

Accessible Transit Services Plan

Year-End 2003 Status Report



TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION

TTC Accessible Transit Services Plan Year-End 2003 Status Report



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	E1
1. Introduction	1
2. Background.....	3
2.1 Evolution of the TTC's Policy on Accessible Service.....	3
2.2 Estimates of Population with Mobility Difficulties.....	5
3. TTC Delivery of Accessible Service	9
3.1 Legislative and Regulatory Environment.....	10
4. Consultation.....	11
4.1 Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation.....	11
4.2 Community Consultation	13
5. Status Updates and Plans	15
5.1 To-the-Door Specialized Service	15
5.2 Community Bus Service	16
5.3 Conventional Bus System	17
5.4 Subway/RT System	21
5.5 Accessibility of the Streetcar Network	29
6. System-Wide Initiatives	31
6.1 Integration of TTC Accessible Services.....	31
6.2 Training Staff Who Deliver Accessible Services	31
6.3 Provision of Customer Information	32
7. Funding is the Key	35
8. Summary.....	37
Exhibits	
Exhibit 1- TTC Accessible Bus Routes and Stations	18
Exhibit 2 - TTC's Conventional Accessible Bus Fleet.....	20
Exhibit 3 - Accessible TTC Stations in 2003.....	24
Exhibit 4 - Budgeted Easier Access II Improvements – 2004 to 2007	25
Exhibit 5 - 2004-2008 Capital Budget Projects Relating to Accessibility.....	38
Appendices	
1. Definition of Disability	A1
2. ACAT Terms of Reference	A3
3. Assessments in 2003 – 2004	A7
4. TTC Accessible Transit System	A13

TTC Accessible Transit Services Plan

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Executive Summary

The Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) provides public transit services for the City of Toronto. The TTC is committed to design and operate these services in a way that is accessible to members of the public, including seniors and people with disabilities. This report describes the TTC's initiatives and ongoing plans to make transit services accessible to people who have mobility difficulties. The TTC is proceeding systematically, and as quickly as possible, given funding constraints, to improve system accessibility.

The TTC's Wheel-Trans operation provides to-the-door service for 30,000 registrants who have restricted physical functional mobility. Service improvements are being made to Wheel-Trans services through improved efficiencies, but the cost of Wheel-Trans services, on a per-passenger basis, may limit the extent to which specialized service can be expanded in the longer-term. At the same time, the TTC is improving the accessibility of its conventional services by rebuilding the physical infrastructure of stations, purchasing accessible vehicles, training front-line personnel, and developing effective ways of communicating with passengers about accessible services.

Improving the accessibility of conventional services will allow some current and future Wheel-Trans registrants to make more use of the conventional system and benefit from spontaneous trip making and more-flexible travel options. While improving the accessibility of conventional services will never eliminate the need for to-the-door services, increased use of accessible conventional services will moderate the increasing demand for to-the-door service. It also provides the opportunity to improve the efficiency of Wheel-Trans services through better integration with conventional services.

A wide range of passengers benefit from accessibility features on conventional service such as elevators, escalators, and automatic accessible doors. For many seniors and others who have limited agility, strength and balance, these features are essential, and the general travelling public also benefit from accessibility improvements. For example, those travelling with baby strollers or carrying heavy packages find elevators of great assistance. Therefore, while planning for improved accessibility naturally focuses on overcoming impediments to travel by seniors and persons with disabilities, all TTC customers will be better off because of improved system accessibility.

The rate at which the conventional TTC services can be made accessible is highly dependent on the level of funding provided for accessibility initiatives. The TTC's Capital Budget includes numerous projects that will, in aggregate, significantly improve accessibility on the system. The program includes:

- The purchase of 1060 low-floor accessible buses between 2004 and 2008, at a cost of \$676M, and the purchase of an additional 320 buses between 2009 and the end of 2012, to make the bus fleet 100% accessible.

- Completing the nine remaining subway stations in the Easier Access Phase II program involving construction of elevators and other accessibility features. When the Phase II program is complete in 2007, at a cost of \$96.5M, 40% of the subway and Scarborough RT stations in the system will be accessible through either that program or other initiatives.
- Including accessibility features as part of ongoing station renovations when possible, as illustrated in the reconstruction of Broadview and Eglinton stations.
- The Easier Access Phase III program, targeted at making the remaining 40 stations accessible by 2019, at a cost of \$230M, has been recommended by staff, but does not have funding approval. Work is continuing on assessing station priorities and possible phasing of development of the stations in support of this major accessibility initiative.
- Replacing the fleet of Wheel-Trans buses and purchasing an additional 12 buses for fleet expansion between 2007 and 2011 at a cost of \$50.5M

Not all of the initiatives being undertaken to improve accessibility require capital funding. The TTC is undertaking a wide range of non-capital initiatives which also will improve accessibility, including:

- Implementing standards for design and construction at the TTC which reflect the input received from the Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation (ACAT) and the community regarding appropriate design features to improve accessibility.
- Taking advantage of opportunities for joint development around subway stations to accelerate the installation of elevators and accessibility features at stations.
- Providing improved information to passengers about accessible services, including a special information line to provide up-to-date information about escalator and elevator availability, the development and distribution of brochures about accessibility features, and information on accessible services on the TTC's web site.

There are many types of mobility difficulties experienced by individual TTC passengers, and it is a complex task to accommodate all these needs on conventional TTC services. 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 Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation (ACAT) has been, and will continue to be, invaluable in implementing the TTC's accessibility program. The TTC also uses a number of other methods to provide information and obtain input from members of the public including "Open Forums", community meetings, and newsletters. Consultative input and joint problem-solving will remain central to the TTC's ongoing approach to improving the accessibility of TTC services.

The TTC will focus on maintaining and integrating services for Wheel-Trans registrants, meeting the timetable for implementing accessibility improvements to the conventional services, and making the best use of the new accessibility resources as they come on-stream. The opportunities for Wheel-Trans registrants, other people with disabilities, and seniors to use accessible conventional services will grow significantly in the years ahead. Encouraging greater use of conventional services by people with mobility difficulties will be a prime objective of the TTC in the coming years.

The Province of Ontario's *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA) requires that public transit systems produce an annual plan documenting the actions taken, and those which will be taken, to identify and address barriers. This report provides the information required by the ODA with respect to TTC services, and goes beyond the one-year plan requirements of the ODA regulation to reflect the Commission's long-term commitment to accessibility improvements.

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

1. Introduction

The Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) provides public transit services in the City of Toronto and is committed to design and operate these services to provide travel options for all members of the public, including seniors and people with disabilities. This report describes how the TTC is taking a systematic approach to making all of the TTC's services accessible as quickly as possible with the funding provided. It provides a status report on the TTC's activities and ongoing plans to improve system accessibility for both conventional services and facilities, and specialised transit services.

The plans and programs presented here have been incorporated into the TTC's budgetary and planning processes. The report reflects the Capital and Operating budgets approved by the Commission on November 19, 2003. Some programs, such as the third phase of the Easier Access program, are planned, but funding commitments have not been secured. All the initiatives outlined here have been addressed in public meetings conducted by the Commission, the City of Toronto, and/or the Commission's Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation (ACAT).

The TTC provides service to people with disabilities both by operating specialised services and by making conventional services and facilities accessible. Making conventional transit services accessible can reduce, but will never eliminate, the need for specialised services, because there are members of the disabled community who require to-the-door assisted services for at least some of their travel needs. However, the availability of accessible conventional services will provide some Wheel-Trans registrants, other residents of Toronto with mobility restrictions, seniors, and disabled visitors to Toronto, with an opportunity to make more trips, to make spontaneous trips, and to travel on transit services available to all members of society. Improvements to the accessibility of the TTC's conventional services will permit people with mobility difficulties unrestricted travel with family and friends, and greater opportunities for social integration and access to services and facilities throughout Toronto.

Residents, and visitors to Toronto, will also benefit from the accessibility improvements. For example, those travelling with baby strollers or carrying heavy packages will find the elevators of great assistance. Similarly, the increase in the number of escalators, the improved directional signage, the additional benches, the courtesy seating in vehicles, the increased and improved communications, and the many other improvements that have or will be carried out, assist all transit passengers. Therefore, while the TTC's accessibility plans naturally focus first on overcoming impediments to travel by seniors and people with disabilities, all TTC passengers will be better off because of improved system accessibility.

The TTC has undertaken a staged approach to providing accessible services and, since the late 1980's, has moved forward with numerous initiatives that, collectively, have created a program of improved accessibility. The program has been documented in a number reports including *Choices for the Future*, August 1989, *Making Public Transit in Metro Toronto More Accessible – Transit Accessibility Implementation Plan*, April 1994, and the *Accessible Transit Service Plan*, July 1997. This report outlines the status of the recommendations and the many projects flowing from the previous studies. It also

describes the actions being taken at this time, and the planned programs to improve accessibility of the TTC's services.

The Province of Ontario's *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA) requires that public transit systems produce an annual plan documenting actions being taken, and those which will be taken, to identify and address barriers. The plan is to also describe the consultation undertaken with people with disabilities in the development of the plan. This report provides the information required by the ODA with respect to TTC services and activities, and it will form the basis for an annual update as required under the Act. The information presented here goes beyond the one-year plan requirements of the ODA regulation, and reflects the Commission's long-term commitment to accessibility improvements.

This document provides a status report describing the actions taken and the numerous and significant longer-term actions planned by the TTC to improve the mobility of people with disabilities in our community.

2. Background

The TTC's efforts to improve transportation for people with disabilities date back to 1973 when the TTC participated in a pilot project to provide to-the-door service for people unable to board conventional public transit services. The project, which was funded equally by the Province of Ontario and Metropolitan Toronto, operated in only a small section of the city, during weekday peak periods, for work trips, by people in wheelchairs. This project eventually led to the establishment of a city-wide service in 1977 and, ultimately, to the current Wheel-Trans service. In the late 1970's, the TTC began working with members of the disability community, through the Technical Advisory Committee on Improved Accessibility, to identify and remove barriers to the accessibility of conventional TTC services. The TTC's approach to accessibility issues has evolved from these early initiatives to become a long-term commitment to making the TTC's services accessible to the entire travelling public.

2.1 Evolution of the TTC's Policy on Accessible Service

This section of the report summarises the major policy studies and initiatives that have aided in the development of the current TTC policy on accessible services and facilities.

Technical Advisory Committee on Improved Accessibility - 1979

As early as 1979, the TTC recognized that there was a need for improvement in its conventional services with regards to access by seniors and people with disabilities. To help overcome this deficiency, the TTC formed the Technical Advisory Committee on Improved Accessibility (TACIA) that worked on projects to help ambulatory disabled passengers use conventional TTC services and stations. Improvements to help non-ambulatory passengers use the TTC's conventional public transit services were not addressed, in part, because of the expectation that the Wheel-Trans services would address all of the needs of non-ambulatory passengers.

Starting in 1980, the TTC approved funding for a wide range of TACIA improvements. These improvements included:

- additional handholds at bus entrance doors,
- additional benches in stations,
- talk-through communicators at Collectors' booths,
- step edge markers,
- audio-visual warnings for closing of subway vehicle doors,



Benches in Stations

- a test of textured warning strips for subway platform edges,
- modifying the stop request cord for surface vehicles, and
- the purchase of the kneeling feature on new buses.



Tactile Platform Edge Marker

Choices for the Future - 1989

In 1989, the TTC undertook its first comprehensive review of the mobility needs of disabled and elderly people. The report subsequently became input to the discussions that culminated in the 1990 *Action for Access* report and its recommendations for improved accessibility in Toronto's transit services.

The *Choices For The Future* report concluded that substantial improvements were required to make the TTC's conventional services more accessible in order to provide adequate mobility for all disabled and elderly people. The report specifically identified the importance of the subway system to meet the travel needs of disabled and elderly people by installing additional escalators and elevators when making significant alterations to existing stations. Wheel-Trans was envisioned as performing exclusively as a subway feeder in order to meet the future travel needs of people with disabilities in Toronto. In part, the conclusions were based on the fact disabled and elderly people make extensive use of public transit, even more so than the general population, and that a significant proportion are dependant on transit for mobility. These populations would benefit from accessible subways fed by Wheel-Trans accessible services.

Perhaps the biggest contribution made to the accessibility of Toronto by the *Choices For The Future* report was the identification of twenty existing "key" subway stations to be made accessible through the installation of elevators and other accessibility features. The existing stations to be made accessible included terminal stations and those that permit transfers between subway lines. As will be noted later, the TTC has already exceeded the earlier station accessibility goals and will have 29 accessible stations at the conclusion of the Easier Access II program in 2007.

Making Public Transit in Metro Toronto More Accessible - 1994

In 1992, the Province of Ontario confirmed its policy on the need for accessible municipal public transit. It required municipalities, including Metro, to purchase low-floor buses with accessible features and to make new terminals fully accessible as conditions of receiving Provincial subsidy. The Province also required municipalities to develop transit accessibility implementation plans consistent with the Province's policy.

The TTC's transit accessibility implementation plan entitled, *Making Public Transit in Metro Toronto More Accessible*, which was completed in April 1994, stated the "TTC's long-term goal is to make all public transit within Metro fully accessible to all customers". The plan explained how all TTC vehicles, busy subway stations, and all new stations should be accessible, but that service accessibility would require further funding. The Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation (ACAT), which today provides community input to the Commission on accessibility issues, was established during this period.

Since the 1994 report was prepared, the TTC has made significant advances towards its accessibility goal. It has developed capital budgets, and proceeded with the implementation of programs to increase the number of accessible stations, add accessible vehicles to the fleet to allow more routes to be accessible, and improve the quality and level of Wheel-Trans service.

Task Force on Accessible Transit - 1997

In January 1997, the Task Force on Accessible Transit was formed to review and prioritize accessibility issues and develop a five-year plan to maximize the provision of transit services to people with disabilities on both the Wheel-Trans and conventional services. The work of the Task Force focused primarily on improving the efficiency of the Wheel-Trans system and resulted in a comprehensive five-year plan for service improvements to that system. The plan included implementation of vehicle productivity standards, introduction of the Wheel-Trans "Zone Bus" concept, a fleet replacement program, and the determination of the appropriate mix of Wheel-Trans-operated versus contracted services.

2.2 Estimated Population with Mobility Difficulties

Based on provincial estimates, 20% of the population of Ontario will have some form of disability in twenty years' time. For Toronto specifically, in September 1997, an analysis of the current and future populations by disability type was undertaken by an Advisory Committee to Metro Council and used as input to the TTC Task Force on Accessible Transit. The consultant's report to the committee addressed overall transit accessibility needs and how those needs were expected to change over the years until 2021. The data used in the analysis was primarily from the 1991 Health and Activity Limitation Survey (HALS), although that information was supplemented by other survey findings.

The HALS information is still considered to be a reliable source of data on disabled people in Toronto. However, it predates the first accessible stations, conventional accessible low-floor buses, the TTC's T-1 subway cars with their access features, and other more-recent TTC initiatives. Therefore, the 1991 assessment of the difficulties people have using transit services was of reduced value by the time the Task Force undertook its work. Nevertheless, the information from the Metro report does provide an appreciation of the very-significant numbers of people who experience transportation access problems in the city and how these numbers are expected to grow. Here are excerpts from the report:

- “Metro’s population will continue to age during the next 20 years and the number of seniors will continue to increase, especially after 2006”.
- Those persons who have trouble using local public transportation or need specialized transit services are generally within the group classified as having some form of local transportation disability (LTD). Of the 1996 “Metro population 15 years and older who live in the community (approximately 2 million people in 1996/97), an estimated 130,000 (7%) travel locally and have some form of local transportation disability”.
- “Based on the analysis of HALS responses, of Metro’s 130,000 residents with LTDs, about half (65,000) use conventional TTC services. Of the estimated 65,000 who use TTC, 28,000 use conventional transit with difficulty, including about 5,000 who use the existing services with extreme difficulty, whereas 37,000 would report that they use conventional transit without difficulty, despite their impairment”. The remaining residents with LTDs would use Wheel-Trans, drive their own vehicles (35,000), use taxis or take rides with others.
- “Of the estimated 130,000 Metro residents with local transportation disabilities, the analysis of the HALS data suggests that:
 - 82,000 + do not use any mobility aids;
 - 23,000 use canes (excluding white canes used by the visually impaired);
 - 11,000 use scooters and/or wheelchairs;
 - 7,000 use crutches or walkers; and
 - 6,000 use back or leg braces.”
- Approximately half of the wheelchair users in the general population used Wheel-Trans.
- “The total population with local transportation disabilities is expected to increase from 130,000 in 1996, to 190,000 by 2021”. The report notes that the rate of growth in this segment of the population is, therefore, almost 4 times greater than the expected growth of Metro’s population. The forecasts suggest the number of people with local transportation difficulties will reach approximately 150,000 by 2006. However, as that and the other estimates exclude those residents below the age of 15 and those residing in institutions, that figure may actually be reached earlier for the total population.
- The fact Metro’s population is ageing “will be clearly evident by the year 2011 when the baby boomers reach the age of 65. In addition, longer life-expectancies will affect their use of conventional transit services”.
- “The number of people using conventional transit with severe difficulty is expected to rise by 20%. These estimates of the travel-disadvantaged presume that no significant improvements are made to conventional transit services and that current eligibility criteria for Wheel-Trans service remain unchanged.”

- “Obviously decisions respecting the availability of, and accessibility to, future conventional and special transit services, could make a significant difference to all of the current projections.”

The Metro Council Advisory Committee report identified the tremendous growth in the proportion of the ageing population who would be disadvantaged without the TTC making improvements in both specialized and conventional accessible services.

The TTC’s actions, to date, as well as the initiatives outlined later in this report, will help to overcome the difficulty seniors and people with disabilities routinely experienced in the past. They will also position the TTC to address the forecasted rapid increase in demand for specialized and accessible conventional transit in the City of Toronto.

3. TTC Delivery of Accessible Service

The provision of accessible transportation service involves virtually all areas of the TTC from marketing and training, to escalator maintenance and new facility construction, to daily operation of the conventional and specialised transit services.

Wheel-Trans currently provides specialised "to-the-door" accessible transit services to 30,000 registrants, many of whom are unable to use conventional services. The services are provided seven days per week at fares that are at the same levels as for conventional TTC services. Eligibility for Wheel-Trans service is determined through an interview process that includes an assessment of an applicant's physical functional mobility.

Wheel-Trans registrants make reservations for service either through an automated phone service, a TTY line, or by contacting staff who make trip reservations. They can book trips in three ways: on a "prebook" basis, as an advance reservation, or on a standby basis. The prebook service is used for booking multiple trips to the same destination for several weeks (i.e. work or school trips, regular occurring trips to medical facilities, places of worship, recreation, or rehabilitation services, etc.). Advance reservations are for trips for the next day. Standby trips are last-minute types of trips used when previously booked trips are cancelled or there are other gaps in service schedules.

Wheel-Trans service uses a fleet of accessible buses that are smaller than conventional transit vehicles and, therefore, often better able to directly serve hospitals, rehabilitation centres, homes for the aged, and other institutions frequently used by seniors and disabled people. Seventy-three accessible taxis, as well as sedan taxis, supplement this fleet of 145 buses. The taxi services operate under contract with the TTC.

Some Wheel-Trans registrants can, however, use accessible conventional transit for at least some of their trips. For them, and the people who may have some mobility or other difficulties, but who do not qualify for to-the door services, the TTC has established an ongoing program of investment in improved access to the conventional system. This investment takes the form of both large capital investments in accessible vehicles and improved facilities, and the establishment of ongoing operating procedures to assist people with mobility difficulties. Accessible vehicles and station improvements remove barriers for both ambulatory disabled people, such as blind customers and those with limited agility, strength or balance, and non-ambulatory people who use wheelchairs or other large mobility devices and who may require lifts, ramps, or elevators to travel in the city.

The TTC works with the Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation (ACAT) to obtain advice on access issues and opportunities for further improvement, as described in Section 4.1. ACAT receives regular reports from operations, planning, and design staff regarding initiatives and programs.

The overall quality of conventional transit services has a large effect on how accessible these services are to seniors and people with disabilities. TTC customers with mobility difficulties can be especially sensitive to long travel times, long waits for service, and to travelling long distances without a seat. Furthermore, many seniors and people with

disabilities are more adversely affected by old, unreliable vehicles breaking down than are the majority of customers who can more-readily transfer between vehicles or easily take alternative services (i.e. bus rather than subway). The vast majority of North American transit systems would retire their vehicles after considerably few years and far fewer miles of service than does the TTC. However, the lack of financial support from senior levels of government means that the TTC is required to keep old equipment in operation for many years.

TTC initiatives that improve the overall quality of service for all passengers, such as more-frequent service and planning for less-crowded vehicles are, therefore, of special benefit to seniors and people with disabilities but, generally, are not seen as investments in improved accessibility. The TTC's plan for implementing these types of initiatives is outlined in the *Ridership Growth Strategy* report, March 2003. Such initiatives as traffic signal priority, bus rights-of-way, efforts to improve vehicle reliability, scheduling system improvements, and increasing the number of transit shelters, all contribute to an improved quality of service for all Toronto transit users. For this reason, they are not grouped with the initiatives to help seniors and people with disabilities in this document. However, as noted, the customers who benefit most from many of these service improvements may well be seniors and people with disabilities.

3.1 Legislative and Regulatory Environment

The TTC's involvement with the provision of accessible services pre-dates, by more than two decades, the proclamation of the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA)*.

The ODA uses the same definition of "disability" as the Ontario Human Rights Code (see Appendix #1, Definition of Disability). The TTC's accessibility initiatives will help people with "disabilities" who use its services and facilities. However, the TTC's initiatives also take into consideration the needs of seniors, parents with baby carriages, and other people who will benefit from accessibility improvements. The TTC's Advisory Committee is required to have seniors as members, and their assessments and advice to staff is based on the needs of both seniors and people with disabilities.

As an employer, the TTC also follows certain standards and codes, including the Ontario Human Rights Code, and procedures to assure equality of employment opportunities without discrimination. While these activities are not described in detail in this document, the TTC does assess the accommodation needs of employees through job site modifications, modified work duties and other measures. TTC staff is trained to recognise the need to accommodate employees with disabilities to ensure they are treated with respect and dignity. The TTC's Human Rights Unit also assists staff with complex accommodations. The accommodations vary greatly depending on the needs of the individual, the tasks performed by the employee, and the environment in which the employee operates.

4. Consultation

4.1 Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation

The TTC's Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation (ACAT), which was formally established by the Commission in 1993, is continuously involved in the review of the TTC's policies, designs, standards, plans, and implementation activities pertaining to accessible transit at the TTC. ACAT is a fifteen-member volunteer committee, appointed by the Toronto Transit Commission. The terms of reference for ACAT require the committee members to be seniors, people with various types of disabilities, and those with knowledge of accessible public transit issues. Appendix #2, ACAT Terms of Reference, provides the overall direction for the committee from the Toronto Transit Commission.

ACAT meets monthly to receive presentations, assess information provided by its subcommittees, and provide advice to the TTC. The meetings are open to the public and members of the public and organizations representing seniors and people with disabilities may make deputations to ACAT at its meetings. ACAT meeting minutes and resolutions are provided to TTC Commissioners and to TTC senior management.

In order to address the numerous service, design, and marketing initiatives underway, ACAT has established a number of subcommittees and panels that meet to address specific standards or other projects. The Design Review Subcommittee, for example, has recently provided advice on:

- station development priorities for the Easier Access programs,
- elevator design standards,
- standards for accessible paths (way-finding tiles, guide rails, etc.),
- improved signage and access guides,
- design of new accessible fare gates,
- access difficulties at stations,
- accessible bus operating procedures (lifts and ramps), and
- the allocation of accessible buses to routes.

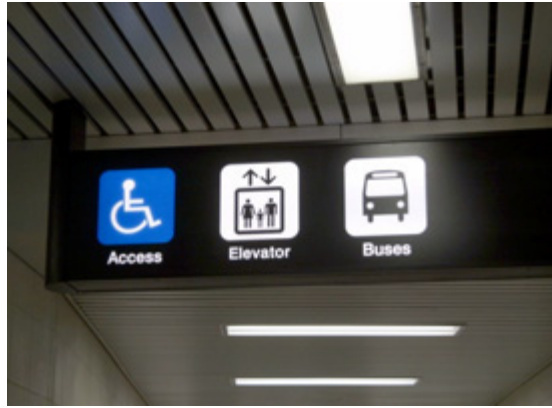
The ACAT subcommittees may call on the expertise of others from the community if they and staff determine specialised knowledge or training is required to fully assess some accessibility initiative. For example, the Design Review Subcommittee obtained the assistance of sight-impaired and blind people and mobility trainers in assessing the application of tactile, way-finding tiles at a station with a unique design, and signage with easily-identified pictograms to supplement text messages.

ACAT members have also helped staff by undertaking audits of Easier Access stations and assessments of accessible services. The audits help to determine if the accessible features at stations have been implemented as designed and are functioning as intended. The “Secret Shopper” assessments of existing accessible services help identify opportunities to improve the quality of service to TTC customers in general, but more specifically for seniors and people with disabilities. A new program is being established where ACAT members will use incident reports, trip logs, and more-detailed surveys to document their observations on TTC accessible services. The completion of these survey forms will help ACAT members advise on the performance of accessible services and areas where further improvement is required.

Appendix #3, Assessments in 2003 – 2004, provides a summary of some of the recent issues addressed by ACAT.



Tactile Wayfinding Floor Tiles



Signage



Accessible Fare Gates



Elevators designed to TTC standards

4.2 Community Consultation

The TTC provides many other opportunities for members of the public and their elected or appointed representatives to provide input to the planning and operation of transit services in Toronto, including accessible services.

Agency and Advocates "Open Forum"

The TTC initiated an "Open Forum" for agencies and advocates involved with services for people with disabilities. Through this forum, advocates, agencies, and ACAT members are invited to exchange information and opinions with TTC staff, and identify the ways and means of improving accessible public transit in the City of Toronto.

Initially the "Open Forum" was made up of a relatively-small number of agencies, institutions, and advocates who had voiced concerns or submitted suggestions to improve service for seniors and people with disabilities. The focus of the discussions was on the TTC's Wheel-Trans specialized transit services and responding to questions on its policies and practices. However, the number of agencies, institutions, and associations that wanted to participate grew, and the accessibility of conventional transit services is now also a common topic of discussions. In 2002, there were 75 agencies, institutions, associations, ACAT members, and other advocates on the invitation list for the Open Forum.

The participants typically receive presentations on the TTC's goals, objectives, and budgeted accessibility plans and initiatives from TTC senior management, after which they form plenary groups to address the issues and opportunities for accessible public transit in Toronto.

Service Planning - Annual Service Evaluation and Planning Process

This is an annual process that helps staff assess existing conventional services and identify potential new services. Each existing service is evaluated against the TTC's service criteria and is ranked by use, and financial performance. Members of City Council are asked to provide suggestions, and a well-publicised public meeting is held to receive suggestions from the public. ACAT members are invited to participate, and a number usually attend the meeting. The suggestions received are evaluated and the results are presented in a report to the Commission. The service changes that come about as a result of this process are subject to ongoing monitoring to confirm they meet TTC standards.

Public Meetings and Outreach Efforts

Public meetings are held periodically to inform residents of significant service changes. In recent years, the expansion of the Wheel-Trans Zone Bus system has been the focus of a number of meetings. The meetings are also used as an opportunity to discuss all accessible services offered in Toronto, to answer questions on the Wheel-Trans registration requirements, fares, vehicles, and station accessibility, or any other matters pertaining to

transit. The public meetings are often attended by the City Councillor for the area in which a service improvement is proposed as well as a representative(s) of ACAT and TTC staff.

Beyond the public meetings, Commission staff, and often members of ACAT, will make presentations to community organizations and institutions serving seniors and people with disabilities. In 2002, for example, there were approximately 40 outreach efforts.

Newsletters

The mailing addresses of all registrants for the TTC's specialized transit services are collected as part of the registration process. The addresses are then used to mail newsletters outlining proposed service improvements, advertise public meetings, and invite comments from the registrants.

In 2002, there were over 27,000 residents of Toronto on the mailing list for newsletters. In addition, materials went to 39 hospitals and medical centres serving seniors and people with disabilities, 28 group homes, 61 nursing homes, 9 adult development facilities, and 17 other institutions whose clients may have need of the TTC's accessible transit services.

The newsletters carry information on specialised transit services, conventional accessible services and facilities, and phone numbers and addresses by which additional information and assistance may be obtained. The improvement and expansion of the specialized and/or conventional accessible services is frequently a topic in the general newsletters.

5. Status Updates and Plans

5.1 To-the-Door Specialised Service

In 2002, Wheel-Trans provided 1.5 million trips to 27,500 registrants. The registrant base is now approximately 30,000 and expected to continue its rapid growth with the ageing of the population and associated greater incidences of disabilities. The service is designed as a customized to-the-door service requiring planning, reservations, and dispatch functions for customer trips. Making conventional transit services accessible will never eliminate the need for specialised service because there are members of the disabled community who require to-the-door services for at least some of their travel needs. However, the availability of accessible conventional transit services will give some Wheel-Trans registrants another travel option, the ability to make spontaneous trips, to travel with groups of family and friends, and to be more fully-integrated into society.

Based on the 1997 *Accessible Transit Services Plan* recommendations, Wheel-Trans has been implementing Zone services with a focus on key accessible subway stations or other consistently high-demand centres. A significant feature of Zone Bus service is its ability to support integration between Wheel-Trans and accessible conventional service. These buses can act as a feeder for conventional bus and subway services, making it possible to combine the convenience of to-the-door service at both the origin and destination ends, with the economy of high-frequency conventional service for long trips. As such, it provides Wheel-Trans the option of encouraging passengers to use accessible conventional service where available and, thereby, ensure a return on the large investment required to make conventional transit accessible. This strategy also improves Wheel-Trans cost-effectiveness by reducing the number of long trips made by Wheel-Trans vehicles, and improves service quality by reducing passenger on-board time.

Wheel-Trans is currently operating ten Zone Bus services, and this number may increase with the demand for service. In order to provide more passenger-trips with the current resources available, scheduling "windows" have been established for customer pick-up times to improve scheduling flexibility. Refinements to this approach are presently being considered. Refinements to customer information and communications systems, and automation of trip reservation systems are also being implemented to improve the quality of service provided to customers.

Purchase of New ELF Buses

In 1997, the *Accessible Transit Services Plan* recommended that the TTC replace the Wheel-Trans bus fleet. A variety of lift-equipped and low-floor buses were tested and assessed by Wheel-Trans customers, ACAT, various organisations serving seniors and people with disabilities, and TTC staff. As a result of these assessments, the TTC ordered ELF (economic low-floor) buses.

The first order of ELF buses was for 137 vehicles and was delivered in 1999/2003. The cost of the replacement and expansion of the specialized bus fleet was approximately \$30M.

The ELF buses have a 7-year life expectancy, so the fleet will have to be replaced between 2007 and 2010. This requirement, along with a forecast need for 12 additional vehicles to address increasing demand, has been included in the TTC's 2003 fleet plan presented as part of the TTC's 2003-2012 Capital Budget. It calls for 151 buses to be delivered from 2007 to 2011. The anticipated delivery schedule is: 77 buses in 2007; 33 buses in 2008; 26 buses in 2009; and 15 buses in 2011. Over a similar timeframe, the accessible taxis required are anticipated to increase from 73 to approximately 100 vehicles.



ELF Bus

Computer-Based Systems Improvements

There are two significant computer-based system projects planned to upgrade and enhance Wheel-Trans service delivery. The first is the upgrading/replacement of the Wheel-Trans Information System (WTIS). This system, which was developed 10 years ago, has award-winning software that is the basis for daily trip-planning, vehicle scheduling and dispatching of trips. It is a critical system in maintaining Wheel-Trans operations. Since its implementation, the system has continued to evolve and be enhanced, but the primary software used to develop the system is now out-of-date. This makes system support and scheduling enhancements both difficult and expensive.

Wheel-Trans is also currently installing Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) equipment on each of its buses and plans to have all vehicles equipped by the end of 2004. This project will provide for real-time vehicle information in order to improve schedule adherence, vehicle productivity and customer trip information.

5.2 Community Bus Service

Wheel-Trans services four Community Bus routes as shown in Exhibit 1. These routes are operated on a fixed route and provide regularly-scheduled accessible service. They operate with regular TTC fares, and passengers have transfer privileges to other TTC services. However, the services differ from other TTC routes because they have been designed largely to serve the local needs of seniors and disabled people, and they use smaller Wheel-Trans buses. The small size of the buses allows them to enter the driveways of facilities, such as nursing homes and other facilities for seniors and disabled people, where it might not be possible for a full-size bus to operate.

Wheel-Trans registrants are able to use the Community Bus services without booking a trip in advance, so they have opportunities for spontaneous travel and for more trips in general than they could make using Wheel-Trans services alone. They may also travel with an unlimited number of attendants, friends or family members as they would on other TTC accessible conventional transit but cannot on to-the-door services.



Community Bus

In 1997, the *Task Force on Accessible Transit* suggested the Community Bus services be terminated and the buses used in to-the-door service. However, the Commission did not approve this recommendation because of the benefits derived by seniors and others within the communities served by the routes. Requests have been received to expand Community Bus services into other areas of the City, but funding constraints have prevented the TTC from doing so to date.

5.3 Conventional Bus System

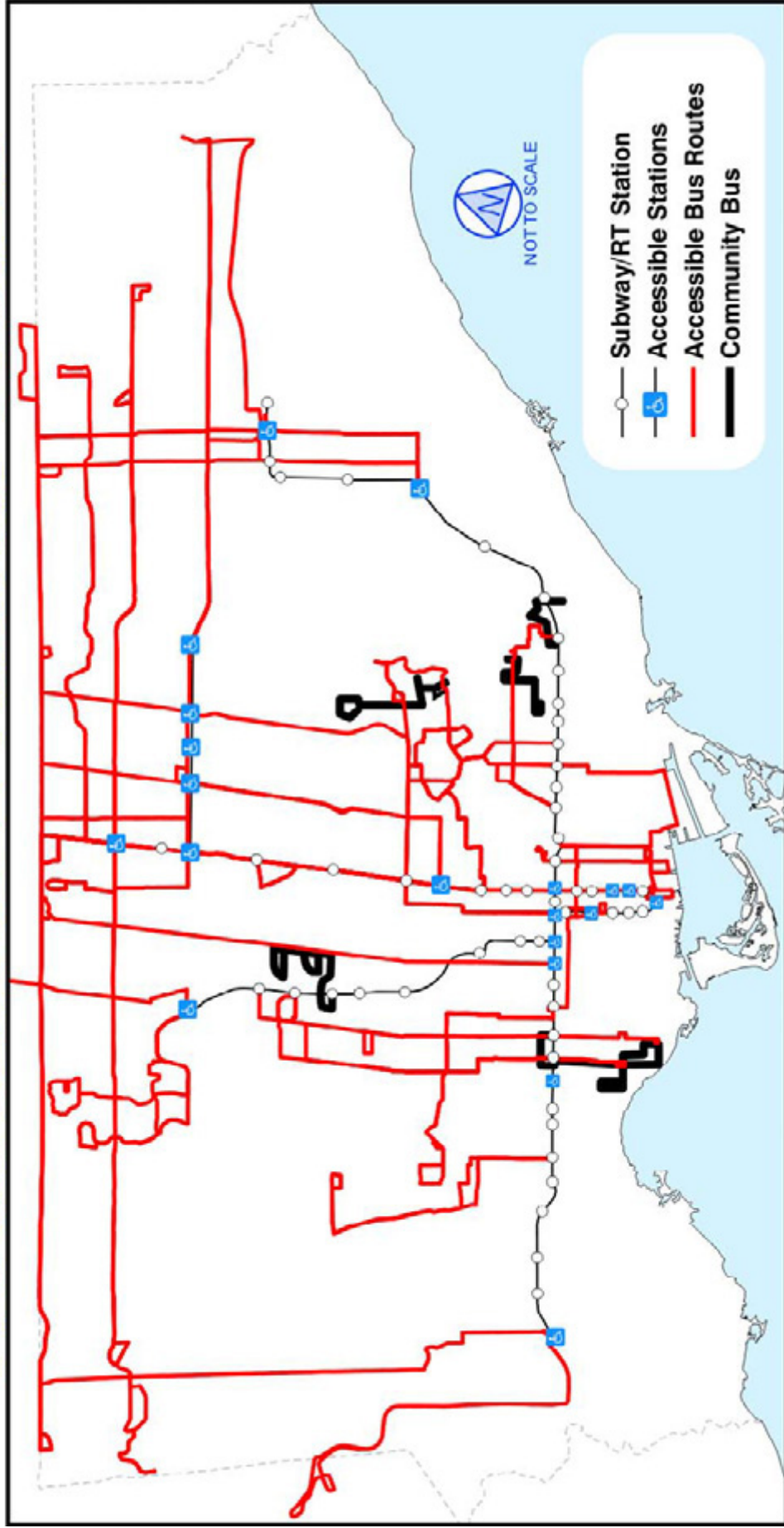
As of September 2003, the TTC owned an active fleet of 1,436 buses for conventional services, of which 338, or approximately 25%, are accessible. Two hundred and thirty-seven of the accessible buses are lift-equipped buses, while the remainder are low-floor. The number of accessible conventional buses will increase substantially with the delivery of 220 Orion VII low-floor buses expected by the end of 2004.

Exhibit 1 shows the routes that are currently designated as "accessible" in the TTC regular-route system. The accessible buses in the TTC's fleet are assigned to these routes, and the majority of bus trips on these routes are operated with accessible buses at all times of the day. These routes form part of a basic accessible network that the TTC has committed to maintaining at all times and which people with mobility difficulties can count on as having accessible service. The selection of these routes has been made through consultation with ACAT, based on the objective of maximizing benefits to seniors and people with mobility difficulties, connectivity to accessible subway stations, and proximity to important services or institutions. As additional accessible buses are added to the fleet, new routes will be designated as accessible in priority order of achievable benefits.

Periodically, some of the existing fleet of buses must be retired due to age and/or condition. The TTC also acquires buses to accommodate increases in passenger demand. The TTC's current policy is that all new bus purchases will be low-floor and accessible, conforming to the stringent standards developed in consultation with ACAT. In addition to

Exhibit 1

TTC ACCESSIBLE TRANSIT SYSTEM



the 220 accessible buses to be received in 2003 - 2004 to expand the accessible route network, a further 840 accessible buses will be received between 2005 and the end of 2008. As the new buses are obtained, new accessible routes will continue to be introduced and the quality of service on existing accessible routes will be improved. As illustrated in Exhibit 2, TTC's Conventional Accessible Bus Fleet, at the current rate of bus replacement, the entire TTC bus fleet will be accessible by the end of 2012.

Lift-equipped conventional transit buses were the first accessible conventional buses obtained by the TTC; the TTC wanted to obtain accessible conventional buses and they were the ones readily available at the time. Since then, low-floor accessible conventional transit buses have become the TTC's standard, because this design is strongly preferred by people with mobility difficulties over the lift type of conventional accessible buses. The new bus designs incorporate a wide range of accessibility features that are now part of TTC standard bus specifications including:

- a kneeling feature to lower the first step at the front of the bus,
- access ramp
- improved P.A. systems,
- additional lighting and high-contrast destination signage,
- easily-accessible stanchions, and
- highly-visible yellow nosing on stair treads.



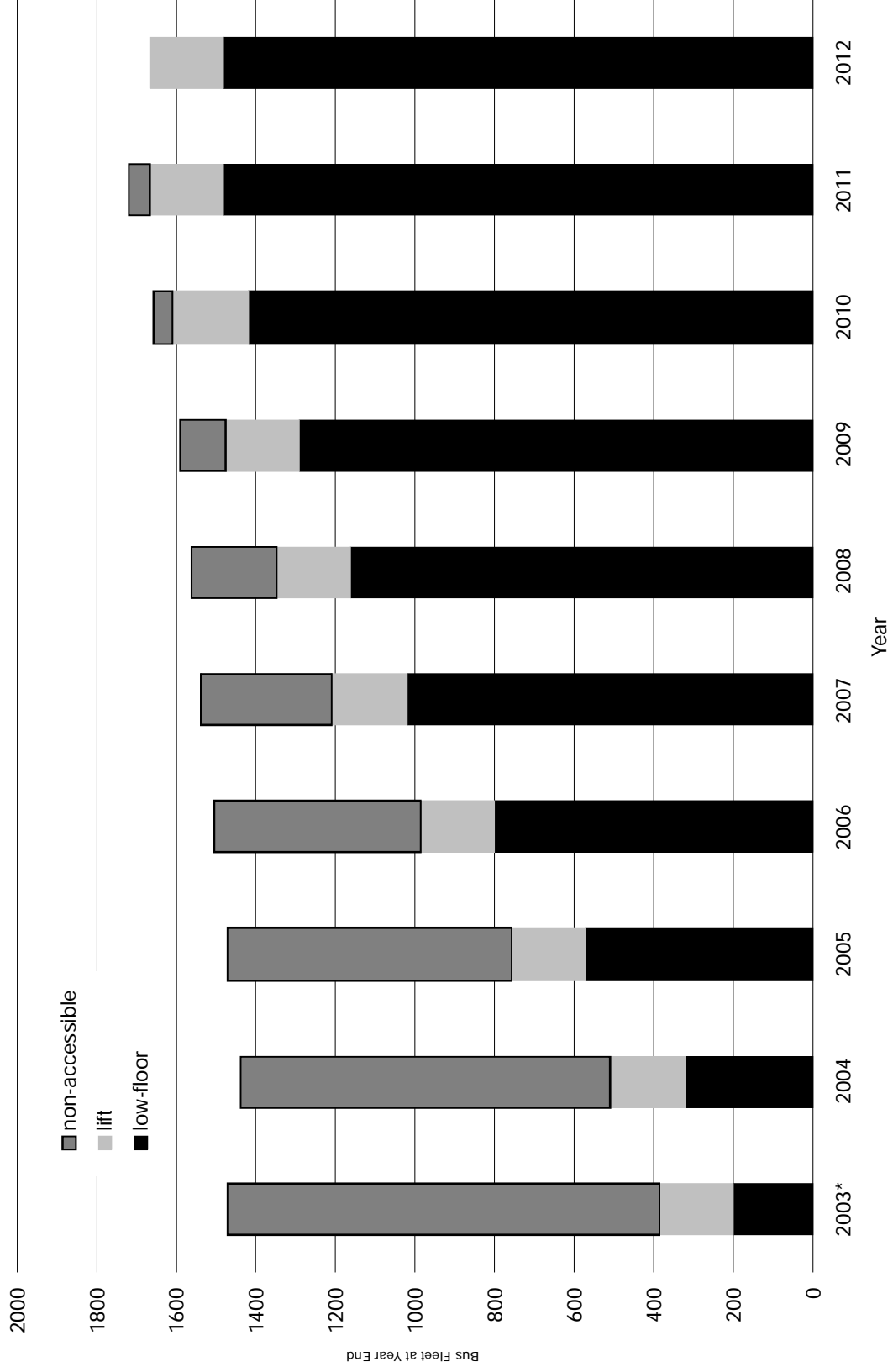
Low-floor Bus

The changes largely reflect the input received from ACAT and members of the accessibility community over many years. Recently, the ACAT Design Review Subcommittee examined the TTC's first of the 220 Orion VII accessible low-floor buses, and identified adjustments to wheelchair securement devices and other accessibility assists.

There are significant costs and operational implications of using low-floor buses. Because they have a lower passenger capacity than standard-floor buses, more of them are required to carry the same number of people. The complete conversion of the TTC bus fleet to low-floor vehicles, while maintaining current capacity, will require the purchase of additional buses to overcome the lower carrying capacity of these buses. For example, in the period 2003 – 2012, approximately 50 buses will be required solely to compensate for the reduced carrying capacity of the low-floor buses. This, in turn, means that operating costs will increase, because more operators are also required.

Another critical component of the TTC's move towards a high level of accessible transit service is the provision of both technical and sensitivity training to staff. The training of front-line staff includes the identification of customers' special needs and the means of meeting those needs.

Exhibit 2 TTC's Conventional Bus Fleet Year-End 2003-2012



* Includes 100 Orion VII planned for delivery in 2003 – not all were received by Dec 31, 2003

5.4 Subway/RT System

Sixty-four percent of all TTC passengers use the subway/rapid transit (RT) system, including people with mobility difficulties who use these services on a regular basis. Accessibility of the subway and Scarborough RT is a prime objective for the TTC. Unfortunately, none of the stations built prior to 1996 were constructed with elevators or with provisions for elevators to be installed later and, in the older stations in the system, the number of escalators is less than called for in current standards. The TTC has ongoing programs to address these shortcomings, and now the TTC operates 296 escalators, and 61 elevators.

The concept of making a number of “key stations” accessible was introduced in the 1989 report, *Choices for the Future*. The report identified how 20 of the TTC’s stations made accessible through the installation of elevators and other improvements, and served by Wheel-Trans, could meet the needs for accessible service in Toronto. Since that time, the TTC has greatly expanded the approach into an ongoing program to eventually make all stations accessible, and is quickly moving towards having all conventional buses accessible as well.



TTC Elevators

The TTC has taken the position that accessibility improvements must be part of any new station or major expansion of an existing station and that, when a private developer chooses to establish a direct connection with a TTC station, they must contribute to the installation of accessibility features. Easier Access improvements have been made at Downsview Station, and Spadina Station through projects other than the Easier Access II program, and the Sheppard Subway stations are also equipped with elevators and easier-access features.

Through the Easier Access program, the TTC, with extensive input from ACAT and the public, have developed a set of design standards for accessible stations which are now used in all station construction and reconstruction projects. In addition to elevators,



Accessible Doors

depending on the station design, there may be requirements for ramps, two or more sets of automatic doors and at least one accessible fare-gate. The standards also include improved signage, more benches, the removal of pathway obstructions, and the installation of guide tiles.

The evolution of the design standards is a continuing process, as users gain experience with the functionality of accessible stations and features and provide input to the design process. In 2003, staff and ACAT members jointly developed proposed revisions to the signage

used in Easier Access stations, including new directory signage. The proposed signage helps to identify the location of elevators, accessible doors to bus platforms, the location of bus bays served by conventional buses and Wheel-Trans services, and other accessibility features within stations.

"Easier Access" Subway Station Improvement Program

The "Easier Access" subway station improvement program initially dealt with improvements to help seniors, blind customers, and other ambulatory disabled people. It included the installation of way-finding tiles, handrails, and benches, etc. as well as vehicle access improvements. The second phase of the program, which is underway now, primarily deals with making existing priority stations in the TTC's subway and rapid transit system accessible through the construction of elevators, in addition to the lower-cost improvements mentioned. The third phase of the program will extend the Easier Access standards to the remaining stations in the system as funding is made available.

The Easier Access II initiative builds on the success of the Easier Access I program by adding elevators, accessible fare gates, automatic doors, signage improvements, ramps, and other features. In most cases, these additions require substantial modifications to the station structures. Because the original station designs did not call for the installation of elevators, the electrical systems were not designed to accommodate the additional power requirements and, therefore, require substantial upgrades. Improvements vary by station but include better lighting, better drop-off or transfer areas, improvements to intercom systems, seating, guide rails, customer monitoring systems, and other features. Six of the Easier Access stations also have barrier-free washrooms (Bloor-Yonge, Don Mills, Downsview, Kennedy, Kipling, and Finch).

The 1989 "Choices for the Future" analysis identified the need to make certain "key" stations accessible. These key stations would facilitate travel on the subway lines and transfers to TTC's to-the-door service. Over time, the list of stations to be addressed in the Easier Access II program has changed as priorities changed and opportunities presented themselves. The lessons learned from the Easier Access programs were applied to new stations to further increase the number of stations meeting the TTC's Easier Access standards.

At the end of 2003, the stations made accessible through the Easier Access II program were Queen, Union, Bloor-Yonge, Finch, Kipling, Kennedy, St. George, Bathurst, Scarborough Centre, Davisville, Dundas West, Dundas, and Queen's Park. (See Appendix 4 - TTC Accessible Transit System.) The cost of the improvements in those stations was approximately \$60 million. As listed in Exhibit 3, Accessible TTC Stations in 2003, twenty of the TTC's stations are now accessible as a result of the Easier Access II program, along with the construction of accessible stations as part of the Sheppard Subway project and other joint development arrangements at subway stations. Recently, it was confirmed that Osgoode Station would also be made accessible as part of a private development station-access proposal with the new Canadian Opera House. The installation of the elevators and other access features at the station are scheduled for completion in 2006.

The remaining stations in the Easier Access II program, which are listed in Exhibit 4, are Broadview, Eglinton West, York Mills, Eglinton, Jane, Main, St. Clair and Lawrence West. When the accessibility improvements at all these stations are complete in 2007, the total cost of the program, including Osgoode Station, will be in the order of \$96.5 million. Any future system expansions or major improvements, including additional private development access to stations, will be required to meet the TTC's Easier Access accessibility standards.

The third phase of Easier Access will extend the accessibility features to all the other subway and Scarborough RT stations that are not being addressed through the Easier Access II program or other subway expansion or improvement initiatives. Based on experience with the Easier Access II program, it is anticipated that the stations to be improved under the Easier Access III program will require, on average, 2 – 3 elevators per station. Along with the elevators themselves, there will be electrical system upgrades and structural modifications required to accommodate the elevator shafts and associated mechanical areas. Preliminary engineering and design work could begin immediately upon receiving funding approval. Improvements to stations could begin as early as 2005 – 2006 and proceed with two or three new stations each year being equipped with elevators and easier access features. This work would continue until all of the stations in the system are made accessible and the accessibility of Spadina Station, which does not currently provide access to both the Bloor and Spadina Subways, is improved. With funding approval in 2004, this work could be completed by 2020 at an estimated cost of approximately \$230 million. In 2004, a study will be conducted, in consultation with ACAT, to assist in determining where the phased development of stations is feasible, and to aid in determining the priority stations for the Easier Access III program.

The Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation is working with staff to develop a phased approach to the implementation of improvements in the Easier Access Phase III program. The concept would be to install the relatively modest features that facilitate transfers between accessible bus services at stations, in advance of the much-more extensive and time-consuming structural modifications and electrical system upgrades required for the installation of elevators at the Easier Access III stations. If feasible, the work would create barrier-free paths between the streets adjacent to stations and bus bays sooner than if these were implemented as part of the major station reconstruction and elevator installation projects.

As the number of accessible stations increase, it will become increasingly efficient for Wheel-Trans services to feed the subway/RT network for integrated trips. Improved integration of the accessible conventional and specialised services is proceeding with both Wheel-Trans buses and contracted accessible taxis to serve accessible stations as they come on stream. Wheel-Trans will assist its registrants to plan trips using both types of services, promoting integrated trips and, will encourage registrants to make integrated trips. The ease of Wheel-Trans connecting with accessible stations for integrated trips will grow beyond 2004 levels as the additional nine stations being made accessible through the Easier Access Phase II program are completed by the end of 2007.

Exhibit 3

Accessible TTC Stations in 2003

Station	# of Elevators	Year Accessible
Downsview	3	1996
Yonge/Bloor	3	1996
Union	3	1996
Queen	2	1997
Spadina *	3	1997
Kipling	2	1999
St. George	2	1999
Finch	4	1999
Kennedy	3	1999
Bathurst	2	1999
Scarborough Centre	2	2000
Queen's Park	2	2002
Davisville	4	2002
Sheppard/Yonge	7	2002
Bayview	4	2002
Bessarion	2	2002
Leslie	2	2002
Don Mills	5	2002
Dundas West	2	2002
Dundas	1	2002

* Accessible to Bloor-Danforth Subway

St. Clair West Station has an elevator, but is not accessible.

Exhibit 4

Budgeted Easier Access II Improvements – 2004 to 2007

Station	# of Elevators	Planned Completion
Main Street	2	2004
Eglinton	1	2004
Eglinton West	2	2005
Jane	3	2005
Broadview	2	2005
Osgoode	1	2006
St. Clair	2	2007
York Mills	2	2007
Lawrence West	1	2007

Opportunities for Further Development at Stations

If there are proposals for a private development direct connection to a TTC station, or linking a TTC station to a major development adjacent to a station, TTC policy requires that TTC accessibility requirements must now be met. The areas around TTC stations are attractive to many types of development, and links between the stations and private sector development add significantly to the convenience of those travelling to and from the development. In this way, the private sector developers who will benefit from an accessible link to a TTC accessible station contribute to the required access features and help the TTC achieve its accessibility objectives.

Broadview Station Improvement Project

Broadview Station is a major subway station on the Bloor-Danforth Subway, and a transfer point for streetcar and bus routes. It was identified in the "Choices for the Future" report as a key station to be made accessible. Unfortunately, Broadview Station is an old station, built in 1966, and is too small to accommodate current service needs or future increases in demand. The ability of the station to facilitate transfers between Wheel-Trans and TTC's conventional transit services is limited.

As with all the older TTC stations, provisions were not made for the installation of elevators or other major access features when Broadview Station was constructed. Because of this and the complexity of the design, the construction of access improvements at this station is expensive. Two elevators are required to make it accessible. The total cost of changes to the structures in the Broadview Station Modifications project will be in the order of \$9.5 million. In addition to the installation of elevators and other accessibility features, a second streetcar platform and other changes are being undertaken simultaneously. Construction of the Easier Access features at Broadview Station is scheduled for completion by the end of 2005.

Eglinton Temporary Replacement Bus Terminal Project

Eglinton Station is one of the priority stations for Easier Access improvements and was placed in the Easier Access II program as a result. As part of a larger reconstruction program, the existing multi-platform bus facility is being replaced, on a temporary basis, with an accessible single-platform facility, complete with new elevator and escalator services. Because a single-platform, 12-bus bay temporary facility is being constructed, it can be served by a single elevator strategically located close to the Yonge Street customer entrance and in approximately the mid-point of the new bus platform. An accessible fare gate, ramps, improved lighting, additional intercoms, accessible doors, and other features required by the TTC will compliment the elevator installation.

Eglinton Station will continue to be one of the busiest stations in the TTC subway systems in terms of both customers accommodated and as a service transfer point. Ten surface routes and Wheel-Trans will be able to transfer customers at the new temporary facility, and those transfers will be easier and more efficient. Non-ambulatory customers will be able to transfer between accessible services operated through the station. Work on the

Eglinton Temporary Bus Terminal Replacement project is projected to be completed in 2004 at a cost of approximately \$10 million.

Escalator Overhaul Program

Escalators are an important addition to TTC stations. In light of the benefits of escalators to many seniors and ambulatory people with disabilities, new stations built since the Easier Access I program have had escalators as well as elevators included in the design. New stations such as those on the Sheppard Subway have both.

As a result of the programs to overcome the barriers that stairs create to a significant proportion of the population, the TTC now operates a total of 296 escalators. These elevating devices run 20 hours per day in extreme conditions from a mechanical perspective (dampness, dirt, and salt corrosion in the winter) and, in many cases, experience very heavy usage. Improving escalator reliability is a major goal for the TTC, especially in those stations that do not have other escalators or elevators to provide an alternative to using stairs. Since 1997, when the escalator overhaul program was initiated to effectively manage ageing escalators that have surpassed their design life of 25 years, 69 of the oldest escalators have been completely rebuilt. In the period 2004 - 2008, a further 58 escalators will be overhauled at a cost of approximately \$21 million.

An overhaul typically includes the complete replacement of all escalator components, including electrical, safety devices, drive assembly, balustrade, step-band, handrail assembly, and controllers. While the end-result of such an extensive overhaul is more-reliable service for seniors, ambulatory disabled persons, and other customers, the overhaul work itself affects the travel of those who benefit most from the escalators. Through continuous process improvement initiatives, the overhaul completion time has been reduced from 28 weeks to 18 weeks. Ongoing efforts are directed at reducing the down time to 15 weeks to further minimize customer inconvenience.

To help customers know about escalators out of service, information on the status of escalators is placed on a special information line, and is available to customers by calling a TTC Customer Service Representative. This information is updated every morning and as required during the day.

Accessible Subway and RT Vehicles

The TTC, with input from customers and ACAT, designed new subway cars that meet the TTC's high standards for accessible vehicles. The first of the T1 cars was built in 1995. The T1 cars have a multitude of accessibility feature improvements over the earlier H-4, H-5, and H-6 subway cars. These features include:

- wider doorways that can more-easily accommodate wheelchairs,

- the use of side stanchions rather than centre stanchions to permit those with mobility aids to more-easily move through the cars,
- door warning lights and chimes,
- improved lighting,
- better communications systems,
- flip-up seating to allow an area for wheelchairs and a locking device for some types of wheelchairs, and
- colour contrasting door thresholds.



Flip-up Seats for Wheelchair Position

The T1 car also incorporates the work done by TTC staff, ACAT, and the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, to design extended end-gates between subway cars. The new subway cars are a significant addition to the TTC's accessible vehicles. However, even these cars were subject to adjustment after they had been in use by customers and reviewed by ACAT and TTC staff. For example, the wheelchair clamps on the T1 cars proved to be problematic and were determined to be largely redundant. Few customers used them, and they were judged to be an impediment to those with large wheelchairs and scooters. ACAT advised the clamps could be eliminated from future orders.

To date, the TTC has purchased 372 new T1 subway cars to replace older cars that needed to be retired and to provide trains for the Sheppard Subway. The T1 cars make up over 50% of the TTC's total fleet of 678 subway cars in service.

The majority of the remainder of the subway fleet is made up of older H4 and H5 type subway cars that have been in operation since 1974 and 1977, respectively, and will reach the end of their useful life between 2004 and 2007. It will be necessary to replace older subway cars as they reach and exceed their design life expectancy, and to purchase more cars to accommodate increased demand for subway service. The subway car delivery schedule calls for 76 subway cars to be received in 2008, 78 in 2009, and 78 in 2010. The 2004 – 2013 budget requires \$744 million for accessible subway car acquisition.



Accessible Trains

The Scarborough RT operates between Kennedy Station, the connecting point for the Bloor-Danforth Subway, and McCowan Station. The major stations on the line are Kennedy Station and Scarborough Centre Station, both of which

are accessible and are served by accessible bus routes. The smaller cars on the Scarborough RT have been in service since 1985, and are accessible to seniors and people with disabilities, although they do not have the capacity or all of the features of the longer and wider subway cars. The RT fleet plan calls for the fleet to be expanded from 28 to 44 cars in the next few years.

Automated Subway Station Stop Announcement System

An issue for some sight-impaired travellers on the subway and Scarborough RT systems is the provision of audio information regarding the next stop to be made by the train. The TTC's current practice is for train crews to manually announce the next stop over the train's PA system between stations as part of their normal operating routine. This approach works well most of the time, but in some situations stop announcements can sometimes be inconsistent. The TTC is investigating the use of an automated stop announcement system similar to that used in a number of other subway systems. If an acceptable system can be found which can be retrofitted onto the existing subway and Scarborough RT cars, installation would occur in 2005/2006. The program is expected to cost about \$2 million and has been included in the TTC's 2004-2008 Capital Budget.

5.5 Accessibility of the Streetcar Network

The TTC currently has a fleet of 248 streetcars. The 196 Canadian Light Rail Vehicles (CLRV) are the oldest in the fleet, as they were delivered to the TTC between 1978 and 1982. A further 52 Articulated Light Rail Vehicles (ALRV's) were delivered to the TTC between 1987 and 1989. Neither of these vehicle designs have low-floors, and the vehicles are not accessible to people who cannot climb steps.

Making the TTC's streetcar operation accessible is problematic. The potential to retrofit the TTC's current streetcars with lifts has been thoroughly investigated, and the finding is that lift equipment cannot be installed on TTC streetcars in any practical way, at either the front or the back doors, due to the structural design and technology of the vehicles. Additionally, lifts would not assist the large number of people who have mobility difficulties but who do not use wheelchairs or scooters and cannot safely and comfortably ride lifts.

Even with the purchase of new accessible streetcars, the streetcar network would still have limited accessibility due to operating and safety constraints. The two newest streetcar lines in Toronto, the 509 HARBOURFRONT and 510 SPADINA lines have been designed with their own right-of-way and have protected passenger loading platforms in the middle of the street. With accessible vehicles, it may be possible to operate these routes as accessible services in a safe way. On most of the TTC's current streetcar network, however, the vehicles operate in the centre of the road in mixed traffic and usually do not have protected passenger-loading platforms. This type of operation requires that passengers board the vehicles from the road itself. To provide accessible service on these routes introduces both safety concerns and practical physical concerns, even with accessible vehicles, because of the requirement to deploy a ramp into a lane of traffic. The difficulties might be increased in winter snows, on routes where curb cuts are few or

inadequate, or where there are other impediments for non-ambulatory people or those needing guidance in crossing traffic lanes.

New accessible streetcars are very costly; current estimates are that they would cost the equivalent of \$3 million to \$4 million per unit to replace the current CLRV fleet. The TTC's current plan is to rebuild the existing cars to extend their life. The CLRV fleet is scheduled to undergo a major rebuild program between 2006 and 2013, which is expected to extend the life of the vehicles by 10 to 15 years. The cost to rebuild each car is approximately \$1.1 million, and the total program is budgeted for \$214 million.

The demand for streetcar service is expected to exceed the capacity of the existing fleet over time and, eventually, new streetcars will need to be acquired. These vehicles will be accessible and, when received, would be assigned to the streetcar routes where safe accessible operation is possible. In addition, it is expected that any new streetcar lines constructed, notably in the Waterfront area, will be designed to be accessible and, if additional vehicles are required to operate these lines, new accessible vehicles will be purchased at that time.

6.0 System-Wide Initiatives

6.1 Integration of TTC Accessible Services

There are a number of substantial benefits to increasing the availability of integrated accessible trips using to-the-door and conventional services. Providing Wheel-Trans specialised services is costly on a per-passenger basis, and the capacity of the specialised service is constrained by vehicle availability and funding. There are also social and community benefits in helping people with mobility difficulties to be more integrated into mainstream activities. Conventional services can be more attractive than Wheel-Trans services for many passengers because of the opportunities for spontaneous and non-time-restricted travel, and for disabled people to travel with large family, social, or school groups. For these reasons, the TTC will be making every reasonable effort to attract customers with disabilities to conventional services for all or part of their trips when possible.

Just as the subway system attracts customers because they do not want to be caught in slow-moving traffic on congested streets in peak periods, people with disabilities will benefit from accessible subway and rapid transit facilities. The accessible conventional bus routes oriented to accessible stations and to-the-door services will assist seniors and people with disabilities.

If Wheel-Trans registrants who can use conventional transit for many of their trips do so, it will allow Wheel-Trans resources to be focused on providing transportation for people who require to-the-door service. In 2004, Wheel-Trans buses and contract accessible taxis will be operating into designated bus bays within accessible stations to facilitate integrated trips. The service will provide an additional level of flexibility to Wheel-Trans in scheduling trips in an efficient manner and meeting the increasing demand for travel and, where possible, will relieve Wheel-Trans service of making trips that duplicate accessible subway services. A program will be undertaken in 2004 to inform Wheel-Trans registrants of their travel options and the added benefits to them of using accessible conventional services. Wheel-Trans registrants will be encouraged to make more use of accessible conventional services.

The Easier Access II station accessibility program will be completed in 2007, and 85% of the bus fleet is expected to be accessible at that time. This level of transit service accessibility will provide further opportunities for travel by TTC accessible services, and for integrated trips in particular. These opportunities will continue to increase as more stations are made accessible through the Easier Access III program.

6.2 Training Staff Who Deliver Accessible Services

The provision of both technical and sensitivity training is a critical component of the TTC's move towards a high level of accessible transit service. The TTC has a comprehensive, integrated approach to both the certification of new employees and the recertification of existing ones. The current approach to training on accessibility issues grew out of the

TTC's experience in developing and delivering stand-alone training programs such as the *Ambassador* program, the *Easier Access* program and the *All Aboard* program in the 1980's and 1990's. The experience gained with these special needs training programs has been built into the permanent programs now delivered to all front-line employees on an ongoing basis.

Accessibility and sensitivity issues are built into the curriculum, and training is systematically delivered and tracked. Approximately 3000 surface operators, 500 subway operators, 350 collectors, and 200 route supervisors receive both vehicle-specific training and broader sensitivity training as part of the ongoing training programs. All new and transferring bus operators are required to take a course for each type of accessible bus operated out of the Division to which they are assigned. In addition, all new employees receive two days of training on Customer Service and Professional Communication that deal with special needs including people with mobility difficulties. There is also a mandatory recertification process for all operators and collectors that includes similar material on accessibility issues. A new recertification cycle is being implemented for streetcar operators in 2004 and for bus operators in 2006. This will involve a two-day training course focussing on diversity and human rights issues.

Curricula for these programs are reviewed regularly and updated based on actual customer service reports to ensure that the training content accurately reflects real-life situations and customer needs.

In addition to the extensive training provided to all TTC operators, employees operating buses from Wheel-Trans take a further 10-day training program. The added training is required to familiarize the operators with the smaller accessible buses, the unique policies and operating practices of to-the-door accessible transit services, and the needs of disabled people who are the registrants for the service. As operators in Wheel-Trans service operate into TTC accessible stations for integrated trips, they must be knowledgeable of safe bus operating procedures within stations, and transfer opportunities between TTC services, as well as the procedures to be followed in assisting and securing customers.

Accessible taxi drivers under contract to Wheel-Trans service, who enter stations to provide integrated trips, will get an additional day of training in addition to their basic training.

6.3 Provision of Customer Information

"Easier Access" Brochure

The TTC has produced a number of brochures for distribution to customers, seniors groups, and agencies to help inform them about accessible services. The first "Easier Access" brochure focussed on providing non-ambulatory customers with information that would help them in using the TTC's accessible conventional services. With the assistance of ACAT, the initial brochure was expanded to provide more information that is important to seniors and people with disabilities, and was later updated to reflect the additional

accessible stations on the Sheppard Subway. An even more-recent version of the brochure will be distributed shortly, and will be included with the TTC's information on the TTC's web site. Because of the frequency and magnitude of the changes in accessible services planned by the TTC, further updates will be required in the future.

A brochure to help Wheel-Trans customers to become more familiar with the TTC's specialised services is planned for 2004, following consultation with ACAT. While both the Easier Access Brochure and the corresponding Wheel-Trans material will make reference to both the conventional and specialized services, the Wheel-Trans document will also provide information of special interest to Wheel-Trans registrants.

Trade Show Participation

The *People in Motion* trade show, which takes place annually in Toronto, focuses largely on mobility devices and transportation for mobility-restricted people. In 2002 and 2003, the TTC provided displays and distributed information on the TTC's accessible conventional and specialized transit services and facilities. On display were both a Wheel-Trans specialized transit bus and the TTC's current larger-capacity accessible conventional low-floor bus. The public had an opportunity to enter the vehicles on scooters, wheelchairs, and other devices, and to examine the accessibility features, so that they could better understand how they could use TTC services.

The show, and access to it by TTC services, is promoted through public address announcements, the Metron electronic sign system in the subways, an advertisement in the press media, bulletins on the Wheel-Trans trip-booking phone system, and in Wheel-Trans newsletters.

Customer Service Communications

Suggestions from customers on service expansion or other improvements, or complaints about difficulties with TTC services, are received by both Wheel-Trans and the Marketing and Public Affairs Department. The former will respond to matters on specialized transit services, while the latter receives customer input on all other TTC facilities and services, including conventional services designed and operated to serve seniors and people with disabilities.

Communications from TTC customers and the general public are of great assistance to the TTC. These communications identify such matters as equipment failures, or service improvements that the TTC can respond to. Each communication is logged and directed to the appropriate department to either address an immediate problem, or to be taken into consideration for upcoming planning and budget purposes.

7. Funding is the Key

The TTC is working as hard as possible to make all of the major elements of its system accessible, but the rate of change is dependent on the levels of funding provided. Fleet replacement costs makes up the largest proportion of the TTC's ongoing capital needs. \$2.2 billion of the TTC's 10-year Capital Budget of \$4.0 billion is for fleet replacement and for rebuilding vehicles. New purchases will include the acquisition of new accessible buses and subway cars. If the current 10-year base funding levels are approved, the TTC will move substantially closer to such significant objectives as having all bus services accessible by the end of 2012, and all stations being accessible by 2020.

The remainder of the TTC's capital budget is primarily for major rehabilitation of infrastructure such as track, bridges, tunnels, buildings, and structures. Approximately \$35 million of this part of the budget is for completion of the Easier Access Phase II program of installing elevators and accessible features in nine stations. The \$230 million Easier Access Phase III program to make the balance of the subway stations accessible is in the TTC's budget, but has not received any funding commitment from the City or senior levels of government to date.

As outlined in Section 2.1, the TTC's policies on accessibility were largely established during the late 1980's and early 1990's with the support of the Province of Ontario. The Province, at that time, provided 75% funding for the TTC's capital needs, 16% funding for conventional transit operating costs, and 50% funding for Wheel-Trans. Municipalities were required to improve transit system accessibility as a condition of receiving this funding. In 1998, the Province withdrew funding support for operating TTC services.

More recently, the Province of Ontario, through the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, has encouraged transit systems to improve the level of accessible service provided, and requires systems to report on progress towards improved accessibility. However, as of this date, the Province of Ontario is not providing the funding the TTC needs to achieve its objective of broad system-wide accessibility. Funding from the Province of Ontario and from the Government of Canada to support accessibility improvements would help the TTC to achieve its accessibility objectives.

As described in this report, the TTC has already completed, or is in the process of implementing, virtually all the improvements that can be made to improve accessibility on the system with the funding made available. The rate at which the TTC can proceed with implementing further accessibility improvements is dependent on the amount of funding received for such improvement initiatives.

8. Summary

The demand for travel on TTC accessible transit services has been growing rapidly, and will grow at an even faster rate, as a result of the ageing of the population and the higher incidences of disabilities associated with seniors. The TTC is taking a comprehensive, integrated approach to providing effective public transportation for this growing market. The approach incorporates both specialized services provided by Wheel-Trans, and continuing programs to make conventional services more accessible.

Wheel-Trans provides to-the-door service for 30,000 registrants who have significant mobility difficulties. Improvements are being made to Wheel-Trans services through improved efficiencies in order to reduce the considerable funding impact of meeting the significant growth in trip demand, but the cost of Wheel-Trans services, on a per-passenger basis, may limit the extent to which this service can be expanded. The TTC is also committed to making its conventional services as accessible as possible, and has a systematic program in place to ensure that this is accomplished in a cost-effective and timely way. The program extends to all aspects of the TTC's conventional service from rebuilding the physical infrastructure of stations, to the purchase of accessible vehicles, the training of front-line personnel and the development of effective ways of communicating with passengers about accessible services.

All passengers, including seniors and people with disabilities, benefit from accessible conventional services. They permit people with disabilities to travel without the need to book trips in advance, to travel with an unlimited number of friends and relatives, and to be better integrated into society in general. While improving the accessibility of conventional services will never eliminate the need for to-the-door services, encouraging increased use of accessible conventional services may slow the need to expand Wheel-Trans services. Integrating Wheel-Trans and conventional services by having Wheel-Trans serve accessible stations will also provide a cost-effective way of improving service for all registrants with mobility difficulties.

The TTC's programs to improve accessible services and facilities benefit from the extensive consultation process established at the TTC to tap into the expertise of people with disabilities in developing solutions that work for everyone. The time and effort made by members of ACAT has been invaluable in bringing the TTC's accessibility program to the state it is today, and the TTC is committed to continue to work with members of the community in joint problem-solving efforts.

The rate at which the conventional TTC services can become more accessible is primarily dependent on the level of funding provided for accessibility initiatives. The TTC's 2004-2008 Capital Budget includes numerous projects that, directly and indirectly, will dramatically improve accessibility on the system. These projects, which have been described in this report and which are listed in Exhibit 5, *2004-2008 Capital Budget Projects Relating to Accessibility*, have a total value of \$2.3 billion. Based on current plans, the bus fleet will be fully accessible by the end of 2012 and elevators will be installed throughout the subway and RT system by 2020.

Exhibit 5

2004-2008 Capital Budget Projects Relating to Accessibility

Excerpt from the TTC's 2004-2008 Capital Budget (\$ thousands)

Budget Page Ref.	DESCRIPTION	Total Probable to end of 2003	Budget 2004-2008	Total Project Cost
	<i>ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS</i>			
337	Station Stop Announcement System	\$0	\$1,910	\$1,910
	<i>BUILDINGS & STRUCTURES</i>			
517	Subway Escalator Overhaul Program	\$23,160	\$20,566	\$61,696
715	Easier Access Phase II	\$65,915	\$30,585	\$96,500
733	Broadview Station Modifications	\$2,838	\$6,712	\$9,550
747	Eglinton Bus Terminal Replacement	\$6,102	\$4,294	\$56,056
913	Easier Access Phase III Study	\$0	\$300	\$300
	<i>VEHICLES</i>			
923/927	Purchase 40' Accessible Hybrid Buses	\$52,082	\$605,097	\$852,989
931	Purchase of Future Wheel Trans Buses	\$0	\$25,061	\$50,592
945	Purchase of 232 Subway Cars	\$0	\$396,027	\$774,000
1003	Purchase of 16 Mark-1 RT Cars	\$119	\$71,581	\$71,700
1357	100 Additional 40' Accessible Hybrid Buses	\$0	\$71,016	\$71,016
	<i>COMPUTER EQUIPMENT & SOFTWARE</i>			
1267	WTIS Replacement	\$200	\$1,340	\$1,540
1275	WTIS Data Flow Enhancements	\$146	\$302	\$448
1285	Wheel-Trans AVL Pilot/Rollout	\$231	\$700	\$931
Total Approved Budget		\$150,793	\$1,235,491	\$2,049,228
1383	Easier Access Phase III Project	\$0	\$38,700	\$230,000
Total including access features at all stations		\$150,793	\$1,274,191	\$2,279,228

The TTC will focus on three primary activities in the coming years in providing accessible service. Those activities are maintaining and integrating services for Wheel-Trans registrants, meeting the established timetable for implementing accessibility improvements to the conventional services, and making the best use of new accessibility resources as they come on-stream. Higher levels of government funding would allow the TTC to make faster progress towards achieving all of its accessibility goals.

An accessibility plan will be produced annually which will show the progress being made by the TTC to achieve its accessibility goals, the status of the many accessibility initiatives, and the next steps that the TTC will take in its plan to make the entire system accessible.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX # 1

DEFINITION OF DISABILITY

The Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 and the Ontario Human Rights Code define "disability" as:

- (a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- (b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- (c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- (d) a mental disorder, or
- (e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

APPENDIX # 2

ACAT TERMS OF REFERENCE



ADVISORY COMMITTEE
ON
ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Reporting to the Toronto Transit Commission, the Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation shall be established as an advisory committee of the Commission to provide a mechanism for on-going public participation in accessible transportation and Wheel-Trans specialized transportation issues.

COMMITTEE ROLE

- 1/ Represent the needs and concerns of persons with disabilities and seniors who use Commission services.
- 2/ Provide guidance to the Commission on the provision of accessible public transportation.
- 3/ Advise the Commission on policy issues for services pertaining to the interests of persons with disabilities and seniors.

- 4/ Aid Commission staff in providing consultation, education, and advice related to persons with disabilities, seniors, and the community-at-large.

MEMBERSHIP

- 1/ Membership shall be open to interested residents of City of Toronto who use Commission services (occasional, frequent, or regular customers) and shall represent the following:
 - a/ Disability type; representation from a broad spectrum of persons with disabilities; i.e. physical, sensory, communication.
 - b/ A minimum of two (2) seniors.
 - c/ A maximum of two (2) other persons exclusive of a) and b).
- 2/ The Advisory Committee shall be composed of fifteen (15) members, exclusive of the Ex-Officio member(s) identified in 3/ below.
- 3/ Ex-Officio members of the Advisory Committee are as follows:
 - a/ A member of the Toronto Transit Commission, appointed by the Commission, shall serve as an Ex-Officio member of the Advisory Committee.
 - b/ Past Chair Proviso - Should the retiring Chair be scheduled to leave the Committee, this individual shall serve in an ex-officio capacity for one-year post retirement.
- 4/ Members shall be appointed for a three (3) year term, with 1/3 of the Advisory Committee members retired and replaced each year.
- 5/ Retired members may reapply after a one (1) year absence from the Advisory Committee.
- 6/ A vacancy may be declared at such time that:
 - a/ A member submits a letter of resignation or is otherwise unable to complete his/her term, and/or
 - b/ A member is asked to resign by the Advisory Committee due to excessive absenteeism.
 - c/ Any such vacancies shall be filled as soon as possible. The new member shall serve for the balance of the term of the member replaced.

SELECTION PROCESS

The membership selection process shall be undertaken with a membership solicitation through advertisement and direct mailings to the community-at-large.

- 1/ Persons with disabilities, seniors, and those who have a knowledge of and interest in accessible transportation issues, and who are willing to make a commitment to attend and participate in Advisory Committee meetings and other related activities, shall submit letters of application outlining their qualifications.
- 2/ For appointments to the Advisory Committee, applications shall be reviewed and evaluated by a three (3) member selection Committee composed two staff representatives from the Commission, and one member of the Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation. The selection committee shall submit recommendations for appointment to the Toronto Transit Commission who shall make final decisions on all appointments.

OFFICERS

- 1/ The Officers shall consist of a Chair and two (2) Vice-Chairs. Officers shall be elected by the Committee membership annually, early in the calendar year. For each officer's position, the member with the most votes on a single ballot is declared elected.
- 2/ The Chair shall preside at all Advisory Committee meetings, attend Commission meetings, and represent the Committee at public functions. The Vice-Chairs shall serve in the absence of the Chair, and Committee members shall serve in various roles as appropriate.

QUORUM AND VOTING

- 1/ Fifty percent (50%) of the eligible Committee Members plus one constitute a quorum for the meetings.
- 2/ Each member is entitled to one vote on each motion.

MEETINGS

- 1/ Committee meetings will be held monthly or at the call of the Chair.
- 2/ At meetings of the Committee, the Committee will entertain depositions from the public with respect to issues pertaining to transit for persons with disabilities and seniors.

COMMISSION STAFFING

- 1/ Commission staff shall act as a liaison and resource to the Advisory Committee and all other committees convened by the Advisory Committee as mutually agreed upon by the Committee and staff to ensure expedient responses to recommendations and areas of concern.
- 2/ Clerical support shall be assigned for the purpose of recording and distributing Committee minutes, meeting notices, correspondence, etc.
- 3/ The General Superintendent - Wheel-Trans Operations and appropriate staff will provide ongoing support, liaison, and administration to the Advisory Committee and shall attend all meetings of the Advisory Committee. Other Commission staff will be called upon to also attend as issues warrant.

AMENDMENTS

Recommendations for amending the Terms of Reference may be made by submission in writing to the Chairperson by any member of the Advisory Committee. Only recommendations approved by a majority vote of the Advisory Committee shall be forwarded to the Commission for consideration.

APPENDIX # 3

Assessments in 2004

At the July 31, 2003 general meeting of the Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation, TTC staff and ACAT members outlined the progress made in the first half of 2003 on a variety of items being investigated by the ACAT subcommittees. Also identified at that time, and later in the year, were issues to be addressed in the latter part of 2003 and/or in 2004. The following is an outline of the major issues being addressed.

1. Easier Access and Wheel-Trans Brochures

The Easier Access Brochure was originally produced to provide non-ambulatory customers with information that would help them use the TTC's accessible conventional services. With the assistance of ACAT, the initial brochure was expanded to provide more information of interest to seniors and people with disabilities and, more recently, was updated to reflect the additional accessible stations on the Sheppard Subway. In 2003, staff requested another review of the brochure with ACAT's advice on further refinements.

A version of the Easier Access Brochure is included with the TTC's information on the TTC's web site. It is expected that both the paper and the electronic versions of the updated document will be available to seniors and people with disabilities in early 2004. However, the process will not end with the completion of the newest edition. TTC staff and ACAT members will consider ongoing revisions to keep customers informed of service improvements such as additional bus routes being made accessible, stations added to the list of Easier Access facilities, and advancements made in integrating TTC's the specialized and conventional transit services, and to encourage use of accessible services.

A brochure to help Wheel-Trans registrants to become more familiar with these specialized services is also planned, and will be available in both print and electronic form in 2004. While both the Easier Access Brochure and the corresponding Wheel-Trans material will make reference to both the conventional and specialized services, the Wheel-Trans document will provide information of special interest to Wheel-Trans registrants.

2. Emergency Evacuation Simulation

The evacuation of a Wheel-Trans bus will be reviewed as part of the TTC's efforts to educate staff and to be prepared in the event of a major emergency. The test evacuation will be the latest in a number of tests on buses and the subway system, including the new Sheppard Subway. The evacuation test on the Sheppard Subway allowed for the test of the emergency preparedness of the TTC and Toronto's emergency services. As well, it provided an opportunity to assess the TTC-designed SERV Cart to help with the rapid evacuation of those in wheelchairs and others who are unable to evacuate the subway unaided.

As with the past evacuation tests, ACAT members will be participants in the Wheel-Trans bus test, and will be requested to share their observations and advice from the unique perspective of seniors and people with disabilities.

3. Easier Access Station Audits and ACAT Surveys

ACAT members have helped staff by undertaking various audits of Easier Access stations, conducting assessments of accessible vehicles, and identifying opportunities to improve services.

The station audits help staff to determine if the accessible features at stations have been implemented as designed and are functioning as intended. The assessment of accessible vehicles, such as the one performed on the Orion VII test bus in 2003 by ACAT members, provide similar benefits to the station audits. The "Secret Shopper" assessments of existing accessible services help identify opportunities to improve the quality of service to TTC customers in general but, more specifically, for seniors and people with disabilities.

In 2004, ACAT members will be asked to audit Main Street and Eglinton stations because it is anticipated the installation of elevators, accessible fare gates, accessible doors, and other features will be completed at those Easier Access II stations during the year. They will also revisit the Sheppard Subway after it has been in operation for more than a year to determine if there are any lessons to be learned from the design and operation of this line that can be applied to future subway expansions or Easier Access station upgrades.

In 2003, ACAT members set out to produce incident reports, trip logs, and survey forms that would help them in collecting information on TTC accessible services. Following the completion of the survey forms and other materials in 2004, ACAT members will use these to document observations on the both the benefits of accessible services and the areas where further improvement is required in TTC's services and facilities.

4. Improved Integration of Conventional and Specialized Services

Wheel-Trans provides service through contracted sedan and accessible taxi services. Starting in early 2004, accessible taxi drivers, who have been trained by Wheel-Trans, will be permitted to pick up and drop off Wheel-Trans registrants at bus platforms in subway stations in the same manner as Wheel-Trans bus operators. This will give the registrants an alternative way to travel, permit them to travel more easily with friends and family on the subway, and relieve Wheel-Trans of making trips that duplicate subway services. For this service to be as successful as it could be, potential users must be aware of this option, and transfers between services must be promoted to Wheel-Trans registrants. Therefore, ACAT will also provide advice on how TTC might inform Wheel-Trans registrants of their travel options and how to encourage the use of accessible conventional services.

5. Allocation of Accessible Conventional Buses

The non-accessible buses in the TTC fleet are being replaced with low-floor accessible buses as the new vehicles are obtained. This acquisition of accessible buses, and the removal of non-accessible buses, will continue until the objective of all buses in TTC conventional and specialized services being accessible is achieved in 2012. As the new buses are obtained, the quality of service on existing accessible routes will be improved and new accessible routes will be introduced.

As the new buses are received, they will be assigned to bus divisions according to need and ability to accommodate, maintain, and dispatch the vehicles. The determination of what routes will become accessible in the phased assignment of buses is done through an evaluation of the candidate routes undertaken in consultation with ACAT members. In 2003, ACAT members were asked to provide input on the allocation of 220 accessible low-floor buses. The extensive assessment of how to best utilize the accessible buses in order to improve the level and quality of accessible service on routes already designated as accessible and to extend accessible bus service to more routes, was initiated in June and completed in December, 2003.

ACAT provided advice on the distribution of accessible buses between bus divisions so that both the existing accessible routes would be significantly improved and up to 15 additional routes could be designated as being accessible in 2004.

In 2004, ACAT members will review the actual operation the new Orion VII accessible buses on the streets of Toronto.

6. Review of Community Bus Service

There are four Community Bus routes in Toronto. These routes are operated as scheduled services on fixed routes by Wheel-Trans. The buses used are accessible buses of smaller size and lower capacity than the buses regularly used in scheduled bus service. The vehicles are however, better designed to enter the driveways of nursing homes or other facilities where it might not be possible for a full size bus to be safely navigated.

The Community Bus services are meant to serve areas with concentrations of facilities serving seniors and people with disabilities and which are not served directly by conventional accessible services.

Wheel-Trans registrants are able to use the Community Bus services without booking a trip through the Wheel-Trans reservations system and customers can transfer to and from conventional TTC bus services.

ACAT has advised that it might be appropriate to consider changes to the existing services and the possibility of introducing a new Community Bus route. TTC staffs will assess such advice and suggestions and discuss the findings with ACAT.

7. Phased Development of Stations

Access to all the levels of a subway station requires the installation of elevators and other major changes. Such changes are costly and time consuming to make, and can be disruptive to the use of the stations during the construction period. Funding limitations restrict the rate at which elevators can be installed at subway stations.

Bus and/or streetcar routes, as well as subway or rapid transit service, may serve non-accessible stations. With this in mind, ACAT and TTC staff agreed to investigate the phased development of stations to permit people with disabilities to use non-accessible stations to access some transit services before elevators are installed.

Members of an ACAT subcommittee visited a number of non-accessible stations and advised on the features that would generally be required to permit people in wheelchairs to have barrier-free access to bus services at stations and to facilitate transfers between accessible bus routes. Subsequently, an examination was made of stations to get an appreciation of the increased access to services this phased approach to station accessibility would provide.

The observations to date suggest, while there are a few stations which would lend themselves to such phased development, many stations will require elevators, significant structural changes, or other major improvements before non-ambulatory people can effectively use them. These latter stations would, therefore, not be good candidates for phased development.

In 2004, ACAT members will help confirm which stations might be candidates for phased development, confirm what access features would be needed, and what impediments to travel would need to be addressed. The observations and advice will also feed into a larger study on prioritizing stations for the third phase of the Easier Access station improvement program.

8. Improved Signage and Access Guides

In 2003 an ACAT subcommittee worked on possible revisions to signs used in Easier Access stations, including new directory signage. The proposed signage would help identify the location of elevators, accessible doors to bus platforms, and other accessibility features within stations.

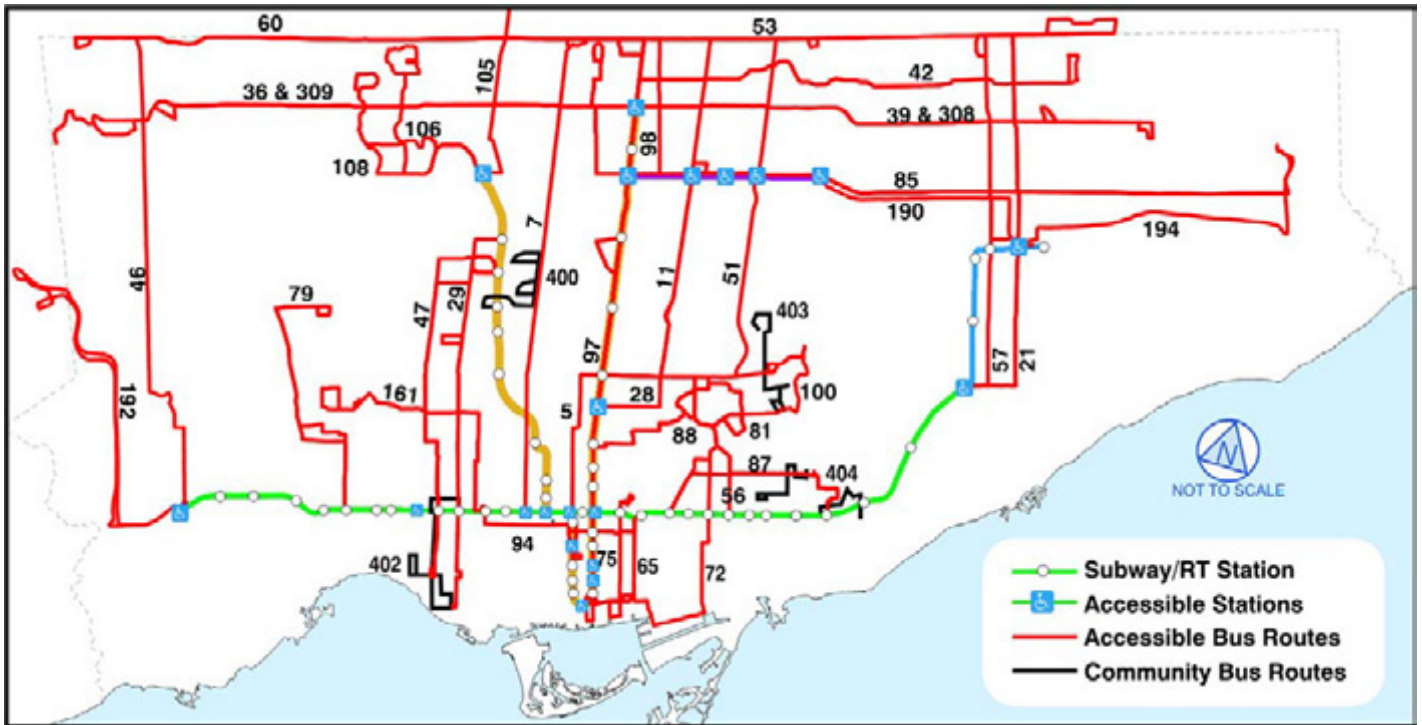
A prototype directory sign was developed for one of the Easier Access II stations. The signage showed what access features were in the station, the location of bus bays served by conventional buses and Wheel-Trans services, and other information to help people with disabilities locate the features and services they need. A meeting was held at the station to confirm that the directory signage would meet the needs of seniors and people with disabilities.

Factors considered included the use of materials that would not create too much glare for sight-restricted people, mounting heights that would be appropriate for most people in wheelchairs as well as ambulatory customers, and contrasting colours and shading. Where possible, the signage will use appropriate symbols and graphics to depict services, can be easier to see and to interpret.

As the requirements for signage may vary between stations because of the different physical layouts of the stations, the design of directory and other accessibility signage will be continue to be refined in 2004 and beyond.

In 2004, staff and ACAT will be discussing the posting of notices or other communications on accessibility features and services at stations. Furthermore, suggestions for additional tactile/Braille guides for blind people will also be investigated in 2004.

TTC ACCESSIBLE TRANSIT SYSTEM



In its continuing effort to make the existing TTC transit system more accessible, the routes and stations listed here have been improved to accommodate those customers requiring accessibility features.

For information including bus schedules and elevator operational status, call 393-INFO (4636). Call Wheel-Trans Reservations at 393-4222 for assistance in planning your trips using Wheel-Trans.

Accessible Bus Routes

- 5 Avenue Rd
- 7 Bathurst
- 11 Bayview
- 21 Brimley
- 28 Davisville
- 29 Dufferin
- 36 Finch West
- 39 Finch East
- 42 Cummer
- 46 Martin Grove
- 47 Lansdowne
- 51 Leslie
- 53 Steeles East
- 56 Leaside
- 57 Midland
- 60 Steeles West
- 65 Parliament
- 72 Pape
- 75 Sherbourne
- 79 Scarlett Rd
- 81 Thorncliffe Park
- 85 Sheppard East
- 87 Cosburn
- 88 South Leaside
- 94 Wellesley
- 97 Yonge
- 98 Willowdale-Senlac
- 100 Flemingdon Park
- 105 Dufferin North
- 106 York University
- 108 Downsview
- 161 Rogers Rd
- 190 Scarborough Centre Rocket
- 192 Airport Rocket
- 194 Zoo Rocket

Accessible Stations

Yonge-University-Spadina

- Downsview
- St George
- Queen's Park
- Union
- Queen
- Dundas
- Bloor-Yonge
- Davisville
- Sheppard-Yonge
- Finch

Scarborough RT

- Kennedy
- Scarborough Centre

Bloor-Danforth

- Kipling
- Dundas West
- Bathurst
- Spadina* (Bloor only)
- St George
- Bloor-Yonge
- Kennedy

Sheppard

- Sheppard-Yonge
- Bayview
- Bessarion
- Leslie
- Don Mills

Blue Night Routes

- 308 Finch East
- 309 Finch West

Community Bus Routes

- 400 Lawrence Manor
- 403 South Don Mills
- 402 Parkdale
- 404 East York

For information on TTC services, routes, maps and schedules, see our website or call.

