

**Transportation Standing Committee
December 13, 2012**

TO: Chair and Members of the Transportation Standing Committee

Original Signed

SUBMITTED BY:

Eddie Robar, Director, Metro Transit

DATE: October 31, 2012

SUBJECT: Bayers Lake Transit Corridor

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

On January 9, 2012, the Transportation Standing Committee approved the following motion:

MOVED by Councillor Hum, seconded by Councillor Watts, that the Transportation Standing Committee request a staff report regarding a potential opportunity for a transportation corridor off Washmill Lake Court, parallel to Chain Lake Drive, to alleviate access concerns and for staff to liaise with the owners of this property on this potential opportunity. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

BACKGROUND

On November 21, 2011, Metro Transit moved storefront bus stops in the Bayers Lake Business Park that were previously serviced by the Route #52 (Crosstown) to Chain Lake Drive. These stops were located in high pedestrian traffic areas in close proximity to store entrances, crosswalks and speed bumps. The Route #52 now services the existing bus stops on Chain Lake Drive that were already being used by the Route #21 (Timberlea). This move serves to increase safety for pedestrians and to improve schedule adherence on this busy cross town route.

Metro Transit has discontinued service to several parking lots in HRM over the past few years due to pedestrian safety issues as noted above. Recent examples of bus stop relocations out of parking lots include Tacoma Centre in Dartmouth, Staples Centre in Sackville, and the Metro Transit facility at 200 Ilsley Drive in Burnside.

When this re-routing took place, concerns were raised about the distance to businesses, grade, lack of sidewalks, and general safety. As a result, at a meeting of the Bayers Lake Business Association on January 9, 2012, it was suggested that a transit corridor be created on the east side of Chain Lake Drive.

The Transportation Standing Committee of Council has requested that staff prepare a report to review the possibility of creating a transportation corridor through these parking lots, either with permission from the property owners or by acquiring the necessary land.

DISCUSSION

Metro Transit recognized that there had been a legacy of storefront service in this area and that the change to the Route 52 would be challenging for some customers. Several potential routings were considered, and Metro Transit pursued a compromise solution that would have accommodated two bus stops within store parking lots. Metro Transit communicated with the two property owners, Loblaw's, and Calloway Reit and draft lease agreements were prepared. However, in the final stages of review, a final agreement could not be reached between the parties involved. Due to this impasse, a transit corridor through the parking lot could not occur unless HRM acquired enough property to construct a municipal road through the privately owned land.

If HRM decided to purchase the land and build a road through the parking lot, HRM would be required to purchase enough land to construct a fully functioning road at considerable cost to the municipality. The newly constructed road would need to conform to the HRM Municipal Services (Red Book) standards, and the resultant parcels would need to adhere to the applicable Land Use By-Law parking requirements. If the property owners chose to build the road, the road would still be required to conform with HRM's street standards before any consideration was given to making it a public road. This road through the parking lot would also result in the loss of parking, and restriction of vehicle movement through the parking lot.

Other Considerations:

The Route 52 (Crosstown) has significant issues with lateness. Since moving the bus stops to Chain Lake Drive, there has been a noticeable improvement in running time in the Bayers Lake area. If the bus were to be re-routed through the parking lot, the reliability and performance would decrease. This would be partly due to the increased turns/maneuvers required, and partly due to the uncontrolled pedestrian and vehicular movements in the parking lot.

The location of bus stops on Chain Lake Drive provides a more centrally located transit service for all of the businesses in the area, and falls within the acceptable walking standards for Metro Transit. Re-routing the bus into the parking lot on the east side of the road would result in longer walks for passengers who are shopping / working on the west side of the road. To facilitate the accessibility of service on Chain Lake Drive, Metro Transit significantly upgraded a key bus stop, by installing a sidewalk to the nearest intersection.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There are no budget implications at this time. Any recommendations that have budget implications will be brought forward in future annual budgets for consideration by Regional Council.

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.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There were no environmental implications identified as part of this report.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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

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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