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The Regional Municipality of Durham

MINUTES

TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

November 19, 2024

A meeting of the Transit Advisory Committee was held on Tuesday, November 19, 2024 in Meeting Room 1-A, Regional Municipality of Durham Headquarters, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby at 7:03 PM. Electronic participation was offered for this meeting.

1. Roll Call

Present: Commissioner Crawford, Chair
A. Ali*, Ajax, attending the meeting at 7:31 PM
A. Andrus*, Community Group, Participation House
R. Claxton-Oldfield, Member at Large
I. Giffin*, Uxbridge
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: M. Bonk, Brock
A. Mujeeb, Pickering
J. Westerman, Oshawa

Staff

Present: F. Amin, Administrative Assistant, Durham Region Transit
S. Dessureault, Committee Clerk, Corporate Services – Legislative Services
B. Holmes, General Manager, Durham Region Transit
R. Inacio, Systems Support Specialist, Corporate Services – IT
M. Rippin*, Eligibility Coordinator, Special Services – Durham Region Transit
*** denotes staff participating electronically**

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Adoption of Minutes

Moved by R. Claxton-Oldfield, Seconded by J. McEwen,
That the minutes of the regular Durham Region Transit Advisory
Committee meeting held on Tuesday, September 17, 2024, be adopted.
CARRIED

4. Presentations

There were no presentations.

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) Specialized Services Eligibility Processes and Policy

R. Smith raised concerns regarding the requirement for a mandatory support person (MSP) and the effect it has on Durham Region Transit (DRT) riders with disabilities; and the reasoning for an MSP after the decision of the Divisional Court of Ontario on April 12, 2022.

B. Holmes advised that the outcome of that case was specific to the eligibility decision of the applicant involved and it did not impact DRT's policies or processes in delivering specialized services. B. Holmes also advised that DRT's decision regarding eligibility always prioritizes the safety of the applicant.

Staff provided clarification regarding the process for assessing a rider's ability to use public transit and establishing their eligibility to travel independently on DRT or the need for an MSP to ensure their safety and ability to use public transit services.

Discussion ensued regarding the process for appealing an eligibility decision; the potential additional barrier created by requiring an MSP for individuals with a disability; and the possibility of the province reviewing the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) to identify and remove potential barriers within the legislation.

B) Transit Advisory Committee Priority Focus Areas

F. Admin asked the Committee to identify which priority focus areas they would like to concentrate on, and presented the following options:

1. Improving the reliability of and usability of Durham Region Transit services;
2. Enhancing communications and community engagement to understand community needs;
3. Drive the adoption of new technology and infrastructure

It was the consensus of the Committee to focus on the second option at the next Transit Advisory Committee meeting.

Discussion ensued regarding DRT developing a new five-year accessibility plan (2026-2030) as a new five-year DRT service strategy is being developed in 2025; ensuring that the DRT service strategy also considers “lived/used” experience element; improving accessibility for individuals transferring from various modes of transportation onto DRT buses; and evolving DRT’s communication methods.

9. Other Business

A) Integrated Service Model

J. McEwen raised concerns on behalf of a resident with regards to changes for door-to-door service for some DRT riders and their transition to integrated service trips.

Staff advised that the integrated service trips continue to be door-to-door, though it may include a transfer onto an accessible scheduled transit bus for part, or all of the trip; DRT offers a travel training service that allows riders to learn how to use DRT’s scheduled services and reduce apprehension in taking an integrated trip; and in known extreme weather conditions, an integrated trip may not be scheduled.

Staff also clarified that integrated trips may be scheduled for a rider who faces environmental or physical barriers that restrict their ability to use conventional DRT services typically and who qualifies for conditional eligibility; and that only trips exceeding seven kilometres would be considered for an integrated trip.

Discussion ensued regarding strategies to improve communication with DRT riders to effectively convey changes to DRT services.

10. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday, February 18, 2025 at 7:00 PM

11. Adjournment

Moved by T. Ralph, Seconded by R. Claxton-Oldfield,
That the meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 PM.

M. Crawford, Chair, Transit Advisory Committee

S. Dessureault, Committee Clerk