

DATS Program Service Enhancement Plan Progress Update

In 2018, DATS riders raised concerns about the service during the non-statutory public hearing for the 2019-2022 budget. In response to these concerns, a Program Service Review was initiated in early 2019 which involved extensive engagement with stakeholders; workshops and focus groups with DATS riders; a review of internal policies and processes; and an examination of industry best practice. The review was led by an independent third-party consultant and engaged the community throughout the process. The findings of this review were used to develop a Program Service Enhancements Plan that was approved by City Council in June 2019. The objectives of the DATS Program Service Enhancements Plan were to respond to the recommendations from the review. The following nine actions were developed:

1. Implement a more flexible and cost effective service model
2. Address operator workforce shortages due to excessive operator retirements and unplanned absences
3. Explore partnerships with alternative transportation providers
4. Pursue enhancements in trip scheduling and real-time customer information
5. Leverage the fully accessible conventional transit fleet
6. Implement enhanced training for contractors
7. Allow DATS riders to book trips based on appointment times
8. Provide more flexibility to address individual riders needs
9. Enhance the paratransit trip experience

Corresponding Action	Measure	Completion Date
1 and 3	Entered contracts with four different service providers, including three taxi companies.	Q3 2019
2	Executed an extensive Operator recruitment campaign in 2019 and implemented annual process to project Operator exits and hires to account for projected long-term absences.	Q3 2019
4	Implemented a new process for scheduling subscription trips, allowing staff to negotiate and prioritize trips during peak periods.	Q3 2019
1	Implemented a new contract management plan.	Q4 2019
8	Provided and promoted a list of alternative transportation and other service providers to DATS riders who required enhanced levels of service.	Q4 2019

Attachment 1

Corresponding Action	Measure	Completion Date
9	Completed Customer Journey Mapping.	2020
9	Implemented annual DATS Customer Satisfaction Surveys.	2020
8	Pilot program using taxi contract for flexible day-of-service scheduling.	Q1 2020
4	Implemented automated daily batch scheduling to improve trip scheduling efficiency.	Q1 2020
9	Developed a new contractor training program, with a focus on disability awareness and customer service.	Q1 2020
1 and 8	Overhauled trip cancellation policies and enforcement program to increase trip accommodation capability and minimize service delays.	Q1 2021
8	Trained and deployed a second taxi company to improve trip accommodation capabilities.	Q4 2021
3	Completed a feasibility review around creation of an accessible transit hub solution. This would be contingent upon technological upgrades and integration. Planned integration with contracted service providers could facilitate future integration efforts to support such a solution.	Q4 2021
3	Provided support around impact analysis and business cases with certain Alternative Transportation Providers.	Q1 2022
9	Reinstated accessible travel training and seniors travel training programs after suspension of these programs due to COVID-19.	Q1 2022
4	Created a new position directly responsible for all aspects of trip scheduling enhancements and technology modernization in paratransit service.	Q2 2022
8 and 9	Tested functionality of allowing distance based ride times to improve consistency of ride times and allow for improved ease in trip planning.	Q2 2022
3	Development of processes to support a "standby" pool of taxi drivers to supplement service on days with increased demand or higher absenteeism from in-house Operators.	Q3 2022
5	Implementing a pilot program for annual accessibility audits for transit infrastructure.	Q3 2022
8 and 9	Conduct engagement workshops on potential customer service enhancements.	Q4 2022
1, 4, and 9	Develop and implement processes to allow for distance-based ride times in trip scheduling.	Q4 2022
9	Conducting public engagement to support an upgrade of online booking features.	Q4 2022

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Corresponding Action	Measure	Completion Date
9	Rollout of enhanced interactive voice response (IVR) tools, including trip reminders, imminent arrival calls, and “where’s my ride” features via text or automated call.	Q3 2023
1 and 9	Implement a new scheduling algorithm that will better align scheduled on-board times with overall trip distance.	Q4 2023
7	Allow DATS riders to book trips based on appointment times.	Expected Q2 2025
1 and 3	Explore ways to integrate paratransit scheduling software with contracted dispatch systems to facilitate seamless real-time trip scheduling. This is contingent upon planned software version upgrades scheduled to be completed in 2022.	Anticipating 2025
4 and 5	Explore technology solutions to help integrate paratransit and conventional service in trip planning.	Anticipating 2026
4	Implement trip scheduling enhancements, including map and road speed upgrades and continuous optimization.	Q1 2024
4 and 8	Rollout of enhanced online booking features.	Q4 2024