



**DURHAM CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**
Learning and Living in Faith

Memorandum

To: Board of Trustees
From: Gerard Winn, Director of Education
Date: September 23, 2024
Subject: **Ad Hoc Committee for Enhancing the Use of Public Transit**

Recommendation

Moved by _____, seconded by _____

“THAT the Board of Trustees approve to extend the Ad Hoc Committee for Enhancing the Use of Public Transit recommendations to the Board not later than the December 16, 2024, Regular Board Meeting in order to allow more time to explore various options and collaborate with community partners.

Moved by _____, seconded by _____

“THAT the committee be dissolved immediately following the January 27, 2024, Regular Board Meeting.

Background

On January 22, 2024, the following motion was passed:

“Whereas, since the 1960s until 2014, the bussing of the majority of high school students to and from Durham schools was handled efficiently by the municipal transit agencies through the use of bus tickets/passes; the municipal operators were Ajax-Pickering Transit, Whitby Transit, Oshawa Transit and Clarington Transit, later amalgamated into Durham Region Transit (DRT) in 2006;

Whereas, in 2014, Durham Region Transit raised the cost of the monthly bus pass significantly and the school boards assumed responsibility for transporting eligible high school students on yellow school buses through its consortium Durham Student Transportation Services (DSTS);

Whereas, for the last few years, pre- and post-pandemic, school bus operators across Ontario have had difficulty finding and retaining a sufficient number of school bus drivers;

Whereas many transit agencies in the province (Toronto, York Region, Ottawa, Kingston) have a high percentage of high school students using public transit to travel to and from school, and more boards and transit agencies are considering similar arrangements;

<https://www.ottawaschoolbus.ca/school-bus-routes/oc-transpo-public-transit-information/#:~:text=OC%20Transpo%20is%20a%20convenient,be%20issued%20to%20eligible%20students.>

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/london/tvdsb-to-consider-free-transit-passes-for-high-school-students-1.7018273>

Whereas DSTS continues to maximize the efficiency of its system using the resources it has, in the fall of 2021, Durham District School Board (DDSB) and Durham Catholic District School Board (DCDSB) sought an expanded relationship between DRT and DSTS. A public delegation was made to the Transit Executive Committee of Durham Region on December 8, 2021, with the intention of explaining the benefits of transit passes for high school students; negotiating a lower rate for DRT passes currently purchased by DSTS; and a strategy to have more high school students given monthly DRT transit passes;

Appendix A. DCDSB presentation at a Virtual Public Meeting by Morgan Ste. Marie, Chair (pages 1-6 focused on current DRT passes) and Declan Amaral, Student Trustee (pages 7-13, benefits of public transit, student perspective).

Appendix B. DDSB presentation transcript by Carolyn Morton, Chair, (focused on expanded use of public transit for high school students);

Whereas, in the months after this delegation, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed by the Region, the Boards and DSTS that “establishes shared principles to guide on-going collaboration” and this MOU was made public on June 8, 2022;

Page 38: <https://calendar.durham.ca/default/Detail/2022-06-08-1330-Transit-Executive-Committee-Meeting/fe6254eb-dde9-4e6b-9d5b-aea90122854e>

Whereas, the Durham Region Transit Service Strategy 2022-2025 references identified opportunities to increase the percent of high school students using transit from 9% to 42%;

Page 13: <https://www.durhamregiontransit.com/en/about-us/resources/The-Route-Ahead-ACCESSIBLE.pdf>

Be it resolved that an ad hoc committee of Staff and no less than 3 Trustees be created to lay out an engagement strategy that advances the shared principles of the Memorandum of Understanding, including “enhancing the use of public transit by youth, including secondary school students, within a fiscally responsible framework” with our transportation partners, transit agencies and other levels of government.

On February 26, 2024, an amendment to the January 22, 2024, motion was passed:

“THAT the DCDSB amend motion number B2024-01-22-04 Ad Hoc Committee for Enhancing the Use of Public Transit previously adopted on January 22, 2024, to include the following:

1. That the committee will provide recommendations to the Board of Trustees not later than the September 2024 Regular Board Meeting.
2. That the committee be dissolved immediately following the October 2024 Regular Board Meeting.
3. That the committee include a maximum of 8 trustees

“That at the first meeting of the committee that staff provide a report on relevant information pertaining to the committee’s mandate including any legal advice regarding jurisdiction and the DSTS Consortium Agreement.”

Three meetings of the Committee have taken place: on April 18, 2024, May 22, 2024, and September 9, 2024.

Next Steps

At the September 9, 2024, ad hoc committee meeting it was suggested that more time was required to explore various options and to allow for further consultation with community partners to enhance public transit for students in the region.

A detailed report will be provided to the Board of Trustees at the December 16, 2024, Regular Board Meeting with an update and recommendations.

GW/eb