

NORTH WEST TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
November 15, 2006

PRESENT: Mr. Phil Cox, Chair,
Mr. William Chaffey, Vice-Chair
Mr. Terry Churney
Mr. Ron McKinnon
Mr. John Merrick
Mr. Gunther Seyffarth
Mr. Steve Scott

ABSENT
WITH REGRETS: Mr. Alastair Lawrie
Councillor Brad Johns

STAFF: Mr. Don Scribner, Transit Technician, Metro Transit
Ms. Chris Newson, Legislative Assistant

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:08 pm in Boardroom #1, Sackville Planning Office, 1st Floor, 636 Sackville Drive, Lower Sackville.

The Chair welcomed new member Mr. Stephen J. Scott to the Committee.

2. ELECTION OF CHAIR/VICE-CHAIR

MOVED BY Mr. Gunther Seyffarth, seconded by Mr. Ron McKinnon that Mr. Phil Cox be nominated as Chair for the North West Transit Advisory Committee for the 2007 term. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Mr. Cox accepted the nomination.

MOVED BY Mr. Gunther Seyffarth, seconded by Mr. Ron McKinnon that Mr. Bill Chaffey be nominated as Vice-Chair for the 2007 term of the North West Transit Advisory Committee. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Mr. Chaffey accepted the nomination.

3. APPROVAL OF ORDER OF BUSINESS AND ADDITIONS/DELETIONS

Addition:

- 6.1 Direct Transit Service to the Cobequid Medical Health Centre
- 9.1 Transit Subsidies - Mr. Ron McKinnon
- 9.2 Route 88 - Mr. Phil Cox
- 9.3 Presentation to North West Community Council - Mr. John Merrick
- 9.4 Route 66 Sunday Service - Mr. Bill Chaffey
- 9.5 ECO PASS Update on Pilot Project

MOVED by Mr. Ron McKinnon, seconded by Mr. Gunther Seyffarth that the agenda be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - October 18, 2006

Deferred to the January meeting as the minutes were not available.

5. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

5.1 Cobequid Terminal - Alternate Site

- An e-mail response from Mr. Dave McCusker, dated November 14, 2006, was before the Committee.

Mr. McCusker indicated in his e-mail that there are no plans to expand or relocate the Cobequid Transit Terminal. As the rural transit service is expanded, it is felt that demands on the "inner" terminals will be reduced. In the case of the Cobequid terminal, some of the demand will be absorbed by a future Rural Express terminal at Fall River. Unfortunately, there will continue to be some short-term demand pressures until the Fall River terminal can be constructed.

Mr. Cox commented that staff's response did not indicate whether or not Metro Link service will be introduced at the Cobequid Terminal. Metro Link service was originally advertised for this location.

Mr. Don Scribner, Transit Technician, Metro Transit provided the following information:

- Concerns with the Cobequid Terminal center around the lack of adequate space such as space for all buses at peak hours and parking for commuters. There had been complaints from business owners along Cobequid Road that transit users were utilizing their parking lots. Traffic congestion at the Cobequid Terminal was alleviated once the Metro Link service, including the new terminal and parking area, was introduced near Downsview.
- There is limited space for expansion at the Cobequid Terminal location.
- Land acquisition for expansion is restrictive due to the high cost of land in this area.
- There is no foreseeable Metro Link service planned for the Cobequid Terminal due, in part, to the above noted concerns.
- The original Metro Link proposal (a Metro Link bus terminating at the Cobequid Terminal) is not going to happen in the near future. Extra service was provided at the Sackville Metro Link terminal from its inception due to the success of the Portland Hills Metro Link Service.
- Transit is not in the business of making parking lots. Feeder services that will go into the neighbourhoods and bring commuters to a terminal is a preferred option. Commuters will be able to leave their cars in their driveways.

In response to Mr. Bill Chaffey, Mr. Scribner advised that strategic planning have hired a Consultant to help plan the Fall River transit service. Issues to be considered are what

service is appropriate for the area, what the fare should be and the frequency of service. Mr. Scribner explained that in future, transit is looking at six (6) different brandings: Regular transit, Neighbourhood, Express (limited stops), Rural (perhaps a highwaytype vehicle) a Feeder service (small buses to a hub) and the Link service.

The Committee raised the following comments/concerns during the ensuing discussion on rural commuter/transit service:

- Commuters prefer direct service to their work place not a connection to an urban/hub service. Too many transfers results in a less attractive mode of transportation.
- Additional parking at the Cobequid Terminal would not be required if the feeder service delivered commuters directly to the terminal from Fall River.
- The parking area for the new Metro Link Terminal in Sackville is not adequate, even with the recent expansion, it is still not adequate.
- Park and Ride parking lots for outlying areas are required and should be planned for now.
- Transit subsidies are required in order to provide adequate services.
- People are already standing on the Link routes.
- Very soon, cars will again be overflowing from the Sackville Metro Link parking area into Wheaton's parking.

This item to be removed from agenda.

5.1.2 Pedestrian Activated Signal - Barrington Street (CFB Halifax)

Mr. Cox advised that this signal is now operational. Item to be removed from the agenda.

5.1.3 Pedestrian Activated Signal - Bedford Highway (MSVU)

Mr. Cox commented that without traffic flow data as a reference, it is difficult to accept that there is more traffic going into the dockyard than along the Bedford Highway at the Mount Saint Vincent University location.

The Committee requested that Traffic Services provide traffic warrant information for the Barrington Street pedestrian activated signal as well as for the signal located near the Keshen Goodman Library on Lacewood Drive.

Due to the fact that a student was hit by a vehicle during a protest regarding safety concerns at this location, this item is to remain on the agenda.

6. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS

6.1 Direct Transit Service to the Cobequid Health Centre

- A draft report to the North West Community Council was before the Committee.

At the October 18, 2006 meeting, a motion was passed that a report be sent to the North West Community Council in regard to the new Route 88 providing direct transit service to the Cobequid Medical Health Centre. It was suggested that a smaller neighbourhood sized bus may be able to service the Health Centre and manoeuvre the turning bulb. The draft report was approved to go forward to the next meeting of the NWCC.

Mr. Scribner advised that Metro Transit does not currently have small buses in its fleet.

7. REPORTS

7.1 Approval of NWTAC Meeting Schedule for 2007

The Committee approved the 2007 meeting schedule as presented. All North West Transit Advisory Committee meetings are to be held in Boardroom 1, Sackville Planning Office,
636 Sackville Drive.

8. CORRESPONDENCE - None

9. ADDED ITEMS

9.1 Transit Subsidies

Mr. Ron McKinnon referred to a recent article in a Toronto newspaper entitled "*Transit Visionary Needed*". He explained that transit was the main concern for a local (Toronto) politician in a recent election campaign. Mr. McKinnon inquired if anyone in HRM has been researching funding options for transit and applying for subsidies. He added that other areas in the country appear to actively seek out subsidies. Mr. McKinnon suggested that transit subsidies be a major point in the 2008 municipal election.

Mr. Scribner responded that there is Federal funding that may be available and Metro Transit will be looking into those options. An additional seventy-five (75) buses are expected over the next three (3) years. Fifteen (15) of the first twenty-five (25) buses will be replacement vehicles with the remainder used to provide additional service. He

added that he is not aware of any intended fare increase for Metro Transit passes.

The Committee raised the following comments/concerns during the ensuing discussion:

- With smaller buses, additional pass options maybe introduced such as a family pass.
- Passes encourage riders during non-peak times as well.
- In Toronto, more people depend on transit as their main means of transportation. In HRM, premium service is provided only during the weekday not all week.
- If transit use was fully promoted, Metro Transit would not be able to service the ridership.
- There is a subsidy tax on gas in the lower mainland of British Columbia where the difference in the cost of gas and the high prices is invested in the transit system. The Committee noted that the provincial government gave the British Columbia Transit Authority permission for that funding. It was suggested that perhaps a province wide transit authority would have more clout.
- The provincial and federal governments have to contribute to transit services.
- Perhaps parking metre revenue could be invested directly into the local transit system.
- It would be interesting to note if a day pass would have an impact on the Metro Link service so that the buses would not be running half empty at non-peak hours.

In response to Mr. Cox's previous request for information on whether there was an increase in sales of transit passes once the tax credit was introduced on July 1, 2006, Mr. Scribner advised that he was uncertain whether that number could be obtained.

9.2 Route 88

Mr. Scribner advised that the Route 88 Northgate will be an hourly service (7:30 am to 11:00 pm) six days per week and Sunday service provided from 10:00 am to 5:30 pm. The service will be phased in as the stores open. Transfers will be available from the Cobequid and Sackville terminals. Route 88 will go to Glendale Drive and available on Duke Street (Glendale extension). Mr. Scribner added that the Route 56 for the Dartmouth Crossing development will also be a similar service with a shorter route and forty-minute service.

The Committee raised the following concerns/comments during the ensuing discussion:

- Why not integrate the Route 88 with other components in the neighbourhood and continue service to Rocky Lake Drive to Sunnyside Mall/Bedford Place Mall. Mr. Scribner responded that in future this may be possible. Currently, there is only

- one bus available to provide this service.
- It is good to see pro-active planning for transit service.

9.3 Presentation to North West Community Council

Mr. Cox advised that the presentation to the North West Community Council on transit deficiencies went well. Mr. Merrick added that Councillor Harvey suggested the information be forwarded to the CAO Mr. Dan English and offered to present the information to Mr. English if required.

The Committee requested an official invitation be extended to the new General Manager of Metro Transit, Mr. Paul McDaniel, to attend the next NWTAC meeting.

9.4 Route 66 Sunday Service

Mr. Chaffey commented that he was disappointed the Route 66 does not provide service to Sackville on Sundays (it ends at Highfield Park, Dartmouth).

Mr. Scribner clarified that the Route 66 only provides service to Sackville until 6:00 pm Monday-Friday. Sunday transit service matches the Saturday service schedules. He added that Metro Transit is reviewing how to blend all the services from Burnside/Bedford and Sackville.

9.5 ECO PASS Update on Pilot Project

No update available at this time. To be added to the next agenda.

10. NEXT MEETING DATE - January 17, 2007

Item for next agenda: Route 66 / 87 - Service to Bedford

11. ADJOURNMENT - The meeting was adjourned at 8:54 pm.

Chris Newson
Legislative Assistant