



Advisory Committee on Accessible Transit

May 2, 2025

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 March 27, 2025 to the May 2025 Board Meeting for information. At the March meeting, ACAT members reviewed a proposed train PA system survey relating to human announcements on trains. This is part of an ongoing audit TTC staff would like ACAT members to participate in as part of efforts to improve communication for TTC customers. The Communications Subcommittee will review updates and assist with finalizing the survey before it is circulated to ACAT members. ACAT also received an update about the battery-electric Wheel-Trans bus pilot scheduled to commence in 2026 and discussed vehicle features and specifications, such as whether vehicles would have sounds to assist customers who are blind.

The following is a summary of the main topics discussed at the March ACAT Subcommittee meetings:

Communications Subcommittee

- Wheel-Trans data privacy and consent presentation and review of travel Training survey and Access Newsletter.

Design Review Subcommittee

- No Design Review Subcommittee meeting held in March.

Service Planning Subcommittee

- Service Planning updates for extended bus routes and Community Bus routes and a presentation about the TTC Car Parking Strategy.

Wheel-Trans Operations Subcommittee

- Possibility of shorter travel training sessions for customers who are interested in learning a specific route, service or mode of transportation.
- HVAC on Wheel-Trans vehicles and the process Accessible Taxis and sedans follow to ensure air conditioning is working on vehicles.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Betty Rivington-Law
2025 ACAT Chair



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Betty Rivington-Law
2025 ACAT Chair

TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION
COMMITTEE MINUTES

APPROVED

Minutes of Meeting: ACAT General Meeting
Meeting Date: Thursday, March 27, 2025
1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Location: Hybrid meeting via Teams

Present: Betty Rivington Law, ACAT Chair
Lori Bailey, ACAT Vice-Chair
Sophie Petrillo, ACAT Vice-Chair
Tammy Adams
Debbie Gillespie
Mei Hung
Frank Lockhart
Maria Marin
Angela Marley
Karen Mootoo
Craig Nicol
Jason Osborne
Lauri Sue Robertson
Chau Sheung Wong

Pool Members: Oliva Darwin
Azim Lila
Paul Manna
Nathaniel Tok

Absent: Lavarnan Mehavarnan

TTC Representatives: Fortunato Monaco, Chief Operations and Infrastructure Officer
Shakira Naraine, Chief People and Culture Officer
Dean Milton, Manager, Strategic Initiatives, Wheel-Trans
Levenson Lincoln, Assistant Manager, Wheel-Trans
Jeff Short, Senior Planner, Strategy & Foresight
Natalie Francis, Manager, Planning and Policy, Wheel-Trans
Adrienne Isaac, Administrative Assistant, Wheel-Trans
Ross Visconti, Project Manager, Wheel-Trans
Sneha Madhuri, Communications Advisor, Corporate Communications
David LoPresti, Manager, Contracted Taxi Services, Wheel-Trans
Mohammed Shaikh, Divisional Manager, Wheel-Trans

Matt Hagg, Manager of Customer Policy, Strategy & Foresight

Abram Braithwaite, Transit Planner, Service Planning & Scheduling

Heather Brown, Director of Customer Experience

Michael Pimentel, Coordinator, Wheel-Trans Contracted Services

John Boucher, Manager of the Lakeshore Garage

Donald Rusk, Chief Instructor, Operations Training Centre

Omar Jabbar, Program Manager, Wheel-Trans

Ike Onuoha, Program Manager, Vehicle Programs

Deepika Gangwani, Manager, Corporate Deliverables, Chief of Operations & Infrastructure

Items Discussed

- 1/ Call to Order / Attendance
- 2/ Land Acknowledgement
- 3/ Declaration of Conflict of Interest
- 4/ Approval of Agenda
- 5/ Review and Approval of February 27, 2025 Minutes
- 6/ Train PA system audit – Deepika Gangwani
- 7/ Remarks from TTC Executive
- 8/ Remarks from ACAT Chair
- 9/ Deputation: Nil
- 10/ Review of Correspondence: Nil
- 11/ Subcommittee Reports, Highlights and Updates
 - Communications
 - Design Review (no March meeting)
 - Service Planning
 - Wheel-Trans Operations
- 12/ Battery-Electric Pilot Wheel-Trans Procurement – Ike Onuoha
- 13/ Outstanding Items
 - a. Pool member honorarium
- 14/ Wheel-Trans Transformation Update from Cameron Penman
- 15/ Other/New Business
 - a. ACAT Member's Manual update – Angela Marley
- 16/ Next Meeting – April 23, 2025 (Wednesday)
- 17/ Adjournment

1. Call to Order/Attendance

Betty Rivington Law, ACAT Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:07 p.m. Attendance was taken.

2. Land Acknowledgement

Lori Bailey, ACAT Vice-Chair read the Land Acknowledgement.

3. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Nil.

4. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda as amended: Karen Mootoo

Seconded: Lauri Sue Robertson

Carried: Agenda approved.

5. Review and Approval of February 27, 2025 Minutes

Motion to approve the Minutes of February 27, 2025: Debbie Gillespie

Seconded: Karen Mootoo

Carried: Approved.

6. Other/New Business

a. Train PA System Audit

Fortunato Monaco, Chief Operations and Infrastructure Officer, discussed the importance of clear and effective communication for TTC customers and shared that since mid-2024, TTC employees have been auditing the clarity of human announcements on trains to identify issues caused by human error or technical problems. Fortunato Monaco asked ACAT members to participate in audits to provide a customer perspective. Current compliance is around 95% but further evaluation is needed to ensure announcements are clear and effective for all customers.

Deepika Gangwani, Manager of Corporate Deliverables, Chief Operations and Infrastructure Group, went through a 12 question survey that would be accessible through a link for ACAT members to provide feedback. Deepika noted the survey could be completed either while members were on the train or when they got home.

Questions and Comments from the Committee

A member asked for clarification of the logistics of filling out the form. Deepika Gangwani explained a link that would be sent to members after the meeting and would provide real time information. The link takes the user directly to the question page.

A member asked if the information they are seeking is for inside or outside the train. Deepika confirmed the information is for manual announcements made inside the train, not automated messages.

A member asked if the audit is accessible for those using screen readers. Jeff Short, Senior Accessibility Planner, confirmed the survey should be accessible and asked for any issues to be reported.

A member suggested flagging all optional questions so that people using screen readers are aware. They also recommended testing the survey prior to opening it up for general use to ensure it is accessible. Deepika Gangwani confirmed that the audit will only be open to TTC staff and ACAT members for now.

Members discussed question seven of the survey and suggested wording changes so that the information request was clear. Deepika Gangwani explained the intention was to determine where the train was located at the time of the announcement. They also suggested avoiding repetitive questions.

A member asked why the question about the person's name completing the survey is optional and Deepika Gangwani explained that if TTC staff require further follow up or clarification about the feedback, having a name would make it easier to contact the person.

A member asked for the location of the train numbers, which was explained as large red block numbers inside the train at the end and outside the train.

A member asked if the announcements would also be provided in text for those people who cannot hear the verbal announcements. Fortunato Monaco noted that the older T1 trains would not have text, but the newer Line 1 trains would have that capability.

A member asked how blind people would find the train car number. Deepika Gangwani confirmed that the question about the train number was optional and the train could be identified by reviewing other information provided such as the route location, direction and time.

7. Remarks from TTC Executive – Shakira Naraine, Chief People and Culture Officer

Shakira Naraine, Chief People and Culture Officer, discussed Transit Worker Appreciation Day held on March 18, 2025 and the events held by the TTC in recognition of the day. She shared that the TTC was recently awarded a marketing award for a campaign related to the Taylor Swift Eras Tour held in Toronto in November 2024.

Ongoing initiatives include a pilot to address bus and streetcar bunching and gapping, a station cleanliness pilot focusing on six key stations, and major upgrades at TTC's Hillcrest Complex to accommodate 25 new accessible streetcars. The February TTC Board meeting approved a pilot for battery-electric Wheel-Trans buses, with delivery expected in 2026, as part of a goal to fully electrify the fleet by 2040. Shakira Naraine thanked ACAT for their valuable contributions.

Questions and Comments from the Committee

A member asked how the six stations were chosen for the cleanliness pilot. Deepika Gangwani explained that the Stations and Planned Maintenance departments conduct monthly evaluations of every station's cleanliness and state of good repair based on specific criteria and key performance indicators. The six stations selected for the pilot program ranked the lowest in these evaluations.

A member asked what events are being planned for the 50th Anniversary of Wheel-Trans. Sneha Madhuri, Communications Advisor, Corporate Communications, gave a short summary of some of the events planned for the upcoming celebration, including a barbeque for TTC Operators, and offered to share the comprehensive communications plan with Committee members once it was finalized.

A member commented about "signal issues" being shared are the reason for many unplanned diversions that include shuttle buses and that it is particularly difficult for blind customers to navigate when shuttle buses are starting to operate as often there is no one to direct the customer to the shuttle buses. Shakira Naraine noted that signal issues is a very broad category and is used for a variety of issues. She noted there is a designated TTC team who has been assigned to determine and address the deeper root cause for the signal issues and meetings have already commenced.

Deepika Gangwani noted that teams are working in the background with the experts to do playbacks and figure out the root cause. A member noted that for persons with disabilities, the need to change suddenly and use shuttle buses unduly complicates a trip.

A member suggested being more specific with the train issue, which might make it better in the customer's perception about how the information is conveyed. Passengers with vision loss face significant challenges in locating and identifying shuttle buses during service disruptions. Multiple solutions should be in place to assist them, including clear guidance on where to find TTC staff for support. When implementing shuttle buses, careful consideration must be given to accessibility needs to ensure all riders can navigate the system effectively.

Deepika Gangwani confirmed efforts are ongoing to address and improve this issue and that the background of signal issues is complex. Ongoing efforts include consultations with other comparable agencies and redefining how they handle these unplanned

disruptions. They are currently creating a playbook that would assist in ensuring all customers require accessibility needs are covered.

A member noted that having Customer Service Agents in reflective vests would not help as the customers who need the support cannot see the agents. The member suggested encouraging agents to approach customers to determine if they need help, rather than waiting to be approached.

A member suggested better communication on using the Passenger Assistance Intercom buttons might help, along with ensuring that available staff would be in the stations during that time.

A member asked if TTC staff included people with disabilities when doing the tabletop exercises about addressing signal issues. TTC staff would take back the suggestion. Heather Brown, Director of Customer Experience, Marketing and Customer Experience, noted that this would be an agenda item for the upcoming Communications Subcommittee meeting, as TTC staff are working on a service disruption communications plan.

A member also suggested that having staff with a megaphone, explaining to people where they should be going and wait times might also help. Deepika Gangwani confirmed TTC has recently purchased megaphones and would be purchasing more to have in TTC stations.

8. Remarks from the ACAT Chair

Betty Rivington Law, ACAT Chair, shared remarks and noted the arrival of spring, longer days and warmer weather will improve mobility in the City. The Easier Access Program is nearing completion, with many stations now equipped with elevators, five more stations set to be completed this year, and six more stations in 2026. The opening of accessible stations all contributes to the City's goal of meeting AODA standards. New ACAT members and pool members have quickly adapted and are actively contributing ideas. A member has been updating the ACAT Members' Manual and diligently reviewing meeting minutes. The ACAT Executive Quarterly Meeting update will be provided at the next ACAT General Meeting.

9. Deputation

Nil.

10. Review of Correspondence

Nil.

11. Subcommittee Reports, Highlights and Updates

Communications Subcommittee (CS)

Maria Marin, Chair for the Communications Subcommittee, presented the highlights for the meeting was held on March 6, 2025 at 1:00 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for April 3, 2025 at 1:00 p.m.

CS Meeting Highlights:

- Election of the 2025 CS Chair, Maria Marin.
- Presentation on Wheel-Trans Data Privacy and Consent.
- Communications updates from Sneha Madhuri.
- Travel Training Survey and ACCESS Newsletter review.

Design Review Subcommittee (DRS)

No meeting this month. The next DRS meeting is scheduled for April 1, 2025 at 1:30 p.m.

Wheel-Trans Operations Subcommittee (WTOS)

Lauri Sue Robertson, Chair for WTOS, presented the highlights for the meeting that was held on March 12, 2025 at 1:00 p.m. Customer Service is investigating having shorter travel training sessions for people that only want to learn a specific service or route or don't have time for a full session. WTOS members were asked to assist and provide feedback. HVAC on Wheel-Trans vehicles was discussed and the process that the Accessible Taxi and sedans follow to ensure they are working. TTC staff will be presenting about specific training on whether drivers should be closing the vehicle door when they are assisting a passenger or leave for another reason at a future Subcommittee Meeting. The Wheel-Trans customer complaints review included statistics along with the percentage of complaints versus how many trips are actually taken in a month. Levenson Lincoln, Assistant Manager of Wheel-Trans Customer Service, noted it was an overall 0.2% of the rides receive a complaint.

The next WTOS meeting is scheduled for April 9, 2025 at 1:00 p.m.

WTOS Meeting Highlights:

- Wheel-Trans Customer Service investigating having shorter travel training sessions.
- HVAC on Wheel-Trans vehicles
- The complaint review included statistics along with the percentage of complaints.

Service Planning Subcommittee (SPS)

Debbie Gillespie, Chair for SPS, presented the highlights for the meeting that was held on March 18, 2025 at 1:30 p.m. Natasha Singh, Senior Planner, Customer Policy, presented the Car Parking Strategy for the TTC Board's next meeting, which included data on various kinds of parking lots used by the TTC. Jasmine Eftekhari, Manager of Service Planning, and her team shared changes approved for 2025. This included, highlights about the extended bus routes to connect non-accessible stations, and an update on the Community Bus routes in the 2025 Annual Service Plan.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 18, 2025 at 1:30 p.m.

SPS Meeting Highlights

- Changes to the TTC Car Parking Strategy
- Service Planning updates (extended bus routes, Community Bus routes).
- Passenger safety and ramp deployment

12. Battery-Electric Pilot Wheel-Trans Procurement

Ike Onuoha, Program Manager, Vehicle Procurement Group gave a presentation on the upcoming procurement and electric Wheel-Trans pilot for accessible vehicles for 2026. One electric pilot vehicle will arrive in early 2026 and the other four pilot vehicles are expected towards the end of 2026. Various information was provided including the procurement process, and the key specifications requested for the vehicles. He noted the vehicles should not have an issue with tariffs as they are manufactured in Turkey and assembled in Mississauga, Ontario. However, this is yet to be confirmed formally.

Questions and Comments from the Committee

A member asked if the charts shown were about emissions and whether a cost savings analysis similar to the greenhouse gas emissions costs savings would be done. Ike Onuoha confirmed that an analysis on cost savings is already underway, but more engagement is required from stakeholders to complete the exercise. The member recommended taking benchmarks from 2024.

A member asked if the sedan taxis and accessible vans would be considered in discussion about environmental sustainability. Ike Onuoha advised the Innovation and Sustainability Group and Wheel-Trans are carrying out a Fleet Optimization exercise, which includes analyzing data on usage of buses and sedans (based on current contracted services). If the analysis supports it, the plan will be to incorporate EV sedans into the fleet, which would bring the electrification plan ahead of schedule, while ensuring to meet rider needs.

A member asked if the vehicles would be given a sound to assist blind or low vision customers. Ike Onuoha confirmed the vehicle would beep under certain circumstances, for example, when backing up, stopping for passengers and during ramp deployment. A

member emphasized the importance for vehicles to make a sound when they are moving for people that are blind. Ike Onuoha would take this feedback to discussions with the Vehicle Programs Engineering team and vendor.

A member asked if the vehicles would have WiFi and be equipped with plugs for mobility devices. Members discussed that charging times depend on mobility scooter models and makes. Ike Onuoha stated TTC battery limitations for the pilot vehicles would make powering mobility devices unlikely, while the Wi-fi requirement was incorporated in the vehicle specification as an optional item. These will also be clarified with Vehicle Programs engineering team.

13. Outstanding Items

a. Recommendations for Honorarium - Pool Members

The ACAT Chair asked for comments from members about this item, which was carried over from 2024. There were no comments so this item would be marked as completed and then removed from the Outstanding Items list after the next ACAT General Meeting.

14. Wheel-Trans Transformation and Update from Cameron Penman

This item was deferred to next meeting.

Questions and Comments from the Committee

Nil.

15. Other/New Business

a. ACAT Member's Manual Update

This item was deferred to the next ACAT General Meeting for discussion.

16. Next Meeting

Next ACAT General Meeting: Wednesday, April 23, 2025 at 1 p.m.

17. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 3:23 p.m. on a motion by Karen Mootoo.

Cindy Edwards
Recording Secretary