

TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION REPORT NO.

MEETING DATE: February 29, 2012

SUBJECT: ACCESSIBLE TRANSIT SERVICES PLAN:
2011 STATUS REPORT

ACTION ITEM

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Commission forward this report to the City of Toronto, Metrolinx, the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services, Transportation, Energy, Infrastructure, and the Ontario Human Rights Commission, noting that:

- this report fulfils the provincially-legislated requirement in the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* for an annual documentation of the TTC's accessibility plan;
- the status of the TTC's current activities to improve the accessibility of its facilities and services is described in more detail in the attached Appendix 1, entitled, *TTC Accessible Transit Services Plan - 2011 Status Report*;
- the TTC achieved a major milestone in its accessibility plan in 2011 as all conventional bus services provided by the TTC are now accessible;
- the TTC is making steady progress in making the TTC accessible, with initiatives underway on streetcar and rapid transit modes;
- TTC's plans call for retrofitting every transit station in the system with elevators and accessibility features. This is a unique program in the transit industry, world-wide, as no other major transit property that we are aware of is retrofitting older stations in a comprehensive way. Forty per cent of TTC's stations have been retrofitted to date, however, due to funding constraints, the program will not be completed until 2025;
- Provincial regulations under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities, 2005* (AODA) have been enacted which apply to the TTC and other public sector agencies. Staff continue to monitor progress of the *Accessibility Standard for the Built Environment*, which is the final standard being developed under the AODA. The TTC is in compliance with most of the clauses in the regulations enacted to date, however the full implications for the TTC of a number of the standards remain unclear. As more information is obtained, staff will report to the Commission on the requirements contained in the standards, along with the associated funding implications.

- the Commission has requested that the Province take the lead on implementation of elements of the standards rather than down-loading the responsibility and costs onto service providers; and
- the Province has not made a commitment to fund the costs of complying with the AODA regulations. Additional, unfunded costs resulting from the Provincial requirements may result in increased TTC subsidy requirements from the City, service reductions, and/or fare increases.

FUNDING

The recommendations of this report have no effect on the TTC's operating or capital budgets. Recently-approved regulations under the AODA will increase TTC costs, but these have yet to be determined and will be reported on separately.

BACKGROUND

The TTC is making continuous progress towards its goal of making all of its services and facilities accessible, consistent with the Provincial mandate of an accessible province by 2025. The TTC has reported annually on plans for accessibility improvements since 2004. This report provides an update on current TTC activities to make its system accessible.

DISCUSSION

The status of programs and initiatives at the TTC to make its services and facilities accessible to everyone is described in more detail in Appendix 1 entitled, *TTC Accessible Transit Services Plan – 2011 Status Report*. To date, the major TTC accessibility initiatives include:

- development of extensive to-the-door service operated by TTC's Wheel-Trans division;
- purchase and deployment of lift-equipped and low-floor conventional transit buses, which has resulted in all TTC bus routes being operated entirely with accessible buses;
- placement of an order to replace existing non-accessible streetcars with new low-floor light-rail vehicles (LRV's);
- the retrofit/construction of 30 subway stations with elevators and other accessibility features to make stations accessible to serve both ambulatory and non-ambulatory disabled people, and to facilitate integration between Wheel-Trans specialized services and the TTC's conventional route system; and

- designing all stations on the extension of the University-Spadina Subway to be accessible.

In 2011, the TTC undertook the following specific activities to improve and expand its accessible transit services:

- the replacement of the last of the non-accessible conventional transit buses with modern low-floor, ramped buses;
- finalizing the accessibility design features for the new LRV vehicles being purchased to replace the current fleet of non-accessible streetcars;
- completing accessibility improvements for Victoria Park Station, including the installation of three elevators, accessible doors, accessible fare equipment, and other changes;
- proceeding with designs to retrofit existing stations and proposed new stations on the University-Spadina subway extension and the Eglinton Crosstown RT lines with elevators and other accessibility features; and,
- hosting a successful public meeting specifically regarding accessibility issues on the TTC with the assistance of the Commission's Advisory Committee on Accessible Transit;

Some, or all, of these programs, budgets, and schedules to improve system accessibility may be affected by the recently-enacted Provincial *Integrated Accessibility Regulation* (IAR), as discussed below.

Regulations to Implement the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005)

The objective of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) is to have all public facilities and services in Ontario accessible by 2025. The Province of Ontario has developed regulations to achieve this goal, a number of which affect the TTC's priorities and operating expenses.

The regulation under the AODA pertaining to customer service came into effect in 2010. In July 2011, the Province enacted the Integrated Accessibility Regulation (IAR) providing standards for accessible transportation, employment, and information and communications. The TTC is already in compliance with many of the IAR regulations and is taking actions to ensure future and ongoing compliance, as required.

As noted in previous reports to the Commission, the TTC has asked the Province to assist service providers with the implementation of the regulations, in particular with respect to the creation of a formal Provincial designation of "support persons" who are exempt from paying a transit fare under the regulation.

A regulation for built environment accessibility is under development and potentially could require major changes to TTC and City of Toronto transit facilities, including stations, terminals, and stops. The aim of the built environment accessibility standard is to help remove barriers in buildings and outdoor spaces for people with disabilities; however, it will only apply to new construction and extensive renovation. While TTC staff have been participating in the development of the Built Environment Standard since 2007, the mass transit elements of the standard have not been developed.

Status of Funding for Accessibility Initiatives

Pressures on the TTC's long-term capital budget have already resulted in deferring completion of the station retrofit program from 2020 to 2025. The Province has not responded favourably to any of the TTC's requests to provide funding to accelerate the program. Similarly, the Province has not agreed to fund any of the changes imposed through the accessibility regulations. If funding is not forthcoming to allow the TTC to meet the Provincial accessibility regulations, especially costs associated with altering services, vehicles and stations, these costs may result in reductions in service and/or increasing the need to raise fares. The Commission has formally documented these concerns to the Province.

SUMMARY

The TTC's many and varied accessibility objectives could be met more-quickly with additional funding from the Province. The TTC's accessibility initiatives, including budgets and schedules, are affected by Provincial regulations on accessibility. The Province has not made a commitment to fund the cost of changes which will result from the regulations.

The TTC remains committed to making its services accessible in order to better meet the needs of people with disabilities, seniors, and other travelers. The TTC has a systematic program in place to ensure that this is accomplished in as cost-effective and timely a way as possible.

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Attachment: Appendix 1: TTC Accessible Transit Services Plan -- 2011 Status Report

Appendix 1

TTC Accessible Transit Services Plan - 2011 Status Report

Publicly-funded transportation for people with disabilities has been provided in Toronto since 1975, when a pilot project provided service for a small number of non-ambulatory people making a limited number of trips. Since that time, TTC services that accommodate ambulatory and non-ambulatory disabled people, on both specialized and conventional services, have grown tremendously.

Virtually all TTC customers benefit from the accessibility features being implemented on conventional services, including accessible low-floor vehicles, elevators, escalators, automatic accessible doors, and improved customer information systems. However, for many seniors, and others who have limited agility, strength, and balance, these features are essential. Therefore, while planning for improved accessibility naturally focuses on overcoming impediments to travel by people with disabilities and seniors, all TTC customers will be better off with improved system accessibility.

In 1989, the *Choices for the Future* study concluded that the demand for transit trips by disabled people in Toronto could be met through the integration of the TTC's specialized Wheel-Trans service and with 20 'key' accessible subway stations. The TTC's Easier Access program was initiated to address the accessibility of these key stations with the objective of providing people with mobility difficulties with an alternative to travel solely on the specialized service. This reduces the segregation of people with disabilities and provides the potential for spontaneous travel without pre-booking trips on the TTC's specialized Wheel-Trans service.

Over the years, the program to make stations accessible was expanded to include eventually retrofitting all existing subway stations with elevators and accessibility features and requiring all new rapid transit and LRT stations to be accessible. In addition, a number of years before the Provincial accessible transportation standard was in place, the Commission directed that all new vehicles acquired by the TTC were to be accessible, and greatly increased the amount of to-the-door service provided to Wheel-Trans registrants.

As a result of the Commission's decisions, thirty existing stations are now accessible, 50% more than was originally envisioned in 1989. In addition, all of the stations on the Sheppard Subway were constructed with elevator access, and all the stations in the Toronto-York Spadina Subway Extension (TYSSE) are being built to TTC accessibility standards.

Accessible Stations and Facilities

Table 1 lists the TTC stations with elevators in operation at year-end 2011.

Table 1: Elevator and Easier Access Installations Completed To Date

LOCATION	NO. OF ELEVATORS	YEAR
Queens Quay Station *	1	1990
Downsview Station	3	1996
Yonge / Bloor Station	5	
St. Clair West Station *	1	
Union Station	3	
Queen Station	2	1997
Spadina Station	3	1999
Kipling Station	2	
St. George Station	2	
Finch Station	4	
Kennedy Station	3	
Bathurst Station	2	
Scarborough City Centre Station	2	
Queen's Park Station	2	2002
Davisville Station	4	
Sheppard Station	7	
Bayview Station	4	
Bessarion Station	2	
Leslie Station	2	
Don Mills Station	5	
Dundas West Station	2	
Dundas Station	1	
Eglinton Station	1	2004
Main Street Station	2	2005
Eglinton West Station	2	
Broadview Station	2	2006
Jane Station	3	
Osgoode Station	1	
York Mills Station	2	2007
St. Clair Station	2	2009
North York Centre Station	2	
Victoria Park Station	3	2011

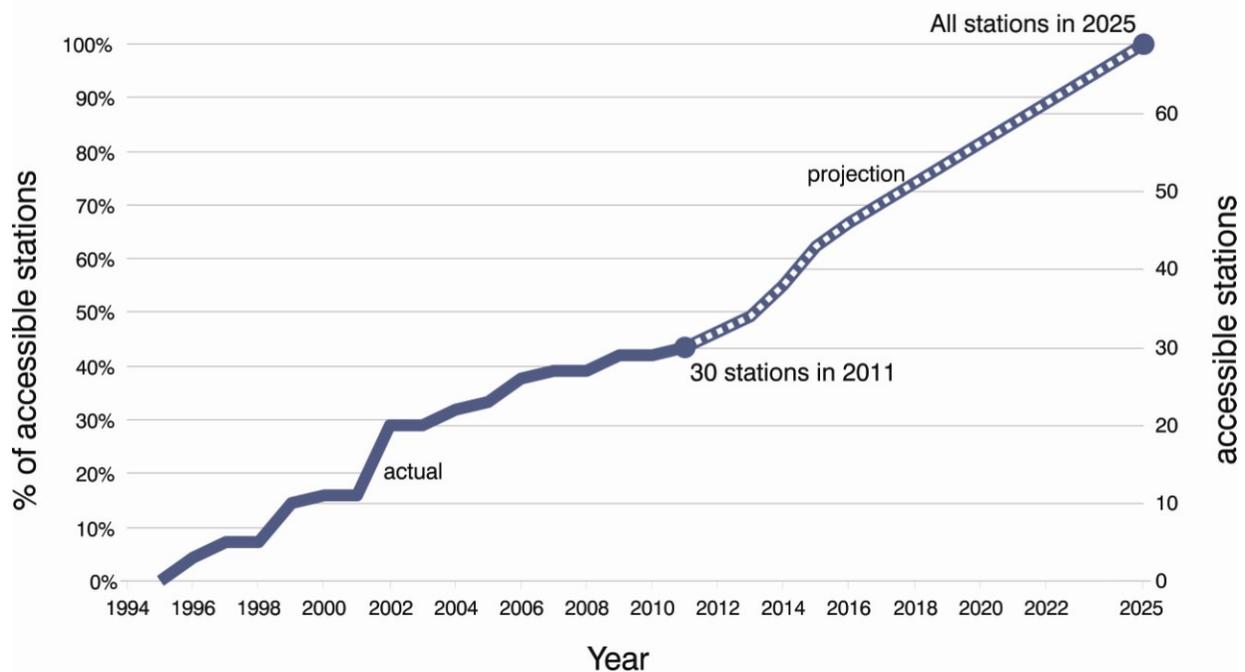
*Elevator only

Bus-platform level accessibility features have also been implemented on an accelerated basis at the following ten additional subway stations: High Park, Old Mill, Runnymede, Keele, Rosedale, Castle Frank, Wellesley, Lawrence East, Greenwood, and Donlands. These improvements, which allow for accessible bus-to-bus and bus-to-street transfers, complement the system-wide introduction of accessible buses. This means that transfers between accessible bus routes within these subway stations, and fare gates and doors to the street, are accessible in advance of the installation of elevators and the other features involved in the complete retrofit program. All of the new accessibility features at these stations were completed in 2009 and 2010.

As illustrated in Exhibit 1, the long-term commitment to equip all existing stations in the system with elevators and easier-access features is proceeding on a schedule to have all of the stations complete by 2025. Station development priorities were developed in consultation with the Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation (ACAT).

Exhibit 1 Accessible Subway & RT Stations

1994-2011, projected to 2025



TTC SP 22-01-2009 DRG. No. 11988a

Table 2 lists the stations which are currently planned for elevator installation over the next five years. Previous plans called for all stations to be accessible by the end of 2020. However, recent budget constraints have resulted in the completion target now being pushed back to 2025. Subway and light rail system expansions, including those which

Table 2: Planned Installations: Elevators and Easier Access Features

LOCATION	PLANNED IN-SERVICE DATE
St. Andrew Station	2012
Pape Station	
Dufferin Station	2013
Lawrence West Station	
Ossington Station	2014
St. Clair West Station	
Wilson Station	
Coxwell Station	
King Station	2015
Woodbine Station	
Royal York Station	
Runnymede Station	
Yorkdale Station	2016
Donlands Station	
Bay Station	
St. Patrick Station	

extend beyond the boundaries of the City of Toronto, such as the University-Spadina subway extension from Downsview Station into York Region, will also have stations built to TTC accessibility standards.

Toronto Rocket Subway Cars

All TTC subway and Scarborough Rapid Transit cars are accessible to ambulatory and non-ambulatory customers. However, the newer vehicles are better equipped and more-readily meet the needs of customers with disabilities.

In July 2011, the first of the six-car Toronto Rocket subway train sets was put into revenue service. The accessibility features for these state-of-the-art subway cars include eight double-sliding side doors for entry and exit by people with mobility devices and others, end door/emergency detrainment ramp at each end of the train, a wheelchair accessible interior layout, digital and audio communications systems along with video surveillance, multiple video screens and electronic trip maps, a passenger assistance intercom system and passenger assistance alarm strips. At the end of 2011, there were

eleven Toronto Rocket train sets with a total of 66 cars in operation on the Yonge-University-Spadina subway line. The initial response to the trains by the public, including the TTC’s customers with disabilities who use the subway system, has been overwhelmingly positive.

Accessible Conventional Bus Services

The TTC reached an important milestone in achieving system accessibility in 2011 as all buses in the TTC fleet are now accessible. This is the culmination of a 15-year process of purchasing accessible buses to replace older vehicles in the fleet. The first accessible conventional bus route was in place in 1996 -- the same year the first accessible station was opened. As illustrated in Exhibit 2 below, as of December, 2011, 100% of the TTC’s conventional bus fleet was accessible. At year-end, the TTC operated 1,798 accessible conventional buses. In addition, all of the buses used by Wheel-Trans, which are used for to-the-door and Community Bus services, are accessible.

**Exhibit 2:
Accessible Conventional Buses**

1994 - 2011

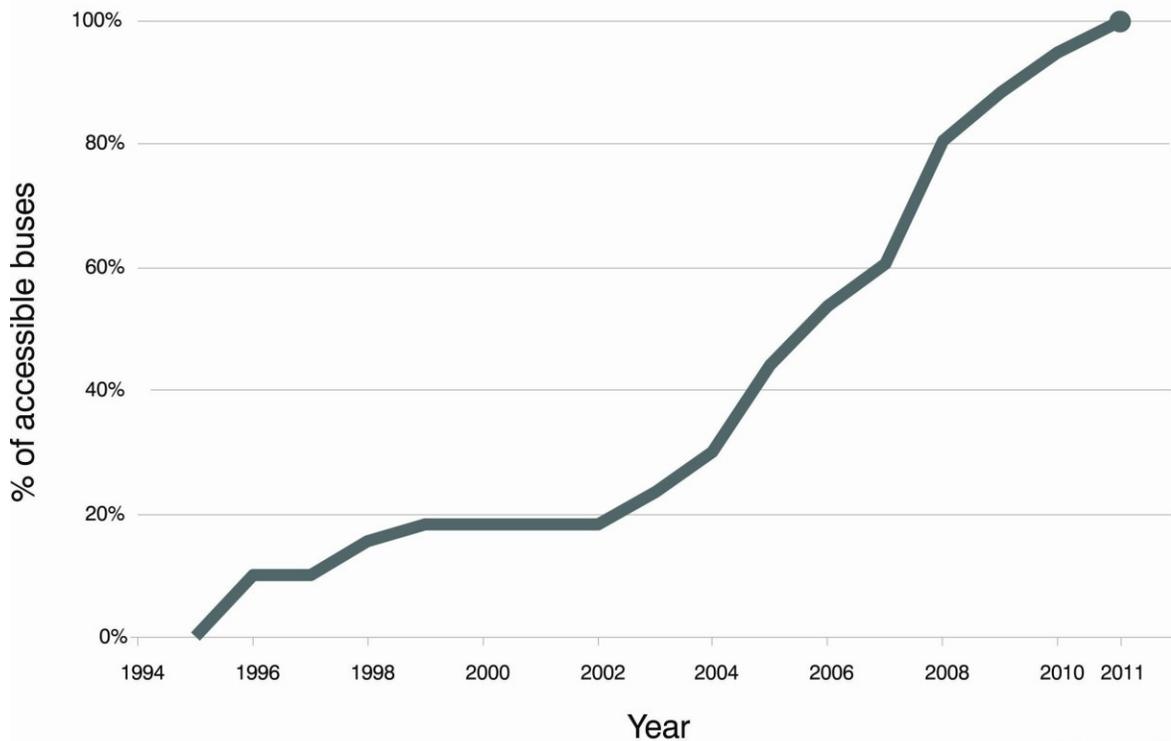
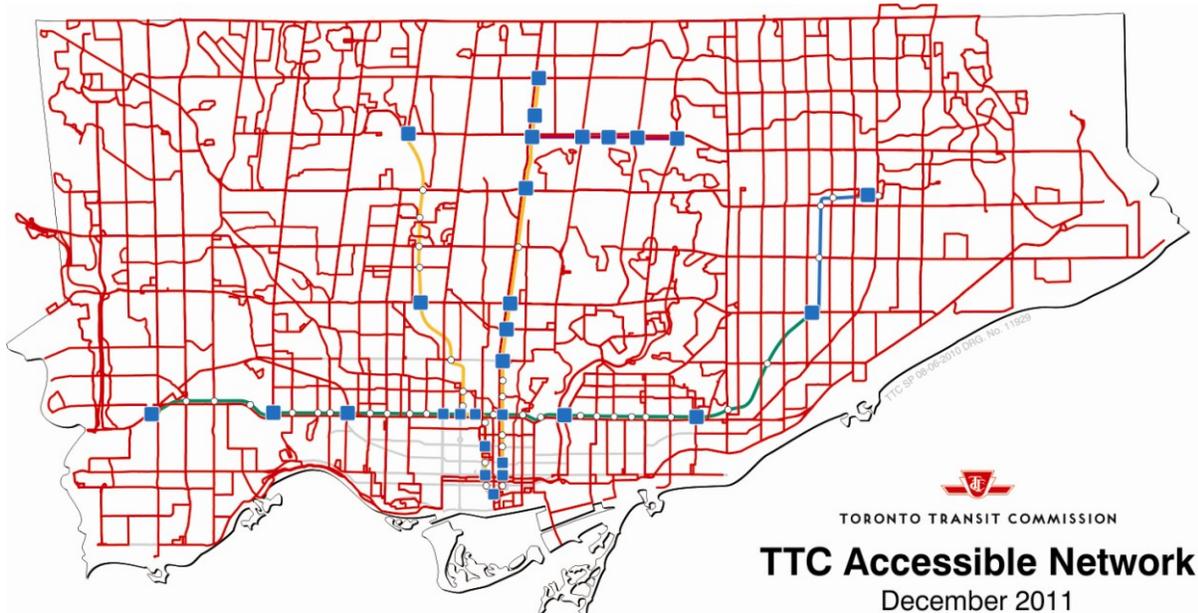


Exhibit 3 illustrates that accessible transit service is now being provided throughout most of the City. The elements which are still inaccessible are the streetcar network and approximately half of the TTC's subway stations.

Exhibit 3



Accessible Conventional Streetcar Services

The placing of an order for 204 low-floor streetcars in June 2009, to replace the TTC's aging fleet of inaccessible streetcars, was a major step forward for the TTC in making all of its services accessible. The current non-accessible streetcar fleet will be replaced with modern, accessible low-floor streetcars starting in 2014, with complete replacement scheduled for 2019. These vehicles will provide accessible service on the entire streetcar network.

In conjunction with the introduction of the new streetcars, improvements are being planned for existing streetcar platforms and many on-street stops in the streetcar network to improve accessibility to the new low-floor streetcars fleet. Engineering and design work is underway to move this initiative forward.

Wheel-Trans Services

In 2011, the TTC's Wheel-Trans operation provided to-the-door service for 40,000 active registrants who have restricted physical functional mobility. To provide quality service to these and future registrants, 110 new low-floor specialized buses have been received in the past 3 years, and another 91 will be delivered in 2012. Ridership in 2011, on the TTC's Wheel-Trans services, was 2.8 million trips which is 4 percent more than the number of passengers carried in 2010.

Improving the accessibility of conventional services will allow a larger percentage of current and future Wheel-Trans registrants to make more use of the conventional system and to benefit from spontaneous trip-making and more-flexible travel options. The integration of the TTC's conventional and to-the-door services will make it more-practical for some Wheel-Trans registrants to travel on the conventional system. While improving the accessibility of conventional services will never eliminate the need for all to-the-door services, the improvements to conventional services will permit a large percentage of people with disabilities to travel on accessible conventional services.

The increased use of accessible conventional services will also have a financial benefit, because it will moderate the increasing demand for to-the-door service, which is expensive on a cost-per-trip basis. It also provides the opportunity to improve the efficiency of Wheel-Trans services through better integration with conventional services.

Accessibility of Rapid Transit Expansion Projects

Work progressed in 2011 on the 6.2-kilometre extension of the University-Spadina subway line to York University and Vaughan Centre, with opening day for the line planned for late 2015. The extension will go from Downsview Station, which is already accessible, northerly to Vaughan Centre in York Region.

There will be six new accessible stations added to the subway system when the project is completed. They are Sheppard West Station, Finch West Station, York University Station, Steeles West Station, Highway 407 Station and Vaughan Centre Station. Construction contracts for five of the stations have now been awarded; the York University Station is being tendered. All the stations will be constructed to TTC accessibility standards with elevators, escalators, accessible doors, accessible fare lines, visual and audible messaging systems, tactile paths and platform edge tiles, high levels of lighting, etc. The new commuter parking lots will have spaces reserved for private vehicles used by people with disabilities. The designs for the stations are being reviewed by ACAT at critical points in the process to ensure that the designs will provide a high quality of accessibility.

A similar process is being established for the design of stations on the Eglinton-Crosstown Rapid Transit line. The TTC is coordinating the design of the 26 stations on the line for Metrolinx, and the stations are being designed to TTC standards for accessibility. Design contracts were awarded for five stations in 2011, and detailed designs for the remaining 21 stations are expected to begin in 2012.

All of these new accessible stations will provide further opportunities for the integration of accessible conventional and specialized services in Toronto and from other jurisdictions which use the stations and facilities.

Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation (ACAT)

There are many types of mobility difficulties experienced by individual TTC passengers, and it is a complex task to accommodate all of these needs. The TTC has established an

ongoing process for consulting with, and tapping into the expertise of, people with disabilities and to enlist their support in the search for solutions that work for everyone. The time and commitment made by members of the TTC's Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation (ACAT) has been, and will continue to be, invaluable in implementing the TTC's accessibility plans.

Public Forum

In addition to the work with ACAT and its various subcommittees, the TTC also uses a number of other methods to provide information and obtain input from the public on accessibility issues. In May 2011, the TTC held its fourth annual public forum to discuss TTC accessible conventional and specialized services, vehicles and facilities. This event, which is popular with TTC's customers with disabilities, provides an opportunity for TTC senior staff and ACAT representatives to hear directly from customers about their complaints and commendations, requests for change, and accessibility priorities. TTC's management and ACAT take the comments from customers into consideration when subsequently assessing the services they are responsible for and in the development and defense of plans and budgets. Table 3, '*Public Forum – Summary of Responses in 2011*' provides a summary classification of the comments received. This was developed through an assessment of all of the individual comments by a subcommittee of ACAT.

Table 3: Public Forum - Summary of Responses in 2011

Category	Number of comments	% of all comments
Specialized (Wheel-Trans) Service:		
• Reservations/Appointment Bookings	117	27%
• Marketing/Customer Service	44	10%
• Level of/Extensions of Service	37	8%
• Service Reliability	21	5%
• Vehicles (Buses/Taxis/ Minivans)	16	4%
Subtotal	235	54%
Conventional Service:		
• Marketing/Customer Service	32	7%
• Level of/Extensions of Service	10	2%
• Stations/Terminals/Stops	50	12%
• Access (Elevators/Escalators/Lifts)	11	3%
• Vehicles (Buses/Streetcars/Subway)	32	7%
Subtotal	135	31%
Other (policy issues, fare issues, etc.)	38	9%
Conduct of the Forums	27	6%
Total	435	100%

Funding for Accessible Services

The rate at which the TTC's conventional services can be made accessible is highly dependent on the level of funding provided for accessibility initiatives. The TTC's Capital Program includes two major projects that will significantly improve accessibility on the system: the replacement of streetcars with low-floor accessible LRV's and the continuing construction of elevators in stations. In 2010 and 2011, pressures on the TTC's long-term capital budget resulted in the program for the retrofitting of stations having to be pushed back by five years, so the completion target for the program is now the end of 2025 rather than 2020.

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)

The Province of Ontario has enacted AODA regulations establishing accessibility standards for customer service, transportation, information and communications, and employment. Standards related to the built environment are under development. These standards apply community-wide, and they will directly affect the TTC delivery of accessible services including the timing and priority of implementation of TTC initiatives and operating costs.

The TTC has asked that the Province take the lead on implementing elements of the standards rather than down-loading the responsibility and costs onto service providers. In particular, the TTC has asked that the Province put in place a provincial designation process related to support persons to make it feasible to implement the requirements of the regulations related to support persons in a practical, effective, and consistent way.

The Ministry of Community and Social Services has also, repeatedly, been made aware of the potential cost of implementing the regulations and that these cost may result in reduced transit service and increasing the need to increase fares. However, to date, the Province has not responded positively to the TTC's request regarding leadership or funding related to the implementation of the standards being imposed.

The Canadian Urban Transit Association and the Ontario Public Transit Association, in consultation with the TTC and other service providers in Ontario, are undertaking assessments of a number of the requirements of the IAR in order to achieve uniform approaches and minimize inconsistent implementation of accessible transportation standards for people with disabilities. The results of these exercises, and the resulting implications for the TTC will be reported in future updates and accessibility plans.

Summary

The TTC will continue to make the best possible use of new accessibility resources as they come on-stream by implementing accessibility improvements on conventional services and integrating services for Wheel-Trans registrants. Encouraging greater use of accessible conventional services by people with mobility difficulties will be a prime objective of the TTC in the coming years.