

Northumberland Accessibility Advisory Committee

Minutes

October 12, 2023

555 Courthouse Road, Cobourg

By Zoom video conference - 10:00am – 11:30am

Members present: Bob Robertson, Christine Bayer, Hope Bergeron, Jason Ducharme, Selena Forsyth, Bobby-Jo Preston (Chair), John Logel (County Councillor) Andrea Nicholson (staff liaison)

Regrets: Stephanie Ash

Guests: Ried Boyd (Hop In Technologies) Erica Benjamin (Hop In Technologies), TJ Flynn (Investment Attraction Specialist), Todd Farrell (Manager, Natural Heritage)

The meeting was called to order at 10:03am.

1. Approval of meeting notes from September 14, 2023

Moved by Hope, seconded by Jason, that the minutes from September 14, 2023 be approved. **Carried.**

2. Action items and follow-up from September 14, 2023

Action 1: Andrea will arrange for the Proclamation request for International Day of Persons with Disabilities to go to Council in November. **Completed.**

Action 2: Andrea will meet with Communications to discuss awareness messaging for International Day of Persons with Disabilities. **Complete.** See update under item 3. iv below)

3. New Business

i Transit Pilot update (TJ, Reid)

Reid (Hop In Technologies) provided an update on the transit pilot project. (See attached presentation) TJ (County) reported that the transit pilot has been extended until November 2023 and that the purpose of the pilot is to collect and analyze data to present to Council for decision-making purposes.

ii Universal Trail update (Todd)

Todd reported on the progress of the new universal trail. The Porcupine Trail is located within the Woodland Trails and has a 375m loop and an 875 m loop. Horses and motorized vehicles will be prohibited on the Porcupine trail. The Natural Heritage team is working on finalizing trail data on grade and slope to prepare the trail information sign. The trail is open, but an official opening event will be planned after signage is in place.

Andrea reported that the universal trails in the County Forest are wilderness trails that remove as many accessibility barriers as possible for a variety of users. Users can view the trail information signs to determine which trails match their level of ability and interest. Andrea was consulted regarding the porcupine image for trail signs and made recommendations to improve recognition of the image selected.

iii Multi Year Accessibility Plan Q3 update (Andrea)

Andrea reported on the progress of the 2023 Accessibility Goals for Q3 (July - Sept 2023). See attached.

iv International Day of Persons with Disabilities December 3

Andrea reported having in initial meeting with Communications and discussed having a website banner with a link to the proclamation, social media posts, video display posts, intranet posting for staff, notice on Courthouse sign. Messaging will be finalized after United Nations announces the 2023 theme. December 3 falls on a Sunday therefore internal postings will be planned for December 1 and external postings for December 3.

v Accessibility Coordinator update (Andrea)

Andrea reported the following:

- The Human Resources policy HR 4.1.4 on Accommodating Disabilities was approved on August 1, 2023. NAAC members were invited to review the policy in July and provide feedback.

Andrea requested that Committee members provide questions they have regarding the Elgin Street and GPL/NCAM major capital projects.

Action item: Andrea will forward the NAAC's questions regarding the Elgin Street and GPL/NCAM major capital projects to the County staff who will attend the November 9, 2023 meeting and include the Committee's previous recommendations.

vi Proposed dates for 2024 meetings

The Committee agreed to the proposed dates.

January 11, 2024
February 8, 2024
March 14, 2024
April 11, 2024
May 9, 2024
June 13, 2024
September 12, 2024
October 10, 2024
November 14, 2024

Action item: Andrea will send 2024 calendar invitations to NAAC members.

4. Adjournment

The meeting was terminated at 11:26am

Next Meeting: November 9, 2023

Upcoming 2023 regular meetings:

- November 9, 2023
- No meetings in July, August or December

Technology Driven Rural Transportation

Connecting Northumberland Communities
with each other and with Regional
Networks

Boyd Reid
Hop In Technologies



Table of Contents

- 1) Overview: Integrating Infrastructure with Technology
- 2) Hop In Technologies - Logistics Software Company
- 3) Mobility Issues Impacting Workforce/ Economy
- 4) Pioneering Pilot - Northumberland Manufacturing Association (NMA) Rides
- 5) Pilot Extensions and Expansions: Commuter Connect - Northumberland County Wide
- 6) Commuter Connect Metrics
- 7) Commuter Connect: Hear from the Community
- 8) Integrating Infrastructure with Technology
- 9) Closing: Hop In Technologies Contact

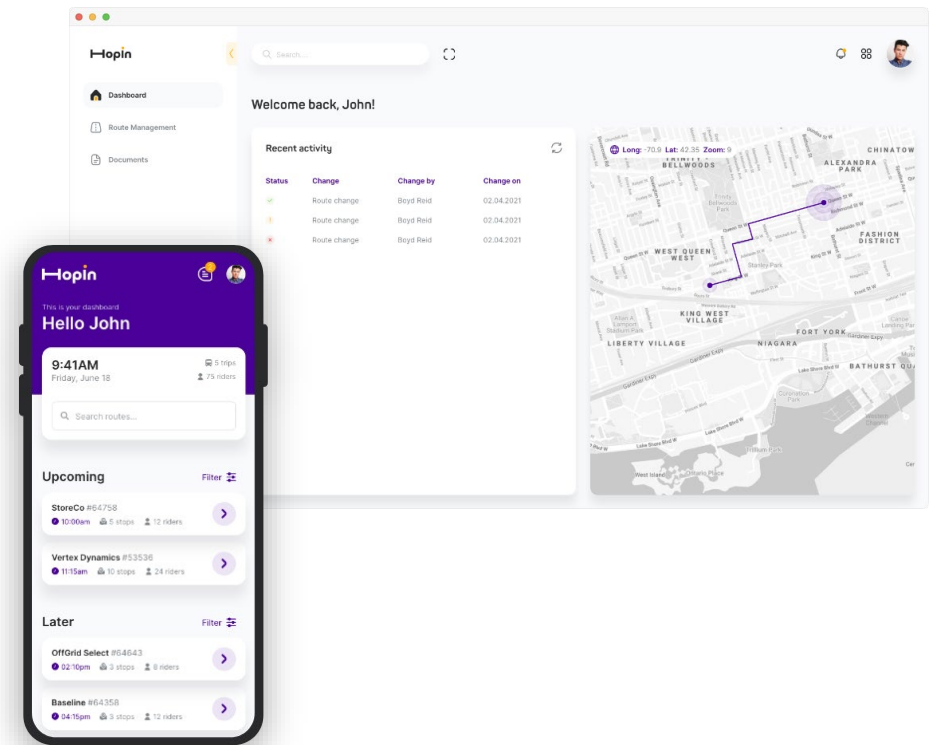
Overview: Integrating Infrastructure with Technology

- Collaboration of integrating technology and infrastructure
- Solution-based partnership tailored to community needs
- Improved mobility and connectivity
- Supporting economy with job and recruitment access



Hop In Technologies – Logistics Software Company

- Mobilizes excess transportation capacity to help people get to work
- Data driven routes and schedules operated through logistics platform
- Setting up Commuter Connect
 - Analyzed data from multiple sources
 - Determined route to meet a high volume of initial demand
 - Coordinated and deployed local transportation operators



Mobility Issues Impacting Workers/Economy

- Growing need for transit options
- Limited community connectivity
- No access to regional networks:
 - Metrolinx/GO Transit
 - VIA Rail Canada
- Impacting access to:
 - Employment
 - Education/Training
 - Medical services
 - Communities of Interest



Pioneering Pilot – Northumberland Manufacturing Association (NMA) Rides!

Objectives:

- Help workers commute to and from work
- Support late night shifts for:
manufacturing/medical/tourism
- Recruitment strategy to attract workers



Pioneering Pilot – Northumberland Manufacturing Association (NMA) Rides!

Scale:

Based on the success of the NMA Rides program (commuting pilot with a local manufacturing organization), the region of Northumberland County in partnership with state/provincial funders opted to subsume and expand the project, increasing capacity and availability of service lines throughout the county. Commuter Connect launched in September of 2022.

As of October 1st, 2023

1,250+ people registered on payments portal

3,500+ rides since launch



Continued ...

Value Delivered:

Through partnership with Hop In, employers participating in the NMA Rides program were able to realize the following benefits:

- Increase in ridership by 413% since initial program launch
- Targeted hiring & training of low-income communities, resulting in direct hires
- Dedicated routes to service previously inaccessible night and overnight shifts (~30% of rides)
- Expansion to additional geographies and sectors (healthcare) based on program success.

Website: www.commuterconnect.ca



Pilot Extension and Expansion – County Wide

- Funding Partnership: Metrolinx and Northumberland County
- Hop In Technologies support for shuttling logistics platform and operations
- Ridership Survey (1,100):
 - Demonstrated passenger demand
 - Demonstrated local intermunicipal transit services interests
 - Favor for early weekday services to support commuting
 - Necessity for connection to the GO Transit network



Continued ...

- Pilot Launched September 2022
 - 12 month commitment
 - Continue to collect data on ridership
 - Further define the extent of local need
 - Identify growth opportunities/expansion
 - Help inform future decisions
 - Northumberland travel line: Cobourg, Colborne, Brighton, Campbellford
 - Durham travel line with connection to Oshawa GO Transit station
 - Trips to 4-5x daily (Depends on commuter line)
 - Potential to be self sustaining over time



Commuter Connect – Metrics

As of September 23rd, 2023:

- 1250 people registered on the payments portal
 - Up 4.4% from September 1st, 2023
 - Up 11.5% from Jan 1, 2023
- 513 Northumberland Line Rider Credits purchased
 - Up 11.5% from September 1st, 2023
 - Up 575% from Jan 1, 2023
- 3055 Durham Line Rider Credits purchased
 - Up 20.8% from September 1st, 2023
 - Up 337% from Jan 1, 2023

Continued ...

- 505 Inter County Line/ Northumberland Line Rides
 - Up 13% from September 1st, 2023
 - Up 801.8% from Jan 1, 2023
- 2961 Durham Line Rides
 - Up 20.3% from September 1st, 2023
 - Up 356.6% from Jan 1, 2023

General Conclusions:

- People have become more reliant, higher volume of Rider Credits sold during the month in comparison to previous months



Continued ...

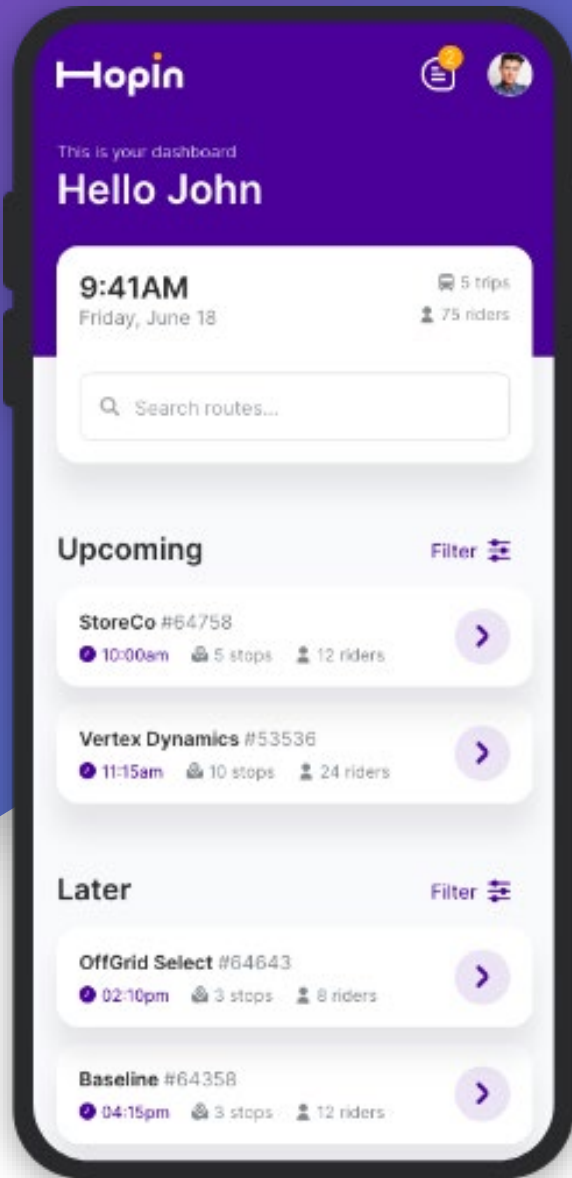
- More people buying for others meaning they are bringing friends and family using their Rider Credits
(Note: this is not capture in our payments portal number)
- Important highlight: Public services are also using Commuter Connect to transport clients
- This also contributes to the higher volume of purchased Rider Credits



Commuter Connect - Hear from the Community

- “Commuter Connect provides fantastic service. I have much appreciation for the accuracy in the shuttles showing up according to schedule, I hope it keeps going as this is exactly what Northumberland County needs”. (Sharon, Port Hope)
- “... Having access to Oshawa has made my life much easier”. (Shane, Colborne)
- “I don’t drive and wouldn’t be able to see my granddaughter without spending well over \$100, having this service especially for us older folks out in Northumberland is really making a difference. I hope to see this pilot grow and develop!” (Joy, Campbellford)





Hopin

Next Generation Transportation
Logistics.

www.hopintech.com



Northumberland County Multi-Year Accessibility Plan: 2023 Accessibility Goals – Q3 update

Acronyms

AC	Accessibility Coordinator
COMM	Communications
CSS-HS	Community and Social Services – Housing
HR	Human Resources
IT	Information Technology
MYAP	Multi-Year Accessibility Plan
NAAC	Northumberland Accessibility Advisory Committee
NH	Natural Heritage
PW-F	Public Works Facilities
PW-MCP	Public Works Major Capital Projects
PW-E	Public Works Engineering

See 2023 Accessibility Goals starting on page 2

2023 Accessibility Goals – Q3 update

General

Action item	Type: MYAP, Dept	Responsibility	Time frame for completion	Action plan or Status	Comments
Conduct an annual review of the Multi Year Accessibility Plan, and update the Plan as required	MYAP	HR (AC)	Q4		

Customer Service

Action item	Type: MYAP, Dept	Responsibility	Time frame for completion	Action plan or Status	Comments
Continue to receive and respond to accessibility feedback and address identified barriers in a timely manner	MYAP	HR (AC), all departments	ongoing	ongoing	Q1 – no feedback forms received in Q1 Q2 – positive feedback from a mother who reported on a waste driver’s interactions with her child who has a disability a disability
Explore and provide training on communicating using plain language	MYAP	HR (AC)	Q3 – expected completion Q4		Extended from 2022 to 2023 – started research in 2022 Q3 – 3 plain language workshops are planned (Oct/Nov) and 50-60 staff will be trained

2023 Accessibility Goals – Q3 update

Action item	Type: MYAP, Dept	Responsibility	Time frame for completion	Action plan or Status	Comments
Explore new technologies that support internal and external customer service	MYAP, ongoing	HR (AC)	ongoing	ongoing	Q1- exploring the possibility of additional assistive listening technologies for Reception and CSS lower desks Q2 – 2 additional assistive listening devices with hearing loops were added to the second wicket at each of the Main reception desk and Community and Social Services desk Q3 – captioning for Council meeting video recordings is being tested
Train employees in customer service facing roles to identify accessibility feedback (not always defined as such) and the procedure to address	MYAP, ongoing	HR (AC)	ongoing	ongoing	

2023 Accessibility Goals – Q3 update
Information and Communications

Action item	Type: MYAP, Dept	Responsibility	Time frame for completion	Action plan or Status	Comments
Develop branding guidelines that improve accessibility, including standardized accessible font sizes and style for emails, business cards, presentations	MYAP	COMM, HR (AC)	Q2 2023 – expected completion Q4	Partly complete in 2022	Extended from 2022 to 2023 Q3 – expected to be completed by the end of Q4
Develop and facilitate Accessible Presentations training	MYAP	HR (AC)	Q2 2023 expected completion Q4 (development)	In progress	(Moved from 2022 to 2023) Dependent on completion of guidelines above Q3 – development in progress

Employment

Action item	Type: MYAP, Dept	Responsibility	Time frame for completion	Action plan or Status	Comments
Review HR policies and practices to ensure applicants and employees with disabilities receive the supports they need	MYAP	HR and all departments	Q4		Q3 – HR 4.1.4 Accommodating Disabilities policy was updated

Design of Public Spaces / Built Environment

Action item	Type: MYAP, Dept	Responsibility	Time frame for completion	Action plan or Status	Comments
Improve accessibility of trail signage within Northumberland County Forest	MYAP	Natural Heritage	Q2		
Ensure that all new and redeveloped public spaces owned and/or operated by the County meet or exceed the requirements of DOPS.	MYAP, ongoing	PW-F, PW-MCP. PW-E	Ongoing		

Additional Initiatives

Action item	Type: MYAP, Dept	Responsibility	Time frame for completion	Action plan or Status	Comments
Conduct research (census, Canadian Health Survey) to better understand the types of disabilities and the number of people with different types of disabilities within the County	MYAP	HR (AC)	Q4		

2023 Accessibility Goals – Q3 update

Other

Action item	Type: MYAP, Dept	Responsibility	Time frame for completion	Action plan or Status	Comments
Work with community housing providers to support accessible housing improvements	MYAP	CSS-HS PW-F	Ongoing		
Proclaim week of May 28 – June 3 as National AccessAbility Week and promote accessibility through events to be determined.	MYAP, ongoing	HR (AC)	Q2 annually	complete	
Select County staff members to be awarded 2023 Helping Hands certificate (NAAC to select)	MYAP, ongoing	HR (AC)	Q2 annually	complete	
Proclaim December 3 as International Day of Persons with Disability and promote accessibility based on UN Theme for 2023	MYAP, ongoing	HR (AC)	Q4 annually		Q3 – proclamation request was sent to through the council meeting portal for approval in November
Conduct spot checks/audits for AODA compliance	MYAP, ongoing	HR (AC)	Ongoing		Q1 – checked the functioning of the 7 assistive listening devices at the customer service desks at 555 Courthouse and the POA offices

2023 Accessibility Goals – Q3 update

Other (unplanned)

(Note any new projects/activities not listed above)

Q1 - Added information to the accessibility webpage on how to access local services and support via 211 (by phone or website)

Q2 – Installed 2 additional assistive listening devices with hearing loops at 555 Courthouse Road at:

- the lowered counter at main Reception and
- the lowered counter at Community and Social Services customer service desk