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Northwest Community Council  
October 25, 2007

**TO:** Chair and Members of Northwest Community Council

**SUBMITTED BY:**   
Mike Labrecque, P.Eng., Director of Transportation and Public Works

**DATE:** October 1, 2007

**SUBJECT:** Standing Passengers on 80-86 Series Routes

### INFORMATION REPORT

**ORIGIN:**

Report item 10.1.1 - June 21, 2007 Northwest Community Council meeting.

**BACKGROUND:**

At the June 21, 2007 meeting of the Northwest Community Council, Council requested staff to report on the safety issues related to standing passengers on 80-86 series routes as reported by the Northwest Transit Advisory Committee, and further, to give priority to 80-86 series routes when planning service increases for the 2008-2009 budget year.

**DISCUSSION:**

Metro Transit has evaluated this request alongside the many other requests received for service improvements received in the past year. Several factors were considered in this analysis:

- Having standing passengers on buses is a standard, acceptable industry practice and is actually desirable during peak hours in a fiscally efficient transit system.
- The number of standing passengers reported is well within Metro Transit service standards. The standards state that during peak hours, buses may be loaded to 150% of the total seated capacity, meaning that the number of standing passengers on the bus may be up to half of the seated passenger capacity of the bus.
- It is not inherently unsafe to have standing passengers on a bus traveling over 70 km/h and there is no regulatory prohibition on doing so. Many other transit systems do this on a routine basis, including GO Transit (Greater Toronto Region) and OC Transpo (Ottawa).
- Metro Transit cannot guarantee passengers a seat on any bus service due to the unpredictable nature of day-to-day passenger loads.
- Since the number of passengers standing is within Metro Transit service standards, there is no warrant to increase service levels based on standing passengers. If Metro Transit were to divert resources to these requests, it would be at the expense of other service improvements that are warranted and are a higher priority at this time.
- Metro Transit has recently implemented route 81 Hemlock Ravine, which parallels a significant portion of the route 80 Sackville. Route 81 also parallels a substantial peak hour section of route 82 Millwood along the Bedford Highway. It typically takes 18-24 months for ridership to fully stabilize once a new route is introduced, especially in a case like this where the new route closely parallels long-standing, established routes. A transfer of ridership from route 80 to route 81 was recorded in the passengers counts conducted in the Fall of 2006. It is expected that this trend will continue in Metro Transit's upcoming Fall 2007 passenger count program, further reducing the number of standing passengers.
- In August 2007, Metro Transit implemented route 16 Parkland, which provides a direct connection between Dartmouth (Bridge Terminal and Highfield Terminal) and Mount Saint Vincent University, continuing to Lacewood Terminal via Parkland Drive. This route provides a convenient option for passengers traveling between Dartmouth and Mount Saint Vincent University, and will reduce the need for these students to use route 80 or 81 to reach the University, further decreasing the loads on routes 80 and 81.

As a result of this evaluation, Metro Transit will not be increasing service levels on 80-86 series routes to address the request of the Northwest Transit Advisory Committee during the 2008-2009 budget year.

**BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:**

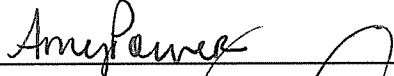
There are no budget implications

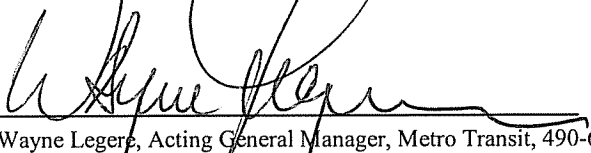
**FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES/BUSINESS PLAN**

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.

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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