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The Regional Municipality of Durham

MINUTES

TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

February 20, 2024

A meeting of the Transit Advisory Committee was held on Tuesday, February 20, 2024 in Meeting Room 1-B, Regional Municipality of Durham Headquarters, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby at 7:00 PM. Electronic participation was offered for this meeting.

1. Roll Call

Present: Commissioner Crawford, Chair
M. Bonk, Brock
R. Claxton-Oldfield*, Member at Large
P. Gunti*, Clarington, Vice-Chair
W. Henshall*, AAC
J. McEwen*, AAC
T. Ralph, Whitby
T. Smale, Member at Large
R. Smith, Community Group, Durham Association for Family Resources
*** denotes members of the Committee participating electronically**

Absent: A. Ali, Ajax
A. Andrus, Community Group, Participation House
I. Giffin, Uxbridge
A. Mujeeb, Pickering

Staff

Present: F. Amin*, Administrative Assistant, Durham Region Transit
S. Ciani*, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services
S. Dessureault, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services
B. Holmes, General Manager, Durham Region Transit
R. Inacio, Systems Support Specialist, Corporate Services – IT
N. Lysaght*, Manager, Policy and Planning, Durham Region Transit
Z. Osime-Fakolade*, Program Manager, Engagement and Change Management, Durham Region Transit
*** denotes staff participating electronically**

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Adoption of Minutes

Moved by T. Smale, Seconded by J. McEwen,
That the minutes of the regular Durham Region Transit Advisory
Committee meeting held on Tuesday November 21, 2023, be adopted.
CARRIED

4. Presentations

A) January Service Optimization

B. Holmes, General Manager, Durham Region Transit, provided a PowerPoint presentation with regards to January Service Optimization.

Highlights of the presentation included:

- Network Performance, January Service Change
- Reliability – Early January 2024
- Capacity – Early January 2024
- 3 Route Adjustments Implement

B. Holmes responded to questions with regards to the effects of the network optimization; the relocation of routes from the Harmony terminal in Oshawa; the communication process for informing Durham Region Transit (DRT) ridership about route changes; delivery of new buses to replace the buses lost during the fire in August and nine leased buses that will be added to the DRT fleet, and if this addition supports the resumption of service on routes that have been impacted by optimization; the process followed by DRT when receiving requests for new or revised routing requests through Customer Service; and a concern that optimization of the network supporting cross boundary services between Durham and Toronto have caused diminishing service levels within urban areas across the Region of Durham.

Discussion ensued with regards to carbon taxes on DRT diesel fuel; and ensuring DRT service information is available in a more accessible way.

5. Delegations

There were no delegations.

6. Correspondence Items

There were no communication items to be considered.

7. Information Items

There were no information items to be considered.

8. Discussion Items

A) AODA Standards

W. Henshall advised that the Ontario government has released revisions to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and questioned if DRT is meeting the new requirements.

B. Holmes advised that DRT complies to the requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards of the AODA, and the bus stop hard surfacing program is planned to meet the 2025 deadline.

B) TAC Action Plan

W. Henshall requested that the Transit Advisory Committee (TAC) establish a concise list of priorities for this term of the TAC.

B. Holmes advised that DRT could support the initiative by scheduling a special TAC meeting and provide an independent facilitator to assist TAC to discuss and agree to their priorities.

C) On Demand vehicles currently experiencing delays due to traffic and the possible use of bus lanes

R. Smith requested an update with regards to the ability for On Demand vehicles to use transit lanes due to the Region of Durham's Traffic and Parking By-law.

B. Holmes advised DRT staff will review the matter and provide a response to the committee at a future meeting.

D) Accessibility Awareness Training Program for Durham Region Transit Employees and Contractors

R. Smith raised concerns regarding the specific training DRT staff and staff of the On Demand contractor, Voyago, receive related to assisting riders with accessibility issues, and who provides this training to staff.

B. Holmes advised that DRT has identified the required training to be provided and delivered by Voyago, which is consistent with the standards expected by DRT for its staff. B. Holmes also advised that more details related to the specifics of accessibility training can be provided at the May 21, 2024, Transit Advisory Committee meeting.

Discussion ensued regarding enhanced tactics that could assist both DRT staff and riders with identifying an individual with an accessibility issue. Staff advised that in 2024 they will implement the Sunflower program, where transit users can choose to wear a sunflower pin or lanyard when using transit which signals to the bus operator and others that the person has a hidden disability and may require additional support or understanding. Staff identified that options are being explored to enhance DRT staff awareness and understanding of the transit

experience of persons with various disabilities, which is being considered to coincide with the launch of the Sunflower program.

E) Transit Fare Rates

T. Smale raised concerns regarding affordability with the fare increase that is proposed for 2024, and the sustainability of annual fare increases to support DRT's growth model.

B. Holmes advised that Report #2024-DRT-03 2024: Transit Fares, has been approved by the Transit Executive Committee and will be on the agenda for the February 28, 2024, Regional Council meeting. The proposed fare increase for this year is 7.5% and ensures the DRT fare table remains consistent with fares across the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area (GTHA). The proposed fare increase considers the 2024 budget guideline and will ensure DRT can maximize the 2024 revenue service hours to respond to record ridership demands across both scheduled and On Demand services and reliability challenges experienced across the network.

9. Other Business

A) Ten Year Expansion Plan

T. Ralph raised concerns with regards to an article in the media that stated that the DRT 10-year transit growth strategy is being negatively impacted by budget decisions at the Region which do not fully fund DRT to reach the intended service targets.

Staff advised some articles may not accurately reflect decisions or expected outcomes. Staff also advised that the 2024 DRT Business Plan and Budget will be presented at the Transit Executive Committee scheduled on March 6, 2024.

10. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday, May 21, 2024 at 7:00 PM

11. Adjournment

Moved by T. Smale, Seconded by M. Bonk,
That the meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 8:39 PM.

M. Crawford, Chair, Transit Advisory Committee

S. Dessureault, Committee Clerk