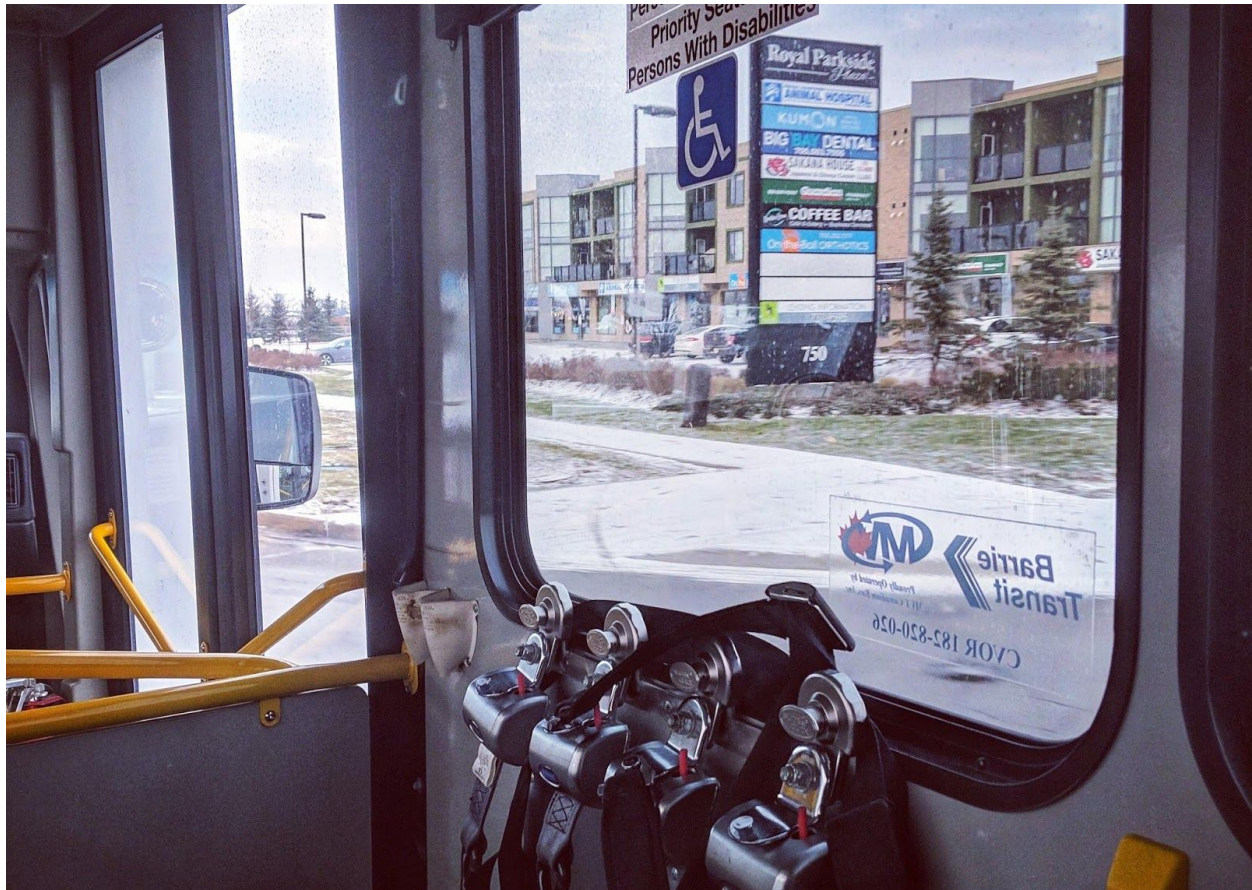


October 7, 2019

Transit Report

Report from the AAC Sub-Committee on Transit



Introduction

This sub-committee was convened for the purpose of considering issues surrounding Accessible, Universal and Affordable transit in the City of Barrie. The members have met twice and submit to you here their thoughts and suggestions in terms of next steps.

The Problem

Concerned residents approached the Accessibility Advisory Committee in June and again in September with concerns around accessibility in transit in the city. Concerns included issues of accessibility, universality and affordability. Specific concerns included:

- Issues around the scheduling process and length of routes (both how far in advance rides needed to be scheduled and when and how those rides could be scheduled);
- Sufficient buses and drivers to address the needs of riders;
- State of the buses (shocks, heating/cooling systems, etc.);
- Lack of accessible alternative forms of transit (AKA accessible taxis/private companies); and
- Affordability

Our Recommendations

After meeting once August 1st, 2019 and again October 2, 2019 we bring back to the committee the following recommendations.

- **Scheduling Process and Length of Routes:**

We recommend that the committee request more information about the current Specialized Transit scheduling system. We are concerned that the current system is causing problems to riders in terms of access as well as route finding/planning. We recommend that the committee request further investigation to see if an alternative scheduling system might better meet the needs of the residents of Barrie.

- **Sufficient Resources:**

We recommend that the committee request more data as to the current available resources for Specialized Transit vs. the current and projected needs for Specialized Transit, both in terms of Drivers and in terms of Vehicles.

- **State of Resources:**

We recommend that the committee invite the City Manager and Council to spend a day in a wheelchair, including using Specialized Transit to get to and from all of their meetings. We would further ask the committee to determine what vehicles the city is using for Specialized Transit currently, and, in consultation with the BAAC and client users consider recommending a change in vehicle for new acquisitions, specifically the Promaster or Sprint full size vans which we feel may better address the current concerns and meet the future needs of all passengers.

- **Accessible Alternatives:**

It was the opinion of this sub-committee that to meet the guidelines of fair and equitable use for those with disabilities, that Barrie's current accessible transit options needed to be increased. It was our opinion that riders should be able to access three forms of scheduling - on-demand, scheduled service and scheduled routes. As such, we applaud the City of Barrie for their decision to introduce Community Routes in 2020, and look forward to seeing how these routes add to the on-demand transit experience of riders requiring these services.

However, it was the opinion of this sub-committee that there was a need to encourage the City to look at ways they could encourage more individualized on-demand service that would be available 24/7 to meet the needs of our growing community. Specifically, we felt that there was a need to recommend a Pilot Project RFP to a private company, looking to put an initial 5 Accessible Vehicles into service in our community, whether they be traditional 'taxis' or some other form of private company. We also felt it would be worth considering a feasibility study to consider whether whatever the city could off-set these rides by whatever amount we are paying on a per-ride basis for existing Specialized Transit services.

- **Affordability:**

After the September meeting of the AAC, this subcommittee was also asked to consider the issue of affordability for transit. It was the feeling of the AAC that we did not currently have a mechanism in place for providing subsidized ride fares to

individuals on OW or ODSP, and the question was raised as to whether we might be able to do something to facilitate this discussion. The AAC had discussed hosting a half-day stakeholders meeting around the issue of affordability in transit and has tasked this sub-committee with the job of suggesting those we should invite to this meeting.

Our recommendations for invitation to this meeting include (but are by no means limited to):

- David Busby Centre
- Salvation Army
- Barrie Food Bank
- Elizabeth Fry Society
- CMHA
- Barrie Community Health Team
- Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit
- Representatives from ODSP/OW
- Local MP's/MPP's
- Representatives from the City of Barrie

Summary

The AAC Sub-Committee on Transit hopes these recommendations are helpful to the AAC. No further meetings are currently scheduled, but the members of this sub-committee are willing to continue meeting if the AAC feels there is a need and specific direction to guide our discussions.

Sincerely;

Members of the AAC Sub-Committee on Transit