

Ottawa Transit Riders—Founding Meeting Registrant Feedback



May 12, 2019

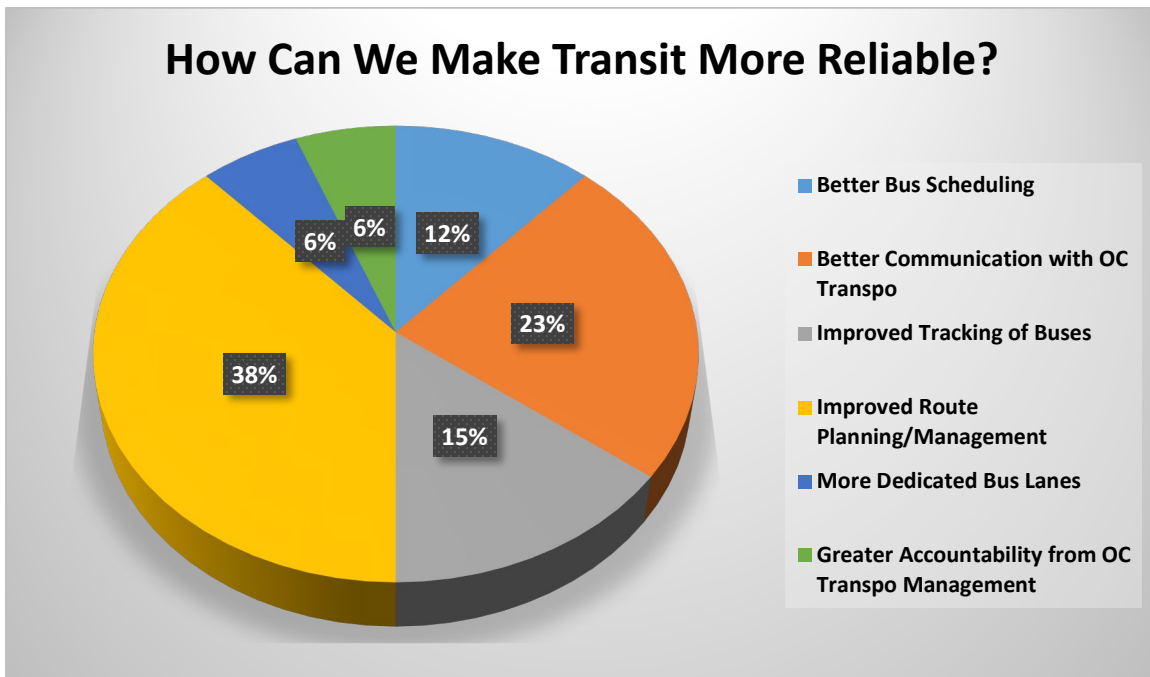
Executive Summary

On April 27, nearly one hundred people gathered in Jean Pigott Place at Ottawa City Hall to launch the Ottawa Transit Riders organization. During the meeting, various tables were set up around the hall where registrants could provide feedback. Five questions were asked:

- How can we make transit more reliable?
- How can we make transit greener?
- How can we make transit more accessible?
- How can we make transit more affordable?
- What should be the priorities of this organization?

The responses that we received were numerous and thoughtful. Below you will find all the responses collected, along with a chart that highlights which issues dominated registrant feedback. These responses can help us determine which areas or campaigns the OTR may wish to focus on during its first year in existence. Some of the more prominent issues were:

- Electric buses
- Improved route planning and management
- Better stop/shelter/route design
- Increasing revenues through alternative methods, like parking and tolls

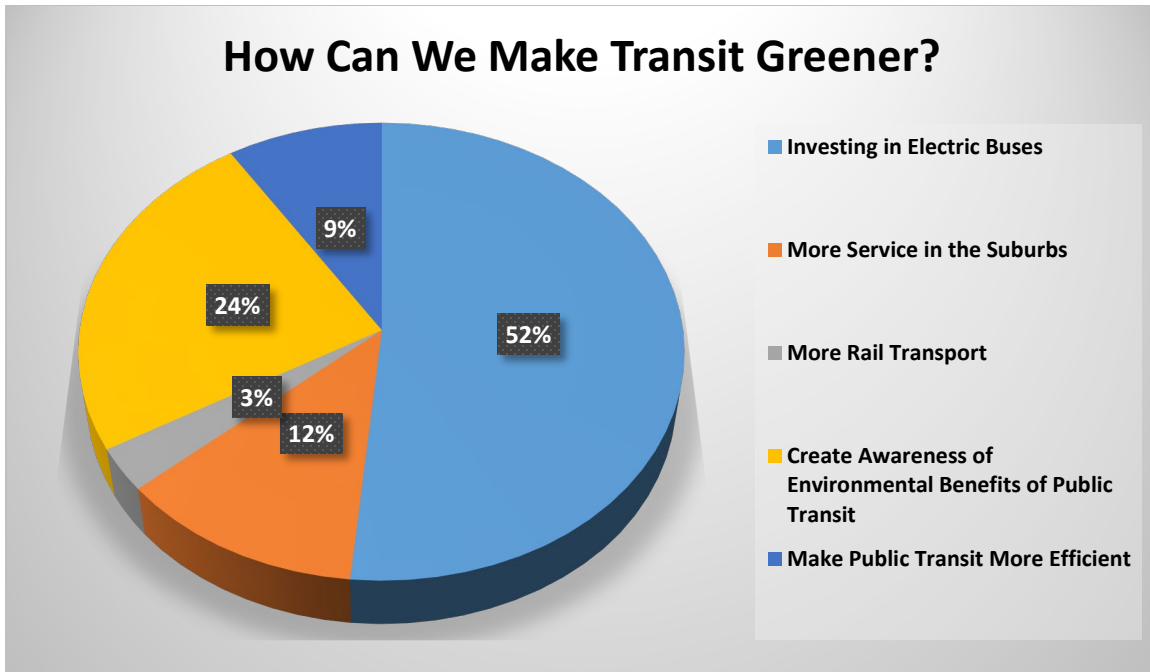


Comments

- “Make management performance pay conditional on reliability.”
- “Reduce the number of stops on certain streets. There are areas on Rideau with stops less than 100 metres apart from each other. This is unacceptable.”
- “Listen to the members! Organize with the drivers—they are our allies and we need a reciprocal relationship.”
- “When a bus is full, use the bus signage to display the time until the next bus arrives. For example, ‘next #85 in 3 minutes, seats available.’”
- “I waited 40 minutes at one time for an OC Transpo employee to answer my call.”
- Have a telephone line whereby you don’t have to wait 40-45 minutes on hold (like today) to get info—not everyone has cell phones or the Internet!”
- “Ditch schedules...make it about frequency with stop arrival times shown in real time at stops.”
- “Make transit for every community.”
- “Enforce the rules of the road to ensure buses keep to their schedule: 62% of buses run on time in Rideau-Rockcliffe, 30% are early.”
- “Get the buses to wait until they are supposed to leave the station if they come early.”
- “Need more support staff on the telephone line. Shorter waits for OC Transpo staff to respond to phone calls.”
- “Keep buses lumbering through the city. Some people don’t want to get on/off buses to have to take a train and then have to get on another bus to go to CHEO or the General Hospital. Also, some people have phobias about being underground.”

- “Stop interlining!¹ Its puts scheduling power into the union’s hands.”
- “Stop changing bus route and bus numbers—i.e. the #2 to the #11.”
- “Use best practices from other cities.”
- “Site tour of OC Transpo dispatch.”
- “Ask OC Transpo traffic control to prioritize bus reliability over general traffic flow.”
- “Pay attention to what bus routes riders are using!”
- “Make your councillor’s and the mayor life heck if they do not improve service!”
- “Make sure buses leave stations on time. For Para Transpo, they need to hire more people to answer phones as well as drivers.”
- “Focus resources on higher frequency routes.”
- “Make all new development, industrial or residential, incorporate public transit planning and routes before any permissions are granted.”
- “Real GPS results. My phone is more reliable and accurate than OC Transpo at transit stations.”
- “Bus-only lanes on existing lanes.”
- “Clear the snow so I don’t have to get over a snowbank to get on the bus.”
- “More buses on Wednesday!! With more seniors taking free service on Wednesday, it takes longer to get on and off the bus.”
- “Have OC Transpo app track via GPS.”
- “Better online interface for complaints.”
- “Voice-mail for complaints.”
- “More buses going past Mackenzie King Bridge or to Tunney’s Pasture.”
- “Better service on #94 to-from Riverside.”
- “Use Real GPS data to determine actual transit times without speeding.”
- “Have advance plans available for bad weather and for blockages in the system so that buses can be quickly rerouted. Not sit in traffic jams for 30 minutes. This happens regularly yet OC Transpo improvises every time and badly.”
- “Implement quick, cheap solutions like Toronto did with the King Street pilot project on streets like Montreal Road, Rideau, and Bank street.”
- “Support local neighborhoods: Orleans to Kanata—Impossible to get around. Businesses suffering and closing. Reinstate local bus service.”
- “Restrict private car use on transit routes.”
- “Free Transit=More Riders=Fewer Cars=Less Congestion=More Reliable”

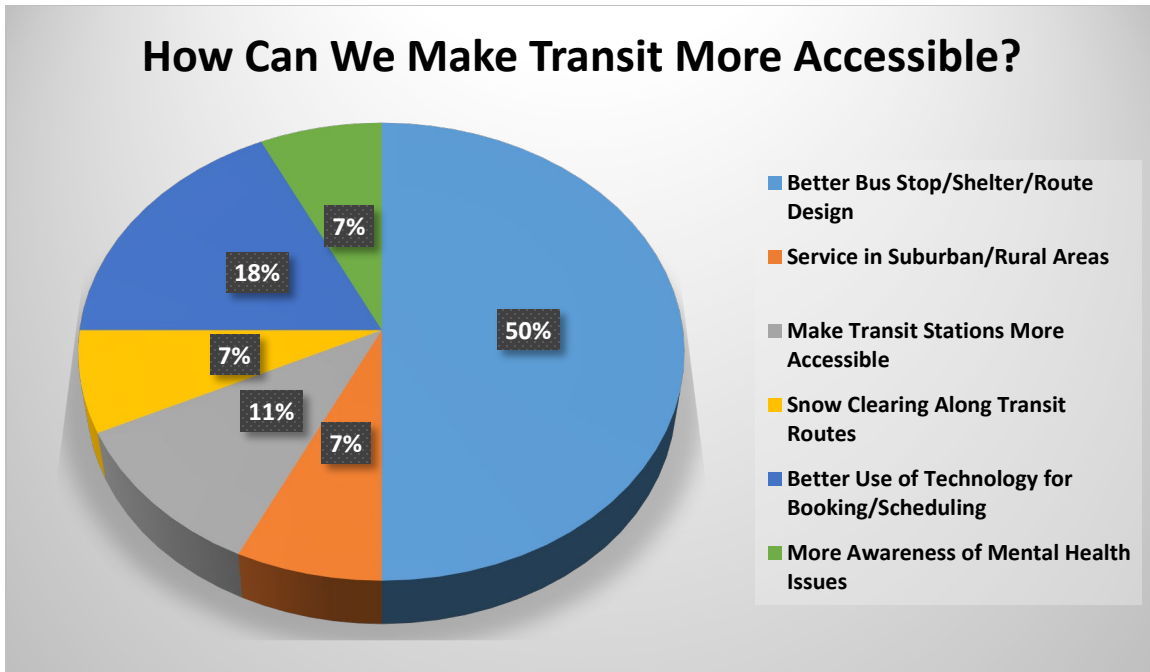
¹ Interlining combines two or more independent routes into one operational schedule. While interlining allows a more efficient use of transit resources, the drawbacks to interlining are that if one bus is delayed on route to its next terminus, it then delays that subsequent route.



Comments

- “Ottawa Transit Riders should propose OC Transpo becomes green.”
- “Better service in the core.”
- “Small buses for less-used routes and off-peak times. Small buses could also work in rural areas to run people into more centralized areas.”
- “More electric vehicles rather than diesel.”
- “Have a strong focus on transit at large workplaces to get more riders.”
- “Demand for climate awareness which makes transit green.”
- “More garbage bins at bus stops.”
- “Rail transports people more efficiently than buses.”
- “Expand the Transitway.”
- “Make transit green globally.”
- “Need to work closely with community associations.”
- “More buses=fewer cars=less climate change!”
- “Speak to indigenous people to support a green transit.”
- “Making it easier to connect from buses—better connection times.”
- “Convert OC Transpo buses to electric.”
- “Electric buses.”
- “More electric buses.”
- “Electric buses.”
- “Buy more electric buses for public transit.”
- “Buy electric buses!”
- “Electric buses, of course!”
- “Convert to electric buses.”
- “Promote hybrid buses.”

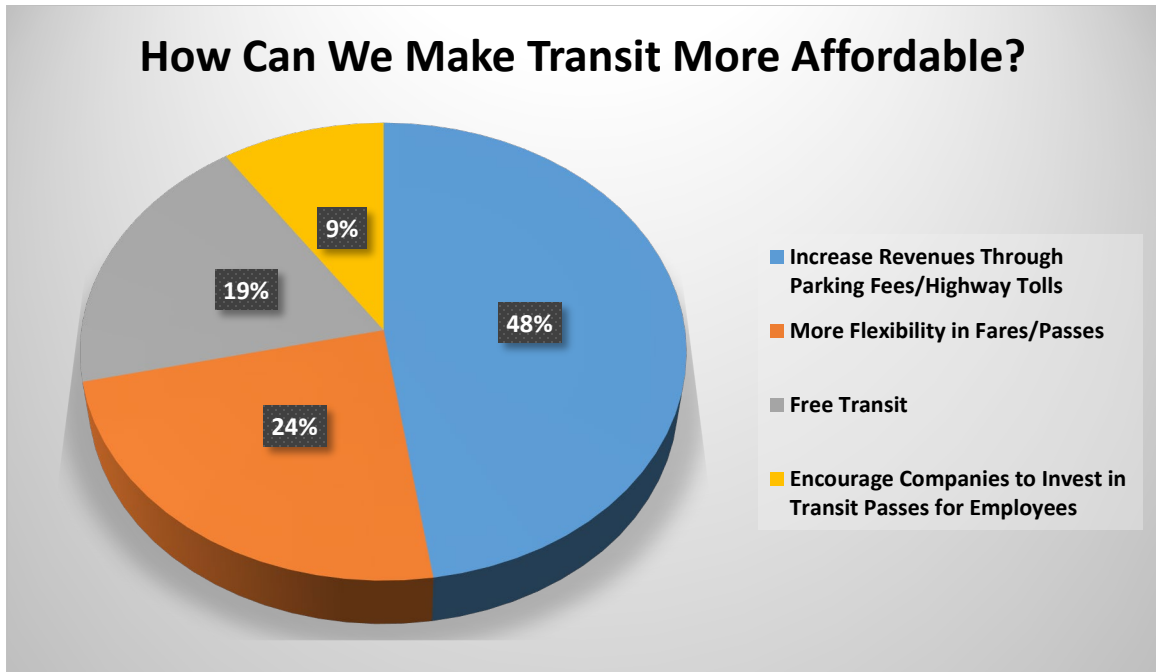
- “Buses on demand outside peak times.”
- “More electric buses.”
- “Make routes shorter with fewer stops.”
- “More bike racks for buses in the summer.”
- “Electric buses.”
- “Everyone should play a role to keep public transit clean and green.”
- “Reinstate local service in the suburbs.”
- “People want to shop locally, reinstate service in suburbs, and add service to rural areas.”
- “All I want for Christmas is an electric bus.”
- “Make a sign on all buses with different language to keep the bus clean.”
- “While transit itself should strive to be as green as possible, its biggest contribution to the planter is to get cars off the road and get people where they need to go.”
- “Less double-deckers and more 40-footers and hybrids.”
- “Electric buses.”
- “Get more people to use it, which will make it more efficient and reduce car use.”
- “Increase ridership by decreasing fares and increasing ridership.”
- “Seasonal electric buses.”
- “Electric buses.”



Comments

- “Hire more female bus drivers.”
- “Bus shelters in suburban and rural areas—stops in Stitsville and Greely are literally posts next to the road.”
- “More frequent service in suburban areas.”
- “Have more shelters, especially heated ones.”
- “More heated shelters.”
- “Improve pedestrian facilities near transit.”
- “Make tickets/vouchers more available. Presto is no option for our most impoverished who needs an occasional bus for doctor’s appointments, etc.”
- “Easier to get tickets.”
- “More bus-stops on certain streets where there are few.”
- “Better pedestrian connections to stops.”
- “More accurate, clearer, and accessible real-time info when the bus is coming!”
- “Make transit accessible for all community.”
- “Look towards Toronto’s online booking system.”
- “Add real service to rural areas—North Gower, Kars, Osgoode. We all drive to the suburbs and take up the parking spaces in transit stations.”
- “Smarter connection between routes.”
- “Encourage collapse strollers on buses (we had them in the 80s!). Too much overcrowding at the front of the bus.”
- “More time than ‘window time’ for transfers.
- “Better management of feeder routes to LRT—LRT is not a one-route solution!”
- “Transit audits!”
- “Assistance in transitioning to LRT for mobility, anxiety, and mental health issues.”

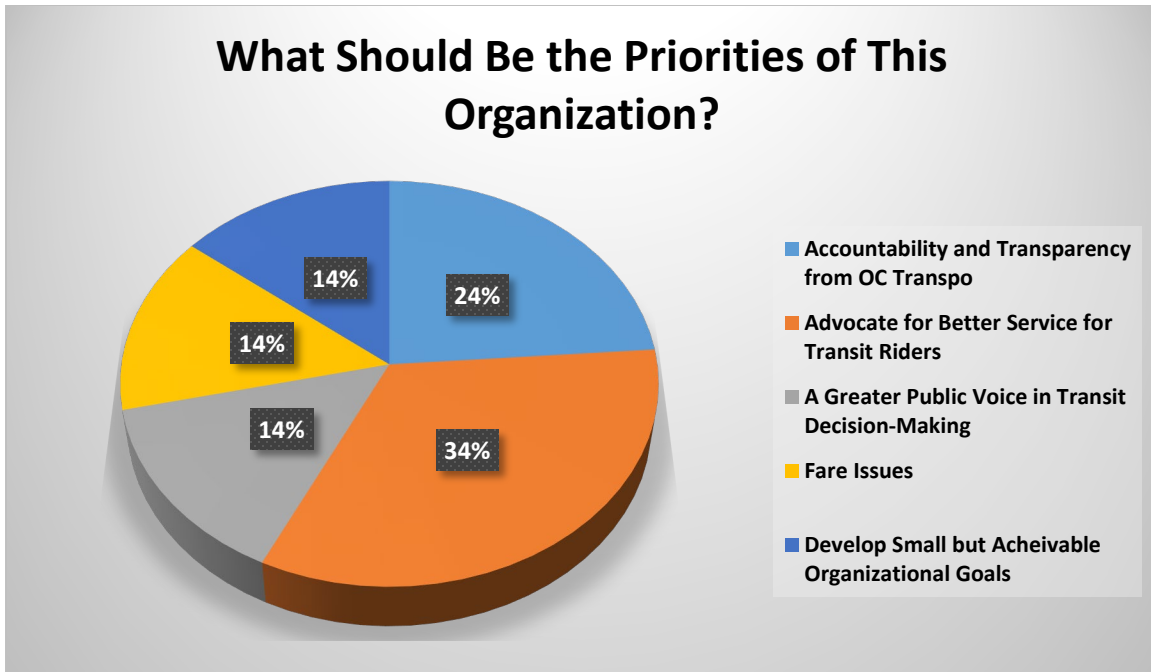
- “Bus stops need to be maintained better.”
- “Transit stations need to be more accessible, elevators are an issue.”
- “More foldable seats so that wheelchairs can fit.”
- “The beeping when lowering the wheelchair ramp or front of the bus is too loud. Loud sounds can be harmful to people with brain injuries or hearing problems.”
- “Deal with overcrowding on buses.”
- “Site tour of Para Transpo booking centre.”
- “Have substitute drivers—not cancelled buses.”
- “Better snow clearing at bus stops.”
- “More snow clearing near bus stops.”
- “Shorter distances between stops and connections.”
- “Make it easy to book Para Transpo online. The current phone system is simply unworkable.”
- “Community consultation for placement of bus stops. More shelters!”
- “Have loading areas specifically for person with disabilities. The new LRT is going to be a horrible crush for anyone with mobility and/or anxiety issues.”
- “Improve transit station design to decrease steps/walking distance—current stations are optimized for buses not for people. They need to be designed for easy transfers.”



Comments

- “Raise the cost of parking to finance it.”
- “Increase ridership! How? It’s a chicken or egg problem. Improve service so workers will want to use it. Make car rides unattractive. Find ways to make it everyone’s problem and solution.”
- “Shift more of the operation costs to the tax base again.”
- “Toll the 417.”
- “Discounted passes for the summer for full time (September-April) students.”
- “Lower fares/expand low-income pass system of instead of age based discounts (not all seniors are low income!), or just free transit.”
- “Congestion charges? Increased parking fees downtown.”
- “Pilot testing to see if free transit is affordable.”
- “Gas tax, raise parking fares, empower the union, and stop putting road maintenance as a transit expense.”
- “Toll highway’s and downtown streets during peak hours.”
- “Low ticket and pass prices.”
- “More window time.”
- “Toll the park-and-rides, and use it to fund the Equipass.”
- “Free central transit (like Pittsburgh)—make car users pay.”
- “Encourage large companies to purchase discounted passes (monthly) for all employees—get more people to take the bus. Like the UOttawa student pass.”
- “Make the family day pass easier to buy! And publicize it!”
- “Focus transit system on reliability NOT coverage.”
- “A congestion charge on cars downtown.”
- “Better fare integration with STO and route integration to Gatineau.”
- “Raise taxes, obviously.”

- “Leverage OC Transpo real estate to make new revenue streams.”
- “3 day or 7 day passes instead of just monthly ones.”
- “Look abroad at other cities the same size as Ottawa to see what works, i.e. Dublin.”



Comments

- “LRT and LRT connections—make sure they work for riders, not RTG.”
- “Change OC Transpo’s staff attitude to emphasize respect for riders and prioritizing their needs.”
- “Advocate for elderly transit users.”
- “Be able to lobby for accountability and transparency.”
- “Better services for transit users.”
- “Remove the restrictive expiry dates imposed on the vouchers handed out by social organizations to people at meetings.”
- “Be a voice for transit users.”
- “Accountability, transparency, and cooperation with other organizations.”
- “Be a leader for transit users and partner with OC Transpo.”
- “Addressing the O-Train’s shutdown for Carleton students.”
- “Green transit.”
- “No more yearly price increases without a corresponding increase in service.”
- “Building a mass membership.”
- “Be an advocate as well as a listener for all transit users.”
- “Be a growing body of governance for transit users.”
- “Rider-centred communication!”
- “Priorities should more access to public communication.”
- “Give the public more voice in the decision making.”
- “Review OC Transpo service improvements request reports.”
- “More frequent rapid transit in all areas of the city.”
- “Buses on time.”
- “Transit rider rights.”

- “Low prices.”
- “Identifying small but achievable goals.”
- “Encourage transit planners to formulate a forum to allow riders to express concerns and follow through with change, i.e. transparency/validation.”
- “We need bus routes on Montreal Road between Rideau Street and Blair, and to develop and promote where changes to bus routes require public consultation.”
- “Fire all current OC Transpo Transit planners.”
- “Transition assistance to LRT—major congestion at start of LRT East and West, and feeder routes need to be managed.”
- “Communication between OC Transpo, City of Ottawa, and Ottawa Transit Riders.”
- “Find alternatives to Presto, and making it respect users right to privacy.”
- “More frequent rapid transit in all areas of the city.”
- “Advocate for a world-class transit system at a fair price.”
- “Speak with drivers—they know first-hand the issues behind reliability.”
- “Getting the mayor to recognize there is a problem! He lives on the #87 line and says its great as a regular user, but it is not.”
- “Formulate clear demands that we will push OC Transpo for.”
- “Fare reduction! We walk longer to bus stops and pay more! Unfair.”
- “Call out the hypocrisy and neglect of politicians/decision-makers.”
- “Be truthful. Be upfront. Begin again with an oversight organization.”