

Members' Motion submitted to Transit Committee

Meeting date: 12 March 2026

Moved by: Councillor Riley Brockington (on behalf of R. King)

Motion Title: Motion – Councillor R. Brockington – Implement of a communication protocol

ACS File No.: ACS2026-OCC-CCS-0015

Ward: City-wide

Motion d'un membre soumise au Comité du transport en commun

Date de la réunion : le 12 mars 2026

Motion de : Riley Brockington, conseiller (au nom de R. King)

Titre de la motion : Motion – R. Brockington, conseiller – Mise en œuvre d'un protocole de communication

Dossier n° (ACS) : ACS2026-OCC-CCS-0015

Quartier : À l'échelle de la ville

MOTION

WHEREAS OC Transpo regularly provides reports, briefings, and memoranda to Transit Commission and Members of Council on system performance, service delivery targets, and planned service changes; and

WHEREAS recurring reliability issues have intensified in recent months, including as a result of winter service cuts, and are being reported across multiple OC Transpo routes city-wide; and

WHEREAS these issues include peak-period cancellations, extended gaps in service, and bus bunching, which undermine rider confidence and the City's transit mode-shift objectives; and

WHEREAS riders across the city are experiencing persistent issues with real-time service information, including last-minute trip cancellations that are not accurately or timely reflected in real-time tracking tools, commonly referred to by riders as "ghost buses"; and

WHEREAS while system-level performance data is routinely shared, Councillor offices are frequently not informed in advance of temporary or recurring trip

cancellations, or ongoing reliability patterns at the route or trip level, limiting their ability to respond accurately to resident inquiries or proactively support affected riders; and

WHEREAS these conditions prevent riders from making informed travel decisions, result in missed work start times, prolonged waits at unsheltered stops, increased reliance on taxis or ride-hailing, and raise broader concerns related to trust, transparency, and system credibility; and

WHEREAS staff have advised that certain temporary service adjustments are intended to stabilize operations and support service delivery targets, but these changes can create critical peak-hour service gaps for riders with fixed schedules;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that OC Transpo staff be directed to implement a consistent, standardized communication protocol -using existing tools and resources -to complement existing reporting and notify all Councillor offices of:

- a) temporary or planned trip cancellations that form part of service adjustments, winter service changes, or recurring reliability patterns;**
- b) recurring route reliability issues; and**
- c) significant schedule adjustments with anticipated customer impact, for awareness and constituent support; and**

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that OC Transpo staff report back to the Transit Committee on how real-time service information is managed, including:

- d) how last-minute cancellations are communicated within real-time information systems, including what triggers updates and where delays occur;**
- e) what improvements are being made to ensure real-time tools reflect service changes as early and accurately as possible; and**
- f) how riders who rely on specific trips are proactively informed when temporary cancellations are introduced, extended, or reassessed; and**

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that OC Transpo staff be directed to ensure that network stabilization efforts do not unintentionally eliminate essential peak-period access for riders with fixed work start times, and that any such trade-offs are transparently identified and reviewed.

MOTION

ATTENDU QU'OC Transpo fournit régulièrement à la Commission du transport en commun et aux membres du Conseil des rapports, des séances d'information et des notes de service sur la performance du réseau, les cibles de prestation de services et les changements de service prévus; et

ATTENDU QUE les problèmes de fiabilité récurrents se sont intensifiés au cours des derniers mois, notamment en raison de la réduction des services d'hiver, et sont signalés pour plusieurs circuits d'OC Transpo dans toute la ville; et

ATTENDU QUE ces problèmes se déclinent en annulations en période de pointe, en lacunes accrues dans les services et en formation de pelotons d'autobus, ce qui sape la confiance des usagères et usagers et compromet les objectifs d'évolution vers le transport en commun de la Ville; et

ATTENDU QUE les usagères et usagers de toute la ville rencontrent des problèmes persistants entourant l'information en temps réel sur le service, notamment des annonces incorrectes ou tardives dans les outils de suivi en temps réel en cas d'annulation de dernière minute, communément appelés par les usagères et usagers « autobus fantômes »; et

ATTENDU QUE si les données de performance du système leur sont communiquées de façon routinière, les bureaux des conseillères et conseillers ne sont souvent pas informés à l'avance des annulations temporaires ou récurrentes ni des problèmes de fiabilité qui perdurent pour certains circuits ou trajets, ce qui limite leur capacité à répondre avec exactitude aux demandes de renseignements des résidentes et résidents ou à aider de manière proactive les usagères et usagers affectés; et

ATTENDU QUE ces conditions empêchent les usagères et usagers de prendre de bonnes décisions pour leurs déplacements, entraînent des retards au travail, de longues attentes à des arrêts non abrités ainsi qu'une dépendance accrue aux taxis et services de transport par hélage, et créent des problèmes plus généraux de confiance dans le système, de transparence et de crédibilité; et

ATTENDU QUE le personnel a indiqué que certains ajustements temporaires de service visent à stabiliser les opérations et à atteindre les cibles de prestation des services, mais que ces modifications peuvent entraîner d'importantes lacunes de service aux heures de pointe pour les usagères et usagers ayant des horaires fixes;

PAR CONSÉQUENT, IL EST RÉSOLU de demander au personnel d'OC Transpo de mettre en place un protocole de communication suivi et normalisé, en utilisant les outils et ressources déjà en place, pour compléter les rapports et informer tous les bureaux des conseillères et conseillers :

- a) des annulations de trajets temporaires ou planifiées s'inscrivant dans des ajustements de service, dans des modifications du service d'hiver ou dans des tendances récurrentes en matière de fiabilité;
- b) des problèmes de fiabilité récurrents touchant les circuits;

- c) des ajustements d'horaire importants aux répercussions attendues pour les usagères et usagers, pour pouvoir en informer les résidentes et résidents et leur venir en aide;**

IL EST EN OUTRE RÉSOLU QUE le personnel d'OC Transpo fasse rapport au Comité du transport en commun sur la façon dont l'information en temps réel sur le service est gérée, notamment :

- d) la communication des annulations de dernière minute dans les systèmes d'information en temps réel, y compris ce qui déclenche les mises à jour et les endroits où des retards se produisent;**
- e) les améliorations en cours pour garantir que les outils en temps réel rendent compte des changements de service le plus tôt et le plus exactement possible;**
- f) la communication proactive aux usagères et usagers de trajets particuliers des annulations temporaires qui sont introduites, prolongées ou réévaluées;**

IL EST EN OUTRE RÉSOLU de demander au personnel d'OC Transpo de s'assurer que les mesures visant à stabiliser le réseau ne privent pas, par inadvertance, les usagères et usagers ayant des horaires de travail fixes d'un accès essentiel au transport en commun aux heures de pointe, et que tout compromis de cette nature soit déterminé et examiné de manière transparente.

TRANSIT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

OC Transpo provides regular updates following established processes and procedures to ensure Council and customers are informed. The real-time tools noted below provide the latest information on service impacts and trip cancellations and remain the best resource for customers seeking information about their trip. Every effort is made to avoid cancellations or adjustments to trips, but as fleet and resource availability fluctuates, and based on a number of uncontrollable external factors (ex. weather, traffic congestion, etc.), there may be a need to make last-minute or temporary adjustments. Staff's focus is on trying to find resources to accommodate these trips, and there is not additional capacity to expand further on the current reporting.

Should this motion be passed by Council, staff will work on a system (with existing resources) of proactive communication on pre-cancelled trips. Staff continue to explore ways to share more data and increase transparency on our bus service delivery.

Given the current challenges to our fleet availability, staff in the Transit Operations Control Centre (TOCC) are faced with minute-by-minute difficult decisions as to which - and how many - trips must be cancelled for a specific service period, knowing that these decisions will impact customers' commutes. Staff follow a standardized process where they prioritize maintaining service on first and last trips, school routes, and less frequent routes. However, given the noted challenges, sometimes those trips may be affected.

Any change to a bus route will be updated on real time tools and readily available for customers. Due to the ongoing bus service delivery challenges, OC Transpo has been providing weekly updates and regular media availabilities to keep Councillors and the public informed of efforts to address ongoing challenges. These weekly updates include information on bus service reliability, undelivered trips, and the number of scheduled trips and reasons impacting trip delivery are provided. This information is also posted on Open Data.

OC Transpo also provides Council and Transit Committee with regular updates via memorandum, email and the OC Transpo Update presentation at Transit Committee. Generally, when a change to a number of scheduled trips is made, care is taken to ensure it does not impact one ward more than another, and mitigations are made to minimize the impacts to priority trips. In the event of a significant impact on service affecting multiple routes or the O-Train system, there is an established communications process where customers are notified through a range of communications channels depending on the severity of the service disruption. At any time, customers can use real-time data tools to monitor their trips, including:

- Texting 560560
- Calling 613-560-1000
- Using Transit, the preferred mobile app, or other third-party apps
- Transit information displays at stations
- Next departures widget or alert page on [octranspo.com](https://www.octranspo.com)
- Information phones and video chat at ticket machines
- Social media on X or Bluesky

Depending on the expected duration of the event, Council may be updated by email, memorandum, or, when the issue is expected to continue for more than 48 hours, OC Transpo may schedule a media availability or technical briefing, depending on the complexity and severity of the situation.

OC Transpo is committed to ensuring Councillors and customers are made aware of planned changes to routes and those routes' timetables. Detailed information regarding quarterly service changes is distributed to Council by memorandum approximately three weeks in advance, and the same information is published on [octranspo.com](https://www.octranspo.com). Scheduling information is also shared in advance with developers that manage real-time tools, like Google Maps and Transit app.

Additionally, Councillors have access to a dedicated email inbox to share their concerns and resident feedback. OC Transpo managers are available to meet with Councillors at their request to discuss specific concerns related to transit service in their Wards and to work towards solutions.

Real-time service information

Last-minute cancellations are determined and made in the Transit Operation Control Centre (TOCC). When a trip is cancelled, the departure information for that trip, at all stops, is flagged as cancelled. All OC Transpo systems that provide real-time data will then show the departure time for that trip as scheduled time with a strikethrough. If a trip is reinstated, the strikethrough is removed and real-time departure information is shown again until the trip departs or passes that stop.

Alerts for a cancelled trip are sent 10 minutes prior to the departure time of the trip. An alert cannot be “recalled”, and the TOCC is continuously striving to fill all canceled trips. For this reason, alerts are sent only when it is very unlikely that the trip will be filled.

These alerts are posted to octranspo.com and are sent out to systems and independent developers via a real-time feed. The preferred OC Transpo mobile app, Transit, has a comprehensive alerts system that enables app users to select routes for push cancelled trip notification alerts based off the OC Transpo feed.

When reliable real-time data is available, our travel tools indicate real-time departures on screens and via 560560, this is marked by an asterisk. Real-time information in the Transit app is shown in bold with a pulsating Wi-Fi symbol. When there is no real-time data available for a route, trip, or stop, the travel tools will provide the scheduled departure time.

All travel tools look for and indicate the best prediction for departures based on data sources, such as:

- GPS locations
- Stops and the distance between
- Bus routing
- Traffic patterns
- Service dates
- Scheduled trips
- Buses in service

In terms of improvements, there has been a recent investment in a generational update to the control and dispatch system for operations. All buses are now equipped with a system that indicates the status and real-time location of buses that are in service. This updated system will ultimately lead to more reliable information for customers.

Further improvements in progress include:

- A new system of entering unplanned detour information into the OC Transpo real-time open data feed is currently being tested. This will allow detours to be

shown in real-time route and trip data, as well as alerts. It will also allow for continued real-time predictions and vehicle locations throughout the detour position of a trip. Currently the real-time for detoured portions of trips is not available and the vehicle position disappears

- The existing OC Transpo real-time service alert open data feed is being modified to carry more data and adhere to the General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS-RT) standard. This will allow easier integration into third-party apps and OC Transpo travel tools, improving the number of systems that can be found as well as how alerts are displayed
- A project is underway to replace the existing OC Transpo travel planner with a real-time travel planner which would display real-time departures, cancelled trips and live detours without the need for human intervention. This will improve the customer experience

OC Transpo continues to consider new methods of publishing data to expand options to customers, including:

- Exploring various ways of publishing real-time information
- Assessing developer preferences
- Reviewing customer feedback
- Expanding the number of key performance indicators published on our website and to Open Data
- Reaching out to peer agencies across the world

Network changes and their effect on customers

If any planned temporary service reductions are required, they have the potential to affect mobility for workers. No reductions will be made without careful consideration of the effects on travellers, and any reduction will be reviewed against alternatives to identify the option that has the least overall negative impact on transit customers.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There is no financial implication to this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Legal Services is aware of the Motion and will be in attendance to answer any questions.

DISPOSITION

If carried at Committee, this motion will be submitted to City Council for consideration on April 8, 2026.

Staff in the Transit Services Department will implement the recommendations in this motion, as appropriate.