



Advisory Committee on Accessible Transit

June 29, 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 May 25, 2023 to the July 12, 2023 Board Meeting for information. The general discussion included making a decision about ACAT meeting times and suggestions about communication to customers when routes are affected by construction. The following is a summary of the main topics discussed at the May ACAT Subcommittee meetings:

Design Review Subcommittee

Workshops held by Metrolinx have included a review of the Scarborough Centre Station design. The TTC has participated in the workshops and an update will be presented to this Subcommittee in Q3 2023. Main Street Station construction was reviewed and the Subcommittee identified that there is no observable curb between the streetcar stop and guideway, which makes it difficult to navigate along the platform.

Service Planning Subcommittee

Correspondence regarding priority seating and vehicle announcements was reviewed. The 5-Year Corporate Plan, TTC Annual Service Plan, 5-Year Customer Experience Service Plan and the Accessibility Plan Status Update were presented to this Subcommittee.

Wheel-Trans Operations Subcommittee

Resuming shared ride service on Sedan Taxis was discussed as well as ongoing customer re-registration efforts and the upcoming voluntary Family of Services (FOS) pilot. The FOS pilot will provide valuable feedback from customers and identify necessary improvements.

There was no Communications Subcommittee meeting held in May 2023.

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, May 25, 2023
1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Location: Virtual meeting via WebEx

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

Regrets: Wangari Muriuki
Mei Hung
Valdo Tammark

TTC Representatives: Natalie Poole-Moffatt, Chief of Corporate Affairs
Cameron Penman, Head of Wheel-Trans
Heather Brown, Director of Customer Experience
Matt Hagg, Manager of Customer Policy, Strategy & Foresight
Dean Milton, Manager of Strategic Initiatives, Wheel-Trans
Ross Visconti, Wheel-Trans Project Manager
Levenson Lincoln, Assistant Manager of Customer Service, Wheel-Trans
Sneha Madhuri, Communications Advisor, Corporate Communications
Jeff Short, Senior Planner, Strategy & Foresight
David Lo Presti, Manager, Contracted Taxi Services, Wheel-Trans
Jason Albom, Chief Instructor, Operations Training Centre
Sara Mahboob, Human Rights Consultant, Human Rights & Investigations
Warren Rupnarain, Accessibility Consultant, Diversity

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 April 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/ ACAT Meeting Times Review Update
- 13/ Subcommittee Reports, Highlights and Updates
 - Communications
 - Design Review
 - Service Planning
 - Wheel-Trans Operations
- 14/ Other/New Business
- 15/ Next Meeting – June 29, 2023
- 16/ Adjournment

1. Call to Order/Attendance

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

2. Land Acknowledgement

A member read the Land Acknowledgement.

3. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Nil.

4. Approval of Agenda

Howard Wax brought a motion to approve the agenda as presented, Lauri Sue Robertson seconded. Carried.

5. Remarks from TTC Executive

Natalie Poole-Moffatt, Chief of Corporate Affairs, thanked ACAT members for inviting her to speak. Natalie noted the increase in media reports pertaining to safety on the TTC and wanted to report to the ACAT members, along with any feedback they might have.

TTC staff have met with customers who identify as women regarding their thoughts on community. Natalie noted that the TTC has several initiatives right now for reporting any incidents or suspicious activities and highlighted a few for the members. These included:

- Reporting incidents to station staff.
- The Designated Waiting Area DWA, which has two buttons, one that is direct to the station staff and one to Transit Control.
- Yellow strip while riding the train can be pushed and the train stops at the next station and staff will respond immediately.

It is important to note that the TTC is concerned with the safety of customers and staff and continues to discuss this on a daily basis at all levels.

Questions and Comments from the Committee

A member commented that they have been in the DWA on different occasions, pushed the button and not received a response. This incident was at Broadview Station. They noted that there is no point in having this button if there is no staff to respond. Natalie Poole-Moffatt apologized for this experience and advised this will be taken back to the Executives as feedback for improvement.

A member commented that the yellow strip on the vehicles is not easy for people with low vision or who are blind and there is nothing to tell them where to look for it.

A member also suggested that the yellow strip is high up on the vehicles and might be difficult to reach. They suggested that the GO train has a specific car for accessibility, which has those strips lower. This will be taken back for review.

A member commented that the TTC should review how the reporting is handled. They heard of a case where a victim was assaulted in the station and when they found two Special Constables, the Special Constables seemed uninterested in taking the report and sent the person to the station staff. Because the victim had to retell the story numerous times it made them feel re-victimized. The member suggested that it should be made clear to staff and customers what they need to do to make a report and who should be responsible for taking that report, or at least assisting the customer to the correct person, rather than leaving it up to the customer. Staff must remember that this person was a victim, and should be treated that way. The member noted that the victim had spoken to many people, made reports on many different levels and felt that it was going nowhere.

Another member commented that if a person reports an incident or needs assistance, there is no prompt confirmation or update, and the person never knows if the comment has been dealt with and closed. They suggested TTC staff does not seem to want to listen and just tell people to make a report online. Natalie Poole-Moffatt spoke to the SafeTTC app as a way to get immediate responses and to make a complaint so the TTC can follow up.

A member commented that they recently attended a meeting between the TTC and City Council, where some of the statistics that were presented were upsetting. Natalie Poole-Moffatt suggested that these statistics must have been through a public presentation as the studies conducted by the TTC were showing improvement. The member stated that the presentation brought up very similar comments to that given by the ACAT members and customers that have presented to ACAT, and they questioned whether the proper demographic was being studied by the TTC. Natalie Poole-Moffatt will take this back, stating that TTC Executives agree that the TTC must do better.

6. Remarks from ACAT Chair

Anita Dressler, ACAT Chair, commented that her remarks were public announcements. May 28 to June 3 is National AccessAbility Week and various events are planned. Applications for next year's ACAT will be open until August 14, 2023 at 4:00 p.m. and the ACAT Chair encouraged current members to speak to anyone they know about applying. The TTC Board meeting will be held on June 12, 2023 and members can watch virtually if they are interested. Finally, the driver training is being scheduled and ACAT members can register to attend by the end of day today.

Questions and Comments from the Committee

A member asked if the date for the driver training was scheduled yet, and it was confirmed it would be scheduled in the next few days for June.

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

Lauri Sue Robertson brought a motion to approve the April 27, 2023 minutes as presented, Betty Rivington-Law seconded. Carried.

8. Outstanding Items

The ACAT Chair provided an update on the following outstanding items:

a) ACAT Meeting Times

This will be discussed later in the meeting.

b) Recommendation for Honorarium

This is ongoing and will be discussed at a later meeting.

c) Scarborough Centre Station Motion

This item is pending and there should be updates in the 3rd quarter of 2023.

Questions and Comments from the Committee

A member asked what is pending regarding the Scarborough Centre Station Motion. Their understanding is there are workshops being conducted, without the input of ACAT, although it was suggested ACAT be included. The member commented that it seems there is little transparency as these workshops are being held without any information to ACAT. Jeff Short, Senior Planner, Strategy & Foresight, will speak to the manager in charge of the project to see if a high-level update could be brought to the Design Review Subcommittee (DRS) for review and a further one later on in the process.

A member commented that this was brought up at the TTC Board meeting, with a similar suggestion that it be brought to ACAT in advance, so that they do not have to go back and make changes when the work is already in progress.

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 an update about Wheel Trans. Wheel-Trans plans to upgrade the Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) system, which provides vehicles with vehicle tracking, is moving along. They are in touch with procurement to begin the first steps, which is expected to start this year. Steps are also being taken to secure a contract to implement a new Interactive Voice Response (IVR) phone system. An update about this item will be provided in the next few months.

Cameron Penman discussed the ongoing re-registration of legacy customers and advised letters have gone out to 1000 Wheel-Trans customers that have not re-registered and a next wave of letters is expected to go out next month. Customers are also reminded on the Self-booking Website should they need to re-register.

There are currently 90 7 metre ProMaster buses in service. These buses are more comfortable and are replacing the older 'Friendly' buses, which Wheel-Trans expects to retire by the end of 2023.

Customer and Operator safety remains a top priority and the mandatory masks/face coverings policy, where medically possible, continues on all Wheel-Trans vehicles.

As customer demand has increased David Lo Presti, Manager of Contracted Services, and the Wheel-Trans team with the input of ACAT has announced they are allowing up to two customers in the back seat of sedan taxis. The front seat is still closed to customers.

Questions and Comments from the Committee

A member asked if customers are notified that others might be riding in the sedan with them when they are booking. Cameron Penman stated that there is no way to do this at this time.

A member noted that the media has picked up on the TTC campaign to encourage re-registration and asked if the TTC had been asked to be part of the discussion. Cameron Penman explained they try and ensure that the information is accurate, but ultimately the media releases the story that they want told.

A member commented that they noticed that the last Toronto Star by-line seemed negative, implying that re-registration is a bad thing for customers. Cameron Penman noted again that TTC put the accurate information out there, trying to fill in the gaps, but ultimately, they do not control the release of information. They do control their own release, which tries to advise customers on the necessity of following the AODA legislation.

A member commented that part of the issue is that the legislation that was released is ableist and although they had not read the articles, they are likely to be sensationalized. It cannot be overstated that there are also issues with the way the TTC has approached it.

The WTOS meeting in June will have a presentation on the effect the legislation is having on the customers and all ACAT members were invited to join the meeting and listen.

12. ACAT Meeting Times Review Update

The ACAT Chair noted that there has been extensive discussion around the meeting times of ACAT and proposed the following motion:

ACAT brings the subject of ACAT meeting times to a close for the 2023 year. Furthermore, candidates being interviewed will be asked their preferred meeting times if they could choose. Answers will be recorded by the TTC staff and if ACAT requests the information in the future to further consider this issue, this information will be provided.

Questions and Comments from the Committee

A member suggested an amendment to include the question in the application in order to collect more data for possible consideration in the future. The ACAT Chair stated that it would not be fair as some of the applications have already been submitted. The member suggested that this could be made for consideration next year. There was a concern voiced that this might affect the application and consideration should be given to determining if there is a way to make this part anonymous, only requiring this information for statistical purposes.

A member asked what the purpose would be for collecting this information and how would it be used. The ACAT Chair explained they felt that they did not have enough information from the general public regarding meeting times and this would be a way to collect more data, as these are the people who would be interested in applying for ACAT, along with the data supplied by current ACAT members. The member asked for clarification on the path forward when they collect this information.

A member provided more background as to why the information was being collected. It was felt that these meetings times are not accessible to everyone who might be interested in being a part of ACAT and this was one way to open up the data to more people during the recruitment process. It was suggested that this would be a small step in getting more information and being able to provide insight to what people want and perhaps passing motions in the future regarding meeting times that are meaningful and able to provide guidance at the time.

The member stated that they understand the data collection, they were unsure how that information would be weighted or how it would impact the decision made. It was explained that they would like this data so that a new motion pertaining to the 2024 meetings might be framed, with accurate, studied information. This member agreed that it was not for the 2023 year as it was too late but could be implemented prior to opening the 2024 year's applications.

The ACAT Chair explained that they wanted to leave it open for the 2024 application process but they must also be mindful of the TTC staff's time for attending and preparing for meetings for 2023 as the schedule had already been set.

Anita Dressler brought a motion that ACAT brings the subject of ACAT meeting times to a close for the 2023 year. Furthermore, candidates being interviewed will be asked their preferred meeting times if they could choose. Answers will be recorded by the TTC staff, and if ACAT requests the information in the future to further consider this issue, this information will be provided and Nic Paterson seconded. Carried.

13. Subcommittee Reports, Highlights and Updates:

Communications Subcommittee (CS)

There was no CS meeting in May.

The next Communications Subcommittee Meeting is scheduled for June 1, 2023 at 1 p.m.

Design Review Subcommittee (DRS)

Craig Nicol, DRS Chair, discussed the items reviewed at the DRS meeting held on May 9, 2023. A presentation was made regarding the replacement of upholstered with non upholstered seating on the buses. This was suggested for various reasons, including cost and maintenance. The seat colouring will remain similar, greys, reds and blues. The accessibility emblem on seats was discussed and members emphasized the importance of the emblem being durable and resistant to graffiti. ACAT and broader customer feedback will be considered as part of the order of the 300-400 new buses.

Work on the Davisville Platform is continuing. The only remaining work is the replacement of old benches. TTC staff are waiting for the new benches to be delivered. The Subcommittee raised questions about the Main Street Construction. There is no observable curb between the streetcar stop and the guideway, which makes it more difficult to navigate along the platform. The longer vehicle ramp is also required.

The next DRS meeting is scheduled for June 13, 2023 from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

DRS Meeting Highlights:

- Non-upholstered bus seats
- Davisville Platform work
- Main Street Station construction

Service Planning Subcommittee (SPS)

Howard Wax, SPS Chair, was away, so an update was provided by Jeff Short.

The next SPS meeting is scheduled for June 6, 2023, at 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

SPS Meeting Highlights:

- Correspondence regarding priority seating and vehicle announcements.
- Presentation of the 5-year Corporate Plan by TTC staff.
- Presentation of the TTC Annual Service Plan.
- Presentation of the 5-year Customer Experience Service Plan.
- Presentation of the Accessibility Plan Status Update.

Wheel-Trans Operations Subcommittee (WTOS)

Lauri Sue Robertson, WTOS Chair, discussed the topics reviewed at the WTOS meeting held on May 10, 2023. Opening the full ride share service model was discussed and an update was provided about the re-registration efforts for legacy customers. Dean Milton, Manager of Strategic Initiatives, discussed a new pilot project that will start in the summer with volunteer customers travelling using FOS. This pilot will provide valuable feedback. Construction projects impacting Wheel-Trans stops were also discussed and TTC staff provided a status update about Line 5 access and the location of Wheel-Trans stops.

The next WTOS meeting is scheduled for June 14, 2023 at 1 p.m.

WTOS Meeting Highlights:

- Opening the full ride share service model
- Reporting on the legacy member re-registration drive
- Working with organizations to help their members apply for re-registration
- FOS pilot project Bus Orientation Day – June 27, 2023.
- Construction projects impacting Wheel-Trans.
- Line 5 access update and location of Wheel-Trans stops

Questions and Comments from the Committee

A member commented about the Line 5 Station descriptions and stated that more information is required from Metrolinx and Crosslinx before they can do anything. Staff will need to compile and share all of the information where Wheel-Trans connections will be provided before any more can be done. That member suggested that this information should be ready well before the opening of the stations, so that there is time to prepare. Jeff Short has reached out and will forward the information when that person returns from holiday.

A member asked for the language to change from developmental delays to developmental disability.

14. Other/New Business

A member asked that with the construction changes, if it would be possible to have the operators announce the change in the route so that customers know there is a change, and they will be arriving at a different spot. The example is the Cliffside bus now stops at Victoria Park Station, rather than Main Street Station with the construction. Staff will work

on better signage and noted that vinyl signs will be replacing some of the other signs, which will give more information to customers. Heather Brown stated that it is difficult to put signs on the buses as routes are changed daily.

A member suggested that the bus drivers could be asked to make the announcements. Staff noted they are working on the best methods to get this information to everyone and will take the feedback back for review.

A member stated that changes like the Cliffside bus going to Victoria Park Station instead of Main Street Station with no notice would be very challenging to a person that is blind as they might have no idea how to get around the station and get where they are going. It should not be difficult to have the drivers announce the change, as this should be the operator's responsibility.

A member pointed out that the GO buses leave their doors open and make the announcement, which allows people waiting outside to know in advance of the changes, so they can plan their route accordingly.

A member also noted that the bus stops only list the bus number, and not the street name, and suggested it might be helpful to add this, as someone not familiar with the station, suddenly dropped there would have no idea how to find where they need to go.

Erica Tanny, ACAT Co-Vice Chair, brought up new business for discussion. She stated that she is on the appeal board, which hears appeals from customers that do not agree with their assessment. This location has no accessible washrooms.

The ACAT Chair continued that the location was recently moved to a rehab centre on Bloor Street. However, it was noticed afterwards that the washrooms are not accessible; they are down a narrow hallway, that does not allow room for turns with mobility equipment, even a walker. It was noted that this is a major barrier for people who are going through the appeal process. Not only does it limit their participation, but also limits ACAT members participation in the decision-making process at the appeal level.

Levenson Lincoln, Assistant Manager, Customer Service, Wheel-Trans, explained that in the interim, they are screening to ensure that anyone who uses a mobility device is not losing any services until they can find another location. They hope to have a more concrete answer very soon on finding a new location. It was noted that a third-party company finds these locations.

A member suggested that perhaps TTC staff and ACAT members should inspect the location prior to agreeing to use it for these appeal meetings to ensure that it is fully accessible.

A member stated that there should be specific criteria listed and required when looking for locations. It should be fully accessible to anyone having any mobility device at all times.

A member asked if the TTC had any notice prior to the change and why was the old location changed. Levenson Lincoln stated that some ACAT Appeal Panel members raised concerns about accessing the other location.

A member noted that they were at the location and use a cane and that the washroom was very small and difficult to navigate, even with just a cane.

A member suggested that TTC should look into utilizing some of their own space, there are 4 floors at Union Station that would work well and are accessible.

A member commented that she is on the appeal board and will be cancelling her upcoming dates as the building is not accessible and therefore not an appropriate place. Other options that were initially proposed included walling off an area to use as a washroom, which is not a viable solution. She also suggested using technology, online meetings if required as well.

The ACAT Chair commented that she is usually available if other ACAT members are unable to do some of the dates for the appeal hearings. She also noted that she would like to see the person that is appealing, and did not feel that technology would give that opportunity to see the body language and gait.

A member commented that it is not the place of the appeal board to decide based on the person's disability on the day, but to see the assessment information provided. The ACAT Chair stated that they always defer to the medical information provided, but also like to see the person live if possible.

This will be left in the hands of staff to provide a resolution as quickly as possible.

15. Next Meeting

The next ACAT General Meeting is scheduled for June 29, 2023, at 1:00 p.m.

16. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned on a motion by Betty Rivington-Law at 3:06 p.m.

Cindy Edwards
Recording Secretary