



City of
Peterborough

To: Members of the Peterborough Transit Liaison Committee

From: Barry Wakeford, Peterborough Transit General Manager

Meeting Date: June 29, 2023

Subject: PTLC23-009 Transit Service Improvement Options

Purpose

A background report to share with the Peterborough Transit Liaison Committee the results of the working group session held on June 22, 2023.

Background

The Peterborough Transit Liaison Committee met for the first time on May 11th, 2023. During the next few meetings, the following presentations were delivered:

- PTLC23-001 Transit and the Transportation Master Plan
- PTLC23-002 Transit Route Review and Study Summary
- PTLC23-003 Transit Operating Budget Overview
- PTLC23-004 Public Transit and the New Official Plan
- PTLC23-005 Peterborough Master Cycling Plan
- PTLC23-006 Transit Route Enhancements Options
- PTLC23-007 Equity and Inclusion
- PLTC23-008 Peterborough Accessible Community Transit

These reports helped the committee members understand that the route changes support the corporate objectives.

At the June 22, 2023 meeting, members of the Peterborough Transit Liaison Committee (PTLC) were separated into four working groups. Each working group was visited by City staff to discuss potential methods by which various service sectors within Peterborough Transit could be improved. The four service sectors are as follows:

- Route Improvements,
- Wayfinding and Navigating the System,
- Accessibility within the Transit service; and
- Customer Service and Communication.

Staff circulated throughout the meeting so that each PTLC working group would have an opportunity to provide insights into each of the four service sectors.

Results of suggestions for improving each sector are provided below:

Route Improvements

During the discussions with each working group, initial prompting was generally required to stimulate conversation and idea sharing. Each group was reminded that reverting to the former radial system would not support the long-term transit needs of a growing City. There were a number of valuable and worthwhile suggestions to improve the Transit Service that deserved further consideration:

- Routes should be extended into certain destinations (Portage Place, St. Joseph's at Fleming) to provide better access and encourage more trips
- 2012 Route review had recommended increasing peak frequency to 20-minute service
- Improve trip tracking for free riders
- Improve funding model for Transit to support improved service
- Reinstate the Jackson Park route or consider if the #9 route could go into Hedonics
- Frequency and hours of operations of Community routes leave riders stranded or without a convenient transit option. Increase frequency and extend hours of operation
- Improve and standardize communications so that users know when changes occur
- Pending changes will make access to the hospital more challenging. Consider installing signals at Medical Drive/Alexander Court to improve transit speed to reduce the need for changes
- Improve services and facilities at the major transfer hubs
- Analyze the successes and failures of the On Demand service and consider making changes
- Longer service hours

- Consider adding stops at medical clinics
- Increase frequency (reduces wait time at transfers, more convenient service)
- Consider a downtown loop (George and Water loop)
- Reinstate the Collison route
- Consider a bus route that service most tourist attractions
- Provide transit service to Activity Haven
- Revise the bus naming system to reflect the major roads or service areas
- Louder stop announcements
- Extend the Chemong #2 route to Trent University
- Advertise the Learn to Ride program and other supports to assist users with navigation
- Implement a Transit Ambassador program
- Provide a more comprehensive statutory holiday service
- Post frequency or schedule information at each stop, consider LED display that says "Next Bus in xx Minutes"
- User smaller buses on lower ridership routes
- Create a high school service
- Increase frequency on Community routes
- Add bike racks to every bus

Wayfinding and Navigating the System

Discussions around educating and informing riders on navigating the transit system

General Feedback

- Retired big city drivers said that Peterborough has one of the best small city transit in Ontario - today their opinion has changed - would be nice to have all day service at hedonics (Community bus has less hours)
- Hedonics is a busy stop - seniors can't make it up the hill to the shelter - Community bus works well.
- Check out Kingston transit information - has increased transit ridership
 - Justify having youth getting free transit
- Current map print outs are huge packages (ask at transit terminal)
- Transit Notification System
 - Really enjoy the phone calls - which they were more accurate - got a 30 minute notice and then the 5 minute and the I'm here notice came at the same time - sometime the I'm here notification comes when already on the bus - the 30 minute notification is not coming on time
 - Winter notifications work well
- Communication by phone
 - Calling after 4:30 - no one answers the phone - endless loop and then hangs up
- Google Maps
 - Displays routes well and links up to cycle network

- Works better than City App
- Used on phone to plan routes
- Google maps works well- but you need a phone and you have to be familiar with the City to plan routes

Education

- Extending education around transit and routing
 - A week where councilors and staff commit to using the transit system to help understand what they are working for
 - Transit orientation students
 - how to put bikes on bus - free transit for kids in high school funded by the school board
 - Students and Fleming should have packages with maps
 - Grade 8 have never been exposed - what is the bus etiquette
- Education around programs that exist today
 - Learn to ride programs – require more advertising
 - Loves the transit mentor program - requires more advertisement

Maps

- Transit Paper Print Maps
 - Bring back paper maps was a consensus at every table
 - Maps on the bus so they know where the route is going without a phone
 - Driver should have maps to hand out
 - Maps work well for navigation
 - New users have a hard time the first time reading the map
 - Add landmarks on maps
 - Clarity on where stops and shelters are

Signage

- Revisit Routes/Bus Stop Signage
 - Use of symbols whenever you can for wayfinding
 - Use title case with non-successive capitalization
 - Example of hard to read signs are the new Heritage signs
 - Keep signs accessible with colours
 - Bus stop signs should be symbolized
 - Universal symbols can be used
 - Colour coded with symbols
 - Signs in between stops - "Route 1 going this direction"

Route Naming

- Revisit Route Naming
 - Colour coded maps on the bus
 - Routes should be named the colour of the route and a number for routes
 - Highlight which routes go to terminal and which don't - make sure some go to the terminal

- Routes could be named after landmarks. So the rider knows which bus goes to the Lions center and where is it in the terminal
- Route 5 - numbers - make sure routes have names - prefer having routes with names that coincide with the location of where the route is going
- Red community bus - says route 5 and route 2
- Stop announcement -
- Bus drivers don't know which named route they are on
- Highlight the major landmarks some
- Naming route of 2 major roads or major milestone
- Bus stops signs colour coded with routes - keep the stops and colours and naming standard
- AB lettering on route number gets confusing

Asset improvements

- Increase Bus Shelters
 - Shelter at every transfer - waiting at transfers is bad in the weather
 - More shelters
- Increase Signage/Maps at Shelters
 - Frequency at the bus stop available at the stop without using a phone
 - i.e. the bus comes every 30 minutes M-F, every 1 hr Saturday Sunday and between what hours
 - Increasing confidence that a bus is coming
 - Stops should have the bus number and colour as well that buses stop at this stop
 - To simplify the process - if the sign At each stop says bus comes every so often and delays can be found where (twitter)
 - Like the idea of knowing if the bus is coming and active
 - Availability to access information at the stop without the use of phones
 - More shelters - accessible with communications about routes - where to call for info and help - programs available
 - What buses will stop at each stop and shelter
 - What buses will stop at each stop and shelter
 - What time the next bus is coming
 - Use the stop and shelter to convey core information and phone numbers for customer system
 - More signage and maps
 - Every shelter should have maps available and on display

Technology

- Bus Delay Information
 - Twitter
 - Use twitter for bus delays
 - More education around using twitter to look for delays
 - Construction education - delay of transit stop
- Increased Technology at Shelters

- Interactive transit shelter with wifi
 - Shelter with time of next bus and maps of where the bus is going
- Transit App Upgrade
 - Current transit app is good but real time would be better
 - The apps is the best.
 - It can provide single source information for what I want
 - Green transit app with a "T" works well
 - Must get the "Where is my bus" GPS app up and running- has been promised for 3-4 years now.
- Website Upgrade
 - lots of scrolling
 - website is hard to navigate with too much schedule info that is hard to understand
 - too much information all at once. Would prefer only to see my route
 - A way to filter the information based on the locations I want to go
 - Go transit app works well - able to type in from and to and get the trip
- Develop Transit Hubs
 - Information hub to educate the transit system - interactive - when's the bus coming - telecommunicating information about late buses
 - Presto card - One card - different passes - top up and pre-load card (pre-paid for the card)
 - Installed at the hubs - purchase a card and reload a card at the hubs
 - Transportation type card for multiple services within the City
 - Centralized locations, hub that talk to you - "2 minutes away from destination"

Bus Pass Review

- Bus passes - special rate for half day service since not getting money's worth with Community Bus
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Education

- Welcome packages to new homes
 - with transit packages with maps and link to the website
- ***Solution possibility** = add Transit Maps and introduction package at Visitors Center

Accessibility within the Transit Service

- Maintain a call-in option to book specialized transit when the mobile booking app is rolled out, as some riders do not use computers or mobile phones.

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- Communicate to specialized transit riders, data on high-demand and low-demand hours/days. Some riders don't bother trying to book a van certain times of the day due to known high-demand, but are not aware of low-demand times.
 - Directly communicate specialized transit low-demand hours with health care professionals, to make them aware of ideal times to book medical appointments for specialized transit riders.
 - Increase specialized service during high-demand hours (e.g., school drop-off/pick-up times).
 - Coordinate with other service providers to help manage demand during special events (e.g., partner with AON to coordinate a Gardens Shuttle Van to an event where there is a consistent pattern of high volume of accessible van pick-ups for an event, such as Peterborough MusicFest or a Peterborough Petes game).
 - Improve communication methods for temporary service disruptions (e.g., route cancellations, route changes due to road construction). Include the needs of people who don't use digital technology.
 - Provide digital displays at key transit stops to communicate temporary service disruptions.
 - Provide roofed structures at transit stops, such as transit shelters.
 - Increase size of transit shelters to accommodate turning radius of mobility aids within the shelter.
 - At a minimum, provide hard surface pads at all transit stops.
 - Prioritize missing sidewalk ramps for the municipal sidewalk network, especially on streets served by transit routes.
 - Provide transit route maps at transit stops with shelters and provide a more basic version of stops along a route at transit stops without shelters.
 - Provide seating and shade at transit stops.
 - Enforce vehicles parked illegally on streets in no-parking or no-stopping zones that impact access by transit vehicles (e.g., Hedonics cul-de-sac.).
 - Enforce priority seating rules.
 - Provide continuous educational campaign on priority seating.
 - Update the Transit website to make the route and schedule information easier to understand.
 - Increase community bus service routes and hours.
 - Community bus routes (22 and 23) that access the downtown core into the Transit terminal to improve transfers to other routes in the network. Some riders can't independently travel from downtown community bus stops to the Transit Terminal, especially in winter months or when it's raining.
 - Revise bus route names to provide a more meaningful high level understanding of the route description.
 - Allow more time for riders with disabilities to transition at transfer points.
 - Destinations like Lansdown Place have multiple entry and exit points this creates some confusion for certain users. Establish an effective communication strategy to coordinate pick-up drop off points at such locations.

Customer Service and Communication

- Phoning in to Customer Service line or Van service to book a van
 - It can be stressful because you feel talked down too, feel like you are bothering them.
 - When asking customer service line a question, making sure the city employee is informed of changes to pass onto Passengers.
- Some students feel that the drivers have attitudes towards them.
- Communication when getting on a conventional bus, so the visually impaired understand where they are and when to get off.
 - When the bus comes to a stop (for people on the bus) and plus when the doors open (for people at the bus stop), the bus could recite what stop it is at.
- Social Media Communications
- Better use of social media, How to ride the bus videos
- A better advertisement on the “learn to ride” service – a lot of international students or students from small towns have never used public transit and would benefit from the service.
 - Cancellations-
 - In the newspaper when the column says “what's open/ closed and blank holiday” something in there about if any Buses will have alternative routes (parades)
 - Radio Stations saying a blurb about any detours.
 - My Beat or Facebook to get information out to Passengers.
 - Live Tracking of buses.
 - New passengers to PTBO, how to get information out to them.
 - Locations for Information across PTBO.
 - Stand-alone signs about NEW Transit info.
 - Library
 - Wellness Center

- Senior Center
 - Large maps at the Schools – Trent and Fleming
 - WIFI available (in Terminal) so people can look up information about the buses

Summary

Peterborough Transit works diligently to provide an effective and efficient public transit service that supports residents and non-residents in making daily essential trips in the City of Peterborough. This fundamental public service carried 3.8 million Transit riders in 2017. However, Peterborough Transit was also experiencing challenges as the city and the service grew, including longer routes, delayed buses, and congestion at the downtown terminal. Transit had also identified that there were opportunities to serve a greater number of riders and new areas in our growing city.

A comprehensive study was completed between 2018 and 2021 to address these challenges and opportunities. The study included a Transit Route Review and Long-Term Growth Strategy, and was supplemented by a Transit Travel Survey, On-Demand Transit Planning Study, and significant public and stakeholder consultation and engagement. The study concluded that Peterborough Transit move forward with a grid-oriented network, enhancing service levels overtime to achieve a 71% increase in transit service by 2051.

In July 2021, City Council approved the recommended network and On-Demand pilot program, but not the Service Enhancement strategy. These new service changes were implemented in 2021 and 2022, as the City was experiencing the on-going impacts of COVID-19. Further development of the network's supportive infrastructure have been postponed as staff respond to uncertainties around the 2023 budget and recent staffing changes.

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