



Toronto Transit Commission Wheel-Trans Service Model Update

Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee

September 5, 2023

TTC Wheel-Trans

- **Our mission**

We support the community by offering barrier-free, accessible service that is efficient, reliable and available.

- **Our vision**

We strive for dignity, spontaneity, fairness and freedom of travel for all customers.

- **Customer base**

- Eligibility requirements expanded from only functional physical disabilities to all disabilities (physical, mental, sensory, cognitive) in accordance with AODA legislative changes.
- Resulted in an increased customer base.



A Wheel-Trans customer

| Purpose of this presentation

The Toronto Transit Commission Board has been requested to present at the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting on September 5, 2023, regarding service planning changes that are being made to the TTC's Wheel-Trans service. **Specifically:**

- The rationale for the changes.
- Equity analysis.
- Consultations held with people with disabilities.
- Status of the re-registration process.
- Mitigation strategies for managing barriers to re-registration.
- Benefits of Family of Services (FOS) for customers and Wheel-Trans service model.



Rationale for the changes

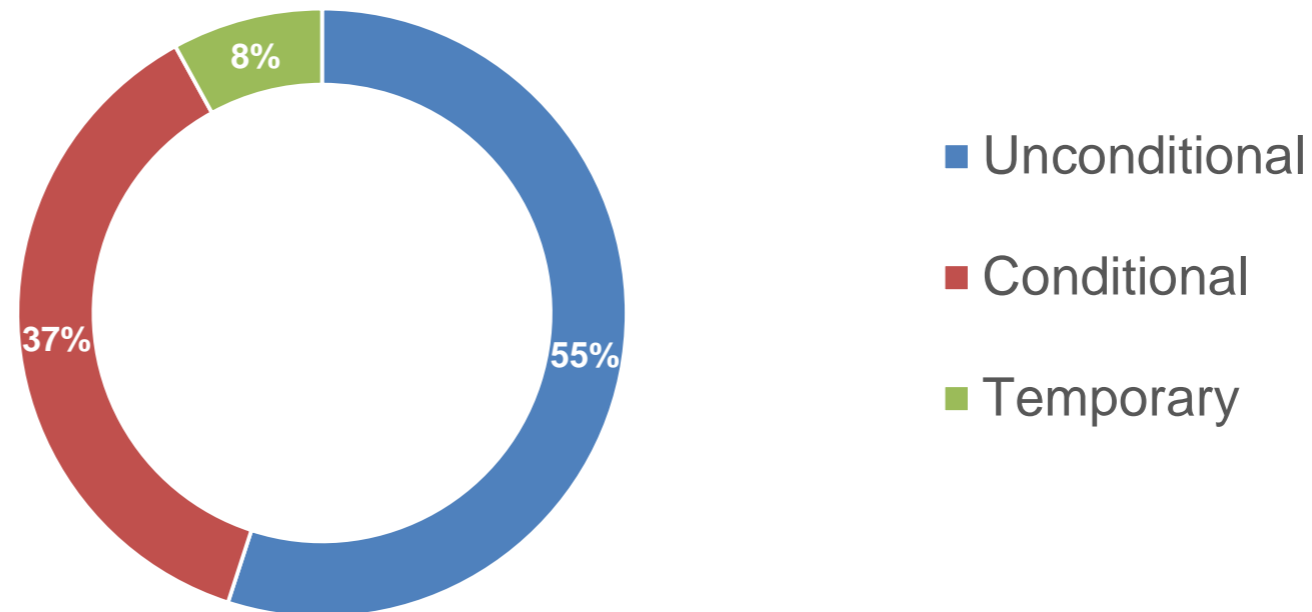
- Wheel-Trans Transformation Program (WTTP) known as the Wheel-Trans 10-Year Strategy was **approved by the TTC Board on November 21, 2016, and by City Council on February 15, 2017.** WTTP facilitates the process and operational changes.
- Changes were required to:
 - Address legislative requirement - *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) 2005 (see Appendix A).
 - Modernize the service delivery model; keeping in line with the GTHA agencies and industry standards.
 - Provide spontaneity and on-demand service.
- **No new service changes for 2023**, re-registration process for Wheel-Trans began in 2017.

Legislative requirement

63. Reg. 191/11: INTEGRATED ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS under [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11](#).

(1) Every specialized transportation service provider shall have **three categories of eligibility** to qualify for specialized transportation services.

Active Wheel-Trans customer eligibility breakdown 2023



Note: Wheel-Trans customers can request and receive door-to-door service, regardless of their eligibility status. FOS remains optional.



| Equity analysis

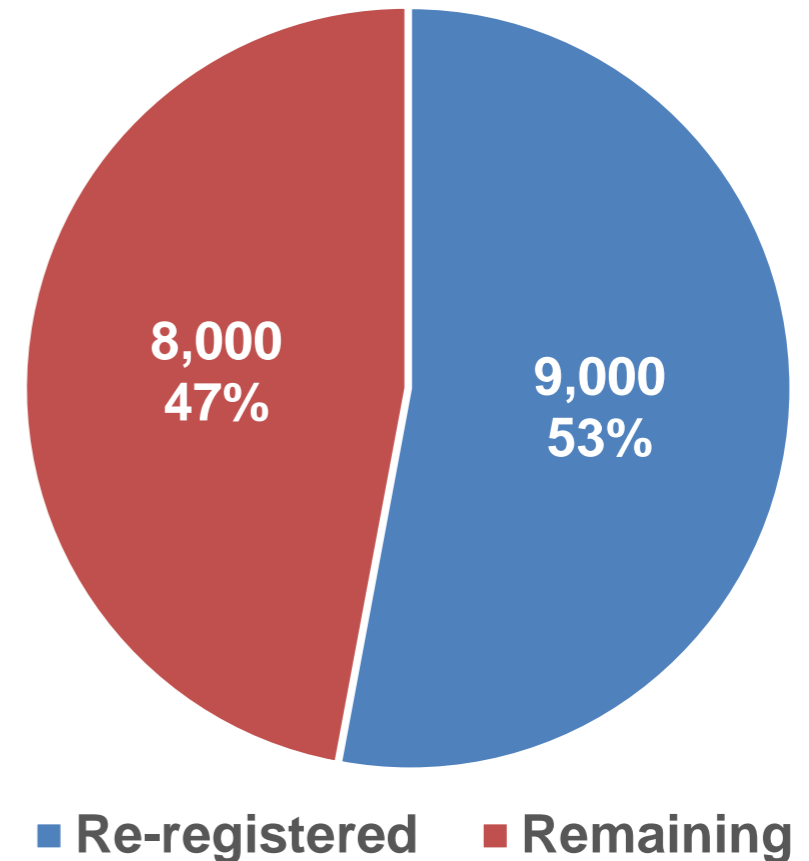
Stakeholder consultations - Since 2016

- The TTC hosted a series of public meetings to inform the public of the changes to the Wheel-Trans service to meet the AODA requirements (Wheel-Trans 10-Year Strategy).
- Reviewed from an equitable standpoint with the City Director of Equity, Diversity and Human Rights.
- The TTC, in accordance with other para-transit organizations, has initiated a standardized FOS approach, and has consulted extensively with (see Appendix C):
 - Wheel-Trans customers and members of the public.
 - City of Toronto's Auditor General.
 - City of Toronto's Director of Equity, Diversity and Human Rights.
 - Community organizations and other stakeholders (i.e. University Health Network, Ontario Human Rights Commission, Local Health Integration Network, Ontario Medical Association).
 - Other para-transit agencies in the GTHA (York Region, Peel Region, Durham Region).
 - TTC's Advisory Committee on Accessible Transit (ACAT). The Committee fully supported the Wheel-Trans 10-Year Strategy.

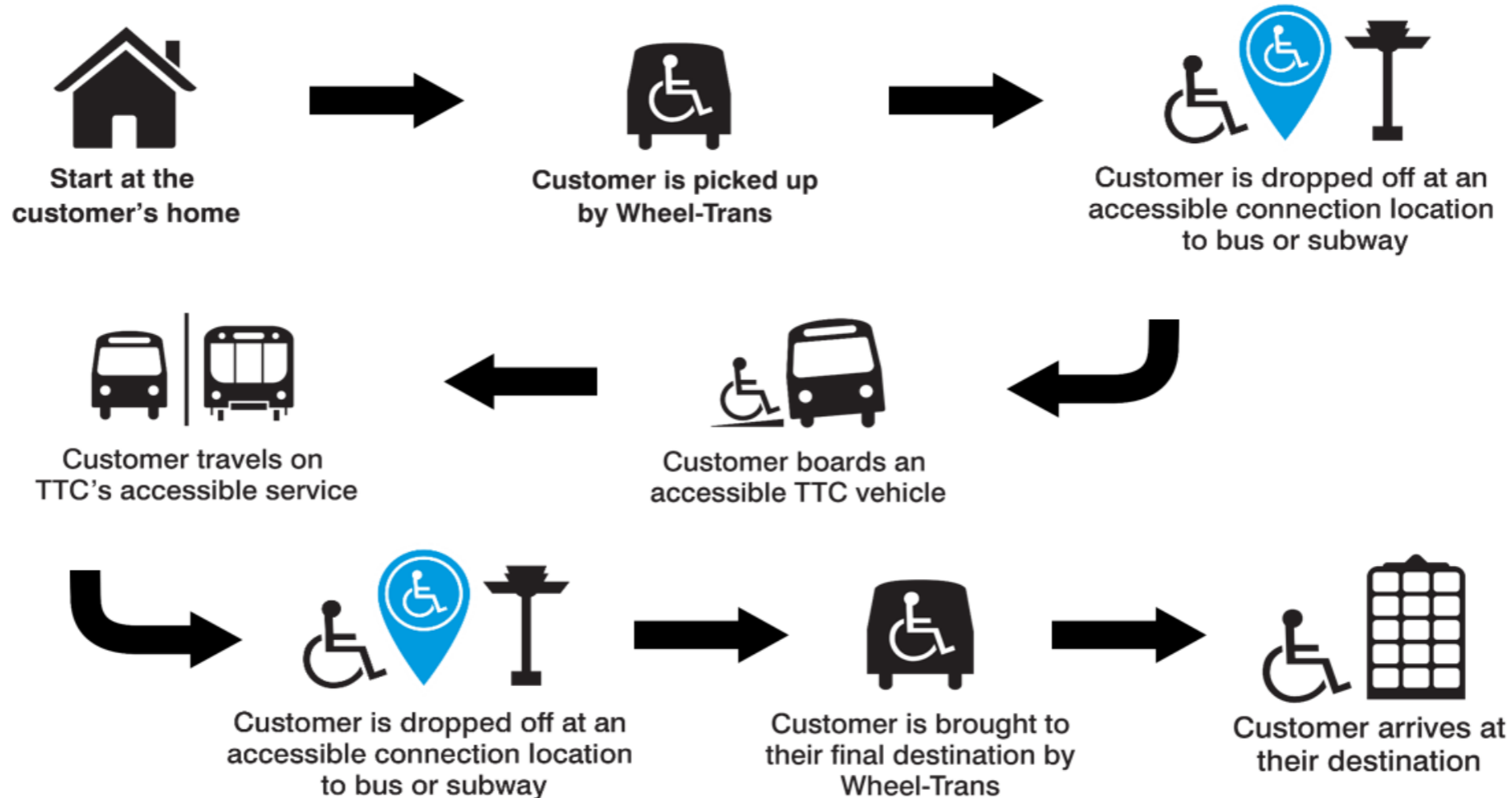
Status of Wheel-Trans re-registration

- On January 1, 2017, Wheel-Trans introduced a new eligibility criteria and application process to comply with the AODA deadline.
- A standardized re-registration process was established in collaboration with other GTHA agencies. The application form with a 14-day acceptance period was implemented.
- To ensure all Wheel-Trans customers are equitably categorized during the re-registration process.
- Wheel-Trans customers prior **to 2017** have been re-registering under the current eligibility process for the last six years.

Number of legacy customers
(17,000)



Family of Services blueprint and mitigation strategies

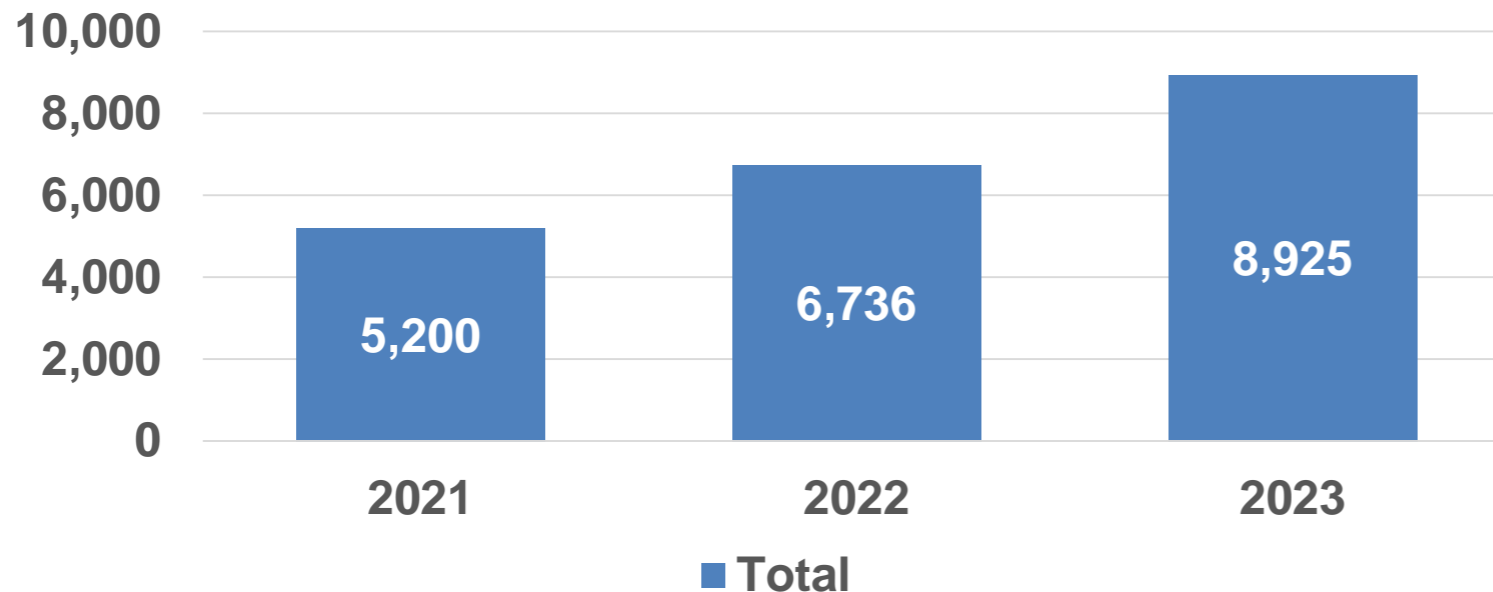


Travel Training provided for any customer requesting assistance (see Appendix D).

Customer experience enhancements

- Introduction of FOS has created shorter trip options for Wheel-Trans customers.
- Previously the average Wheel-Trans trip was 17 kms.
- FOS allows increased trip availability to meet customer demand for spontaneous travel.
- A 2023 customer survey conducted by Forum Research indicates that **31% of Wheel-Trans customers** voluntarily use the conventional TTC regularly.

FOS Ridership 2021 to 2023 (Jan to Jul only)



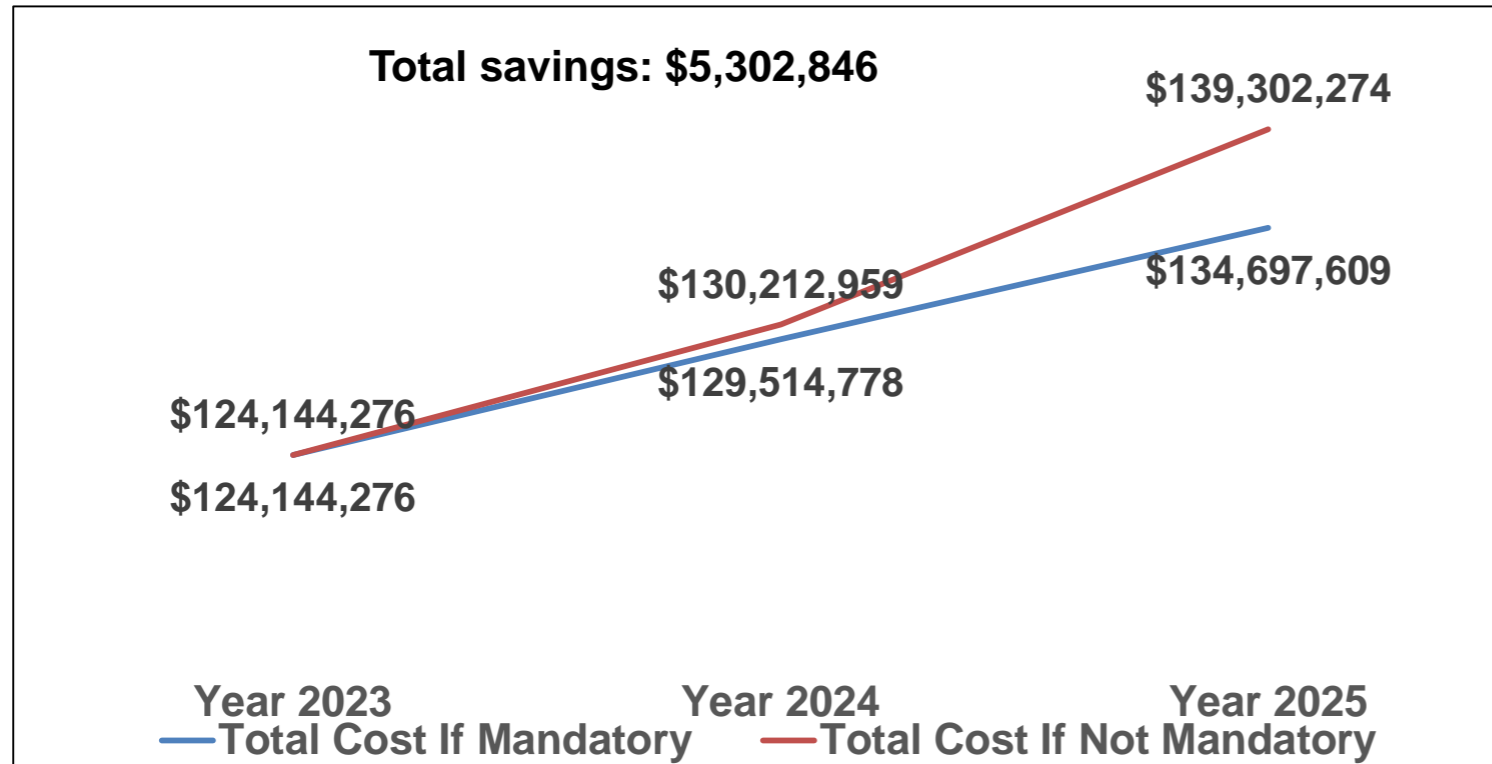
Since 2017, we have provided over 2.8M FOS trips



Cost avoidance of Family of Services

- The data on FOS continues to be studied and FOS implementation will be in accordance with the TTC Board recommendations.
- FOS also allows for greater operational efficiencies by providing more service under the same funding.

A comparison of projected financial costs of operating the Wheel-Trans under Family of Services and the previous Wheel-Trans service model



Capital investments made for accessibility:

- Access Hubs
- Capital costs - garages
- Operating costs – workforce
- Investment approved by TTC Board (approx. \$50 million)



| Modernization of the service delivery model

Modernization of the Wheel-Trans scheduling software has created a user-friendly experience for customers:

- Improved call response times.
- Reduced call wait times.
- Improved on-time delivery of service.
- Mobile app tracking.
- Increased on-demand service availability.
- Ability to provide spontaneous and equitable service which meets a customer's eligibility criteria.



Modernization of the service delivery model

Upgraded the scheduling software system –
Hastus on Demand

- Re-designed to allow FOS scheduling.
 - Mobile app and Self-booking Website.
- Automated Vehicle Location (AVL) systems were updated to track vehicles for enhanced customer experience and safety.
- Provide a specific service that meets customer needs based on customer eligibility.
- Every customer requesting a ride receives a ride.



A Wheel-Trans customer

| Modernization of the service delivery model

The Wheel-Trans Transformation Program - Family of Services (FOS) aims to:

- Redefine eligibility for Wheel-Trans services in accordance with the AODA legislation.
- Remove barriers to transit by improving accessibility on the conventional transit system.
- To date, 55 out of 70 TTC stations are fully accessible and 15 stations are under construction (excludes SRT).
- Modernize software systems to accommodate increased ridership and to improve operational performance (customer wait times, dispatching, etc.).



Improved communication efforts in 2023

- Personal letters mailed to Wheel-Trans customers reminding them to re-register.
- Email Blasts sent to Wheel-Trans customers.
- Information published on the Wheel-Trans Self-booking Website.
- Articles published in the Wheel-Trans Access newsletter.
- Reminders by reservationists when customers call the Wheel-Trans Reservations line.
- An information banner pops up when the customer logs into the Wheel-Trans Self-booking Website.



A screenshot of the information banner on the Wheel-Trans Self-booking Website



| Appendix A - Legislative requirements

O. Reg. 191/11: INTEGRATED ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS under [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11.](#)

Categories of Eligibility:

63. (1) Every specialized transportation service provider shall have three categories of eligibility to qualify for specialized transportation services:

1. A person with a disability that prevents them from using conventional transportation services shall be categorized as having **unconditional** eligibility.
2. A person with a temporary disability that prevents them from using conventional transportation services shall be categorized as having **temporary** eligibility.
3. A person with a disability where environmental or physical barriers limit their ability to consistently use conventional transportation services shall be categorized as having **conditional** eligibility. O. Reg. 191/11, s. 63 (2).
4. Specialized transportation service providers shall meet the requirements of this section **by January 1, 2017.** O. Reg. 191/11, s. 63 (4).



Appendix B - Using Family of Services

- Family of Services routes have new stop poles to mark shared Wheel-Trans stops.
- These new stop poles have a blue No-Show board attached directly to the pole.
- Wheel-Trans customers with conditional eligibility who travel using Family of Services will have their trips monitored for service delays and emergencies by Dispatch.
- [Click here](#) to view the Family of Services instructional video.



The new FOS stop poles



Appendix C - Consultations since 2016

To ensure that the Wheel-Trans 10-Year Strategy is accessible and inclusive, the TTC has consulted extensively with Wheel-Trans customers, members of the public, community organizations, and other stakeholders (i.e. University Health Network, Ontario Human Rights Commission, Local Health Integration Network, Ontario Medical Association, etc.), including the TTC's Advisory Committee on Accessible Transit (ACAT).

Municipal and Provincial stakeholders

- ACAT
- City of Toronto Auditor General
- City of Toronto Chief Planner (planned)
- City of Toronto Director, Equity Diversity and Human Rights
- City of Toronto Disability Accessibility and Inclusion Advisory Committee
- City of Toronto Ombudsman
- City of Toronto Senior Management Team Cluster A
- City of Toronto Accountability Table – Toronto Seniors Strategy
- The Honourable David Onley
- Ontario Human Rights Commission
- Metrolinx

Local, National and Federal:

- Alzheimer's Society of Toronto
- Aphasia Institute
- Autism Ontario –Toronto Chapter
- Brain Injury Society of Toronto
- Canadian Head Injury Resources Support
- MS Society of Toronto
- Ontario March of Dimes
- Spinal Cord Injury Society
- Toronto Central CCAC
- Toronto Central Local Health Integrated Network
- Toronto Council on Aging
- Toronto Seniors Summit
- Variety Village
- West Neighborhood Housing

Medical and Legal Communities

- Arch Disability Law
- Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH)
- Legal Aid Specialty Clinics
- Local Health Integrated Network (LHIN)
- Ontario Medical Association
- Ontario Physiotherapists Association
- Ontario Society of Occupational Therapists
- University Health Network

Major Exhibitions

- People in Motion
- Toronto Seniors Summit



Appendix D - Travel Training

- The objective of Travel Training is simple - we want to support and familiarize our customers with traveling on the conventional system using Family of Services.
- Customers receive orientation and navigation assistance.
- Various types of training available:
 - One-on-one route training.
 - Virtual and phone training.
 - Station and vehicle orientation.
 - Fixed route training.
 - Customized training based on individual needs.



Image of Wheel-Trans customer in front of a TTC bus