



Transit Advisory Committee Agenda

Council Chambers
Regional Headquarters Building
605 Rossland Road East, Whitby

Tuesday, May 18, 2021

7:00 PM

Please note: In an effort to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19, and to generally comply with the directions from the Government of Ontario, it is requested in the strongest terms that Members participate in the meeting electronically. Regional Headquarters is closed to the public, all members of the public may view the [Committee meeting via live streaming](#), instead of attending the meeting in person. If you wish to register as a delegate regarding an agenda item, you may register in advance of the meeting by noon on the day prior to the meeting by emailing delegations@durham.ca and will be provided with the details to delegate electronically.

1. Roll Call

2. Declarations of Interest

3. Introduction of new Committee Member, Heather Hall

4. Adoption of Minutes

- A) Durham Region Transit Advisory Committee meeting –
March 23, 2021

Pages 3 - 10

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

Pages 11 - 31

6. Correspondence

- 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

Pages 32- 32

7. Information Items

- | | | |
|-----|---|---------------|
| 7.1 | General Manager's Report – April 7, 2021 (2021-DRT-05) | Pages 33 - 48 |
| 7.2 | Paper transfers (2021-DRT-08) | Pages 49 - 57 |
| 7.3 | On Demand outcomes and next steps (2021-DRT-09) | Pages 58 - 65 |
| 7.4 | General Manager's Report – May 5, 2021 (2021-DRT-10) | Pages 66 - 79 |
| 7.5 | Zero Fare Transit – Experience and Implications (2021-DRT-11) | Pages 80 - 93 |

8. Discussion items

9. Other Business

10. Date of Next Meeting

- Tuesday, September 21, 7:00 PM

11. Adjournment

Notice regarding collection, use and disclosure of personal information:

Written information (either paper or electronic) that you send to Durham Regional Council or Committees, including home address, phone numbers and email addresses, will become part of the public record. This also includes oral submissions at meetings. If you have any questions about the collection of information, please contact the Regional Clerk/Director of Legislative Services

The Regional Municipality of Durham

MINUTES

TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, March 23, 2021

A meeting of the Transit Advisory Committee was held on Tuesday, March 23, 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
C. Antram, Ajax
J. Beaton, Whitby
R. Claxton-Oldfield, Clarington
A. Desai, Student Association representative, Ontario Tech University,
Durham College and Trent University
K. Ginter, Member at Large
I. Liang, Scugog
A. Macci, Pickering
J. Hollingsworth, Member at Large
J. Martin, Brock
M. Roche, AAC
G. Weddel, Uxbridge

All members of Committee participated electronically

Absent: J. Layne, Oshawa

Staff

Present: *A. McKinley, Deputy General Manager, Maintenance, Durham Region Transit
*B. Holmes, General Manager, Durham Region Transit
*L. Huinink, Director, Rapid Transportation & Transit Oriented Development,
Office of the Chief Administration Officer
R. Inacio, Systems Support Specialist, Corporate Services – IT
*L. Kubilis, Planner, Service Design, Durham Region Transit
*C. Norris, Deputy General Manager, Operations, Durham Region Transit
*J. Phelen, 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 A. Macci, Seconded by R. Claxton-Oldfield,
That the minutes of the regular Durham Region Transit Advisory
Committee meeting held on Tuesday, January 19, 2021, be
adopted.

CARRIED

4. Presentations

4.1 David Hopper, Consultant Project Manager, Parsons Corporation; re:
Durham-Scarborough Bus Rapid Transit – Project Update

C. Norris, Deputy General Manager, Operations, Durham Region Transit, advised that the Durham-Scarborough Bus Rapid Transit (DSBRT) Project is in the preliminary design stage and entering into the Transit Project Assessment Process (TPAP) consultation and documentation period. He noted the DSBRT is a multi-jurisdictional cross-boundary project being led by Metrolinx and involving the City of Toronto, the Toronto Transit Commission, and the Region of Durham.

David Hopper, Consultant Project Manager, Parsons Corporation, provided a PowerPoint presentation update on the scope of the Durham-Scarborough Bus Rapid Transit (DSBRT) Project across the Region. A copy of the presentation was provided electronically to the members.

Highlights of the presentation included:

- Purpose
- Map: 2041 Regional Transportation Plan Frequent Rapid Transit Network
- Map: Study Area
- Why Bus Rapid Transit?
- Project Benefits
- Project Schedule: Overall Timeline
- What We've Heard So Far
- Preliminary Design
 - Proposed BRT Stop Locations
 - Preferred Preliminary Design – City of Pickering
 - Preferred Preliminary Design – Town of Ajax
 - Preferred Preliminary Design – Town of Whitby
 - Preferred Preliminary Design – City of Oshawa

- Images depicting what the future BRT could look like: Kingston Road at Liverpool Road in the City of Pickering; and Bond Street at Stevenson Road in the City of Oshawa
- BRT Stop Design: Design Standards
- BRT Stop Design: Shelter Concepts
- BRT Stop Design: Platforms
- BRT Stop Design: Platform Details
- BRT Stop Design: Platform Access
- Active Transportation
 - Walking and Cycling
 - Cycling Facilities in Pickering
 - Cycling Facilities in Ajax
 - Cycling Facilities in Whitby and Oshawa
- Next Steps

D. Hopper provided an update on the next steps and advised that in mid 2021 the Notice of Commencement will notify stakeholders that the 120-day Transit Project Assessment Process (TPAP) consultation and documentation period has begun. He also noted that additional stakeholder meetings and a Public Information Centre (PIC) will be held during the 120-day TPAP consultation and documentation period in mid-2021. This will be followed by a 30-day public review period and 35-day ministerial review period.

D. Hopper stated that segments of the corridor are planned to be constructed by the Region of Durham as part of the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program, subject to Federal approval.

D. Hopper invited the Committee to email any questions or comments regarding the Durham-Scarborough Bus Rapid Transit Project to dsbrt@metrolinx.com or [Metrolinx Engage DSBRT](#).

Discussion ensued regarding the current Highway 2 PULSE Route 900 service into Centennial Circle at the University of Toronto Scarborough Campus (UTSC). D. Hopper responded to questions with respect to whether the Route 900 service will continue along Ellesmere Road into the Scarborough Town Centre; if the PULSE bus will enter the bus loop or stop at the Scarborough Centre station; whether the PULSE bus corridor at the Scarborough Centre station will be located in the GO Transit terminal or the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) paid fare zone; and, the potential for operational cross-boundary transit and fare integration for only one fare.

D. Hopper also responded to questions regarding opportunities to facilitate the traffic movement along the PULSE routes including one-way streets or tunnelling under the downtown Whitby area; utilizing transit priority signaling; and, additional bus stops along Highway 2 for the DRT local buses.

Discussion followed on the locations of the proposed nine PULSE bus stops in Town of Ajax, and whether there will be more or less PULSE stops.

Concerns were expressed regarding the proposed DSBRT corridor impacts with respect to road widening requirements, the disruption and removal of the existing tree canopy; the development of the tower apartments on Valley Farm Road in the City of Pickering; and the protection of the heritage and historical characteristics in Pickering Village and the Town of Ajax. D. Hopper responded to questions regarding the tree compensation plan; whether public art will be implemented into the stations, particularly in Pickering Village; the virtual Public Information Centres and being able to engage the public; and, the timelines for implementing the segments of the DSBRT network.

Further discussion ensued regarding 'all-doors boarding' and 'off-board fare payment' systems at PRESTO machine platforms and enforcing proof of valid fare payment.

At the request of the Committee, D. Hopper provided an overview on how the PULSE buses will operate through the downtown area in the Town of Whitby. He noted that Metrolinx is also looking at expanding the Transit mall in the future.

The Committee suggested that attention also be given to the cyclists and pedestrians during the reconstruction of the bridges, particularly the standards for the size of the bike and walking lanes; the planning of the route in the City of Pickering to meet up with the mobility hub being developed at the Pickering Parkway terminal and the GO Station pedestrian bridge; and, the opportunity for proposing a pedestrian and transit mall with the City of Pickering, to divert transit priority to the mobility hub, similar to downtown Markham.

D. Hopper responded to additional questions regarding the feasibility for a future Light Rail Transit (LRT) system and subway in Durham Region; if the IBC is available online; and, the cost benefit ratios.

5. Correspondence Items

There were no items of correspondence to be considered.

6. Information Items

6.1 General Manager's Report – February 3, 2021 (2021-DRT-03)

Report #2021-DRT-03 from B. Holmes, General Manager, Durham Region Transit, was received.

Discussion ensued regarding the opportunity to increase the goals outlined within the matrix of the Report, such as the On-Time Performance and Availability measures; the potential for taking on new goals; and the importance of existing matrix's for the purposes of comparison within the other transit agencies. A. McKinley advised that she would take the comment backs to staff.

A. McKinley responded to questions with respect to the feedback received from the community regarding the Paramedic Services' Mobile Paramedic Clinic initiative; and, whether the opportunity exists to assist other services within the community.

J. Phelen responded to questions regarding the projected boardings per hour required to restore a route back to fixed service; the fluctuation in the required boardings per hour, per route; and whether there is a different threshold for rural areas proposed in Phase 3.

Discussion ensued regarding the status of the ICIP Projects outlined on page 10 of the Report with respect to passenger comfort. It was noted that people are feeling uncomfortable on the new buses when they are seated, face to face, and, there is a preference for the cushion seats used previously. A. McKinley advised that going forward the seats will be a vinyl material for the safety of the riders and employees.

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

6.2 2021 Durham Region Transit Business Plans and Budgets (2021-DRT-04)

Report #2021-DRT-04 from B. Holmes, General Manager, Durham Region Transit, was received.

Discussion ensued regarding the discontinuation of the DRT paper transfers. A. McKinley advised that DRT is looking at re-implementing the paper transfers, and that a report will be coming forward at the April 7, 2021 TEC meeting.

Discussion also ensued regarding the availability of the On-Demand App video on the DRT website.

The Committee inquired whether DRT has a 5-Year Service Plan outlining the proposed 3,000 service hours in 2021. A. McKinley advised there is a plan and noted that staff will provide a presentation on the 5-Year Service Plan at the June TAC meeting. It was also questioned whether DRT has a 5 Year Strategic Plan that could be shared with TAC. A. McKinley advised

there is a strategic plan and that she would check whether this document can be shared with the members.

J. Phelen responded to questions regarding whether there is a detailed transit service plan for the proposed Amazon facility; how the DRT operators work schedule will be impacted and managed for the route to the Metro Zoo, should the Metro Zoo not re-open; and, if any On-Demand zones will transition to fixed service in 2021.

A concern was raised by Ontario Tech University and Trent University (Durham Campus) students regarding the discontinuation of the U-Pass and the 1.9 percent fee increase. It was suggested that the students be provided the option to opt out of the U-Pass; and, that DRT consider a digital pass. A. McKinley advised she will take back the suggestion for a digital pass.

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

CARRIED

6.3 Internal Bulletin; re: Public Information Centres: Customer Policies and Fares, and Social Equity

A. McKinley provided an update on the upcoming virtual Public Information Centres (PIC) being held to allow DRT to inform and obtain feedback to better understand customers' attitudes towards cash-free fare payments. J. Phelen responded to questions regarding the details for the upcoming PICs, including post-COVID proposals for the next phase of transit services.

Moved by J. Hollingsworth, Seconded by A. Desai,
That Information Item 6.3 be received for information.

CARRIED

7. Discussion Items

There were no discussion items to be considered.

8. Reports

9. Other Business

9.1 Process for Members to introduce New Business Items

R. Claxton-Oldfield inquired on the status of his previous request in February to introduce new business items on the TAC \agendas. He asked that in going forward, could the members be emailed the timelines to submit items for inclusion on the upcoming agendas; and, if the members could be kept

regularly informed on current transit events to allow for a more interactive experience.

9.2 Bus Stop Signage within Durham Region

Discussion ensued with respect to the bus stop signage, at the bus stops, within the Region. It was questioned what the bus stop sign depicting 'Future Bus Stop' means. A. McKinley clarified that the future bus stop notification signs indicates that a bus stop will be added in the future. Bus stop closure signs are notification of a bus stop closure.

9.3 PRESTO Card Pass

C. Antram advised that she no longer needs her PRESTO card and that the administrative cost to buy the card is non-refundable. She inquired whether there is an opportunity for the people who no longer require their PRESTO card to donate or transfer these cards to people within the community.

A. McKinley advised that she would refer this suggestion to the appropriate staff.

9.4 On Demand Contracted Services

Discussion ensued regarding the upcoming change in the contracted provider for the DRT On Demand services (Hutchins Transportation).

J. Hollingsworth questioned whether it is anticipated that the change will be seamless and that customers can be assured the services for On-Demand will be reliable. It was also questioned if there are any benefits to the DRT and its customers, such as DRT branding on the vehicles. A. McKinley advised that she would speak with staff and respond back to J. Hollingsworth, directly.

9.5 PRESTO Device Replacement

J. Hollingsworth inquired whether an update is available on the timelines for the PRESTO device installations on the contracted service vehicles. A. McKinley advised that the PRESTO devices should be in place by the third quarter of 2021.

10. **Date of Next Meetings**

Tuesday, May 18, 2021 at 7:00 PM

11. Adjournment

Moved by C Antram, Seconded by J. Beaton,
That the meeting be adjourned.
CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 9:03 PM.

D. Barton, Chair, Transit Advisory Committee

C. Tennisco, Committee Clerk

Transit Assistance Program and Secondary Student Transportation Incentives

Transit Advisory Committee

May 18, 2021





Transit Assistance Program (TAP)

Pilot Evaluation

Results and Recommendations

A green-tinted background image of a Durham Region Transit bus, number 8523, with the company name visible on the front and side. The bus is shown from a front-three-quarter view.

Overview

TAP Pilot Evaluation



TAP Background

- TAP pilot launched November 2019
- Open to all social assistance clients in Durham (OW and ODSP)
- Leverages loyalty cap features of PRESTO
- Pay-as-you-go for first 14 trips in a month, unlimited trips thereafter
- Reduces stigma
- Eligibility confirmation every 6 months
- Unused funds carry over to next month
- Protection against lost or stolen cards



Evaluation Methodology

- Four key program elements:
 - Ridership behavior of TAP customers;
 - Accessibility and convenience of the program;
 - Strengths and opportunities to improve the program;
 - Sustainability of the program.
- Data collection and analysis:
 - Client feedback survey – 382 social assistance recipients
 - Staff feedback survey – 81 OW and ODSP caseworkers
 - Transit usage data – over 4,950 TAP PRESTO cards

A short, solid orange horizontal line.

Results

TAP Pilot Evaluation

Summary of Results



Ridership Behaviour of TAP Users

- TAP users are riding DRT for essential trips during the pandemic
- Overall ridership pattern similar to other PRESTO card users



Accessibility & Convenience of the Program

- Majority of current and previous TAP users found the program easy and convenient
- Users found it easy to use the card, get information and get help about the TAP program



Strengths & Opportunities

- The TAP program is an easy and convenient program helping users travel for essential purposes
- Technology and format of delivery could be improved

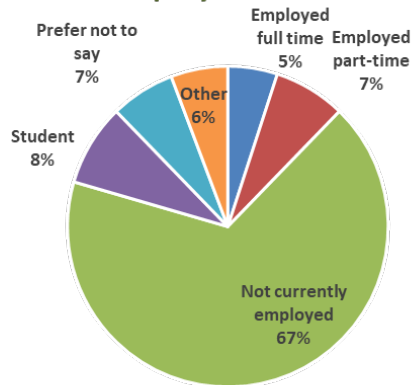


Sustainability of the Program

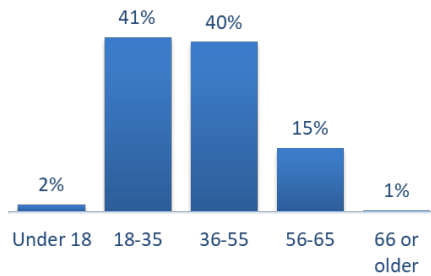
- Overall experience of users are positive
- Some previous users are no longer on TAP because of eligibility
- Staff are very engaged and majority feel supported

TAP Customer Characteristics

Employment status



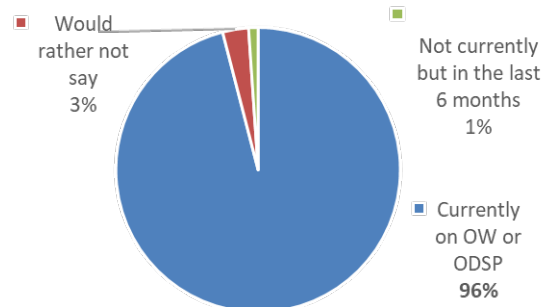
Age Distribution



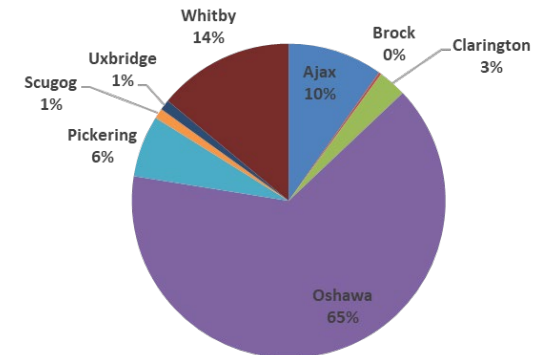
382 respondents



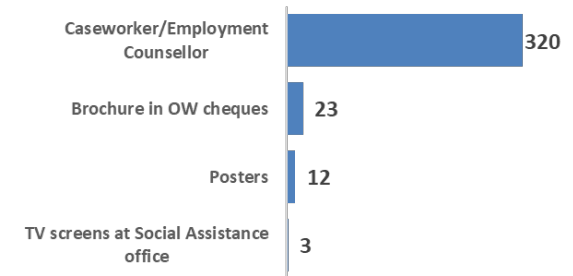
Social Assistance



Municipality

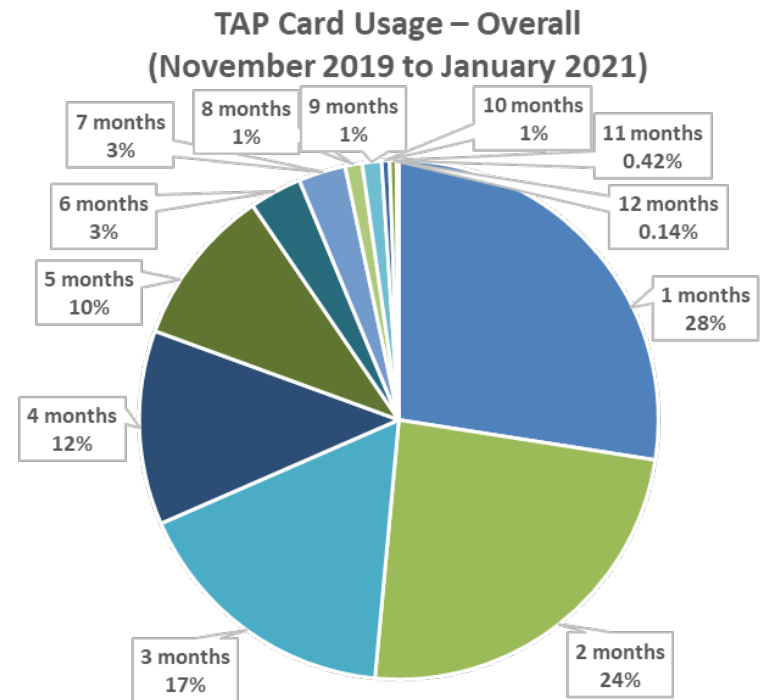


How Clients Found out

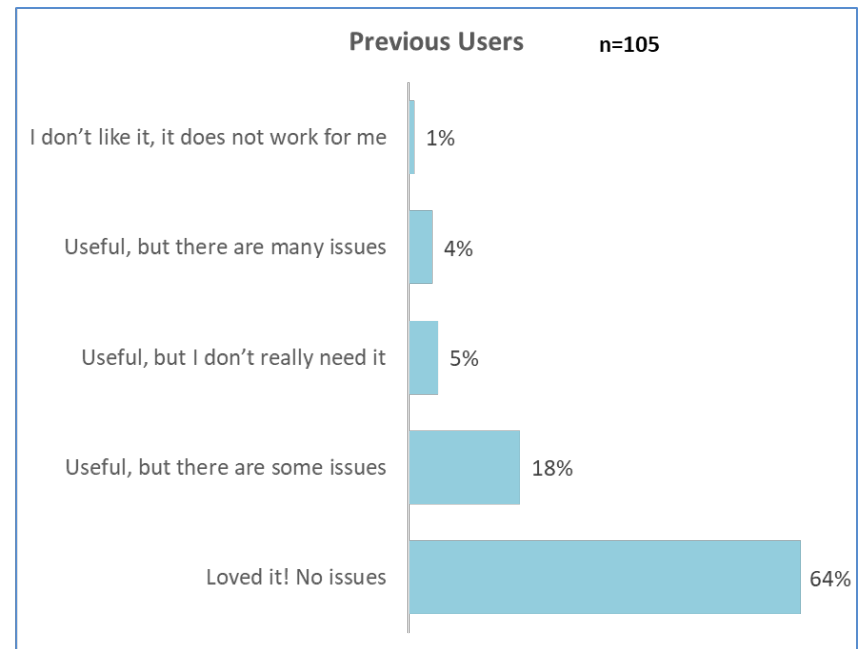
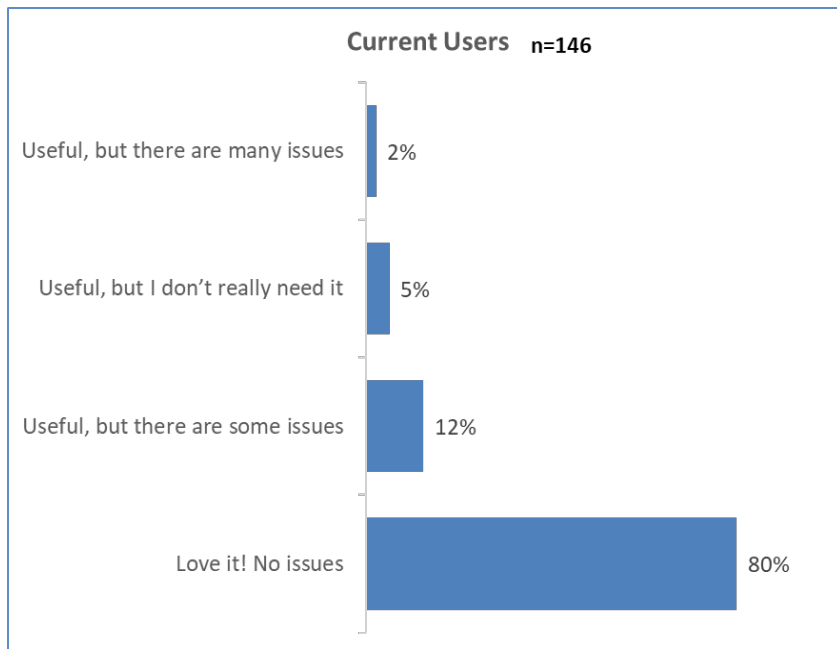


TAP Card Usage

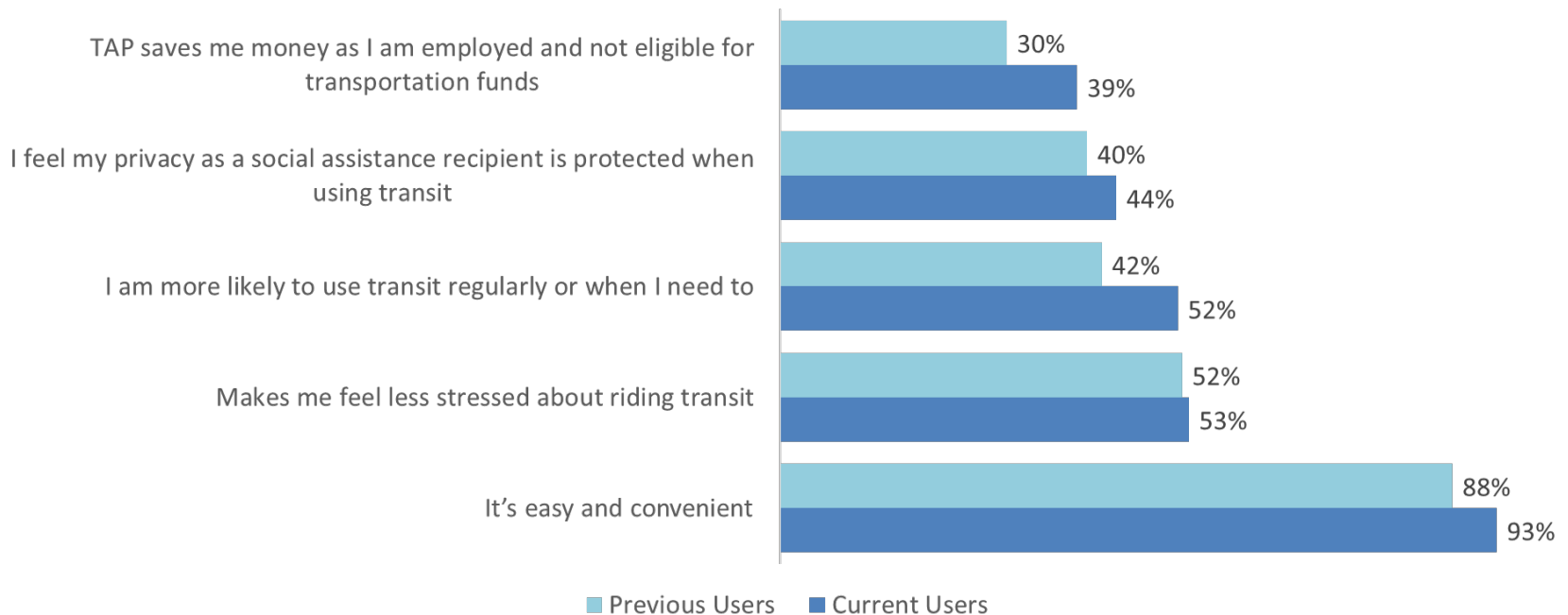
- Total of 4,958 TAP cards distributed
- 2,825 TAP cards used to travel on DRT (57 per cent)
- Average trips per month typically between 15 to 21
- 47,669 trips made with no fare required (estimated value of \$155,000)
- 70 per cent of customers participated in TAP for 3 months or less
- 62 per cent of TAP card usage occurred pre-pandemic (peak in January 2020)



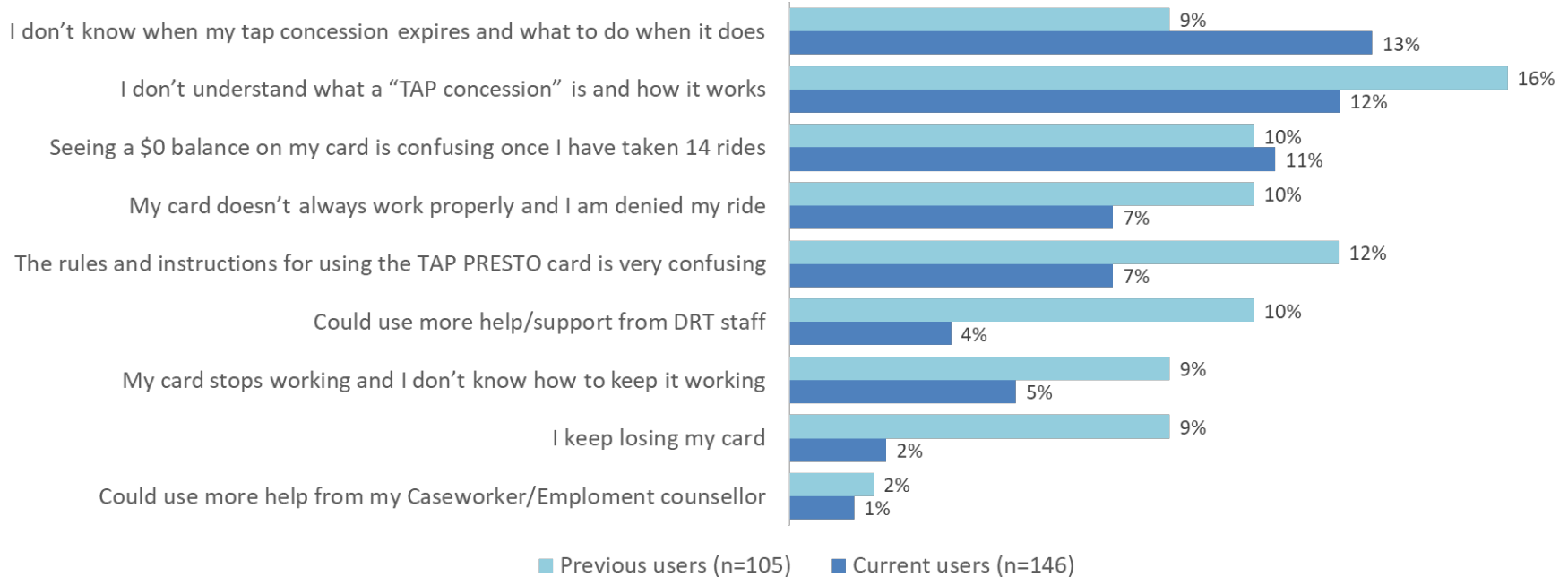
Overall Customer Experience with TAP



What Customers Like About TAP



What Customers Do Not Like About TAP

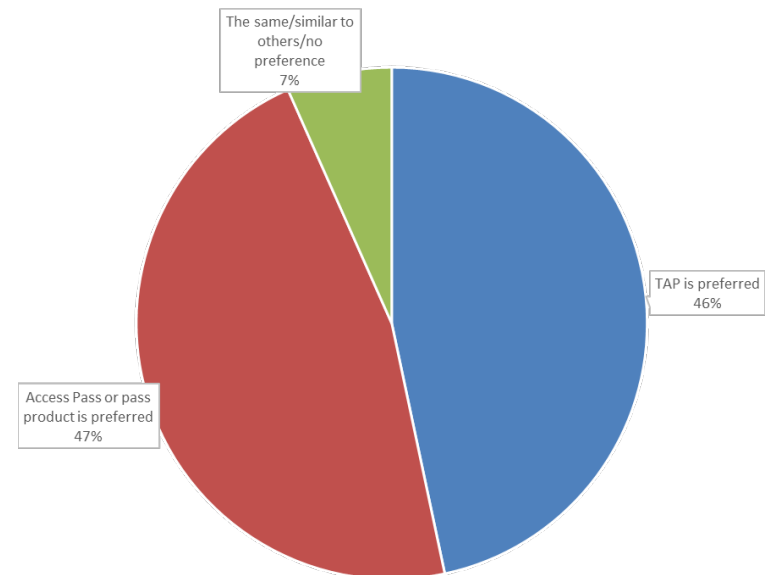


Caseworker Impressions of TAP

Does TAP effectively support your clients?

Theme	Percentage represented
YES - better able to move around for life and work purposes	44%
YES - is more affordable for clients and provides savings for other necessities	23%
YES - in general	10%
YES - but only for some (eg. employed, in south Durham, non-transients) for employed clients	9%
YES - more clients can benefit/clients can benefit from transportation benefit even with less trips per month	7%
YES - reduces stigma	3%
YES - provides clients with more motivation to seek employment	2%
NO - no change, clients prefer a pass	2%
NO - didn't understand program to fully/properly utilize it	1%

Preference for TAP versus Monthly Pass



A green-tinted background image of a Durham Region Transit bus, number 8523, with the company name visible on the front and side. A horizontal orange line is positioned above the title.

Recommendations

TAP Pilot Evaluation



Recommendations

- Extend TAP pilot through March 2023
- Provide more choice for TAP customers – Pay-as-you-go and Period Pass
- Discontinue paper Access Pass by end of 2021
- Waive PRESTO card fee for ODSP clients shifting to TAP
- Communications strategy to build awareness and explain TAP
- Pursue direct payment options with Social Services and Province
- Assess expansion potential to other vulnerable groups

Comparing TAP and the Access Pass

Program Feature	Access Pass	TAP	
		Pay-As-You-Go (current pilot)	Period Pass (proposed)
Eligibility	ODSP	OW and ODSP	OW and ODSP
Fare Medium	Paper Pass	PRESTO Card	PRESTO Card
Monthly Cost	\$46.00	Up to \$45.50	\$46.00
Renewal Term	Monthly	Every 6 months	Every 6 months
Payment Terms	Upfront	Upfront or pay-as-you-go	Upfront
Unused Funds	Flat fee	Carry over to next month	Flat fee
Replacement	Not possible	Value can be transferred	Pass can be transferred
Purchase Options	In-person only at DRT points of sale	Initial set-up through caseworker or DRT PRESTO points of sale. Future card loads through DRT PRESTO points of sale, Shoppers Drug Mart locations, PRESTO app or on-line	



Secondary Student Transportation

Review and Recommendations

A background image showing a white Durham Region Transit bus with 'PULSE' branding and a white car, both with 'Transit' logos, parked on a street. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent green filter.

Child and Youth Fares

Initiatives

- 2006-2013 partnership with school boards
 - Bulk purchasing program for school boards
- 2019
 - Children (12 years of age and younger) ride free
 - Y10 program saving \$20 per month when purchasing a monthly youth pass each consecutive month from September through June
 - Summer 2 for 1 program: July and August pass for the price of one monthly pass



Market Opportunities

Secondary Students in Durham Region

- Students within 3.2 kilometres
 - Residual capacity within the existing network can accommodate up an additional 2,800 students.
- Students bused by Durham Student Transportation Services
 - Significant net operating and capital investments would be required.

A background image showing a white Durham Region Transit Pulse bus and a white car, both with the Transit logo, parked on a street. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent green filter.

Recommendations

Fares

- Effective September 2021
 - Y10 pass discount to \$63.50, from \$73.50
 - Bulk pass purchase pilot program
 - Available to school boards in Durham Region and Durham Student Transportation Services
 - Minimum purchase of 570 monthly passes per month to qualify for a \$20 discount
- Report on Y10 and Bulk Pass program in 2022



Thank You

Durham Region Transit
605 Rossland Road East
Whitby, Ontario L1N 6A3
Phone: 1-866-247-0055
durhamregiontransit.com



Direction Memorandum

TO: Cheryl Tennisco, Committee Clerk

FROM: Ralph Walton, Regional Clerk/Director of Legislative Services

DATE: April 28, 2021

RE: Resolution adopted by Regional Council at its meeting held on April 28, 2021

Corporate Services
Department –
Legislative Services

FOURTH REPORT OF THE FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

1. Appointment of Accessibility Advisory Committee Member to Transit
Advisory Committee
-

That Heather Hall be appointed as the Accessibility Advisory Committee representative to the Transit Advisory Committee.

Ralph Walton

R. Walton
Regional Clerk/Director of Legislative Services

c. T. Fraser, Committee Clerk

If this information is required in an accessible format, please contact 1-800-372-1102 ext. 3702



The Regional Municipality of Durham Report

To: Durham Region Transit Executive Committee
From: General Manager, Durham Region Transit
Report: #2021-DRT-05
Date: April 7, 2021

Subject:

General Manager's Report – April 7, 2021

Recommendation:

That the Transit Executive Committee recommends

That this report be received for information.

Report:

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This report is submitted at each Transit Executive Committee (TEC), for information.

2. Background

- 2.1 The General Manager Report provides regular updates on key performance measures and summaries of current activities and transit issues in Attachment #1.

3. Previous Reports and Decisions

- 3.1 Not applicable

4. Financial

- 4.1 The General Manager's Report focuses mainly on performance and service standards. There are no financial impacts associated with TEC's receipt of this report.

5. Relationship to Strategic Plan

5.1 This report aligns with/addresses the following strategic goals and priorities in the Durham Region Strategic Plan:

- a. Service Excellence

6. Conclusion

6.1 For additional information, contact: Bill Holmes, General Manager, at 905-668-7711, extension 3700.

7. Attachments

Attachment #1: General Manager's Report – April 7, 2021

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

Bill Holmes

General Manager, DRT

Recommended for Presentation to Committee

Original signed by

Elaine C. Baxter-Trahair

Chief Administrative Officer



General Manager's Report

April 7, 2021

TEC

Attachment #1

Performance Measures Dashboard	<u>2</u>
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Service Delivery	<u>7</u>
Updates	<u>9</u>
General	<u>13</u>

Performance Measures Dashboard

Safety

Key performance indicator	Description	Latest Measure	Current	Target ¹	Current Variance to Target (per cent)	YTD Status ² (per cent)
Collisions	Preventable collisions per 100,000 km	February	0.66	0.48	✗ 37.5	✗ 23.9

Ridership

Conventional and On Demand (OD)						
Ridership (x1,000)	Monthly passengers	February	244	905	✗ -73	✗ -75.6
PRESTO Ridership	Customers paying using PRESTO	February	79.6 per cent	38.4 per cent	✓ 41.2	✓ 41.2
Bus full occurrences	Number operator reported occurrences	February	11 ³	233	NA	NA
Ridership (OD)	Number customer trips	February	7,483	193	NA	NA
Specialized Services						
Ridership	Number customer trips	February	3,776	13,468	✗ -72.0	✗ -74.0
Unaccommodated Rate	Trip requests not scheduled	February	0.1 ³ per cent	0.9 per cent	✓ -0.8	✓ -0.7

Service Delivery

Conventional						
On time performance	Per cent on-time departures from all stops	Q1 2021	Not Yet Available	80 per cent ⁴	NA	NA
Service availability	Per cent scheduled service delivered	Q1 2021	Not Yet Available	99.5 per cent ⁴	NA	NA
Mean Distance Between Failure (MDBF)	Average number of revenue service kilometres between occurrences of vehicle defects impacting service	February	7,120	N/A	N/A	N/A

¹Target is 2019 measure for the same period as latest measure

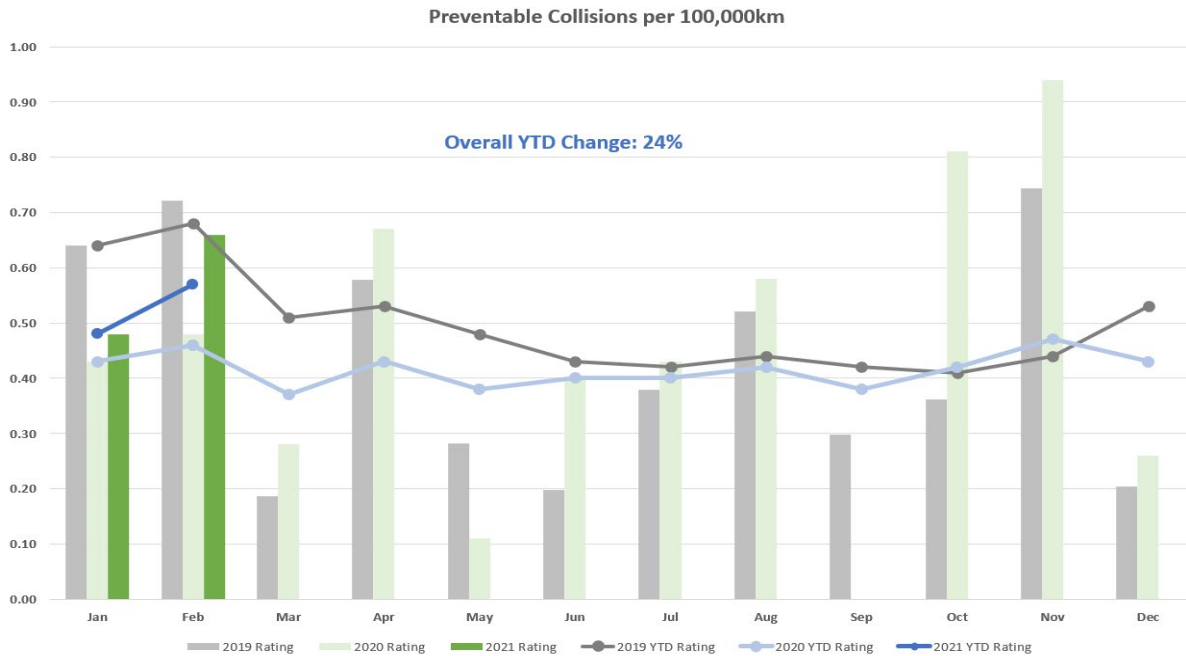
²Year to Date (YTD) compared to previous year

³Bus capacity limited to seated load, reduced ridership during pandemic

⁴Quarterly performance target

Safety

Preventable collisions rate per 100,000 km



Definition: A preventable collision is one in which the driver failed to do everything reasonable to avoid the collision. The preventable collision rate is the number of preventable collisions per 100,000 kilometres of travel for all Durham Region Transit (DRT) vehicles.

A collision may not be reportable to police based on the Highway Traffic Act, but for DRT purposes all collisions are documented and investigated.

Analysis

Preventable collisions in February were 38 per cent higher than 2020, and 24 per cent higher year to date.

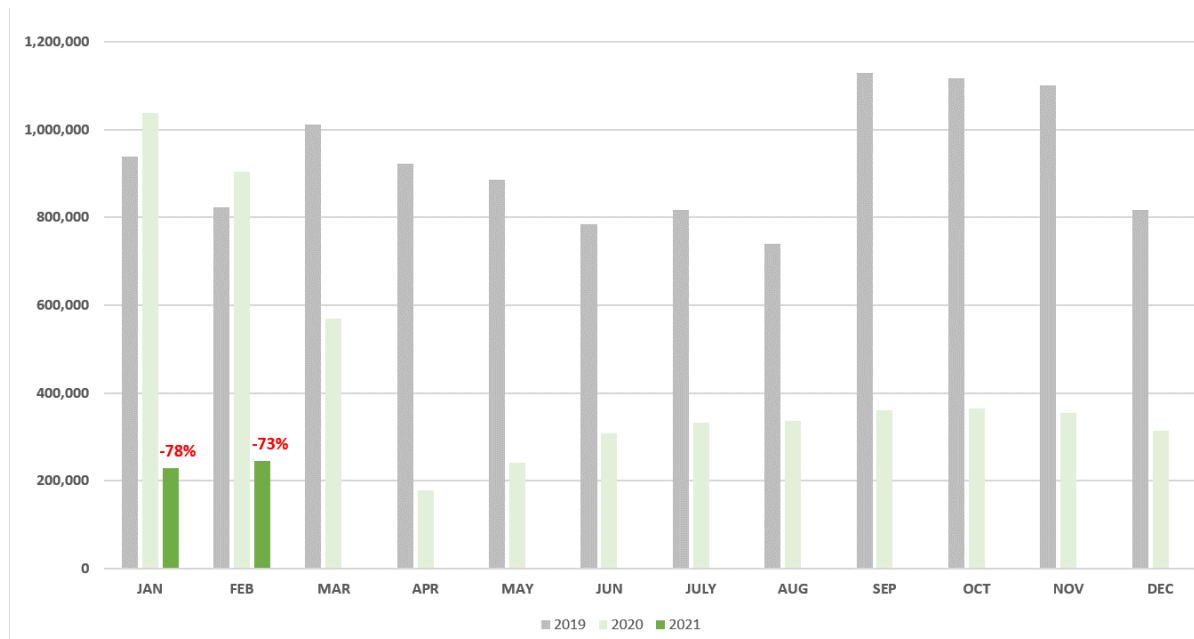
Action Plan

In addition to mitigation measures previous reported, Safety and Training staff have implemented additional measures to curb the trend of increasing monthly collision rate.

- Trainers and mobile supervisors are being deployed to depots and relief points to host “safety talks” with bus operators, focussing on work preparations and defensive driving habits.
- Collaborating with corporate partners to develop data analysis tools to support monitoring of trends and hot spots to identify contributing factors and root causes such as traffic conditions, weather, and time of day.

Ridership

Conventional and On Demand

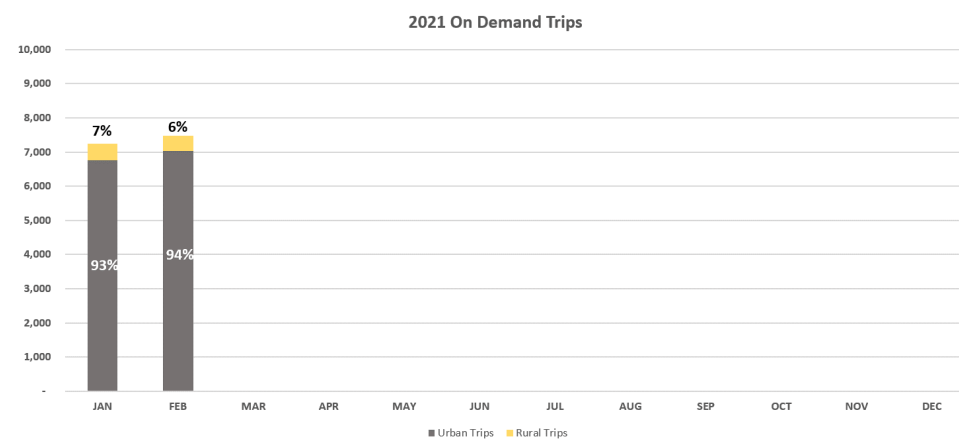


Definition: Ridership is the sum of all passenger trips. A passenger trip is considered a one-way trip from origin to destination, regardless of the number of transfers that may be required. Ridership data is calculated from fare box data and data from PRESTO, GO Bus One Fare Anywhere, and On Demand.

Results

Following the holiday pandemic-related lock down, ridership has slowly increased; ridership in February 2021 was 27 per cent of 2020 levels.

On Demand:



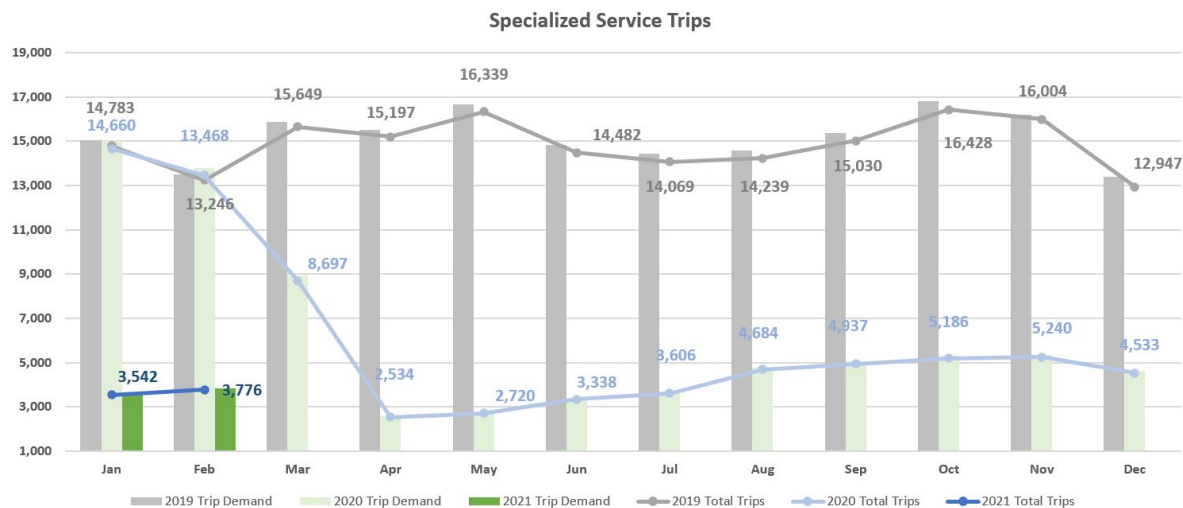
Ridership on On Demand bounced back faster in 2021 than scheduled service with 7,483 trips delivered in February, only 14 per cent lower than November 2020 compared to 31 per cent lower on scheduled service.

January 2021 Ridership data by municipality is summarized in the Update section of this report.

Action Plan

Through mid-March 2021, the ridership monitoring framework indicates that ridership within low demand areas have not reached the minimum thresholds to return scheduled routes within the next four-week period.

Specialized Service



Definitions:

Ridership: A Specialized Services trip is considered a one-way passenger trip from origin to destination, regardless of the number of transfers that may be required. Ridership data is calculated from the scheduling system used by DRT Specialized Services.

Trip Demand: Trip demand is the sum of all trips delivered, no-shows and cancelled at the door, and unaccommodated trips.

Unaccommodated Rate: An unaccommodated trip is one where DRT is unable to schedule a trip for the specific requirements of the customer, or the customer declined to accept the trip option provided by the booking agent.

Results

Following the holiday pandemic-related lock down, Specialized Services ridership is slowly increasing following the holiday pandemic-related lock down; ridership in February 2021 was 28 per cent of 2020 levels.

Specialized Services delivered 99.9 per cent of trip requests in February.

Action Plan

Staff continue to liaise with customers to ensure DRT meet their transportation needs during the pandemic.

Service Delivery

On Time Performance and Availability (conventional)

Note: Starting in 2021, On Time Performance (OTP) and service availability will be reported quarterly.

Definition

On Time Performance (OTP) is a measure of the percentage of buses departing a bus stop no more than zero minutes early and five minutes late. The annual OTP target has been increased to 80 per cent.

Service availability measures the actual service delivered by DRT compared to the scheduled revenue service. The service availability target is 99.5 per cent.

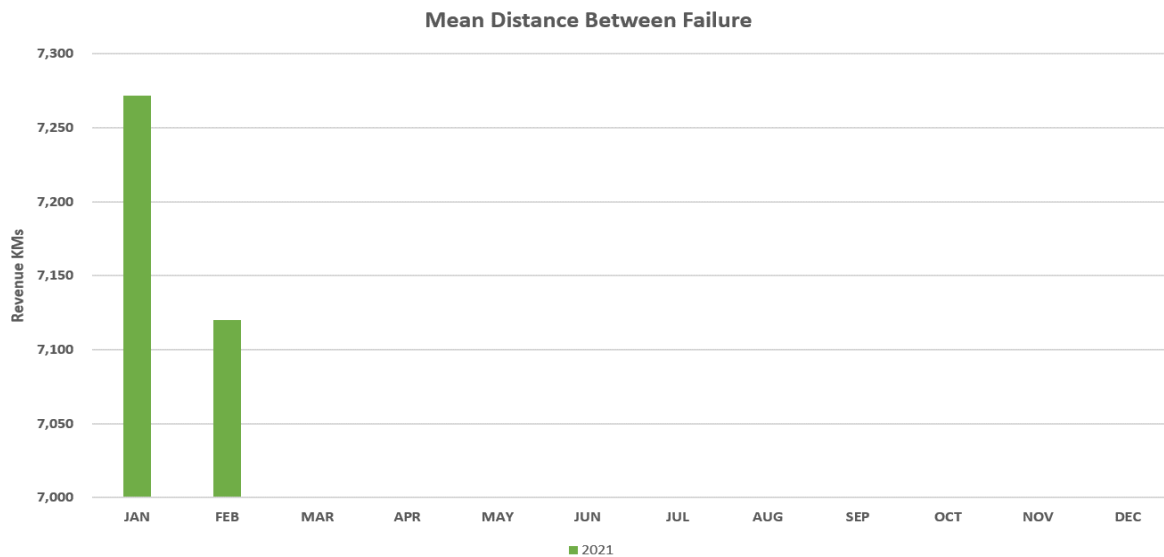
Results

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Action Plan

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Mean Distance Between Failure (conventional)



Definition

Mean Distance Between Failure (MDBF) measures the reliability of the fleet by tracking the mean distance between bus breakdowns or mechanical failures that result in cancelled service. A bus breakdown or mechanical failure is any incident that precludes a revenue vehicle from completing its trip or beginning its next scheduled trip, and is measured by the total number of revenue vehicle kilometers (conventional service fleet) divided by the total number of *chargeable vehicle defects* during the reporting period.

Chargeable vehicle defects (or chargeable mechanical failures) are consistent with guidelines from the Ontario Public Transit Association (OPTA) and does not consider failures resulting from passenger-related events (i.e. sickness on the bus), farebox or other technology defects such as PRESTO readers.

Service impacts resulting from bus breakdowns are mitigated by assigning an available bus or reassigning a bus from a lower priority trip, to cover all or a portion of the affected trip(s).

Results

The MDBF for February 2021 was 7,120 km.

Action Plan

DRT will establish an appropriate MDBF target at the end of 2021 with the objective to continuously enhance preventative maintenance practices and improve annual MDBF performance.

Updates

1. On Demand ridership in rural areas, January 2021

Brock, Uxbridge and Scugog are classified as rural On Demand zones, whereas Clarington includes both urban (Bowmanville) and rural zones. For the month of January 2021, On Demand ridership within the municipalities of Brock, Clarington, Scugog, and Uxbridge, was 49 per cent of total On Demand ridership; Clarington accounted for 70 per cent of this ridership. Ridership in rural zones of the Region accounts for approximately six per cent of total On Demand ridership.

Clarington recorded 33 per cent of all On Demand ridership in January, with Scugog, Uxbridge and Brock recording seven per cent, six per cent and three percent, respectively.

Table 1: January 2021 On Demand Ridership within Rural and Urban areas of local area municipalities

Municipality	Rural	Urban	TOTAL	Per cent
Pickering	25	2135	2160	47
Clarington	101	1412	1513	33
Ajax	NA	955	955	21
Oshawa	NA	816	816	18
Whitby	NA	722	722	16
Uxbridge	11	313	324	7
Scugog	154	119	273	6
Brock	150	NA	150	3
TOTAL	266	4337	4603	

The average On Demand wait time in January was ten minutes within urban zones and 23 minutes in rural areas, with average trip distances of five kilometers in urban zones and 16.5 kilometers in rural areas.

The highest weekly and daily ridership totals were recently recorded during the week ending March 13.

2. Tender for On Demand supplemental services

When On Demand was expanded in September 2020 the existing Specialized Services contracted service providers temporarily provide the required service to ensure area coverage across the Region. On Demand was and continues to be delivered using four internal vans and DRT bus operators, supplemented by the contracted service providers.

The tender for a third-party On Demand service provider was recently awarded and effective April 1, 2021 through February 28, 2022, Hudson Transportation Group Inc (Circle Taxi), of Whitby, Ontario, will provide supplemental On Demand services across the Region. There were six bidders for the work including submissions from organizations in Whitby, Ajax, Ottawa, Kitchener, Port Perry, and Prince George, British Columbia.

3. Fleet update

As part of the 2020 capital plan DRT placed orders for several conventional and Pulse BRT buses.

Throughout May and June, 16 Pulse BRT buses will be delivered, funded through the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Plan (ICIP); fourteen-12 metre buses and two-eight metre (articulated) buses. Six existing Pulse BRT buses (2013 New Flyer Xcelsior) will be refurbished in 2022 and added to the conventional fleet to replace several buses retired in 2020.

The Metrolinx Transit Procurement Initiative (TPI) team recently announced the award of the next 12 metre and 18 metre transit bus procurement contracts to Nova Bus of St. Eustache, Quebec. The new three-year contract includes procurement of diesel, CNG and hybrid propulsion buses. Staff are currently in the process of completing the Purchasing Agreement for the 2021 bus orders, including the 11 hybrid-electric buses funded through ICIP.

4. Support for students experiencing financial barriers to transportation

The Customer Service team has been working closely with social and community agencies to assist students and their families whose success at school may be hindered by transportation insecurity and/or financial barriers. Leveraging PRESTO contactless fare payment solutions, students and agencies are realizing the benefits of E-Tickets and E-Purse.

5. Safe Restart Agreement (SRA), Phase 3

On Monday, March 1, 2021 the Ontario government announced \$150 million in additional funding to help transit systems address financial impacts of the COVID-019 pandemic. The \$150 million is in addition to \$500 million already allocated to municipalities for the period April 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021, with extensions to December 2022 granted on a case by case basis. The Ontario government has called on the federal government to match the \$150 million in additional funding.

The total SRA transit funding allocated to the Region of Durham is \$27.1 million, including \$8.2 million in Phase 3 funding.

Phase 1 April 1 – September 30, 2020 \$8.4M, unused funds carried over into Phase 2

Phase 2 October 1 – March 31, 2021 \$10.5M, with balance of funding not required to be returned to MTO.

Phase 3 April 1 – December 31, 2021 \$8.2M, with balance of funding not required to be returned to MTO

Eligible expenditures under the SRA include COVID-19 transit financial impacts including net revenue

a. Revenue Losses:

- farebox revenue losses,
- advertising revenue losses,
- parking revenue losses,
- contract revenue losses,

- any other revenue loss incurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic that, in the opinion of the Province, is considered eligible

b. Operating Costs:

- costs associated with vehicle cleaning, except for those for which MTEC funds have been provided or claimed,
- costs associated with changes in fuel consumption (e.g., increases due to running additional buses or savings in consumption relating to lower service levels than budgeted, or both),
- costs associated with vehicle maintenance,
- costs associated with transit facilities,
- costs resulting from existing contracts with expanded scope/new contracts,
- employee related costs (i.e., salaries, wages, benefits),
- costs for employee personal protection equipment (e.g., face masks, gloves, sanitizer),
- costs for signage and other means of communications related to COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., social distance guidance),
- any other operating cost incurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic that, in the opinion of the Province, is considered eligible

Capital Costs:

- costs associated with installing driver protection barriers and other protection measures for transit drivers,
- costs associated with providing passenger protection equipment and other passenger safety measures,
- any other capital cost incurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic that, in the opinion of the Province, is considered eligible

For Phase 3 funding only, additional eligible expenses include a provincial/municipal 50 per cent cost share for:

- a) initiatives that support a long-term vision for regional fare and service integration,
- b) On-Demand Micro transit (ODMT) studies and pilot initiatives,
- c) the transformation of transit structures/governance between neighboring municipal governments, where the province has been engaged in discussions

Based on the approved 2021 budget the entire Phase 3 allocation (\$8.2 million) will be required to fund lost revenue and operating expenses. Item c) above is not applicable to the Region of Durham and DRT.

6. Open Payment, PRESTO

On March 11, 2021 Metrolinx launched the first phase of implementation for the PRESTO Open Payment pilot on UP Express. This additional contactless fare payment option will enable customers to tap their credit card or use their mobile wallet to receive PRESTO's best adult fare pricing. The added offering of debit card functionality will arrive later this spring. Both credit and debit options will

be tested with customers to further enhance the payment experience and to inform the rollout across the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA). DRT expect to be one of the first transit agencies to roll-out Open Payment following the completion of the Metrolinx pilot program.

7. Service Change April 5, 2021

As part of the regular travel time review process, schedule changes will be implemented on several routes to reflect actual travel times.

- Routes 291, 302, 403, 405, 407, PULSE 900 and 901, 902, 905, 915, 916

To improve access to employment areas, service on route 916 will begin earlier seven days a week so residents can access early morning shifts.

PULSE 900 B trips which currently end at Glenanna and the Esplanade will be extended to the Pickering Town Centre stop, just north of Pickering Parkway Terminal.

On Saturdays and Sundays, the last northbound and southbound trips for route 216, and the last eastbound trip for route 224, will be cancelled to align with GO Train schedules and weekday service.

Route 224 trips currently entering service at Kerrison and Salem will start at Salem and Kingston.

General

1. Fare and Service Integration (FSI)

The Ministry of Transportation (MTO) has established a Fare and Service Integration (FSI) Provincial-Municipal Table (“the Table”), comprised of senior representatives from transit systems within the GTHA and the broader GO service area (Greater Golden Horseshoe).

The Table’s work and recommendations will help inform the provincial government on ways to improve transit and the customer experience when travelling between municipalities. The Table is expected to be an objectives-based, problem-solving body comprised of transit and transportation experts that will foster collaboration between the Ministry of Transportation, Metrolinx, transit systems, and other transit-focused organizations.

In the short-term the Table will address immediate FSI objectives, such as:

- One bus/one fare;
- Cross-boundary challenges for short, “local” trips; and
- Harmonizing fare concessions across systems.

The Table will also identify FSI-related service challenges with the goal of supporting COVID-19 economic recovery by improving accessibility, mobility, and access to employment and other essential areas. In the long-term, the Table will advance broader FSI objectives with the goal of recommending a single regional fare structure and implementation steps.

The existing FSI-focused tables convened by Metrolinx, such as the Fare Integration Forum and GTHA FSI Working Group, will be paused as MTO convenes the new Table.

The Table convened on February 18, 2021 and at this time is meeting monthly.

Staff will report to TEC on the opportunities, options, and recommendations arising from the Table.

2. 416-905 Service Integration

In collaboration with the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC), MiWay (Mississauga), Brampton Transit, and York Transit, staff has been working since late 2020 to identify service integration opportunities to facilitate real change that will benefit customers travelling between Toronto and the neighboring municipalities.

The approach and goal of the agencies is to implement the most efficient overall system, or what would make the most sense if the service was being designed from scratch. From there, the business cases will analyze strategic alignment and the financial, customer, agency, environmental, economic and community benefits. The work is focused on integrating services to match shared

capacity with shared demand on shared corridors, and evaluating corridors where service currently overlaps and costs and savings for both agencies. The real opportunities will include the consolidation of service along a corridor using existing capacity and realizing savings or reallocation of revenue service hours and buses.

Based on preliminary analysis the existing Ellesmere corridor will be reviewed as part of Stage 2 of the work, with the Sheppard corridor work reviewed as part of Stage 3 to align with the Scarborough subway extension.

This work is being considered as part of the MTO FSI initiative.

3. Specialized Services contracted service provider in northern municipalities

DRT has been informed that Island Taxi will be going out of business as of March 29, 2021. For over 15 years Island Taxi has supported residents in the Municipalities of Scugog and Uxbridge who booked trips with DRT Specialized Services. Island Taxi was also integral to the success of On Demand in the northern municipalities. Specialized Services will make the appropriate service delivery adjustments to ensure residents are not impacted by this change.

4. Service alignment within Operations

As part of our continuous improvement efforts, an organizational review was recently undertaken to advance consistency in delivering revenue services.

Demand responsive services—which include specialized and On Demand services—are currently delivered by different units within Operations. To streamline operations, the Manager, Operations (Service Delivery) will be responsible for the delivery of scheduled, specialized and On Demand services. All unionized staff within Operations will be supported by the Manager, Operations (Employee Management).

The position of Manager, Specialized Services, will be reassigned to the Maintenance division to manage DRT's enhanced cleaning and disinfection of programs and operational management of new and existing remote facilities.

If this information is required in an accessible format, please contact 1-800-372-1102 ext. 3702



Durham Region Transit Report

To: Durham Region Transit Executive Committee
From: General Manager, Durham Region Transit
Report: #2021-DRT-08
Date: April 7, 2021

Subject:

Paper transfers

Recommendation:

That the Durham Region Transit Executive Committee approve:

- A) That staff review and report back to TEC in December 2021 summarizing Durham Region Transit's (DRT) current fare payment processes, including direct and indirect costs of electronic, cash and ticket fares, including barriers and recommended solutions for considering a fully electronic fare payment process.
 - B) That paper transfers be reintroduced on a trial basis starting May 3, 2021, and that should there be a change in employee COVID-19 cases, DRT stop issuing paper transfers for cash and ticket fares; and
 - C) That during the trial period and effective June 1, 2021, DRT no longer issue free PRESTO cards, unless approved otherwise, and should DRT cease issuing paper transfers, PRESTO cards be issued at no cost to a customer if \$6.50 is loaded when purchasing the card at a Durham Region Transit point of sale location.
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Report:

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Transit Executive Committee (TEC) an overview of current fare payment options during the COVID-19 pandemic in response to Transit Advisory Committee (TAC) recommendation that Durham

Region Transit (DRT) resume the use of paper transfers when a fare is paid with cash or ticket.

2. Background

- 2.1 At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic DRT implemented several safety measures to ensure public transit could continue to safely operate, including rear door boarding and the suspension of fare collection, maximum bus loads, and maintaining physical distance between the bus operator and passengers. These measures were crucial to ensuring the safety of customers and employees.
- 2.2 Before resuming fare collection in July 2020, the risks of COVID-19 transmission were reviewed when fare is paid using cash or paper fare media.
- a. Lack of hand washing facilities for customers handling cash or tickets
 - b. Operator handing transfer to each customer who pays by cash or ticket
 - c. Additional time a customer stand at the front of the bus to pay and wait for their transfer
 - d. Disputes regarding cash fares and expired paper transfers
 - e. Employees empty fare boxes and staff handle cash to prepare for pick-up by contracted security services
 - f. Additional people (contracted service provider) in DRT's workplace
 - g. Recommendation from the Province and Public Health to adopt contactless fare payment when possible

The Durham Region Health Department fact sheet data April 9, 2020, title COVID-19 and Physical Distancing, highlighted the use of tap to pay rather than handling money as a way to practice physical (social) distancing.

The June 11, 2020 Ministry of Transportation document "Guidance for Public Transit Agencies and Passengers in Response to COVID-19", highlighted that whenever possible transit agencies and transit passengers should avoid exchanging paper products such as cash for fare collection and receipts, and to favour contactless payment such as tapping credit or debit cards.

- 2.3 Consistent with the recommendations issued by the Provincial Chief Medical Officer of Health on May 20, temporary "bio-shield" barriers were installed between the bus driver and boarding customers. The bio-barrier mitigated the risk

of exposure to the COVID-19 virus (droplets from coughing, sneezing and talking) from boarding customers.

- 2.4 Customers who pay using cash or tickets are provided a paper transfer printed by the bus operator using the driver control unit; the bus operator hands the transfer to the customer. DRT transfers are valid for a period of two hours. When using contactless fare payment, there is no contact between the operator and customer and the transfer is automatically applied to the card when the customer taps their card on the reader when boarding the bus.
- 2.5 The electronic fare payment system was implemented in 2008 offering passengers, operators and DRT several benefits including seamless travel between transit systems, on-line account management and electronic purse protection, and accurate ridership data. Customers load value or passes onto their cards on-line or in-person at points of sale (POS) locations and can board participating transit services by tapping their card on the fare transaction device at entrance points. In 2019, 39 per cent of DRT customers paid their fare using the PRESTO fare payment system.
- 2.6 Electronic fare payment affords customers the opportunity for significant savings; DRT PRESTO fare is cheaper than cash fares. The \$6.00 PRESTO card fee is recovered by the eighth trip. For every trip thereafter, the customer saves \$0.75 a trip, or approximately \$10.00 for every 14 bus trips.
- 2.7 It's beneficial for customers to register their PRESTO card and protect their balance if their card is lost or stolen, however, registration is voluntary, and customers can remain anonymous while taking advantage of lower PRESTO fares.
- 2.8 Several options are available to customers to load value onto their PRESTO card.
 - a. prestocard.ca (credit card only currently)
 - b. DRT POS (cash, debit, or credit card)
 - c. any of the 28 Shoppers Drug Mart locations in the Region (cash, debit or credit card)
 - d. GO Transit stations in Pickering, Ajax, Whitby, Oshawa (cash, debit or credit card)
- 2.9 It has long been DRT's policy, consistent with the transit industry, that for the safety and security of staff and customers, bus operators don't carry change and exact cash fares are required.

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- 2.10 Based on a review of best practices, a paper transfer for cash paying customers is the only applicable approach currently used in the transit industry.

3. Previous Reports and Decisions

- 3.1 On December 4, 2019, TEC endorsed the principles and timelines outlined in DRT's fare strategy (#2019-DRT-25 Durham Region Transit Fare Strategy).

The fare strategy will achieve a fare structure that is simple, seamless and fair, provides incentives to loyal customers, and offers additional assistance to customers through social services.

The fare strategy is based on six principles:

- a. Recognize fare pricing influences services use.
- b. Apply fare increases to the standard (adult) single-ride fare and translate increases to other concessions and products.
- c. Provide choice for customers through loyalty incentives offering value for frequent use.
- d. Incentivize and prioritize electronic fare payment functionalities that provide value for customers and DRT.
- e. Minimize interaction/oversight of fares by bus operators.
- f. Ensure sustainability of discounted fare programs while minimizing impacts on DRT service delivery.

The fare strategy consists of three stages:

- a. Short term (2020): Incentivizing PRESTO by creating a significant price differential between single ride and cash fares.
- b. Medium term (2021-2024): Fare harmonization and acceleration of PRESTO adoption.
- c. Long term (2025 and beyond): Simplified, needs-based fare structure that promotes easier travel beyond Durham Region boundaries.

- 3.2 On June 3, 2020, TEC adopted three recommendations (#2020-DRT-11 Resumption of Fare Collection) supporting fare resumption on July 2, 2020.
- a. Eliminate monthly passes (excluding Access Pass) and paper transfers and limit availability of paper tickets.
 - b. Provide 4,000 PRESTO cards at no cost to customers.

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- c. Investigate additional contactless fare payment technology strategies such as mobile ticketing.
- 3.3 On September 9, 2020, TEC adopted a recommendation (#2020-DRT-18 PRESTO Card Incentive) to continue incentives to support customer adoption of PRESTO contactless fare payment. TEC approved that the \$6.00 PRESTO card fee be waived when a customer loads a minimum of \$6.50, the equivalent of two adult trips. These free PRESTO cards were available at DRT Point of Sale (POS) locations through December 31, 2020.
 - 3.4 On January 7, 2021, TEC directed staff to review alternatives to paper transfers, to report back at the April meeting, and to continue to provide free PRESTO cards to customers when they load a minimum of \$6.50.

4. Current Status

- 4.1 Approximately 7,700 free PRESTO cards have been distributed to customers since June 2020.
- 4.2 E-Tickets were implemented in September 2020 and customers can purchase their DRT E-Ticket single ride tickets or monthly pass from their smartphone. For the week March 7-14, 2021, less than one per cent of ridership paid their fare using an E-Ticket. The weekly use of E-Tickets, however, is trending higher.
- 4.3 An average of 78 per cent of customers paid their fare using PRESTO during the period September-December 2020. The high PRESTO adoption rate is due to the pause of the U-Pass agreement. For January and February 2020, 38 per cent of ridership paid using PRESTO, with 35 per cent of ridership using the U-Pass.
- 4.4 Monthly ridership paying a cash fare has remained consistent with pre-pandemic levels, ranging between nine and 11 per cent, currently between 1,500 – 1,800 riders per day.
- 4.5 Based on the PRESTO operating agreement, DRT is required to attain a PRESTO adoption rate of 70 per cent by approximately July 2022, with the required adoption rate increasing to 80 per cent 12 months after Open Payment is launched.
- 4.6 PRESTO devices installed on conventional buses were replaced in 2020 as part of the device refresh program. The updated PRESTO devices enable new functionality including reduced card loading delays and electronic validation of E-

Tickets when boarding. The devices also support open payment which is expected to be piloted at DRT later in 2021. The Open Payment option will enable customers to pay their fare with their credit or debit card and provide an automatic two-hour transfer.

The design and placement of the new PRESTO devices were engineered before the pandemic; approximately 35 per cent of buses still require bus operators to hand the transfer to the customer.

PRESTO devices can be repositioned but requires additional engineering design by Metrolinx at a cost of up to \$43,000. This work will be completed later in 2021 following the installation design of the new permanent bus operator safety shields.

- 4.7 Several prevention measures have been implemented on buses to mitigate the risk of virus transmission between customers and bus operators.
- a. Installed operator bio-shields
 - b. Although customers are expected to supply their own hand sanitizer, hand sanitization stations are installed at the front and rear doors of the buses and solutions are replenished nightly during daily servicing activities
 - c. Provincial legislation mandates that face coverings or masks be worn by everyone on the bus, with exceptions
 - d. Posted required Public Health information, including customer pre-screening expectations
 - e. Limited the number of passengers (seated load)
 - f. Required customer boarding through front door, exit through back door, except customer who require ramp to be deployed
 - g. Buses are cleaned and disinfected daily

Currently, approximately 99.5 per cent of customers wear a face covering or mask when boarding a DRT bus.

- 4.8 Public Health has advised that as long as all the recommended public health measures are taken (physical distance, hand hygiene, masking, flow of patrons, etc), handling transfers would be a low risk activity for COVID transmission. Further, based on available information the risk of COVID-19 virus transmission

on a public transit vehicle is similar to the risk of transmission within the general community.

- 4.9 DRT is unaware of any confirmed incidents of COVID-19 transmission on a DRT bus involving customers or employees.
- 4.10 DRT is currently hosting a virtual Public Information Centre (PIC) to engage residents and customers on DRT's customer-facing policies, draft social equity policy, and contactless fare payment. Residents are being asked three fare-related questions.
- What are the barriers that prevent you from switching to automated fare payment, such as PRESTO E-tickets or PRESTO card?
 - Did you know that you save money when using PRESTO instead of cash?
 - For customers using PRESTO, what are the challenges you are currently experiencing with the system?

The PIC remains open through April 3, 2021, however at the time of preparing this report no feedback has been provided.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 Since June 2020, an average of 855 free PRESTO cards have been issued each month, at a cost of approximately \$5,130 per month. Should DRT resume issuing PRESTO cards at no cost to customers, the total associated financial risk for the remainder of 2021 (April through December) would be \$46,170, and eligible for funding through the Safe Restart Agreement.
- 5.2 Engineering work required to reposition 35 per cent of the PRESTO devices to eliminate the need for the operator to handle the transfer to the customer will cost approximately \$43,000; implementation costs are unknown at this time. Associated costs that cannot be funded from within DRT's 2021 budget will be considered for DRT's 2022 Business Plans and Budget.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1 Consistent with DRT's fare strategy, specifically to minimize interaction and oversight of fares by bus operators, DRT will coordinate with PRESTO to identify alternative installations that enable customers to independently access paper transfers once the driver safety shields are installed.

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- 6.2 Staff will also complete a fulsome study of current fare payment processes, including direct and indirect costs associated with DRT's electronic fare payment system and cash fares, and barriers to customers adopting electronic fare payment. Staff will report back to TEC in December 2021 highlighting barriers and recommended solutions for considering a fully electronic fare payment process.

7. Relationship to Strategic Plan

- 7.1 This report aligns with/addresses the following strategic goals and priorities in the Durham Region Strategic Plan:
- a. Community Vitality: Enhance community safety and well-being.
 - b. Service Excellence: Collaborate for a seamless service experience.

8. Conclusions

- 8.1 Paper transfers were temporarily removed in June 2020 as part of DRT's safety measures to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 virus transmission during the cash and ticket fare payment process. Public Health has since advised that the transfer handling process is considered a low risk process related to the transmission of the COVID-19 virus.
- 8.2 At the January 2021 meeting, the Transit Advisor Committee expressed disappointment that their strong support for cash and paper transfers were dismissed, and that the transfer decision was delayed until the April TEC meeting.
- 8.3 Social equity and safety are important considerations for residents and public transit, and DRT has recently engaged residents to fully understand their barriers to adopting electronic fare payment options that offer residents and DRT many benefits over legacy cash and paper fare media, including customers saving money.
- 8.4 It's recommended that paper transfers be reintroduced on a trial basis starting May 3, 2021. Recognizing that:
- a. the provincial vaccination program is advancing;
 - b. it will be some time before most Ontarians are able to be vaccinated;
 - c. the cases of COVID-19 and variants of concern are currently increasing in our communities;
 - d. DRT is not aware of any confirmed cases of COVID-19 transmission on a DRT bus; and

-
- e. bus operators and transit staff must feel confident in the precautions implemented for their safety and the safety of their customers,

should there be a change in employee COVID-19 cases, DRT may cease issuing paper transfers for cash fares and customers paying by cash will pay a fare when boarding each bus.

- 8.5 It is also recommended that during the trial period, and effective June 1, 2021, DRT no longer provide free PRESTO cards, unless approved otherwise by TEC, and that if DRT cease issuing paper transfers, free PRESTO cards will resume when a customers loads at least \$6.50 when purchasing the card at a DRT point of sale location.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

Bill Holmes

General Manager, DRT

Recommended for Presentation to Committee

Original signed by

Elaine C. Baxter-Trahair

Chief Administrative Officer



The Regional Municipality of Durham Report

To: Durham Region Transit Executive Committee
From: General Manager, Durham Region Transit
Report: #2021-DRT-09
Date: April 7, 2021

Subject:

On Demand outcomes and next steps

Recommendation:

That the Transit Executive Committee recommends

That this report be received for information.

Report:

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update for On Demand services launched September 28, 2020.

2. Background

- 2.1 In Ontario, various forms of demand responsive service have operated over the past 40 years. The advancement of mobile data platforms has modernized the service to meet customer demands for real-time trip planning and communication of trip information such as real-time vehicle location and arrival times.

a. Dial-a-bus

Dial-a-bus was launched in the 1970s to service low density suburban areas often using smaller transit vehicles. Customers in established zones telephoned a reservation number to request a trip to a transit station.

In Ontario, dial-a-bus trials were first conducted by GO Transit in the York Mills area of Metropolitan Toronto, in the Bramalea area of Brampton, and in

Pickering. Service in these communities transitioned to scheduled bus routes as demand grew.

b. Transcab

Similar to dial-a-bus, Transcab service was introduced in several communities in Ontario and Quebec (known as Taxibus). Transit agencies partnered with local taxi providers to link low demand areas to the closest scheduled bus route, similar to the integrated service process many Specialized Transit customers utilize today. Customers telephoned a reservation number to request a trip.

In Ontario, communities which currently offer transcab services as part of their public transit service include Hamilton, Milton, Niagara Falls, Peterborough, St. Catharines, Sudbury, and Welland.

c. Advanced Technology Platforms

Advanced Technology Platforms, such as the Spare Labs currently used by DRT for its on-demand services, have gained popularity over the last five years. Similar to dial-a-bus and transcab, the service uses a mobile application that customers use to plan, request and book a trip. Most systems also offer a call-in option for customers who do not have access to a smartphone.

Advanced Technology Platforms leverage modern backend software to optimize real-time trip assignments to vehicles. The customer experience is similar to that of transportation network companies (TNC), such as Uber and Lyft, and elevates the customer experience by providing more detailed information on pick-up and drop off locations, vehicle arrival, and pre-booking options.

Application based services have been launched in several Ontario communities, including Barrie, Belleville, Durham Region, Innisfil, Niagara Region, North Bay, Oakville, Sault Ste. Marie, Stratford, Waterloo Region and York Region. Other communities considering this service delivery, include Cobourg, Fort Erie, Guelph, Hamilton, Manitoulin Island, and Milton.

d. Specialized transit

Specialized transit operates similar to dial-a-bus and the service is available only to eligible customers for all or part of their trip. Registered customers must dial into a reservation number to book a trip, and some systems now offer online booking through a mobile application.

2.2 Demand responsive service in Durham Region

a. Prior to 2016

- Dial-a-bus

Dial-a-bus operated in Ajax, Pickering, and Whitby during off peak hours to maintain customer access to transit service during periods of low demand. As ridership grew, dial-a-bus services were replaced with scheduled bus service.

- Late night shuttle

Late night shuttles provided drop off only service for customers boarding at GO train stations and the PULSE 900 Highway 2 bus route in Ajax, Pickering, and Whitby. Trips departed GO stations at designated times and customers would board the bus and advise the bus operator of their destination. The bus did not follow a defined route, rather, the bus operator followed the most efficient routing based on customer drop off locations.

As ridership demand increased the shuttles were replaced with scheduled service to offer more travel options during the late-night hours.

- Scugog dial-a-bus

In 2007, Durham Region Transit (DRT) trialed a dial-a-bus service in Scugog Township enabling customers to travel within the Township.

b. Five Year Service Strategy and Rural-North Service Strategy: 2016-2020

- Rural On Demand

As part of DRT's Rural-North Service Strategy, On Demand service was implemented in 2017 within the townships of Brock, Scugog, and Uxbridge. DRT delivered the service through Specialized Services and

customers were required to call into the reservation line to book a trip at least two hours in advance.

The 2020 Rural Transit Review included recommendations to expand On Demand to all rural areas within Durham Region, including rural areas of the urban Lakeshore municipalities.

To support the increasing customer value of On Demand with areas of low ridership, an advanced technology platform was launched in 2020 as part of the Ridership Recovery Plan. The platform allowed customers to travel at their convenience by scheduling and booking On Demand trips with a mobile application, or by telephoning a reservation line.

- Urban On Demand

With the successful launch of On Demand service in the rural areas, On Demand service was planned to be expanded in 2020 within some low ridership areas of some urban areas of the lakeshore municipalities. Initial plans focused on two low demand areas; the south Rosebank area of Pickering and the Port Whitby industrial area of Whitby.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, DRT pivoted to provide customer access to On Demand service in low area ridership areas as part of the Ridership Recovery Strategy. A weekly ridership framework was developed to actively monitor On Demand zones to support the transition back to scheduled service when reasonable.

3. Previous Reports and Decisions

3.1 #2020-DRT-12, Review of transit services in rural Durham

In June 2020 TEC approved the implementation of the recommendations and strategy outlined in Report #2020-DRT-12.

- a. Replace scheduled services in low demand areas of rural areas with On Demand service.
- b. Adopt a scalable advanced technology platform that is complementary with and has the capability to schedule and dispatch both Specialized Services and On Demand trips in coordination with the scheduled service network to provide efficiencies through integration of services.

3.2 Ridership Recovery Framework Presentation, July 8, 2020, Transit Executive Committee

During the COVID-19 pandemic ridership demand declined by more than 70 per cent, primarily a result of commuter markets such as downtown Toronto and post secondary institutions implementing remote work and learning. Boardings on many bus routes was low, with many local routes experiencing two or fewer customers per trip. As a cost containment measure service on many routes was reduced to an hourly daytime service, and some routes were temporarily cancelled.

DRT's Ridership Recovery Plan introduced On Demand in the urban area as part of the Phase A service plan for September 2020 as part of several service changes to adapt the transit network to the realities of the COVID-19 pandemic and establish a sustainable and scalable network to support economic recovery and increasing ridership.

The Phase A service plan enabled DRT to re-assign operating staff to important bus cleaning and sanitization tasks and ensure appropriate levels of operating staff to maintain service while responding to potential increases in pandemic-related absences. All remaining part-time employees that were laid off returned to work in March 2021.

3.3 #2021-DRT-03 General Manager's Report – February 3, 2021

Specific to zones of low ridership, the current On Demand service is frequent, available and accessible regardless of where residents live or travel in the Region, and a cost-effective way to deliver transit service during the pandemic. Replacing On Demand with an equivalent level of scheduled service in low ridership zones would cost an additional \$14.5 million. Replacing On Demand with scheduled service that operates every 60 minutes between the hours of 7 am and 7 pm, with weekend services not available in some areas, would cost an additional \$3.4 million.

4. Discussion

4.1 Service Design

As of September 2020, DRT operates one of the largest On Demand services in Canada with area coverage of more than 2,500 square kilometres, including 18 urban On Demand zones. With a combination of scheduled and On Demand service, Durham Region is one of the few municipalities in Canada that provides 100 per cent transit area coverage including both rural and urban areas of the Region and operating seven days per week from early morning to late at night.

a. Ridership Monitoring Framework

As the Region begins to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, transit ridership will gradually increase supporting travel to offices, school and other key destinations.

Scheduled service will replace On Demand services within a zone when ridership reaches 20 boardings per hour within a three-hour period.

4.2 Customer Experience

The On Demand service implemented in September 2020 included several new enhancements that improved the customer experience.

a. Transit (application)

Transit is a mobile application supporting customers to plan their transit trip. Transit is integrated with the Spare application, allowing customers to plan and seamlessly book their On Demand trip. Transit also supports customers to plan inter-regional trips across the Greater Toronto and Hamilton area (GTHA).

b. Spare

- DRT On Demand application

The Spare DRT On Demand mobile application is the interface customers use to book their On Demand trip with their mobile phones. The application provides customer with detailed trip information and real-time location of their assigned vehicle.

Customers can also telephone a book agent who will schedule their trip.

- Vehicle dispatching

The Spare technology platform delivers efficient scheduling of On Demand vehicles minimizing customer wait times. Current wait times are less than 15 minutes within urban areas, and less than 30 minutes in rural areas.

4.3 Short-term enhancements

DRT continues to enhance On Demand service based on customer and operator feedback.

a. PRESTO availability

The PRESTO electronic payment system is widely available on scheduled services across the GTHA. Mobile PRESTO devices are currently used for DRT's internal fleet, but PRESTO payment has not always been available to the contracted service providers.

In September 2020, PRESTO E-tickets was launched to provide contactless mobile payments across all services. DRT will deploy PRESTO mobile devices to the contracted service provider in April 2021.

b. Child passengers

The Ministry of Transportation of Ontario (MTO) regulates vehicle child restraint systems through the Highway Traffic Act. The smaller vehicle type used for On Demand are equipped with seat belts and as such children and toddlers are required to use the safety equipment, including requirements such as booster and child seats.

In order to accommodate children and infants, customers are currently required to telephone a book agent and DRT deploys a full-sized transit bus to complete the trip. This process is similar to other transit systems operating On Demand, such as York Region Transit.

DRT is examining opportunities to provide a more seamless process to support families travelling with children requiring booster and child seats.

5. Relationship to Strategic Plan

5.1 This report aligns with/addresses the following strategic goals and priorities in the Durham Region Strategic Plan:

- a. Expand sustainable and active transportation
- b. Enhance communication and transportation networks to better connect people and move goods more effectively
- c. Optimize resources and partnerships to deliver exceptional quality services and value

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, deploying On Demand services within urban areas has enabled DRT to enhance the mobility of residents across the Region by increasing access, availability, and the frequency of transit service.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

Bill Holmes
General Manager, DRT

Recommended for Presentation to Committee

Original signed by

Elaine C. Baxter-Trahair
Chief Administrative Officer

If this information is required in an accessible format, please contact 1-800-372-1102 ext. 3702



The Regional Municipality of Durham Report

To: Durham Region Transit Executive Committee
From: General Manager, Durham Region Transit
Report: #2021-DRT-10
Date: May 5, 2021

Subject:

General Manager's Report – May 5, 2021

Recommendation:

That the Transit Executive Committee recommends

That this report be received for information.

Report:

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This report is submitted at each Transit Executive Committee (TEC), for information.

2. Background

- 2.1 The General Manager Report provides regular updates on key performance measures and summaries of current activities and transit issues in Attachment #1.

3. Previous Reports and Decisions

- 3.1 Not applicable

4. Financial

- 4.1 The General Manager's Report focuses mainly on performance and service standards. There are no financial impacts associated with TEC's receipt of this report.

5. Relationship to Strategic Plan

5.1 This report aligns with/addresses the following strategic goals and priorities in the Durham Region Strategic Plan:

- a. Service Excellence

6. Conclusion

6.1 For additional information, contact: Bill Holmes, General Manager, at 905-668-7711, extension 3700.

7. Attachments

Attachment #1: General Manager's Report – May 5, 2021

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

Bill Holmes
General Manager, DRT

Recommended for Presentation to Committee

Original signed by

Elaine C. Baxter-Trahair
Chief Administrative Officer



General Manager's Report

May 5, 2021

TEC

Attachment #1

Performance Measures Dashboard	<u>2</u>
Safety	<u>3</u>
Ridership	<u>4</u>
Service Delivery	<u>7</u>
Updates	<u>10</u>
General	<u>11</u>

Performance Measures Dashboard

Safety

Key performance indicator	Description	Latest Measure	Current	Target ¹	Current Variance to Target (per cent)	YTD Status ² (per cent)
Collisions	Number preventable collisions per 100,000 km	March	0.24	0.28	✓ -14.3	✗ 21.6

Ridership

Scheduled						
Ridership (x1,000)	Number passengers	March	341	571	✗ -40.3	✗ -67.5
PRESTO Ridership	Customers paying using PRESTO (per cent)	March	79.3	35.1	✓ 44.2	✓ 42.2
Bus full occurrences	Number operator reported occurrences	March	3 ³	174	NA	NA
Demand Responsive						
Ridership - Specialized	Number customer trips	March	4,689	8,930	✗ -47.5	✗ -67.9
Unaccommodated Rate - Specialized	Trip requests not scheduled (per cent)	March	0.3	0.7	✓ -46.6	✓ -67.6
Ridership – On Demand	Number customer trips	March	10,094	228	NA	NA

Service Delivery

Scheduled						
On time performance	On-time departures from all stops (per cent)	Service Period 1 ⁴	78.7	81.3	NA	✗ -2.6
Service availability	Scheduled service delivered (per cent)	Service Period 1 ⁴	99.6	98.8	NA	✓ 0.8
Mean Distance Between Failure (MDBF)	Average number of revenue service kilometres between occurrences of vehicle defects impacting service (revenue service kilometers)	March	8,365	N/A	N/A	N/A

¹Target is 2020 measure for the same period

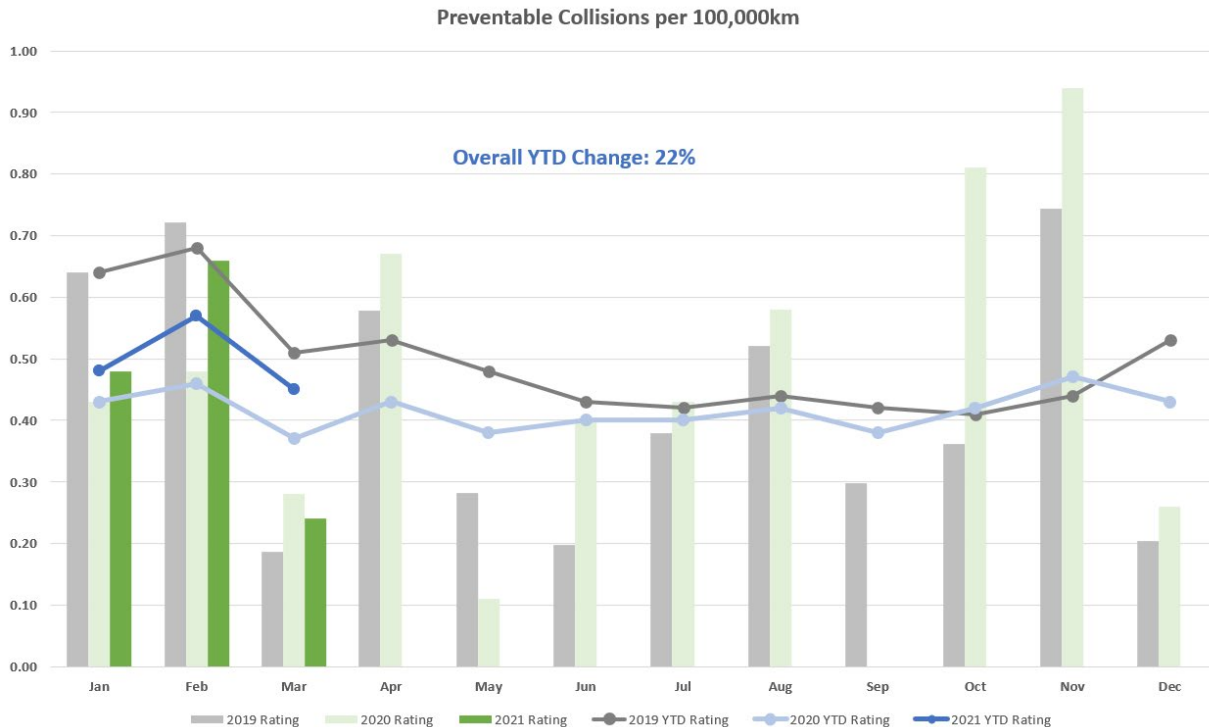
²Year to Date (YTD) compared to previous year

³Bus capacity limited to seated load, reduced ridership during pandemic

⁴January 3 through April 5, 2021

Safety

Preventable collisions rate per 100,000 km



Definition: A preventable collision is one in which the driver failed to do everything reasonable to avoid the collision. The preventable collision rate is the number of preventable collisions per 100,000 kilometres of travel for all Durham Region Transit (DRT) vehicles.

A collision may not be reportable to police based on the Highway Traffic Act, but for DRT purposes all collisions are documented and investigated.

Analysis

Preventable collisions in March were 17 per cent lower than 2020, with the year to date collision rate remaining higher than 2020 by 22 per cent.

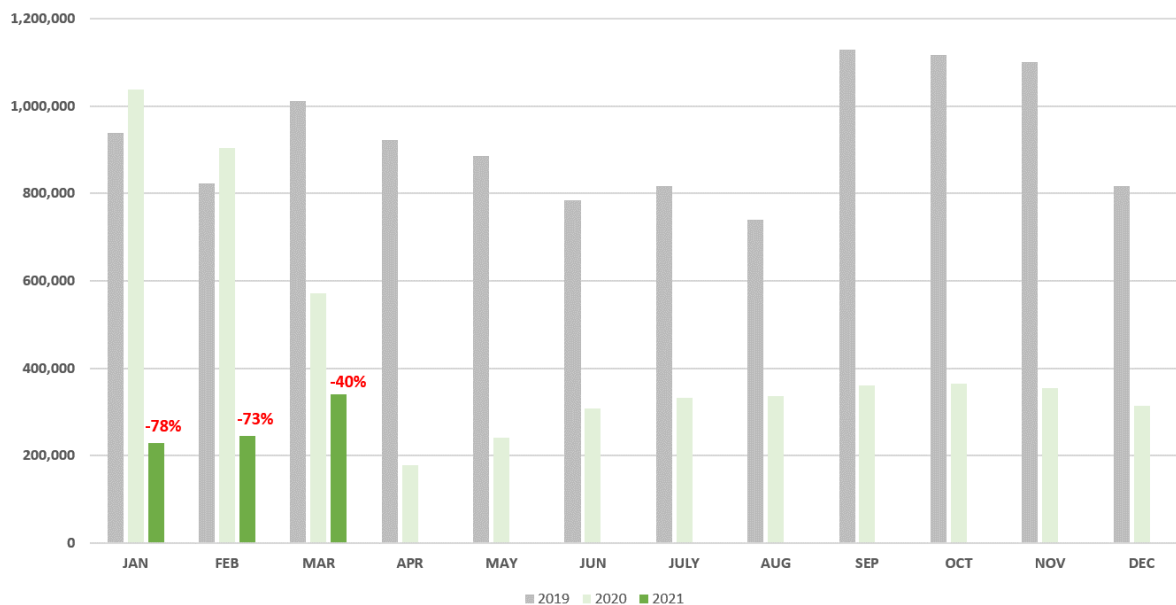
Action Plan

Safety and Training staff have implemented additional measures to curb the trend of increasing monthly collision rate.

- Trainers and mobile supervisors deployed to depots and relief points to host “safety talks” with bus operators, focussing on work preparations and defensive driving habits.
- Collaborating with corporate partners to develop data analysis tools to support monitoring of trends and hot spots to identify contributing factors and root causes such as traffic conditions, weather, and time of day.

Ridership

Scheduled transit



Definition: Ridership is the sum of all passenger trips. A passenger trip is considered a one-way trip from origin to destination, regardless of the number of transfers that may be required. Ridership data is calculated from fare box data and data from PRESTO, GO Bus One Fare Anywhere, and On Demand.

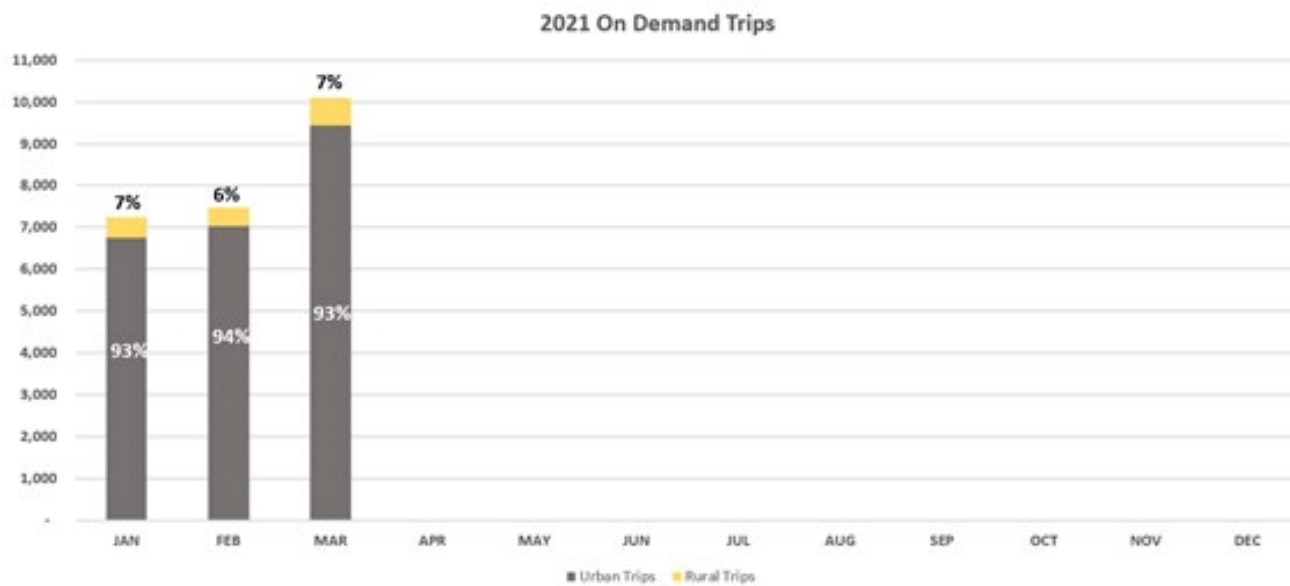
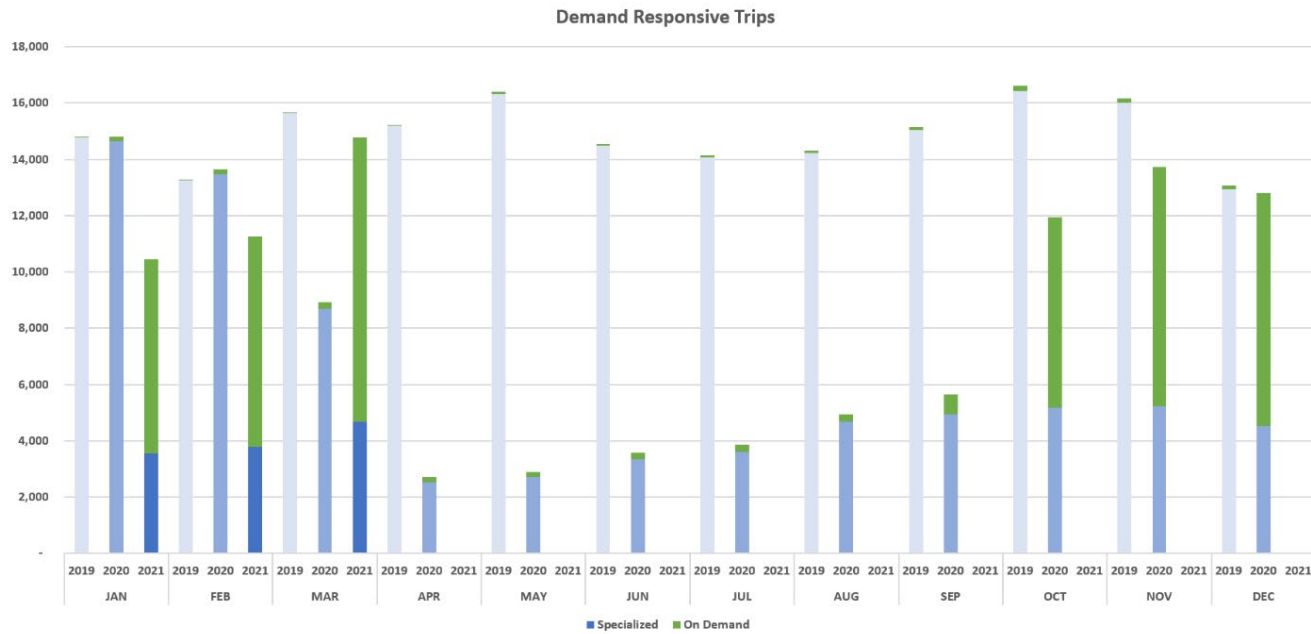
Results

March 2020 was the first month where ridership was significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. One year later, impacts from the pandemic remain significant; ridership was approximately 34 per cent of 2019 levels, and 60 per cent of 2020 levels.

Action Plan

Through mid-March 2021, the ridership monitoring framework indicates that ridership within low demand areas have not reached the minimum thresholds to return scheduled routes within the next four-week period.

Demand Response Transit





Definitions:

Ridership: A trip is considered a one-way passenger trip from origin to destination, regardless of the number of transfers that may be required.

Trip Demand (Specialized): Specialized transit trip demand is the sum of all trips delivered, no-shows and cancelled at the door, and unaccommodated trips.

Unaccommodated Rate (Specialized): An unaccommodated Specialized transit trip is one where DRT is unable to schedule a trip for the specific requirement requested by the customer, or the customer declined to accept the trip option provided by the booking agent.

Results

Specialized transit ridership is slowly increasing following the holiday pandemic-related lock down. Ridership in March 2021 was 70 per cent of 2019 levels, and 46 per cent of 2020 levels.

Specialized transit delivered 99.9 per cent of trip requests in March.

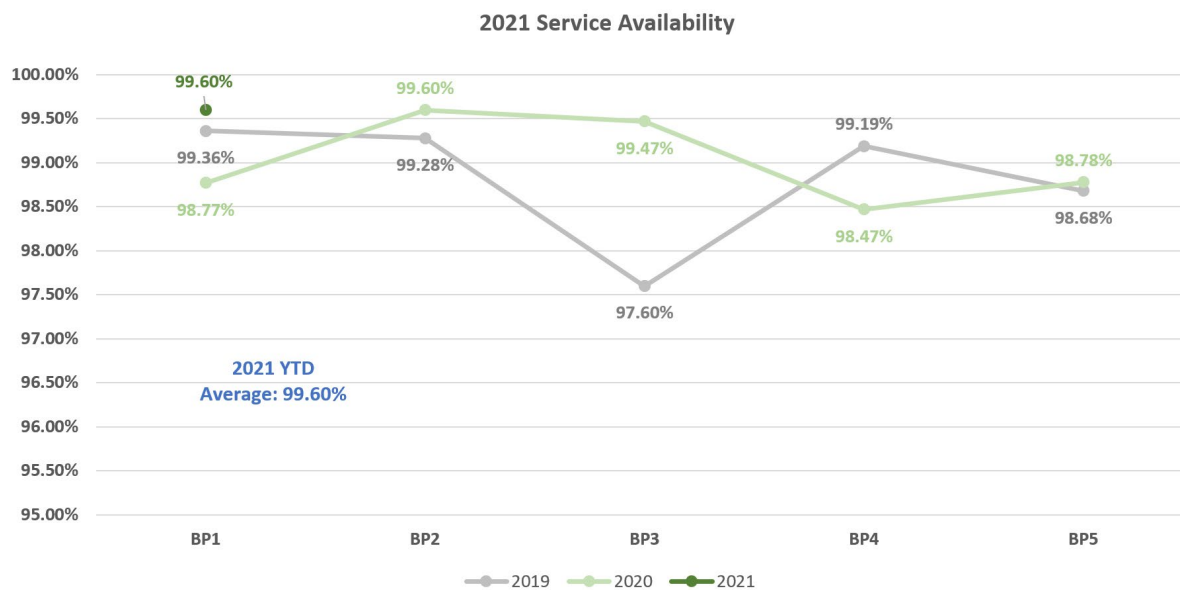
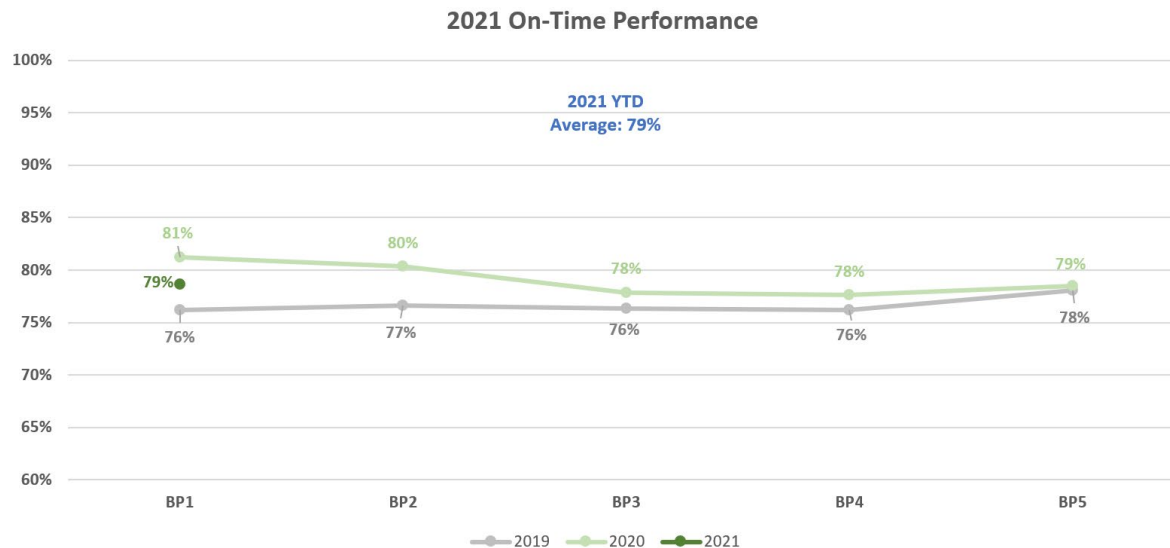
Ridership with On Demand transit bounced back faster in 2021 than scheduled service with 7,483 trips delivered in March, only 14 per cent lower than November 2020 compared to 31 per cent lower on scheduled service.

Action Plan

Staff continue reviewing ridership trends and the pandemic status to project service level and routing requirements for September 2021. Staff plan to provide a service update in June 2021.

Service Delivery

On Time Performance and Availability (conventional)



Definition

On Time Performance (OTP) is a measure of the percentage of buses departing a bus stop no more than zero minutes early and five minutes late. The annual OTP target has increased to 80 per cent. OTP is reported for each service period.

Service availability measures the actual service delivered by DRT compared to the scheduled revenue service. The service availability target is 99.5 per cent. Service availability is reported for each service period.

Results

OTP for the 2021 service period 1 (BP1) improved by three per cent compared to 2019 and tow per cent lower than 2020. Year to date OTP is one per cent below the target of 80 per cent.

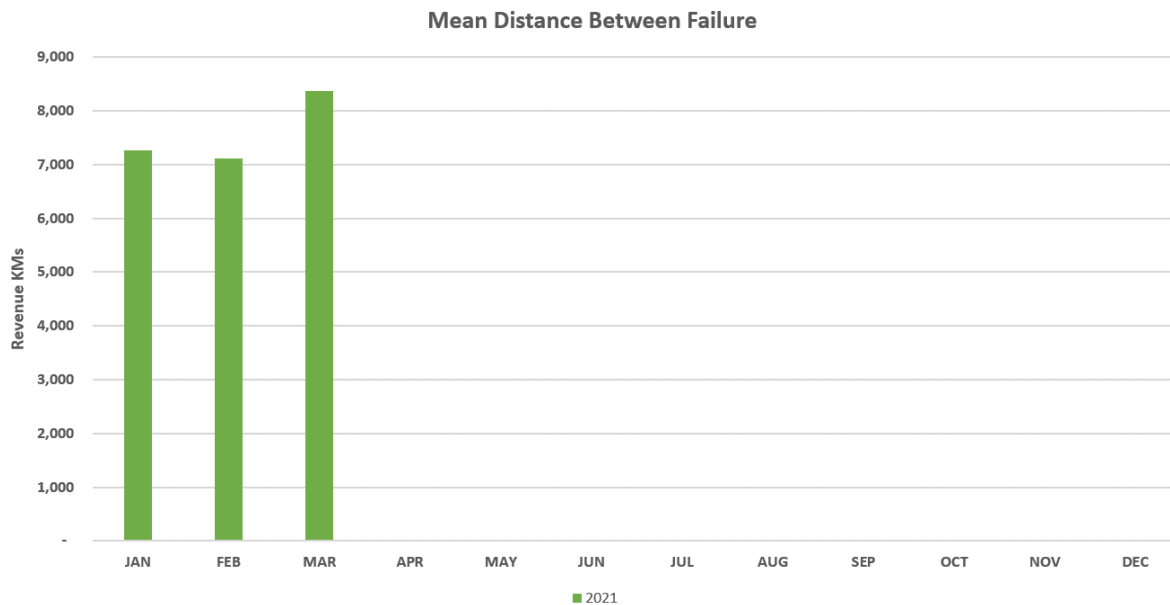
Service availability improved 0.2 per cent compared to 2019 and 0.8 per cent compared to 2020, exceeding the target of 99.5.

Action Plan

Service Planning staff have completed recent run time analyses to update schedules to reflect actual trip running times.

Service availability is impacted by unplanned events such as on-street conditions impacting service delivery (collisions, detours, etc) and mechanical defects. Maintenance staff continue to enhance vehicle maintenance activities to mitigate on-street defects, as demonstrated in the Mean Distance Between Defects metric, and operations management continue to use available on-street resources to cover service when unplanned event happen.

Mean Distance Between Failure (conventional)



Definition

Mean Distance Between Failure (MDBF) measures the reliability of the fleet by tracking the mean distance between bus breakdowns or mechanical failures that result in cancelled or missed service. A bus breakdown or mechanical failure is any incident that precludes a revenue vehicle from completing its trip or beginning its next scheduled trip, and is measured by the total number of revenue vehicle kilometers (conventional service fleet) divided by the total number of chargeable vehicle defects during the reporting period.

Chargeable vehicle defects (or chargeable mechanical failures) are consistent with guidelines from the Ontario Public Transit Association (OPTA) and does not consider failures resulting from passenger-related events (i.e. sickness on the bus), farebox or other technology defects such as PRESTO readers.

Service impacts resulting from bus breakdowns are mitigated by assigning an available bus or reassigning a bus from a lower priority trip, to cover all or a portion of the affected trip(s).

Results

The MDBF for March 2021 was 8,365 km, an improvement from 7,120 km in February.

Action Plan

DRT will establish an appropriate MDBF target at the end of 2021 with the objective to continuously enhance preventative maintenance practices and improve annual MDBF performance.

1. **Request For Proposal (RFP) for Charging Infrastructure – Oshawa Power**

Oshawa Power and Utilities Corporation (OPUC) is aiming to release an RFP for the procurement of electric bus charging equipment and infrastructure to support the energy supply requirements of DRT's electric bus pilot at 710 Raleigh Avenue facility in Oshawa. This work is being conducted as part of a Letter of Intent (LOI) in place with OPUC, which will assist in the development and submission of a business case to the Region for "charging as a service". DRT is exploring a partnership model in which OPUC would design, build, finance, maintain and operate the charging infrastructure and in return charge a fee for the service to DRT. One of benefits of this model for DRT includes limiting the capital expenditure for the equipment and transferring the operating savings from diesel fuel consumption to the service provider.

Of note, there is no obligation for OPUC to proceed with an RFP proponent and no agreements will be executed unless the necessary approvals are in place at the Region. Further information about this model and details of the business case are expected to be provided through a report to a forthcoming meeting of TEC.

General

1. Zero Emissions Fleet Strategy

As mentioned at a previous TEC meeting, DRT is developing an RFP to retain consulting services to conduct a feasibility study on the transition of DRT's fleet to zero emission propulsion technology. The work would include developing a deployment plan for the vehicles and fuelling supply infrastructure - aiming for significant GHG emissions reductions that aligns with Corporate, Provincial and Federal policies and goals. A key outcome of this project is to identify a phased approach contributing to DRT achieving its emissions reduction targets (between 2025-2045) considering commercial technology availability, technical feasibility, economic feasibility, service requirements (including future projected service), and funding opportunities.

2. 2020 Safe Driver Awards

DRT is proud to recognize the 31 bus operators who achieved safe driver milestones in 2020. A special presentation to acknowledge these exceptionally employees is scheduled for Regional Council on May 26, 2021.

Throughout 2020, DRT buses were driven approximately 11 million kilometres - equivalent to completing 274 rotations of the earth at the equator. Collectively, the professional operators being recognized today have driven 355 years without a preventable collision. DRT's commitment to safety is best demonstrated through the accomplishments and actions of staff, and never more so than throughout the past year as they dealt with the extraordinary challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic while continuing to ensure the safe operation of their vehicle each and every day. Thank you to the following operators for their dedication to their craft, and congratulations on an impressive achievement.

5-Years

Chris Hansen
Wayne Newman
Jason Ostler
Mike Pepeljugoski
Chris Rae
Susan Stoppard
Holly Trotman
Sheri-Lee Latta
Leah Daize
Laura Tillaart
Luci Oddi

10-Years

Ryan Anderson
Lana Pignatell
Alex Reyes
Harjit Singh
Ark Wodzynski

15-Years

Dexter Baksh
Paul Black
Karen Christiansen-Walker
Jason Ford
Tracy Henderson

Gwen Henry

Allan Just
Bal Kissoon
Al Wilson
Melissa Schneider
Ken Macpherson
Jamie Hendry

20-Years

Robert Gryz
Matt Kuchmak

30-Years

Nelson Scott

3. Inclusive Community Grant

DRT recently received funding from the Ontario Inclusive Community Grants program to improve access to safe, affordable public transit for seniors and those with disabilities, to reduce social isolation, and maintain the dignity of older adults and people with disabilities.

Nine transit service kiosks will be installed in local retirement residences, long-term care homes, and community service locations, one of which will offer a television monitor displaying real-time bus arrival information for an adjacent bus stop. These installations are anticipated to reduce outdoor wait times in harsh weather conditions, while also providing enough time for residents to arrive at the bus stop safely and securely.

More information will be available once the details of the program and locations are finalized.

If this information is required in an accessible format, please contact 1-800-372-1102 ext. 3702



Durham Region Transit Report

To: Durham Region Transit Executive Committee
From: General Manager, Durham Region Transit
Report: #2021-DRT-11
Date: May 5, 2021

Subject:

Zero Fare Transit – Experience and Implications

Recommendation:

That the Transit Executive Committee recommends

That this report be received for information.

Report:

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of experiences and lessons learned from other jurisdictions in the provision of zero fare public transit and the factors influencing transit ridership, as well as implications and considerations for zero fare transit in Durham.

2. Background

- 2.1 In response to questions regarding zero fare transit options at the January 8, 2020 meeting of the Transit Executive Committee (TEC), the General Manager of DRT advised TEC members that staff would conduct a review of the impacts of providing free fares for transit services in Durham Region and report back to the Committee later in the year on the results. At the January 29, 2020 meeting of Regional Council, it was further requested that the review include consideration of zero fare transit for seniors and low-income youth. Due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic the review and report back was deferred to Spring 2021.

2.2 Since its inception in 2006 DRT has taken a number of actions to improve the affordability of transit in Durham for people living with low income. This includes:

- a. Introduction of Kids Ride Free in 2019 providing zero fare transit for children aged 12 and under.
- b. Provision of reduced cost transit fares and passes for youth and senior riders based on discounts shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Fare Table

Concession Type	Fare Type	Rate	Per cent of Adult Rate
Adult	Cash	\$4.00	100
	PRESTO	\$3.25	100
	Monthly Pass	\$117.00	100
Youth	Cash	\$4.00	100
	PRESTO	\$2.90	89
	Monthly Pass	\$93.50	80
Senior	Cash	\$2.75	69
	PRESTO	\$2.15	66
	Monthly Pass	\$46.00	39

- c. The introduction of additional fare incentives reducing the cost of transit for youth, including the Youth 2 for 1 summer pass and the Y10 ten month loyalty pass providing an additional \$20 per month decrease on the already reduced monthly youth pass rate of \$93.50. At its meeting on April 7, 2021 (#2021-DRT-07), TEC approved a further \$20 reduction on the cost of the Y10 pass to \$53.50 per month (46 per cent of the standard adult monthly pass) beginning September 2021 and providing \$400 in savings for the school year over the regular youth pass provided the pass is purchased each month from September to June.
- d. Establishment of the Access Pass in 2008 for Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) clients providing unlimited rides on DRT for only \$46.00 per month or 39 per cent of the standard adult monthly pass sold at \$117.00. Over the ten-year period from 2008 to 2018, Access pass ridership increased from 285,000 rides to nearly 958,000 – or 235 per cent. In 2019, the Access pass represented nine per cent of DRT’s overall ridership and four per cent of annual revenue (\$1.1M). Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic DRT sold approximately 1,900 Access Passes each month, amounting to a total subsidy value of \$1.3M annually.

-
- e. Implementation of the Transit Assistance Program (TAP) pilot in November 2019 leveraging the loyalty cap features of the PRESTO card. Ontario Works and ODSP clients are able to load funds onto their PRESTO card and pay-as-they-go for the first 14 trips on DRT in any month (equivalent to \$45.50 or 39 per cent of the standard adult monthly pass) after which no fare is charged for any additional rides during the remainder of the month. Any unused funds on the card at the end of the month carry over to the next month reducing the amount of funds that need to be loaded onto the card. At its meeting on April 7, 2021 TEC received a report (#2021-DRT-06) on the evaluation of the TAP pilot between November 2019 and January 2021 and approved recommendations to extend the pilot, add an additional TAP period pass option, and assess opportunities to extend eligibility for TAP to other people living with low income.
 - f. Implementation of the DRT U-Pass with Durham's three post secondary institutions providing DRT's best overall value fare pass product at \$141.75 per semester per student. The U-Pass, which is available to all full time post secondary students at Durham College, Ontario Tech University and Trent University (Durham Campus), is equivalent to a monthly pass rate of \$35.44 or 30 per cent of the standard adult pass rate (38 per cent of the standard youth monthly pass rate).

3. Previous Reports and Decisions

- 3.1 At its meeting on December 4, 2019, TEC approved DRT's long-term fare strategy. The strategy set out key principles and milestones for advancing transit fare policy. For the period of 2021 to 2024 the focus is on fare harmonization and acceleration of PRESTO adoption. This includes completing reviews of existing fare incentive programs such as TAP. It also considers potential expansion of reduced cost transit to people living with low income. Over the longer term (2025 and beyond) the strategy envisions a more simplified, needs-based fare structure based on the customer's ability to pay in place of the current age-based structure.

4. Factors Influencing Public Transit Ridership

- 4.1 One of the primary factors affecting public transit use is personal vehicle ownership. When residents do not own vehicles, they are most likely to use transit because the convenience of the private automobile is unavailable. Many factors contribute to automobile ownership: land use density and mixture, proximity to work and essential services, household income levels, and the availability and quality of transit service, are just a few.

-
- 4.2 The Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) Report 27, Building Transit Ridership, concluded that transit ridership varies with four general types of factors:
- a. **The levels of travel-inducing activities.** Since travel is predominantly a derived demand, as the levels of those activities that require passenger transportation change, so can the demand for transit service be expected to change.
 - b. **The price and other characteristics of the service.** The price and various aspects of the level of service provided by the transit system have been shown by substantial previous research to affect the level of ridership.
 - c. **Other transportation options.** The price and service characteristics of substitute and complementary modes of travel may also be expected to influence transit passenger volumes (e.g. road pricing, tolls, taxi/ride sharing rates, parking availability and cost, active transportation infrastructure).
 - d. **The characteristics of the population served.** The market for transit services comprises individuals with heterogeneous tastes, and the level of demand can be expected to vary between different demographic and socioeconomic subgroups of the population.
- 4.3 While most factors are outside the control of transit, two key factors that DRT does control are the quality of transit service and fares supporting residents who are less likely to own vehicles and who are more likely to use transit. Various physical and perceived attributes of public transit service impact the attitudes and perceptions of both transit riders and non-riders and their choice to use transit. Physical attributes, such as reliability, frequency, speed, access, and price tend to entice ridership. Perceived positive attributes, such as comfort, safety, convenience, and aesthetics, tend to retain existing riders.
- 4.4 DRT has demonstrated locally that increasing access, frequency and reliability of service will boost ridership. For the period 2015-2019, ridership improved by 7.5 per cent, responding to a 7.6 per cent increase in revenue service hours enhancing the route network, span of service, and bus frequencies. Further, On-Time Performance has exceeded 80 per cent, and service availability has reached 99.6 per cent.
- 4.5 A 2016 City of Edmonton report highlighted a hierarchy of factors, in order of importance, affecting transit ridership.
- a. Level of access and easy of use
 - b. Frequent and reliable service with sufficient trip information
 - c. Level of comfort and cleanliness

-
- d. Safe and secure
 - e. Cost and affordability
 - f. Fast service
 - g. Low environmental impact

5. Zero Fare Transit Experience and Implications

5.1 Over the past 40 years many jurisdictions have implemented and/or conducted trials of zero-fare transit in different forms. Current estimates indicate that over 100 cities around the world now offer some form of zero fare public transit, with most in Europe but increasing interest in North America. The key forms of zero-fare transit include:

- a. Universal – transit is offered free to all passengers at all times
- b. Geographic – free rides offered within specific zones (e.g. downtown areas)
- c. Time-based – transit is free within specified time periods (e.g. off-peak hours)
- d. Age-based – transit is provided free to specified age groups (e.g. children aged 12 and under, seniors aged 65 and over)

5.2 Overall, the experience in other jurisdictions with zero fare transit suggests that such policies are successful in growing transit ridership and promoting social equity. However, they also introduce new challenges in added funding pressure to maintain and grow revenue service and infrastructure investments, increases in disruptive behaviour and overcrowding, and a lower sense of security among passengers and staff. Notable examples of zero fare transit experiences include:

- a. Calgary, Alberta – Has waived fares on a geographic basis within the downtown light rail transit zone for several decades. Introduced as a gesture to downtown businesses whose employees often needed to travel only a few blocks between offices and meetings in the downtown and for tourists to promote shopping. Customer research has found that customers prefer benefits like higher frequency service on routes, better connections, more convenience and enhanced customer experience above lower fares.
- b. Austin, Texas – Zero fare policy implemented in 1990 for a 15-month trial to increase ridership and promote social equity. Funded through a one cent sales tax increase. A 70 per cent increase in ridership was experienced along with more frequent passenger disruptions, vandalism and low operator morale due to safety concerns. Interviews with customers following the trial found that they prioritized safety, service reliability and frequency, and system cleanliness over free fares.

-
- c. Denver, Colorado – Waived fares during off-peak hours offered in Denver Regional Transportation District in early 1990s. Ridership increased by 52 per cent in off-peak hours and 49 per cent system-wide, but experienced overcrowding, increased passenger disturbances, decreased schedule reliability and lower operator morale.
 - d. Scotland – Since 2004, Scotland has provided zero fare local and long-distance transport to persons over 60 or who have a disability through the National Entitlement Card. A 2014 study found 99 per cent customer satisfaction with the program, 41 per cent indicated they used the car less, and 48 per cent reported making trips they otherwise would not have made. The Scottish Government is currently considering extending access to the program to all youth aged 19 and under beginning in the 2021-22 financial year.
 - e. San Francisco, California – A consultant was retained in 2008 to assess the feasibility of implementing zero fare transit. It was predicted that ridership could increase 48 per cent, requiring a \$69 million increase in annual operating costs to accommodate increased demand and an additional \$530 million in capital costs for vehicles, facilities and infrastructure.
 - f. Estonia – In July 2018, Estonia became the first country in the world to implement zero fare transit nearly nation wide with a goal of making it easier for people with low to average incomes to remain mobile. A review by the National Audit Office of Estonia released in 2021 found that while the program halted the decline in public transit users over the previous two years, it did not reduce the share of trips completed by car given transit service challenges. Furthermore, while state expenditures in funding public transport had increased rapidly, funding for public transit services was found to be unequal between Estonian counties.
 - g. Olympia, Washington – Implemented a five-year zero fare demonstration project in January 2020 funded through the establishment of a dedicated sales tax for public transit purposes. Experienced a 20 per cent ridership increase in the first month alone. A full assessment of zero fare transit will be completed at the end of the five-year period to evaluate the program's impact and cost effectiveness.
 - h. Victoria, British Columbia – In April 2019, Victoria City Council endorsed a proposal to phase out transit fares within the provincial capital region as an action against climate change. The resolution also calls for investment in enhanced service levels and fleet expansion to meet increased demand, in

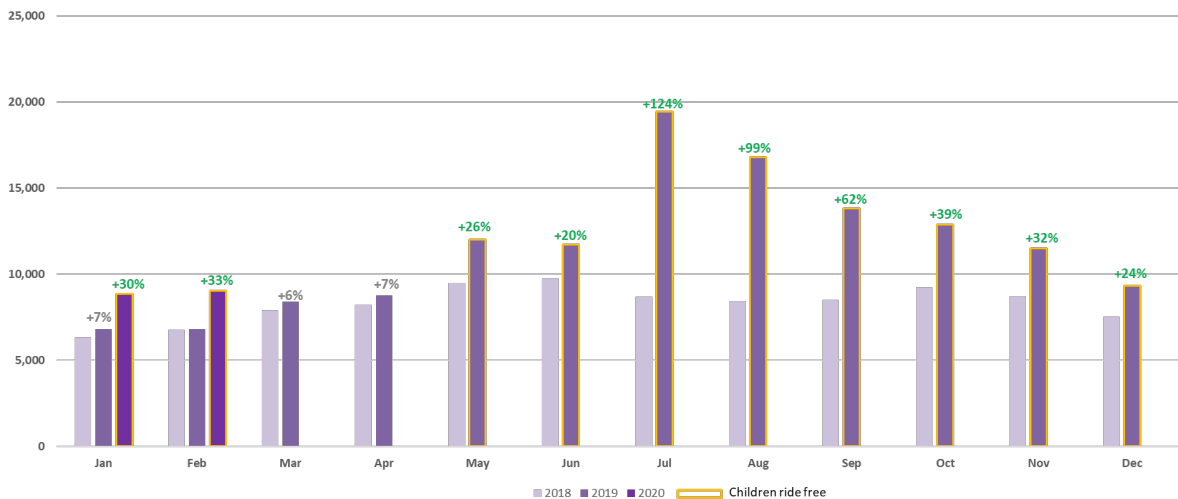
conjunction with fleet electrification. The first step is a pilot program to phase out fares for youth aged 18 and under through adjustments to provincial transfers and property taxes. The City of Victoria and BC Transit are offering free bus passes for youth aged 6 to 18 between February and December 2021. Applications for the pass can be made online through the city's website.

- i. Kansas City, Missouri – In December 2019 Kansas City Council passed a resolution to implement zero fare transit subject to identifying funding to offset lost fare revenues of \$8.0 million annually.

6. Zero Fare Transit and DRT

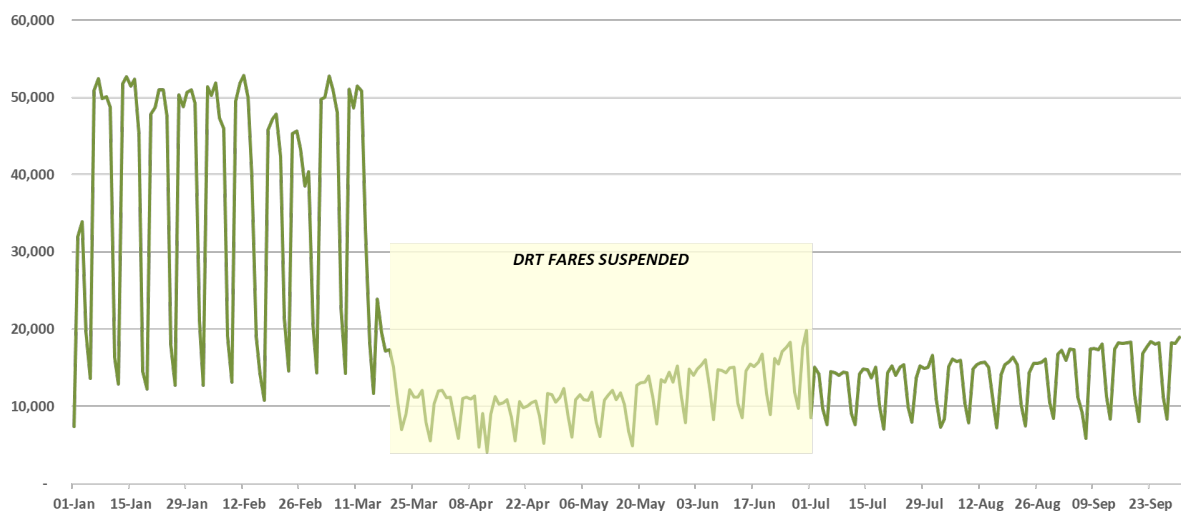
6.1 DRT has had two recent experiences with zero fare transit. The first is age-based through the Kids Ride Free program for children aged 12 and under. Since its launch in May 2019, DRT has seen a notable increase in monthly child ridership compared to the same time period for the preceding year as shown in Figure 1. This peaked in July 2019 with a 124 per cent increase in child ridership over July 2018 before settling into increases between 24 per cent and 39 per cent for the Fall 2019 and Winter 2020 months prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the same period, adult ridership experienced an 11 per cent increase in July 2019 and increases between five per cent and 13 per cent over the previous year for the Fall 2019 and Winter 2020 months. While this may be indicative of residual ridership growth from Kids Ride Free as a result of transit being a more affordable option for families, child ridership continues to account for approximately one per cent of total DRT ridership.

Figure 1: DRT Child Ridership (January 2018 – February 2020)



- 6.2 DRT's second recent experience involved universal zero fare transit implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. With the resulting lockdown that took effect in March 2020, DRT suspended fare collection for all customers from late March through the end of June in support of rear door boarding to reduce close interactions between customers and bus operators. During this time DRT experienced significant ridership reductions of more than 70 per cent in April with daily weekday ridership as low as 9,800 trips. Throughout the fare suspension period ridership did increase steadily peaking at nearly 20,000 daily trips on June 30.
- 6.3 With the reinstatement of fares on July 2, 2020 ridership experienced a 24 per cent decrease compared to June 30 and did not approach 20,000 daily trips again until late September (see Figure 2). This limited experience, while influenced by several factors related to COVID-19 lockdowns and travel guidelines in place, suggests that fare suspension did encourage more transit ridership than otherwise would have been experienced. However, during this period DRT experienced multiple incidents of individuals, and in some cases families, riding on DRT buses for extended periods without an obvious destination. Lost fare revenue during this period was eligible for funding under the Safe Restart program made available to transit agencies by the provincial and federal governments to help offset the financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 2: DRT Daily Ridership (January – September 2020)



- 6.4 To consider the implementation of universal zero fare transit on DRT at pre-pandemic ridership levels would require the immediate replacement of approximately \$30.0 million in fare and U-Pass revenues. This does not account for additional financing that may be required to increase fleet and service levels to keep

pace with any resulting growth in ridership demand. DRT's revenues have typically offset between 35 per cent and 40 per cent of its operating costs. Over the five years between 2015 and 2019, DRT's revenue cost ratio – the percentage of transit operating expenditures offset by fare, U-Pass and advertising revenues – has averaged 38 per cent. This places DRT below comparator transit systems in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area over the same five-year period (see Table 2). A primary factor is Durham Region's large service area – the largest of all GTHA transit systems – and relatively low population densities in many areas of the region. For 2020, as a result of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, DRT's revenue cost ratio decreased to 19 per cent with the lost revenue offset by funding through the Safe Restart program and other cost containment efforts.

Table 2: Average Annual Revenue Cost Ratio for GTHA Transit Agencies (2015 – 2019)

Jurisdiction (east to west)	5 Year Average Revenue Cost Ratio
Durham	38 per cent
York	40 per cent
Brampton	49 per cent
Mississauga	47 per cent
Hamilton	46 per cent
Waterloo	39 per cent

- 6.5 An age-based zero fare transit for youth aged 13 to 19 (accounting for approximately 25 per cent of DRT ridership) would require additional funding of an estimated \$7.5 million annually including eligible U-Pass customers (\$10.3 million if expanded to include all youth and full time post secondary students currently eligible for U-Pass, accounting for approximately 40 per cent of DRT ridership). Zero fare transit for seniors aged 65 and up (accounting for five per cent of total DRT ridership) would require approximately \$1.1 million annually to offset revenues generated from the already discounted senior fare rates.
- 6.6 When considering an aged based zero fare approach, a key consideration is the added impacts to operations that would be introduced for bus operators in verifying which passengers are eligible for zero fare transit as opposed to fare paying adults. Under this approach the frequency of fare disputes contributing to service delays and requests for police intervention would be expected to increase. The introduction of electronic fare payment has reduced the risk of fare disputes since proof of age is completed at the time of purchasing a PRESTO card. However, depending on how age-based zero fare transit is implemented, bus operators may need to confirm that the customer is travelling with the correct concession on the PRESTO card (i.e. that

an adult is not boarding with a PRESTO card loaded with a youth or senior concession).

- 6.7 Overall, there may be several positive impacts from the introduction of universal zero fare transit in Durham. Most notably are the social inclusion and life stabilization benefits resulting from the removal of cost as a barrier to travel for Durham residents living with low income, allowing for more reliable transportation to employment, education, health care and essential social supports. At the same time operational efficiencies would be realized by DRT through the elimination of fare-related conflicts and administrative requirements to support fare collection and processing. To the extent that zero fare transit would attract new transit riders who otherwise would operate a personal vehicle, congestion and emission reductions may be realized. And Durham may see modest increases in annual Provincial Gas Tax revenues (approximately \$9.3 million for 2021) which are allocated to Ontario municipalities on a 70 per cent transit ridership and 30 per cent population formula. However, any increase in Durham's share of Provincial Gas Tax revenues would be dependent on the extent of ridership growth or decline in other jurisdictions.
- 6.8 The shift to universal zero fare transit could realize savings in reduced expenditures associated with fare products, collection, and processing. In 2019, these costs totalled approximately \$1.4 million, with the majority associated with the PRESTO electronic fare payment system as well as costs for the production of paper fare products, commission fees to third party points of sale, cash transportation and processing, and farebox maintenance. Ultimately the extent of these savings would depend on operational decisions with respect to how zero fare transit is implemented. In addition, the PRESTO commission rates paid to Metrolinx are established in the 905-PRESTO Operating Agreement, a ten-year agreement between 905 transit agencies and Metrolinx in effect through 2027. At present, participation in the PRESTO electronic fare payment system is a requirement for 905 transit agencies to be eligible to receive annual Provincial Gas Tax funding.
- 6.9 Notwithstanding the initial benefits and budget pressures, challenges in sustaining zero fare transit over the longer term would be anticipated. These include securing additional ongoing and dedicated revenue and/or funding sources that would enable service levels and fleet requirements to keep pace with the level of demand. If the quality of service is unable to increase with demand, ridership would eventually flatten and/or decline –that is, customers will not continue to use a service if it does not meet their needs or is an unpleasant experience regardless of how affordable.

6.10 Providing zero fare transit would also raise expectations from an equity standpoint in ensuring that all Durham residents have equal access to the service, putting added scrutiny on new service investments given the absence of revenue generation potential as a contributing factor.

6.11 Experience from other jurisdictions suggests when transit is perceived as free, passengers often attach less value to it leading to increased incidents of disruptive behaviour, lower respect for operators and more wear and tear on transit vehicles and infrastructure. This can manifest in higher staff turnover, stress and absence rates, and increased maintenance and repair costs for the transit fleet and other assets.

7. DRT Service Levels

7.1 Durham Region continues to increasingly invest in transit services through the Region's annual budget process. However, DRT continues to lag behind comparative agencies (e.g. Brampton, Hamilton, Mississauga, Waterloo, York) based on key transit measures in the 2019 Performance report from the Municipal Benchmarking Network of Canada. This includes:

- Ridership per capita: 51 per cent below the average
- Ridership per Revenue Service Hour: 14 per cent below the average
- Revenue Service Hours per capita: 41 per cent below the average

7.2 As an alternative to subsidizing universal zero fare transit, a \$30 million investment in DRT service could enable significant enhancements to the frequency and span of service in Durham. Table 3 summarizes the extent of transit service enhancements that could be possible with an investment comparable to pre-pandemic annual revenue levels. The cost of these enhancements does not account for potential revenue generated by the added service nor does it include additional vehicle and garage expansion that would also be required. Similarly, ridership increases resulting from universal zero fare transit could be expected to generate capital investment requirements in fleet and facilities to accommodate the added demand.

Table 3: Sample DRT Service Enhancements with \$30 Million Investment

Service Type	Route	Change
Existing PULSE Network	PULSE 900 Highway 2	Service every five minutes 6:00 to 19:00, weekdays, every ten minutes all other times, seven days a week. Extension to Scarborough Centre.
	PULSE 901 Simcoe	Service every five minutes 6:00 to 19:00, weekdays, every ten minutes all other times, seven days a week. Extension to Windfield Farms.
PULSE Network Expansion	PULSE 902 King to Bowmanville	ten minute service, seven days a week.
	PULSE 915 Taunton	ten minute service, seven days a week.
	PULSE 916 Rossland	ten minute service, seven days a week.
Frequent Network	917 Bayly-Consumers	15 minute service, seven days a week
	302 Baldwin-Brock	15 minute service, seven days a week.
	407 Ritson	15 minute service, seven days a week.
	224 Harwood-Salem	15 minute service, seven days a week.
	216 Harwood North	15 minute service, seven days a week.
North Service	905 Thickson-Reach	Hourly service to Uxbridge, 7 days a week.
Overnight Service	PULSE 900 Highway 2	Every 30 minutes overnight.
	PULSE 901 Simcoe	Every 30 minutes overnight.
	On Demand	Overnight service.

8. Relationship to Strategic Plan

8.1 This report aligns with/addresses the following strategic goals and priorities in the Durham Region Strategic Plan:

- a. Environmental Sustainability: Expand sustainable and active transportation
- b. Service Excellence: Drive organizational success through innovation, a skilled workforce, and modernized services that respond to changing expectations and fiscal realities

8.2 These goals are supported by highlighting the many fare and policy initiatives in place or under development at DRT that promote equitable access to transit in Durham.

9. Conclusion

- 9.1 Residents who do not own a personal vehicle are most likely to use public transit, and studies have demonstrated that the primary factors, in order of importance, that impact ridership are access, reliability, frequency, safety, comfort and fare pricing.
- 9.2 The experience locally and abroad with zero fare transit suggests it may offer benefits of increased transit ridership, improved social equity and inclusion, and added operational efficiency. However, over the longer term, sustaining those benefits requires governments to not only fund lost fare revenues, but to grow sustainable and dedicated funding sources to ensure transit service levels and safety systems keep pace with demand and growth needs in an equitable manner, address added maintenance requirements for vehicles and infrastructure, and maintain the safety and security of transit vehicles and stops for passengers and staff.
- 9.3 A universal zero fare transit service for DRT would require approximately \$30 million in extra annual budget financing by the Region, in addition to regular annual budget pressures required to maintain and grow the service to meet customer demands and expectations for a reliable, safe and comfortable travel experience. An age-based zero fare approach would require an extra \$7.5 million annually for youth, or \$1.1 million annually for seniors.
- 9.4 It is the position of staff to continue to follow the approved DRT long-term fare strategy and the fare structure and incentive programs currently in place. Changes to the fare structure would require approval of Council during the annual budget process.
- 9.5 For additional information, contact: Jamie Austin, Deputy General Manager, Business Services, Durham Region Transit, at 905-668-7711, extension 2624.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

Bill Holmes

General Manager, DRT

Recommended for Presentation to Committee

Original signed by

Elaine C. Baxter-Trahair

Chief Administrative Officer