

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

The Regional Municipality of Durham

MINUTES

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, May 24, 2022

A meeting of the Accessibility Advisory Committee was held on Tuesday, May 24, 2022 at Regional Headquarters Building, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby at 1:00 PM. Electronic participation was permitted for this meeting.

1. Roll Call

Present: D. Campbell, Whitby, Chair
A. Beach, Oshawa
H. Hall, Participation House
D. Hume-McKenna, DMHS
Councillor R. Mulcahy attended the meeting at 1:05 PM
R. Purnwasie, Ajax, Vice-Chair
M. Roche, Oshawa
***all members of the committee participated electronically**

Absent: S. Sones, Whitby

Staff

Present: J. Austin, Deputy General Manager, Business Services, Durham Region Transit
A. Hector-Alexander, Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
R. Inacio, Systems Support Specialist, Corporate Services – IT
J. Traer, Accessibility Coordinator, Office of the Chief Administrative Officer
K. Smith, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services
***all staff except R. Inacio participated electronically**

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Adoption of Minutes

Moved by M. Roche, Seconded by D. Hume-McKenna
That the minutes of the Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting held on Tuesday, March 22, 2022, be adopted.

CARRIED

4. Presentations

A) Jamie Austin, Deputy General Manager, Business Services, re: Whitby Autonomous Vehicle Electric (WAVE) Pilot Status

Jamie Austin, Deputy General Manager, Business Services, provided a presentation with regards to the Whitby Autonomous Vehicle Electric (WAVE) Pilot Status and the Transit Assistance Program (TAP) Update.

Highlights of the WAVE Pilot Update presentation included:

- Overview
- Preparations
- Accessibility
- Learnings

J. Austin advised that the autonomous vehicle was tested on the road for four months and one and a half months with passengers on board, with over 295 hours on the road with 1,600 kms of autonomous operations. He stated that the pilot ended in February 2022 because the shuttle manufacturer ceased operations.

J. Austin discussed the preparations involved with the autonomous vehicle which included route design and scheduling; traffic measures and signage; standard operating procedures; integration with transit control; safety attendant training; safety committee and shuttle testing; first responder engagement; and COVID-19 precautions.

J. Austin provided an overview of the accessibility initiatives involved with the autonomous vehicle which included a session hosted prior to launch with AAC members; policies and procedures created to ensure appropriate audible and visual route and stop announcements; ramp deployment angles and assessment at each stop; high visibility reflective tape added to the shuttle ramp; cabin lighting tested to ensure visibility during night operations; accessible bus pads installed along routes; and attendant safety training for the proper securement of mobility devices.

J. Austin discussed the lessons learned with the autonomous vehicle which included the autonomous navigation system; route adjustment limitations; vehicle speed; accommodating young children; navigation obstructions and other human drivers; navigating intersections and bus stops; operating in bad weather; and permits and insurance for the vehicle.

J. Austin responded to questions with regards to the consideration of timing for those with mobility devices using the autonomous vehicle; and testing the autonomous vehicle with standard size buses.

J. Austin continued with a PowerPoint presentation on the Transit Assistance Program (TAP) Update. Highlights of the presentation included:

- ACCESS Pass is ending
- What is TAP?
- How is TAP different?

J. Austin advised that the Durham Region Transit ACCESS Pass is ending in October 2022 and moving to contactless options including the phase out of paper passes. He also advised that DRT is offering a special run of ACCESS Passes over the next 6 months which includes an attachment to educate riders that the ACCESS Pass is ending and transitioning to TAP. He stated that ACCESS Pass holders are eligible for a free PRESTO card until August 15th.

J. Austin advised that TAP is a PRESTO-based, reduced cost fare program for low-income persons receiving social assistance. He stated that TAP was introduced as a pilot program in November 2019 and has been extended through to 2023.

J. Austin reviewed the summary of differences between the ACCESS Pass and TAP. He advised that customers are only required to confirm eligibility once every six months for TAP, whereas the ACCESS Pass customers were required to confirm eligibility every month. He also advised that the card for the TAP looks the same as PRESTO cards so that the pass does not identify the cardholder as a social assistance recipient.

J. Austin responded to a question with regards to the potential of adding a tactile differentiator to the PRESTO cards.

B) Nathan Gardner, Executive Director, Back Door Mission, re: Accessible Transportation – Usable Formats for the Vulnerable Sector

Nathan Gardner, Executive Director, Back Door Mission, provided a presentation with regards to Accessible Transportation – Usable Formats for the Vulnerable Sector. He stated that Back Door Mission is a full-service hub of homelessness services located in downtown Oshawa. He advised that his presentation will talk about the advocacy for the continued use of paper tickets on Durham Region Transit and accessible transit for the vulnerable sector, particularly for the homeless sector and those suffering from mental health and addictions.

Highlights of the presentation included:

- Accessible Transportation
- About Us
- Agency Partners
- In 2021
- Who We Serve
- Transportation Barriers
- Travel Needs
- Challenges of Vulnerable Population
- Presenting Need and Recommendations
- Agencies that distribute bus tickets

- What next?

N. Gardner stated that there are a number of agencies available at Back Door Mission and an integrated model is used to provide coordinated services for individuals to determine what services need to be involved, and to put together a case plan for each individual.

N. Gardner reviewed the vulnerable individuals who are served through Mission United which include individuals with mental health issues, addictions, illness or medical conditions, learning/cognitive limitations, physical limitations, and brain injuries.

N. Gardner discussed the transportation barriers of using a PRESTO card for vulnerable individuals. He stated that implementing a change where individuals are required to use electronic formats for travel will result in an almost zero percent chance the individual will have a successful transition.

N. Gardner discussed the various challenges for the vulnerable population; the need for the continuation of paper bus tickets; and the need for non-electronic formats of bus schedules and route maps. He stated that moving away from paper bus tickets can result in risk to the safety and access to services for vulnerable individuals.

N. Gardner responded to questions with regards to navigating the bus schedules and routes with physical messaging.

It was the consensus of the Committee to recess at this time. The Committee recessed at 2:17 PM and reconvened at 2:25 PM.

Following the recess, the Committee Clerk conducted a roll call, and all members of the Committee were present with the exception of S. Sones.

9. Other Business

A) Introduction of New Member

J. Traer advised that subject to Council approval, Wayne Henshall has been appointed to the Accessibility Advisory Committee. The Committee welcomed W. Henshall and he provided a brief overview of his background.

5. Discussion Items

A) Traditional Territory Acknowledgment

A. Hector-Alexander discussed how it would be important for the Accessibility Advisory Committee to begin the meetings by acknowledging the traditional territory and for this to be included as a standing item on the agenda. The Traditional Territory Acknowledgment reads as follows:

“We are currently located on land which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange among the Mississaugas Peoples and is the traditional and treaty territory of the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation. We honour, recognize and respect this nation and Indigenous Peoples as the traditional stewards of the lands and waters on which we meet today.”

It was the consensus of the Committee to make a decision on this matter at the next meeting.

B) Janet Traer, Staff Liaison, re: Upcoming Retirement

Dawn Campbell, on behalf of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, congratulated Janet Traer, Staff Liaison, on her upcoming retirement and thanked her for her hard work and professionalism during her time with the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

6. Correspondence

There were no items of correspondence to consider.

7. Information Items

A) Education Sub-Committee Update

J. Traer provided the following update:

- There are two presentations set up for the June meeting, which are Spinal Cord Injury of Ontario and Bus Shelter Design on Highway 2 Route.
- National AccessAbility Week is from May 29th to June 4th. The Regional Chair has proclaimed this week as Accessibility Week and it is being promoted on Durham Region's website and social media channels.
- There is a Lunch N' Learn session on Thursday, May 26th to recognize National AccessAbility Week with Michael Jacques as the guest speaker. A second Lunch n' Learn session is scheduled on Wednesday, June 1st with James Deignan as the guest speaker.
- Danielle Culp and Greg Pereira from the Planning Department will be providing an e-scooter and e-bike demonstration at Regional Headquarters on Wednesday, June 15th from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM in the northwest corner of the parking lot. Neisha Mitchel, Coordinator for Advocacy with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind will be at the demonstration.
- One of the “I am a Person First” video series was played for the Committee and will be provided to Committee members following the meeting.

B) Update on the Transit Advisory Committee (TAC)

M. Roche advised that there was an update at the May 17th TAC meeting regarding the 210 people that were using Specialized Services and that he will provide a more detailed update at the June 28th AAC meeting.

C) Accessibility Coordinator Update

J. Traer advised that the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act Alliance Update will be on the June 28, 2022 agenda.

She advised a further update would be provided via email following the meeting.

8. Reports for Information

There were no reports to consider.

9. Other Business

B) National Volunteer Week – April 24th to April 30th

J. Traer advised that it was National Volunteer Week from April 24th to April 30th. Councillor Mulcahy thanked Committee members for all their hard work and for volunteering to be on the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

10. Date of Next Meeting

The next regularly scheduled Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 28, 2022 at 1:00 PM.

11. Adjournment

Moved by M. Roche, Seconded by R. Purnwasie,
That the meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 PM

Respectfully submitted,

D. Campbell, Chair, Accessibility Advisory Committee

K. Smith, Committee Clerk