



## **Brock Accessibility Advisory Committee**

**Date:** Tuesday, January 19, 2021

**Time:** 7:00 p.m.

**Location:** Electronic Meeting

### **Minutes**

**Present:** Jolene Munro, Donna Schirle, Jodi Foreman, Councillor Lynn Campbell, Tony Laundrie, Karen Hakonson,

**Guests:** Jamie Austin, Deputy General Manager, Business Services, Durham Region Transit & Michael Binetti, Supervisor, Service Design, Durham Region Transit

**Staff Present:** Maralee Drake, Clerk's Assistant (recording the minutes)

#### **1. Call to Order**

Chair Munro called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

#### **2. Confirmation of Minutes**

Moved by Lynn Campbell that the minutes of the November 17, 2020 meeting be approved.

MOTION CARRIED

#### **3. Hearing of Deputations**

Mr. Austin thanked the committee for the opportunity to make the presentation and advised the discussion would cover new Durham Region Transit (DRT) services, changes, and the draft social equity guidelines. Mr. Austin reviewed the measures put in place by DRT in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, advising the entire transit industry faced challenges and significant decreases in ridership. Fare collection ceased when the pandemic began, but was resumed in July. If DRT had continued with fare suspension for the entirety of the year, there would be over 20 million dollars lost. Mr. Austin advised when fare collection resumed, over 5,00 free PRESTO cards were handed out to Durham Residents, and the PRESTO E-ticket app for mobile devices was launched in September. Using PRESTO is the most affordable option for riders, with a savings of 75 cents per use. In 14 trips over \$10.00 can be saved. Using PRESTO and E-tickets allows for contactless payment.

Mr. Austin reviewed the features of the E-ticket app, advising all ticket types can be purchased through the app, and internet connection is only required when purchasing the ticket, not when using

them. There are verification features in place for the DRT drivers to confirm the E-tickets are active and valid.

Mr. Binetti reviewed the Services Changes for DRT. Post-Secondary students were no longer using transit, and downtown routes had limited riders because many people started working from home. Most route changes occurred in Southern Durham. Mr. Binetti advised that DRT On-Demand Services are now available for residents in all areas of Durham Region, for the same fares that would apply to regularly scheduled services. On-Demand hours have been increased and are now available on weekdays from 6:00 a.m. – 12:00 a.m. and on the weekends from 7:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m. Residents can request on Demand Services by calling in to the Customer Service Line or by using the E-Ticket app.

Mr. Binetti noted that Fishers' Your Independent Grocer in Beaverton is one of the busiest stops in Brock Township. He demonstrated scheduling a pickup from that location using the app on his mobile device to show approximate pickup times, advising those times will vary, and that the app shows you what transfers and routes to take to get to your final destination.

Mr. Binetti provided an overview on the Draft Social Equity Priorities in Durham Region, noting that there is very little Canadian content on this topic, and that DRT is one of the first to develop these guidelines in Canada. The groups that have been included on the list are priority for consideration when DRT is planning routes and making decisions. DRT has also identified Communities of Focus for consideration in decision making processes. The guidelines and goals for DRT are to provide supportive infrastructure, service coverage and availability, service span and frequency and transit to serve employment uses. Mr. Binetti noted that in rural areas, the demographic has shifted with a higher need for transit services, as older residents are aging in place and do not have the social and family networks to fully support their day to day living.

Ms. Schirle enquired how Seniors who do not have internet access can contact DRT to which she was advised through the Customer Contact Centre (phone). Mr. Austin noted that Seniors have been the demographic that has most taken up the PRESTO card option.

Mr. Laundrie requested clarification on the fare for a resident who may be using the On-Demand Service to travel from Beaverton to Port-Perry to which he was advised it would be the same fare as all other services. If using a PRESTO card, it would cost \$3.25, and if paying by cash, it would be \$4.00. When using a presto card, there is a two hour window for each trip, but when paying by cash, additional fares are charged when transferring.

Ms. Hakonson enquired if the On-Demand Services include specialized transit. Mr. Austin advised that those who require a level of accessible service have to confirm their needs through an application process with DRT. When calling to schedule a trip, the rider can advise of their needs, and the appropriate vehicle will be sent. Mr. Binetti suggested that should a rider know about a required trip, that they book in advance to ensure appropriate transit is available at the time it is needed.

Ms. Foreman enquired as to the tools used to share DRT messaging about the services and E-ticket app. Mr. Austin noted they have used their website, print, radio and television. Further that a survey was done in the summer and the majority of respondents noted that the DRT website was the most effective means of communication about their services.

Councillor Campbell thanked Mr. Austin & Mr. Binetti for their presentation and advised she has provided DRT information to residents who required On-Demand Transit.

Councillor Campbell enquired as to ridership numbers in Brock during the pandemic. Mr. Austin advised that ridership in Durham has grown significantly since September, with over 2,000 trips a week, and most rides being booked through the app. Mr. Binetti noted that there was no specific numbers for Brock, but there are a few trips per day being booked in the Township, noting that prior to COVID-19 the most popular pickup location and destination was Beaverton.

Mr. Austin advised it is a challenge to educate the public that Transit is a safe option and that proper cleaning protocols are in place.

Ms. Foreman enquired as to the DRT Support Persons policy, to which she was advised that a support person may ride free of charge, if the other individual has paid for their fare. Mr. Austin noted this was a topic being investigated by the larger transit industry and that the development of an identification card has been discussed.

Chair Munro thanked Mr. Austin & Mr. Binetti for their time and advised she is looking forward to the next steps of the Social Equity Guidelines being shared.

The committee discussed sending a letter of thanks with support for the drafted social equity guidelines, to which the Clerk's Assistant advised she would draft the letter for the committee's review.

Ms. Hakonson requested follow up for ridership numbers prior to COVID-19 and during the pandemic.

#### **4. General Items**

##### **1) Election of Chair and Vice Chair**

Moved by Jolene Munro that Tony Laundrie be appointed Vice Chair of the Brock Accessibility Advisory Committee.

MOTION CARRIED

Moved by Lynn Campbell that Jodi Foreman be appointed Chair of the Brock Accessibility Advisory Committee.

MOTION CARRIED

##### **2) Community Accessibility Event**

Ms. Munro advised that the event should be held virtually given the unknown trajectory of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Ms. Foreman suggested a tutorial or virtual presentation to provide residents with an explanation on how to book transit using the DRT website and mobile app, with a focus on booking On-Demand transit.

Ms. Munro enquired as to the possibility of free presto cards being made available to residents in Brock.

Ms. Hakonson noted that although DRT advertises on television and radio stations in southern Durham Region, many residents in Brock do not have access to those channels. Further that DRT may have some promotional material that they could share for promotion through the Township social media and website.

Mr. Laundrie advised the On-Demand services are contracted out through Island Taxi from Port Perry.

Ms. Munro requested the tutorial be held during National Access Awareness Week, which is the last week of May (annually).

3) Bench Outside of Foodland

The Clerk's Assistant (Ms. Drake) advised that the Director of Public Works is aware of the request and the location will be considered when additional benches are placed throughout the Township.

4) Multi Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP)

The Clerk's Assistant (Ms. Drake) advised a status report is submitted yearly for the MYAP, noting a new MYAP plan will be developed by the Clerk's Department with input from the committee.

Ms. Schirle enquired if the Sunderland Town Hall door replacement project should be included.

Ms. Foreman enquired if the new Township website meets the WCAG 2.0 requirements to which she was advised in the affirmative.

5) Draft Work Plan

Moved by Lynn Campbell that the Draft Work Plan be approved.

MOTION CARRIED

5) Electronic Meetings

The Clerk's Assistant (Ms. Drake) advised that after COVID-19 restrictions were lifted, meetings would take place in person.

Ms. Hakonson enquired if committee members would be required to have the COVID-19 vaccine. Councillor Campbell enquired if meetings could be held electronically if there was inclement weather. The Clerk's Assistant (Ms. Drake) advised she would follow up with the Clerk.

**5. Other Items & Inquiries**

1) New Business

2) Next Meeting Date – March 16, 2021

**6. Adjournment**

Moved by Karen Hakonson to adjourn the meeting at 8:12 p.m.

MOTION CARRIED