

ACCESS

Newsletter of the Wheel-Trans Community



Message from Eve Wiggins, Head of Wheel-Trans

With 2017 coming to a close, I am happy about the progress we have made toward bringing the Wheel-Trans 10-Year Strategy to life. This year we took



important steps that will lay a solid foundation for extensive service improvements. From the expansion of Wheel-Trans eligibility, to the launch of the Family of Services and

Community Bus Pilots; to the arrival of our new mini-buses and the revision of the Wheel-Trans Late Cancellation and No-Show Policy, we are well on our journey to transformation.

In 2018, we will continue to build upon this and expand our improvements into new areas. These include:

Travel Training: We will be able to offer personalized, 60-minute training sessions that will help customers learn how to use

the TTC's conventional transit services independently. Training will be customized to fit your lifestyle, travel needs and abilities. The program features include: planning your trip, wayfinding and navigation, paying your fare, boarding vehicles, requesting accessible features, and problem solving tips for when unexpected challenges, such as delays and closures arise. If you would like to travel on the conventional system and are unsure about how to do so, you may find travel training helpful. Let us know if you would like to participate the next time you call to book your trip or email us at wtdcs@ttc.ca.

New Telephone System: We will launch a new and modern telephone system to transform the way you connect with us. Once the system is installed, we expect phone wait-times and the number of unanswered and abandoned calls to be reduced. The system will include features to automatically inform customers about wait-times until their call can be answered; a call-back feature for

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customers who prefer not to wait on hold; and customers will now be able to use one phone number to contact us, regardless of the service they are trying to access.

Customer Experience: We are finalizing the Wheel-Trans Customer Experience Strategy. This strategy will establish a deliberate and consistent way of delivering our services, and interacting with you that is aligned with your needs and expectations. The strategy will drive a number of business choices, including; new policies for how our services are structured and the way and tone in which our employees engage with you. It will also drive the creation of a customer charter which will make clear expectations for what you can expect of us and how you can help your fellow customer get to where they need to go.

In the upcoming months you will hear more about these initiatives.

Thank you to our employees whose hard work keeps us moving forward. Thank you to Advisory Committee on Accessible Transit (ACAT) who continue to provide valued input to support our service delivery and thank you to our customers, who we place at the heart of all that we do.

On behalf of the TTC, I'd like to wish all our customers' happy holidays, Merry Christmas and Happy Hanukkah.

Family of Services: Customer Spotlight

"I've had my scooter for 15 years now and in that time I've seen so many positive accessibility changes in the transit system. It has become more convenient for me to get around the city.

The type of Family of Services trip I take depends on many factors, including where I'm going, how I'm feeling and the weather on that day. On the bus or the subway I can choose to use either my cane or my scooter. If I am going to a doctor's appointment, I wouldn't bother to book a return door-to-door Wheel-Trans ride depending on the accessibility of the location and the time of the appointment. I often choose to use my cane because most of my doctors are conveniently located a short walk from subway stations or bus stops, and my journey does not involve many transfers from one mode to other.



Berta Ramirez

When I used to work – I retired last year – I would book Wheel-Trans door-to-door trips there, but sometimes take conventional transit to get back home. I really liked to do that on Fridays. I used to take the streetcar from downtown to Broadview Subway Station, then take the bus to Main Station. I like to take Family of Services trips because they give me the same freedom other people have. I don't feel isolated. It is relaxing for me to feel like everyone else."

New phase of Family of Services Pilot marks major milestone

The start of Phase Three of the Family of Services Pilot was a significant milestone along the TTC's journey to provide Wheel-Trans customers with more independent and flexible travel options. During this phase, which began on October 23, customer volunteers are invited to book Wheel-Trans trips to select conventional bus stops – a first for the TTC.

Due to the increasing accessibility of the transit system and accompanying changes to TTC's practices, Wheel-Trans connections to these select conventional bus stops are now possible.

“We've done extensive research, planning and consultation with various teams across the TTC to ensure the most suitable bus stops were selected,” said Dean Milton, TTC Wheel-Trans Family of Services Pilot Lead. “This phase of the Pilot allows us to validate the logistics and service components that will make these types of transfers a regular practice for Wheel-Trans customers who choose to take the bus.”

Customer volunteers are invited to book to select bus stops along the following five routes: 29 Dufferin, 85 Sheppard East, 84 Sheppard West, 95 York Mills and 97 Yonge.

All stops meet or exceed City of Toronto Accessibility Design Guidelines or AODA requirements. They also include a shelter with seating and have ample sidewalk and room for disembarking.

Phase three of the Family of Services Pilot builds upon the previous two phases where customer volunteers booked trips to and from subway stations respectively. So far, more than 900 customers have volunteered to participate in the pilot and since January 1, more than 40,000 Family of Services trips have been taken.

The fourth and final phase of the Family of Services Pilot begins early in the New Year. In this phase we will further refine how we work with the conventional bus system by coordinating Wheel-Trans passenger pick-ups at the select bus stops.

Additional information about the pilot is available at ttc.ca/wheeltrans.



A customer using a motorized wheelchair waits to board a conventional bus.

Community Bus makes local travel easy

Long-time resident of East York, Thomas Richardson likes his neighbourhood Community Bus service. He uses it frequently to get to local stores and community centres.

“I like the convenience of being able to take one bus to get to multiple places in my neighbourhood,” said Thomas Richardson. “I especially like how the bus drops you off at the front doors of many buildings. That saves me the trouble of having to navigate through parking lots.”

Community Bus operates in five Toronto Communities: Parkdale, Etobicoke, East York, Don Mills South and Lawrence Manor. In early September, the 404 East York and 400 Lawrence Manor routes were extended and scheduled service was increased, as part of a pilot to see if these enhancements will result in an increase in ridership.

“It's great to have more frequent service,” said Thomas. “There are a few places along the new part of the route that I like to visit, and now it is much easier for me to get there.”

Community Bus offers customers additional features that the conventional

bus service does not. It drops off passengers in front of popular neighbourhood destinations such as groceries, shops, community centres, seniors' residences and hospitals. In addition, the Community Bus routes are operated by Wheel-trans vehicles and the bus can be flagged down between stops along any portion of the route. Unlike regular Wheel-Trans service, this bus runs on a schedule, so customers do not have to book a trip to their destination.

In January, service hours will be adjusted along the Community Bus pilot routes to reflect feedback customers have provided so far. For more information visit: ttc.ca/communitybus.

To receive a pamphlet about your neighbourhood Community Bus, please contact Wheel-Trans Customer Service.



Thomas Richardson waits for a Community Bus at Coxwell Station.

Wheel-Trans Family of Services Pick-Up Reminder

Please note, Wheel-Trans buses and accessible taxis cannot idle at subway station or on-street bus stops. If you are waiting at a stop when the Wheel-Trans vehicle arrives, you will be boarded safely. If you are not there, the bus will circle around and return five minutes after the scheduled time to accommodate you.

Holiday service: Important changes to your regular service

Regularly scheduled trips

Many facilities and programs close over the holiday season, so we will be cancelling all regularly scheduled trips (trips that automatically reoccur every week) for the period of December 24, 2017 – January 6, 2018 on your behalf. Regular trips for dialysis won't be cancelled.

You can still make travel arrangements during this period, but you'll need to book all the trips you require. If you know in advance that you'll need your regularly scheduled trips during the above mentioned period, please let us know beginning December 17, or up to seven days prior to the date you are travelling by visiting mywheeltrans.ttc.ca or by calling the Reservation Office at (416) 393-4222.

Service to transfer points

Some transfer points will have service changes over the holiday period, as the local business hours change. For your safety, our service to these transfer points will reflect the local business hours, as listed below:

East

Midland and Steeles Tim Hortons
4228 Midland Avenue:

- December 24: Tim Hortons closes at 3 p.m. Last pick-up and drop-off at 2 p.m.
- December 25: Tim Hortons is closed.
- December 26: Tim Hortons opens at 6 a.m.
- December 31: Tim Hortons closes at 6 p.m. Last pick-up and drop-off at 4 p.m.
- January 1: Tim Hortons opens at 8 a.m.

Central

Shops on Steeles and the Tim Hortons on Don Mills and Steeles
2890 and 2900 Steeles Avenue East

- December 24: Last pick-up and drop-off at 6 p.m.
- December 25: Tim Hortons is closed.
- December 26: Tim Hortons opens at 6 a.m.
- December 31: Last pick-up and drop-off at 3 p.m.
- January 1: Tim Hortons opens at 8 a.m. (the mall is closed).

Centre Point Mall

6464 Yonge Street

- December 24: Last pick-up and drop-off at 5 p.m.
- December 25: Centre Point Mall is closed.
- December 26: Centre Point Mall opens at 9:30 a.m.
- December 31: Last pick-up and drop-off at 5 p.m.
- January 1: Centre Point Mall will be open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

West

Queensway General Hospital, 150 Sherway Drive

- December 24, 26, 26, 31 & January 1:
Last pick-up and drop-off at 9 p.m.

Service to major malls

In order to deal with congested parking lots at shopping malls, beginning Sunday December 11, we'll provide service to the following malls only to the entrances listed below:

Yorkdale Shopping Centre: Shoppers Drug Mart Mall entrance. Check our website for shuttle information.

Scarborough Town Centre: TD Bank Mall entrance

Fairview Mall: Shoppers Drug Mart Mall entrance

Cloverdale Mall: Dollarama Mall entrance

Sherway Gardens: Shoppers Drug Mart Mall entrance

Service to all other malls will remain unchanged. Please remember you're responsible for carrying your parcels, bags and boxes. Be safe, and have a happy holiday season!

A Message from ACAT

The Advisory committee on Accessible Transit (ACAT) is comprised of 15 volunteers representing seniors and people with disabilities. ACAT provides advice and recommendations to the TTC

on matters pertaining to accessible public transit in Toronto.

Welcome to the fall issue of Access. So far, my term as ACAT Chair has been a busy one.

ACAT provided support on the following initiatives:

- The official launch of Ossington and Woodbine Stations' accessibility upgrades;
- The TTC Wheel-Trans 10-Year Strategy Public Meetings;
- The delivery of the first ProMaster mini-bus where ACAT provided design suggestions and feedback to TTC staff throughout the process and of course;
- The TTC Public Forum on Accessible Transit.

It has been great to meet many of you at the public meetings and events during the year. Together we have all done our part to keep accessibility on the radar. In closing, remember that universal access benefits everyone and sometimes the simplest solution can make the biggest difference.



Debbie Gillespie
ACAT Chair

Winter Safety Tips:

For your safety and the safety of our drivers, please make sure all ramps, driveways and sidewalks are clear of ice and snow. If you require assistance with snow removal from your private property, phone 311 and the City will direct you to a local agency that may provide this service. Here are some great tips to help keep you safe this winter:

- Ice grippers for extra traction on slippery surfaces can be added to the rubber tips on the end of canes. Shoes and boots with deep treads will help provide extra traction.
- Service will likely be delayed when it snows or is unusually cold, so be sure to dress accordingly.
- Make sure that your mobility device is in good repair and the tires have lots of tread and are properly inflated.

Wheel-Trans service during inclement weather

If by 3 p.m. the day before you are booked for Wheel-Trans service, the weather forecast calls for a snowfall of eight cm or more, we encourage customers to cancel non-essential rides. If it snows on the day of service, go to mywheel-trans.ttc.ca or call the RideLine at 416-397-8000 for further updates and instruction. Rides cancelled during a snow advisory will not be included in the Late Cancellation/No-Show Policy.

Due to the possibility of busy roads and inclement weather, please allow an additional 30 minutes travel time when booking your rides.

Lots on the go at the TTC with PRESTO

The final wave of fare gate construction is well underway at the station entrances that do not yet have our new paddle-style fare gates. This construction is taking place in some of the TTC's busiest stations where the fare lines are more constrained, necessitating some weekend and early closures. During these closures trains will by-pass the station in both directions. Signs will be posted to advise you of the closures and the PRESTO section on the TTC's website has the latest information about the construction and rollout.

New Self-Serve Reload Machines are being tested and pending successful results will begin to rollout to stations later this year. These new machines will also eventually replace the existing ones that are available at some of our stations. In addition, new Fare Media Vending Devices are also being tested and pending their successful results will be rolled out to our subway stations, starting with our new Line 1 extension stations first, and continuing across the system until available at all entrances. Once they are installed you will be able to purchase a PRESTO card, load it with money or a TTC pass and check your balance at every entrance.

Line 1 extension brings enhancements to six subway stations

The countdown is on to the opening of the TTC's new Line 1 extension stations. Vaughan Metropolitan Centre, Highway 407, Pioneer Village, York University, Finch West, and Downsview Park stations will all be opening on December 17. This is

another significant milestone in the TTC's modernization efforts.

These stations, in addition to Sheppard West and Wilson, will all be opening under the TTC's new station model where collector booths will be a thing of the past and customer service agents will be front and centre at the fare lines to assist customers face to face. Our new fare gates with PRESTO will be available at all of these stations. While you will still be able to use tickets, tokens and TTC passes, you will no longer be able to purchase these items at these stations. You will only be able to purchase a PRESTO card or load an existing card with money or a TTC pass. Later in 2018 this new station model will be implemented across all stations.

In preparation for the opening of the TTC's new Line 1 extension Metrolinx, the provincial agency responsible for transit, announced a new co-fare agreement that will allow customers who transfer between GO Transit and the TTC to pay a half price fare instead of having to pay two-full price fares. As a result, adult, senior and youth/student customers will pay \$1.50 to ride the TTC after transferring from GO or UP Express. Similarly, adults heading from the TTC to GO Transit or UP Express will receive a \$1.50 discount on their GO or UP Express fare. This discount will go into effect in January 2018.

As always to learn more about PRESTO visit ttc.ca/presto or look for a PRESTO on Wheel-Trans brochure on the hooks of all Wheel-Trans vehicles.

TTC Access Hubs to make connecting to conventional bus easier

In early 2018, the TTC will open its first Access Hub at Meadowvale Loop in Scarborough. This Hub is among others that are slated for construction at select locations across the city.

Access Hubs provide customers with a more comfortable, accessible place to wait when transferring between Wheel-Trans vehicles and other TTC modes of transit. They will be dry and well-lit; spacious enough for multiple mobility devices; have automatic doors and provide generous seating.

“Our goal is to make connecting to conventional transit more convenient for Wheel-Trans customers who chose to do so,” said Eve Wiggins, Head of Wheel-Trans.

The Access Hubs (formerly known as Mobility Transfer Hubs) are a part of the TTC's Wheel-Trans 10-Year Strategy, a roadmap for reimagining and transforming how accessible public transit services are delivered to seniors and customers with disabilities. More information about Access Hubs will be included in the next issue of Access Newsletter.



An architectural rendering of the Access Hub located at Meadowvale Loop Scarborough. This location is served by the 85 Sheppard East and 86 Scarborough buses.

MEADOWVALE LOOP 3D-RENDERING PREPARED for TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION



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580 Commissioners Street, Toronto, On M4M 1A7

