

## **The Regional Municipality of Durham**

### **MINUTES**

#### **TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Tuesday, May 18, 2021**

A meeting of the Transit Advisory Committee was held on Tuesday, May 18, 2021 in the Council Chambers, Regional Municipality of Durham Headquarters, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby at 7:00 PM. In accordance with Provincial legislation, electronic participation was permitted for this meeting.

#### **1. Roll Call**

Present: Commissioner Barton, Chair  
J. Beaton, Whitby  
K. Chen, Student Association representative, Ontario Tech University,  
Durham College and Trent University  
R. Claxton-Oldfield, Clarington, attended the meeting at 7:26 PM  
H. Hall, AAC  
J. Layne, Oshawa  
I. Liang, Scugog  
J. Martin, Brock  
M. Roche, AAC  
G. Weddel, Uxbridge

**All members of Committee participated electronically**

Absent: C. Antram, Ajax  
K. Ginter, Member at Large  
J. Hollingsworth, Member at Large  
A. Macci, Pickering

#### **Staff**

Present: \*A. McKinley, Deputy General Manager, Maintenance, Durham Region Transit  
\*J. Austin, General Manager, Business Services, Durham Region Transit  
\*M. Binetti, Transportation Service Design, Durham Region Transit,  
\*R. Inacio, Systems Support Specialist, Corporate Services – IT  
\*C. Norris, Deputy General Manager, Operations, 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. Introduction of new Committee Member - Heather Hall**

Chair Barton introduced Heather Hall, the new representative on TAC for the Accessibility Advisory Committee. At the request of the Chair, Heather Hall provided a brief overview of herself.

**4. Adoption of Minutes**

Moved by J. Beaton, Seconded by J. Martin,  
That the minutes of the regular Durham Region Transit Advisory  
Committee meeting held on Tuesday, March 23, 2021, be adopted.  
CARRIED

**5. Presentations**

**5.1 Jamie Austin, Deputy General Manager, Business Services, DRT and  
Christopher Norris, Deputy General Manager, Operations, DRT re: Transit  
Assistance Program and Secondary Student Transportation Incentives**

Jamie Austin and Christopher Norris provided a PowerPoint presentation on the Transit Assistance Program (TAP) and Secondary Student Transportation Incentives. J. Austin advised that the presentation provides an update on the DRT's reduced cost fare initiatives, including incentives to support the secondary schools' students.

J. Austin provided an overview of the Transit Assistance Program (TAP) Pilot.

Highlights of the presentation included:

- Overview: TAP Pilot Evaluation
- TAP Background
- Evaluation Methodology
- Summary of Results
- TAP Customer Characteristics
- TAP Card Usage
- Overall Customer Experience with TAP
- What Customers Like About TAP
- What Customer Do Not Like About TAP
- Caseworkers Impressions of TAP
- Recommendations
- Comparing TAP and the Access Pass

J. Austin provided an overview of the recommendations to: extend the TAP pilot through to March 2023; the Pay-as-you-go and Period Pass for TAP customers; discontinue the paper Access Pass by the end of 2021; waive the PRESTO card fee for Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) clients

shifting to TAP; develop a Communications strategy to build awareness and explain the TAP functions; investigate direct payment options with Social Services and the Province; and, assess the expansion potential to other vulnerable groups.

J. Austin noted that the Transit Executive Committee (TEC) adopted the recommendations, outlined in Report #2021-DRT-06: Transit Assistance Program pilot evaluation, at their meeting held on April 7, 2021.

C. Norris provided an overview of the Secondary Student Transportation Program and recommendations. He advised that the presentation outlines the market opportunities for school boards' students within the Region of Durham including the Durham Student Transportation Services secondary students.

Highlights of his presentation included:

- Child and Youth Fares
  - Initiatives
- Market Opportunities
  - Secondary Students in Durham Region
- Recommendations
  - Fares

C. Norris provided an overview of the recommendations that effective September 2021, the Y10 pass be discounted to \$63.50, from \$73.50; that a bulk pass purchase pilot be available to school boards in Durham Region and Durham Student Transportation Services with a minimum purchase of 570 monthly passes per month to qualify for a \$20 discount; and, that a report on the Y10 and Bulk Pass program will be brought back to TEC in June 2022 on the results of the pass programs.

C. Norris advised that at the Transit Executive Committee meeting held on April 7, 2021 TEC amended Part A) of the recommendations, of Report #2021-DRT-07: Secondary student transportation, to increase the discounted Y10 pass cost of \$73.50, by \$20.00, to lower the Y10 pass cost to \$53.50.

## **6. Correspondence Items**

- 6.1 Direction Memo to Cheryl Tennisco, Committee Clerk, advising that Regional Council at its meeting on April 28, 2021 approved the appointment of Heather Hall, as the Accessibility Advisory Committee representative to the Transit Advisory Committee

Moved by J. Beaton, Seconded by J. Layne,

That Correspondence to Cheryl Tennisco, Committee Clerk, Regional Municipality of Durham, dated April 28, 2021, re: the appointment of Heather Hall as the Accessibility Advisory Committee member to Transit, be received for information.

CARRIED

**7. Information Items**

**7.1 General Manager's Report – April 7, 2021 (2021-DRT-05)**

Report #2021-DRT-05 from B. Holmes, General Manager, Durham Region Transit, was received.

Moved by J. Beaton, Seconded by J. Layne,  
That Information Item 7.1 be received for information.

CARRIED

**7.2 Paper transfers (2021-DRT-08)**

Report #2021-DRT-08 from B. Holmes, General Manager, Durham Region Transit, was received.

Chair Barton recognized the efforts of the TAC regarding re-implementing the paper transfer.

A. McKinley advised the Committee that the issuing of paper transfers for cash and single cash ticket fares was re-introduced on May 3, 2021. She further advised, that to date, there appears to be no issues; and, that staff will review and report back, at a later date, to TEC on Durham Region Transit's current fare payment processes.

Moved by J. Beaton, Seconded by, J. Layne  
That Information Item 7.2 be received for information.

CARRIED

**7.3 On Demand outcomes and next steps (2021-DRT-09)**

Moved by J. Layne, Seconded by J. Martin,  
That Information Item 7.3 be received for information.

CARRIED

7.4 General Manager's Report – May 5, 2021 (2021-DRT-10)

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At the request of the Chair, A. McKinley provided an overview of the ridership levels, including the fluctuation in the ridership resulting from the extension of the April 2021 'Stay At Home' provincial order. She advised that DRT staff continues to monitor the levels of the ridership; and, that staff anticipates that ridership will increase when the students return to classes in the fall.

The Committee questioned whether the ridership increased from the customers who use transit to travel to and from a vaccination clinic within Durham Region. A. McKinley advised yes, and, noted that this service has been well received by the customers in the Region.

R. Claxton-Oldfield advised the Committee that he attended a Public Information Centre and was impressed with the proposed 5 Year Service Plan for transit and going forward. He asked about the transit service plans for this September, and when the Members will be advised of these plans to inform any transit riders who may inquire. M. Binetti advised that a Report on the DRT service plans will be coming forward at the June 2, 2021 Transit Executive Committee meeting.

A. McKinley advised that the Committee Clerk will email a copy of the Report to the members when available.

Moved by R. Claxton-Oldfield, Seconded by M. Roche,  
That Information Item 7.4 be received for information.  
CARRIED

7.5 Zero Fare Transit – Experience and Implications (2021-DRT-11)

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J. Beaton inquired whether staff has considered what a desirable transit rate would be, in terms of a zero fare and the current fare rate.

J. Austin discussed the challenges, outlined in the Report, related to zero fare transit systems; and, the experiences in other jurisdictions in terms of customers priorities for service reliability and cleanliness over zero fares. He advised that at the May 5, 2021 TEC meeting staff was asked to look at options to pursue various transit fare incentives, service investments, and the overall lost revenues and funding pressures associated with a discounted and zero fare transit system. J. Austin added that the DRT Long Term Transit Strategy envisions DRT shifting from an age based structure to an individual's ability to pay.

Discussion ensued regarding the opportunity for a free fare program, post-COVID, to grow the DRT ridership levels in certain zones including the downtown areas.

J. Austin responded to questions regarding the requirement for DRT's participation in the PRESTO agreement; the implications of a zero fare transit system with respect to the Provincial Gas Tax funding; the potential for a Greater Toronto Hamilton Area (GTHA) common fare; and, the need for a DRT competitive fare.

Moved by J. Martin, Seconded by J. Beaton,  
That Information Item 7.5 be received for information.  
CARRIED

**8. Discussion Items**

There were no discussion items to be considered.

**9. Other Business**

**9.1 Eligibility Review – Specialized Service Process**

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At the request of M. Roche, A. McKinley provided an overview of the Eligibility Review – Specialized Service process. She advised that letters are being sent out to inactive registered clients that need to re-register to qualify to maintain their services.

J. Beaton inquired whether the window for Specialized Service clients to re-register could be extended, due to the extra burden of COVID, or take place via a telephone call. A. McKinley advised she would follow-up with staff in regards to the processes.

M. Roche asked staff whether the client requires a signed form from their physician to requalify for the Specialized Services.

A. McKinley advised that she would arrange for staff to present on the Eligibility Review – Specialized Service process at the September 21, 2021 TAC meeting.

**10. Date of Next Meetings**

Tuesday, September 21, 2021 at 7:00 PM

**11. Adjournment**

Moved by J. Layne, Seconded by J. Martin,  
That the meeting be adjourned.  
CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 8:02: PM.

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D. Barton, Chair, Transit Advisory Committee

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C. Tennisco, Committee Clerk