




Hamilton

# INFORMATION REPORT

<b>TO:</b>	Chair and Members Public Works Committee
<b>COMMITTEE DATE:</b>	April 3, 2023
<b>SUBJECT/REPORT NO:</b>	HSR Public Safety Update (PW23025) (City Wide)
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	City Wide
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<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

## COUNCIL DIRECTION

N/A

## INFORMATION

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an overview regarding public safety measures on HSR, including the launch of a customer awareness safety campaign.

### Background

Safety is the top priority for staff and customers on HSR, and Transit uses a variety of measures to promote and maintain public and Operator safety.

Acts of violence, discrimination, hate and other types of inappropriate behaviors on transit are unacceptable and HSR is committed to providing a safe and welcoming environment for all. Transit should be a safe public space for the community at large. The development of appropriate policies, programs and education are vital steps to achieving this.

### HSR Safety Technology

All HSR buses are equipped with computer-aided dispatch (CAD) software that connects buses to the transit control center and enables the control center to see the location of the buses in real-time (known as automated vehicle location or AVL). Among other benefits, the system provides important information for emergency response.

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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.

All HSR buses are equipped with a closed-circuit camera system which records both video and audio with multiple placements in the vehicle. The video system is useful to identify offenders involved in on-board incidents and assist police with investigations. Video footage is stored for 72 hours.

#### HSR Staffing, Policies and Procedures

The Frank A. Cooke Transit Terminal currently uses a third-party security guard vendor that is managed under contract by the City's Energy, Fleet and Facilities Management Division. The primary role of the security guards at this location includes maintaining a presence on the terminal property 24 hours a day, through both technology observation and foot patrols of the terminal and platform areas. Security guards also engage the support and response emergency services (medical, fire and law enforcement) to promote overall public safety.

Transit Operators are expected to be professional and provide quality customer service, while safely operating a transit bus in varying weather and traffic conditions and adhering to the schedule. HSR ensures these expectations are met through recruitment, training, customer feedback and performance management.

It is important to acknowledge that Operators themselves are vulnerable to conflict in a seated position and sometimes their personal safety is compromised in dealing with disruptive customers. Incidents of this nature may result in an Operator escalating the situation to the Control Centre and on road Inspector staff, or 911 calls based on the severity of the incident. When observed or alerted, Operators also aid customers in medical or critical emergencies by contacting 911 for assistance. As may be necessary, the City's Trespass By-Law may be used for both property that is owned/operated by the City for HSR operations, and well as HSR buses.

The most serious threats to safety for customers and Operators involve criminal activities which take place on transit and in the community alike. Criminal activities are a police matter and as such, they are investigated and processed by Hamilton Police Services (HPS). HSR cooperates fully with HPS and will provide video footage upon request to assist with criminal investigations, noting investigation outcomes are not shared with HSR.

In January 2023, HSR began tracking contacts related to bias and discrimination. If sufficient information is provided, HSR will action the information as appropriate to the event. This involves internal action steps but does not include reporting to external agencies.

### Courtesy Stop Request Program

HSR offers customers a courtesy stop request program. After dark, customers may request for a non-stop location (i.e.: between two regular bus stops), and the Operator will honour the request, providing it is safe to do so in the Operator's professional discretion.

The customer is asked to make the request at least one stop ahead of the desired exit and to exit by the front door. The program is available on local routes, but is not typically done on B Line or Route 20 - A Line since these are express service routes

### Customer Awareness Safety Campaign

Following a hate incident onboard an HSR bus in early August 2022, HSR consulted with corporate and community stakeholders, including HPS and Hamilton Anti-Racism Resource Centre to determine next steps. One initial outcome is HSR's safety awareness campaign, similar to campaigns used by other Transit agencies, such as "See Something Say Something".

HSR's "Speak Up, Speak Out" campaign aims to encourage transit customers to step forward and report harassment and hate concerns directly to Hamilton police by either calling 911 for an active event, or by calling the non-emergency reporting number. The ad also features a QR code that links to the non-emergency police reporting form. The campaign launches in the spring and includes messaging at transit shelters, onboard every bus, on HSR's digital channels (i.e.: website and social media) and through customer service channels. A sample "Speak Up, Speak Out" campaign poster is attached as Appendix "A" to Report PW23025.

HSR is also keen to support Hamilton for All, a community-led anti-discrimination campaign led by the "No Hate in the Hammer Coalition" that will launch in the spring of 2023. The campaign aims to create awareness about discrimination and hate, as well as build capacity to combat it in Hamilton. The campaign is co-developed by the City of Hamilton, Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council, Hamilton Anti-Racism Resource Centre, Hamilton Community Legal Clinic, and No Hate in the Hammer. The City of Hamilton is preparing a broad communication plan, and HSR plans to feature campaign messaging on its social media channels.

### Measuring Customer Perception of Safety

The HSRNow app is one channel used by HSR to collect customer satisfaction data. HSR hosts a customer survey to "rate my ride", and in 2022, 302 customers completed the survey which includes a question on feelings of safety. To the question "I felt safe", 62% of responding customers felt either "very safe" or "safe", which is two points above the minimum target.

The customer satisfaction survey has expanded to include in-person data collection and HSR will continue to monitor customer safety perception.

### Corporate Training

Working with the Corporate Organizational Development and Learning Team, HSR reviewed existing training materials to include in both existing Operator training as well as new Operator refresher training that launched in March 2023. The two Operator training offerings include the protocol for gender identity and gender expression and features a full day of non-violent crisis intervention training (for conflict resolution and de-escalation). Operator training also covers customer service and accessible customer service standards in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

HSR will leverage upcoming corporate-wide EDI training planned for the latter part of 2023 which includes a module specific to anti-racism / anti-oppression. In addition, the Hamilton for All campaign website will feature an anti-hate toolkit which HSR will review to incorporate into ongoing staff communication such as internal electronic boards, newsletters, staff notices and customer service knowledge articles.

### Transit Safety App

An upcoming report will address a Council direction to review options for a transit safety app within the context of HSR's safety program (Outstanding Business List item MM, General Issues Committee 22-018 Item 16).

### Conclusion

Transit plays an important role in city-building and offers the community an important public space. HSR honours the City and Council's equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) priority, which is echoed in HSR's EDI guiding principle, and further formalized through HSR's desired outcome statement "everyone has a right to feel welcome and safe while using transit."

HSR continues to take steps to improve public safety and is committed to implementing important corporate initiatives that aim to mitigate hate, and promote equity, diversity and inclusion.

### **APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED**

Appendix "A" to Report PW23025 - "Speak Up, Speak Out" campaign poster