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Halifax Regional Council
January 17, 2006

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Labrecque", written over a horizontal line.

Mike Labrecque, P.Eng., Director, Transportation & Public Works Services

DATE: January 9, 2006

SUBJECT: Rural Bus Service

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

Halifax Regional Council meeting dated August 2, 2005, item 12.6.

BACKGROUND

Councillor Stretch requested a report identifying opportunities to provide a replacement bus service not only for the Eastern Shore but to all rural areas throughout HRM.

On April 15, 2005, Perry Rand Transportation Group Limited who operate Zinck's Bus Co. Ltd. applied to the Nova Scotia Utility & Review Board to cease bus operation along the Eastern Shore effective September 30, 2005.

DISCUSSION

On September 30, 2005, Zinck's Bus Co. Ltd. ceased operations of bus service along the Eastern Shore. Residents of the Eastern Shore indicated at community meetings that they would like the community to be involved in determining the bus service needs of the area. Staff facilitated a replacement service operated by Need-A-Lift Transportation Services to continue operation of the service effective October 1, 2005, contracted by the Eastern HRM Partnership Council and funded through the Community Transportation Assistance Program(CTAP) administered by Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Affairs, Province of Nova Scotia. HRM provided the Partnership with a retired Access-A-Bus to assist in providing the service.

After three months of operation, Need-A-Lift Transportation Services notified the Eastern HRM Partnership Council and Nova Scotia Utility & Review Board that they would discontinue operation of the service effective December 31, 2005. Despite the vehicle provided through the Partnership and funding assistance through the CTAP program, Need-A-Lift could not make the service financially viable due to low ridership and the distanced travelled. Halifax Regional Municipality has arranged to extend the service through Need-A-Lift Transportation Services until March 31, 2006 while staff works with Service Nova Scotia and the Eastern HRM Partnership Council to find a new operator.

The Draft Regional Plan includes a number of initiatives to enhance public transit throughout the Halifax Regional Municipality including rural areas. Staff is currently preparing an RFP for consultant services to identify types of service delivery options to various rural areas and how best to deliver these services in a cost-effective manner.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There are no budget implications.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN

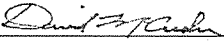
This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

ALTERNATIVES

There are no recommended alternatives.

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.html> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

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Report Approved by: 
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Financial Review: 
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