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The Regional Municipality of Durham

MINUTES

TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, January 19, 2021

A meeting of the Transit Advisory Committee was held on Tuesday, January 19, 2021 in the Council Chambers, Regional Municipality of Durham Headquarters, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby at 7:05 PM. In accordance with Provincial legislation, electronic participation was permitted for this meeting.

1. Roll Call

Present: Commissioner Barton, Chair
J. Beaton, Whitby
R. Claxton-Oldfield, Clarington
A. Macci, Pickering
J. Hollingsworth, Member at Large
I. Liang, Scugog
M. Roche, AAC
G. Weddel, Uxbridge

All members of Committee participated electronically

Absent: C. Antram, Ajax
A. Desai, Student Association representative, Ontario Tech University,
Durham College and Trent University
K. Ginter, Member at Large
J. Layne, Oshawa
J. Martin, Brock

Staff

Present: *A. McKinley, Deputy General Manager, Maintenance, Durham Region Transit
*M. Binetti, Service Design, Durham Region Transit, attended the meeting at 7:40 PM
R. Inacio, Systems Support Specialist, Corporate Services – IT
*L. Kubilis, Planner, Service Design, Durham Region Transit
*C. Tennisco, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services
* Denotes staff participating electronically

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Adoption of Minutes

Moved by J. Beaton, Seconded by R. Claxton-Oldfield,
That the minutes of the regular Durham Region Transit Advisory
Committee meeting held on Tuesday, November 17, 2020, be
adopted.

CARRIED

4. Presentations

4.1 Lauren Kubilis, Planner, Service Design, Durham Region Transit; re: Durham Region Transit Policy Update

Lauren Kubilis, Durham Region Transit, provided a PowerPoint presentation update on the Durham Region Transit (DRT) Policy. A copy of the Presentation was provided in the agenda.

Highlights of the presentation included:

- Overview
- Background
- Policy Update Highlights
- Other Policy considerations

The Committee requested clarification that the Electric Bikes (E-bikes) are acceptable on buses. L. Kubilis advised that pedal assisted bikes are allowed on the DRT buses equipped with bike racks, as they fit safely onto the rack.

Discussion ensued regarding the removal of the Transfer Calling policy from the OP manual, and that customers could benefit from the Transfer Calling policy remaining in place until more service options are available. L. Kubilis advised these are draft policies and that feedback is appreciated and would be taken back for consideration.

M. Binetti advised that a Public Information Centre will be held in March to consider the DRT Social Equity Guidelines and the Operator Procedure manual.

5. Correspondence Items

There were no items of correspondence to be considered.

6. Information Items

6.1 General Manager's Report – December 2, 2020 (2020-DRT-22)

Report #2020-DRT-22 from B. Holmes, General Manager, Durham Region Transit, was received.

M. Roche referred to the Eligibility Review – Specialized Service update detailed in the Report. He asked staff to clarify the 85 % as it relates to the adjustments to customer eligibility to conditional eligibility.

A. McKinley advised she will provide clarification to M. Roche, directly; prior to the January 26, 2021 Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Discussion ensued regarding how staff determine which transit metrics should be tracked in the General Managers' Report.

Moved by J. Beaton, Seconded by M. Roche,
That Information Item 6.1 be received for information.
CARRIED

6.2 Durham Region Transit U-Pass agreement 2020-21 academic year update (2020-DRT-23)

Report #2020-DRT-23 from B. Holmes, General Manager, Durham Region Transit, was received.

Chair Barton highlighted the details in the Report to temporarily suspend participation in the U-Pass agreement with Durham College, Ontario Tech University and Trent University (Durham Campus) including the one-year extension to the U-Pass agreement and the 1.9 percent fee adjustment.

Moved by A. Macci, Seconded by J. Hollingsworth,
That Information Item 6.2 be received for information.
CARRIED

6.3 PRESTO Device Replacement (2020-DRT-24)

Report #2020-DRT-24 from B. Holmes, General Manager, Durham Region Transit, was received.

A. McKinley provided an update on the replacement of the PRESTO devices on the DRT vehicles. She noted the replacement installations on the vehicles is 98 percent completed, and, the devices are functioning well, with only a few minor issues.

Chair Barton advised the Committee that he continues to advocate for the issuance of paper transfers, once COVID is under control; and, that the Transit Executive Committee (TEC) is allowing that paper transfers not be issued in the short term. A. McKinley advised that staff will report back at the April 7, 2021 TEC meeting on the best practice solutions for paper transfers.

The Committee expressed disappointment that TAC's strong support for cash fares and paper transfers were dismissed, and that a decision is being delayed until April. The Committee also expressed concerns regarding the move towards the PRESTO card options, including eliminating the paper transfers.

It was noted that 10 percent of the DRT ridership pays the cash fare; and, that by DRT not issuing paper transfers to these customers, it makes public transit not a viable alternative. R. Claxton-Oldfield stated that a customer is required to pay an additional \$4.00 for each bus travelled, amounting to \$8.00 to complete a one-way trip requiring more than one bus. He stated that for many customers struggling financially or having health challenges, public transportation is their only means of transportation.

R. Claxton-Oldfield inquired whether DRT provides tickets to the local charities for people in need, including the Simcoe Hall Settlement House. He explained that these tickets would be treated as a cash fare, and those in need would be required to pay the extra \$4.00 if they had to take a second bus to travel to an agency or a shelter. A. McKinley advised that the community agencies purchase the DRT tickets and that DRT also offers individuals, with proof of income, a low-income reduced monthly PRESTO card, which would not require a paper transfer.

Discussion ensued regarding the contactless fare resumption and the elimination of paper transfers in July 2020 to address the recommendations by DRT and Public Health regarding physical contact; the PRESTO technology to print a contactless paper transfer; the installation of plexiglass bio-shields to protect DRT operators; and, the best practices of the larger transit systems for paper transfers.

I. Liang suggested that staff initiate a survey to analyze how many people pay by cash and utilize the paper transfers; and the data be location based. A. McKinley advised she would look into whether fare specific route data is available and will bring the information back at the next TAC meeting.

J. Hollingsworth noted that the grocery stores still offer paper receipts. He explained that the receipt is removed from the printer and the other end of the receipt is handed to the customer; being contactless; and, that the placement of the PRESTO printer is a non-issue. A. McKinley advised that staff could discuss this process with Human Resources and UNIFOR 222.

Chair Barton pointed out to the Members that a large percentage of the employees / residents are fearful of the COVID virus and noted that the Transit Executive Committee wants to be flexible in its decision on the paper transfers, however, they understand the complexities for the employees in the current environment. Chair Barton advised that he will voice the Committee's disappointment to TEC.

J. Hollingsworth advised that a large portion of the DRT services are now provided by On Demand vehicles and contracted taxis and noted the taxi vehicles do not have the PRESTO devices on-board.

Chair Barton inquired about the timelines for the PRESTO device installations on the contracted service vehicles. A. McKinley advised that the PRESTO devices for the taxis are not ready yet; and, that she will have staff follow-up with the contractor on this matter.

J. Hollingsworth noted that when he recently booked an On Demand trip, the App asked him to cross a river to get to the bus stop. He added that in the past, it has asked him to cross a busy road, such as Highway 2, to be picked up. A. McKinley advised she will take the information back to review how this issue can be addressed.

Moved by M. Roche, Seconded by J. Hollingsworth;
That Information Item 6.3 be received for information.
CARRIED

6.4 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 A. Macci, Seconded by J. Beaton,
That Information Item 6.4 be received for information.
CARRIED

6.5 Simcoe Street transit priority pilot study (2021-DRT-02)

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

Discussion ensued regarding the Ridership Recovery Strategy for the future east-west service on Adelaide Avenue; and, the farside bus relocation at Simcoe northbound and Adelaide Street. M. Binetti responded to a question regarding the plans for the Route 412 Adelaide service now identified in the Ridership Recovery Strategy.

The Committee asked whether staff could provide an update, at the next TAC or TEC meeting, on the Ridership Recovery Strategy, comparing the corridors identified in the proposed plan versus DRT's current strategy.

Discussion also ensued regarding the 15 bus stop locations identified to be closed, including the stop in front of Lakeridge Hospital in Oshawa.

M. Binetti advised that the Service Design team will review the closure of this bus stop; and noted that this bus stop is within the DRT Social Equity Guidelines.

A. Macci discussed the 3 Phases of the ridership recovery network services to re-introduce bus services; and, the opportunities to inform the public of the next Phase network services.

Staff was asked if DRT could advertise, through social media, the thresholds for the 3 Phases of service required on a bus route to advance to the next Phase service level. M. Binetti advised he would look at what DRT could do and noted that the current threshold is 20 boardings per hour within a 3 hour period.

Moved by J. Hollingworth, Seconded by A. Macci,
That Information Item 6.5 be received for information.
CARRIED

7. Discussion Items

There were no discussion items to be considered.

8. Reports

9. Other Business

9.1 Update on the Status of Paper Transfers for Customers Paying a Cash Fare

This item was considered earlier in the meeting. See Item 6.3 on pages 4 and 5 of these minutes.

9.2 January Schedule Service Enhancements

M. Binetti provided an update on the January scheduled service enhancements to better connect with the GO Train scheduled changes. He advised that the Route 901B Simcoe service was modified to operate between the North Campus and the Oshawa Centre terminal on weekdays; the Route 407 Ritson services now operate to the Oshawa Centre terminal; and, the Route 902B King services have been extended along George Reynolds Drive in the north / east part in Courtice.

M. Binetti responded to questions regarding whether staff will monitor the Route 407 Ritson ridership; and, if DRT has considered using John Street to provide transit services to the Oshawa Senior Centre.

M. Binetti outlined the improvements to the late night trips adjustments for the Route 403 Park services into the south Oshawa industrial areas until 12:40 AM; the Route 403C service operating via the Fresh Del Monte plant into the downtown area in Oshawa; and, the PULSE 980 night services from the Harmony Road terminal in Oshawa into Pickering.

Discussion ensued regarding the services of the Route 902A King to connect with the GO Train Station; and, the possibility of switching to the Route 902B service times to better meet the GO Trains. M. Binetti advised he will review these changes for the Route 902 service times with the scheduling team.

9.3 Bus-only Lanes along Highway 2 in the City of Pickering

Discussion ensued regarding the bus-only lanes along Highway 2 in the City of Pickering and opportunities to communicate the rules for the bus-only lanes to the general public; and, the potential to work with the Durham Regional Police Services (DRPS) to address the safety concerns arising from the people who frequently drive in the bus-only lanes.

Discussion also ensued regarding advertising the rules for bus-only lanes on the back of the DRT buses to educate drivers; and, the possibility of marking the bus-only lanes in red.

10. Date of Next Meetings

Tuesday, March 23, 2021 at 7:00 PM

11. Adjournment

Moved by J. Hollingsworth, Seconded by M. Roche,
That the meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 8:38 PM.

D. Barton, Chair, Transit Advisory Committee

C. Tennisco, Committee Clerk