

Transit Windsor Advisory Committee

Meeting held November 30, 2021

A meeting of the Transit Windsor Advisory Committee is held this day commencing at 4:00 o'clock p.m. via Zoom video conference, there being present the following members:

Councillor Kieran McKenzie, Chair
Councillor Rino Bortolin
Councillor Jeween Gill
Councillor Chris Holt
Bernie Drouillard
Nathanael Hope

Regrets received from:

Ryan Hooley

Also present are the following resource personnel:

Tyson Cragg, Executive Director, Transit Windsor
Steve Habrun, Manager Operations, Transit Windsor
Jason Scott, Supervisor Planning, Transit Windsor
Karen Kadour, Committee Coordinator

1. Call to Order

The Chair calls the meeting to order at 4:00 o'clock p.m. and the Committee considers the Agenda being Schedule A attached hereto, matters which are dealt with as follows:

2. Declaration of Conflict

None disclosed.

3. Adoption of the Minutes

Moved by Councillor Gill, seconded by Councillor Holt,
That the minutes of the Transit Windsor Advisory Committee of its meeting held February 16, 2021 **BE ADOPTED** as presented.
Carried.

4. Business Items

4.1 Transit Resumption of Service Progress Report

T. Cragg advises that Transit Windsor resumed full service (minus the tunnel operation) as of September 5, 2021. From a ridership perspective, are at approximately fifty percent ridership. With the return to full service, the ridership went from forty percent to fifty percent.

Councillor Bortolin states there are trends that Transit Windsor follows, i.e. students coming back to high school and the university every day and asks if Administration has a projection of where ridership will be by January/February 2022 because of those changes.

T. Cragg responds based on projections provided by the university, they will be at a sixty percent level of on campus attendance as of January 2022, and the college will be at seventy-five percent attendance, which will have an impact on ridership as well. We are still at a capacity limitation as advised by the Health Unit, so to get the level of ridership (loads on the buses previously had) in the current environment is not possible. It all depends upon the uptake when students return and if there is any change with respect to the capacity.

N. Hope refers to the working people who use transit (early morning and late shifts) and asks for the percentage of ridership from this group.

S. Habrun responds they do not have ridership broken down that granular at this point.

The Chair asks if ridership since the beginning of September 2021 has fluctuated and did you reach sixty percent or was it fifty percent since Labour Day.

T. Cragg responds that fifty-two percent was the highest reached over the weekly summaries, which is consistent with other transit agencies across the country.

In response to a question asked by the Chair regarding the uptake of Route 518, T. Cragg responds it is strong and has exceeded expectations. Ridership has been in the 1500 to 1800 range over the course of a week.

Moved by Councillor Holt, seconded by Councillor Bortolin,
That the verbal update from the Executive Director, Transit Windsor regarding the transit resumption of service progress report **BE RECEIVED**.
Carried.

4.2 Transit Windsor Budget Request 2022 Budget

T. Cragg advises that the Transit Windsor 2022 Budget presentation went before the Environment, Transportation & Public Safety Standing Committee on November 24, 2021. The budget was endorsed with an amendment to a motion to provide additional information for the Council Deliberations with respect to non-administration recommended Route 418X as well as some other options to provide service to the Lancer Centre.

Councillor Holt asks if the request for six diesel buses is in the Capital Plan.

T. Cragg responds that the budget issue of Route 418X is not recommended, and as a result there is no capital request for those buses.

Councillor Bortolin notes that Transit Windsor put forward many recommendations plus the Master Plan implementation of 418X, the creation of a fleet reserve and the addition of a fleet specialist, and asks if this is accurate.

T. Cragg concurs that this is accurate. They are presently at fifty percent ridership and not where they were when the Master Plan was envisioned almost two years ago and that is why the 418X was not recommended by Administration.

Councillor Bortolin states that if the intent is to adhere to the Master Plan without losing pace, these items would be moving forward and asks if that is a fair comment.

T. Cragg responds in an ideal world, yes.

Councillor Bortolin advises that he sees a 4.82 percent increase over \$750,000 for last year's budget, but for the most part, those increases are focused on budget salary and fuel increases. He asks if that is accurate.

T. Cragg responds that is related to inflationary increases, contractual increases with respect to collective agreements, but it also includes the annualization of Route 518X which also is included in that percentage.

Councillor Bortolin indicates that the 518X will be moving forward. He asks if there is enough in the Capital Plan to ensure that we are keeping pace with the Master Plan.

T. Cragg responds that there is a significant amount of investment over the next ten years in the range of \$63M of which money that can be leveraged with Federal/Provincial grants, ICEP. He adds that twenty-four new buses will be arriving in 2022, which is approximately fifteen percent of the fleet that is being replaced.

Councillor Bortolin asks if we wanted to introduce the 418X which was the promised route to the Lancer Centre, there was mention that six new buses would be required. He questions if ICIP funding could be accessed for this purchase.

T. Cragg responds from a technical perspective, because of the lead time (up to a year) in order to procure buses, it would be difficult to get the fleet available to do that route.

Councillor Bortolin refers to the hours that we have buses on the road and asks if the City of Windsor is below average, or at the top of the pack. He notes that statistics from CUTA in 2019 indicated that Windsor was 1.2 revenue hours per capita, which is the lowest in the province and asks if this is accurate.

T. Cragg responds that this is accurate.

The Chair states that Route 418X is critical because it must be in place before alterations can be made to the Transway 1C and the Crosstown 2.

T. Cragg responds that the Master Plan is a full scale revamp of the system, so there is an order where pieces can be put in the Route 418X is that next step.

The Chair alludes to electric buses and asks if this Committee should determine whether there is a preference for electric buses and if there is a cost benefit analysis.

T. Cragg responds that electrification is the direction the industry is moving in and there are definitely benefits from a climate change perspective. From their perspective, the industry is not quite there and there are many options relating to electric bus procurement along with a purchase cost consideration (\$1M to 2.6M a bus).

T. Cragg provides the following as it relates proposed increases to the Tunnel Bus fare:

- Transit Windsor took over the Tunnel bus in 1982 under Windsor Chartabus Inc. from the Tunnel Corporation
- Upon taking this over, assumed could be run on a cost recovery basis, i.e. break even with no subsidy involved.
- Over the years, the fares have not kept pace with the cost of the operation, tunnel fares or tolls.
- During the pandemic when the service was shut down, they were provided an opportunity to undertake an examination of this operation.
- Looked at the nature of the ridership with the tunnel bus. The average tunnel bus rider is not a Transit Windsor rider.
- Losing approximately \$6. a head from every round trip going through the tunnel.
- Refers to Niagara Falls (WEGO) and notes there is a \$9. fare going up to \$10. in 2022.
- Their Leamington service is another comparison and is \$10. each way.
- Want to match the fares to the cost of the operation.
- The commuter pass is still in place and the increase to that is minimal.

Moved by Councillor Holt, seconded by Councillor Bortolin,
That the Transit Windsor 2022 Budget request including both the recommended
and not recommended budget issues **BE SUPPORTED**.
Carried.

4.3 Transit Garage Transit Feasibility Study Progress Report/Fleet Electrification

T. Cragg advises that the Consultant is in the process of working through the Feasibility Study. The current garage that they are in is showing its age and part of the Master Plan is to examine the existing facility. He adds that electrification was discussed in the preceding item.

Councillor Bortolin asks for the plans from a capital perspective.

T. Cragg responds that there are funds in the capital budget for years 2023, 2024 and 2025 that are leveragable funds which is part of the \$63M commitment over the next ten years.

The Chair asks for an opportunity to view the Feasibility Study upon completion.

Moved by Councillor Bortolin, seconded by Councillor Gill,
That the verbal update regarding the transit garage Transit Feasibility Study **BE RECEIVED**.
Carried.

4.4 Equity Diversity Inclusion Training Update

T. Cragg reports that currently there is not an Equity Diversity and Inclusion program at Transit Windsor. He notes that once resource is in place, the program will be developed and delivered to staff.

Councillor Bortolin asks if city staff can assist in this.

T. Cragg responds that as seventy percent of their staff are operators, they want to deliver a program tailored to transit operations.

The Chair indicates that there is a Diversity Advisory Committee.

Moved by Councillor Holt, seconded by N. Hope,
That the Transit Windsor Equity Diversity Inclusion Training **BE REFERRED** to the Diversity Committee for review and comment.
Carried.

5. New Business

T. Cragg remarks that we are fortunate in the City of Windsor that both the Environment, Transportation and Public Safety Standing Committee and City Council maintain the level of funding that they have. There are many municipalities where their council have taken steps to cut service because of the reduction of ridership.

6. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be at the call of the Chair.

7. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting is adjourned at 5:19 o'clock p.m.

CHAIR

COMMITTEE COORDINATOR