

TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION REPORT NO.

MEETING DATE: February 17, 2010

SUBJECT: ACCESSIBLE TRANSIT SERVICES PLAN:
2009 STATUS REPORT

ACTION ITEM

RECOMMENDATION

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

- this report fulfils the provincially-legislated requirement in the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* for an annual documentation of the TTC's accessibility plan;
- the TTC is making steady progress in the implementation of its *Accessible Transit Services Plan*, with accessibility initiatives underway on bus, streetcar, and rapid transit modes;
- the status of the TTC's current activities to improve the accessibility of its facilities and services are described in more detail in the attached Appendix 1, entitled, *TTC Accessible Transit Services Plan - 2009 Status Report*;
- due to budget constraints imposed through the TTC's 2010-2014 Capital Budget process, the TTC will not be able to retrofit subway stations with elevators and accessibility features as quickly as previously planned. Previous plans called for all stations to be retrofitted by 2020, while the current plan defers this date to 2024;
- the TTC could accelerate the rate at which its accessibility plan can be implemented if senior levels of government or Metrolinx were to provide additional funds for station accessibility; and
- Provincial regulations under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities, 2005* (AODA) are being enacted, and these will apply to all public sector agencies, including the TTC. Regulations regarding customer service came into effect January 2010, and the TTC has taken the appropriate actions to implement these regulations. Harmonised regulations for accessible transportation, the built environment, employment, and communications are expected to be finalised in 2010. The Province has not yet made a commitment to assist with any operating and/or capital cost increases which might result from the AODA regulations.

FUNDING

This report has no effect on the TTC's operating or capital budgets.

BACKGROUND

The TTC is proceeding towards its goal of making all of its services and facilities accessible by 2025, consistent with the Provincial mandate of an accessible province by 2025.

The Province requires transit properties to report annually on plans for accessibility improvements, and the TTC has done so since February 2004. The purpose of this year-end report is to:

- respond to the legislated requirement for an annual status report; and
- provide an update on current TTC activities to make its system accessible; these are described in the appendix to this report, entitled, *TTC Accessible Transit Services Plan – 2009 Status Report*.

DISCUSSION

The status of programs and initiatives at the TTC to make its services and facilities accessible to everyone is discussed in Appendix 1. Prior to 2009, the major TTC accessibility initiatives included:

- development of extensive to-the-door and community bus services operated by TTC's Wheel-Trans;
- purchase and deployment of lift-equipped and low-floor conventional transit buses, in order to make the TTC's network of regular fixed-route services accessible;
- the Easier Access subway station retrofit programs to make stations accessible to serve both ambulatory and non-ambulatory disabled people and to facilitate integration between Wheel-Trans specialized services and the TTC's fixed-route system; and
- making all stations on the Sheppard Subway accessible.

In 2009, the TTC undertook the following specific initiatives to further improve and expand its accessible transit services:

- acquisition of 146 additional accessible buses and the associated designation of 26 new accessible bus routes;

- acquisition of 110 replacement and service-expansion Wheel-Trans buses for delivery in 2009 and 2010;
- hosting a successful community meeting -- jointly with the Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation (ACAT) -- specifically regarding accessibility issues on the TTC; and
- undertaking of extensive public consultation related to the planning, environmental assessment, and design features of the *Transit City* lines, including provisions for accessible service.

The TTC has a number of ongoing initiatives which will continue to improve the ease and convenience of transit travel for everyone, including people with disabilities:

- the further replacement of existing non-accessible buses with low-floor buses;
- the impending replacement of the current fleet of non-accessible streetcars with new, modern accessible light rail vehicles;
- the continuing initiative to make more existing subway stations accessible in order to ensure that all stations will be accessible by 2025; and
- the TTC's commitment to make all new rapid transit stations and all stations and stops on the *Transit City* light rail lines accessible.

Some, or all, of these programs, budgets, and schedules to improve system accessibility may be affected by the forthcoming Provincial regulations on accessibility standards. This is discussed below.

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

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) requires that all public facilities and services be accessible in Ontario by 2025, and provides for the development of accessibility standards to achieve this goal. The Province of Ontario is currently developing specific regulations for implementation of the AODA, and these are expected to affect the TTC's schedules, priorities, and operating expenses, especially if they impose requirements that are not included in the TTC's current accessibility plans.

The first standards developed under the AODA pertaining to customer service came into effect January 1, 2010. In compliance with these regulations, the Commission has developed and approved a corporate policy regarding customer service accessibility which is available on the TTC's web site at:

http://www3.ttc.ca/TTC_Accessibility/Commitment_to_Accessibility/index.jsp

The TTC also provided training to all staff, contractors, and consultants directly involved with the public, and management staff who have input into the development of policies or procedures that could affect people with disabilities.

In a similar fashion, the Province is developing a sector-specific standard that pertains to public transportation services in Ontario, and general accessibility standards for information and communications, employment, and the built environment. These standards are in various stages of development.

These standards will apply community-wide, and the TTC has been working with the City of Toronto, and other transit agencies, to provide input on the overall standards and on transit-specific issues and concerns. In particular, as described in a report to the Commission on November 17, 2009 entitled, *AODA Regulations on Accessibility Standards*, TTC staff have requested the Minister of Community and Social Services to harmonize the various draft regulations being developed to ensure consistency before additional individual regulations are finalized. The standards will affect the TTC's accessibility plans and programs, but the TTC is not yet in a position to assess the impacts because many aspects of the proposed standards and their implementation schedules are not known.

Status of Funding for Accessibility Initiatives

Limited funding for accessibility improvements is already included in the TTC's capital and operating budgets, however, recent pressures on the TTC's long-term Capital Budget have resulted in the program for the retrofitting of stations being pushed back by four years. All stations are now planned for completion in 2024 rather than 2020.

The TTC's plans for station accessibility and to lower the unaccommodated rate on Wheel-Trans to-the-door services could be accelerated through the provision of additional funding from the City, senior levels of government, and/or Metrolinx.

Additional funding will also be required to meet the upcoming Provincial accessibility regulations, but specifics are not known at this time. The Province has indicated that it will not fund any additional costs to transit operators which result from the requirements of the AODA legislation and regulations.

SUMMARY

The TTC is committed to making its services accessible in order to better meet the needs of people with disabilities, seniors, and other travellers. The TTC has a systematic program in place to ensure that this is accomplished in a cost-effective and timely way. The TTC's accessibility objectives could be met faster and sooner if Metrolinx and/or the Province of Ontario were to provide additional funding.

The TTC's accessibility initiatives, including budgets and schedules, could be affected by Provincial regulations on accessibility. The Province has not made a commitment to fund

the cost of changes which will result from the regulations.

February 3, 2009

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Attachment: Appendix 1: TTC Accessible Transit Services Plan -- 2009 Status Report

Appendix 1

TTC Accessible Transit Services Plan - 2009 Status Report

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

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

The 1989 *Choices for the Future* study concluded that the demand by disabled people for trips on public transit services could be met through the integration of the specialized Wheel-Trans service and the provision of accessibility features at only 20 'key' subway stations. The TTC's Easier Access program was initiated to address the accessibility of these key stations. However, over the years, this program was expanded to include the eventual retrofitting of all existing subway stations with elevators and accessibility features. The Commission has also committed to making all new rapid transit and LRT stations accessible and ensuring that all new vehicles acquired by the TTC are accessible. The Commission has also, progressively, greatly increased the amount of to-the-door service provided to Wheel-Trans registrants.

As the system has expanded, new facilities have been constructed to provide a high standard of accessibility. For example, all of the stations on the Sheppard Subway were constructed with elevator access. This policy continues, and all stations currently being designed for the Toronto-York Subway extension, the *Transit City* LRT underground stations, and the Yonge North subway extension include elevators and easier access features.

Accessible Stations and Facilities

The TTC's program to retrofit stations with elevators and easier access features, which initially was a commitment to retrofit 20 stations, has been expanded to include retrofitting all existing stations and all new subway and LRT stations as well. As can be seen in Table 1 lists the TTC stations with elevators in operation at year-end 2009.

Table 1 Elevator and Easier Access Installations Completed To Date

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

* Elevator only

Accessibility features at the bus-platform level of selected subway stations have also been accelerated at ten stations: High Park, Old Mill, Runnymede, Keele, Rosedale, Castle Frank, Wellesley, Lawrence East, Greenwood, and Donlands. These improvements, which allow for accessible bus-to-bus and bus-to-street transfers, complement the system-wide introduction of accessible buses. This means that transfers between accessible bus routes within these subway stations, and fare gates and doors to the street will be accessible in advance of the installation of elevators and the other features involved in the complete retrofit program. Most of the required elements were installed in 2009, and all of the new accessibility features at these stations will be complete by mid-2010.

As illustrated in Exhibit 1 below, the expanded *Easier Access III* program is a long-term commitment to equip all existing stations in the system with elevators and easier access features. Station development priorities were developed in consultation with the Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation (ACAT).

Exhibit 1

Accessible Subway & RT Stations

1994-2009, projected to 2024

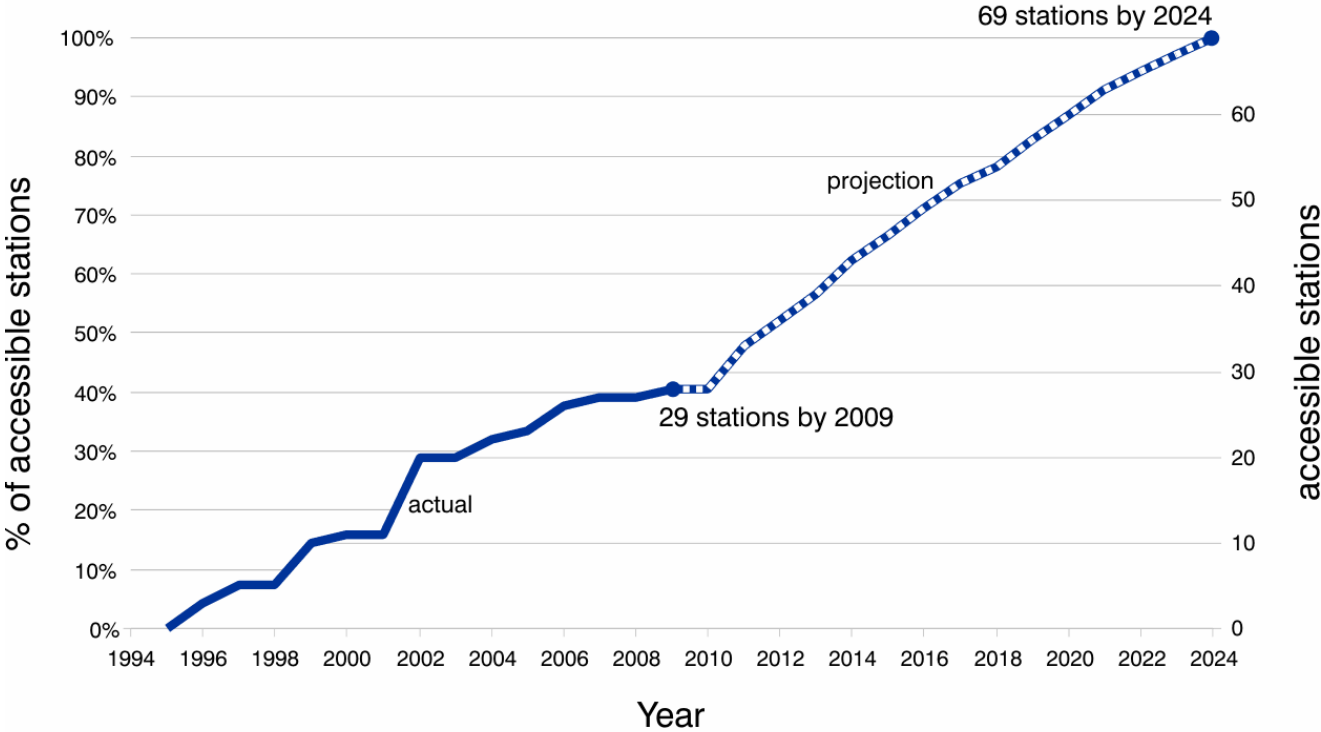


Table 2 lists the stations which are currently planned for elevator installation over the next five years. Previous plans called for all stations to be accessible by the end of 2020. However, recent budget constraints have resulted in the target now being pushed back to 2024, as described in the section on *Funding for Accessible Service*, below. Subway and *Transit City* LRT system expansions, including those which extend beyond the boundaries of the City of Toronto, such as the Toronto-York Subway from Downsview Station into York Region, will also have stations built to TTC accessibility standards.

Table 2 Elevators and Easier Access Installations - Planned

LOCATION	PLANNED IN-SERVICE DATE
Lawrence West Station	2011
Victoria Park Station	
St. Andrew Station	
Pape Station	
King Station	2012
Ossington Station	
Wilson Station	
Dufferin Station	2013
St. Clair West Station	
Coxwell Station	
Yorkdale Station	2014
Woodbine Station	
College Station	
Royal York Station	

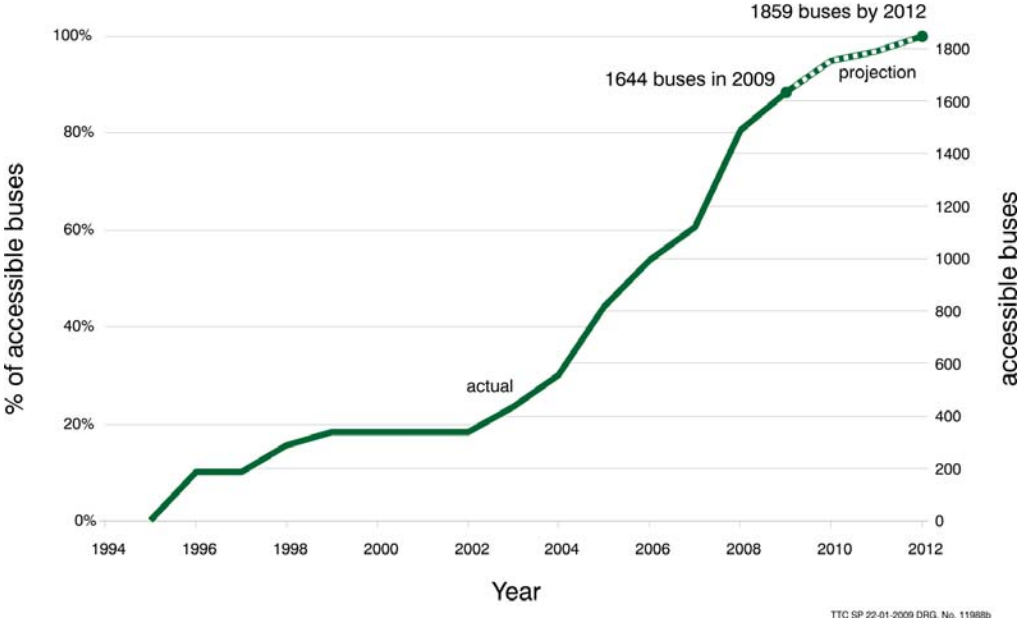
Accessible Conventional Bus Services

The first accessible bus route was in place in 1996 -- the same year the first accessible station was opened. The TTC has made great strides in increasing the number of accessible buses in the fleet and the number of accessible bus routes since then, and will continue to do so in the future.

As illustrated in Exhibit 2 below, in December, 2009, approximately 92% of the TTC's conventional bus fleet was accessible. At that time, the TTC operated 138 non-accessible conventional buses and 1,644 accessible conventional buses. The figures above do not include the accessible buses used in community bus and to-the-door service provided by Wheel-Trans, all of which are accessible.

Exhibit 2 Accessible Conventional Buses

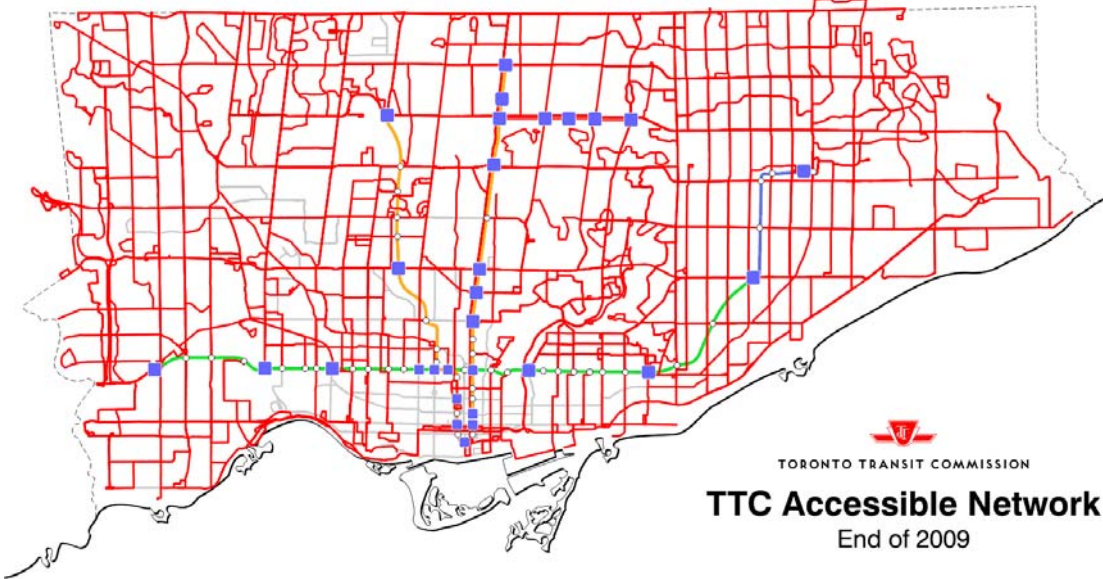
1994 - 2009, projected to 2012



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

As shown in Exhibit 3 below, of the 168 bus routes which were operated at the end 2009 (including 5 Community Bus routes and 22 Blue Night routes), 153 were accessible (i.e. 91%). This will grow to 95% by the fall of 2010, when seven more routes are planned to be designated as accessible. A total of 155 new accessible buses will be added to the fleet in 2010 and 2011. All bus routes are expected to be designated accessible in 2011.

Exhibit 3



TTC SP 23-06-2009 DRG. No. 11929

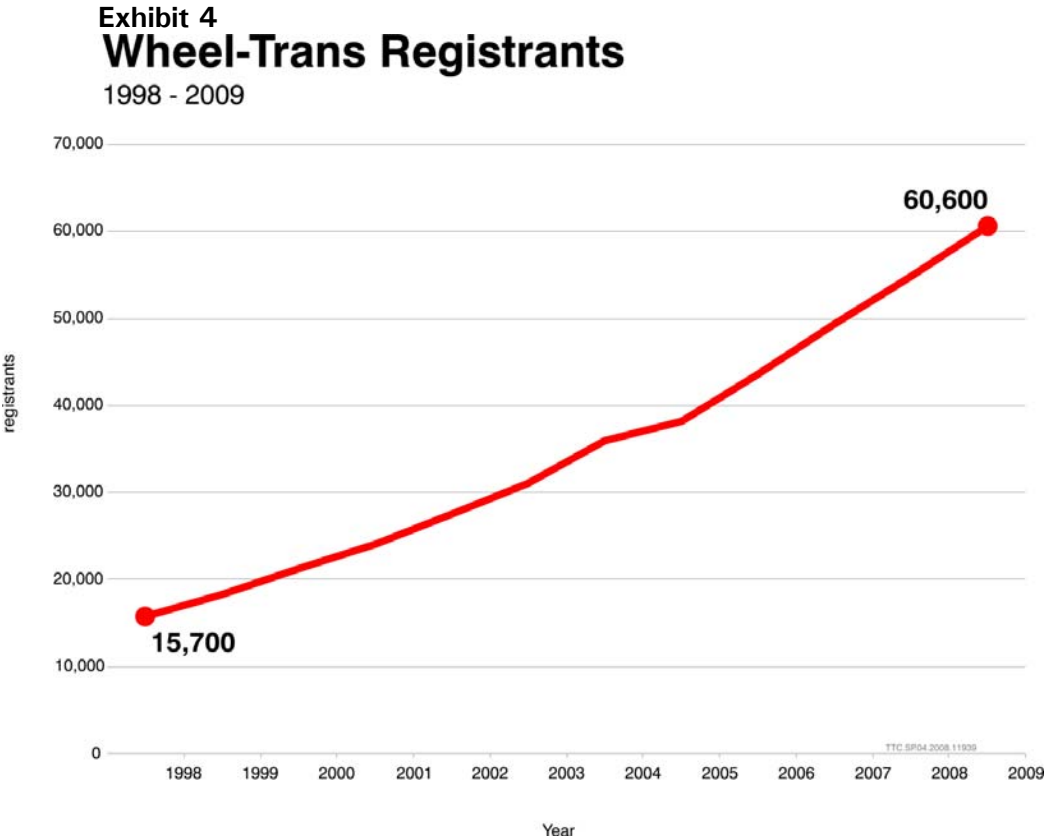
Accessible Conventional Streetcar Services

The placing of an order for 204 low-floor LRV vehicles in June 2009, to replace the TTC’s aging fleet of inaccessible streetcars, was a major step forward for the TTC in making all of its services accessible. The current non-accessible streetcar fleet will be replaced with modern, accessible low-floor light rail vehicles (LRVs) starting in 2012, with complete replacement scheduled for 2018. These vehicles will provide accessible service on the entire streetcar network.

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

Wheel-Trans Services

As shown in Exhibit 4, below, in 2009, the TTC's Wheel-Trans operation provided to-the-door service for 60,600 registrants who have restricted physical functional mobility. To provide quality service to these and future registrants, 110 new low-floor specialized buses are being delivered, with 41 having been received in 2009, and 59 planned for delivery in 2010.



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

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

Funding for Accessible Services

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

- The purchase of accessible buses:
 - delivery of 440 new low-floor conventional accessible buses started in 2008 and continues in 2010 at a cost of \$297 million; and
 - delivery of replacement and service-expansion buses for Wheel-Trans started in 2009 and will continue into 2014 at a cost of up to \$76 million.
- Constructing elevators and other accessibility features at the 40 existing subway stations that have not yet been made accessible, at a cost of \$346 million. To date, 30 stations have been made accessible, which is 43% of all stations.

Recent pressures on the TTC's long-term Capital Budget have resulted in the program for the retrofitting of stations having to be pushed back by four years, such that all stations are now planned for completion in 2024 rather than 2020. This program could be restored to its original schedule or accelerated with additional funding.

Development of Regulations Related to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)

The Province of Ontario has enacted an AODA regulation regarding accessibility standards for customer service and is in the process of finalizing similar regulations for four other sectors: transportation, information and communications, employment, and the built environment. These standards apply community-wide, and the TTC has been working with the City of Toronto, and other transit agencies, to provide input on the overall standards

and on issues and concerns that are specific to the transit industry and the TTC. In particular, staff have requested the Minister of Community and Social Services to harmonize the various draft regulations being developed to ensure consistency before additional individual regulations are finalized. The standards will affect the TTC's schedules, priorities, and operating expenses, but the TTC is not yet in a position to assess the impacts because many aspects of the proposed standards and their implementation schedules are not known.

In compliance with the recently-enacted customer service regulations, the Commission has developed and approved a corporate policy regarding customer service accessibility which is available on the TTC's web site at:

http://www3.ttc.ca/TTC_Accessibility/Commitment_to_Accessibility/index.jsp

The TTC provided training to all staff, contractors, and consultants directly involved with the public, and management staff who have input into the development of policies or procedures that could affect people with disabilities. The training relates to the Commission's corporate policy on customer service and how to improve the TTC's communications with people with disabilities.

Rapid Transit Expansion

The TTC is embarking on a very aggressive program of expanding rapid transit services in the City of Toronto, and beyond, through the extension of the University-Spadina subway line to York University and Vaughan Centre, and the construction of four priority *Transit City* LRT lines. Environmental Assessments have been, or are soon to be, approved by City Council, and design work is proceeding on all of the projects. The TTC's funding partners, including the City of Toronto, Metrolinx, the Province of Ontario, and the Government of Canada, have confirmed funding for the projects and, as shown below, the new lines are scheduled to begin revenue operation between 2013 and 2020.

	Opening Day For Revenue Operation
Sheppard East LRT	2013
Finch West LRT	2015
Toronto-York Spadina Subway Extension	2015
Scarborough Rapid Transit LRT	2015/2016
Eglinton-Crosstown LRT	2016 – 2020 (3 phases)

All of these facilities will be constructed to provide excellent accessibility for all travelers including those with mobility limitations. This expansion of rapid transit services is a major step forward for the City in providing broadly-available, accessible, high-quality, reliable rapid transit service. It will dramatically expand the number of destinations that are easily accessible to people with mobility limitations traveling in the City.

Public Consultation and the Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation (ACAT)

There are many types of mobility difficulties experienced by individual TTC passengers, and it is a complex task to accommodate all 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 TTC's Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation (ACAT) has been, and will continue to be, invaluable in implementing the TTC's accessibility plans.

The TTC also uses a number of other methods to provide information and obtain input from members of the public including community meetings, and newsletters. In June 2009, the Commissioners and TTC staff participated in a well-attended Public Forum on TTC accessibility held at Exhibition Place. The event was jointly undertaken by the TTC and ACAT as the second of what has now become an annual event.

Summary

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