

NORTH WEST TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

September 15, 2004

PRESENT: Bill Chaffey, Vice-Chair
Troy Mitchell
Gunther Seyffarth
Alastair Lawrie

ABSENT WITH
REGRETS: Phillip Cox
Ron McKinnon
Councillor Brad Johns

ALSO PRESENT: Mr. Ken Silver, Manager, Transit Planning & Development
Ms. Lori Patterson, Manager, Public Affairs, Metro Transit
Ms. Lisa Cormier, Metro Transit
Ms. Millie Hull, Legislative Assistant

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:0 p.m. in the Fenerty Room, Sackville Library, Sackville.

2. PRESENTATION

Ms. Lori Patterson, Manager, Public Affairs, Metro Transit introduced Ms. Lisa Cormier, also of Metro Transit, who assisted in the presentation. Ms. Patterson began her presentation on the Communications and Marketing of Metro Transit by referencing Metro Transit's mandate which was to provide service to the citizens of HRM within the core service area. She noted that the Marketing mandate was two-fold:

- to provide customer service information
- generate transit rider-ship

She advised that the transit rider-ship had increased by 9%, year-to-date.

Ms. Patterson indicated that, due to the increase in transit rider-ship, the current focus is on buses that are full and people that are being left behind. She advised the job now is not to generate new transit riders but to ensure good customer service for all existing services and new services that are being introduced. She reviewed examples of different initiatives Transit has introduced in the last few years. She noted the accessible low floor bus service which is now available on six routes. Ms. Patterson stated this service is not meant to replace the door- to-door service provided by the Access-A- Bus but rather to make the conventional transit service more accessible to people with minor disabilities that can use the regular service.

Ms. Patterson reviewed with the Committee various aspects of the on-going communication and promotion with the rider-ship as follows:

- the transit rider-ship newsletter Go-Times distributed on buses and ferries and through fifty-five retail outlets
- schedules which are printed four times a year
- maps which are printed twice yearly
- U Pass service to full time students at Saint Mary's University
- HRM Recreation Catalogue
- Naturally Green Householder which is sent out four times a year
- Metro Transit Website www.halifax.ca/metrotransit/index.html
- 52% calls received by the HRM Call Centre are transit related
- automated GO-Time System
- special events such as the free New Year's Eve service
- Stuff-A-Bus Campaign

- many special events coming to the City such as the Tall Ships
- the "Wherever Life Takes You" campaign which is in its third year and is a general awareness campaign for public transit. Ms. Patterson will provide samples of the campaign material.
- One-Tonne Challenge (reduction of omissions by one-tonne) which will be held in November
- Harbour Ferry Service rack card that is displayed at the airport
- commemorative coin produced and handed out by the Mayor to ferry passengers
- FRED the Bus (Free Rides Everywhere Downtown)
- donation of advertising space on bus-boards for non-profit organizations

Ms. Patterson briefly outlined other promotions that had been held over the past years.

She noted that Metro Transit's new initiative is the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). She advised that HRM is one of eight cities awarded funding through the Transport Canada's Urban Transportation Showcase Program. She indicated that background work is in progress, the contract is signed and construction will begin in the fall.

Ms. Patterson briefly outlined the branding process for the Bus Rapid Transit service which included:

- approval for the logo/name/bus design
- development of a standards manual
- development and approval of the marketing/promotional campaign/time line
- implementation of the plan over the next year
- launch the service in 2005
- ongoing promotion/evaluation

Discussion ensued with Ms. Patterson and Mr. Silver responding to questions from the Committee. Mr. Chaffey thanked Ms. Patterson and Ms. Cormier for their presentation.

3. APPROVAL OF ORDER OF BUSINESS AND ADDITIONS/DELETIONS

Additions: 6.2.1 November - Extra Service - Ken Silver

6.2.1 Parking Cobequid Terminal - Troy Mitchell

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - June 16, 2004

MOVED by Mr. Mitchell, seconded by Mr. Lawrie, that the minutes of June 16, 2004, as distributed, be approved. **MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

5. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

5.1 STATUS SHEET ITEMS

5.1.1 Terms of Reference - Approval by North West Community Council

It was noted that the Terms of Reference, as amended by North West Transit Advisory Committee on June 16, 2004, were approved by the North West Community Council on July 8, 2004.

5.1.2 Bus Stop Before Bridge - Out of Service

Mr. Ken Silver, Manager, Transit Planning & Development, advised the bus stop before the bridge has returned to service.

5.1.3 Intersection of Spring Garden Road and Barrington Street and Spring Garden Road and Summer Street

Mr. Silver indicated staff at Traffic Authority has advised that counts were done this past summer to determine whether a left turn from Summer Street onto Spring Garden Road is warranted. He noted that the analysis and a recommendation will be available for the next meeting.

Mr. Silver noted that there was no update on the Intersection at Spring Garden Road and Barrington Street at this time. He further indicated that it was still a concern as pedestrians and vehicles tend to enter the intersection when the light turns color.

During discussion regarding pedestrian traffic coming from the Ferry Terminal and crossing Water Street, it was suggested that more signage be erected to advertise the overhead walkway from the Ferry Terminal crossing over Water Street.

5.1.4 Upper Sackville Park and Ride

Mr. Seyffarth advised the Committee that there is no progress on this issue to report at this time.

During discussion Mr. Lawrie suggested that staff from the Planning Department be invited to a meeting to discuss proposed development in the area of Sackville and Beaverbank.

Mr. Silver advised the land behind Downsview Mall had been purchased and a Park and Ride is being designed. He noted that construction of the terminal, which will be similar to the Cobequid Terminal with approximately 200 parking spaces, will begin next spring.

Mr. Silver further noted that a challenge with the low floor buses that are being manufactured is the lower number of seats in them.

He also advised that Metro Transit is currently reviewing all fare structures and discussion ensued.

5.1.5 Route 82 - Saturdays

Mr. Silver noted that this route is the early Saturday morning route which does not connect with the 80 at Cobequid. He advised that it was designed that way so that Routes 82 and 80 would connect at Downsview. He further advised that staff are considering adding more service to both routes next year and indicated that this may address the issue.

Discussion ensued and Mr. Silver noted that Route 87 will be increased to half hour service as a part of the November route changes.

5.1.6 Lucasville Road

Mr. Silver noted that Lucasville Road is beyond the Urban Core and it is not an area that would typically be served based on Transit Service standards. He advised that he will continue to try to contact Councillor Johns and explore the options available.

6. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS

6.1 Deferred Business

6.1.1 Off Peak Service from Bedford to Downtown & Service from Bedford to Bayer's Lake

Mr. Silver noted that more service may be considered in next years budget. Discussion ensued and Mr. Silver noted that at the November meeting he will present next year's business plan which will identify the services that will be improved.

6.2 New Business

6.2.1 November - Extra Service

Mr. Silver indicated there will be service changes which Mr. Robar will discuss in more detail at the November 2004 meeting.

6.2.2 Parking at Cobequid Terminal

Mr. Mitchell raised a concern that some people at the Cobequid Terminal may becoming creative with their parking. He noted that a car had been parking in the driveway of the main paved parking lot. He further noted that this car is blocking half of the access to the lot. Mr. Mitchell requested that Mr. Silver contact the Road Supervisor with a request that this matter be addressed.

On another matter, Mr. Mitchell noted that the paved parking lot has a back entrance near the cul-de-sac that has not been finished. He further noted that there is a big dip in this particular area which is dangerous to vehicles. He requested Mr. Silver make a request to have this slope repaired.

Mr. Mitchell also noted there was a lot of garbage and debris around the parking lot. He requested Mr. Silver contact the Provincial Department of Transportation and Public Works with a request they have the area cleaned up.

5. NEXT MEETING DATE - Wednesday, October 20, 2004

6. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Millie Hull
Legislative Assistant