
DATE: July 28, 2011

REPORT TITLE: **ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE 2010 ANNUAL REPORT**

FROM: Dan Labrecque, Commissioner of Public Works

RECOMMENDATION

That the Accessible Transportation Advisory Committee 2010 Annual Report, attached as Appendix I to the report of the Commissioner of Public Works, dated July 28, 2011, titled "Accessible Transportation Advisory Committee 2010 Annual Report" be received;

And further, that staff complete a customer satisfaction survey in 2012 and report to Regional Council findings from the survey along with an action plan to address any areas of concern raised by customers in the survey.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- The Accessible Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC) prepares an annual report on Accessible Transportation and TransHelp services. It also identifies potential enhancements, observations, recommendations and ATAC related outcomes to be reviewed for the following year.
- The mission of ATAC is to provide Accessible Transportation staff and the Region of Peel with a consumer point of view and a valuable source of input regarding services.
- The annual report highlights ATAC 2010 activities and changes resulting from ATAC input. It also identifies concerns and issues to be addressed in 2011.
- ATAC, Accessible Transportation and TransHelp staff had a number of successful accomplishments during the last year.

DISCUSSION

1. Background

The Accessible Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC), formerly named TransHelp Advisory Committee (TAC), was established by Regional Council in 1989. This year marks the 21st year of this voluntary committee.

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The members of ATAC for 2010 were:

- Glenn Barnes, Coalition for Persons with Disabilities (Chair)
- John Mandrow, Mississauga Passenger Representative (Co-Chair)
- Jason Gauld, Ontario March of Dimes
- Dulcinea Gauld, Peel Association for Handicapped Adults
- Clement Lowe, Seniors Representative
- Suzanne Hernandez, Caledon Passenger Representative
- Jon Greenaway, ErinoakKids
- Harvinder Bajwa, Brampton Passenger Representative
- Brock Richardson, Communications Representative

The Chair of the Accessible Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC) prepares an annual report on behalf of the Committee that is submitted to Regional Council for their information. This report recognizes some of the service improvements achieved in 2010. It also identifies areas of interest to the Committee that should be reviewed for the following year. The 2010 report and the 2011 agenda are attached as Appendix I.

The Chair of ATAC is scheduled to make a brief presentation to Regional Council on September 8, 2011 and will introduce the members of the Committee who are able to attend.

Based on the 2009 TAC Report, the following items were 2010 agenda items that were to be reviewed during the agenda year:

- Trip booking enhancements – Assess the booking cut off times, scheduling windows and late cancellation window to ensure client needs continue to be met;
- Accessible Transportation website enhancements – currently needs to be more informative and updated to reflect family of services;
- Same day service enhancements – work towards a 100 percent accommodation rate;
- Reviewing TransHelp’s eligibility criteria to ensure the needs of all people living in Peel with disabilities are being met;
- An additional mandate of overseeing TransHelp and other supporting programs from the former Accessible Transportation Coordination Office (ATCO);
- Testing usability of an automated call back feature soon to be active on the Interactive Voice Response (IVR);
- Testing customer safety and monitoring satisfaction on new buses;
- Continue to implement *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) standards as they affect booking parameters;
- Observing potential scheduling improvements that are afforded from the installation of Automatic Vehicle Locator (AVL) technology on buses and an implementation of Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) technology; and,
- Enhancements to the TransHelp Taxi Contracts.

2. 2010 Accomplishments

- Renewed TransHelp taxi contracts and added additional service providers. ATAC was kept apprised of ongoing negotiations regarding providers and were able to provide input on the new vendors and assist with monitoring and evaluating vendors. ATAC is currently providing feedback on the new vendors related to performance and customer service;

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- With the enactment of the *Accessibility for Ontarians Disability Act (AODA)*, staff in conjunction with ATAC, continues to review the requirements and ensure that TransHelp and other Peel transportation services are in compliance;
- A full launch of the Taxi Scrip Program was completed with nine taxi vendors across the Region of Peel now providing service under the program;
- Website enhancements are being reviewed corporately by the Region's Communications department;
- Same day service has had a 65 percent to 70 percent accommodation rate and continues to increase;
- Online booking technology is being tested and launch is expected by end of 2011;
- Passenger Assistance Program (PAP) was fully implemented including in Caledon;
- IVR currently under review with Region's Information, Systems and Technology Services Division. Options are being considered with ATAC input; and
- Surveying customer safety on vehicles as well as monitoring client satisfaction with services remains a high priority. Since the last customer satisfaction survey was conducted in 2008, ATAC recommends that a customer satisfaction survey be completed in 2012 by a third party to be hired by the Region. Funding for this initiative will be sought through the 2012 budget cycle.

3. 2011 Update

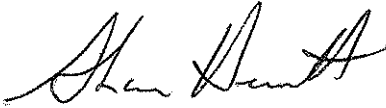
Accessible Transportation continues to see a huge increase in demand for services. Total registered users are expected to reach 9,000 by the end of the year, representing approximately 1,700 new users added over 2010. Accessible Transportation appears to be on track to deliver the overall trips budgeted for 2011 of 428,908. This represents an 8% increase over 2010 service levels. Trip demand is forecasted to grow an additional 8% in 2012.

CONCLUSION

The 2010 Annual Report from the Accessible Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC) celebrates the accomplishments achieved in 2010 and focuses on areas to review for the upcoming year. It demonstrates the results of continually engaging our clients to improve the family of accessible transportation services provided by Peel. ATAC will continue to assist staff to strengthen relationships with clients and providing excellent customer service. Accessible Transportation staff and the Accessible Transportation Advisory Committee have demonstrated dedication and commitment to our Accessible Transportation clients and are to be congratulated for their tremendous accomplishments over the last year.

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DL Dan Labrecque
Commissioner of Public Works

Approved for Submission:



DS D. Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer

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c. Legislative Services

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APPENDIX I

**ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
ANNUAL REPORT
2010**

Prepared by Glenn Barnes
Accessible Transportation Advisory Committee Chair

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TransHelp Advisory Committee
2010 Annual Report
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Executive Summary

The past year has been a year filled with both excitement and difficult times to deal with for passengers using the TransHelp system. On a positive note the number of trips TransHelp riders took in 2010 was just shy of 350,000. Of course not each one of those trips is linked to work completed by the Accessible Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC) but the committee reviews all trips taken monthly to see a breakdown of comments, accommodations, and the concerns of passengers. Although it will be clearly revealed in the 2011 report, the number of comments and concerns from our taxi vendors continues to trend higher than the concerns about trips taken by passengers using buses. At the end of the year passenger comments and concerns escalated to very concerning levels with the addition of a new vendor in both Mississauga and Brampton. It should be noted now however that the new vendors seem to be operating with a greater understanding of the quality of service required by a Region of Peel vendor. The ATAC committee will continue to monitor and evaluate performance of contracted service providers.

2010 also saw the launch of several large scale projects which will continue to require work for the next several years. Some of these projects include discussion of website enhancements; the possibility of connecting with users via Facebook and Twitter pages; busses beginning to become equipped with the Automated Vehicle Location system (AVL); upgrades to the Interactive Voice Response System (IVR); discussion of the online booking system; as well as discussions about how the AVL system and other technologies may be used to alert passengers of real time bus arrival information.

Another big project the ATAC committee is monitoring and assisting staff with is a proactive approach to the implementation of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*, particularly those effecting transportation service providers. We now know that the AODA integrated regulation, which includes transportation, communication and information, and an employment standard was passed into law July 1st, 2011. With two members of the committee's previous regime being involved in the development of the transportation standard the ATAC committee has been most pleased with the forward thinking of Region of Peel Council and TransHelp staff in preempting many of the accessibility requirements called for in the regulation. One of the concerns that the ATAC committee still has is the accommodation of same day service. Although you will see a slightly higher number of same day trips being accommodated, the ATAC committee still believes more same day trips should be provided each day. Of the nearly 350,000 trips provided in 2010, 5418 same day trips were accommodated even though close to 8500 same day trips were requested. Considering that the members of the ATAC committee collectively have nearly 100 years of experience booking rides and using the TransHelp system, the committee collectively commented that there are a number of users, including themselves, who do not attempt to book a ride on a same day basis because the accommodation rates in the past have been virtually non-existent. The ATAC believes that if we continue to communicate to passengers that same day service is a definite possibility and as a system we are able to accommodate close to the 65% to 70% rate we are currently achieving we will definitely be achieving a same day accommodation standard that would be a benchmark for the entire province of Ontario.

In conclusion, the ATAC continues to be very proud of the strides that the Region of Peel's Accessible Transportation department has achieved. In particular one of the many things that make Peel a leader in providing Para transit services, is their continued dedication to providing excellent customer service and in many cases going beyond their mandate. Throughout the report you will see examples of how TransHelp has become involved with offering services to community partners that rise above day to day travel in and around the Peel Region. As we

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move forward in 2011 the ATAC continues to strive for relationships with local conventional transit authorities in Brampton, Mississauga and across the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). The goal of the committee will continue to be customer satisfaction and acting as a voice to help bridge the gap between passengers and staff to ensure that services remain at the exceptional level achieved over the past five or six years.

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1. 2010 Service Delivery Statistics

TransHelp continued to experience strong growth in 2010. This can be attributed to continued increases in weekend and holiday ridership as well as overall ridership. TransHelp has also committed to meet the needs of clients for special community events, same day services and cross boundary transportation. The chart below shows a comparison of trips provided in 2010 and 2009 respectively:

	2010	2009	% of Increase
TransHelp Trips	348,823	300,005	16%
Other Trips*	48,614	-	-
Stat Holiday Trips	2,780	2,505	11%
Weekend Trips	41,661	36,545	14%
Late Request Accommodations (Same Day Trips)	5,418	4,441	22%
Cross Boundary Trips	22,000	9,500	131%

* Other trips include Passenger Assistant, Dialysis, and Taxi Scrip Program

2. TransHelp Taxi Contract Enhancements

In 2010 the TransHelp taxi contract was put out for tender. The previous contract was awarded in 2005. The 2010 contract sought qualified vendors to deliver trips on behalf of TransHelp to eligible users. The ATAC provided input into the creation of the contract with specific input on performance measures. The new contract was awarded in part to four (4) vendors, up from two (2) vendors in the previous contract. Taxi vendors perform approximately fifty (50) percent of TransHelp trips. ATAC members will continue to monitor and evaluate the vendor's performance during the term of the contract.

Status: Completed with ongoing performance monitoring.

3. AODA Review and Implementation

On July 1, 2011 the AODA Integrated Regulations were passed into law. These regulations set out to achieve a fully accessible Ontario by 2025. The AODA transportation standards, included in the Integrated Regulations, will help ensure transportation service providers make their services fully accessible to people with disabilities. The ATAC will work with TransHelp management to ensure that the Region of Peel's family of accessible transportation services is aligned with the requirements of the AODA.

Status: Ongoing

4. Website Enhancements

The TransHelp website is a key source of information and news for users of the service. The current website has not been updated for many years and users have expressed a need to update the existing website. With the upcoming launch of an online booking system and update to the Region of Peel's external website, a review of the TransHelp website will be completed and options for enhancements considered.

Status: On hold pending enhancements to the Region of Peel external website

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5. Same Day Trip Accommodation

Same day trip accommodation continues to improve at TransHelp. Current accommodation rates range from 65% to 70%. This means that the majority of users requesting same day service are being accommodated by TransHelp. Same day service is provided when users are not able to book their trips in advance or when appointments are arranged last minute. This high accommodation rate is particularly important for users who need to travel to see their doctor at a moments notice.

Status: Ongoing

6. Online Booking System

A web based trip booking module was purchased to better accommodate rider booking requests. Implementation and testing of the system with user groups was completed in early 2011. The ATAC provided feedback on the system and participated in testing the web based online booking system. The software vendor is now preparing the new system to go live sometime in 2011. ATAC members will participate as a pilot group to use the new system once it goes live.

Status: Testing completed, awaiting delivery from vendor.

7. Interactive Voice Response System (IVR) Enhancements

The current IVR system has been in place for TransHelp users for many years. It allows users the ability to cancel and confirm trips as well as check their account balance. The current system is outdated and enhancements are required. Specifically a 'call back' option is needed so that users receive automated calls from the system confirming their ride times. TransHelp staff is currently working on enhancing the IVR system to provide more user functionality and stability. ATAC staff will provide input and feedback once the new system is available to be tested.

Status: Currently being developed by vendor

8. TransHelp in the Community

In 2010 TransHelp continued to actively participate in the community above and beyond its day to day operation and obligations. For example, TransHelp was involved in the following community partnership projects:

- Provided out of town trips to members of the Region of Peel Accessibility Advisory Committee to attend important workshops and conferences;
- Connections 2010 Resource Fair for Persons with Disabilities – TransHelp/Accessible Transportation participated with an information booth and on an information panel about accessible transportation;
- TransHelp staff hosted several fundraising barbecue's supporting various charitable organizations;
- Provided extended bus service hours for numerous programs and agencies throughout the year including Erinoakkids and Peel Association for Handicapped Adults (PAHA);
- Continued a long standing tradition of providing transportation for participants of Community Living Summer Camps;

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- For the third year in a row, TransHelp staff held a successful Christmas Food and Toy Drive benefiting the Peel Children's Aid Society and the Salvation Army;
- For the second year in a row, TransHelp staff raised over \$1000 and sponsored a less fortunate family during Christmas through Human Service's Outreach division;
- Participated in the Peel Children's Water Festival by providing shuttle bus services;
- And provided shuttle services for Mississauga's Carassauga Cultural Festival and transported festival goers over a three day weekend.

Status: Completed

9. Peel's Family of Accessible Transportation Services

TransHelp and the Accessible Transportation Coordination Office (ATCO) merged in 2009, effectively enhancing services for a variety of clients with different disabilities residing in the Region of Peel. The result of the merge was a one-stop shop of accessible transportation services under one roof.

In 2010, the Taxi Scrip program was fully launched to users after support from Council. There are now multiple taxi vendors participating in the program across Peel. The program provides subsidized taxi fare to TransHelp clients as well as people with other disabilities who do not qualify for TransHelp service.

Also note worthy is the Passenger Assistant Program (PAP) operating in partnership with the Canadian Red Cross and Caledon Community Services. The program provides trips to individuals who require supervised transportation over and above TransHelp service. In 2010 with Council support, the PAP was implemented as a regular program under Accessible Transportation.

Two other programs that ensure inclusiveness for people with disabilities in Peel are Travel Training and the Conventional Transit Access Initiative. The Travel Training program provides specialized training to individuals able to use conventional transit services but who may be reluctant, fearful or unsure of how to get around on the conventional system. The Conventional Transit Access Initiative strives to encourage and promote the use of conventional services in Peel which have made huge strides to become fully accessible. To assist in promoting the conventional services, a short video was created in collaboration with Mississauga and Brampton Transit demonstrating the many benefits and ease of use of the conventional system.

Status: Continue to evaluate and enhance programs under Accessible Transportation.

AGENDA PRIORITIES REQUIRING COUNCIL APPROVAL

Completion of a Customer Satisfaction Survey

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ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ATAC) AGENDA FOR 2011

The following new items will be on the ATAC Agenda for 2011:

- Investigate option for clients to make payments directly to their accounts via the internet by way of the Region of Peel website;
- Evaluate Access Peel locations currently accepting TransHelp payments (10 Peel Centre and 7120 Hurontario) to ensure client needs are being met;
- Provide feedback into the new TransHelp facility at Copper Road;
- Work with management to implement the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) Integrated Regulations, particularly those affecting transportation services;
- Review service and booking hours, service area and fare parity for AODA compliance;
- And complete a Customer Satisfaction Survey.