

For Information

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**DATE:** October 9, 2009**REPORT TITLE: UPDATE AND STATUS REPORT ON PROGRAM DELIVERY FOR  
TRANSHelp AND THE ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION  
COORDINATION OFFICE****FROM:** Dan Labrecque, Commissioner of Environment, Transportation  
and Planning Services

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**OBJECTIVE**

To provide an update on the program delivery and proposed operational budget changes for TransHelp and the Accessible Transportation Coordination Office.

**REPORT HIGHLIGHTS**

- In August 2009, TransHelp and the Accessible Transportation Coordination Office merged together under one section in the Transportation Division.
- The consolidation of the various programs under the Accessible Transportation Coordination Office and TransHelp into one section will create one access for Accessible Transportation matters in which to serve our clients and increasing service demands.
- Staff also recognize the benefits for the 2010 budget to be consolidated into one funding source for all accessible transportation delivery programs.

**DISCUSSION****1. Background**

In August 2009, an inter-departmental reorganization took place in Environment, Transportation and Planning Services (ETPS) to reflect ETPS' commitment to continue to look for opportunities to improve upon our integrated approach for delivering the Region's programs and services. As part of those changes, TransHelp and the Accessible Transportation Coordination Office (ATCO) merged together into one common section in the Transportation Division. A new name for the section is under consideration to reflect the various services which support transportation needs for people with a broad range of disabilities. TransHelp's eligibility criterion currently provides transportation to those persons that have physical mobility impairments. The Accessible Transportation Coordination Office is a gateway for all persons with disabilities that are non-TransHelp clients to redirect them to the appropriate available transportation programs.

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### **2. Status of the 2009 Program Delivery for ATCO and TransHelp**

The 2009 ATCO approved operating budget is \$1.7 million which includes the delivery of the Passenger Plus Program (formerly Red Cross Dialysis), Passenger Assistant Program, Community Bus Program, Taxi Script Program and Conventional Transit Access Program and the associated administrative costs.

The Passenger Plus Program is an established dialysis service that has remained constant in trip numbers over the last few years. The remaining programs are just in their infancy and have been slow to commence for a variety of reasons. Awareness for these programs is being communicated to the public through clients' case workers, Regional website and brochures. As such, staff is expecting to see an increase in trips before the end of the year. The Community Bus and Taxi Script programs were only recently launched as a result of a shortage of resources. Staff is anticipating that these programs will be a huge success in the coming years.

The approved 2009 TransHelp operating budget is \$11.8 million which includes all administrative costs and the operation and maintenance of a fleet of fifty buses and a target of 277,909 trips. The service is currently provided with an average 65/35 split between TransHelp buses and taxi vendors. In addition, TransHelp has a strong partnership with Caledon Community Services which supports transportation needs to the residents that live in Caledon where conventional transit does not exist.

### **3. Operational and Planning Synergies**

One of the key benefits of merging TransHelp and ATCO under one portfolio is that it allows for an integrated approach to supporting transportation needs for a broad range of clients with varying disabilities. Ultimately a one-stop service window for our clients will enable us to optimize resource allocation to meet emerging client needs as efficiently and effectively as possible with our full spectrum of programs. Additionally, opportunities exist for us to enhance our customer service focus by expanding the software utilized by the TransHelp program (which is used to book trips, manage accounts and maintain a database of all our clients) to include our ATCO clients thereby providing one efficient common support system.

Furthermore, combining these groups strengthens our relationships with the local transit authorities and other partners within the Greater Toronto Area. Providing a seamless program delivery allows us the opportunity to work towards narrowing the gap of providing transportation for people with disabilities as indicated in the 2004 "Study of Transportation for Persons with Disabilities".

### **4. Expectations for 2010 Program Delivery and Budget Structure**

For the 2010 budget process, staff will be developing and presenting the budget as one consolidated service. Given continued growth in the community need as a result of general population growth, an aging population and changes within the *Accessibility for Ontarians Disability Act* (AODA), the budget proposal will likely incorporate some modest growth in overall service capacity across the broader spectrum of our programs.

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**CONCLUSION**

As part of the 2010 operating budget, staff are proposing to consolidate the operating costs of both of the existing TransHelp and ATCO programs under one group to provide staff and Council with the opportunity of enhancing the level of transparency and accountability for this essential public service.



Dan Labrecque  
Commissioner of Environment, Transportation  
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**Approved for Submission:**



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