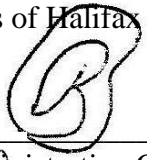




P.O. Box 1749  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
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**Item No. 10.1.8**  
**Halifax Regional Council**  
**December 13, 2011**

**TO:** Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

**SUBMITTED BY:** Original signed by   
\_\_\_\_\_  
Richard Butts, Chief Administrative Officer

Original Signed by   
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mike Labrecque, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** December 1, 2011

**SUBJECT:** Sheldrake Lake MetroX Service

**ORIGIN**

Request from Metro Transit to acquire land near Exit 4, Highway 103 for a MetroX Park and Ride Facility.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council authorizes the Mayor and Municipal Clerk to enter into an Agreement of Purchase and Sale for the Purchase of a portion of 3284 St. Margaret's Bay Road, Timberlea Nova Scotia, PID # 4103186 as per the key terms and conditions outlined in Table 1 of this report.

## **BACKGROUND**

The 2007 *HRM Regional Transit Plan – Park & Ride, Express and Rural Transportation Services* outlined a roadmap for the development and implementation of rural transportation services in HRM.

In response to this plan, MetroX was developed, a service to provide direct, limited stop, public transit from strategically located Park & Ride facilities in rural commuter centres along the 100-series highways. MetroX is a premium service that includes branded vehicles and park and ride lots and limited stops to the urban core. Designed to serve weekday commuters, the buses typically depart every half hour or greater during peak morning and afternoon travel times and less frequently midday.

The first service, Tantallon MetroX was introduced in 2009 and other locations are currently in the planning or development stages. The plan also identified Highway 103 Exit #4 (Sheldrake Lake) as a potential park and ride location.

## **DISCUSSION**

After an exhaustive search, it was determined that a 6.5 acre property owned by the Canadian National Baptist Convention was the only suitable site for a MetroX Park and Ride. There is currently a church and gravel parking lot located on the property. Site challenges include a significant amount of low lying wetlands and a well adjacent to the proposed parking lot (Figure 1, attached). HRM Real Estate has negotiated a purchase price for the required land which includes an easement that allows for a passenger drop off and pick area as well as access to the parking lot for church users. The terms are provided in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1

Property Address	Portion of 3284 St. Margaret's Bay Road, PID # 41031386, Timberlea
Vendor	Canadian National Baptist Convention
Purchaser	HRM
Purchase Price	\$100,000
Proposed Development	Public Transit Facility
Lot Area (total)	104,544 square feet (2.4 acres)
Closing Date	March 31, 2012
Terms and Conditions	<p>HRM will have 90 days to receive Regional Council approval with an additional 20 days to do any site inspections.</p> <p>The obligation of HRM to the Church as per the AP&amp;S is construction of the driveway with asphalt, ongoing maintenance as well as snow removal and assurance the well will not be compromised and if it is HRM will rectify.</p>

In part due to the site constraints for Sheldrake Lake and resulting higher than average estimated costs, there is a risk that sufficient ridership may not materialize to justify the significant investment required. Also, should the service be removed in the future, HRM would be left with an asset without a municipal requirement. For these reasons, staff are presenting several alternatives that would reduce the project costs. The following options are available for Council's consideration:

**Option 1** - Sheldrake Lake Park and Ride constructed as per typical MetroX standards;

**Option 2** - Sheldrake Lake Park and Ride constructed without bus loop;

**Option 3** - Sheldrake Lake Park and Ride constructed with gravel parking lot, no bus loop;

**Option 4**- No Sheldrake Lake service, vehicles incorporated into Tantallon MetroX service and parking lot expanded by 30 parking spaces;

**Option 5**- No Sheldrake Lake service, vehicles incorporated into Tantallon MetroX service.

Further details on these options, as well as associated costs, are discussed below.

### **Option 1 – Sheldrake Lake**

The current plan is to proceed with the Sheldrake Lake Park and Ride and MetroX service as previously directed by Council. HRM Design and Construction enlisted the services of SNC Lavalin to develop a preliminary design for the Park and Ride facility (Attachment 2). The current design consists of two entrances from St. Margaret's Bay Road; one for the bus loop and one closer to the church for the parking area. There is a proposed bus shelter located between the parking area and the bus loop. The bus loop and the parking area would be paved and appropriate drainage and catch basins installed to ensure the church well located on the site is not impacted. This facility would accommodate 48 parking spots.

The design incorporates the common look and feel of a MetroX facility, with a separate parking lot and bus loop, a bus shelter and a pedestrian connection between the two areas. Separating the bus loop is important as it eliminates the mixing of buses and cars thus mitigating potential safety issues and congestion. In addition, all areas where buses will travel at the facility (ie. bus loops, driveways) must be paved using heavy duty asphalt in order to ensure durability and continued operations.

Estimated ridership for the Sheldrake Lake MetroX is 71 riders per day. Operating costs for this service would be based on approximately 9 additional hours of service per day.

Total Capital Cost = \$684,343

- Construction = \$576,000 (incl. net HST)
- Site Development and Land Acquisition = \$100,000 (HST does not apply)
- Miscellaneous (legal fees, land survey, subdivision fees) = \$8,343 (incl. net HST)

### **Option 2 – Sheldrake Lake**

The second option explored by staff would include developing the Sheldrake Lake Park and Ride site with a more modest design by eliminating the bus loop from the proposal. The parking area would still be paved.

Total Capital Cost = \$465,343

- Construction = \$357,000 (incl. net HST)
- Site Development and Land Acquisition = \$100,000 (HST does not apply)
- Miscellaneous (legal fees, land survey, subdivision fees) = \$8,343 (incl. net HST)

Ridership Impact – 71 daily riders, as per Option 1

Risk

- Eliminating the bus loop will increase the potential for safety issues and congestion as buses will now be required to loop through the parking lot.
- Would require Metro Transit to renegotiate a new site plan with the current land owners as Option 2 would require a shared access driveway.

**Option 3 – Sheldrake Lake**

The third option for Council's consideration is to proceed with the MetroX service in Sheldrake Lake with minimal site improvements. Only the driveway and the looping area in front of the church would be paved, and the parking lot would be graveled. A separate bus loop would not be developed. Metro Transit would propose a lease arrangement with the church as opposed to a land purchase.

Total Capital Cost\* = \$ 392,343

- Construction = \$284,000 (incl. net HST)
- Misc. = \$8,343 (incl. net HST)

*\*lease cost is not included in above and would have to be negotiated with the church*

Ridership Impact – 71 daily riders, as per Option 1

Risks

- The church may not agree to a lease arrangement and the fact that they no longer have the benefit of a paved parking lot. In addition, there are increased maintenance costs (estimated at approximately \$20,000 per year) and liability risks associated with gravel lots. Wheelchair accessibility would also be compromised.
- Would require Metro Transit to renegotiate a new site plan with the current land owners as Option 3 would require a shared access driveway.

**Option 4 – Tantallon**

As an alternative to developing the Sheldrake Lake Park and Ride, the vehicles acquired for this service would be reallocated to the existing Tantallon MetroX service and resources could be utilized to construct up to 30 additional parking spaces at the existing Tantallon Park and Ride, subject to developing a detailed design. Vehicle capacity issues exist on the Tantallon MetroX service, and the additional parking spaces would allow for future ridership growth. The increase

in operating costs for this service would be equivalent to Options 1 through 3, as the estimated 9 service hours per day would be redirected to provide this service. With this option, there would be no MetroX service to Sheldrake Lake.

Capital Cost = \$111,670

Ridership Impact – Capacity for up to 115 additional daily riders

Risk – There is no incremental risk associated with this option.

### **Option 5 – Tantallon**

The final option available would be to defer any capital improvements to the MetroX service in the 103 corridor at this time, and reallocate the operating costs and vehicles acquired for the Sheldrake Lake service to the existing Tantallon MetroX service. Ridership of this existing service is such that without any further capital investment, staff estimate that the additional vehicles would result in the ability to carry up to 71 additional riders daily. With this option, there would be no service to Sheldrake Lake.

Capital Cost = nil

Ridership Impact – The potential of 71 additional daily riders

Risk – There is no incremental risk associated with this option.

Attachments 1 through 3 illustrate the capital costs associated with each of the options detailed above. For comparison purposes, Attachment 4 outlines the cost of construction per space for other existing/planned MetroX Park and Ride lots.

### **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

The funding for this project was previously approved in the Metro Transit Project budget MetroX CMX01104 and is available to cover the costs estimated above. Any remaining funds would be reallocated to other transit improvement projects including buses and infrastructure related to MetroX.

Budget Summary:	Cumulative Unspent Budget	\$5,692,909
	Sheldrake Lake MetroX Project*	(\$584,343)
	Balance	\$5,108,566

*\*note: the land purchase is committed in SAP, therefore accounted for in cumulative unspent budget*

## **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.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

A Public Information Meeting was held on June 15, 2011, at Lakeside Community Centre to explain the proposed Land Use Bylaw amendment required to proceed with the project. Eight members of the public were in attendance.

The Public Hearing regarding the bylaw amendment was held by Western Region Community Council on Monday, October 24, 2011. The staff recommendation was approved.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

1. Regional Council may direct staff to proceed with Option 1 and continue pursuing the purchase/construction/implementation of the Sheldrake Lake Park and Ride and MetroX service as per the standard Metro Transit design (estimated capital investment \$684,343).
2. Regional Council may direct staff to proceed with Option 2 and continue pursuing the purchase/construction/implementation of the Sheldrake Lake Park and Ride and MetroX service, but in an effort to reduce costs eliminate the bus loop from the design of the Sheldrake Lake Park and Ride (estimated capital investment \$465,343). Requires renegotiation of terms with land owner as a new site plan is required.
3. Regional Council may direct staff to proceed with Option 3 and in an effort to reduce costs even further explore options for leasing the land and proceed only with minimal upgrades to the Park and Ride site, eliminating the bus loop and using gravel for the parking lot area (estimated capital investment \$392,343). Requires renegotiation of terms with land owner as a new site plan is required.
4. Regional Council may direct staff to proceed with Option 4 and to no longer pursue the construction of a Sheldrake Lake Park and Ride and alternatively redirect the vehicles intended for this service to the existing Tantallon MetroX service and investigate enhancements to the existing Tantallon Park and Ride lot (estimated capital investment \$111,670).

5. Regional Council may direct staff to proceed with Option 5 and to no longer pursue the construction of a Sheldrake Lake Park and Ride or upgrades to the Tantallon Park and Ride, whereby additional vehicles intended for this service will be redirected to the Tantallon MetroX service.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

**Figure 1 - Sheldrake Lake Site - Wetland Delineation**

**Figure 2 - Sheldrake Lake Proposed Site Plan**

**Attachment 1 – Capital Cost**

**Attachment 2 – Capital Cost per Parking Space**

**Attachment 3 – Capital Cost per New Rider**

**Attachment 4 – MetroX Capital Construction Cost per Parking Space**

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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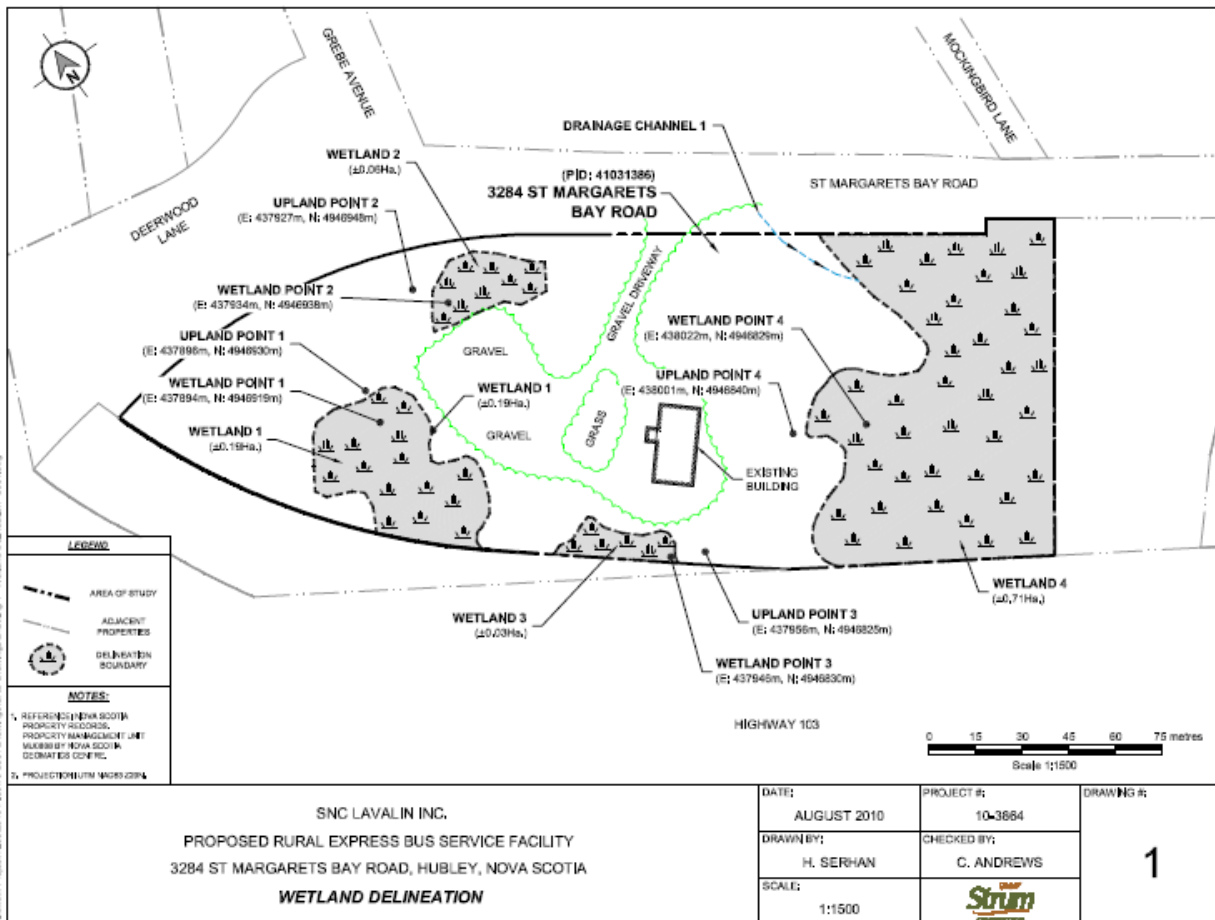
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James Cooke, CCA, Director of Finance/CFO, 490-6308

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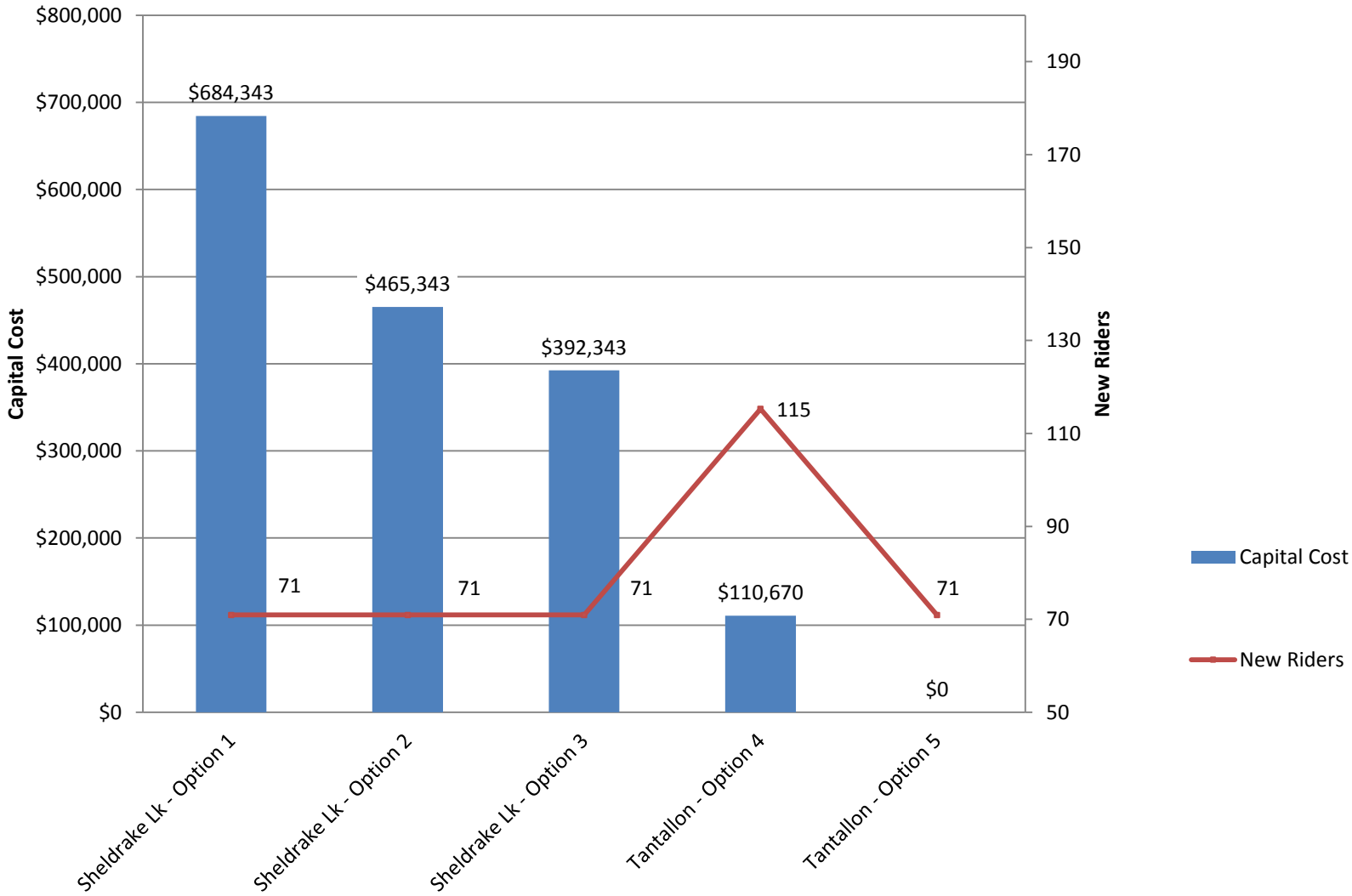


Figure 1 - Sheldrake Lake Site - Wetland Delineation

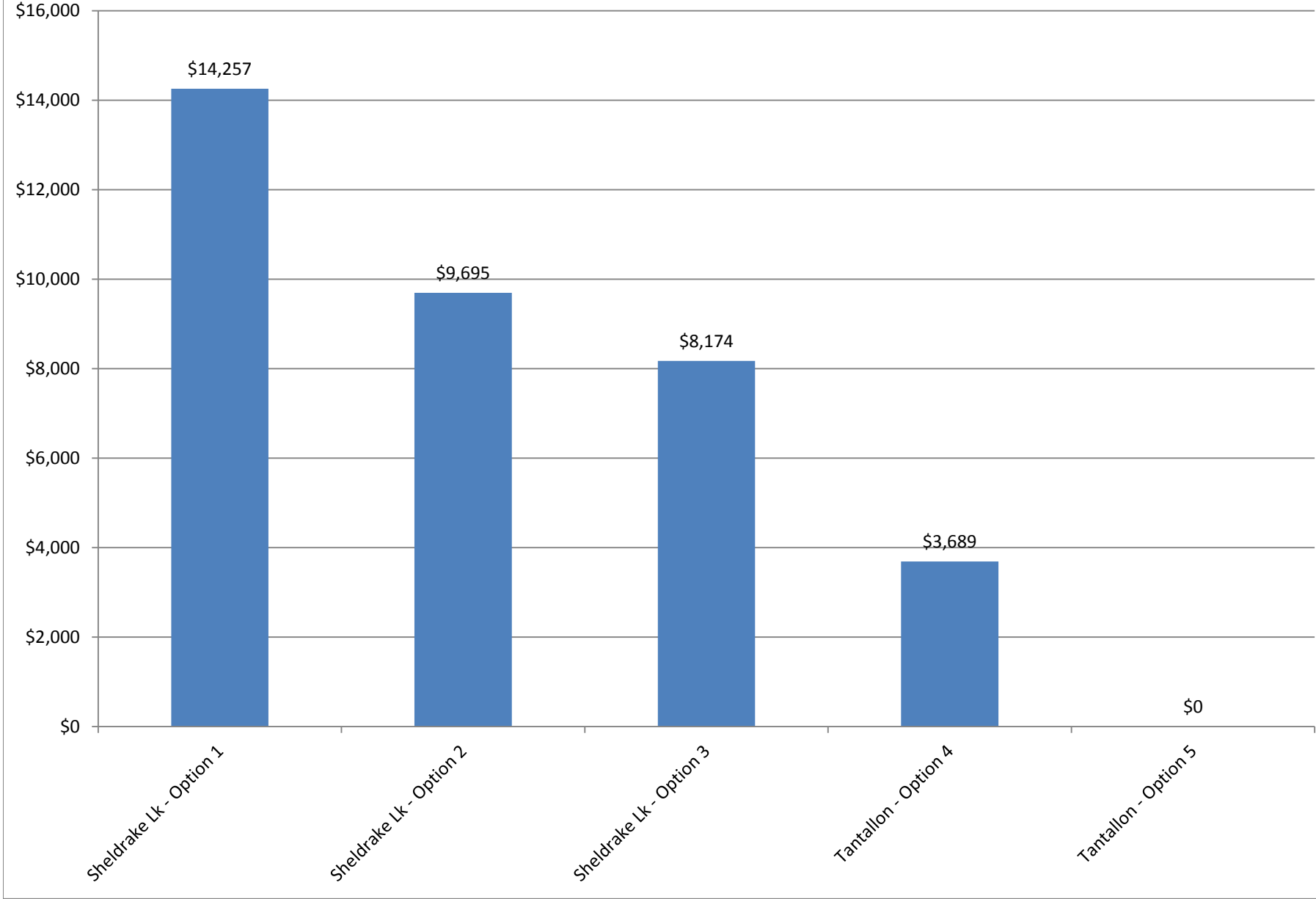


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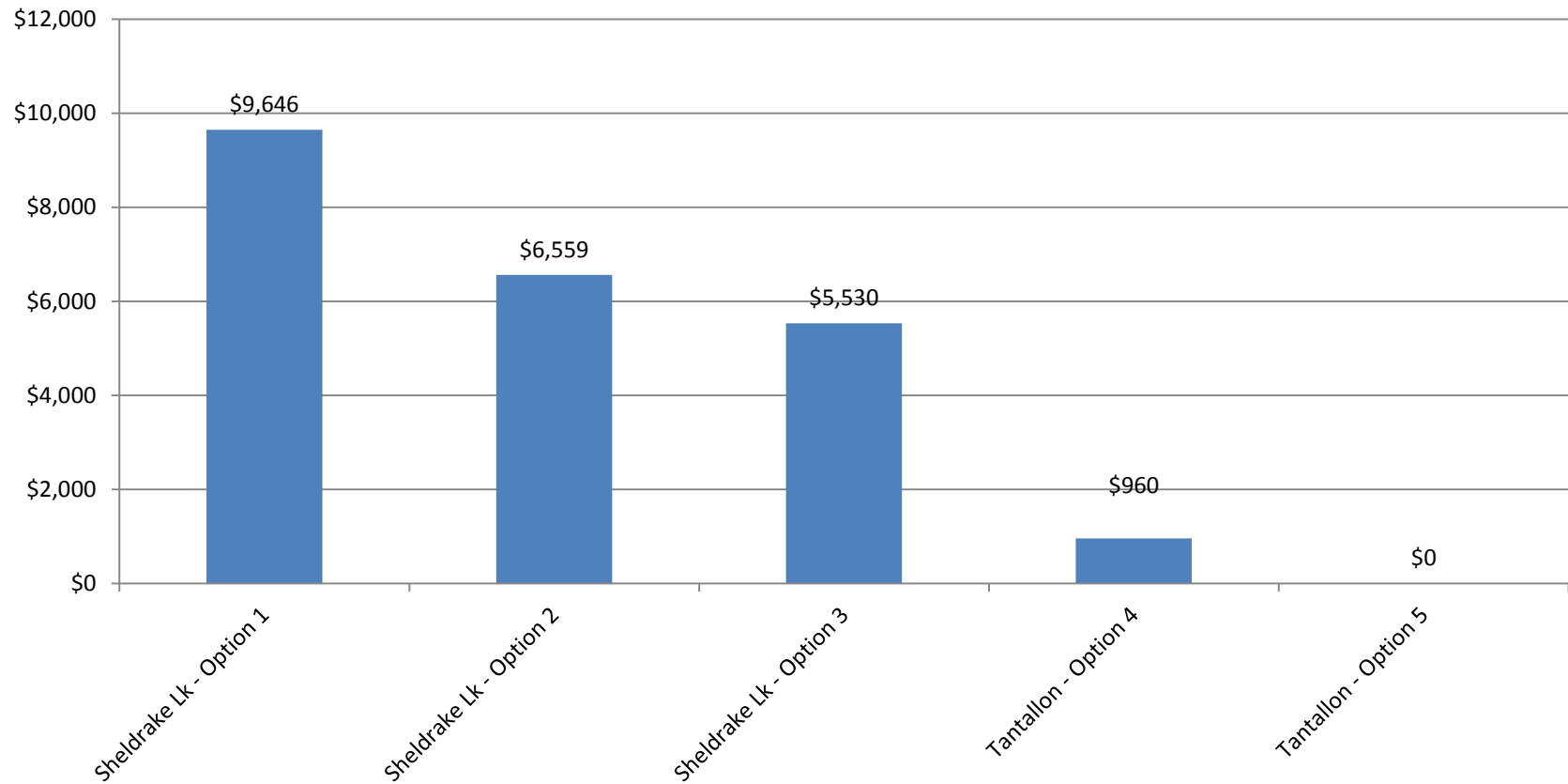
# MetroX Sheldrake Lake and Tantallon Capital Cost Comparisons



Capital Cost Per Parking Space



## Capital Cost Per New Rider



**MetroX - Capital Construction Cost Per Parking Space**

