

RE: Durham Region Transit Executive Committee Report #2024-DRT-10, General Manager's Report – June 2024

To Durham Region Transit Executive Committee Commissioners,

I want to specially talk about on-time performance which is currently at 68.5%. On-time performance has been a challenge for DRT. As the report states, oftentimes buses have to be cancelled because of accumulative delays due to congestion. On the street, a bus that is supposed to run every 15 minutes might have two buses show up within minutes of each other and then a long gap, this is called bunching. All of this is frustrating for passengers. You have to leave earlier to ensure you will be on time and hope the bus trip goes smoothly.

The report does state that the new revenue service hours will help improve on-time performance. This will be done by adding extra running time to the routes. Effectively making the schedule slower ("padding" the schedule). These extra service hours are essentially wasted as they are not providing additional capacity, only covering for the slower speed of service because of congestion. This is a band-aid solution, and I am sure staff are aware of this.

The real solution to on-time performance is transit priority measures. In The Route Ahead - Service Strategy 2022 - 2025 deployment plan (Attachment #2 2021-DRT-20), a Transit Priority Measures Strategy was identified to start in 2022. I asked the staff if this study was underway or if there were any timelines for completing it. The customer service staff (who are excellent!) said that the strategy has not commenced yet, but DRT staff have been working with municipalities to have queue jump lanes where possible. It is disappointing that this strategy has not been commenced yet (likely for understandable reasons) but there still haven't been any new transit priority measures built yet that I am aware of.

What DRT needs to do is strategically identify and prioritize locations that need transit priority, like the strategy. Solutions like queue jump lanes, but also transit signal priority. Even removing bus stops that are too close together would help. I am hopeful that these things will be done, but I think a plan is crucial to guiding the investment.

Transit priority measures help everyone, it keeps the buses moving, which means lower operating times for routes and more efficient use of resources. It can also make transit more attractive.

Durham Region and the local municipalities need to make transit priority measures a priority. If Councillors would like to see a better, more efficient transit service, they need to push for transit priority measures on their roads. DRT is at the will of road authorities.

Let's all work together to ensure DRT vehicles aren't wasting money stuck in traffic.

Kind regards,

Noah Edwards

Oshawa Resident