



Notice of Motion

Continuing Free Wi-Fi Service

Moved by: Commissioner Josh Matlow

Seconded by: Chair Jamaal Myers

Recommendation

That the TTC Board:

1. Direct staff to continue to offer TConnect Wi-Fi service, subject to the completion of the following:
 - a. an equity impact review by the Racial Equity Office, assessing potential impacts that termination of service may have on equity deserving groups such as youth, women, and low-income riders, and other identifiable demographic groups, with recommendations for impact mitigation; and
 - b. a plan for the establishment of a pilot for free Wi-Fi on bus and street platforms and bays at stations given that public Wi-Fi is both a safety and accessibility issue.
2. Request the Interim CEO to report to the October meeting on the provision of free Wi-Fi on subway platforms that includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - a. Contract requirements, if any, for Rogers to still provide Wi-Fi services for internal use by TTC and/or Metrolinx;
 - b. Reasons for decline in Wi-Fi service experienced by riders in recent years including, if applicable, failure to provide critical system updates and commercial/advertising-related impediments to log ins;
 - c. Cost breakdown of the \$17 million figure cited as necessary for the long-term viability of free Wi-Fi including hardware and installation and provide a more cost-effective option for delivering the service.

Summary

The recent decision by the TTC and Rogers to discontinue public Wi-Fi came as a shock to many Torontonians. This move runs counter to the aims of the City's ConnectTO program which seeks to expand locations where free Wi-Fi is available. Removing free internet access on station platforms is obviously a step backwards.

The main reason cited for discontinuing free Wi-Fi is the decline in service and the purported \$17 million cost for supposedly necessary upgrades. The Briefing Note circulated to Commissioners by TTC Staff does not provide the details required for the Board to make an informed decision.

The attached motion seeks to provide clarity on the operation of free Wi-Fi on subway platforms and the decision to discontinue the service. It further requests that the service be continued, until there is a better understanding of the impacts to equity deserving groups and how these impacts can be mitigated.

Date: September 16, 2024