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The Regional Municipality of Durham

MINUTES

DURHAM REGION TRANSIT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Wednesday, January 6, 2021

A regular meeting of the Durham Region Transit Executive Committee was held on Wednesday, January 6, 2021 in the Council Chambers, Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby, Ontario at 1:30 PM

1. Roll Call

Present: Commissioner Collier, Chair
Commissioner Barton, Vice-Chair
Commissioner Anderson
Commissioner Carter
Commissioner Mulcahy
Commissioner Pickles attended the meeting at 1:35 PM
Commissioner Smith
Regional Chair Henry
*** all members of Committee, except Regional Chair Henry, participated electronically**

Also
Present: Commissioner Crawford
Commissioner Wotten

Staff
Present: E. Baxter-Trahair, Chief Administrative Officer
W. Holmes, General Manager, Durham Region Transit
J. Austin, Deputy General Manager, Business Services, Durham Region Transit
D. Beaton, Commissioner of Corporate Services
B. Bridgeman, Commissioner of Planning & Economic Development
J. Demanuele, Director of Business Services, Works Department
D. Dunn, Project Manager, Transportation Design, Durham Region Transit
S. Glover, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Service
L. Hatch, Marketing Assistant, Durham Region Transit
L. Huinink, Director, Rapid Transportation & Transit Oriented Development, Office of the Chief Administration Officer
R. Jagannathan, Director of Transportation and Field Services
A. McKinley, Deputy General Manager, Maintenance, Durham Region Transit
A. Naeem, Solicitor, Corporate Services – Legal
C. Norris, Deputy General Manager, Operations, Durham Region Transit
J. Phelen, Planner, Service Design, Durham Region Transit

T. Steffler, Supervisor, Transit Durham East, Durham Region Transit
N. Taylor, Treasurer, Durham Region Transit, and Commissioner of Finance
R. Inacio, Systems Support Specialist, Corporate Services – IT
C. Tennisco, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Adoption of Minutes

Moved by Commissioner Anderson, Seconded by Commissioner Barton,
(1) That the minutes of the regular Durham Region Transit Executive
Committee meeting held on Wednesday, December 2, 2020, be adopted.
CARRIED

4. Delegations

4.1 Emily Ames, Pickering resident; re: Necessary improvements to On Demand Service

Emily Ames appeared before the Committee regarding challenges and suggested enhancements to the Durham Region Transit (DRT) On Demand services for families.

E. Ames advised that her family, including her seven year old daughter, continue to regularly use DRT; however, the transition to the On Demand services has been a challenge for her family, particularly when travelling with her daughter. She explained that when DRT switched to the On Demand service with regular vehicles without booster seats, it made it less safe for her daughter as per recommendations of the Hospital for Sick Children and the Ministry of Transportation.

E. Ames stated she has reached out to DRT's Customer Service regarding how her family could access transit and make sure it was safe. She noted that in the beginning of On Demand, DRT had utilized the regular buses but later in the fall these vehicles were typically not available because they were often redeployed; and left them without a transit option in the morning. She also stated that the 'same day' On Demand booking service is a challenge particularly when you require a pick-up at the same time every day.

E. Ames suggested that the staff look at enhancing the On-Demand service by providing an option for customers to request regular pick-ups, a week in advance and a week at a time, instead of just on the same day; creating a profile of its riders and requirements so that the booking agent knows when a rider is travelling with a young child with accessibility needs; and, enhancing safety by providing booster seats for any DRT service vehicle or contracted service vehicle equipped with seat belts. E. Ames stated that booster seats are a low-cost solution and

raise a child up so the adult seat belts in the vehicles protect them better. She noted that to her knowledge Ontario's Highway Traffic Act requires children weighing 18 kg to 36 kg (40 to 80 pounds), standing less than 145 cm (4 ft. 9 inches) tall, and under 8 years of age to use a booster seat.

E. Ames responded to questions of the Committee.

Discussion ensued on how a booster seat protects children when travelling in a DRT service vehicle equipped with adult seatbelts versus a conventional transit bus without seatbelts.

Staff was asked to reach out to E. Ames with respect to the outcome of today's discussions regarding the provision of booster seats on DRT service vehicles.

[Further discussion ensued on this matter later in the meeting. See Item 10.2 on pages 7 and 8 of these minutes.]

5. Presentations

5.1 Bill Holmes, General Manager, Durham Region Transit; re: Paper Transfers

Bill Holmes, General Manager, Durham Region Transit, provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding an update on Durham Region Transit issuance of paper transfers as requested by the Committee at the December 2, 2020 TEC meeting. A copy of the presentation was provided in the Agenda.

Highlights of the presentation included:

- Background
- Transfers and Fare Payments
 - Paper Transfers
 - PRESTO Transfers
 - PRESTO contactless fare payment
- Transit Executive Committee (TEC) reports and decisions
 - Report #2019-DRT-25: Durham Region Transit Fare Strategy, December 4, 2019
 - Report #2020-DRT-11: Resumption of Fare Collection, June 3, 2020
 - Report #2020-DRT-18: PRESTO Card Incentive, September 9, 2020
- Status
- Recommendations

B. Holmes provided an update on the mitigation measures implemented with respect to paper transfers at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure the safety of customers and employees and to ensure DRT could continue to operate; and, the Durham Region Health Department and the 2020 Ministry of Transportation guideline documents recommending a contactless fare payment to avoid the exchange of paper products such as cash and receipts. He noted that in July 2020 paper transfers and fare media were temporarily eliminated to mitigate the risks of the virus transmission.

B. Holmes advised that currently customers paying with cash pay a fare on each bus; customers using PRESTO fare payment (card or e-ticket) pay \$3.25 and the transfer is automatically applied to the card for travel within a 2-hour period, regardless of the number of buses boarded. B. Holmes explained PRESTO saves a customer \$0.75 per trip, or \$10.00 for every 14 bus trips. He outlined the options available to customers to purchase, load, and manage their PRESTO card. He also confirmed TEC's decision to assist customers and provide free PRESTO cards in 2020 while paper transfers were temporarily eliminated.

B. Holmes provided an overview of the Transit Executive Committee's (TEC) reports and decisions for a DRT fare strategy in order to achieve a fare structure that is simple, seamless and fair, and that provides incentives to its customers.

B. Holmes explained that Public Health has advised that as long as all the recommended public health measures are taken (physical distance, hand hygiene, masking, flow of patrons, etc), handling transfers would be a low risk activity for COVID transmission. While DRT has taken steps to address some of the original risks identified, issuing paper transfers still requires intervention by the bus operator and compromising the bio-barrier. B. Holmes advised that staff will continue to pause paper transfers and tickets and report back to TEC in April 2021 on this matter; and, continue the TEC approved incentive to waive the PRESTO card fee through March 2021 when a minimum of \$6.50 is loaded on the card.

Commissioner Barton re-iterated his support for the Transit Advisory Committee's resolution to allow cash fares and paper transfers.

B. Holmes responded to questions regarding opportunities to reimplement the paper transfers by September 2021; if there are some customers that will choose only to use cash and not adopt PRESTO; and, the \$4.00 cash fare paid by customers on each bus travelled.

Staff was asked to look at an alternative for paper transfers for the DRT customers paying a cash fare. B. Holmes advised that staff will review the best practices within the transit industry for potential solutions.

Chair Collier clarified that 10 percent of the DRT ridership uses cash fares. He also outlined the process of DRT bus operators when dealing with cash paying customers who request paper transfers.

5.2 Lorraine Huinink, Director, Rapid Transit Implementation and Transit Oriented Development; and David Dunn, Project Manager, Rapid Transit Implementation; re: Bus Rapid Transit Implementation Update

L. Huinink and D. Dunn provided a PowerPoint presentation update on the implementation and timing of the various sections of the Durham Scarborough Bus Rapid Transit (DSBRT). A copy of the presentation was provided in the Agenda.

L. Huinink advised that, in partnership with the Works Department and in collaboration with Durham Region Transit, the Rapid Transit Office is mandated to plan, design and implement Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) solutions within Durham Region. She noted that the presentation outlines the current status of the BRT projects and an overview of the construction timeline during the next 8 to 10 years.

D. Dunn advised that starting in 2011, with the Quick Win and the Public Transit Infrastructure Fund (PTIF) funding programs, the Region has constructed approximately 5 km of dedicated BRT lanes in the City of Pickering and the Town of Ajax.

Highlights of the presentation included:

- Maps
 - BRT lanes already built
 - Durham-Scarborough BRT
- Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) project submissions
 1. Simcoe Street rapid transit EA (ICIP funding approved)
 2. Oshawa, Whitby & Ajax Rapid Transit Road Works (ICIP funding approved)
 3. Pickering Median Transit Road Works (ICIP funding pending Federal approval)
- Pickering ICIP project schedule
- Previously constructed BRT segments – Pickering
- Converting existing curbside to median
- ICIP road works funding facts
- BRT projects lessons learned and mitigation strategy

D. Dunn advised that in 2017 the Province announced \$10 million for the Durham-Scarborough BRT (DSBRT) EA to connect the Scarborough Subway in the west to the future Oshawa GO Train Station in the east. He also advised that the EA is currently in the consultation process and input from the stakeholders is being gathered, and it is anticipated to be completed by 2021.

D. Dunn noted that in October 2019 the Region applied for funding under the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) – Transit for 14 projects including two projects for the DSBRT. He provided an update on the Simcoe Street Rapid Transit EA for higher order transit to begin in 2021; the Oshawa, Whitby, and Ajax Rapid Transit BRT road works; and, the Pickering median DSBRT lane projects.

D. Dunn provided an overview of the City of Pickering's constructed BRT segments and the scheduled conversion to median transit lanes in the years 2022 to 2023 for Whites Road, Liverpool Road and Brock Road. He displayed images of the existing curbside segments to median transit lanes.

Commissioner Mulcahy noted the concerns raised by the community regarding the ICIP projects through the historic downtown area in the Town of Whitby, as detailed on page 25 of the agenda. She stated that residents were unaware of any

opportunities for discussions or public consultation in regards to the project timing, the detailed design, property acquisitions and the \$2 million allocated for these projects. D. Dunn advised that the Environmental Assessment (EA) design will be finalized early in the summer and that there will be further opportunities for consultation moving forward. He noted that the property acquisition for the 45 metre right-of-way between Lakeridge Road to Des Newman Boulevard in Whitby is moving forward, and the Request For Proposal (RFP) will provide the options for design changes. D. Dunn explained that the \$2 million allocated in the current ICIP project for downtown Whitby includes line painting and que-jumps to bring the buses up through the intersection area of Brock Street.

D. Dunn responded to questions regarding the timelines for Durham-Scarborough BRT (DSBRT) projects, the Whitby ICIP project timeline for 2027; the Ajax ICIP project for curbside bus lanes from Salem Road to Galea Drive; the changes from Westney Road to Lakeridge Road for bike lanes; and, timelines for the Ajax projects.

6. Correspondence

There were no correspondence items to be considered.

7. Reports

A) General Manager's Report – January 6, 2021 (2021-DRT-01)

Report #2021-DRT-01 from B. Holmes, General Manager, Durham Region Transit, was received.

Moved by Commissioner Barton, Seconded by Commissioner Mulcahy,
(2) That Report #2021-DRT-01 of the General Manager, Durham Region Transit, be received for information.

CARRIED

B) Simcoe Street Transit Priority Pilot Study (2021-DRT-02)

Report #2021-DRT-02 from B. Holmes, General Manager, Durham Region Transit, was received.

Moved by Commissioner Drew, Seconded by Commissioner Smith,
(3) That Report #2021-DRT-02 of the General Manager, Durham Region Transit, be received for information.

CARRIED

8. Advisory Committee Resolutions

There were no advisory committee items to be considered.

9. Confidential Matters

There were no confidential matters to be considered.

10. Other Business

10.1 Specialized Service Bus Capacity and Blocked off Front Seats

At the request of Commissioner Anderson, a copy of an email from Rosemary McConkey, Oshawa City Councillor, on behalf of Norm Lyon, Oshawa resident, with respect to blocked off front seats and capacity on the Specialized Service buses, was forwarded to the Committee.

B. Holmes advised that it continued to be critical during the pandemic that DRT services were fair and equitable for all customers, including both Specialized and Conventional services. He explained that there is consistency for operators and customers to remain at least two metres from the operator compartment. In terms of capacity, B. Holmes advised that the maximum capacity on a Specialized Services bus is 4 customers, and that similar to conventional services, face coverings required by all customers because at times physical distancing on the bus can not be assured. C. Norris advised that on average the maximum number of customers on a Specialized Services vehicle is 3 customers.

Staff was asked to follow-up with Councillor McConkey and Norm Lyon regarding the guidelines in place for travelling safely on a Specialized Services bus.

10.2 Challenges and Enhancements to the Durham Region Transit (DRT) On Demand Services for Booster Seats

Chair Collier referred to the request from Ms. E. Ames, as heard during her delegation earlier in the meeting, to provide booster seats for DRT service vehicles equipped with seat belts, including the On Demand service. He requested clarification on the issue of DRT providing booster seats on the service vehicles.

B. Holmes explained that the issue of booster seats comes into play when a vehicle is equipped with seatbelts. He noted the legal requirements state that when a vehicle is equipped with seatbelts, the seatbelts must be worn; that there are specific requirements for a child seat dependent on the age, weight and height of the child; and, that there has been extensive discussions on the logistics related to providing child seats for families travelling with children. B. Holmes stated that the current DRT process is to have a regular bus available to accommodate families travelling with a child which is a consistent practice throughout the transit industry.

C. Norris clarified that because the provision of child seats is specific to the age, height and weight of a child, as outlined in the Ministry of Transportation's (MTO)

regulations, it would require DRT to have the various child restraint systems on-board each vehicle to ensure that every child is provided the proper restraint system per the MTO regulations. He added that the process of securing the car seat and child could take up to 10 minutes per child.

11. Date of Next Meeting

The next regularly scheduled Durham Region Transit Executive Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 3, 2021 at 1:30 PM in the Council Chambers, Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby.

12. Adjournment

Moved by Commissioner Anderson, Seconded by Commissioner Pickles,
(4) That the meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 2:45 PM

Respectfully submitted,

S. Collier, Chair

Committee Clerk