

# Access



Wheel-Trans

Newsletter of the Wheel-Trans community

Winter 2023

## Message from the Head

Now that we have welcomed in 2023, I would like to take a look back at the previous year and highlight some Wheel-Trans accomplishments from 2022. Last year, we began the process of replacing our older 'Friendly' buses with 7 metre ProMaster vehicles. We now have more than 50 of these newer, more comfortable buses in service. We added more Family of Services (FOS) routes and stops to our network throughout the year and now have 54 FOS 'frequent service' routes and 5,000 active stops on the TTC conventional network. We produced a FOS educational video as an additional tool to assist customers and to demonstrate the accessibility of the conventional system. We continued to perform on our promise to lower wait times for our Reservations contact centre, delivering an average of just over two minutes to answer calls in 2022. We expanded our Mobile Application pilot and now have over 150 users assisting in refining the product for optimal use once it is released in 2023. Finally, we just completed a business solution assessment which will pave the way forward for the next four phases of our Reservations, Scheduling and Dispatch software upgrades. We plan to deliver these upgrades over the next four years which will ultimately result in us being able to provide a better service to you, our customers.

I am happy to report that we have almost completely returned to normal operations at this point in the waning COVID-19 pandemic. However, the following measures still remain in place to ensure customer safety: Customer COVID-19 health disclaimer, mandatory masks/face coverings, where medically possible, and solo rides on sedan taxis.

The start of 2023 marks new beginnings for the Advisory Committee on Accessible Transit (ACAT), through the retirement of some long-standing members and the introduction of new members. The election of a new ACAT Chair and Co-Vice-Chairs was held in mid-January. We look forward to engaging with ACAT, and utilizing their expertise for another year.

As we look forward to 2023, here is what you can expect from Wheel-Trans in the coming months: We will enhance our customer re-registration campaign so that more of our customers who registered for service prior to January 1, 2017 are categorized into one of three AODA-mandated eligibility categories. We will continue to add more 7 metre ProMaster vehicles to our fleet and we plan to retire all of our older 'Friendly' vehicles by the Fall. Lastly, we plan to launch our Mobile Application later this year, making it available for all customers to download.

This app will give customers added convenience during their trips with the ability to utilize many of the tools available on the Self-booking Website, such as finding your Wheel-Trans ride, receiving service alerts and trip reminders.

All the best for 2023!



**Cameron Penman**

Head of Wheel-Trans

# Eligibility re-registration for Wheel-Trans service

Customers that were registered with Wheel-Trans prior to January 1, 2017 are required to submit a new Wheel-Trans application (re-registration) by going to [portal.ttc.ca](http://portal.ttc.ca) or contacting Customer Service at 416-393-4111.

There are approximately 11,000 Wheel-Trans customers that still need to re-register under the new eligibility criteria. **Over the next few months, letters will be mailed out to these customers with instructions on how to submit their new Wheel-Trans application.**

## Why must customers re-register?

On January 1, 2017, in compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), Wheel-Trans introduced the new eligibility criteria and application process. All customers are assessed using the same eligibility criteria.

Re-registration ensures a fair and equitable approach for all Wheel-Trans customers. To date, close to 8,000 customers have voluntarily re-registered.

## What are the new eligibility categories?

**Unconditional eligibility:** a person with a disability that prevents them from using conventional transportation services. They always receive door-to-door service.

customer will travel using Conventional TTC and Wheel-Trans, OR Customer receives door-to-door services when one or more of their conditions are present.

**Temporary eligibility:** a person with a temporary disability that prevents them from using conventional transportation services for a specified period of time. They always receive door-to-door service.

Each customer is assessed individually and assigned a specific eligibility and conditions based on their abilities. If a customer believes that their category of eligibility and/or condition(s) does not truly reflect their abilities, then we encourage them to request an eligibility appeal. Appeals and functional testing are carried out by independent specialized occupational therapists or physiotherapists.

**Conditional eligibility:** a person with a disability where environmental or physical barriers limit their ability to consistently use conventional transportation services. When none of their conditions are present,

## Will I still have access to door-to-door Wheel-Trans service?

**Yes** customers that qualify for Unconditional or Temporary eligibility will be able to travel door-to-door for all of their trips. Customers with Conditional eligibility will be able to travel door-to-door when their conditions are present, and use Family of

Services when their conditions are not present. Currently a Family of Services trip is optional, meaning customers can choose to travel door-to-door at all times.

## Appeal panel

The Appeal Panel is the final step of the eligibility appeal process. If a customer disagrees with the eligibility decision made by Wheel-Trans and/or the Functional Assessment, they can attend an in-person assessment by an Appeal Panel. The Appeal Panel is made up of a Transit Specialist, an Occupational Therapist and a member of ACAT.

The Appeal Panel appointments were paused during the pandemic. Wheel-Trans has resumed scheduling Appeals as of November 2022. The resumption of Appeals will ensure customers receive appropriate eligibility. Additional information about the appeal process, as well as required forms, can be found at [ttc.ca/wheeltrans](http://ttc.ca/wheeltrans), by e-mailing [WTEligibility@ttc.ca](mailto:WTEligibility@ttc.ca) or calling 416-393-4111.

## Resumption of late cancellations/“Life Happens” Policy

Beginning March 1, 2023 the Wheel-Trans Late Cancellation and No–Show Policy will be in effect once again after being paused during the COVID-19 pandemic. Reminder letters will be sent out in February to customers that have exceeded their allotment of “life happens” points.

Wheel-Trans understands that “life happens” and there are circumstances that are beyond the control of its customers. Therefore, each Wheel-Trans customer will receive a total of eight Life Happens points per month. This will not only give flexibility when “life happens” and customers need to cancel a trip on short notice, but will also help reduce the number of cancellations to ensure more trips are available for customers.

**A Late Cancellation (LC)** occurrence is defined as any booked trip that is cancelled less than four hours before the scheduled pick-up time. This includes trips that are booked as a same-day trip request.

**A Cancel-at-the-Door (CAD)** occurrence is defined as any booked trip that is cancelled after the Wheel-Trans vehicle has arrived at the pick-up location.

**A No–Show (NS)** occurrence is defined as any booked trip where the Wheel-Trans vehicle arrives at the pick-up location and the customer is not present.

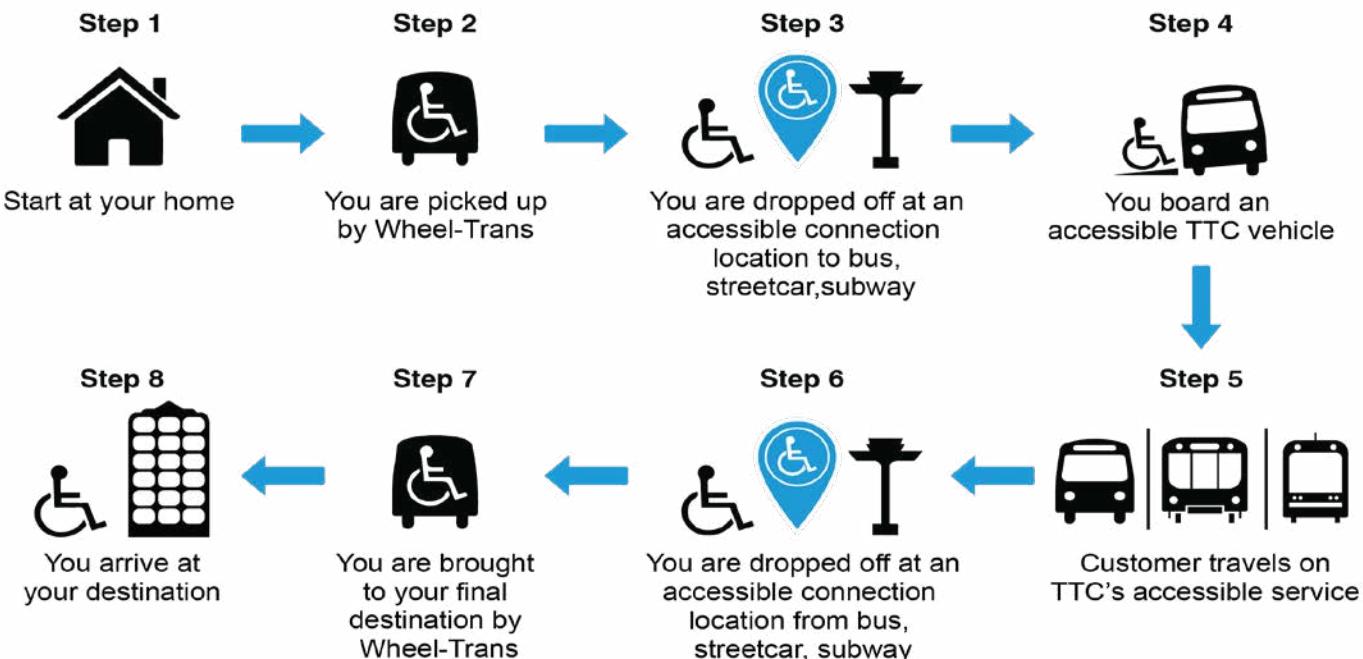
Customers are expected to make every possible attempt to cancel booked trips that are no longer needed or cannot be used at least four hours in advance of their scheduled pick-up time.

For full policy details please go to [ttc.ca/wheel-trans/wheel-trans-policies/late-cancellation-or-no-show-policy](http://ttc.ca/wheel-trans/wheel-trans-policies/late-cancellation-or-no-show-policy) or call Wheel-Trans Customer Service at 416-393-4111.

# Family of Services

A Family of Services (FOS) trip is when a customer uses a combination of Wheel-Trans and conventional TTC modes of travel to reach their destination. Family of Services connects customers to the TTC's accessible conventional network, which includes bus, subway and streetcar.

## An example of a Family of Services trip:



**Step 1:** Start at your home

**Step 2:** You are picked up by Wheel-Trans

**Step 3:** You are dropped off at an accessible connection location to bus, streetcar, subway

**Step 4:** You board an accessible TTC vehicle

**Step 5:** You travel on TTC's accessible service

**Step 6:** You are dropped off at an accessible connection location from bus, streetcar, subway

**Step 7:** You are brought to your final destination by Wheel-Trans

**Step 8:** You arrive at your destination

**Conditional Trip-Matching** simply means that the Family of Services trip that you will be offered will match your eligibility conditions. You will receive a trip based on your needs and abilities and can include a door-to-door trip, or a Wheel-Trans trip connecting you with the conventional TTC system. If you are scheduling your trip when none of your conditions are present, then you can travel using TTC's Family of Services, and can travel using a combination of Wheel-Trans, and/or TTC bus, streetcar and subway.

If you are scheduling your trip when one or more of your conditions are present, you will receive a door-to-door Wheel-Trans trip from your starting address

to your destination. Currently a Family of Services trip is optional, you can choose whether you wish to travel door-to-door. Once Family of Services becomes mandatory, conditional trip matching will be in place for **Conditional Customers** only

We have produced an [educational Family of Services video](#) as an additional tool to assist customers and demonstrate the accessibility of the conventional TTC system.

[ttc.ca/wheel-trans/family-of-services/TTC-Family-of-Services-Video](http://ttc.ca/wheel-trans/family-of-services/TTC-Family-of-Services-Video)

# Travel Training

Travel Training is a free program available to Wheel-Trans customers who want to learn how to use the TTC's conventional system (bus, streetcar, subway), which operates on fixed routes and schedules. This program is also a great way to help you learn how to travel using the Family of Services. A Family of Services trip means travelling to your destination using a family of TTC vehicles, which can include a combination of Wheel-Trans, bus, streetcar and subway.

**Note:** Travel Training does not determine Wheel-Trans eligibility.

The goal is to help you improve your travel skills, increase your comfort and confidence when travelling on the TTC, and teach you about all of your travel options. The Travel Training Program can be customized to meet your needs.

Please feel free to reach out to Arlen Orellana, Wheel-Trans' Travel Training Specialist, for any questions, or to book a session. She can be reached at 647-614-9396 or by e-mail at [TravelTraining@ttc.ca](mailto:TravelTraining@ttc.ca).

## Winter operations update

Safety first! As the winter season continues, please be reminded that it is your responsibility to keep personal entrances clear of ice and snow. If you require assistance and qualify for the Senior Assistance Home Maintenance Program, please contact the City of Toronto at [tigp.org](http://tigp.org). You can also contact 311 if your street has not been cleared in a timely fashion.

Wheel-Trans has a Severe Weather Plan in order to keep everyone safe. Customers will be advised when a severe weather advisory has been declared and customers are encouraged to cancel non-essential trips without penalty.

Same day trip bookings are not available during a severe weather advisory.

The process is included below.

If by 3 p.m. the day before you are booked for Wheel-Trans service, the weather forecast calls for a snowfall of 8 cm or more, we encourage you to cancel non-essential rides. If it snows on the day

of service, go to [mywheel-trans.ttc.ca](http://mywheel-trans.ttc.ca) or call the RideLine at 416-397-8000 for further updates and instructions. Same day service will be restricted, and all Family of Service trips will be converted to Door-to-Door. Rides cancelled during a snow advisory will not be included in the Late Cancellation/No-Show Policy.

## Access Hubs

Access Hubs are large, fully accessible, well lit, heated shelters that can easily accommodate multiple customers using mobility devices who are travelling on TTC's Family of Services. To ensure customer safety and comfort, the TTC has also secured snow removal contracts to remove snow around Access Hubs within 24 hours of a snowfall.



Access Hubs are equipped with infrared heaters that work on a timer, and can be activated by customers when the temperature drops below 5 degrees Celsius. Customers need to be directly in front of the heater to benefit from its warmth.





**Image of a new elevator at Lansdowne Station**

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## Lansdowne Station is now accessible!

As of December 2022, Lansdowne Station is the latest TTC station to become fully accessible. This milestone marks the 56th accessible station on the TTC system, and the 22nd station with elevators on Line 2 Bloor-Danforth. The upgrades include three new elevators, automatic sliding doors at the station entrance, a new station canopy, and a barrier-free path from the main entrance to all levels of the station.

The TTC's Easier Access Program is making "the better way" the easier way to get around for people using wheelchairs, scooters, walkers, other

mobility devices or baby strollers. Every accessible station that comes online brings the TTC and Wheel-Trans closer to its Family of Services model.

Elevator construction is currently underway at 14 other stations: Donlands, College, Summerhill, Rosedale, Castle Frank, Glencairn, Greenwood, Lawrence, Christie, High Park, Spadina, Museum, Warden and King. If you are interested in learning more about these ongoing projects, visit the TTC Projects webpage online. <https://www.ttc.ca/projects>

## Word from Chair of ACAT

As we embark on a new year, ensuring that riders can continue to rely on accessible transit remains the top priority of the Advisory Committee on Accessible Transit (ACAT). Whether you use conventional transit vehicles or Wheel-Trans service, flexibility and on-time options are important to all transit riders. My term on ACAT is now completed, and I extend congratulations and welcome the new ACAT members for 2023.

ACAT worked diligently on several initiatives in 2022, including ACAT's 30th anniversary. A lot has certainly changed in providing accessible transit to TTC customers in 30 years! Other items ACAT worked on in 2022 included:

- Pole card and route information on temporary stops as a result of closures, route diversions or construction
- Accessible boarding zones

- Family of Services process
- Accessibility of the TTC website
- Wheel-Trans mobile app

I wish you safe and happy travels in 2023.



**Debbie Gillespie**  
ACAT Chair (2022)



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Wheel-Trans

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