

If this information is required in an accessible format, please contact 1-800-372-1102 ext. 2097.

The Regional Municipality of Durham

MINUTES

TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, January 21, 2020

A meeting of the Transit Advisory Committee was held on Tuesday, January 21, 2020 in the Lower Level Boardroom (LL-C), Regional Municipality of Durham Headquarters, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby at 7:00 PM

Present: Commissioner Barton, Chair
C. Antram, Ajax
J. Beaton, Whitby
R. Claxton-Oldfield, Clarington
K. Ginter, Member at Large
J. Hollingsworth, Member at Large
A. Macci, Pickering
J. Martin, Brock
J. Nguyen, Student Association representative, Ontario Tech, Durham
College and Trent University
M. Roche, AAC

Absent: G. Weddel, Uxbridge

Staff

Present: B. Holmes, General Manager, Durham Region Transit
C. Norris, Manager, Customer Experience, Durham Region Transit
C. Tennisco, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services

1. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Chair Barton reiterated the Members responsibilities regarding stating a declaration of interest under the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act.

2. Adoption of Minutes

Moved by C. Antram, Seconded by J. Nguyen,
That the minutes of the regular Durham Region Transit Advisory
Committee meeting held on Wednesday, November 19, 2019, be
adopted.

CARRIED

3. Delegations

3.1 Daryl Smith, Whitby resident, re: Durham Region Transit's bus scheduling, bus shortages and its impact on the riders

D. Smith, Whitby resident, provided a PowerPoint presentation titled, "Durham Transit Communication Issue" regarding Durham Region Transit's bus scheduling, bus shortages and its impact on the riders. A copy of his presentation was provided as a handout.

D. Smith stated that for most riders, the information on services provided by Durham Region Transit (DRT) is inadequate and at times incorrect. He noted that while delays and mechanical issues are understandable, changes in the bus routes often leave the riders in the dark and unable to make the most efficient transit decisions. He advised that these DRT issues have been ongoing during the last 60 days on the Route 302, 305 and 308 services.

Highlights from the presentation included:

- Inaccurate Information
- Lack of alerts of bus changes
- Mobile site should display disruptions information
- Additional issues in the case of cancelled or delayed buses

D. Smith stressed the importance of timely and correct communications for DRT riders, as it impacts how and when they will get to the GO Train station so they arrive to work on time.

D. Smith responded to questions of the Committee.

C. Norris advised that after reviewing the DRT website for the Route 308 Whitby schedule, the link to the older schedule was still available. He noted that staff would be looking into the issue; and, are working towards providing the option for DRT alerts being available on a real time Twitter and GTFS-RT feed.

Detailed discussion ensued regarding the importance of people getting to where they need to go, on time; equipment reliability issues; how the operational mechanics impacts the DRT services; and the options and timelines for a third party local transit service in Whitby.

4. Introduction of new Committee Members who use Public Transit

There were no new members to be introduced.

5. Presentations

There were no presentations to be heard.

6. Correspondence Items

There were no items of correspondence to be considered.

7. Information Items

7.1 General Manager's Report – December 2019 (2019-DRT-23)

Report #2019-DRT-23 from B. Holmes, General Manager, Durham Region Transit, was received.

C. Norris provided an update on the key performance measures detailed in Attachment #1 to the Report, including bus full occurrences; on time performance (OTP) for bus departure stops; and, service availability for the actual service delivered by DRT.

7.2 General Manager's Report – January 2020 (2020-DRT-01)

Report #2020-DRT-01 from B. Holmes, General Manager, Durham Region Transit, was received.

C. Norris provided an overview of the DRT 2019 ridership and advised that the 2019 ridership exceeded 11 million riders; the On Demand service continues to exceed the targeted expectations; and, that DRT delivered 99.1 per cent of its scheduled hours.

Detailed discussion ensued regarding the reliability of the on-time performance (OTP) data analytics; how the data analytics is being leveraged by staff; the DRT service schedule challenges for GO Train connections; and the target measures for a bus departing a stop, including the Ajax Station Route 225 and 232 services.

It was questioned at what point when a bus is consistently late leaving a stop would DRT identify the OTP issues. C. Norris advised that DRT work to identify the trip specific issues at the stop. He also explained that DRT actioned the Ajax depot issues in December and suggested that TAC Members with specific service related issue contact staff directly.

Moved by J. Hollingsworth, Seconded by J. Beaton,
That Information Items 7.1 and 7.2 be received for information.

CARRIED

7.3 2020 Transit Strategic Issues and Financial Forecast Report (2020-DRT-02)

Report #2020-DRT-02 from W. Holmes, General Manager, Durham Region Transit, was received. C. Norris advised that the Transit Executive Committee adopted Report #2020-DRT-02 at its meeting held on January 8, 2020. A similar report was also adopted by the Finance and Administration Committee at its January 14, 2020 meeting and will be considered by Regional Council at their January 29, 2020 meeting.

C. Norris provided an overview of DRT's 2019 achievements for new fare incentive initiatives including the Kids Ride Free Pilot, Youth Summer 2-4-2 Pass, Y10 Youth (10 month) Loyalty Pass and the Transit Assistance Program (TAP); the expansion of the On Demand services in the Township of Brock; the initiation of the Rural Service Review enhanced services in the rural and low demand areas of the Region; and the procurement of DRT's six articulated bus to arrive in 2020. C. Norris responded to questions regarding the removal of the requirement for children riding free to be accompanied by a fare paying customer.

C. Norris also provided an overview of the DRT 2020 service related initiatives including transitioning the Simcoe Street transit service to PULSE, the introduction of the Route 902 service between Oshawa Station and Bowmanville along Highway 2 in September; and the replacement of the Route 601 Beaverton-Uxbridge service with enhanced Route 652 On Demand services starting in April.

C. Norris responded to questions regarding the logistics of replacing the Route 226 Westney South service to the Ajax GO Station with the 291 Community Bus services; improve reliability to Route 403 Park service to; the options for Route 902 evening services for Clarington residents to get home after work; the optimization of the Route 506 Clarington Community Bus; and whether the DRT website supports multiple languages to allow users to plan trips in their native language.

C. Norris responded to additional questions regarding the one-year extension to the existing U-Pass agreement with Durham College, Ontario Tech University and Trent University (Durham Campus); the 2 per cent U-Pass increase per semester; and whether the terms for the one year extension and U-Pass fee increase is a result of the PRESTO uptake.

Discussion ensued on the decline in DRT's revenue cost ratio over the past 4 years. Chair Barton advised the Committee that DRT's cash fares have not increased since 2016 and that the new 2019 fare incentives have not generated significant revenue growth.

Chair Barton asked for the members feedback on the proposed DRT fare increases.

Committee Comments included:

- Kids Ride Free program offers good value for families
- Options for integrated fares across the Greater Toronto Area or fares based on the distance travelled
- The proposed elimination of the paper fares
- The .80 cent Co Fare to connect to and from a GO Transit bus
- Uber rates versus public transit cash fares
- The methodology for the proposed increase in all cash fares of \$0.25 to encourage further adoption of the PRESTO electronic fare payment
- The need for committed Federal and Provincial funding agreements
- DRT's strategy for additional Specialized Service vehicles

C. Norris responded to questions regarding whether DRT's fare structure is based on best practices of the various transit agencies; need for a seamless transit system between the neighboring borders; whether the potential exists for the Transit Assistance Program (TAP) pilot costs to be absorbed by the Province; and the potential for a tiered lower income pass for individuals who are not recipients of the Ontario Works (OW) and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP).

C. Norris responded to questions regarding the PRESTO Card \$6.00 administration fee; and how staff intend to transition the cash fare riders to use PRESTO. Discussion followed on the potential roll out of the PRESTO "open payment" for transit users to tap their debit cards, credit cards or phones on a GO bus. It was suggested that the first PRESTO card should be free; and that the \$6.00 PRESTO administration fee only be charged when a replacement card is required. C. Norris advised that DRT will pass this suggestion onto the 905 Transit Agency group for discussion.

C. Norris also responded to questions with respect to options for public education and Durham Regional Police Service enforcement of the bus-only lane zones along Highway 2 at the intersections of Salem Road, Harwood Avenue and Westney Road in Ajax. Discussion ensued regarding these intersections being a potential for a red-light camera site.

Further discussion ensued with respect to the Transportation Master Plan (TMP) strategy for a multi-model public transportation network. It was questioned whether a copy of the TMP is available for the Committee's review. C. Norris advised that an electronic copy of TMP will be emailed to the Members.

Discussion also ensued regarding the one-year trial of the automated shuttle technology with the Town of Whitby; the age distribution of the conventional bus fleet; the fleet replacement plan; the procurement of 11 conventional hybrid electric buses; and the replacement of the Raleigh Avenue Administrative building in Oshawa.

Detailed discussion ensued regarding connecting Lakeridge Health Whitby with the Abilities centre; the extension of Routes 410 Olive Harmony services; and, the Route 910 Campus Connect services.

Moved by C. Antram, Seconded by A. Macci,
That Information Item 7.3 be received for information.
CARRIED

8. Discussion Items

There were no discussion items to be considered.

9. Reports

There were no reports to be considered.

10. Other Business

A) Schedule coordination with Metrolinx GO Transit services

C. Norris provided an update on the DRT route services to connect to the GO Train stations. Discussion followed on DRT's working relationship with Metrolinx, specific to the GO Train and bus time changes: the lack of notifications from Metrolinx for pending service changes; DRT service challenges for GO Train connections; and, how late GO Trains impact the DRT commuter ridership.

B) Holiday Service Reductions

R. Claxton-Oldfield expressed concerns with respect to the Durham Region Transit (DRT) 2019 Holiday Schedule and the lack of communicating the reduced services to passengers and throughout the communities; and that the residents of Bowmanville, Orono and Newcastle, during the period of December 23 to December 29, 2019, were without weekday transit services for nine days.

C. Norris responded to questions with respect to how many inquires DRT received regarding the reduced transit services during the holidays season; and how the reduction in services was communicated.

C. Norris advised that staff would be conducting a debrief of the holiday service schedules to discuss the level of services that were offered; the ridership; and, alternative options for communicating the reduced levels of transit service during the 2020 Holiday Season.

11. Date of Next Meetings

- Tuesday, March 24, 2020 at 7:00 PM
- Tuesday, May 19, 2020 at 7:00 PM
- Tuesday, September 22, 2020 at 7:00 PM
- Tuesday, November 17, 2020 at 7:00 PM

12. Adjournment

Moved by A. Macci, Seconded by M. Roche,
That the meeting be adjourned.
CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM.

D. Barton, Chair, Transit Advisory Committee

C. Tennisco, Committee Clerk