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P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

NORTH WEST COMMUNITY COUNCIL
March 23, 2006

TO: North West Community Council

FROM:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phillip Cox".

Phillip Cox, Chair
North West Transit Advisory Committee

DATE: February 15, 2006

SUBJECT: **Lack of Transit Subsidies**

ORIGIN

Ongoing discussions by the Northwest Transit Advisory Committee.

RECOMMENDATION:

The North West Transit Advisory Committee recommends that the North West Community Council:

Take immediate action to obtain transit subsidies from both the Provincial and Federal Government levels in order to address the serious existing service deficiencies within Metro Transit.

BACKGROUND

The issue of transit service deficiencies has been the source of ongoing discussions at the Northwest Transit Advisory Committee (NWTAC) meetings for many months. Continuing requests from area residents for transit service (to the Lucasville Road and Patton Road areas for example) or, for improvements to existing transit service (Route 80 series) have been received. Metro Transit responds to requests for improvements to/expansion of transit service by indicating that there are just not enough resources (funding, buses, drivers) available to meet the demand.

DISCUSSION

The NWTAC has been researching the existing transit deficiencies and compiling statistics in regard to a variety of concerns. Some of the concerns are:

1. The number of riders who must stand on buses for long periods of time (some commuters are standing the entire trip from Sackville to downtown Halifax).
2. The number of riders who are left at bus stops due to overcrowded buses (approximately 175 people per day throughout HRM).
3. Requests for transit service to areas that currently do not have service (Lucasville Road, Patton Road areas).
4. Areas that have a Community Transit service (Beaver Bank and Porter's Lake/Preston) must pay an additional fare to use the regular Metro Transit routes. Community Transit routes provide feeder service to regular Metro Transit routes; however, transfers are not issued or accepted. For example, an adult would pay \$2.50 from Porter's Lake to Mic Mac Mall and then would be required to pay the \$2.00 Metro Transit fare if they wish to use the Metro Transit service.
5. Requests for increased transit service (more frequency, ½ hour service as opposed to hourly service and extended evening/weekend hours).

In the process of researching this issue, the Northwest Transit Advisory Committee discovered that HRM has one of the highest (70%) cost recovery through the fare box in Canada. The NWTAC further discovered that HRM has not received subsidies for transit services from the Provincial or Federal Government since amalgamation in 1995, with the exception of the Showcase Program funding for the Metro Link buses and related infrastructure in 2004. Other cities across Canada, of comparable size to HRM such as Brampton/Kitchener/London, Ontario, Laval/Hull, Quebec and Victoria, BC, receive Provincial and Federal Subsidies (see graphs attached to this report as Attachment "A").

Attachment "A" refers to statistics taken from the CUTA (Canadian Urban Transit Association) Fact Book from 2002 to 2004. It is to be noted that the peak in funding for 2004 (showing just over \$3

M contributed to HRM by the Federal government and just under \$1 M contributed to HRM by the Provincial government) was due to Transport Canada's Showcase Program (METROLINK buses and infrastructure).

A future report containing more detailed findings of the research being conducted by the NWTAC will be forthcoming to the NWCC. In the meantime, the service deficiency situation is worsening as U-Passes are now being introduced and utilized (SMU and Dalhousie). Additional requests for U-Passes (MSVU and the NSCC) are being received and considered. The U-Pass is resulting in increased demand on an already overburdened system.

Metro Transit is not able to properly promote transit use as it is not able to meet the current demand and cannot responsibly encourage more riders into an already exhausted system. The proposed Regional Plan also raises concern in regard to HRM being able to provide the transit service to and from the proposed "*mixed use transit and pedestrian-oriented centres*" and to accommodate the resulting influx of commuters into the urban transit system.

It is requested that the NWCC work with Regional Council to have HRM approach both the Provincial and Federal levels of government to obtain funding for transit services in line with what other municipalities are receiving. Additional funding will enable Metro Transit to address the current existing deficiencies and perhaps provide service to areas that are presently without Metro Transit service.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

None at this time.

ALTERNATIVES

None.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Attachment "A" Statistical Graphs from the CUTA Fact Book.

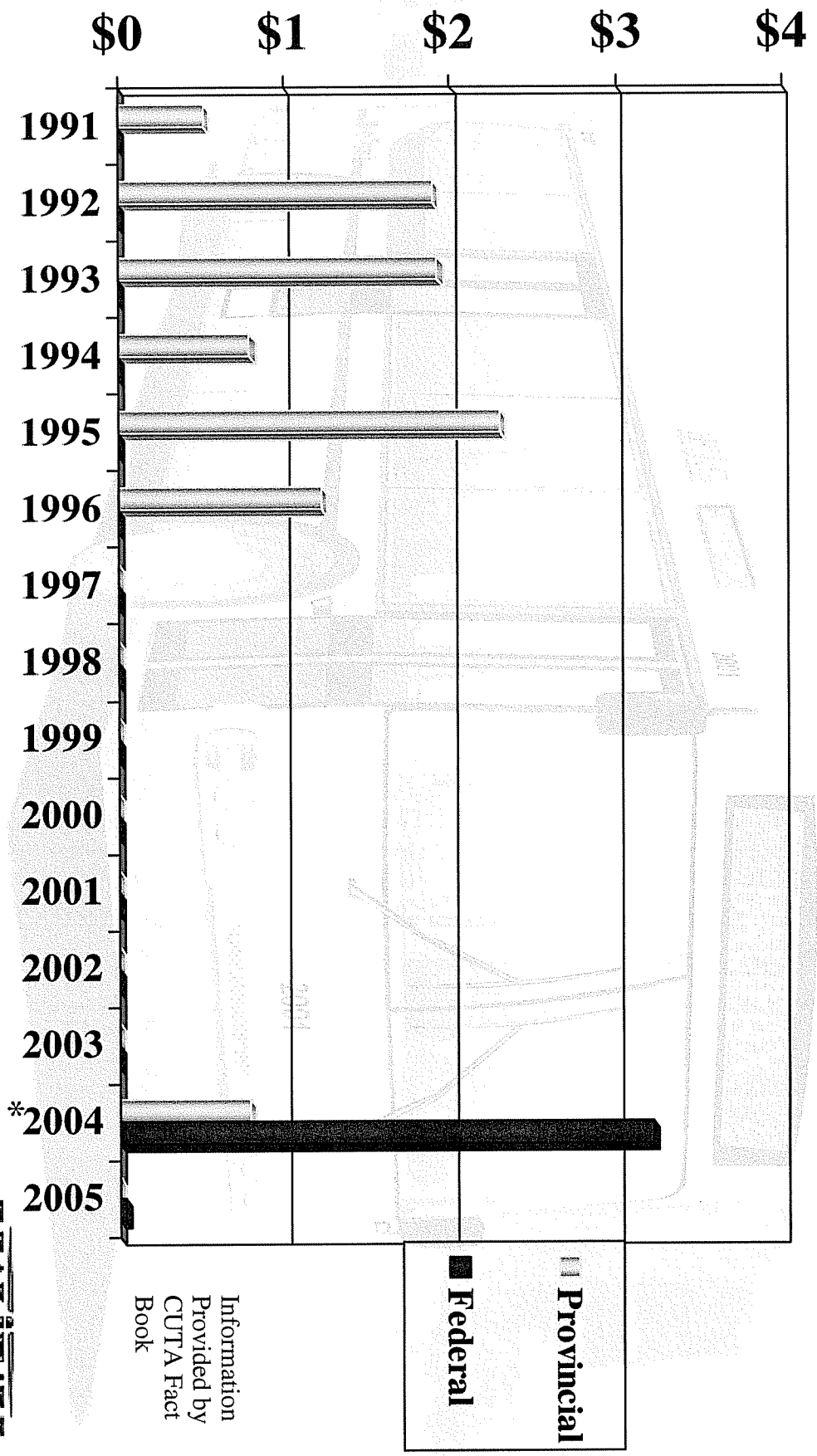
Additional copies of this report, and information on its status, can be obtained by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210 or fax at 490-4208.

Report prepared by: Chris Newson, Legislative Assistant

Federal/Provincial

Contribution to Transit/Year

Millions



Metro Transit

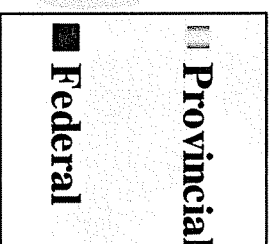
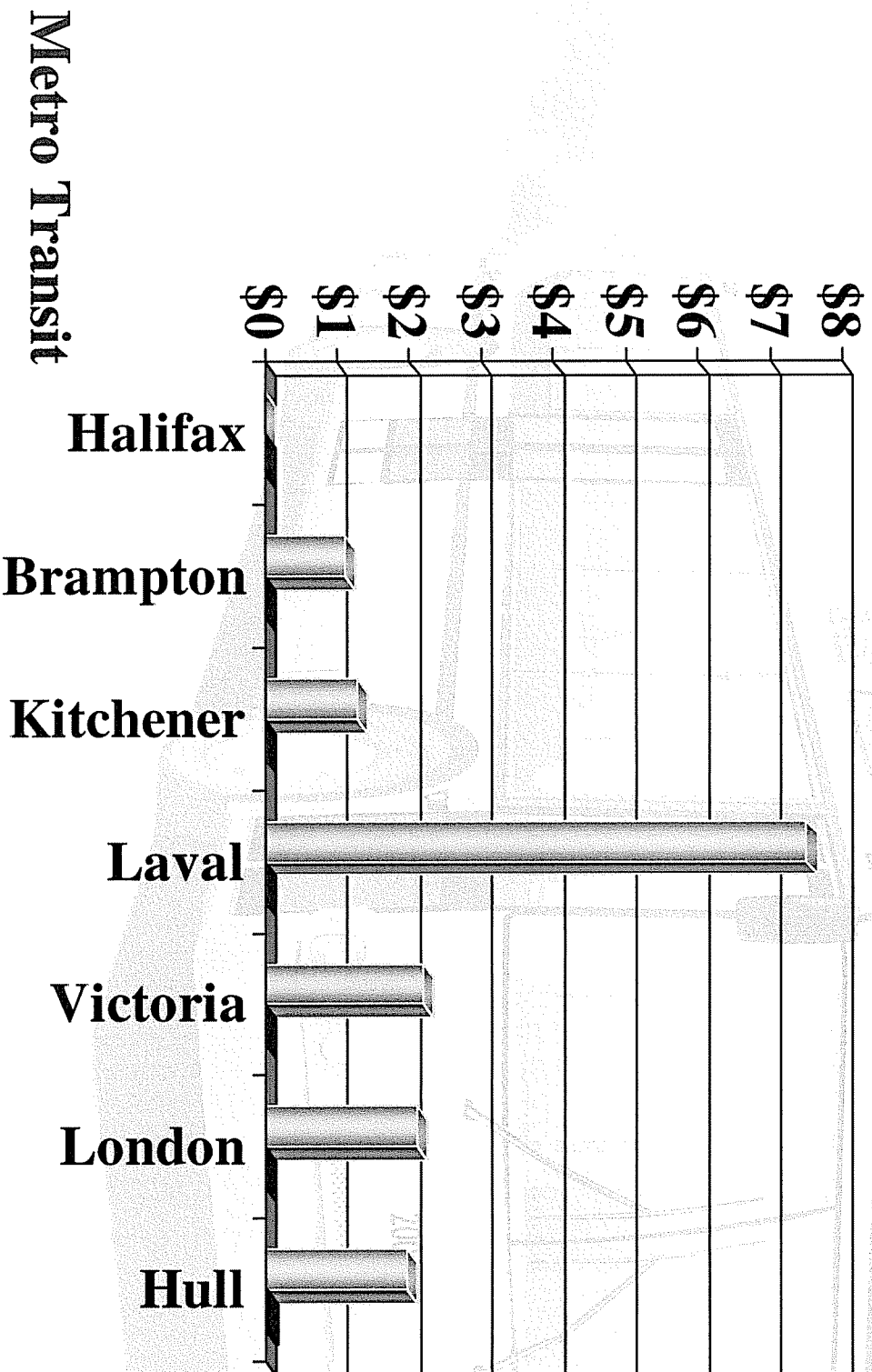
*2004 – Transport Canada Showcase Program Funding

Information Provided by CUTA Fact Book



Federal/Provincial Contribution in \$ (2002)

Millions



* CUTA Fact
Book 2002

Metro Transit

Halifax

Brampton

Kitchener

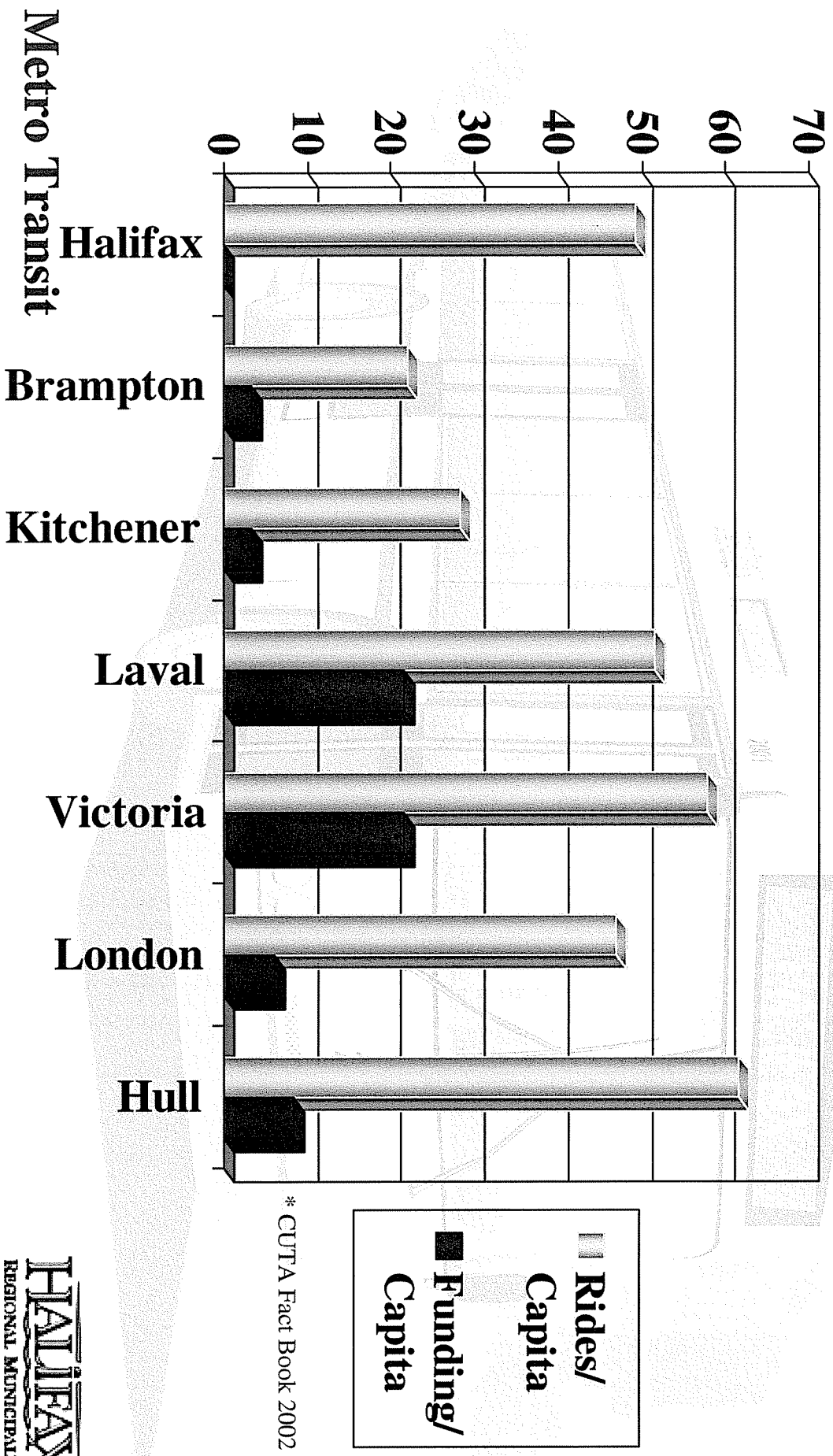
Laval

Victoria

London

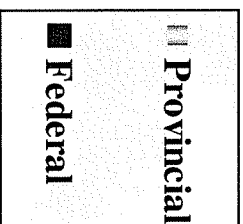
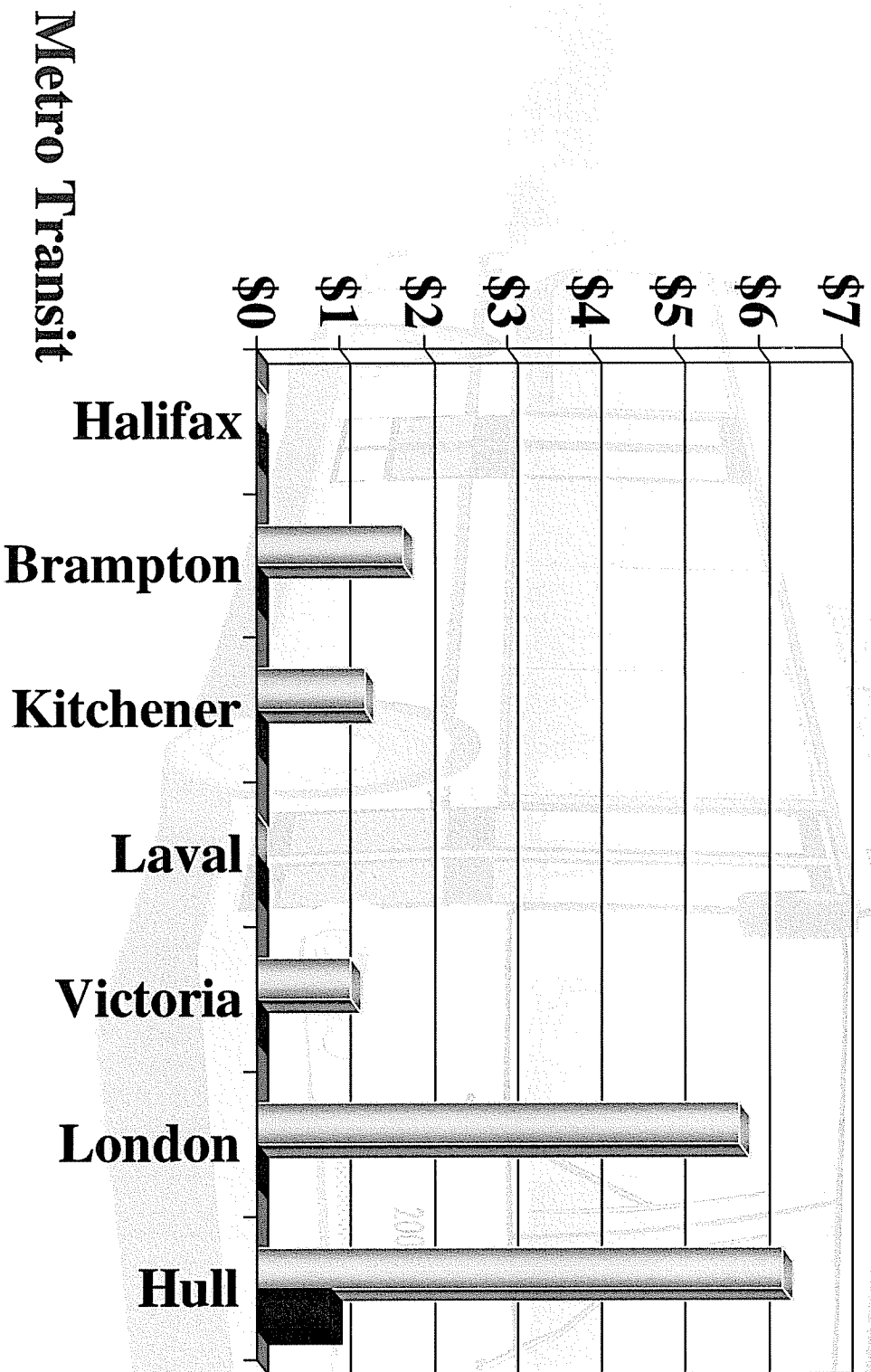
Hull

Passengers & Federal/Provincial Funding/Capita 2002



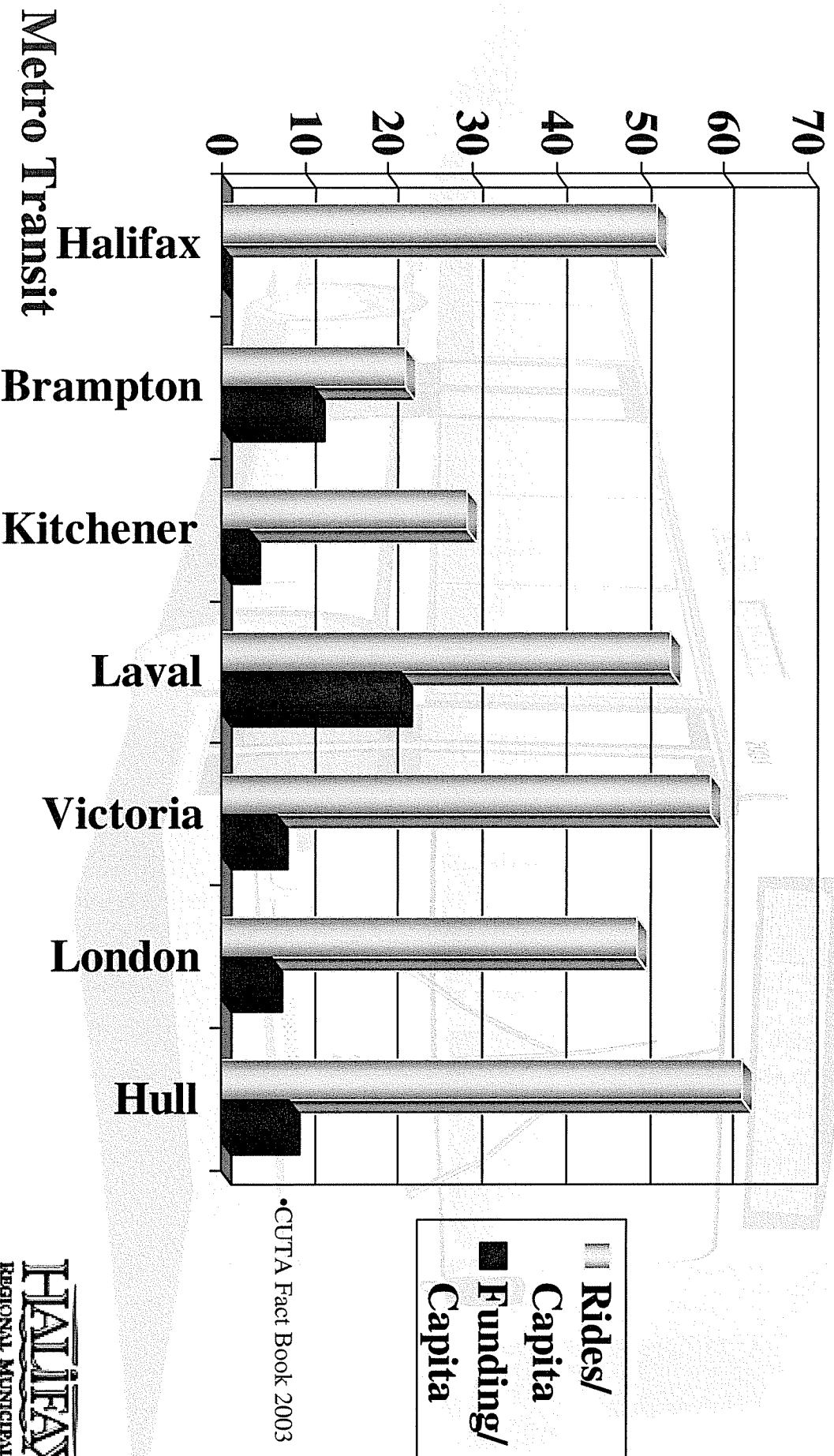
Federal/Provincial Contribution in \$ (2003)

Millions



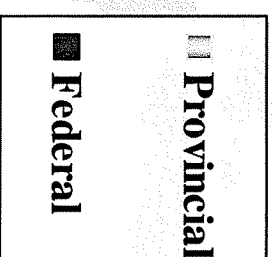
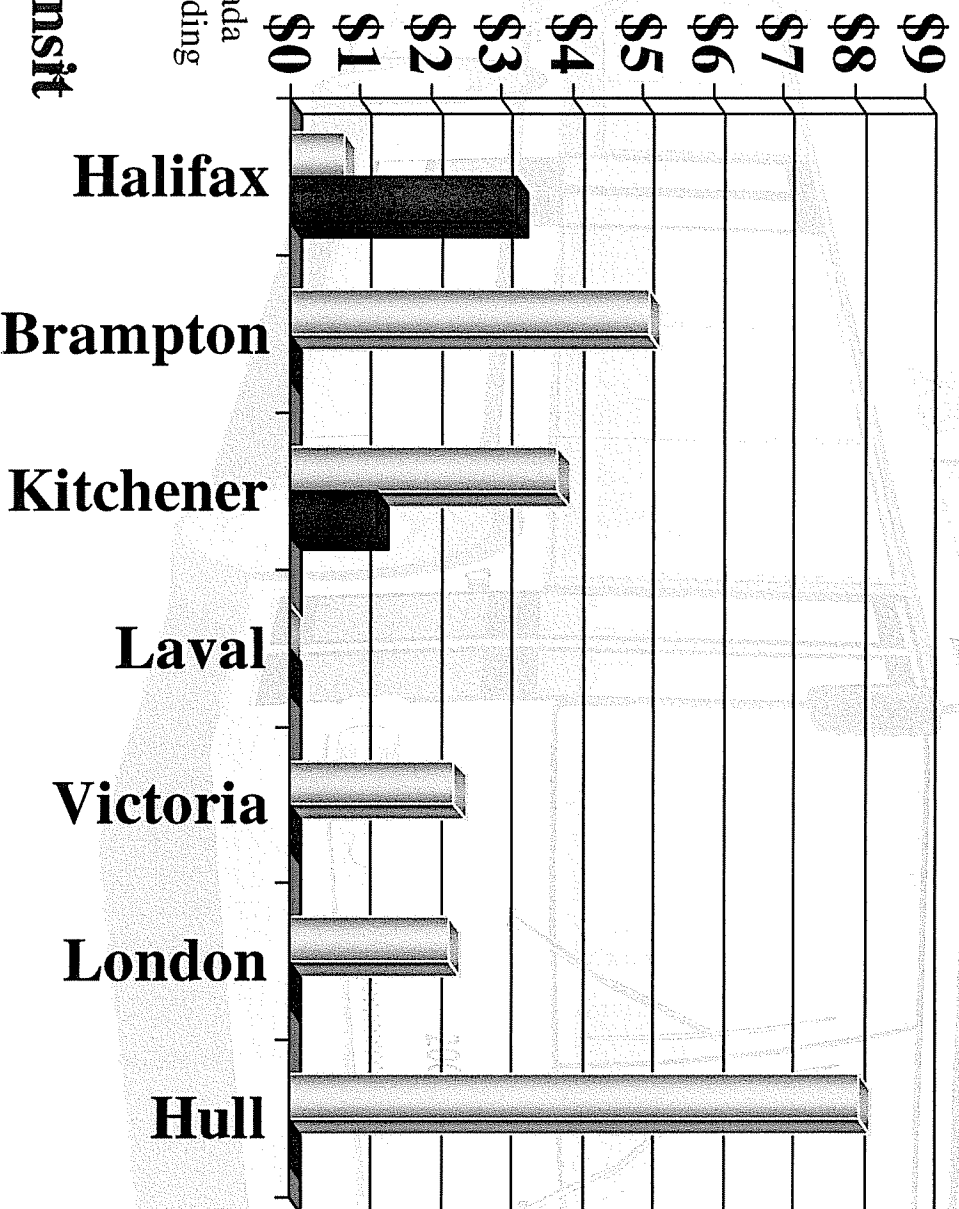
* CUTA Fact
Book 2003

Passengers & Federal/Provincial Funding/Capita 2003



Federal/Provincial Contribution in \$ (2004)

Millions



* CUTA Fact
Book 2004

004 – Transport Canada
Case Program Funding

Metro Transit

Passengers & Federal/Provincial Funding/Capita 2004

