

NORTH WEST TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Wednesday, May 18, 2005

PRESENT: Mr. Phil Cox, Chair
Mr. Bill Chaffey
Mr. Alastair Lawrie
Mr. Ron McKinnon
Mr. Gunther Seyffarth
Mr. John Merrick
Mr. Troy Mitchell
Councillor Brad Johns

STAFF: Mr. Edward Robar, Coordinator, Transit Scheduling
Ms. Chris Newson, Legislative Assistant (7:07 pm)

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:18 pm in the Charles Fenerty Room, Sackville Library, 636 Sackville Drive.

2. APPROVAL OF ORDER OF BUSINESS AND ADDITIONS/DELETIONS

Additions: 7.1.1 New Rider's Guide
7.1.2 Slide presentation - improvements

The agenda was **approved as amended**.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - April 20, 2005

Corrections/amendments:

Item 4.1.5 Refurbishing 8 *existing* buses. (The buses are not new).

Page 5. Peak hour service to Woodside is regarding Ferry service not Bus service.

Page 6. 4.1.3 bus stop be moved closer to pedestrian activated push button at Artz street.

Page 7. Change: right **not** to right **now**.

If 87 comes all day, **drop in ridership** in route 80 **not runs**.

20 minutes service to Dal in Jan. 2005 - should it be **2006**.

Page 8. 7.1.1 MOTION PUT AND PASSED. **Not unanimously.**
Also: motion is not what was intended and the motion should be: **that there be no push buttons at all and that pedestrian get a walk light when they push the button.**

MOVED BY Mr. Bill Chaffey, seconded by Mr. Ron McKinnon that the minutes be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

4.1 Status Sheet Items

4.1.1 Dockyard Change in Hours

Mr. Robar commented that Metro Transit has seen no changes in relation to service due to the change in the Dockyard work hours. Item to be removed from the status sheet.

4.1.2 Transit Subsidy - Draft report update

Mr. Chaffey circulated copies of his draft information at this time. The Committee commended Mr. Chaffey for his work in compiling the information in a readable format from the raw data provided from Metro Transit.

Upon further discussion, the Committee suggested the following:

- Standing on the Route 86 begins at Basinview. The charts (provided by Mr. Chaffey) indicate the length of time riders are standing.
- There are possible health and safety issues (regarding people standing for long periods on the bus or waiting for the bus in inclement weather) and those should be the priority areas. For example, the number of people left standing on the side of the road and the length of time they have to wait as well as the number of people standing on the bus and the length of time they have to stand.

Mr. Mitchell commented that he usually lets the first Route 80 and 84 go by as they are too full. He counted the number of people standing one day and lost count at twenty (20). The length of time standing is a good issue to emphasize.

- Load counts were done during the school year with worst case scenarios being October to November. Mr. Robar commented that there is a big rush in September which usually filters off but this year the rush did not filter off.
- Gas and car insurance increases are in correlation with increased transit ridership.
- The emphasis of this presentation will be on WHY we require more buses. Sackville is just an example of what is happening all over HRM (standing room only etc.).

Mr. Robar noted that with the U-Passes, students are changing their riding behaviour and may jump on the bus for one or two stops and then get off. He added ridership will increase with the Dal U-Pass in January 2006.

- The report/presentation should indicate how many buses are required. How many buses are running in the fleet now and how many more will be required. Also include information on whether the transit rider is able to pay/have to pay much more for the service.
- Tie the transit subsidy presentation/report together with growth: the BRT will make a change as will the Larry Uteck Boulevard Route. The U-Pass will mean a huge increase in ridership as will the Regional Plan which emphasises transportation matters.

Mr. Chaffey requested the raw data from before the SMU U-Pass was in effect to compare/correlate the ridership counts. Mr. Robar will provide Mr. Chaffey with information from 2002 as the SMU U-Pass was implemented in 2003. Mr. Merrick offered to assist Mr. Chaffey with the data. Mr. Robar advised that 51% of students at SMU live on campus and those off campus were mostly located in the Cole Harbour and Sackville areas.

- Include notation under the charts to explain the information shown in the charts.
- The purpose at the end of this report is to indicate what it is going to take to solve the transit problems - the number of buses required to fix the situation. Show the current and projected budget abilities, buses required and additional monies required to obtain those buses and provide the service. (Budget/buses/bucks).
- Include the replacement buses which have fewer seats. With only 36 seats on the Low Floor bus you have twelve people standing. It is not as easy to hold on while standing on the Low Floor buses either and the steps in the back take away space.

Mr. Robar confirmed that for every four (4) buses replaced by a Low Floor bus, one new bus is required due to the loss of seating capacity. Metro Transit replaced thirty-three (33) buses with Low Floor buses and lost 300+ seats.

- Include some sample charts of the worst case scenarios (worst routes on the worst days). At mid-day people are standing on the Route 80 and you would not expect to stand on the bus in the middle of the day. For the Route 80, the issue is not just a commuter issue but an all day issue.
- Include a dotted line showing what the situation will be with the new Low Floor buses.
- The BRT will not do anything for the students unless they can use their U-Passes on the BRT.

Mr. Robar added that there was a 125% increase in ridership from SMU when the SMU

U-Pass was implemented.

Mr. McKinnon suggested a meeting devoted just to the preparation of this report. The goal is to have this report reach Council by October.

Mr. Chaffey indicated that for the June meeting he will have an idea of the projected impact regarding the Dal U-Pass by using the SMU numbers.

The Legislative Assistant will attempt to obtain photocopying costs for Mr. Chaffey.

4.1.3 Dal U-Pass

Mr. Robar advised that King's College will not be included in the initial roll out of the Dal U-Pass. He responded to Mr. Cox indicating that he was not certain if the U-Pass will apply to the Metro Link service. Mr. Cox requested that the Metro Link issues (transfers etc.) be added to the next agenda for more in depth discussion.

Mr. Cox commented that the U-Pass would be a great selling feature for the universities.

4.1.4 Shelter for MSVU

Mr. Robar advised that Mr. Ken Silver sent an e-mail to MSVU regarding cost recovery/cost sharing from them for the shelter. Mr. Cox suggested that other Councillors be asked to contribute and not just the District 16 Councillor.

4.1.5 Pedestrian Push Buttons - (Report to NWCC)

The Committee requested the matter be referred to Mr. Pat Doyle, Traffic Analyst, Central Region, HRM Transportation and Public Works, for clarification.

4.1.6 Intersections (Bedford area near Bedford Place Mall and Sackville area near Highway 101)

Mr. Robar advised the Sackville BRT Terminal will be at the corner of the Crossroad and the Old Sackville Road. The Sackville Terminal will be the largest park and ride to date with 250 parking spaces.

5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS - None

6. REPORTS - None

7. ADDED ITEMS

7.1 Added Items

7.1.1 New Rider's Guide

Mr. Edward Robar circulated a copy of the new Metro Transit Rider's Guide.

Mr. Troy Mitchell suggested that a line be added to the guide indicating a new route or additional route so the change will be more noticeable which could attract more riders.

7.1.2 Slide Presentation - Improvements

Mr. Edward Robar presented a slide presentation on Metro Transit improvements. No further action required.

7.2 New Business - None

8. NEXT MEETING DATE - Wednesday, June 15, 2005

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:58 pm.

Chris Newson
Legislative Assistant