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The Regional Municipality of Durham Report

To: Durham Region Transit Executive Committee
From: General Manager, Durham Region Transit
Report: #2024-DRT-01
Date: February 7, 2024

Subject:

General Manager's Report – February 2024

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 There are no financial impacts associated with 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 – February 2024

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
February 7, 2024
TEC
Attachment #1

Performance Measures Dashboard	<u>2</u>
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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	December	0.36	0.77	✓ -53.1	✓ -25.6

Ridership

Scheduled						
Ridership (x1,000)	Number passengers	December	910	668	✓ 36.2	✓ 47.9
PRESTO Ridership	Customers paying using PRESTO (per cent)	December	92.3	87.6	✓ 5.8	✓ 8.0
Bus full occurrences	Number operator reported occurrences	December	342	72	✗ 383	✗ 285
Demand Responsive						
Ridership - Specialized	Number customer trips	December	9,429	8,002	✓ 17.8	✓ 32.7
Unaccommodated Rate - Specialized	Trip requests not scheduled (per cent)	December	NA ³	NA ³		
Ridership – On Demand	Number customer trips	December	10,360	8,110	✓ 27.7	✓ 6.0

Service Delivery

Scheduled						
On time performance	On-time departures from all stops (per cent)	Service Period 5 ⁴	68.4	69.2	🚩 -0.8	✗ -3.0
Service availability	Scheduled service delivered (per cent)	Service Period 5 ⁴	97.9	96.1	✓ 1.8	✓ 0.6

¹Target is 2022 measure for the same period

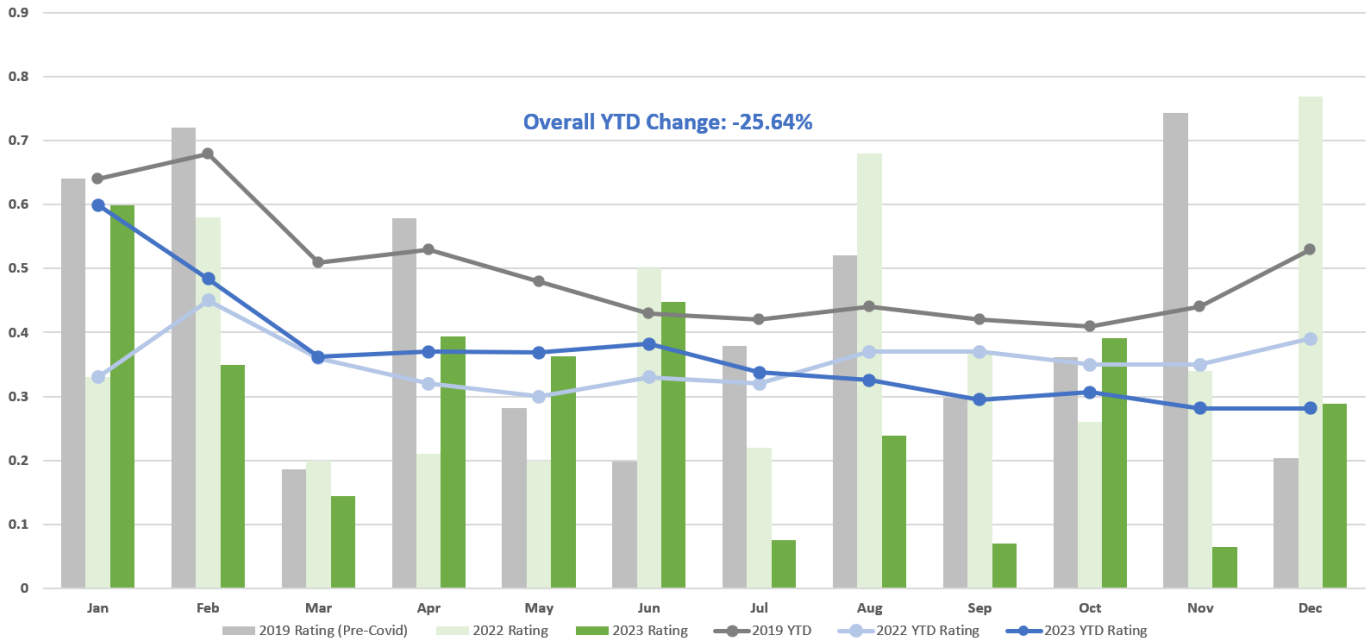
²Year to Date (YTD) compared to previous year

³Unaccommodated rate to be reported starting March 2024

⁴December 4, 2023 through January 1, 2024

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. DRT's objective is to reduce annual preventable collisions by ten per cent relative to the previous year.

Analysis

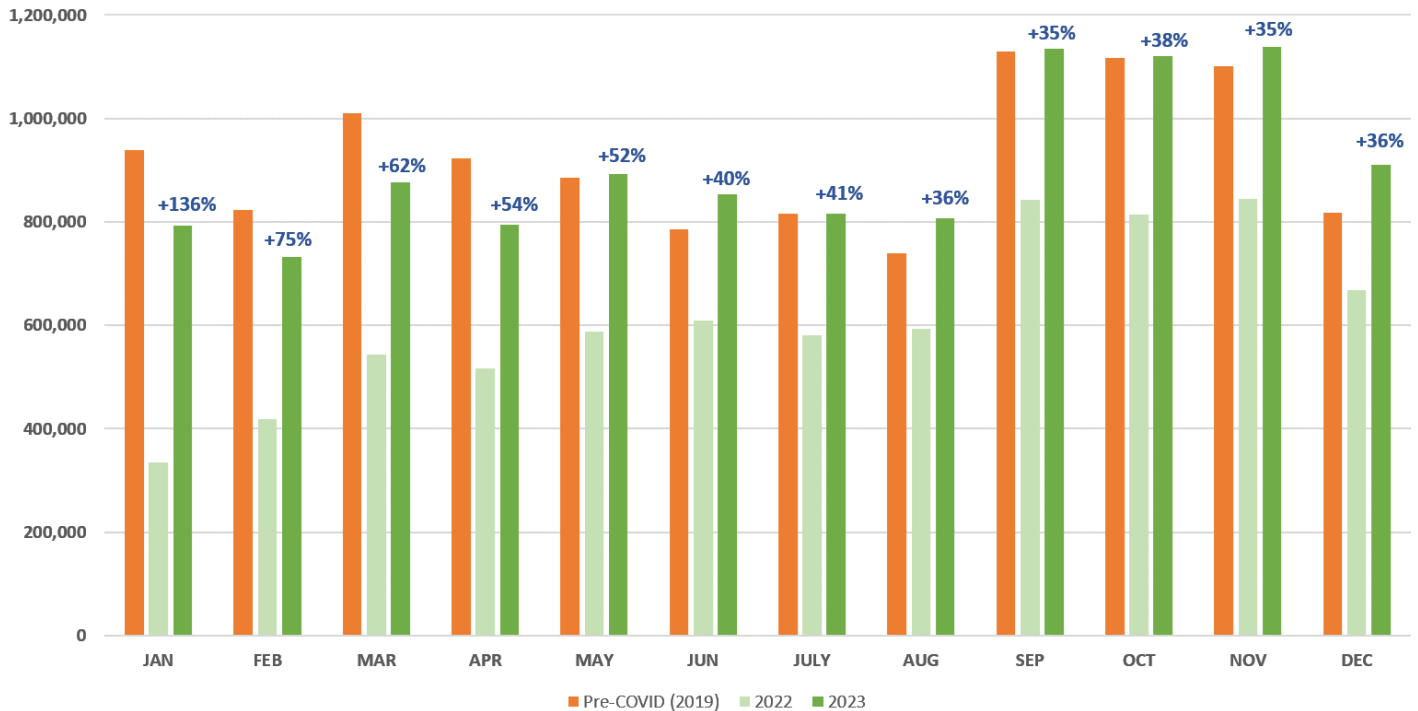
The December preventable collision rate was 0.36 per cent compared to 0.77 per cent for the same period in 2022. The 2023 collision rate of 0.29, which is 26 per cent lower than the 2022 rate of 0.39, exceeded DRT's performance objective.

Action Plan

Operations continue to implement their safety management system including promotion and communication, managing employee performance, and requiring remedial training for all employees involved in a preventable collision.

Ridership

Scheduled transit



Definition: Ridership is the sum of all passenger trips. A passenger trip is 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 and demand response.

Results

December ridership on scheduled service was approximately 37 per cent higher than the same month in 2022. More significantly, December ridership exceeded 2019 pre-pandemic levels by approximately 12 per cent.

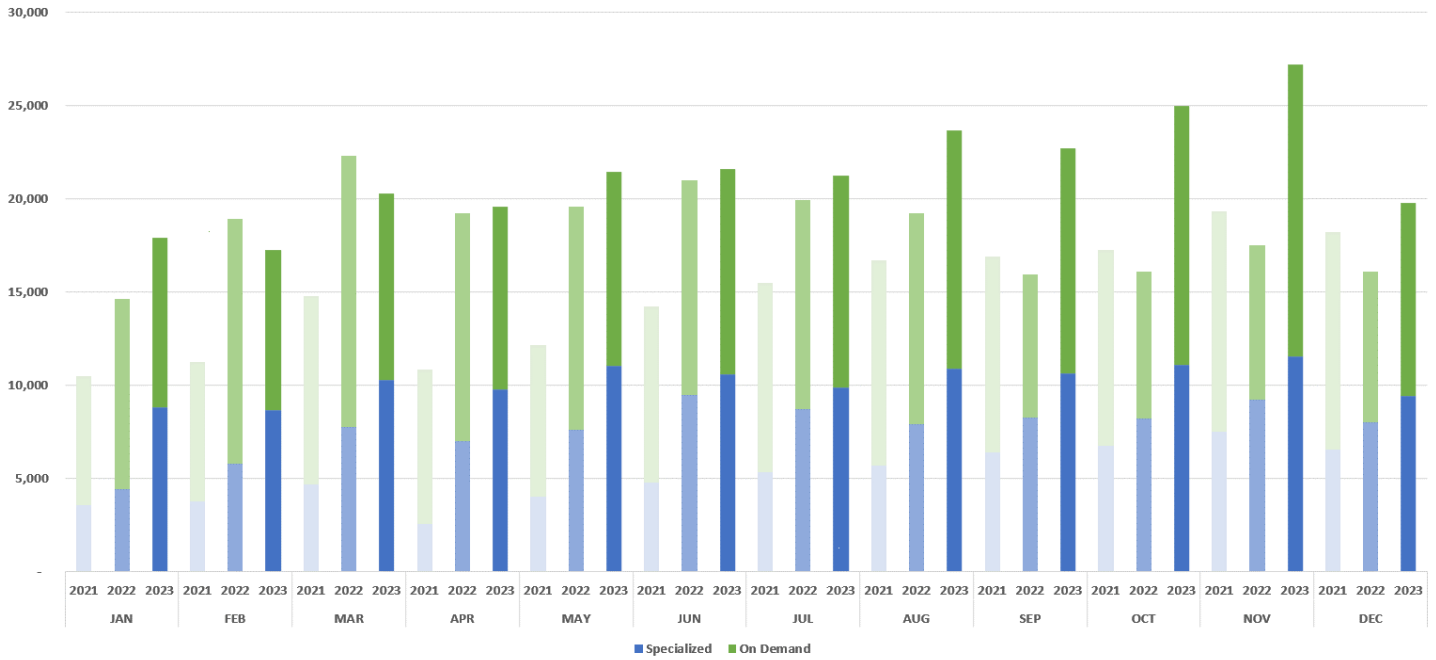
2023 annual scheduled ridership increased by 48 per cent compared to 2022, reaching 10,589,799. While monthly ridership has exceeded 2019 pre-pandemic levels since September, overall 2023 ridership was approximately 98 per cent of 2019 levels.

Action Plan

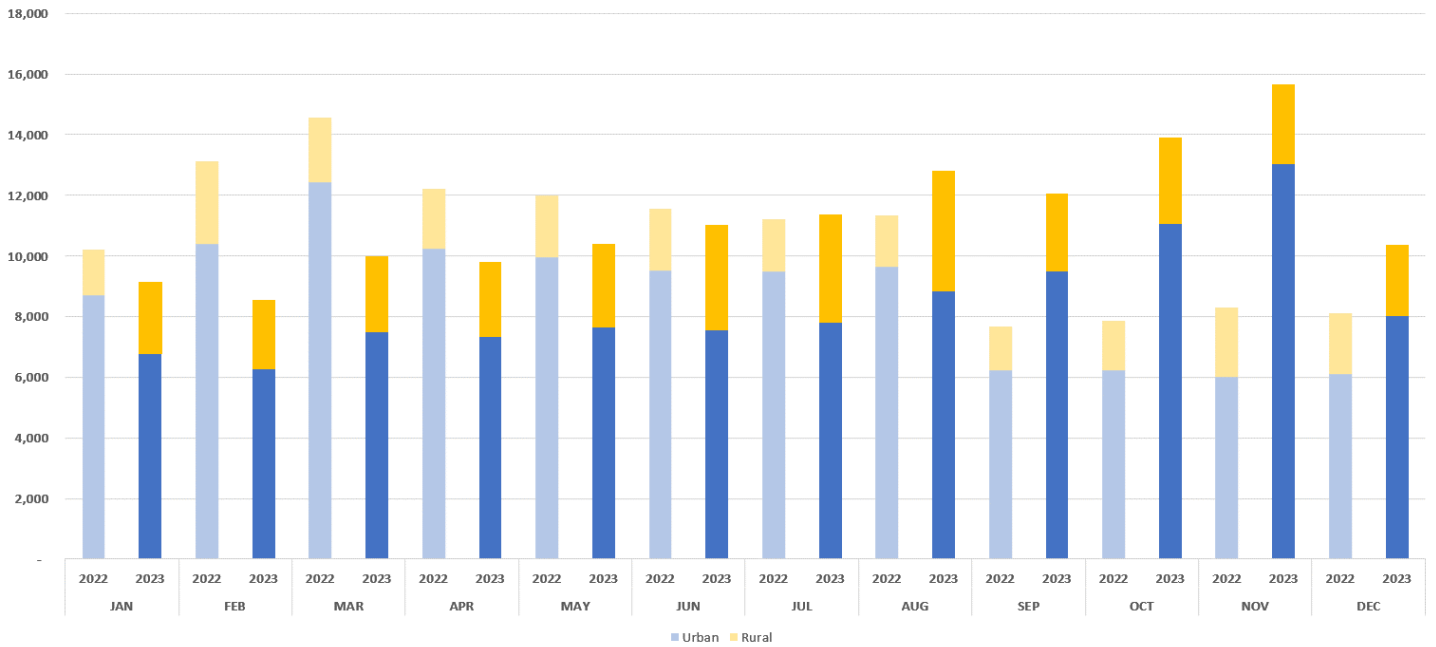
Ridership and transit demand have reached record levels across the Region. For January 2024, DRT was required to optimize resources within existing service guidelines. Resources were reallocated from lowest performing routes and trips to areas of highest pressure and inadequate capacity to meet ridership demand on the busiest corridors. Some routes were restructured to remove service duplication, improve network reliability, and mitigate requirements for additional resources. Ridership pressures and network performance continue to be monitored.

Demand Response Transit

Demand Responsive Trips



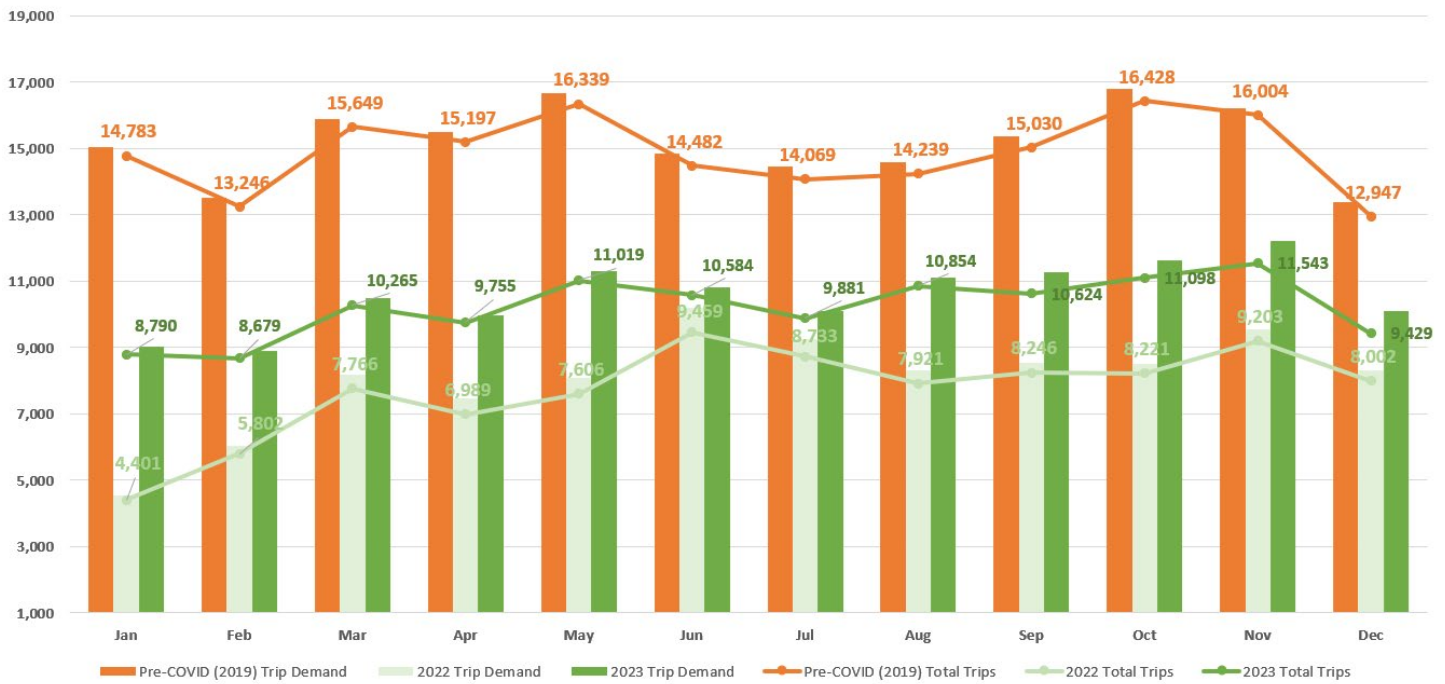
On Demand Trips



		DEC 2023	YTD 2023
R U R A L	Uxbridge	236	9,756
	Brock	885	7,378
	Scugog	627	10,731
	Pickering	258	2,670
	Ajax	-	16
	Whitby	21	915
	Oshawa	4	18
	Clarington	586	20,711

		DEC 2023	YTD 2023
U R B A N	Uxbridge	1,081	3,800
	Scugog	686	2,794
	Pickering	868	12,222
	Ajax	688	11,361
	Whitby	1,671	26,881
	Oshawa	1,320	14,022
	Clarington	1,717	11,688

Specialized Transit Trips



Definitions:

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

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, the customer declined to accept the trip option provided by the booking agent, or DRT did not have available capacity to accommodate the trip request.

Results

On Demand delivered a total of 19,789 trips in December 2023, including 9,429 trips for customers registered with Specialized transit. Total On Demand trips delivered in December 2023 were 23 per cent higher than December 2022, including an 18 per cent increase in Specialized transit trips. Consistent with scheduled service trends over Fall 2023, demand for On Demand and Specialized transit trips regularly exceeded DRT capacity.

2023 annual On Demand ridership increased 23 per cent compared to 2022 with a total of 276,838 trips delivered, including a 46 per cent increase in trips for customers registered with Specialized transit with a total of 141,808 trips delivered.

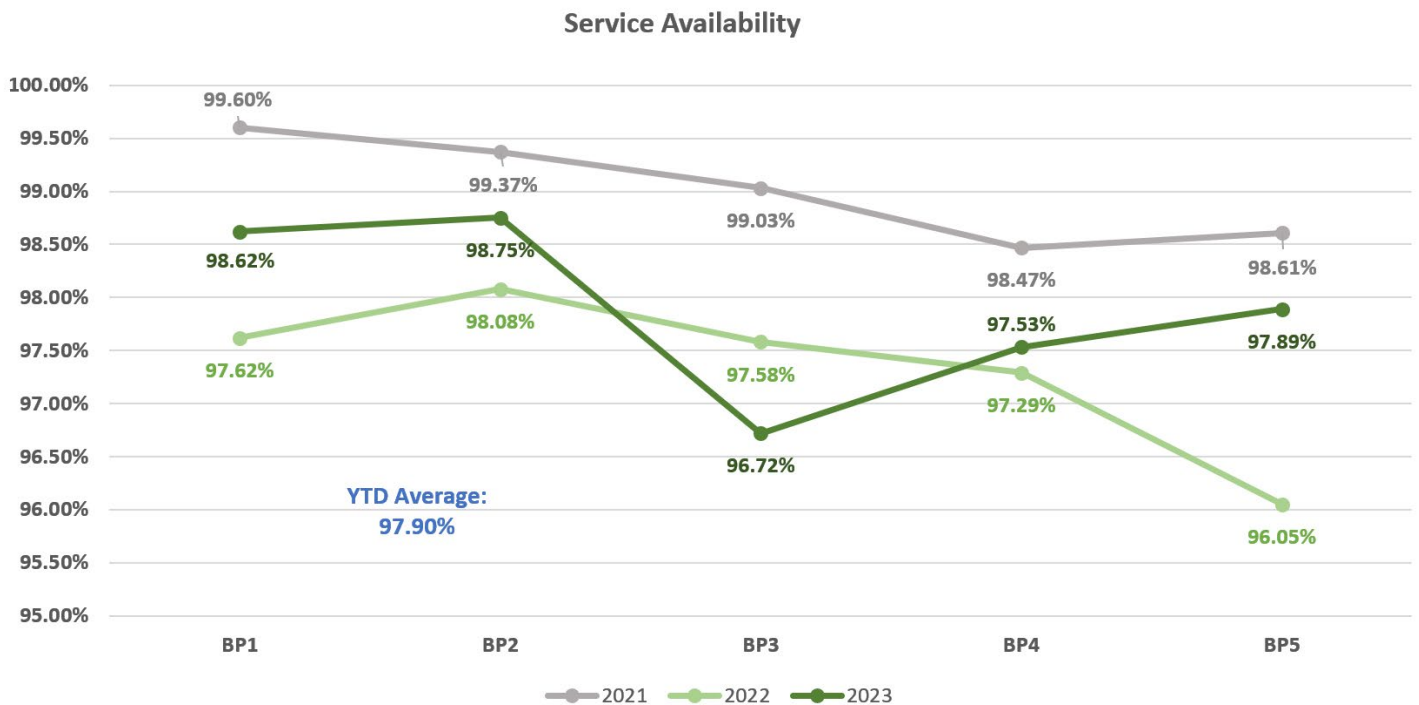
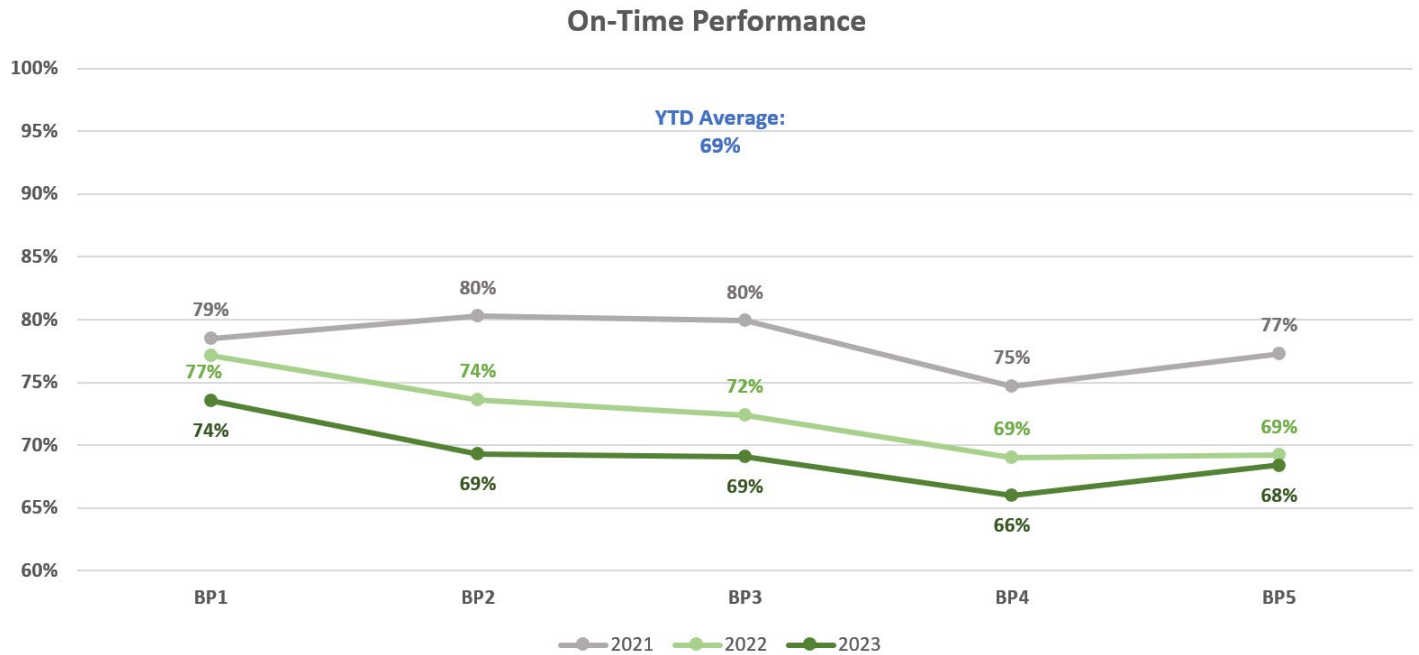
Report DRT-2023-18 highlighted that Specialized transit trips by active customers now exceed pre-pandemic levels, with active customers completing an average of 14.6 trips in April 2023 compared to 14.3 trips in 2019. Active customers completed an average of 14.7 trips in November 2023 and November 2019.

Action Plan

As part of the service model transition program, DRT expedited the transition of On Demand services to the third-party vendor to increase capacity. Effective September 5, 2023, all On Demand trips were delivered by DRT's third-party contractor (Voyago). Throughout the Fall 2023, DRT maximized capacity within existing resources to meet increasing trip demands.

Service Delivery

On Time Performance and Availability (conventional)



Definition

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

Service availability is a measure of the actual service delivered by DRT as a per centage of scheduled revenue service. The service availability target is 99.5 per cent. Service availability is reported for each service period.

Results

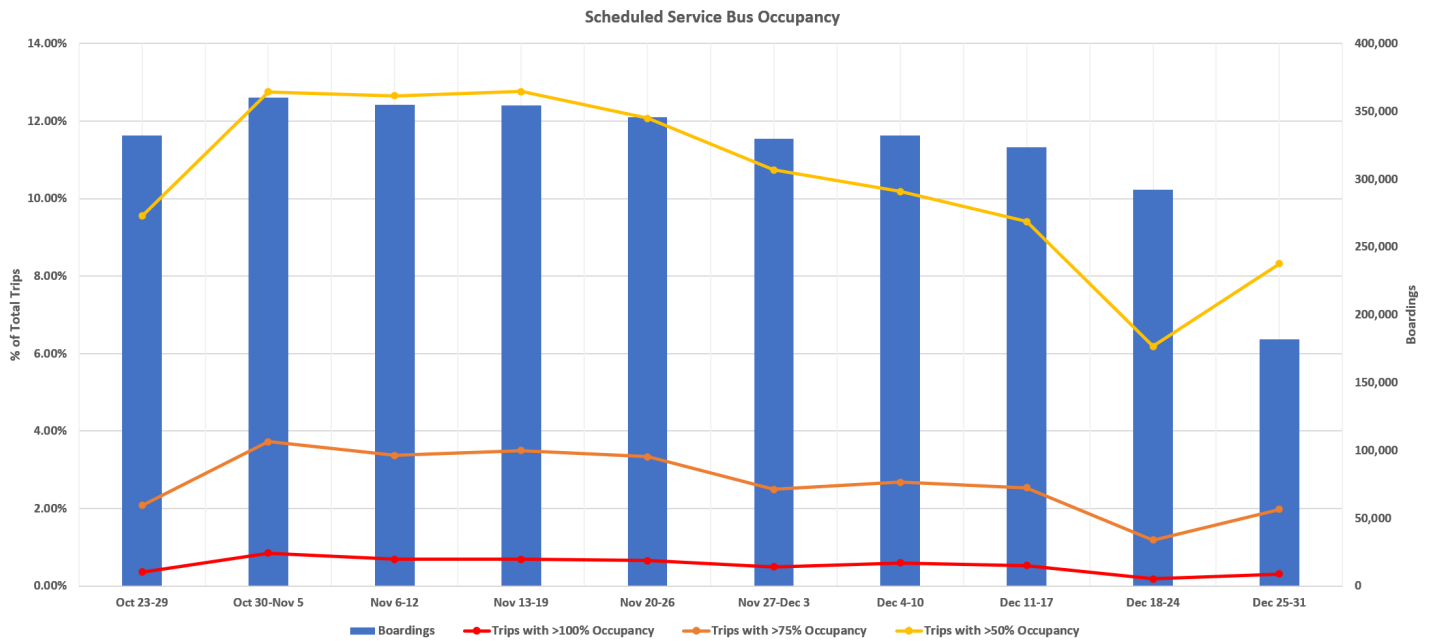
OTP for board period five (December 4 through January 1, 2024) was 68.4 per cent; 0.8 per cent lower than the same period in 2022. OTP recovered slightly in December from the record low OTP of 66 per cent during board period four (September through November).

Service availability for board period five improved to 97.9 per cent from 96.7 per cent during board period three, which was impacted by the emergency service changes required in response to the fire on August 16, 2023.

Action Plan

OTP continues to be impacted by increasing delays due to congestion experienced across major roads in the Region. The record low service availability during board period three (summer) resulted from the emergency service plan implemented following the fire at the Oshawa garage on August 16, 2023. DRT continue to experience service impacts from congestion and construction projects. Some planned trips are cancelled when a route is operating excessively late to enable subsequent planned trips to remain on schedule. Trip cancellations, which reduces service availability, impacts customers through less route capacity, longer wait times, and longer travel times due to missed connections. Staff have identified draft budget requirements to ensure service reliability for routes in areas of known and significant congestion and 2024 construction across the Region. When implemented, these investments will improve service reliability resulting in improved OTP and service availability for customers.

Scheduled Service Maximum Bus Occupancy



Definition

Maximum bus occupancy is a measure of the maximum number of riders on a scheduled service vehicle at any point of a trip, currently expressed as a per centage of the overall vehicle capacity. The data accounts for the differences in capacity for regular and articulated buses.

Results

Throughout December, approximately one per cent of all trips exceeded maximum occupancy, with approximately 3.5 per cent of trips exceeding 75 per cent maximum occupancy, and ten per cent of trips exceeding 50 per cent bus capacity. Operators reported approximately 342 incidents of bus full occurrences where customers waiting at stops were by-passed.

Action Plan

Significant service enhancements were implemented September 5, 2023, in anticipation of ridership reaching pre-pandemic levels. Where trips experience capacity limits, Transit Control continue to assign supplemental service, when available, to mitigate impacts to customers. Network optimization implemented in January reassigned capacity to routes experiencing the greatest ridership and/or reliability pressures.

Updates

1. Fare Integration – Removal of Double Fares Program (Ontario’s One-Fare Program)

The fare integration agreement recently signed with Metrolinx will save customers money when transferring between DRT and the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC). Through the Province’s One-Fare Program, customers will not be required to pay a second fare when transferring between the TTC and 905 transit agencies when using an eligible PRESTO fare payment solution.

The One-Fare Program, funded by the Ministry of Transportation and delivered through Metrolinx, will reimburse transit agencies for their respective foregone farebox revenue. The program applies to fares paid through the PRESTO fare payment system. Fares paid using PRESTO E-Ticket or cash are not eligible for the One-Fare Program and customers will continue to pay the second fare when transferring between transit agencies.

For example, an adult customer boarding an eastbound Pulse 900 or 920 in Durham will pay \$3.35 when boarding and paying with PRESTO e-Purse or Open Payment, or they will simply tap on the PRESTO reader with their PRESTO DRT monthly pass. When transferring to the TTC within the two-hour transfer window, the customer will tap on the TTC PRESTO reader, but they will not be charged the TTC fare. Metrolinx will reimburse TTC \$3.30 for the foregone revenue from the transfer. Similarly, for the reverse of the preceding travel example, when connecting to DRT from the TTC, the customers will not pay a fare to DRT and Metrolinx will reimburse DRT \$3.35 for the foregone fare revenue from the transfer.

In partnership with participating transit agencies, Metrolinx will implement an extensive communication campaign following announcement of the program implementation date by the Province.

2. Service model transition project

DRT’s service model transition program included the contracting out of On Demand service and internal delivery of scheduled services by DRT staff.

Effective September 2023, delivery of On Demand services transitioned to the current contracted service provider, Voyago. DRT continue to be responsible for the overall management and administration of On Demand services. The DRT contract for supplemental scheduled service, most recently delivered by Pacific Western Transit (PWT), expired December 31, 2023. Since December 25, 2023, DRT staff have delivered all scheduled services.

The project will be successfully completed by January 31, 2024.

3. Network performance following January service change

At the November 2023 meeting, TEC was advised of unprecedented pressures on the transit network as weekday and weekend ridership reached record levels, and service experienced increasing delays due to higher loading and increased traffic congestion. To mitigate network pressures and minimize ridership impacts, the current transit network was planned to be optimized

to reallocate the required number of buses and service hours. Reallocating resources to areas experiencing the greatest pressure would assist to mitigate ridership impacts by improving service availability and reliability. Further, network optimization would result in changes, including restructuring of several routes, suspension of service on the lowest performing routes, new or replacement service, and a reduction in some route frequencies. Optimization was planned to be implemented for January 2024 to improve reliability and increased capacity on key routes that are critical to sustaining ridership and the transit network.

DRT's on-time performance in November reached an all-time low of 66 per cent (target is 80 per cent), and service availability of 97.5 per cent (target is 99.5 per cent). Customers were experiencing unacceptable levels of buses being at capacity and uncomfortable, full buses by-passing them at stops, trips being cancelled at the last minute because of excessive late, and longer travel times because of missed connections and excessive time waiting at bus stops.

Optimization of scheduled services for January 2024 was completed through data driven decisions and adhering to established transit service guidelines. The objective was to provide service to the greatest number of transit riders within the allocated service hours and resources. Below is a summary of key elements of [DRT's Service Guidelines](#) which are balanced during the planning and design of the transit network.

Service deployment All Durham residents have access to transit, with service varying by time of day and day of the week to ensure that services are sustainable and implemented in an efficient and fair manner. Routes operate at a minimum 30-minute frequency for a minimum of three hours. Span and level of service are adjusted based on customer demand.

Ridership Productivity Ridership productivity guideline provide a measure of the effectiveness of a transit route. Each service type (PULSE, Base, GO Transit Connector and rural) contribute differently to the DRT transit network and each have unique minimum productivity targets. Route productivity varies based on the varying built environments in which each route operates. Route ridership minimums based on service type.

Frequency/Span DRT provides 24-hour transit service seven days a week in urban areas, and service from 06:00 to 24:00 on weekdays and 07:00 to 21:00 on weekends in rural areas. The span of service and service level varies based on customer demand.

For scheduled routes, minimum 30 minutes service frequency in urban areas, 90 minutes in rural areas.

Vehicle Capacity Vehicle capacity considers the average number of passengers that can be accommodated on a bus during its busiest hour, and most popular point on the route.

Service Proximity Service proximity means the walking distance between dwellings and the nearest bus stop. In the urban area, DRT aims to have:

- Dwellings within a 500-metre walk of a bus stop: 80 per cent.
- Dwellings within an 800-metre walk of a bus stop: 95 per cent.

In the rural area, 100 per cent of dwellings will be served by Demand Response at the curb (such as the entrance to a property).

DRT received significant feedback from residents regarding the January 2024 Service Changes, mainly focussed on three issues:

Issue: Residents are now required to walk farther to access a scheduled route.
 DRT comments: Issues expressed by residents included a longer walk to a bus stop, they have mobility limitations and experience difficulty or are unable to get to the bus stop, lack of lighting, lack of pedestrian infrastructure to walk to the bus stop, and additional travel time required when using public transit.

Optimization of the network for January 2 was required to reallocate existing transit resources (service hours and buses) from lowest performing routes and trips to areas of insufficient capacity and reliability to meet record level ridership demand. The changes, such as suspending or restructuring a route, were made within DRT's service guidelines and resulted in less convenient access to scheduled service for some customers. As new resources become available, the recently suspended services are expected to be reintroduced, and service enhancements are planned as part of DRT's 10-year service strategy to provide more convenient access for residents.

Issue: Residents no longer have access to scheduled service because the route has been suspended, realigned, or some trips have been suspended.
 DRT Comments: Consistent with the service guidelines, where appropriate On Demand replaced schedule service in several areas where scheduled routes/trips were suspended.

Specific to the distance between a dwelling and the nearest bus stop, the DRT network continues to meet the proximity guideline of 95 per cent within an 800 metre walk.

Issue: Route reliability and capacity has improved in areas of pressure, but routes and trips continue to experience capacity and reliability challenges
 DRT Comments: DRT reallocated the equivalent of approximately 20,000 annual service hours (approximately 4 per cent), from lowest performing routes to areas of reliability and capacity pressure on the transit network. The objective

was to increase service on routes where buses were exceeding customer capacity with customers regularly being by-passed by full buses, and to enhance reliability and availability of service on routes impacted by delays.

Staff will be evaluating network performance over the coming months but did provide some preliminary data for January 2024 (see below).

Reliability

- Average 23 per cent improvement in departures/arrivals from terminals for route 902 (highest performing route on the DRT network).
- Up to five per cent improvement in late departures for all stops on cross-regional routes 900, 915, 916, 917, 920.

Capacity

- 13 per cent improvement for route 920, and 6 per cent improvement for route 901, in over-capacity buses on networks busiest routes.
- Enhanced On Demand capacity with over 50 daily trips by customers to Amazon Fulfillment centre now serviced with route 920, and 50 daily trips by customers within Uxbridge accommodated through route 605.

DRT also received feedback claiming that the service changes implemented in January 2024 are in contravention of the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

In their report “Human rights and public transit services in Ontario”, the Ontario Human Rights Commission stated the following.

“The OHRC recognizes the multiple roles and obligations facing transit providers, the complexity of the system that they operate, and the severity of the financial constraints that they are experiencing. It is unrealistic to expect that transit providers will, without some outside assistance, be able to rapidly achieve maximally accessible, dignified transit options for all.”

The report was approved by the OHRC in 2002, and this comment remains relevant in 2024.

The Integrated Accessibility Standard (IAS) of the AODA includes the transportation standards that apply to public service providers, for which DRT is compliant. The IAS mandates requirements for scheduled services, otherwise referred to as conventional services, and specialized transportation services.

The challenge facing transit in Durham today is that annual revenue service hours and capacity are not sufficient to meet the demand of residents and visitors who are choosing transit, or who

don't have a choice but to use transit, for their travel needs. The January service change also highlighted challenges faced by residents in accessing transit stops, including incomplete or missing pedestrian infrastructure such as sidewalks, pedestrian lighting, and seasonal snow clearing concerns.

DRT has been required to optimize the network regularly over the past number of years to maximize service in areas of greatest ridership demand. While transit in Durham Region remains last amongst comparators in several metrics, such as revenue hours per capita, DRT has been taken steps towards a mature transit network including higher-frequency Pulse routes, 24/7 service, and service to all residents in the region. However, as the transit network has matured, there remains limited capacity to optimize services without impacting traditional local services.

In response to unprecedented growth across the Region and known pressures on the transit network, the Region has planned significant investments in annual revenue service increases as part of DRT's 10-year service and financing strategy.