



Advisory Committee on Accessible Transit

June 24, 2021

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 28, 2021 to the July 7, 2021 Board Meeting for information (attached).

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Igor Samardzic
2021 ACAT Chair

Attachment

TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION

COMMITTEE MINUTES

Minutes of Meeting: Advisory Committee on Accessible Transit
Meeting No. 366

Meeting Date: Friday, May 28, 2021
1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Location: Virtual meeting via Webex

Present: Igor Samardzic, Chair
Debbie Gillespie, Co-Vice Chair
Chris Stigas, Co-Vice Chair
Margo Brodie
Gwyneth Dalzell
Sean Hollingsworth
Angela Marley
Jonathan Marriott
Craig Nicol
James Pyo
Kim Pearson
Sam Savona
Janice Shachter
Mahendan Sivabalasundaram
Lauri Sue Robertson

Pool Members: Howard Wax
Kim Pearson

Absent: Rhonda Cheryl Solomon

Regrets: John Rae

TTC Representatives: Jim Ross, Chief Operating Officer
Stephan Boston, Chief Instructor, Training Department

Claudio Caschera, Head of Subway Transportation
Dwayne Geddes, Head of Wheel-Trans
John Boucher, Manager – Lakeshore Garage, Wheel-Trans
Heather Brown, Manager of Customer Communications
Loris Dametto, Program Manager – Bus & Wheel-Trans
Procurement, Vehicle Programs
David Lo Presti, Manager – Contracted Taxi Services,
Wheel-Trans
Dean Milton, Manager – Strategic Initiatives, Wheel-Trans
Cameron Penman, Manager of Customer Service, Wheel-
Trans
Charlene Sharpe, Divisional Manager, Wheel-Trans
Lodon Hassan, Assistant Manager – Customer Service,
Wheel-Trans
Mohammed Shaikh, Assistant Manager, Wheel-Trans
Operations
Matt Agosta, Project Coordinator, Bus Procurement, Vehicle
Programs
Matt Hagg, Senior Planner – System Accessibility
Eunice Kays, Anti-Racism Policy Consultant, Diversity
Courtney Laidlaw, Human Rights Consultant, Human Rights
Investigations
Brittany Manu, Anti-Racism Policy Consultant, Diversity
Hanh Nguyen, Administrative Assistant, Wheel Trans
Lema Salaymeh, Senior Community Liaison Officer,
Wheel Trans
David Skwira, Employee Relations Consultant, Human
Resources
Bahar Tajrobehkar, Diversity Consultant, Diversity

Invited Guests:

Brad Bradford, Councillor, TTC Board
Joanne De Laurentiis, Vice-Chair, TTC Board

Items Discussed

1. Call to Order / Attendance
2. Land Acknowledgement
3. Declaration of Conflict of Interest
4. Approval of Agenda
5. Minute of Silence in Honour of Cam Woodburne
6. Remarks from ACAT Chair
 - a. TTC Board Meeting and Accessibility Matters
 - b. ACAT Executive Quarterly Meeting with TTC CEO and TTC Chair: Nil (No meeting held)
7. Review and Approval of April 29, 2021 Minutes
8. Outstanding Items
9. Deputation: Nil
10. Review of Correspondence: Nil
11. Subway Guard
12. GTHA AAC Potential Agenda Items
13. Wheel-Trans Call Buttons
14. COVID-19 Updates: Nil
15. Wheel-Trans Transformation Updates
16. Subcommittee Reports, Highlights and Updates
 - Communications
 - Design Review
 - Service Planning
 - Wheel-Trans Operations
17. Other / New Business
18. Next Meeting – June 24, 2021
19. Adjournment

1. Call to Order / Attendance

ACAT Chair Igor Samardzic called the meeting to order at 1:09 p.m. and attendance was taken.

2. Land Acknowledgement

Read by ACAT Chair Igor Samardzic.

3. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Nil.

4. Approval of Agenda

On a motion by Angela Marley, seconded by Debbie Gillespie, the agenda was approved as amended to include a minute of silence in honour of Cam Woodburne.

5. Minute of Silence in Honour of Cam Woodburne

A minute of silence was held in honour of Subway Operator Cam Woodburne. He was an employee almost 21 years of service with the TTC. He succumbed to COVID-19 on May 26, 2021 after a 4-week battle with the virus. His co-workers at Wilson Subway Division and all members of the TTC family mourn his passing.

6. Remarks from ACAT Chair

ACAT Chair Igor Samardzic advised members this meeting would not be video or audio recorded. TTC staff are reviewing the previous meeting's recording to determine next steps to make the meetings accessible to the public. The captioning link for this meeting is on the TTC website for the public to read in real time.

ACAT Chair reminded all presenters to state their names and be mindful when presenting slide decks to describe the slides as they appear, especially when there are visuals and images to avoid motioning or vague references that may be difficult for members with visual impairments to understand.

a. TTC Board Meeting and Accessibility Matters

ACAT Chair reported the TTC Board met on May 12, 2021 with discussions on the 2021 Accessibility Plan Status Update. This report describes the TTC's progress towards achieving the objectives of the *2019-2023 TTC Multi-Year Accessibility Plan*. The *Accessibility Plan* identified 47 specific objectives to improve the accessibility of TTC services and facilities by 2023. 45 percent of these objectives have been completed to date with another five planned by year-end 2021 which includes, Easier Access on three additional subway stations, Platform Edge Tile Upgrades at up to 11

additional subway platforms and launching the new Wheel-Trans mobile app. By year-end 2021, 55 percent of these specific objectives will be achieved.

ACAT Chair thanked all staff and ACAT for their efforts to create one of the most accessible transit systems. He encouraged members to read the status report that provides a detailed overview of TTC Accessibility projects. Matt Hagg, Senior Planner on System Accessibility confirmed the vast majority of the objectives with few exceptions will meet the target timeline by year-end 2023.

ACAT Chair reported the Infrastructure and Environment Committee met on May 25, 2021 regarding the motion to recommend that Council expand the current mechanical sidewalk winter snow clearing services to areas of the City that currently do not receive this service because of narrow sidewalks and frequent physical obstructions. There was a strong presence and emphasis on seniors and people with disabilities as it relates to areas of the city that get this service and do not. The motion was approved and will go to City Council for consideration on June 8, 2021.

The next TTC Board meeting is June 16, 2021.

b. ACAT Executive Quarterly Meeting with TTC CEO and TTC Chair

ACAT Chair Igor Samardzic advised the next meeting is scheduled for June 8, 2021, and encouraged members to send in topics for discussion to the ACAT Executive. Some agenda items that will be discussed include TTC relationship with Metrolinx, strengthening collaboration with them, the new TTC website, One Person Train Operation (OPTO), Wheel-Trans and Highway Traffic Act and how to improve Wheel-Trans vehicles and signage.

7. Review and Approval of April 29, 2021 Minutes

On a motion by Debbie Gillespie, seconded by Lauri Sue Robertson, April 29, 2021 Minutes were approved with no amendments.

8. Outstanding Items

- Item: ACAT Terms of Reference – Ongoing.
The ACAT Terms of Reference are under review with TTC staff. Once all edits have been compiled, the Terms of Reference will be sent out to ACAT Executives and ACAT members for discussion and approval.
- Item: GTHA Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) Joint Meeting – meeting is scheduled for June 18, 2021 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. via Zoom.

9. Deputation

Nil.

10. Review of Correspondence

Nil.

11. Subway Guard

ACAT Chair Igor Samardzic provided background to this item. ACAT members expressed concerns that One Person Train Operation (OPTO) would create significant hardships for persons with disabilities, seniors and community members.

Members are considering two motions to put forth on this item.

- a. ACAT's strong opposition to eliminating subway guards as they believe they are critical.
- b. A path forward with respect to the above issue with specific directives, that include that the TTC Board delay any further implementation of one person train operation until a full presentation can be given to ACAT on the effects of OPTO specifically on people with visible and invisible disabilities, seniors and community members and analysis is taken to determine the effect of such a change on people in these categories, and potential solutions are identified with consultation from ACAT.

Member objected to the cancellation of the guards in the middle of the subway trains because they make the experience of riding on the subways feel much safer. For instance, when a customer has their wheel chair stuck in the space between the car and the platform, between the doors of the subway train when they start to shut, or when a service animal's tail is caught, it is comforting, important and essential that an employee is nearby who can help. Customers cannot rely on the kindness of strangers to assist and having the guards there grossly reduces the fear of riding the subway. To expect the operator to go up and down the subway, to ensure the safety of such customers seems onerous. Further analysis is suggested.

Jim Ross, Chief Operating Officer, presented TTC's planned implementation of One Person Train Operation (OPTO). It is a modernizing step that allows the operator to perform both the duties that were traditionally performed by the operator and the train guard. Technology has advanced to the point where one crew member can safely drive the train and operate the doors. TTC is among a very small minority of transit systems that still has train guards. Historically, the Line 3 (Scarborough) has been OPTO since its inception in 1985. In 2013, the TTC Five Year Corporate Plan identified the implementation of OPTO as a program that was presented to ACAT committee and approved by the TTC Board. The OPTO program included timelines for its implementation on Line 1, Line 2 and Line 4. In October of 2016, OPTO was successfully implemented on Line 4 and has operated safely without incident for the last five years.

OPTO works by the operators performing both duties as driver and guard. They monitor the platform via a screen installed in their cab that has four camera views that cover the entire length of the subway platform. This provides a better view than the guard could have as the guard is at platform level and can only see as far as their view is unobstructed by other customers. The cameras are mounted on the ceiling, providing a top-down view of the platform, thereby making it easier for the operator to safely operate the doors. On Line 4, three cameras are used due to shorter trains and smaller platforms.

OPTO is complemented by the implementation of Automatic Train Control (ATC). This feature will allow for the train operator to press the Automatic Train Operation (ATO) start button, which will enable the train to drive itself safely to the next station, dock perfectly at the platform and the doors will open automatically. Normally at this point the guard on the train presses a button to close the doors. Instead of two employees that each press one button, it will be one employee to push two buttons. All other operating duties remain the same. The operator will be equipped with a portable radio in the event of an emergency alarm, the operator will attend and he has constant two-way communication with the control centre.

In September 2015, an overview of the OPTO plans for Line 4 were presented to this committee for full migration. The TTC also engaged with the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) and had experts review the program, the TTC's focus on safe operations, and its plan to implement OPTO. These experts included Greg Hull, Director of Security and Operations Support in APTA, Ronald Esther, Vice President of Rail Operations of Chicago's Transit Authority, Todd Johnson, Deputy Chief Operating Officer in Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, and Vijay Khawani, Chief Safety Officer in Los Angeles Metro. Mr. Esther, Mr. Johnson, and Mr. Khawani all had first-hand experience with OPTO, as their agencies employ OPTO for their rail operations. The TTC also presented its plan to the Ontario Ministry of Labour staff responsible for its workplace safety program. The peer review report was extremely favourable, and the TTC implemented a number of generally minor recommendations that flowed from the report. A media day was also organized for observation of OPTO on the Sheppard Line 4.

Claudio Caschera, Head of Subway Transportation discussed the implementation plan. As of August 21, 2021, OPTO will run on Line 1 from VMC Station to St. George station, Sundays only. A two person crew will take over from St. George Station to Finch Station. On November 21, 2021, OPTO will run seven days a week in those same stations. OPTO will be in full operation from VMC Station to Finch Station in late 2022 or early 2023. Line 2 conversion to OPTO is likely dependent on the purchase of a new fleet and ATC implementation, which is in discussion.

OPTO allows for opportunity to increase station staffing levels to assist customers. Operators are trained to provide assistance including train evacuation and assisting customers with mobility devices.

Jim Ross reached out to Imperial College for benchmarking that are specific to the accessibility community with respect to OPTO. Imperial College is based in London, where London Underground began their conversion to OPTO in 1985, and they administer international benchmarking program called COMET (Community of Metros) which many major transit providers in the world are members of including Paris, Moscow, Hong Kong, Tokyo, New York, and so on. Chicago Transit Authority have a similar ACAT committee called CAAT.

Questions and Comments from the Committee

Members inquired on the number of incidents where wheels were caught or any accessibility incidents on Line 4 and SRT. Members raised concerns of operators assisting customers when the wheel of their mobility device are stuck in the gap.

Staff advised Line 4 being relative new aside from TYSSE have much more uniformed platform gaps than in other older areas of the subway system. Furthermore, there is a platform gap mitigation program in place to avoid having incidents where customers' mobility device and the wheels are stuck in the gap between the platform and subway car. With the exact consistent stopping of trains in ATC, stopping locations can be adjusted thereby avoiding areas of the platform with wider gap issues. Staff will search for incident data and report back at the Service Planning Subcommittee.

Members suggested gap analysis to support the prioritization of gap remediation in platforms at detrimental stations, Wilson and Davisville Stations, prior to full roll out of OPTO.

Member asked if TTC have reached out to other cities that have organizations which represent persons with disabilities and have they been consulted when implementing OPTO. Member inquired on the recommendations and the status of implementing the recommendations.

Staff advised ACAT was the committee that was consulted in 2015. The recommendations and status of implementation of those recommendations will be looked up and reported back. Staff confirmed that cities with similar accessible needs and accessibility committees or advocates for those organizations, Chicago and Boston, are being sought for further information and discussion.

Member expressed concerns on having the subway guard removed places additional responsibilities on the operator. The operator is distracted with the burden of communicating with Transit Control, operation of the train and watching out for all passengers.

Staff advised with the addition of ATC, this technology has taken away significant amount of duties from the operator. The priority is always the safety of the customers that are on the platform and on the train. Secondary to that would be answering any calls from Transit Control. There are no known distraction issues from this. When safe

to do so, operators can engage in customer service. Operators go through safety checks before departing a stop.

Member raised concerns on train door management system, whether it would interlock with the ATO start button as well as several concerns on train operation failures such as camera failure at a specific station or specific train.

Staff advised there is an interlock between doors and the ATO. The train door monitoring system provides view of the platform. When there are obstructions within a door set, the doors on the Toronto Rocket Trains have what is called Sensitive Edge doors and will be unable to close. The train will detect the situation and will not move. All doors must be closed and locked to enable propulsion. The TTC is equipped to handle and deal with various scenarios of concerns including when there are train operation failures, camera failures and more. There are many procedures in place. In the case of full camera failure on the train, an employee will be assigned to the platform to advise the operator when it is safe to depart. That employee essentially acts as the train guard.

Members raised concerns having collectors not present in the station outside of the booth to assist and on the collective responsibility into one individual of fare collection, customer service, policing or management of the system while ensuring safety of customers with accessibility needs.

Staff reported due to COVID-19 pandemic as a safety measure the collectors had resumed the traditional role within the booth, however when it is safe to do so they will be placed back into the stations. The role of Customer Service Ambassadors will not involve fare collection, policing or management of the system. The role is exclusively customer service that includes customer safety when necessary.

Member inquired on the effects of OPTO towards Wheel-Trans and Family of Services (FOS). Member has concerns on reduced door-to-door services, what kind of services and procedures will be placed to support persons with disabilities, and to identify persons with disability as they are being placed onto conventional transit. Member stated this system is not equitable and inclusive.

Staff informed no one is being forced onto FOS. If Wheel-Trans customers are not capable, they are not able to take FOS, they are not able to use the conventional system, and TTC will not ask that customer to use it. The door-to-door service will

remain. The goal is to allow the customers to travel independently, freely and does not need assistance from employees whether that be a guard or operator. If there is a need for assistance than the operator can assist in real time whether that be someone with accessibility needs or any other passenger. The reason for FOS is from feedback of customers who advised they wanted a system that is free and equal. The TTC cares about accessibility needs and that is the reason why ACAT feedback and recommendations are sought.

Member raised concerns on lack of consideration to customers who may have cognitive disabilities, sensory disabilities or seniors.

Staff advised specific training can be provided however, the operators are trained on how to accommodate people using mobility devices and how to accommodate and address issues with persons that identify with a disability. Additional resources are available at the stations to assist. The process a person with cognitive or sensory disability normally follow to board the subway train will remain the same.

Members recommended OPTO concerns and the two motions be discussed further at the Service Planning Subcommittee and will be open to all members to attend.

Member suggested that after the implementation of OPTO, there should be a measurement period where ACAT can review any drastic increased issues or incidents that may arise and have ability to revert to a two-person system.

12. GTHA AAC Potential Agenda Items

Not discussed due to time constraints.

13. Wheel-Trans Call Buttons

ACAT Co-Vice Chair Chris Stigas reported there was an issue surrounding call buttons. Through discussions in the Design Review Subcommittee, members recommended a more accessible button that required less force to press. The suggested button was two and a half inch by one inch that was red on the surface with grey casing mounted on round stanchions. The call buttons were approved by ACAT and by staff and were to be procured and installed on conventional transit on new vehicles moving forward. The issue was when the new procurement of Wheel-Trans 7m ProMaster vehicle came, the buttons would not mount on flat surfaces, specifically the walls or underneath the seats

or bus seats when folded up. Staff came back with a button near identical to the original with the inside orange and outside blue. For consistency, Co-Vice Chair planned to put a motion forward to have the call buttons reviewed and staff revisit for another button procured similar to the approved one by ACAT that will mount on flat surfaces.

Loris Dametto, Manager in Bus and Wheel-Trans Procurement, Vehicle Programs advised one of the action items from March 25, 2021 ACAT General meeting was call buttons. Further investigation has been made on different buttons. One suggestion was to install sensitive tape strips and obtain feedback. Second action item was to develop a decal.

The sensitive tape strip buttons provided positive feedback with the exception for customers with visual impairments. The ACAT recommended button was sourced but manufacturer were unwilling to produce prototype unless with a larger order. Staff took apart existing stock button, ensured the switch and the voltage worked with existing vehicle, and were able to make modifications in order to be mounted flush. Staff will check if the modified buttons can go under the seat, walls, and in any location as needed. Staff is working with vendor to engineer one with drawings. The downside is current modified buttons done in-house would void the warranty.

Decal was reviewed during the Wheel-Trans Operations Subcommittee meeting and placed on the glass of the side doors.

Questions and Comments from the Committee

Member raised concerns whether persons with cognitive disabilities were considered, were the label and the colour consistent across the fleet of services as this is an easy barrier to overcome.

Staff confirmed any work done for decals have gone through Wayfinding team for consistency. For future procurements the call buttons will be the same as the ACAT approved button. In the 7m ProMaster vehicle, the buttons will be blue with the International Symbol of Access logo in the middle.

Member explained as point of information, the blue stop buttons are for the priority seating locations that are in bus operator's panel, they light lit up and the ding is a double ding to advise if there's an accessibility need.

Members commented on the size and location of the decals for the side doors. Member is concern the height will not meet eye level of the cyclist or runner and suggested to increase the size of the decal.

Staff will review and remarked signs are supplemented by flashing lights on the doors.

14. COVID -19 Updates

Nil.

15. Wheel-Trans Transformation Updates

Not discussed due to time constraint.

16. Subcommittee Reports, Highlights and Updates

- Communications
- Design Review
- Service Planning
- Wheel-Trans Operations

The above items were not discussed due to time constraint. The subcommittee reports were deferred to June ACAT General meeting.

17. Other / New Business

Member stated that Wheel-Trans link to the Customer Satisfaction Survey is not accessible for persons using screen readers. The buttons are not labelled and the check boxes are invisible. ACAT Co-Vice Chair, Debbie Gillespie suggested staff to advise customers of the new version that will be accessible and to avoid being bombarded as the survey was already widely circulated. In addition, staff should advise ACAT once the issue has been rectified.

Staff advised the Customer Satisfaction Survey was produced by a new vendor and these issues will be brought up and fixed immediately. Staff will send communication out as soon as it is resolved.

18. Next Meeting

The next ACAT General meeting will be held on Thursday, June 24, 2021 from 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. via Webex.

19. Adjournment

On a motion by Angela Marley, the meeting was adjourned at 3:34 p.m.

Boma Enwesi

Recording Secretary