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The Regional Municipality of Durham

MINUTES

DURHAM REGION TRANSIT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Wednesday, December 7, 2022

A regular meeting of the Durham Region Transit Executive Committee was held on Wednesday, December 7, 2022 in the Council Chambers, Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby, Ontario at 1:30 PM

1. Roll Call

Present: Commissioner Crawford, Chair
Commissioner Schummer*, Vice-Chair
Commissioner Anderson
Commissioner Brenner
Commissioner Carter
Commissioner Garrod
Commissioner Roy
Regional Chair Henry

Also

Present: Commissioner Kerr
Commissioner Marimpietri
Commissioner Jubb*
*denotes Commissioners participating electronically

Absent: Commissioner Wotten

Present: E. Baxter-Trahair, Chief Administrative Officer
W. Holmes, General Manager, Durham Region Transit
F. Amin, Administrative Assistant, Durham Region Transit
J. Austin, Deputy General Manager, Business Services, Durham Region Transit
B. Baltkois, Program Manager, Technical Solutions, Durham Region Transit
A. Burgess, Deputy General Manager, Maintenance, Durham Region Transit
J. Constance, Manager, Maintenance Support Durham Region Transit
B. Fisher, Supervisor, Customer Service, Durham Region Transit
R. Inacio, Systems Support Specialist, Corporate Services – IT
M. Kassad, Program Manager Specifications and Support, Durham Region Transit
B. Lodge, Manager, Maintenance East, Durham Region Transit
A. Mak, Supervisor, Financials, Durham Region Transit
A. Naeem, Solicitor, Legal Services
C. Norris, Deputy General Manager, Operations, Durham Region Transit

Z. Osime-Fakolade, Program Manager, Community Engagement and Change Management, Durham Region Transit
N. Ratti, Manager, Policy and Planning, Durham Region Transit
P. Teoh, Program Manager, Analytics, Durham Region Transit
A. Thompson, Supervisor, Business Support, Durham Region Transit
P. Uthayakumar, Program Manager, Sustainability and Strategic Initiatives, Durham Region Transit
G. Vaspori, Manager, Operations, Durham Region Transit
A. Harras, Regional Clerk/Director of Legislative Services
L. Fleury, Legislative Officer, Corporate Services – Legislative Services
S. Ciani, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services
L. Soto Maya, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services

In accordance with the Transit By-law 27-2021, Section 8, Regional Chair Henry designated Commissioner Crawford as the Chair of Transit Executive Committee for the remainder of the term.

Commissioner Crawford assumed the Chair for the balance of the meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Election of Transit Executive Committee Vice-Chair

Chair Crawford called for nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the Transit Executive Committee.

Moved by Regional Chair Henry, Seconded by Commissioner Roy,
(34) That Commissioner Schummer be nominated for the position of Vice-Chair of the Transit Executive Committee.

CARRIED

Moved by Commissioner Carter, Seconded by Commissioner Garrod,
(35) That nominations be closed.

CARRIED

The Chair declared Commissioner Schummer as the Vice-Chair of the Transit Executive Committee.

4. Adoption of Minutes

Moved by Commissioner Carter, Seconded by Commissioner Brenner,
(36) That the minutes of the regular Durham Region Transit Executive Committee meeting held on Wednesday, September 7, 2022, be adopted.

CARRIED

5. Delegations

5.1 Jessica Maga, Durham Resident, Re: Integration of Durham Region Transit and Metrolinx

Jessica Maga, a customer of Durham Region Transit 103 bus route in Pickering, provided a delegation to Committee on the integration of Durham Region Transit and Metrolinx.

J. Maga encouraged the Committee to review Ms. Henderson's presentation from the September Transit Executive Committee meeting regarding the planning issues between Durham Region Transit and Metrolinx. J. Maga outlined her experience transferring between the GO Train and DRT buses and referenced DRT statements that current misalignments are due to last minutes changes from Metrolinx. J. Maga recommended the need for communication between DRT and Metrolinx, and noted that all three levels of government are encouraging residents to use transit.

J. Maga asked the Committee to pass a motion to invite Metrolinx and DRT to present their plans to ensure appropriate communication and planning so that Durham Region transit riders can rely on a safe, consistent, and integrated Transit system.

J. Maga responded to a question from the Committee.

B. Holmes responded to questions regarding coordination of schedules and communication between DRT and Metrolinx.

5.2 Adam Lamplugh, Durham Resident Re: Service Changes

Adam Lamplugh, Durham Resident, withdrew the request to appear before the Committee with respect to Service Changes.

5.3 Joshua Sankarlal, Ontario Tech Student Union, President Re: Student Transit

Joshua Sankarlal, Ontario Tech Student Union President, provided a presentation to the Committee on Student Transit matters arising from a recent survey of Ontario Tech students conducted by the Ontario Tech Student Union.

Highlights of the presentation included:

- Who We Are
- Our Principles
- Why We're Here
- Resolution Timeline
- High Reliance, Low Reliability
- Unequal Access, Equal Fees

- A Lack of Communication
- Today's Agenda

J. Sankarlal advised that the Student Union has engaged with DRT for over a year on student transit concerns. J. Sankarlal stated that Ontario Tech Student Union represents the interests of 10,000 undergraduate and graduate students, and advocates at the institutional, municipal, provincial and federal governments.

J. Sankarlal provided an overview of the status of transit for students, including: students have a high-reliance on transit; students experience a low-reliability of transit service; and UPASS costs for students. J. Sankarlal advised that a recent survey conducted by the Ontario Tech Student Union found that 70 percent of students surveyed strongly agreed that they rely on Durham Region Transit; students believe that DRT is not reliable; and 82 percent of students surveyed indicated a high reliance on the transit network.

J. Sankarlal recommended that DRT introduce frequent express routes between residential areas and campus, increase public transportation services in municipalities with less transit availability, and ensure equitable access to transit services across the Durham Region. J. Sankarlal recommended DRT collaborate with Ontario Tech to streamline communication strategies to ensure students are informed of real-time transit updates.

J. Sankarlal stated that Durham Region is set to receive 3.7 million in Transit funding through the provincial Safe Restart Agreement funding and requested that the funds be allocated to reflect the concerns of Ontario Tech students.

J. Sankarlal responded to questions of the Committee.

B. Holmes, General Manager, Durham Region Transit responded that DRT will provide an information report to the Transit Executive Committee meeting in January to address the concerns raised.

B. Holmes responded that all customers could access real-time bus information when using the Transit app, that displays the arrival time of the next bus. Customers could also consider receiving Twitter notifications of delayed or cancelled trips.

5.4 Tien Huynh, Town of Whitby Resident Re: Upcoming Service Changes to Durham Region Transit (DRT Pulse)

Tien Huynh, a Town of Whitby resident, provided a delegation to the Committee on upcoming service changes taking affect in January to Durham Region Transit (DRT Pulse).

T. Huynh outlined service cuts to DRT Pulse routes, resident reliance on the transit routes, and the need for more transit services for Durham residents that rely on transit to make a living. T. Huynh compared the level of services provided by DRT to other municipalities with higher service levels, such as Brampton. T. Huynh stated that investment in transit within Durham is required to improve ridership.

6. Presentations

6.1 Bill Holmes, General Manager, Durham Region Transit Re: General Manager's Verbal Update

B. Holmes, General Manager, Jamie Austin, Deputy General Manager - Business Services, Christopher Norris, Deputy General Manager - Operations, and Allison Burgess, Deputy General Manager - Maintenance, Durham Region Transit, introduced DRT staff, and a verbal update to the Committee.

Highlights of the presentation included:

- Review of GM Report
- January 2023 Service Update
 - Objectives
 - On-Demand
 - Conventional
- Summary Changes Frequency
- Updates – Rural
- Updates – West
- Updates – Central
- Updates – East
- Where We Need to Be

On behalf of Durham Region Transit, General Manager, Bill Holmes congratulated the Commissioners on their appointment to the Transit Executive Committee. B. Holmes highlighted that DRT has achieved many accomplishments over the last 17 years, and the DRT team is focused on the future and advancing transit in the Region. B. Holmes provided an overview of the key performance metrics for November and summary of current and upcoming transit issues.

B. Holmes highlighted the current service status, including; DRT enhanced service by 12 percent in September, implementing new routes and enhanced frequency throughout the network to support secondary and post-secondary students return to campuses, and residents return to the office. DRT now provides 60 percent more residents in Durham with direct transit to post-secondary campuses compared to the pre-pandemic network. In December, weekly boardings reached 84 percent of pre-pandemic levels – 82 percent on weekdays and over 100 percent on weekends. Provincial ridership varies with an average of 73 percent across the province. Cross-boundary bus transit trips with Toronto have returned to pre-

pandemic levels, with over half of the trips taken on the new route 920 from McCowan Station via Sheppard to the north campus in Oshawa.

B. Holmes stated that consistent with the fare strategy, the Transit Assistant Pass on PRESTO has replaced the legacy paper ACCESS pass. In November, the number of TAP passes sold surpassed pre-pandemic levels. DRT has experienced strong local bus ridership in Durham and connecting to Toronto on the bus, but commuter ridership to downtown Toronto remains well below pre-pandemic levels.

B. Holmes addressed the recent reliability of the conventional scheduled service network. Service during the fall board period was 97.6 percent compared to DRT's target of 99.5 percent. DRT indicated that service not delivered was attributed to resource availability (25 percent) and increased traffic on key corridors (75 percent).

B. Holmes advised that on-time performance (OTP) for the fall board period dropped to 79.6 per cent. Traffic volumes are approaching or exceeding pre-pandemic levels, contributing to increasing service delays and reducing DRT reliability. To improve reliability for customers, DRT will be increasing running time for routes operating on corridors experiencing delays, resulting in DRT costs increasing to deliver the same level of service.

In September, DRT merged specialized services and On-Demand to ensure an equitable demand response service for residents. The merged service is called On-Demand. B. Holmes noted that in September the centralized platform contributed to some reliability challenges, and these issues have been resolved. B. Holmes provided an overview regarding recent capacity and reliability issues. B. Holmes highlighted that staff absences resulting from the early flu season and continued COVID-19 pandemic have been the main contributor to capacity challenges. There is a need for temporary capacity until the service matures, and actions are being taken to add capacity to the service.

B. Holmes stated DRT's commitment to climate emergency, and DRT the hybrid buses were placed into service starting October 31.

B. Holmes stated that DRT will provide fare free boarding on New Years Eve from December 31st at 7:00 pm to January 1st at 4:00 a.m.

J. Austin provided an overview of the Business Services division which provides business supports on an enterprise-wide basis, customer focus fare initiatives, as well as, modernization and innovation initiatives. Business Services includes; financial services; business analytics; transit technology solutions; safety and training; business support; customer service; sustainability and strategic initiatives; and procurement and specifications.

A. Burgess provided an overview of the Maintenance division, comprised of a team of dedicated and solution-oriented staff that ensure over 200 vehicles are safe and ready for service. The maintenance team includes mechanics, service persons, part and inventory, and administrative staff.

C. Norris provided an overview of the Operations division, comprised of a team of 420 staff. In addition to bus operators, there is a team of 50 staff including transit planners, schedulers, supervisors, project managers, dispatchers and the eligibility office. DRT operations support 24 hour transit service 365 days a year.

B. Holmes introduced the new community and engagement group that will interact with stakeholders and include DRT Ambassadors who will be present on platforms to support customers, and attend various engagement events starting in 2023.

C. Norris presented the January 2023 service updates for conventional services.

B. Holmes provided an overview of the key service level metrics for DRT relative to comparator transit agencies in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. In 2019, DRT's revenue hours per capita was 0.85, compared to 1.5 – 2.0 for comparator municipalities. Significant investments would be needed to provide Durham residents with levels of transit service comparable to other municipalities.

B. Holmes and C. Norris responded to questions from the Committee regarding On Demand Service, future service adjustments to address customer demand, accessibility, fares, system pressures, capacity, and community engagement.

7. Correspondence

7.1 Memorandum from Regional Clerk-Director of Legislative Service Re: Transit Executive Committee Members for 2022-2026 Term

Moved by Commissioner Anderson, Seconded by Commissioner Brenner,
That the memorandum from the Regional Clerk-Director of Legislative Services regarding Transit Executive Committee Members for 2022-2026 Term, be received for information.

CARRIED

8. Reports

8.1 General Manager's Report - December 7, 2022 (2022-DRT-18)

Report # 2022-DRT-18 - General Manager's Report - December 7, 2022 from B. Holmes, General Manager, Durham Region Transit, was received.

Moved by Commissioner Anderson, Seconded by Commissioner Brenner,
That Report # 2022-DRT-18 be received for information.

CARRIED

8.2 2022-2026 Data and Analytics Strategy (2022-DRT-19)

Report #2022-DRT-19 - DRT 2022-2026 Data and Analytics Strategy from B. Holmes, General Manager, Durham Region Transit, was received.

Moved by Commissioner Carter, Seconded by Commissioner Garrod,
That Report # 2022-DRT-18 be received for information.

CARRIED

9. Advisory Committee Resolutions

There were no advisory committee resolutions to be considered.

10. Confidential Matters

There were no confidential matters to be considered.

11. Other Business

11.1 2023 Transit Executive Committee Schedule

(37) Moved by Commissioner Carter, Seconded by Commissioner Brenner,
That the 2023 Transit Executive Committee Schedule be received for
information.

CARRIED

11.2 2023 Transit Advisory Committee Schedule

(38) Moved by Commissioner Roy, Seconded by Commissioner Garrod,
That the 2023 Transit Advisory Committee schedule be received for
information.

CARRIED

11.3 Provincial Funding Announcement

Commissioner Brenner requested clarification regarding the allotment of funding that was part of the provincial announcement for 3.7 million dollars, as well, the terms for the Restart Funding.

B. Holmes, General Manager, Durham Region Transit, responded that the recently announced Safe Restart Agreement (SRA) funding allocation of up to \$3.7 million is committed to funding 2022 pressures resulting from the on-going impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The funding will cover reduced fare revenue compared to 2019, and pandemic related expenses incurred in 2022.

12. Date of Next Meeting

The next regularly scheduled Durham Region Transit Executive Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 11, 2023 at 1:30 PM in the Council Chambers, Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby.

13. Adjournment

(39) Moved by Commissioner Carter, Seconded by Commissioner Roy,
That the meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 3:22 PM

Respectfully submitted,

M. Crawford, Chair

L. Soto Maya, Committee Clerk