

NORTH WEST TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
March 14, 2007

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
Ms. Angela Miller
Mr. Alastair Lawrie

ABSENT: Councillor Brad Johns

STAFF: Mr. Don Scribner, Transit Technician, Transportation & Public Works
Ms. Christina Sears, Legislative Assistant
Ms. Julia Horncastle, Legislative Assistant

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm in Boardroom #1, Sackville Planning Office, 1st Floor, 636 Sackville Drive, Lower Sackville.

2. APPROVAL OF ORDER OF BUSINESS AND ADDITIONS/DELETIONS

Additions:

- 8.1 Mr. Alastair Lawrie's resignation
- 8.2 MSVU shelter
- 8.3 Parking at Sackville Bus Terminal

The Committee agreed that the agenda be approved as amended.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - January 10, 2007

MOVED by Mr. William Chaffey, seconded by Mr. Gunther Seyffarth, that the minutes of January 10, 2007 be approved. MOTION PUT AND PASSED

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

4.1 Status Sheet Items

4.1.1 Traffic Warrants- Pedestrian Activated Signal- Bedford Highway (MSVU)

Discussion ensued among Committee members.

MOVED by Mr. Bill Chaffey , seconded by Mr. John Merrick, that North West Community Council recommend to Halifax Regional Council that pedestrian activated signals be installed at the Mount Saint Vincent University crosswalk on the Bedford Highway. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

4.1.2 Service Through Bedford

Mr. Don Scribner, Transit Technician, Transportation and Public Works updated the Committee on the daily weekday passenger counts. He advised that route 80 has improved due to the Hemlock Revinces and routes 84 and 85 are looking better because of the Metro Transit Link.

The Chair requested this item be deferred until the next meeting.

4.1.3 Status of 2006 Ridership Counts

Metro Transit passenger profiles for 2005 were discussed and the Committee decided that the graphs were useful and the process should be repeated with the 2006 data.

Mr. Terry Churney entered the meeting at 7:22 p.m.

Discussion ensued and in response to questions, concerns and issues, Mr. Scribner advised the following:

- The route 88 Duke- Bedford Common is running today and hopes the route will extend beyond Dumascus Street;
- Dartmouth Crossing is expected to have forty-three stores open by the fall. This will create a big impact on ridership. The anticipated impact will be the connector on Burnside Drive through Commodore into the Dartmouth Crossing, opening in the spring. The connector through Wright Avenue is anticipated to open in the fall;
- Resources are limited for 2007 and he advises further change will not occur until 2008;
- Services in Burnside will be closely connected to Dartmouth Crossing including routes 66, 87, 72;
- Metro Transit recognizes there is a lack of service intended for Bedford. Most of the service to Bedford routes to outlying areas such as Halifax or Sackville;
- Route 88 will be a candidate for Rocky Lake Road and into the new development, connecting the gap in service;
- The Bedford Common development is slated to move slower than the Dartmouth Crossing. There is a bigger push to open the stores in the Dartmouth Crossing.

The Chair requested this item remain on the agenda.

Mr. Scribner suggested working with HRM's Planning Department to keep the Committee updated.

Mr. Scribner advised that HRM is now preparing a final document to send to the Federal Government on the showcase. He added that they are in the semi-final stages and noted that this will be good information to assist in the Committee's statistics for routes 185, 159 and 165.

Mr. John Merrick advised that he volunteered to assist Mr. Robar with entering the numbers into the database. He noted that he hadn't received a reply. Mr. Scribner offered to speak to Mr. Robar concerning this. The Committee commented that they are primarily interested in the route 80 series. They would like an estimated time of arrival for the data, noting that when it is ready it should be provided to Mr. Chaffey.

4.1.4 Service from Sackville to Burnside

The Committee requested an update from staff at their next meeting with regard to a complaint from a HRM resident. The Committee would like confirmation that this matter was addressed. Mr. Scribner advised he will mention this to Mr. Edward Robar, Coordinator, Metro Transit.

4.1.5 Passenger Complaints

The Committee advised Mr. Scribner that they wanted the ability to view the number of complaints Metro Transit receives as they pertain to different issues. Mr. Scribner noted that Mr. Robar would be attending the next meeting to answer their questions as he does not have any figures for them at the present time.

Discussion ensued and Mr. Scribner provided information in detail to the Committee on HRM's Hansen data entry software. He addressed concerns from the Committee on refining the search engine but noted that at this time, transit does not have the information a refined search would require. He noted that Halifax is the first municipality to utilize this software and has agreed to a long term commitment. He advised the Committee that Hansen was never solely intended for Transit and in fact, many business units throughout the Municipality use it on a daily basis.

The Committee requested that Mr. Robar attend the next meeting.

4.1.6 Retirement of Buses

Discussion ensued and in response to questions, concerns, and issues Mr. Scribner advised the following:

- By the end of 2007, for regular Metro Transit service, they will have two hundred and twenty five (225) vehicles. Of which they can use one hundred and eighty-eight (188) for scheduled service, four (4) will be on standby for operational uses, the remainder of the buses are for fleet services. Maintenance generally holds back about fifteen percent, which works out to be approximately thirty-three (33) per fleet;
- There are twenty (20) BRT buses. He noted that BRT buses are only used on BRT routes;
- There are fourteen (14) BRT buses that are required to run at peak service with two (2) on standby. He noted that this is a high ratio with the BRT buses. One hundred and eighty-eight (188) : four (4) versus fourteen (14) : two (2);
- Ridership typically drops off in the summertime. He noted that a study is being held on parking places and believes it will indicate that in fact there are too many;
- There are currently eight (8) articulated buses, of the fourteen (14) available on any particular day due to short term and long term maintenance. The numbers are

- down to eight (8) from eleven (11);
- There was an order for seventy-five (75) by the end of 2005. By the end of 2007 they will have another fifty (50) and by the end of 2008 they will have the remaining twenty-five (25). He noted these will be regular, low floor buses;
- Rural bussing is a subject for future consideration, approximately five (5) years;
- The regular transit buses will now be air conditioned;
- In 2008 there will be two hundred and thirty-five buses available for service;
- There will be ten more (10) to add to scheduled service;
- The articulated buses are going through another mid-life refit and Transit is looking at keeping them for another five (5) to ten (10) years;
- Provincial laws are changing with regard to the width of the bus aisles. With this change the buses will gain back approximately two (2) to three (3) seats;
- There will be forward facing seats for safety purposes;
- The new buses will all have straps and they will not move;
- There will be five buses provided for service to the universities. This service will stop in May for the summer months;
- Maintenance averages approximately twenty-eight (28) defects per day;
- Based on funding HRM will have to continue to purchase more buses, responding to the growth in existing service areas as well as the expansions;
- HRM purchased all the buses without any outside funding.

4.1.7 ½ Hour Service at Peak

Mr. Scribner advised the Committee that route 83 runs on the half hour in the mornings and on the hour in the afternoon. He noted that as of February an additional trip was added for the morning commute. He indicated that Transit will be matching the size of the vehicle to the size of demand, using smaller busses to generate ridership.

5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS

6. REPORTS (Oral)

6.1 Community/ Neighbourhood Buses- Mr. Paul McDaniel

The Committee agreed to defer this item until Mr. McDaniel could attend to make a presentation.

6.2 Community Transit - Fall River

The Committee agreed to defer this item until Mr. McDaniel could attend to make a presentation.

6.3 Winter Performance- ALF (Accessible Low Floor) Buses

Mr. Scribner advised he could provide the Committee with a copy of the Snow Plan Policy. There was no further discussion on this item.

7. CORRESPONDENCE - None

• **ADDED ITEMS**

8.1 Mr. Alastair Lawrie's Resignation

Mr. Alastair Lawrie advised the Committee this would be his last meeting. The Committee noted their appreciation for Mr. Lawrie's commitment and accepts his resignation with regrets.

8.2 MSVU Shelter

Mr. Scribner advised that the pad has been poured. He noted there were problems with Procurement but they are still working on installing them.

8.3 Parking at Sackville Bus Terminal

The Committee requested an update from staff regarding the number of handicap parking spaces available. They questioned the criteria for HRM, indicating that two (2) spots in a capacity of three hundred (300) is not acceptable. Mr. Scribner advised he would speak to Mr. Robar.

The Chair requested the status of three (3) reports that were sent to the North West Community Council.

8.4 Route 88

Mr. Scribner advised there will be no connection from route 185 to route 88. He noted that the schedule for route 88 will change several times to meet several demands. Once the demand is greater the service will change to accommodate.

Discussion ensued among the Committee around their discussion list. The following was noted:

- Item 3.5 be amended to show a change from the Halifax International Airport to Robert L. Stanfield International Airport;
- Service for route 60 has increased to fifteen (15) minutes. Route 65 is currently being looked at as a connection at Penhorn Mall to extend from the Woodside Terminal and past the new community college. This would provide an alternative

in using the ferry service as well as route 60. He noted parking at the Woodside terminal is now free;

- Ridership on route 165 is under review. Two of the trips are high while rides on the other trips are low;
- The U-Pass for Mount Saint Vincent University will begin in September. He advised it is a much smaller campus than the other universities and will not have a severe impact. New routes will be established to accommodate service Monday through to Friday with runs every thirty (30) minutes. Service will not be interrupted throughout the summer months but will continue and assist service to Burnside.

9. **NEXT MEETING DATE** - Wednesday, April 11, 2007

10. **ADJOURNMENT** - The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 pm.

Christina Sears
Legislative Assistant