

**NORTH WEST TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES**

**March 24, 2004**

**PRESENT:** Phillip Cox, Chair  
Alastaire Lawrie  
Ron McKinnon  
Gunther Seyffarth  
Councillor Brad Johns

**ABSENT:** Bill Chaffey (regrets)  
Troy Mitchell

**ALSO PRESENT:** Eddie Robar, Schedule Planner, Metro Transit  
Chris Newson, Legislative Assistant

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## 1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m. in the Fenerty Room, Sackville Library, 636 Sackville Drive.

## 2. APPROVAL OF ORDER OF BUSINESS AND ADDITIONS/DELETIONS

- Addition:**
- 5.2.1 Presentation on Service Improvements Over Next Three Years
  - 5.2.2 Transit Routing Project by Larry Hughes
  - 5.2.3 Metro Transit Passes for March Break
  - 5.2.4 Service Complaint - Route 80
  - 5.2.5 Direct Route to Bayers Lake from Bedford

It was agreed Mr. Robar's presentation would be dealt with first on the agenda.

The Committee **agreed to the agenda as amended.**

### 5.2 ADDED ITEMS

#### 5.2.1 Presentation on Service Improvements Over Next Three Years

Mr. Eddie Robar presented a powerpoint presentation on Metro Transit's timeline for service improvements. He advised he would also mention the review of IBI Standards conducted by the IBI Group, overview of service adjustments, routing adjustments and service adjustments by pick (every three months routes are changed), BRT update.

Service Standards to be applied to all routes in HRM including Core, Local and Small Communities:

- Core = places like Sackville Drive/Cobequid where a high standard of service is required to pull in the demand.
- Local = Springfield Estates - standards to be applied during weekday / holidays/ Saturdays and Sundays.
- These standards were applied to all routes. Deficiencies were noted which resulted in the changes to be made over the next three years and includes the 70,000 hours of increase in service over the next three years.
- Increase in service indicated for Route 83, 82 and 87 which will begin in May.
- Route 87 Downsview - re-route will fall in conjunction with the BRT implementation and will not change until then. Consideration is to go to Dartmouth Road and service a little of Bedford and change unserved area near highway to serviceable once the BRT is implemented. This will add 5 or 6 minutes to the travel time for this route. Public consultation will be held before final changes are made.

- Plans to extend BRT service to hospitals/universities as currently they will end at Scotia Square
- Plans to increase service to ½ hour service down from hourly service - some routes are currently using new schedule.
- Some routes to have Sunday Service or increased Sunday Service.
- Three additional new buses expected to handle increased (heavy) loads
- All new buses will be low-floor buses.
- Route 83 Springfield - by year 2005 there will be two additional weekday evening trips later at night.
- BRT plans have to wait until the contract is signed. August 2005 was the original target to have changes implemented but this date may be delayed.
- U-PASS - at this time no additional passes are being implemented as the load cannot be handled. There have been requests from MSVU and Dalhousie for U-Passes. U-PASS has been a huge success.
- Route 82 Millwood will increase midday service to ½ hour and will run later on Saturday evenings to give a full service day. Increase to Saturday daytime service to ½ as well by 2006.
- Route 80 - beginning in May 2004 will increase service to ½ hour. Should help Route 82 Saturday morning issue.
- There will be 6 or 8 bus bays at new Sackville BRT Terminal (near Wheaton's)

The Committee raised the following comments during the ensuing discussion:

- Low floor buses do not do well in the snow (*doors get stuck in the snow*).
- Wilson Lake Development will require more service of Route 82.
- Sackville golf course is being re-developed, Route 83 service will have to increase.

The Committee thanked Mr. Robar for his presentation.

### **3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - January 21, 2004**

**Corrections:**      page 4, Mr. Robar's comments "10% ridership *in the system*" not route 84.  
                                 page 8, add: "#2 Fuel oil/diesel"  
                                 page 9, "70,000 *km*" should be "*hours*", "*over the next year*" to "*over the next three years*".

**MOVED by Councillor Johns, seconded by Mr. Gunther Seyffarth to approve the Minutes of meeting held on January 21, 2004 as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

### **4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES**

4.1 Bus Shelter - Fenerty Road

Mr. Robar advised it is the time to submit suggestions for other locations. The Fenerty Road Bus Shelter will be done as soon as the ground is frost free.

4.2 Intersection of Spring Garden Road and Barrington Street and Spring Garden Road and Summer Street - Nothing new to report.

4.3 Bus Shelter - Bedford Highway at MSVU - Nothing new to report.

4.4 Service to Former Sackville Heights Elementary School - Nothing new to report.

4.5 Bus Schedules - Concerns with 80 Series Buses

Mr. Eddie Robar, Coordinator, Transit Scheduling presented a powerpoint presentation on the Standardized Service Survey results. Route changes for the 80 series buses were discussed at that time. See page 3.

4.5.1 Route 83 - Map - Nothing new to report.

4.5.2 Route 82 - Service to NSCC on Leeds Street

Mr. Robar advised Mr. Ken Silver will be meeting with Community Council regarding this issue and will provide an update at a future date.

4.6 Access A Bus

To be removed from the agenda as the policy book was received in January 2004.

4.7 Park and Rides

Mr. Robar advised, in regards to Mr. Mitchell's concerns with the Bayers Road Park and Ride, a response was received from the Mall Administration that it is not necessary to enter the mall to receive permission to park there.

4.7.1 Beaver Bank Park and Ride

Mr. Robar commented Beaver Bank is being seriously considered for a Park and Ride but probably nothing will happen before 2006.

4.7.2 Upper Sackville Park and Ride - *No new information.*

4.7.3 Downsview Park and Ride

Mr. Robar advised the Downsview Park and Ride will be gone and the buses for the area will be re-routed to the new BRT Terminal near Wheaton's. The Committee suggested consideration be given for sidewalks to the BRT Terminal. Concern was also expressed for pedestrian access from the trailer park across the series 100 highway to the BRT Terminal - perhaps a pedestrian overpass could be considered for this area.

4.7.4 Cobequid Park and Ride - *No new information.*

4.8 Long Range Issues

4.8.1 Status of Beaver Bank Bypass - *No new information.*

4.8.2 Future Service to New Cobequid Health Centre - *No new information.*

4.8.3 New Use for Present Cobequid Multi-Service Centre - *No new information.*

4.8.4 Future Service for New Recreation Facility in Bedford - *No new information.*

4.8.5 Future Service for New Community College in Woodside

Mr. Robar reported Metro Transit has received the concept plans for the new campus and are making suggestions to NSCC regarding access for transit. He advised one concern is the distance of the campus from the main road as well as the grade upon which the campus will be built. Mr. Robar will provide a further update at the April meeting.

4.8.6 Transit Service to Halifax International Airport - *No new information*

4.8.7 Transit Service to Bayers Lake Business Park from Bedford

Mr. William Chaffey had requested an item be added to the agenda regarding a more direct route to Bayers Lake from Bedford. The direct route would alleviate the necessity of traveling into Halifax, transferring onto the Route 52 Crosstown then traveling back out to the Bayers Lake area. Mr. Cox suggested Mr. Chaffey's request be added to this status sheet item. Mr. Robar to provide an update for the next meeting.

4.9 Bio-Diesel in Metro Fleet - *No new information.*

4.10 Commuter Rail

This item to be returned to the North West Transit Advisory Committee agenda. Although there was an e-mail sent from the Mayor's office indicating there was a Committee reviewing this issue and that it could be removed from this agenda, the Committee agreed it is an item they would like to have remain on their status sheet.

## **5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS**

5.1 Promotion of Transit

Mr. McKinnon requested more information from Mr. Robar regarding marketing/promotion of Metro Transit and commented that transit should promote all services since they are now promoting BRT. Mr. Robar advised Ms. Lori Patterson handles promotion/marketing for Metro Transit. He added posters have just been developed with all bus service schedules and will go in the terminals. Mr. Robar advised a Tips and Tricks flyer is being considered and more advertising/promotion is being discussed. Mr. McKinnon added he heard a jingle "Where Ever Life Takes You" and asked if Lori Patterson could obtain the jingle for use by metro transit in their promotions and commented there is a real need for creativity in promoting Metro Transit.

Mr. McKinnon suggested Metro Transit do more promotion to attract riders. The following comments were raised during ensuing discussion:

- Signs inside the buses are really preaching to the converted and perhaps a different approach needs to be considered to reach those not currently using transit.
- Requested Ms. Lori Patterson, Public Relations person for Metro Transit provide information on the current promotion/marketing strategy.
- Promote Metro Transit to new developments such as apartment buildings or subdivisions in order for the owner/developer to provide the information in their sales packages.
- Have a bus on display at the shopping centre(s) on a Saturday to promote transit use. This would be good to do during the Regional Planning discussions.

The Committee requested that Lori Patterson report back to this Committee on what is being considered for promotion/marketing.

## 5.2 NEW BUSINESS / ADDED ITEMS

### 5.2.1 Presentation on Service Improvements Over Next Three Years

Dealt with earlier on the agenda. See pages 3 & 4.

### 5.2.2 Transit Routing Project by Larry Hughes

Mr. Cox inquired if the software program created by Larry Hughes would be a good tool for Metro Transit. Mr. Robar advised the program is not as accurate as a transit user would require as it does not take into account route changes (travel patterns) during the day, i.e: Route 59 does the same route during the day but the last run at night it goes to the Forest Hills area. Further, he advised HRM's 490-4000 number does handle most of the transit calls regarding scheduling and routing. He added there is a TRIP PLANNER software available but it is expensive. He suggested anyone who is interested in seeing how the software works could check out Seattle, Washington's website as they use the TRIP PLANNER software.

### 5.2.2 Metro Transit Passes for March Break

The Committee suggested Metro Transit consider implementing passes such as: family passes, shoppers passes, convention passes, event passes, vacation/weekend passes for those visiting Halifax during March Break/tourist season and/or year round. Mr. Robar commented this idea has been considered specifically during the TALL SHIPS.

The Committee raised the following points during the ensuing discussion:

- Agreed the passes would help alleviate traffic congestion heading into and around the downtown core.
- Hamburg, Germany has a four day family pass (4 adults, 3 children) only restriction is that you cannot use the transit system during rush hours.
- Mr. Robar will check into this and provide an update for the next meeting.

Mr. Robar commented that FRED (Free Rides Everywhere Downtown) is in operation in the downtown core during the summer months and has been hugely successful.

### 5.2.3 Service Complaint - Route 80

Mr. Ron McKinnon advised on February 10, 2004, the Route 80 pulled away from the BAYER'S ROAD stop as a young woman (his daughter) was running to catch it. He inquired if there was a policy for young women traveling at night and also whether there was a means for another passenger to notify the driver there is someone running for the bus.

Mr. Robar responded he will bring this information forward to the Operator. He further advised drivers are not to pick people up or drop them off anywhere other than at the designated bus stop. However, late at night there is a policy to oblige requested stops for females or others who wish to be let off in a safer location. He added this would be investigated by the service supervisors and dealt with accordingly by the Supervisors and Operator. Committee members commented that someone could yell out to the driver that someone is running for the bus or they could ring the bell.

**6. NEXT MEETING DATE - Wednesday, April 28, 2004**

Mr. Seyffarth conveyed regrets for the next meeting as he will be out of the country.

**7. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Chris Newson  
Legislative Assistant