

Sent by Email

March 1, 2024

Alexander Harras
Regional Clerk, Director of Legislative Services
The Regional Municipality of Durham
605 Rossland Road East
Whitby, ON L1N 6A3
clerks@durham.ca

Subject: (Acting) Director, Community Services, Report CS 02-24
Durham Region Transit Services
- Accessibility Advisory Committee

The Council of The Corporation of the City of Pickering considered the above matter at a Meeting held on February 26, 2024 and adopted the following resolution:

1. That Report CS 02-24 regarding Durham Region Transit Service Changes be endorsed;
2. That, further to the recommendation of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, Council be requested to send a letter to the Region of Durham requesting reinstatement of transit services in Pickering that were offered prior to January 1, 2024; and,
3. That the letter be copied to the local area Minister of Provincial Parliament, the Association of Municipalities in Ontario, and all Durham Region Municipalities.

A copy of Report CS 02-24 is attached for your reference.

Should you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned at 905.420.4660, extension 2019.

Yours truly,



Susan Cassel
City Clerk

Encl.

SC:am

Copy: The Honourable Peter Bethlenfalvy, MPP, Pickering – Uxbridge;
Nicole Cooper, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Town of Ajax;
June Gallagher, Municipal Clerk, Municipality of Clarington;
Chris Harris, Clerk, Town of Whitby;
Fernando Lamanna, Clerk, Township of Brock;
Debbie Leroux, Clerk, Township of Uxbridge;
Mary Medeiros, City Clerk, City of Oshawa;
Ralph Walton, Interim, City Clerk, Township of Scugog;
The Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO);

Chief Administrative Officer
(Acting) Director, Community Services;
Accessibility Coordinator

From: Laura Gibbs
(Acting) Director, Community Services

Subject: Durham Region Transit Services
- Accessibility Advisory Committee
- File: A-1440-001

Recommendation:

1. That Report CS 02-24 regarding Durham Region Transit Service Changes be received;
 2. That, further to the recommendation of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, Council be requested to send a letter to the Region of Durham requesting reinstatement of transit services in Pickering that were offered prior to January 1, 2024; and,
 3. That the letter be copied to the local area Minister of Provincial Parliament, the Association of Municipalities in Ontario, and all Durham Region Municipalities.
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Executive Summary: The purpose of this report is to advise Council that the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) recommends advocating for the return of Durham Region Transit Services (DRTS) to Pickering, and consult with key stakeholders, including those with accessibility needs on any future service changes.

On January 2, 2024, Durham Region Transit made changes to bus routes and services in Pickering, and across the Region. The Region issued a statement on December 19, 2023, indicating that bus routes would be changing to maximize transit ridership and improve on-time performance. Some bus stops and routes have been taken out of service. The impact of the changes means transit users need to walk further to reach an active bus stop. Updates to some bus routes have significantly increased transit times for Pickering transit users.

The Accessibility Advisory Committee adopted the following recommendation at their meeting of January 17, 2024:

1. That the AAC finds the service changes, implemented by DRTS on January 1, 2024, to be in contravention of the Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC) and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*; and,
 2. That the AAC request that the Council of the City of Pickering send a letter to the Region of Durham (ROD) requesting that they reverse the service changes immediately and consult with Pickering residents and key stakeholders, including those with accessibility needs, on any future service changes.
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Relationship to the Pickering Strategic Plan: The recommendations in this report respond to the Pickering Strategic Plan Priority of Advocate for an Inclusive, Welcoming, Safe & Healthy Community.

Financial Implications: There are no direct financial impacts to the City of Pickering that result from adopting the recommendations in this report.

Discussion: At the AAC Meeting on January 17, 2024, the AAC tabled a “DRT Service Update” as an agenda item. The Durham Region Transit Service made a number of service changes effective January 2, 2024, that have had an impact on the transit services offered to Pickering residents. The most notable change included the introduction of a standardization of 800 metre distances between bus stops, as well as the reduction of buses serving the Pickering community. The AAC has expressed concern about the lack of community input on the implemented changes which have resulted in numerous complaints the City received regarding this matter and suggested that the changes created barriers to elderly users and users living with disabilities, as well as for youth requiring services for school access.

Discussion among the AAC Members included:

- concerns regarding the lack of volume for audible bus stop announcements;
- concerns regarding the lack of consultation with Pickering residents on proposed route and service changes;
- concerns regarding poor signage indicating that bus stops are no longer in service;
- concerns regarding the service changes being implemented in winter season;
- concerns that DRTS On Demand bus service only picks up passengers from the nearest bus stop rather than a convenient location for the transit user;
- the DRTS past refusal to implement audible bus stop announcements in light of the Ontario Human Rights Commission order to implement that measure; and,
- concerns regarding how the service changes were communicated to the public.

The purpose of this report is to advise Council that the AAC recommends advocating for the return of Durham Region Transit Services to Pickering. The AAC requests that Council sends a letter to Durham Region to request the reinstatement of these services and consult with key stakeholders, including those with accessibility needs on any future service changes.

Attachments:

1. None
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Prepared By:

Original Signed By

Timothy Higgins
Accessibility Coordinator

Approved/Endorsed By:

Original Signed By

Laura Gibbs, MBA, MSc.
(Acting) Director, Community Services

LG:th

Recommended for the consideration
of Pickering City Council

Original Signed By

Marisa Carpino, M.A.
Chief Administrative Officer