

# TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION REPORT NO.

**MEETING DATE:** June 2, 2010

**SUBJECT:** CUSTOMER SERVICE INFORMATION SCREENS

## **ACTION ITEM**

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Commission receive the attached report and delegate authority to the Chair, Vice-Chair, and Chief General Manager to modify the existing contract with OneStop Toronto Inc. (OneStop) to incorporate the installation of Customer Service Information screens should a satisfactory conclusion to negotiations occur and that staff report back to the next Commission meeting on the results of those negotiations.

### **FUNDING**

The Next Vehicle Arrival System (NVAS) contract with OneStop provides for the installation of screens in the subway system. A portion of those screens are unassigned and will be utilized for the Customer Service Information screens project. Any additional costs will either be self-funded through the OneStop contract or will be provided for in the TTC Capital Budget.

### **BACKGROUND**

In 2005, CBS Outdoor Inc. (CBS) was awarded the advertising contract for the exclusive rights to all advertising (print & digital) within the TTC's system for a seven (7) year period, through a Competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) process. This primarily involves the display of printed advertising in revenue vehicles and stations as well as vinyl material on vehicles and in stations. As part of the contract with CBS, the TTC is to receive a minimum guarantee (MG) fee of \$93.2M over the 7 year contract term or revenue sharing whichever is greater. As a result, the TTC received \$20.1M in 2008 and \$15.3M in 2009 from CBS both of which went into revenue sharing and exceeded the MG.

Prior to 2005, electronic Metron signs displayed time and limited advertising information on subway platform areas. The signs were aging and were problematic from a maintenance perspective and presented a number of limitations in terms of what could be displayed. In 2005, CBS agreed to sever the Metron units out of CBS's contract and TTC contracted with OneStop directly for the installation/maintenance of Platform Video Screens as a replacement for the aging Metron signs. The agreement with OneStop included system maintenance and support for the new signs to 2011. In 2008, OneStop agreed to provide and install an additional 149 LCD screens for the NVAS in subway station areas in return for a seven year extension to their contract to 2018.

**DISCUSSION**

The TTC is committed to improving customer service in as short a time span as possible and within resource constraints. One of the identified improvements involves providing more timely and relevant communications of transit service disruptions and other anomalies to customers as well as station Collectors. Transit service disruptions (i.e. eAlert Service Advisories) are currently displayed on Platform Video Screens, forwarded as eAlert's via email, and displayed on the TTC website (ttc.ca). However, customers that have not subscribed to the eAlert service may not be aware of service disruptions prior to entering stations. In addition, Collectors are reliant on the public announcement system for receiving information related to service disruptions and may not hear all announcements. The installation of signage at the faregate areas of all stations displaying transit service advisory information, would alleviate this problem and improve customer service.

The NVAS which includes LCD signage at subway stations is in the process of being rolled out. At this point LCD signage has been installed and is operational at 5 subway stations. The original design and screen layout included a list style display of vehicle arrival times and a map based display depicting the actual location of vehicles along a particular route. The map based display was removed from the system design and other screen layout changes were confirmed based on the Focus Group's recommendation not to proceed with electronic route maps. This has created a surplus of 82 LCD screens that OneStop is obligated to provide and install as part of the current contract.

Staff had initiated a RFP for a system that would provide signage to display service advisories and other relevant transit information at station entrances as well as within Collector booth areas. The proposed system would also include screens installed in other operational areas (i.e. garages and carhouses) for providing information to other front line staff. Staff have subsequently, put this RFP on hold and initiated discussions with OneStop regarding the feasibility of redeploying the surplus NVAS screens for the purposes of displaying transit service advisories as part of their current contract.

OneStop currently receives all service advisories and next vehicle arrival prediction information electronically. OneStop uses this information for the display on Platform Video Screens and NVAS LCD's. Several meetings have been held with OneStop regarding the TTC's requirement to redeploy the surplus NVAS screens for the purpose of displaying service advisories. The TTC has emphasized the objective and desire to maximize the use and leverage the existing NVAS network and communications infrastructure. Thus, minimal enhancements to the NVAS infrastructure are envisioned to allow for this additional messaging functionality. Staff expects to complete the negotiation discussions with OneStop during June 2010, for these screens and additional screens at other locations to complete the system wide roll-out.

**JUSTIFICATION**

Providing timely and accurate information regarding the status of transit service is key to achieving an overall improvement in customer service. The installation of Customer Service Information screens will assist in ensuring that customers are provided with this information, particularly as they enter the transit system at subway stations.

OneStop currently displays all service advisories on Platform Video Screens and next vehicle arrival prediction information on NVAS screens installed in the subway system. Modifying the existing contract with OneStop to incorporate the installation of Customer Service Information screens will maximize the current communications systems and ensure the screens are installed and operational in a timely fashion.

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