

Ottawa Transit Riders – Year in Review

Annual General Meeting
August 22, 2020



Quick Zoom refresher

- The chair will mute everyone at the start to keep background noise low
- If you want to speak, please raise your hand (under “Participants” OR “Reactions”, with some browsers/devices) or ask in the “Chat,” both of which are along the bottom



- If you want to check that you’re muted or mute your video, the controls are in the lower left of your screen:



Code of conduct

- We are going to start this meeting off with a member *vote*.
- The Ottawa Transit Riders (OTR) is a volunteer-based advocacy group that encourages vigorous debate in a respectful manner. We ask all members and volunteers to represent the OTR well and to treat each other with respect.
- Therefore, we are asking members to approve a Code of Conduct encouraging respectful behaviour. Please take a moment to review the text of our code, which can be found on our website in the AGM post at the top:
 - https://www.ottawatransitriders.ca/agm_2020_resources

Do you approve?

Where did it all start?

- A year ago, on April 27, 2019, the Ottawa Transit Riders was formally founded with our first board
- The event was held at City Hall and drew more than 100 attendees
- It's been quite a trip since then!



Why did we form this group?

- Ottawa's buses were often late, cancelled without notice, and crowded (when they showed up)
- ParaTranspo users were being ignored
- The city declared a Climate Crisis but still wasn't prioritizing transit
- It felt like OC Transpo and the City of Ottawa weren't listening
- And, the city told us to wait because the LRT was on its way ...

What have we been doing?

- Since the founding meeting, OTR has worked on developing the group's infrastructure
- We also developed and ran several campaigns
- In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic led to a lockdown in Ottawa and we had to redirect our efforts a bit



Outreach

- Many tv, radio, internet, and print interviews
- Participation in multiple online webinars, working groups, and panels
- Representation at EVERY Transit Commission meeting
- Social media:
 - Twitter (4,048 followers): www.twitter.com/OttTransitRider
 - Facebook (852 followers): www.facebook.com/OttawaTransitRiders
 - Instagram (394 followers): www.instagram.com/OttawaTransitRiders
- Active website: www.OttawaTransitRiders.ca



Accomplishments

- We won a mini-grant from the Healthy Transportation Coalition
- We were nominated for a 2020 Faces Magazine Award for Best Volunteer Organization
- We met with an accessibility lawyer in early October 2019 to explore options regarding lawsuits or complaints about ParaTranspo service
- We appeared as delegations at Transit Commission meetings
- We started campaigns: #Fight4FairFares, #ParaParity, #KeepTransitMoving, #TransitChallenge2020, and #BusDetective



Campaigns - #Fight4FairFares

- A campaign to halt the planned City of Ottawa budget 2020 fare increase
- Through our efforts, the City temporarily froze transit fares from January to the end of March 2020
- The freeze was subsequently extended due to COVID-19
- Plan to continue to advocate for fair fares, especially as we head into a time of austerity during COVID-19 recovery

Campaigns - #KeepTransitMoving

- Supported the #KeepTransitMoving campaign to advocate for emergency transit funding
- Sent out press releases, did media interviews, and developed a social media campaign
- Also sent letters to the federal Minister of Infrastructure and Communities and the provincial Minister of Transportation urging emergency funding for public transit
- Helped run #KeepTransitMoving's May 28, 2020, Day of Action, which resulted in hundreds of Canadians signing the petition for emergency transit funding



Campaigns - #ParaParity

- A campaign in conjunction with Healthy Transportation Coalition, focusing on accessibility issues for customers of ParaTranspo
- This campaign helped to convince the City of Ottawa to move forward with online booking
- The City announced an interim online booking app in September 2019 and promised a full suite of online services by the end of 2020
- We also ran a survey to learn more about how users were finding the interim online booking tool



Campaigns – Transit Challenge 2020

- We organized the 2020 Transit Challenge in cooperation with Healthy Transportation Coalition, Free Transit Ottawa, and Ecology Ottawa
- Helped to plan and implement a kick-off panel discussion entitled “What should Ottawa do with public transit?”
- The Challenge was a huge success with 20 councillors and the mayor committing to use public transit to get to all work and personal commitments for seven days
- The event generated significant conversation about transit issues, both good and bad, and led to ongoing engagement with several councillors
- We subsequently developed a 2020 Transit Challenge report summarizing the results of the event and organized a press conference at City Hall to share the report and answer questions from local media



Campaigns – Bus Detective

- We started working with two software developers on the Bus Detective app, which will help to collect data on Ottawa's bus service (e.g. timeliness, reliability, safety, etc) and create a baseline by which to measure future service improvements
- The app had to be put on hold temporarily due to the pandemic. We expect to restart work on the app (or develop another solution for data collection) into fall 2020 or winter 2021
- Are you a developer who wants to help? Reach out to us!
OttawaTransitRiders@gmail.com

Board of Directors 2020

We received eight applications for our Board of Directors so we did not need an election

- Five previous Board of Directors will be returning:
 - Henry Paikin
 - John Redins
 - Kari Glynes Elliott
 - Sam Boswell
 - Stuart MacKay
- We're also pleased to welcome three new Board members:
 - Chris Hansen
 - Laura Shantz
 - Sally Thomas

Resources

- We've put up a variety of resources on the website, including:
 - Full version of the 2020 Annual Report
 - Transit Challenge 2020 Report
 - ParaParity Survey Report
 - Code of Conduct
- https://www.ottawatransitriders.ca/agm_2020_resources

What's next?

- We will keep fighting for better bus, LRT, and ParaTranspo service
- We hope to launch the Bus Detective app in the winter
- We will continue to work with #ParaParity on more equitable and accessible transit
- We will continue to support the #KeepTransitMoving campaign
- We will work with OC Transpo and the City to help rebuild trust in the public transit system post-pandemic

Conclusion

- Do you have questions? Raise your hand or send us a question using the chat feature

