

**Transportation Standing Committee  
December 13, 2012**

**TO:** Chair and Members of Transportation Standing Committee

**SUBMITTED BY:**



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Eddie Robar, Director, Metro Transit

**DATE:** November 21, 2012

**SUBJECT:** Transit Service Standards

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**INFORMATION REPORT**

**ORIGIN**

On September 27, 2012, the Transportation Standing Committee approved the following motion:

MOVED by Councillor Watts, seconded by Councillor Hum, that the Transportation Standing Committee request an information report on how current Metro Transit service standards have been decided upon. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

## **DISCUSSION**

Transit service standards are a tool used to plan and evaluate the performance of transit services. Service standards were first formally adopted by Halifax Regional Council in 2002, with the approval of the “Metro Transit Strategy” prepared by IBI Group. These included varying cost recovery, ridership performance, and minimum service level standards for each of core, local and community transit routes. They also included overall standards for service coverage, maximum peak point ridership, and bus stop and shelters.

In 2009, Regional Council approved the “Metro Transit Five-Year Strategic Operations Plan – Taking Transit to the Next Level”. Metro Transit’s current service standards were developed and adopted as part of this plan. The structure and form of the service standards, as well as the service levels chosen, reflect industry standards. They were developed based on the professional experience of the consultants, knowledge of other transit agencies in Canada, and existing service levels for Metro Transit. They are based generally on the 2002 standards, but were expanded to include standards specific to MetroLink, MetroX, urban express, and ferry service.

In addition, the service standards are intended to reflect the vision and goals of the Five-Year Strategic Operations Plan. The Plan includes three overall goals: to improve ridership and mode share; to improve service quality and customer satisfaction, and; to maintain productivity and cost-effectiveness. The service standards were developed to assist in achieving these goals, including the ridership and cost-effectiveness desired, by increasing service levels, while ensuring that service provision was appropriate for the level of demand.

### **Service Standard Classifications**

Distinct service standards exist for core, local, community, MetroLink, MetroX, urban express, and ferry service. Divisions of this nature are typical in the transit industry, and acknowledge that the various service types have significant differences that impact expectations and performance.

Core routes are those that travel on the major transportation corridors in the urban area and form the primary transit network, whereas local routes tend to circulate through communities to supplement the core system. For example, the Route 1 (Spring Garden Road) is a core route that travels through dense residential and commercial areas on the Halifax Peninsula and provides a link to Dartmouth. The Route 88 (Bedford Commons) is an example of a local route, which connects the Cobequid Terminal in Sackville to the Bedford Commons. The service standards differ between the two classifications of routes, to reflect that core routes have higher potential demand and ridership, and are intended to have a higher level of service than local routes. In practice, many transit routes in HRM take on characteristics of core and local routes along different portions of the routes, and the difference between the two is often subtle.

Higher-Order services including MetroLink, MetroX, and urban express differ from core and local routes in that they function primarily to transport commuters to the downtown area during

peak travel times. As such, peak hour trips on these premium services are intended to be desirable and have high ridership, but there is a much lower expectation of ridership in the reverse direction. The service standards reflect this by concentrating frequencies and having high ridership standards at peak times, while off peak times and directions have significantly lower standards, or in some cases, no service. Metro Transit's ferry service is classified alongside Higher-Order services in the Five-Year Strategic Operations Plan, and shares cost recovery targets with these services. However, the ferry service is so unique that typical service standards for buses are not all applicable, and different standards have been applied.

Community transit routes travel through rural areas with less population density than other transit services, and often over relatively long distances. Establishing a separate standard for community transit routes acknowledges the lower demand for services than in urban areas, which is reflected by lower service levels and ridership expectations.

### **Modifications to Service Standards**

Service standards are intended to be revisited periodically to ensure they continue to be relevant and are achieving the desired outcomes. The Five-Year Strategic Operations Plan indicates that the existing service standards are meant to give direction for a period of five years. As that time frame is nearing completion, service standards should be addressed as part of any upcoming strategic planning initiative for transit. This will provide an opportunity to review the standards as part of a consultative process, incorporating the values of the public and Council into any proposed modifications.

### **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

There are no budget implications at this time.

### **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.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

No community engagement is required as this report is only providing information to the Transportation Standing Committee.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no environmental implications associated with this report as it is only providing information to the Transportation Standing Committee.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1: Metro Transit Service Standards

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A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/boardsom/SCtransp/index.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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## Metro Transit Service Standards

The following is a summary of key Metro Transit service standards. For more detailed information and descriptions, please refer to the Metro Transit Five-Year Operations Plan – Taking Transit to the Next Level (2009).

**Route Coverage** - In urban areas, transit routes will be located so that 90% of all residences, places of work, secondary and post secondary schools, shopping centres, and public facilities in the urban area are within a walking distance of not more than 400 metres of a transit route in residential and commercial areas and 750 metres of a bus stop in industrial areas.

Vehicle Loadings	
<b>Core Service / Local Service / Community Transit Service</b>	During peak periods: 125% of seating capacity over maximum 60 minute period During off-peak periods: 100% of seating capacity over a maximum 60 minute period
<b>MetroLink Bus Service / Urban Express Service / MetroX (Rural Express)</b>	During peak periods: 125% of seating capacity over maximum 60 minute period During off-peak periods: 75% - 100% of seating capacity over a maximum 60 minute period
<b>Ferry Service</b>	During peak periods: 100% of seating capacity over maximum 60 minute period (390 passengers per ferry) During off-peak periods: 75% - 100% of seating capacity over a maximum 60 minute period

Ridership Performance Targets	
<b>Core Service</b>	40 passengers per service hour during daytime on weekdays 20 passengers per service hour during evenings and weekends
<b>Local Service</b>	25 passengers per service hour during daytime on weekdays 15 passengers per service hour during evenings and weekends
<b>Community Transit Service</b>	20 passengers per service hour (urban community shuttle) during weekday peak hours; 15 passengers per service hour (rural community shuttle) during weekday peak hours 10 passengers per service hour (urban and rural shuttle) during off peak hours
<b>MetroLink Bus Service / Urban Express Service</b>	50 passengers per service hour in peak direction during daytime on weekdays 35 passengers per service hour in peak direction during evenings and weekends
<b>MetroX (Rural Express)</b>	40 passengers per service hour in peak direction during daytime on weekdays
<b>Ferry Service</b>	390 passengers per service hour in peak direction during daytime 290 passengers per service hour in peak direction during evenings and weekends

<b>Service Levels</b>			
<b>Service</b>	<b>Day</b>	<b>Headways</b>	<b>Service Span</b>
<b>Core Service</b>	Weekdays	15 minutes	6:00 to 9:00 a.m. 3:00 to 6:30 p.m.
		30 minutes	9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. 6:30 p.m. to 12 midnight
	Saturdays	30 minutes	6:00 a.m. to 12 midnight
	Sundays	30 minutes	7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.
<b>Local Service</b>	Weekdays	30 minutes	6:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. / 3:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.
		30 minutes	9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
		60 minutes	6:30 p.m. to 12 midnight
	Saturdays	30 minutes	6:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.
		60 minutes	6:30 p.m. to 12 midnight
	Sundays/ Holidays	60 minutes	7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.
<b>Community Transit Service</b>			
Urban Community Shuttle	Weekdays & Weekends	30 minutes	6:00 a.m. – 12 midnight
Rural Community Shuttle	Weekdays & Weekends	60 minutes peak, 120 minutes off peak	6:00 a.m. – 12 midnight
<b>MetroLink Bus Service</b>	Weekdays	10-15 minutes	6:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. 3:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.
		30 minutes	9:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m. 6:30 p.m. - Midnight
	Weekends	No service	
<b>Urban Express Service</b>	Weekdays	10-15 minutes	6:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. 3:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.
		No off-peak	
<b>MetroX (Rural Express)</b>	Weekdays	30-90 minutes	6:00 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.
<b>Ferry Service</b>	Weekdays	15 minutes	6:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. 3:00 p.m. - 6:15 p.m.
		30 minutes	9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. 6:15 p.m. - 11:45 p.m.
	Weekends	30 minutes	6:30 a.m. - 11:45 p.m.

<b>Cost Recovery Targets</b>	
<b>Core Service</b>	Weekdays Daytime: 55% - 60% Weekday Evenings/Weekends: 35% - 40%
<b>Local Service</b>	Weekdays Daytime: 40% - 45% Weekday Evenings/Weekends: 35% - 50%
<b>Community Transit Service</b>	Weekdays Daytime: 30% - 40% Weekday Evenings/Weekends: 20% - 25%
<b>MetroLink Bus Service / Urban Express Service / MetroX (Rural Express) / Ferry Service</b>	Weekdays Daytime: 50% - 65% Weekday Evenings/Weekends: 30% - 50%