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Item No. 3
Halifax Regional Council
October 27, 2009
Committee of the Whole
November 10, 2009

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Dan English".

Dan English, Chief Administrative Officer

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Wayne Anstey".

Wayne Anstey, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer - Operations

DATE: October 9, 2009

SUBJECT: Metro Transit Five-Year Strategic Operations Plan

ORIGIN

This study originates from the 2008/09 Capital Budget and RFP No.08-129 - Consulting Services. Metro Transit Strategic Plan Update, which was awarded by Regional Council on September 30, 2008 to IBI Group, which operationalizes Metro Transit's Five Year Approach to Transit enhancements.

NOTE: The Metro Transit Service Strategy Plan does not cover detailed planning for MetroX, HarbourLink or Rural Community services. Planning for these is being undertaken in a separate, parallel process that is integrated with the Five-Year Strategic Operations Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council approve in principle the attached Metro Transit Five-Year Strategic Operations Plan, and that Halifax Regional Council direct staff to use this Plan as the basis for planning and operating the Metro Transit system for the fiscal years 2010-11 to 2014-15.

BACKGROUND

In 2006, Halifax Regional Council adopted The Regional Municipality Planning Strategy (MPS), as a guide for future development of the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM). The overarching goal of this MPS is to achieve a shared vision of the future of HRM, a vision of healthy, vibrant and sustainable communities, without taking away from the character that makes HRM a distinct and attractive place to live.

In June 2002, Metro Transit completed its first Transit Strategy. This Strategy provided guidance with respect to planning and operations over its five-year lifespan. This Transit Strategy completed prior to the MPS was not integrated to achieve the goals of The Regional Plan. However, as the recommendations of the Transit Strategy were executed, Metro Transit service levels and ridership increased significantly. Once the intended lifespan of the Plan had passed, efforts began on an updated five-year plan fully integrated into the MPS and Council Focus Areas (CFA). The Regional Plan’s focus on transportation is to increase the modal split and presents targets to be achieved throughout the life of the Plan, the targets are as follows:

Table 1: Transit Modal Splits (Existing) and Targeted

Trip Origin	Trip Destination				
	Regional Centre	Suburban A	Suburban B	Suburban C	Rural
Regional Centre	(25%) 29%	(20%) 25%	(15%) 20%	(10%) 17%	(0%) 8%
Suburban A	(20%) 25%	(20%) 25%	(15%) 20%	(10%) 17%	(0%) 8%
Suburban B	(15%) 20%	(15%) 20%	(15%) 20%	(10%) 17%	(0%) 8%
Suburban C	(10%) 17%	(10%) 17%	(10%) 17%	(10%) 17%	(0%) 8%
Rural	(0%) 8%	(0%) 8%	(0%) 8%	(0%) 8%	(0%) 8%
Total of all Trips	(18%) 23%				

The Metro Transit Five-Year Strategic Operations Plan is the culmination of these efforts and will provide guidance as Metro Transit continues to grow over the next five years. This Plan, working in conjunction with The Regional Plan, is a key element of the Five Year Approach to Transit Enhancements and serves to operationalize that Capital Plan.

DISCUSSION

Over the past year, Metro Transit and other HRM staff have worked with IBI Group and their partners to develop the Metro Transit Five-Year Strategic Operations Plan. The preparation of this Plan included public consultation through a web survey (which received over 9,000 responses), and three public open house sessions held in Halifax, Dartmouth and Sackville. Staff also built upon the day to day feedback we received from Councillors and the general public.

In general terms, the Metro Transit Strategic Operations Plan is about making public transit a higher priority in HRM. The Plan builds on the high priority Halifax Regional Council has already given public transit through the Council Focus Area of Transportation. This Plan also builds on the emphasis placed on public transit in the HRM MPS. The intent is to take Metro Transit to the “next level” in HRM, ensuring that the significant growth in public transit planned for the next five years happens in a way that is most beneficial to residents. The key components of the Plan are as follows:

Metro Transit Service Strategy

The Strategic Operations Plan details Metro Transit’s proposed operating strategy for the next five years, beginning with Fiscal Year 2010/11. A key component of this Metro Transit Service Strategy provides detailed recommendations for service changes over the next five years.

Highlights of the Metro Transit Service Strategy include:

- Conversion of Route 1, Spring Garden to a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service, with a 7.5-minute peak headway;
- Revamped service structure in Burnside and Dartmouth Crossing, to reflect the evolving nature of these areas, including a new Burnside Transit Terminal;
- Introduction of urban express routes, achieved through conversion of existing peak hour supplementary high demand service;
- Significant realignment of service in the Portland Street and Cole Harbour Road corridor to “Core/Feeder” system to improve overall service levels and more efficiently allocate resources;
- Improved circulation within communities such as Cole Harbour and Bedford;
- New service in the designated growth centres of Russell Lake West, Bedford South, and Bedford West;
- Improved university service;
- New MetroLink services;
- New service to Regency Park Drive, Ragged Lake, Armdale and Exhibition Park;
- Improved headways and span of service in many routes throughout the system;
- Improved circulation from the Halifax Ferry Terminal to the Spring Garden Road/Hospitals corridor and;
- Five-Year Fleet and Infrastructure Plan.

The Metro Transit Service Strategy Plan does not cover detailed planning for MetroX, HarbourLink or Rural Community services. Planning for these is being undertaken in a separate, parallel process that is integrated with the Five-Year Strategic Operations Plan.

Service Standards

Another key element of the Plan is the Service Standards. These standards provide staff with guidelines by which to plan and operate transit services. The proposed Service Standards consider categories of service; route coverage; route structure; population density; service levels; vehicle loadings; ridership performance, and cost recovery.

The Service Standards section also includes standards for rural transit services. These standards provide a framework for the provision of fixed route bus transit services to those areas that can support such services in a fiscally sustainable manner. Under these standards, not all rural areas in HRM will be suitable for fixed route bus transit service. These areas would then be considered for alternative means of public transportation. Such standards are necessary to ensure that Metro Transit's budget is used to benefit the greatest number of people possible, and that a disproportionately high amount of funding is not being allocated to a relatively small number of residents.

Fleet Plan

An overall Fleet Plan provides guidance on vehicle requirements over the next five years. It includes the purchase of expansion and replacement vehicles following a strategy consistent with the Fleet Recapitalization Plan, including 60-foot articulated vehicles.

A summary of the cost to purchase and operate expansion vehicles needed to implement this Plan is included below:

Fiscal Year	Capital Costs (In Millions)	Operating Cost of Capital (In Millions)
2010-2011	\$7,000	\$2,200
2011-2012	\$7,600	\$2,300
2012-2013	\$7,800	\$2,300
2013-2014	\$7,000	\$2,400
2014-2015	\$7,000	\$2,400
Total	\$36,300	\$11,800

Other Elements

Other elements of the Plan include; a Market Analysis; a Transit Operations Strategy; Transit Supportive Strategies; a Financial Plan; an Implementation Plan; and an analysis of Greenhouse Gas, and Climate Change Impacts of the Study.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There are no budget implications at this time. Requests for budget to implement this Plan will follow through the annual budget process.

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.

ALTERNATIVES

Regional Council could choose to not approve in principle the Metro Transit Five-Year Strategic Operations Plan.


ATTACHMENTS

Metro Transit Five-Year Strategic Operations Plan

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/agenda.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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