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Chebucto Community Council
July 5, 2010

TO: Chair and Members of Chebucto Community Council

SUBMITTED BY: 

Ken Reashor, P.Eng., A/Director, Transportation & Public Works

DATE: June 23, 2010

SUBJECT: Route 22 Bus Service in the Stoneridge Community

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

Chebucto Community Council meeting of June 7, 2010 items 9.2.2 and 9.2.3.

BACKGROUND

At the Chebucto Community Council meeting on June 7, 2010, Councillor Mosher requested a staff report to address all letters and information included as part of two petitions submitted by Stoneridge area residents regarding the proposed Metro Transit route 22 Armdale.

DISCUSSION

Metro Transit bus service in Stoneridge area

The issue of providing conventional bus service to the Stoneridge community has been discussed at Chebucto Community Council several times since 2006. The item has remained on the Chebucto Community Council status sheet since 2006 as an ongoing issue, signalling its importance to members of that community.

The Stoneridge subdivision is located off the Northwest Arm Drive, near the intersection with the Bay Road. Metro Transit currently services a portion of the Stoneridge community in Halifax with conventional bus service including the route 6 Quinpool and route 14 Leiblin Park. However, neither of these routes provide convenient service for the higher density area of the Stoneridge subdivision along Walter Havill Drive.

5-Year Strategic Operations Plan

The proposal for the route 22 Armdale was first communicated publicly in mid-2009 during preparation of Metro Transit's 5-Year Strategic Operations Plan. Public consultation sessions to discuss the proposed 5-year Strategic Operations Plan were held in July 2009 in addition to an online survey to which nearly 9000 responses were received on HRM resident's travel patterns. The information received from both the public consultation sessions and the survey was used to inform the final version of the 5-Year Plan and identified short and long term priority transit services and projects.

The 5-year Strategic Operations Plan was approved in principle by Regional Council in February 2010. As a result, the route 22 was proposed in Metro Transit's 2010/11 Annual Service Plan as part of the expansion of public transit in under-served areas of HRM. The route within the Stoneridge community as described in the 5-Year Plan - and as is currently proposed - includes the following streets:

From St. Margaret's Bay Road, left onto Quarry Road, then Edgehill Road, right onto Glenmore Avenue, left onto Stonehaven Road, right onto Alton Drive, left onto Kelly Street, right onto Osborne Drive, then Walter Havill Drive to Albert Walker to St. Margaret's Bay Road.

Routing of the 22 Armdale

At a meeting of Chebucto Community Council in February 2006, Metro Transit staff recommended that Kelly Street be completed prior to implementing bus service to Stoneridge in order to allow the bus serving the Quarry Road area to be extended via Walter Havill Drive. In 2009, the Kelly Street extension from Osborne to Alton was not yet completed, and so interim routing (as described in the

Mosher Report, District 17 newsletter issued in spring 2010) proposed that the 22 Armdale travel from Walter Havill Drive to the Herring Cove Road via Osborne Street.

However, as indicated by the February 6, 2006, Chebucto Community Council report, the intention was always to have the 22 Armdale travel via Kelly Street once the street connection from Osborne to Alton was complete to enhance the service currently provided by the route 6 Quinpool. The routing currently proposed intends to increase alternative transportation options to a growing urban population as directed by the Regional Plan, and to meet Metro Transit's local route service standards by providing 30-minute service from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m., 7 days a week.

Frequently Asked Questions regarding Route 22

Can the routing be changed to the routing described in the Mosher Report, District 17 newsletter?

As stated previously in this report, an interim route was proposed in 2009 prior to the Kelly Street extension being completed. This interim route was communicated to Councillor Mosher in 2009. However, the 5-Year Strategic Operations Plan always described the route as travelling along Kelly Street, as was the intention of Metro Transit as soon as the street extension was completed. This proposed routing has also been previously discussed in several staff reports to the Chebucto Community Council over the past four years.

Can the 22 Armdale be re-routed to avoid travelling on Walter Havill Drive?

Metro Transit schedule and route planning staff assessed various alternatives for the provision of transit service within the Stoneridge community, including the extension of existing transit routes 6 and 14. Ultimately, a new route providing a connection between the new Exhibition Park 'Park & Ride' and Mumford Road via Walter Havill Drive and St. Margaret's Bay Road provided the best option for an enhanced transit service. The high population density of Walter Havill Drive single family homes and multi-residential buildings allows Metro Transit to directly serve a large proportion of the community as directed by the Regional Plan and 5-Year Strategic Operations Plan.

Can the schedule for the 22 Armdale be designed to travel on Walter Havill Drive on the hour, and by-pass it on the half hour?

One of the most important considerations when designing a transit route or service is to make it efficient and easy to use. Alternating the route every other trip would decrease the predictability and ease of use of the route 22, which would likely reduce overall ridership; it is not a feasible alternative.

Will Stoneridge community residents have access to Access-A-Bus service without the implementation of the 22 Armdale?

Service standards for Access-A-Bus dictate that only citizens within 610 metres of conventional transit service have access to Access-A-Bus. This means that only a portion of Stoneridge residents currently have access to Access-A-Bus service due to their proximity to existing bus routes 6 Quinpool and 14 Leiblin Park. Service standards are currently under review through the Access-A-Bus Study, which could result in changes to the existing service standard.

Why were residents not consulted prior to bus stops being installed along the route 22 Armdale?
It has never been Metro Transit's practice to consult with individual homeowners on the installation of bus stops in front of their homes. Metro Transit and HRM Traffic staff use their professional judgment combined with service standards when considering sites for new bus stops and make every attempt not to inconvenience residents. This becomes more difficult when siting bus stops in primarily residential neighbourhoods. However, it is important to note that Metro Transit's overall objective is to implement a public transit service in the best interest of the community as a whole and provide a sustainable, convenient and reliable alternative transportation method for HRM citizens.

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, Project and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Project and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

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

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