accessibility Planner, Strategy & Foresight, will be reaching out to external organizations to help ensure that feedback about the needs of individuals with hearing loss are considered.

The subcommittee was updated about the Wheel-Trans Family of Services (FOS) pilot, upcoming launch of Wheel-Trans mobile app, and the recruitment of new ACAT members.

Jeff made a presentation about TTC's Multi-Year Accessibility plan for 2024-2028 regarding information that will be shared with all ACAT members, along with specific feedback from both the Communications Subcommittee and the Service Planning Subcommittee, to help ensure participants feel more comfortable sharing. Due to staffing limitations the TTC has engaged a consulting firm called Left Turn Right Turn to assist in organizing and facilitating the consultations.

The next Communications Subcommittee meeting is scheduled for September 7, 2023 at 1 p.m.

#### CS Meeting Highlights:

- Elevator Intercom Screens Presentation



- Wheel-Trans update – FOS pilot, Mobile App launch, ACAT recruitment.
- TTC 2024-2028 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, engagement and consultation

### Questions and Comments from the Committee

A member reminded the Committee that it is important for presenters to face the camera when speaking as it is difficult to read lips when they are facing away.

Jeff advised that he will be emailing interested ACAT members to request input regarding the messaging screens for the new elevators.

### Design Review Subcommittee (DRS)

Craig Nicol, DRS Chair, discussed the items reviewed at the DRS meeting held on August 8, 2023.

Jeff made a presentation on the York Mills Accessibility features survey, the reasoning behind the survey and the different added accessibility features. As part of the survey, he noted that the TTC worked with CNIB to recruit individuals with vision loss to participate. He summarized their findings and the feedback given, with a large portion of customers appreciating these additions. The subcommittee asked about the durability of the decals on the ground, the bay numbers not providing enough information on the service routes for people with low vision. The members asked if there was a tactile equivalent for the transom signs, and Jeff noted this was a comment made by some participants recruits through the CNIB. The subcommittee suggested the addition of stop poles to assist people with low or no vision in locating the stop. The subcommittee also suggested that the feedback received from the survey should be looked at other bus terminals as well.

An update was provided about pre-boarding announcements on buses. The subcommittee had previously recommended 20 second intervals rather than 10. TTC staff confirmed the interval will be changed to 20 seconds. The subcommittee discussed the gate configuration relating to the Presto gates, explaining how some people with a mobility device, guide dog, or individuals with strollers have issues opening the gates.

The subcommittee recommended that the City of Toronto consider including a message on the crosswalk buttons advising people about centre median transit platforms that can be accessed from a crosswalk, which would be helpful to individuals with vision loss especially with the upcoming opening of Line 5. The City has agreed and there will be a test location at Avenue Road and St. Clair.

The next DRS meeting is scheduled for September 12, 2023.

### DRS Meeting Highlights:

- York Mills Accessibility survey results.
- Pre-boarding announcement on buses

- Messaging on Line 5 cross-walk buttons.

### Service Planning Subcommittee (SPS)

Howard Wax, SPS Chair, presented about the SPS meeting held August 1, 2023.

A presentation was made regarding snow clearing at transit stops and included both City of Toronto staff, along with TTC who set out their responsibilities for snow clearing. It was explained that this was the first year for this contractor, and they had some feedback to take back to them. The Subcommittee discussed a few items, including the ability for someone to access the crosswalk button that is often blocked by snow, blocking of the crosswalk entrance with snow, along with other details.

Members were assured that the roads are not given priority over sidewalks, but explained that they are timed so that road clearing does not block the sidewalks up again after they have been cleaned. The group also discussed who is responsible for snow clearing at third party station entrances (a commercial building with access to the subway) and whether the TTC should suggest on its website that only the main entrance should be used during snow events.

The final discussion involved the consultants hired for the 2024 – 2028 Multi-Year Accessibility plan. The Subcommittee members asked for a copy of the draft engagement plan before they are ready to provide feedback. They also suggested that this should have gone to the ACAT General Meeting for initial feedback, along with the Communications Subcommittee for more in-depth discussion.

Jeff provided a short update on the TTC's Photo ID Office, including the suggestion to post the phone number so that people could reach someone in the office without having to pay the fare to get their ID (post secondary cards, Support Person Assistance Cards), and including more information about the Davisville location to the website, although it has more limited services (primarily related to the Support Person Assistance Card).

The next meeting is scheduled for September 5, 2023.

### SPS Meeting Highlights:

- Snow clearing at transit stops
- 2024-2028 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan
- Photo ID Card Office update

### Wheel-Trans Operations Subcommittee (WTOS)

Lauri Sue Robertson, WTOS Chair, discussed the topics reviewed at the WTOS meeting held on August 9, 2023.

A moment of silence was held for Sam Savona, former ACAT member.

Gwyneth Dalzell, ACAT Co-Vice Chair made a presentation on the Appeals Committee noting issues with both the process and the location/choice of location. In particular they mentioned the lack of autonomy and dependence on other people or mobility devices. They noted many issues limit the ability of people to use the accessibility features and in particular the bias and unfairness of the appeals process. It was suggested that a separate committee be formed to discuss this as there is a lot of information to go through. It was also recommended that this information be sent to all ACAT members in order to get more input from different perspectives.

Levenson Lincoln, Assistant Manager of Customer Service for Wheel-Trans, addressed the issues and stated the portion of the system that are not fully accessible are covered by Wheel-Trans and Family of Services. Dean Milton provided an update on Family of Services and the upcoming pilot project.

An update was provided by Dean Milton regarding the changes to the masking requirements, in partnership with the Joint Health and Safety Committee, they will no longer be mandatory, but will be optional for operators and customers unless they are symptomatic or COVID positive. Finally, Levenson Lincoln provided the update on the Wheel-Trans complaints for July.

#### WTOS Meeting Highlights:

- Wheel-Trans Appeals
- Family of Services pilot project update

The next WTOS meeting is scheduled for September 13, 2023.

#### Questions and Comments from the Committee

The ACAT Chair and the ACAT Executive are having discussions about the possibility of forming another committee to discuss the appeal process or whether further discussions will be held in WTOS.

#### 13. Other/New Business

- a. Resuming ACAT General meetings in person
- b. Fire Evacuation Procedures – Mark Biamonte Signage at Kennedy Station
- c. TAAC Presentation – Dean Milton

##### a. Resuming ACAT General meetings in person

A member stated they went to Sam Savona's funeral and the TTC sent honour guards who accompanied the casket in and out of the church. The member was disappointed to see no other current ACAT members or TTC Executives present.

A member asked when in-person ACAT meetings will be resumed. Cameron Penman suggested that ACAT members discuss the topic and TTC staff will support their decision.

Committee members were asked to email either the ACAT Chair or Alexandra Nicastro, Wheel-Trans Administrative Assistant with their input.

Members were reminded that if they choose in-person there are a number of items that must be considered, including availability of members to be in Toronto, Boardroom availability, arranging for attendant car, and the possibility of streaming the meeting on YouTube.

A member commented that there are other considerations if they were considering meeting in person that they must give staff the time to consider.

A member commented they were not ready to discuss meeting in person and that they believe it requires further discussion. They suggested a hybrid version for people that cannot attend in person.

b. Fire Evacuation Procedures – Mark Biamonte

Mark Biamonte, Director of Emergency Management & Fire Life Safety, Fire Safety & Emergency Planning, presented an overview of the TTC's Fire Evacuation Procedures at the June SPS meeting. Mark's June presentation was circulated in advance of this General Meeting for review and comment by the ACAT members.

Questions and Comments from the Committee:

A member asked if evacuation chairs have been considered. Mark explained these were looked at in the past but there were issues with them, such as storage and accessibility when they are needed. If there is new technology or options, they would be happy to take another look. He also noted that they have separate devices for evacuation from the tunnel that ride on the rails to evacuate to a station.

Jeff Short asked Mark to give an overview of how the elevators work in case of an emergency. Mark explained that evacuation chairs must be used by experienced personnel, so have limited uses. In the event of an emergency, the elevator will recall. It works so that smoke will not work its way out to the platform and in most emergencies, the elevators continue to work as normal. If the announcement comes on to discontinue using the elevators, people will be told to wait at the elevators and help will come.

A member commented that this does not seem safe, what happens in the elevator recalls to a floor with an active fire. They understood that they recall to the ground floor and then are controlled by the fire department. Mark stated that the elevators are programmed not to open on a floor with an active alarm. The member was still concerned about this.

A member asked about the announcements and screens that carry emergency information in the event a station is having an emergency or fire. This member was concerned that there are frequent generic announcements that come over the PA system and wondered if the emergency information would go to all stations as well. Mark explained that the station

would be put on manual mode, and that a generic message would go to other stations about there being an emergency situation at a specific station and the manual mode would keep specific information to that station regarding evacuation/emergency procedures.

A member asked about the emergency strips and commented that people with vision loss do not have the ability to find the strips and have been unable to locate them on the TTC website. A member also asked if they feel different so they can be easily found. Mark stated there are strips below the blue seats, as well as up above all the seats. They are listed on the website on how to find them. Mark noted that when pressed, the driver looks at the camera and puts out an announcement noting the emergency strip being pressed. Jeff posted where the location of the strips is found on the website.

A member commented that in their experience, the messages do overlap/conflict with each other and there are so many that it can be difficult to understand them, both due to the content and the legibility of the speaker. Mark explained that they are doing training for people to speak on the microphone and that as long as the operator holds down the talk button, it is kept in manual mode and goes only to the station. The member stated he has also seen ladders, which are likely for evacuation as well. The member suggested that the other options for evacuation products that are like a board, which could be stored in the collector's office for easy availability. Mark stated that there are stokes baskets at the end of each platform and they spend every other Sunday night training fire officers on the use of the equipment, where to find it et cetera. This will ensure that all firefighters are familiar with the equipment.

A member stated that they have been on a stair climber chair, and they are slow. It would be dangerous to be using one going slowly with all the other people evacuating around you. They heard that using an elevator during a fire will draw fire into the shaft and it will spread. Mark explained that unless the fire is in the equipment room of the elevator it will not be back drafted into the shaft. The member stated that often they think that wheelchair users avoid the subway system as they are afraid that they would not be able to escape if there were an emergency. When people are escaping an emergency, who would stop to help someone else? Mark explained they have reached out to some groups to assist them with this kind of evacuation to help them practice.

A member suggested simple, plain language signs with three steps that would help people know what to do in an emergency. Mark stated that they have signs that are at places where people would congregate, the DWA, pay phones, and near elevators that explain in detail what to do in an emergency. This member suggested additional signs with three simple steps, "go here, do this, wait for that" that would include pictures for people that might have language barriers and be more straightforward than having to read something that is long.

A member stated that they are still concerned with the announcements over the PA in the stations getting mixed up with the generic messages in an emergency. It was stated that as long as the operator is holding down the talk button, but if other announcements are

mixed up with the emergency notices, it will get confusing, especially for someone that is blind, as they take in a lot of audible cues information from the environment.

Mark thanked the Committee for the feedback, stating that they do their best but are always looking for ways to improve. He will take the comments back from today. He noted that members are welcome to attend and watch the firefighter training, but it is done very early in the morning on a Sunday, at a time when the subway is not running. If they are interested, members were asked to reach out a week early and they can accommodate if possible.

### c. TAAC Presentation – Dean Milton

Cameron Penman explained the background behind the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee (TAAC) presentation that Dean Milton would be delivering on September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Dean presented and asked for comments from the Committee members.

#### Overview

The presentation was about Wheel-Trans' service model updates and TAAC's request to:

- Provide rationale for changes made
- Provide an equity analysis
- Review consultations held with people with disabilities
- Review the status of the re-registration process for customers and mitigation strategies to managing barriers to re-registration
- Review the benefits of Family of Services

#### Questions and Comments from the Committee:

A member suggested that the topics covered in the presentation did not address some concerns that were raised at WTOS. Dean stated that the TTC was asked to present the rationale for the changes, what equity analysis was done and the consultation as well as to give more insight into the registration process as well as how they were dealing with the barriers to re-registration. The member commented that the presentation was a lot of information, and that the TTC should consider the information they are sharing, along with respecting people's times. It should be ensured that the information and concerns being brought forward are being addressed. They were not sure that was coming through in this presentation; there were a lot of details and data, but limited acknowledgement of potential problems and thoughts for solutions and mitigation.

A member commented that from their experience, the Family of Services (FOS) is a waste of time and money, having had a bad experience in the past. Dean stated that the FOS is a work in progress, and any positive and negative feedback brought to their attention about a person's trip will help improve future service delivery

A member commented that there are two areas they are concerned with. The first is the potential extra cost to customers having to re-register with Wheel-Trans. It could be

expensive if your physician charges you to fill out forms, and you are dealing with individuals that are seniors, disabled and disadvantaged, all with limited income. The cost to obtain the doctors letter might be out of reach. The second is the appeal process and the lack of anti-bias training provided. The Appeals Panel consists of a TTC staff member, an ACAT member, and an Occupational Therapist from Bayshore. There should be a fourth totally independent member of the panel and anti-bias training provided. The decisions made at this appeal affect the lives of people using the system.

A member asked if there is travel training for people that are new to the City, with language barriers, or that are not a Wheel-Trans customer. Dean explained at this time with limited resources, no. Wendy Reuter thought this was a good idea and will take this back for consideration as it could be a benefit to others.

A member wondered if the TTC had considered adding a touch screen in the stations that would assist people to map their trip, which might make it easier for people to visually see it. Wendy Reuter said this could be an alternate way to support wayfinding while already on the system and will take this back as well.

#### 14. Next Meeting

The next ACAT General Meeting is scheduled for September 28, 2023.

#### 15. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned on a motion by Howard Wax at 2:56 p.m.

Cindy Edwards  
Recording Secretary

TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION  
COMMITTEE MINUTES

APPROVED

Minutes of Meeting: ACAT General Meeting  
Meeting Date: Thursday, September 28, 2023  
1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Location: Virtual meeting via WebEx

Present: Anita Dressler, ACAT Chair  
Gwyneth Dalzell, ACAT Co-Vice Chair  
Erica Tanny, ACAT Co-Vice Chair  
Betty Rivington-Law  
Bobbi Moore  
Craig Nicol, DRS Chair  
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Howard Wax, SPS Chair  
Jason Osborne, Pool Member  
Lauri Sue Robertson, WTOS Chair  
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Mei Hung  
Wangari Muriuki  
Rob Lackie  
Valdo Tammark  
Nicholas Paterson, Pool Member

Regrets: Tammy Adams, Pool Member

Member of Public: Debbie Gillespie

TTC Representatives: Josie La Vita, Chief Financial Officer  
Cameron Penman, Head of Wheel-Trans  
David LoPresti, Manager, Contracted Taxi Services, Wheel-Trans  
Dean Milton, Manager of Strategic Initiatives, Wheel-Trans  
Ross Visconti, Wheel-Trans Project Manager  
Lodon Hassan, Manager of Customer Service, Wheel-Trans  
Levenson Lincoln, Assistant Manager of Customer Service, Wheel-Trans  
Natalie Francis, Manager of Planning and Policy, Wheel-Trans  
Adrian Grundy, Senior Communications Advisor, Corporate Communications  
Jeff Short, Senior Accessibility Planner  
Shaun Deonarine, Human Rights Consultant



Shima Eghanian, Operations Manager, Streetcar  
Maintenance

Chrisanne Finnerty, Director, Commission Services

Mark Mis, Head of Strategy and Foresight

Alexandra Nicasro, Administrative Assistant, Wheel-Trans

Oma Okolocha, Coordinator, Human Rights & Investigations

Sneha Madhuri, Communications Advisor, Corporate  
Communications

Warren Rupnarain, Accessibility Consultant

Items Discussed

- 1/ Call to Order / Attendance
- 2/ Land Acknowledgement
- 3/ Declaration of Conflict of Interest
- 4/ Approval of Agenda
- 5/ Remarks from TTC Executive
- 6/ Remarks from ACAT Chair
- 7/ Review and Approval of August 31, 2023 Minutes
- 8/ Outstanding Items
- 9/ Deputation: Nil
- 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/ Other/New Business
  - a. Resuming in-person/hybrid ACAT General Meetings
  - b. Communication Etiquette
- 14/ Next Meeting – October 27, 2023
- 15/ Adjournment

### 1. Call to Order/Attendance

Anita Dressler, ACAT Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m., welcomed attendees and attendance was taken.

### 2. Land Acknowledgement

A member read the Land Acknowledgement.

Jeff Short, Senior Accessibility Planner also noted that the TTC is commemorating Truth and Reconciliation Day and that everyone should take time to reflect on the victims and survivors of Residential Schools. It is important to recognize this day to reflect on how our community can move forward with the truth of Canada's involvement. Anita Dressler thanked Jeff Short for raising this item.

### 3. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Nil.

### 4. Approval of Agenda

Howard Wax brought a motion to approve the agenda, Betty Rivington-Law seconded. Carried.

### 5. Remarks from TTC Executive

Josie La Vita, Chief Financial Officer explained that she deals with the financial matters with the TTC, including procurement and information technology services. She noted it is budget time with both the TTC and the City of Toronto. They are making sure that all the priorities are being funded and that Wheel Trans has the money it requires. They have spent a lot of time with Cameron Penman's, Head of Wheel-Trans' team and forecasting the 2024 financial requirements to ensure they have the resources in place to fund that. At this point they are almost done. On the capital side, they are working with partners at the TTC and City of Toronto to have funding for important projects. The Easier Access project has cost escalations, but there is funding in place to ensure the costs are covered. They are also working hard to ensure that the next generation of work required for the transformation of Wheel-Trans and other projects have funding. IT staff have been working diligently to complete the new app and thanked the committee for their input. In the broader picture, they are focused on making sure there is funding for all the upcoming and current projects. A big item that was discussed at the TTC Board meeting on Tuesday was the Safety, Security and Well-Being Report that adds resources where it is felt they are needed. The next step is to go to City Council for approval. They are working with the new TTC Board to get them up to speed on major activities with TTC's 2024 Operating budget that are already underway.

### Questions and Comments from the Committee

A member asked if the TTC expects the City of Toronto's new mayor to provide adequate funding? Josie La Vita was hopeful, and Olivia Chow has met with both the Premier of Ontario and the Federal Government to forge a new deal for Toronto. The TTC is still suffering from lower ridership and the post covid issues. The mayor has two services that are a priority, transit and housing, so they are hopeful that funding will remain steady.

#### 6. Remarks from ACAT Chair

Anita Dressler again thanked the staff and members of ACAT for their dedication to improving transit around the City for everyone, not just improving it for those who need accessibility. She thanked the Subcommittees for their great work and mentioned a few projects they had been working on. The impact that all the members are making on the TTC are very impactful. They have completed the interviews for the new ACAT members and will have the selections finalized by tomorrow. The names of the newly selected candidates will then be sent to the TTC Board for approval. This time is bittersweet as some members will be finishing their term and leaving, but they will be welcoming new members. She encouraged the departing members to reapply, as their time and expertise is valuable.

#### 7. Review and Approval of August 31, 2023, Minutes

Maria Marin brought a motion to approve the August 31, 2023 minutes as presented, Wangari Muriuki seconded. Carried.

#### 8. Outstanding Items

##### a) Scarborough Centre Station Motion

This item is pending, and updates are expected in Q4 2023.

##### b) Recommendation for Honorarium

This is ongoing and an update will be provided at the November meeting as Cameron Penman is still working on this.

##### c) Terms of Reference

This will be brought to the November meeting.

#### Questions and Comments from the Committee

Nil.

#### 9. Deputation

Nil.

#### 10. Review of Correspondence

Nil.

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

Cameron Penman, Head of Wheel-Trans, provided a Wheel-Trans update. Workshops have begun with a consultant in order to develop the Request for Information for the new Automatic Vehicle Locations (AVL) and Interactive Voice Response (IVR) systems. These will be followed by a Request for Proposals for the new systems which are expected to be issued next year. Regarding phases 5-8 of the Reservations, Scheduling and Dispatch software upgrades, Cameron explained that internal discussions continue regarding a way forward based on the recommendations from the solution assessment.

Cameron explained that the Wheel-Trans Mobile App is ready for official release on Monday, October 2, 2023 and communication for customers is ready to be released. The app comes with the same features that the self-booking website has, but on your phone. A new option on the app is the 'where is my ride' feature, that you can access 10 minutes before your scheduled pick-up time and see on a map, where your ride is.

The re-registration of legacy customers is ongoing, and Cameron advised that this year 3,800 people have re-registered, with an additional 6,600 left.

With respect to the Wheel-Trans fleet, there are currently 100, new 7 metre ProMaster buses in service, with only a few of the Friendly buses left to replace.

He reminded the ACAT members of the annual Public Forum on Accessible Transit that will be held Monday, October 23, 2023 between 6:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. at the Toronto Reference Library. ACAT members should have received their invitations, and if not, to reach out to Jeff Short. He noted that the newsletter is ready for release as well.

For the COVID update, there was little to update, but noted that the TTC is ready to revert back to masking if recommended by local public health officials and the TTC Safety team.

#### Questions and Comments from the Committee

Nil.

#### 12. Subcommittee Reports, Highlights and Updates:

##### Communications Subcommittee (CS)

Maria Marin, CS Chair, provided a summary of the Communications Subcommittee meeting was held on September 7, 2023.

A presentation was made to the subcommittee on the partnership between the TTC and Unlimited Therapeutics, who have created a game to help children with developmental disabilities prepare and learn about taking the subway. It is accessible on either a tablet or virtual reality system to show them the sights and sounds that they will experience. The Committee members made suggestions such as having hints they can press to explain things they see, adding accessibility features and changing the level of detail in the game, depending on the person. Criticisms included that it appeared to be forcing people to face their fears, rather than providing them with their own way to support themselves, e.g. a backpack with tools to help them help themselves.

A short update was provided by Heather Brown in the sensory notices in outstanding items, confirming giving more prominence to these notices.

Alex Blackwell from the Wayfinding Department gave an update on the Sheppard and Yonge Station sign updates, to reflect the new TTC standards. They are still working on it, but should be finished soon. Jeff Short gave an update on the 2024-2028 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan consultation, stating that it is moving along and when input is required. These updates will be a standing agenda item. Sneha Madhuri updated the Committee members on the Wheel-Trans communications, including the Mobile App, launched on September 25, 2023, the beginning of the Family of Services (FOS) pilot on September 20, 2023, and the new, shorter newsletter. ACAT members were asked to watch for their invitation to the upcoming Public Forum on Accessible Transit in October. The final discussion was on in-person meetings returning, which will be discussed at the ACAT General meeting.

The next meeting will be held on October 5, 2023, at 2:00 p.m.

#### CS Meeting Highlights:

- Unlimited Therapeutics presentation on new sensory game.
- Update on wayfinding at Sheppard-Yonge Station.
- Wheel-Trans communication updates.

#### Questions and Comments from the Committee

Nil.

#### Design Review Subcommittee (DRS)

There was no meeting held in September for the DRS.

The next DRS meeting is scheduled for October 10, 2023 at 1:30 p.m.

#### Service Planning Subcommittee (SPS)

Howard Wax, SPS Chair, presented about the SPS meeting held September 5, 2023.

There was a presentation on the operator training regarding using the microphone, which included pacing your voice and speaking slowly and clearly to ensure that people understand. A member commented that this presentation was well modulated, but not at the pace that most people speak and those can be difficult to understand. Operators are also told to pace their voice as it will reverberate in the stations. Members suggested that any route change on the buses, should be communicated clearly as soon as possible to customers so that they can adjust their route accordingly. Specifically if they require shuttle bus trips so that if they want, they can get off earlier and avoid the crowds. Concerns from members also included competing with the conversations going on, diversions forcing people with mobility devices to be inconvenienced, connections with FOS and diversions, difficulties with diversions and people with learning difficulties. A recommendation to provide a short version of instructions in case of emergency in the stations, with diagrams might also be helpful.

There was a presentation on the mid-block stops, looking through an equity and accessibility lens. A member asked for the definition of mid-block, which was clarified. A member recommended TTC reach out to the City to see if notices could be put up near these mid-block stops to inform traffic. TTC staff asked for some input from the SPS members regarding how far they would consider walking for stops and crossings. SPS members recommended engaging with the communities that will be affected by stops moving and TTC staff confirmed they would be doing this. Jeff Short recommended that they look into the City's and TTC's standards for placing benches when considering the distance between stops. A member suggested looking into a similar program as Request Stop but for customers who can only walk shorter distances.

The subject of meeting in person was raised and TTC staff will look into this, and it will be discussed further at the ACAT General meeting.

The next meeting will be October 3, 2023 at 1:30 p.m.

#### SPS Meeting Highlights:

- Operator training with announcements.
- Mid-block stops - changes and proposed new locations.
- In person meetings.

#### Questions and Comments from the Committee

A member commented they had been at the recertification training for the streetcar operators and heard comments from a lot of them that they enjoyed the training and had never had this before. The member asked if the long-time employees received this training or if there is training for new employees or plans to provide training for long-term staff. Jeff Short confirmed there is accessibility training for new TTC employees, and together with Mark Mis committed to getting more details on the training and if long time employees have the opportunity to do the training (including refresher training) as well.

A member commented that another issue is that employees do not understand that they should not be using the accessible washroom stalls or petting service dogs, which they should receive training on. Jeff Short suggested that the TTC can investigate options for the ACAT members to give input on the accessibility e-learning or training being received by staff to recommend possible enhancements.

### Wheel-Trans Operations Subcommittee (WTOS)

Lauri Sue Robertson, WTOS Chair, discussed the topics reviewed at the WTOS meeting held on September 13, 2023.

There was an update to the Modal Usage/Diversion Survey that was done during June and July of this year. The findings were summarized for the WTOS members. The Family of Services (FOS) pilot started on September 10, with 17 customers agreeing to try the system. Results will be available and provided to WTOS in the future. A member noted that not everyone knows about the updated accessibility options, and it was suggested that the TTC reach out for media coverage. Re-registration is moving along, with 3,526 legacy members re-registering as of September. Their target had been 3,000 for the year, this has already surpassed that goal. There was an update on the Mobile App, being launched on September 25, 2023. A mandatory refresher training will be provided for the FOS taxi drivers, ACAT members will receive an invitation to audit. Their feedback is appreciated. The ACAT members thanked TTC for the service of calling Wheel-Trans customers 10 minutes before their pickup time, as it is helpful to remind people. One member commented there are issues with this and TTC staff agreed this feedback has also been received and there will be updates coming in the future.

### WTOS Meeting Highlights:

- Results of the Modal Usage/Diversion Survey.
- Family of Services pilot start date.
- Re-registration update.
- Mobile App update.
- Mandatory FOS recertification training.

The next WTOS meeting is scheduled for September 13, 2023.

### 13. Other/New Business

- a. Resuming ACAT General meetings in person/hybrid
- b. Communication Etiquette
- c. Working Appeals Group

#### a. Resuming ACAT General meetings in person/hybrid

Cameron Penman provided more details on the upcoming meetings. He noted that the October and November meetings will remain virtual, but the ACAT General Meeting in December will be held in the 7<sup>th</sup> floor Boardroom at Head Office, which will start with a



luncheon and then proceed to a hybrid meeting. He encouraged members to come out and interact with one another, but they were also welcome to join virtually. In January, the ACAT General meetings will be hybrid and held in the 7<sup>th</sup> floor Boardroom, based on the feedback from the ACAT members. As the Boardroom is not available for all of the meetings, for the time being the subcommittees will remain virtual, until such time as they can find a location that will have the required technology (microphones, video capabilities, etc.) to allow for a hybrid meeting. They are hoping space will be found sometime next year.

#### Questions and Comments

A member asked if the TTC had given any consideration to a suggestion from another member regarding honouring Sam Savona, late ACAT Chair and founding member. Cameron asked that they leave this with him and recommended adding this to outstanding items.

#### b. Communication Etiquette

Cameron explained they have been getting requests from ACAT members to share emails that are being sent to the ACAT email address. He explained that these emails are managed by Alexandra Nicastro, Administrative Assistant, Wheel-Trans, and forwarded to the ACAT Executive for a decision on how to proceed.

#### Questions and Comments from the Committee:

A member asked also when you are returning emails, to ensure you don't hit reply all, unless that is what you intended to do.

#### c. Working Appeals Group

Erica Tanny, ACAT Co-Vice Chair explained that the conversation at the last meeting regarding forming a Subcommittee to discuss the appeals process was discussed by the ACAT Executives and they are recommending forming a Working Group, rather than a Subcommittee. They are invite as many ACAT members as possible sign up to contribute to the Working Group, as they are hoping to break into smaller groups to focus on issues. They have a lot of legitimate concerns regarding the Appeals Process and want to ensure that it is transparent and concerns are dealt with in an organized manner. They are hoping to bring recommendations to the ACAT General Meetings this year, although intend for the Working Group to be ongoing. Erica stated that they will look to staff where necessary for information, support, and assistance, if required. Everyone in the Working Group will have a voice, and although it will not be a committee, it will retain legitimacy and independence.

She will be working on administrative tasks over the next few weeks to set up the Working Group and encouraged everyone to bring their skills to this group, even if you are not directly impacted by this issue.

### Questions and Comments

A member asked if there were a desired number of people they would like to see join the Working Group. Erica stated that the more members that are involved, the better. They are not worried about having too many people, they will work with as many as they can.

A member asked if they would be working on Terms of Reference for the Working Group. Erica said that they would not be doing this right now, they want to get started as soon as they can to have some recommendations ready for this year regarding the Appeals Process.

A member asked if there was any point in ACAT members that were finishing their term joining this year and Erica stated that their input was still valuable, and they encourage them to join.

### Discussion

Anita Dressler reported that the Quarterly Executive meeting was held yesterday and was a very successful meeting. They had the chance to meet the new TTC Chair, Jamaal Myers. It was clear at the meeting that the TTC values the work done by ACAT and they will be involved with numerous projects with the TTC in the future.

Anita also wanted to thank Levenson Lincoln and Maria, the Manager at Bayshore. Over the last weeks, they have been working to find new locations for the appeals that are fully accessible. They have had difficulty finding places, but are working diligently to find two locations, one in the east and one in the west.

Howard Wax wanted to thank Debbie Gillespie, a past ACAT Chair for attending the meeting.

Anita Dressler stated that there is lots of hard work coming up; they should have the list of successful candidates by tomorrow and this will be brought forward to the TTC Board for approval. She thanked the members that are leaving for their valuable help, and looks forward to skilled and qualified people coming on to the Committee.

#### 14. Next Meeting

The next ACAT General Meeting is scheduled for October 27, 2023 at 1:00.

#### 15. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned on a motion by Betty Rivington Law at 2:11 p.m.

Cindy Edwards

Recording Secretary