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The Regional Municipality of Durham

MINUTES

SPECIAL TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

May 1, 2024

A Special meeting of the Transit Advisory Committee was held on Wednesday, May 1, 2024 in Meeting Room 1-B, Regional Municipality of Durham Headquarters, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby at 7:02 PM. Electronic participation was offered for this meeting.

1. Roll Call

Present: Commissioner Crawford, Chair
A. Ali, Ajax* attended the meeting at 7:05 PM and left the meeting at 8:48 PM
A. Andrus*, Community Group, Participation House
M. Bonk, Brock
R. Claxton-Oldfield*, Member at Large
I. Giffin, Uxbridge* attended meeting at 7:25 PM
P. Gunti*, Clarington, Vice-Chair
W. Henshall*, AAC
J. McEwen, AAC
A. Mujeeb*, Pickering
T. Ralph*, Whitby
T. Smale, Member at Large
J. Westerman, Oshawa

*** denotes members of the Committee participating electronically**

Absent: R. Smith, Community Group, Durham Association for Family Resources

Staff

Present: M. Fitzgibbon, Policy Advisor, Innovation
B. Holmes, General Manager, Durham Region Transit
R. Inacio, Systems Support Specialist, Corporate Services – IT
J. Lopez-Wilson, Policy Advisor, Innovation
E. McGarry Ware, Manager, Innovation and Research
S. Dessureault, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services
*** denotes staff participating electronically**

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Discussion Items

A) Creating a Workplan for the Transit Advisory Committee

J. Lopez-Wilson, Policy Advisor, Innovation, provided introductory remarks for the Design Dash Workshop, and outlined the purpose of the session.

B. Holmes, General Manager, Durham Region Transit, provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding background and context of the Transit Advisory Committee.

Highlights from the presentation included:

- Role of the Transit Advisory Committee
- Durham Region Transit Vision
- Background: Strategic Priorities
- Strategic Priorities
 - Economic Prosperity
 - Social Investments
 - Service Excellence
- Key Information – Looking forward

J. Lopez-Wilson provided a presentation with regards to creating a Workplan for the Transit Advisory Committee.

J. Lopez-Wilson asked committee members to participate in an exercise by answering ‘One thing they love about Durham Region Transit (DRT)’. Members provided the following responses:

- potential;
- accessible;
- cleanliness;
- economical;
- opportunity; and
- available to our community.

J. Lopez-Wilson provided guiding principles for creating a workplan.

The guiding principles included:

- Everyone has wisdom
- We need everyone’s wisdom for the best results
- There are no wrong answers
- Together, Alone
- Stay Focused

J. Lopez-Wilson asked committee members to participate in an exercise to help formulate a practical vision, by answering ‘What do we want the impact of our efforts (TAC) to look like in 3-5 years’.. Members provided the following responses:

- active communication through all levels;
- ensuring feasible, affordable, and equitable transportation;
- continuous empirical assessments of needs;

- a reliable network;
- accountability resulting in concrete changes in DRT services and delivery;
- public engagement;
- affordable transit ensuring everyone can afford to ride a barrier-free transit system;
- accessibility for all;
- a frequent, convenient, multiuse system;
- real-time transmission of changes;
- fostering diversity, employment, and continuous training;
- system models reflecting the Region of Durham; and
- a usable system with empathy at its core for the community of the Region of Durham.

J. Lopez-Wilson clustered all responses from the committee members into themes regarding the practical vision into distinct groups to sharpen the focus. Committee members collaborated and unanimously concurred on a vision to assist TAC to identify their key priorities.

J. Lopez-Wilson asked committee members to participate in an exercise by answering ‘What are DRT’s strengths and assets that can help achieve our vision’. Members provided the following responses:

- leveraging technology;
- fostering connections with the community;
- acknowledging the potential for change and improvement in current road infrastructure;
- forming partnerships with other regional entities;
- recognizing the valuable contributions of staff, volunteers, and leaders at DRT;
- the Transit Advisory Committee;
- ensuring well trained, professional staff;
- enhancing communication; and
- ability to recognize challenges and find workable solutions.

J. Lopez-Wilson compiled the top responses from committee members regarding strengths and assets to refine the focus. Committee members collaborated and identified the primary strengths and assets of DRT.

J. Lopez-Wilson asked committee members to participate in an exercise by answering ‘What challenges and barriers do TAC members feel are blocking DRT from achieving our vision’. Members provided the following responses:

- limited financial resources;
- reliability issues;
- communication challenges;
- ensuring long-term goals address underlying issues;
- overcoming infrastructure limitations;
- addressing workforce concerns and preparing for technological transitions;

- addressing scheduling challenges with Metrolinx;
- providing adequate staff training; and
- scheduling to meet the needs of riders.

J. Lopez-Wilson clustered all responses from committee members regarding challenges and barriers into distinct groups to refine the focus. Committee members collaborated and unanimously agreed upon the primary challenges and barriers facing DRT.

J. Lopez-Wilson asked committee members to participate in an exercise by answering 'What are the top priorities for DRT to overcome the challenges, build on strengths and move towards the TAC vision'. Members provided the following responses:

- keeping up with technology, engaging with the community to understand needs;
- staffing;
- strengthening funding;
- transparent communication;
- focusing on affordability through long-term goals and targets;
- community communication and advocacy for improving ridership; and
- infrastructure.

J. Lopez-Wilson clustered all response from committee members regarding the priorities for the Transit Advisory Committee into distinct groups. Committee members collaborated to identify the top priority areas of focus for the Transit Advisory Committee for the remainder of the current term. Members top responses were the following:

- Consistent and, reliable service is the face of transit for the public and should be a top priority;
- Engage with community to understand the needs; and
- Technology and infrastructure.

Chair Crawford concluded the meeting and advised that the prioritized focus areas will be reviewed by members at the next regular meeting on May 21, 2024.

4. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday, May 21, 2024 at 7:00 PM

5. Adjournment

Moved by J. McEwen, Seconded by M. Bonk,
That the meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 8:52 PM.

M. Crawford, Chair, Transit Advisory Committee

Sarah Dessureault, Committee Clerk