



Hamilton

INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members Public Works Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	May 13, 2019
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Scheduling and Safety Concerns with DARTS (PW19038) (City Wide) (Outstanding Business List Item)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Dennis Guy (905) 546-2424 Ext. 1858
SUBMITTED BY:	Debbie Dalle Vedove Director, Transit Public Works Department
SIGNATURE:	

COUNCIL DIRECTION

Public Works Committee, at its meeting of September 17, 2018 approved the following:

- Jonathan Jones, respecting Safety and Scheduling Concerns with DARTS (Item 6.4)
 - Jonathan Jones addressed the Committee respecting Safety and Scheduling Concerns with DARTS.
 - The delegation provided by Jonathan Jones, respecting Safety and Scheduling Concerns with DARTS, was received.
 - Staff were directed to review the concerns respecting DARTS safety and scheduling raised by Jonathan Jones, and report back to the Public Works Committee.

This Information Report has been prepared by staff to address “the concerns respecting DARTS safety and scheduling raised by Jonathan Jones, and report back to the Public Works Committee”.

INFORMATION

Concern: ProMaster vans are not practical for oversized wheelchairs. The design has seats along both sides (often towards the front) and a narrow ramp up, which makes it more difficult for individuals in wheelchairs to position themselves.

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

**SUBJECT: Scheduling and Safety Concerns with DARTS
(PW19038) (City Wide) - Page 2 of 3**

Response:

- The standard ProMaster has a 34-inch ramp and the extended ProMaster is a 36-inch rear loading ramp. These ramps are wider than the ramps on our conventional fleet and therefore provide a bit more room to manoeuvre in and out of given the layout of the vehicles.
- The seats along the sides flip up to allow oversized wheelchairs.
- Passengers are able to drive up rear ramp into position.

Concern: DARTS scheduling should be brought back in-house. DARTS is refusing rides due to overbooking/double-booking and are wait listing clients too far out.

Response:

- The scheduling team works with clients to try and accommodate ride time requests; rides that we are unable to schedule at the time of the request are placed on a wait list.
- Our records (electronically-tracked performance data) show that refusal numbers are down since 2016. The combination of changing fleet composition and rapidly rising ride requests presents scheduling challenges that we work to improve on a day-to-day basis.
- We have experienced a significant increase in ridership over the last few years and are trying to maintain and/or increase service levels within approved budgets.

Concern: Employees of the subcontractor (Hamilton Cab) talk on their cell phones during passenger load and/or transport.

Response:

- Passengers should report incidents of poor service to us, noting vehicle number and time of day. We can be reached by calling 905-529-1212 or by emailing ats@hamilton.ca
- We immediately follow up with DARTS (who contacts their subcontractor) for corrective action when we receive a complaint.

Concern: ProMaster does not have the capacity to transport as many passengers as DARTS buses.

Response:

- This is true, but as outlined in report PW16015, presented to Public Works Committee in February 2016, we found that 70% of our rides carry only one mobility device at a time, and therefore we could move to smaller vehicles such as the MV-1s and ProMasters.
- Council approved our recommendation to increase the accessible and non-accessible van fleet and reduce the bus fleet.

**SUBJECT: Scheduling and Safety Concerns with DARTS
(PW19038) (City Wide) - Page 3 of 3**

Concern: Walkers are not always tied down, putting passengers at risk.

Response:

- Walkers in MV-1's and vans are to be placed in the trunk of the vehicle.
- ProMasters have a place in the back of vehicle with tie-downs to keep them secure.
- Passengers should report incidents of a walker not being tied down, noting vehicle number and time of day, so that we can follow up with DARTS. We can be reached by calling 905-529-1212 or by emailing ats@hamilton.ca

Concern: Fire safety is negatively impacted by the ProMaster design and breaches of safety rules.

Response:

- Evacuation is discussed during driver training; in the event of an emergency, both the rear door and the side door are exit points.
- All vehicles are equipped with cutting tools to cut safety belts if an evacuation is necessary.

Concern: DARTS is sending three separate vehicles to one location.

Response:

- Smaller vehicles mean more vehicles to locations for passengers.
- As outlined in report PW16015, presented to Public Works Committee in February 2016, the instances of large groups travelling were few enough that they could be handled cost effectively with multiple vehicles.
- We are working with groups to help them get used to the possibility of multiple vehicles arriving by promoting use of the "Where's My Ride" and "Next Bus" mobile applications to track their rides.

Concern: The suspension system in ProMaster vehicles is substandard and passengers in the back of the vehicle are jolted around.

Response:

- The ProMasters are equipped with an enhanced suspension system designed to stabilize and level the vehicle. It provides a more comfortable ride by absorbing road shock and improving roll stability.
- While we do not have hard data regarding this concern, anecdotally, requests for a front seat have always been greater with vans than with buses.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

N/A