



City of Hamilton Report for Information

To: Chair and Members
Public Works Committee

Date: March 17, 2025

Report No: PW22079(i)

Subject/Title: Accessible Transportation Services Performance

Ward(s) Affected: City Wide

Recommendations

That Report PW22079(i) **BE RECEIVED** for information.

Key Facts

- Accessible Transportation Services (ATS) is required to report annually to the Accessibility Committee for Persons with Disabilities (ACPD) on key performance indicators, as mandated by a past Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario decision. In 2022, Council directed that these reports be provided quarterly.
- ATS is responsible for client approval and program/contract management. The service is delivered by a contractor (DARTS) and their subcontractor. DARTS is responsible for daily operations, including call centre operations, trip booking, vehicle safety, on road service delivery and management of their subcontractors.
- The latest report was presented to the Accessibility Committee for Persons with Disabilities at Meeting #25-002 on February 11, 2025. The full report is available in Appendix "A" attached to Report PQ22079(i).
- Appendix "B" attached to Report PW22079(i) summarizes contractor vehicle inspection results for 2024.

Financial Considerations

Not applicable.

Background

Public Works Committee, at its meeting of April 22, 2022, approved the following: “That staff be directed to report back to the Public Works Committee and the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities on a quarterly basis respecting Accessible Transportation Services (ATS)” (PW Report 22-006, Item 3 (PW21055(a))).

In 1998, an Ontario Human Rights Code complaint was filed, and the subsequent settlement established, in part, that the City of Hamilton report on service-specific requirements: notably, a trip denial rate goal of 5%, an on-time performance goal of 95% or greater for DARTS trips, and an annual report to the Accessibility Committee for Persons with Disabilities (ACPD) on: trip requests, trip denials, passenger refusals of trips, cancellations, no shows, missed trips, trips provided, complaints and on-time performance.

The history of reporting of ATS quarterly performance data is outlined below. Q3 2024 indicators were presented to the ACPD on February 11, 2024 (Meeting 25-002, Item 7.2).

Analysis

Applications for Service

In response to Committee interest in application data following presentation of PW22079(h), ATS has included this information in Appendix “A” attached to Report PW22079(i).

The following analysis provides a high-level summary of key facts and trends, found in Appendix “A” attached to Report PW22079(i).

- **Trips Delivered:** ATS delivered 141,279 trips through DARTS in Q3 2024, which is a 10% increase compared to the same period in 2023. Year-to-date totals are 6% above the budgeted service target and 70% of pre-pandemic levels (2019).
- **Trip Denial Rates:** DARTS maintained a low denial rate of 1.9% for year-to-date 2024, well below the 5% goal set by the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) settlement.
- **On-Time Performance:** DARTS achieved a 99% on-time performance in Q3 2024, exceeding the OHRC target of 95% and aligning with industry best practices (95–99%).
- **Applications for Service:** 87.1% of Q3 applications were approved, slightly lower than previous quarters. The primary reason for incomplete applications was missing consent signatures, which will be addressed in 2025 through application updates.
- **Call Centre Performance:** The call abandonment rate decreased from 27.9% in 2023 to 18.2% year-to-date 2024. However, the service level (calls answered within 5 minutes) slightly declined in Q3 compared to earlier quarters but remained higher than 2023 averages.

- Complaints: Complaints decreased year-over-year, with 2.9 complaints per 1,000 DARTS trips in Q3 2024, down from 4.5 in Q4 2023. This is close to the industry average of 2.1 but still above the best practice of 1 complaint per 1,000 trips.
- Commendations: Commendation rates remain below the 2023 level but are consistent with the 2016 industry average of 0.36 per 1,000 trips.

Service efficiency continues to steadily improve. The number of trips delivered has increased, while denial rates remain low, ensuring more residents can access transportation when needed. This reflects ongoing efforts to meet the community's transportation needs effectively.

DARTS continues to demonstrate good on-time performance, achieving a 99% success rate in Q3 2024. This exceeds the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) target of 95% and aligns with industry best practices. Reliable service is essential for accessibility, and ATS remains committed to maintaining this high standard in 2025.

Customer feedback indicates that service quality is improving, with fewer complaints compared to 2023. However, the complaint rate is still slightly above the industry best practice. In 2025, the contractor has committed to focusing on further reducing complaints by enhancing training for drivers and call centre agents and improving scheduling efficiency.

Call centre performance has also improved, with fewer abandoned calls and shorter wait times. While service levels dipped slightly in Q3, overall performance remains stronger than in 2023. In 2025, the contractor has committed to continuing to refine call centre operations, ensuring faster response times and better customer support to further reduce client frustration.

The quarterly report presented above exceeds the terms and the reporting frequency requirements of the 2004 Ontario Human Rights Commission settlement. The Q4 2024 report (October – December 2024) was **presented** to the Accessibility Committee for Persons with Disabilities at Meeting #25-002 on February 11, 2025.

Additional Metrics Related to the Contractor Performance

Appendix "B" attached to Report PW22079(i) summarizes contractor vehicle inspection results for 2024; these include results from both third-party mechanical inspections and on-site vehicle records inspections by City staff year to date January 2025.

ATS has made progress in keeping contracted vehicles safe and reliable. The number of vehicles failing their first inspection dropped from 8% in early 2024 to just 2% by the end of the year. DARTS and its subcontractors have worked to improve vehicle conditions, with VETS and Hamilton Rising having no failed inspections in Q4. In 2025, staff will keep a close watch on inspections to make sure these high standards continue.

Vehicle maintenance records also improved, reaching 100% compliance in the last half of 2024. However, in January 2025, one provider did not meet the required standards. ATS will fix this by improving oversight to make sure records are kept properly. ATS continues to address contractor non-conformance as required, to clarify and set City

expectations for service. In 2024, thirteen performance-related letters were sent, all regarding serious incidents.

These improvements show ATS's strong focus on safety and service quality. In 2025, staff will continue regular inspections, hold providers accountable, and work closely with DARTS and subcontractors to keep the system running smoothly.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

Accessible Transportation Services provides the above information in support of the following Council Strategic Priorities:

2. Safe & Thriving Neighbourhoods
 - 2.2. Make sure people can safely and efficiently move around by foot, bike, transit, or car; and
3. Responsiveness & Transparency
 - 3.1. Prioritize customer service and proactive communication.

Continued attention to the above indicators not only supports oversight of contractor performance but also informs both continuous quality improvement and long-term planning for a safe, accessible, and sustainable service.

Previous Reports Submitted

- [ACPD Meeting 25-002, Item 7.2](#)
- [PW24005 Darts Vehicle Safety Audit AUD22007\(a\) Update to Management Response January 18, 2024](#)
- [PW22079\(h\) Accessible Transportation Services Performance Report September 3, 2024](#)
- [PW22079\(g\) Accessible Transportation Services Performance Report August 14, 2024](#)
- [PW22079\(f\) Accessible Transportation Services Performance Report April 29, 2024](#)
- [PW22079\(e\) Accessible Transportation Services Performance Report January 15, 2024](#)
- [PW22079\(d\) Accessible Transportation Services Quarterly Performance Report September 18, 2023](#)
- [PW22079\(c\) Accessible Transportation Services Performance Report June 12, 2023](#)
- [PW22079\(b\) Accessible Transportation Services Performance Report May 1, 2023](#)
- [PW22079\(a\) Accessible Transportation Services Performance Report January 16, 2023](#)
- [PW21055\(a\) Accessible Transportation Services Eligibility Audit Management Response April 22, 2022](#)
- [PW21055 Consultant Report to Accessible Transportation Services funded by Provincial Audit and Accountability Fund October 7, 2021](#)

Consultation

Marco Mostacci, Senior Project Manager Accessible Transportation Services, Public Works

Owen Quinn, Project Manager Transit Customer Loyalty, Public Works

Mike Perez, Project Manager Contracts and Vendor Performance, Public Works

Peter Wobschall, Executive Director, DARTS

Appendices and Schedules Attached

Appendix A: Accessible Transportation Services Performance Review Q3 2024

Appendix B: Contractor Vehicle Inspection Results 2024 – Year to Date

Prepared by: Michelle Martin, Manager
Public Works, Transit/Accessible Transportation Services

Submitted and recommended by: Maureen Cosyn Heath, Director of Transit
Public Works, Transit