

9.1.3

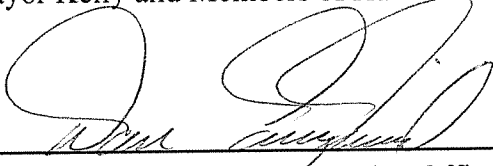


PO Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

Halifax Regional Council
October 24, 2006

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:



Dan English, Chief Administrative Officer



Wayne Anstey, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer - Operations

DATE: October 17, 2006

SUBJECT: **Metro Transit Service and Sunday Shopping**

ORIGIN

This report originates from the October 10, 2006 Regional Council Meeting for an Information Report on the transit implications of Sunday Shopping.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

1. Regional Council approve additional Sunday transit service as a pilot to accommodate expected demand for service resulting from Sunday shopping at a net cost of \$150,000 for the remainder of the 2006/07 fiscal year; and
2. Regional Council approve an increase of \$150,000 in the 2006/07 Operating Budget with funding provided as a withdrawal of \$150,000 from the Operations Stabilization Reserve, Q308.

BACKGROUND

On Wednesday October 4, 2006, the Province of Nova Scotia announced that Sunday shopping would be unrestricted. Based on this announcement, it can be expected that there will be an increase in the demand for transit service on Sunday.

Currently, Metro Transit provides Sunday transit service on 25 conventional transit routes. There are five conventional transit routes that operate on Saturday that do not operate on Sunday (Route 55, Route 62, Route 65, Route 66 and Route 72).

Ferry service is provided between Dartmouth and Halifax on Sunday. During the months of January and February, no ferry service is provided on Sunday.

One Community Transit route (Beaver Bank) provides service on Saturday with no Sunday service.

Access-A-Bus service is provided on Sunday based on the existing conventional transit service schedule.

DISCUSSION

Traditionally, Metro Transit provides schedule changes every four months based on the approved annual budget. This four month period is required to produce new transit schedules, hire new bus operators and undertake the selection of bus operator shifts. The next planned schedule change dates are November 26, 2006 and February 17, 2007.

To account for the additional transit service demand on Sunday and Holidays, Metro Transit has prepared a pilot Sunday transit service plan based on an estimation of anticipated demand to be implemented starting November 5, 2006 continuing until March 31, 2007. Pending utilization, this service would be considered for continuation past March 31, 2007 and identified as part of the 2007/08 budget process.

The pilot Sunday transit service would include new Sunday and Holiday transit service on five transit routes that currently have Saturday service but no Sunday transit service. These routes include Route 55, Route 62, Route 65, Route 66 and Route 72. Sunday ferry service would be provided for the months of January and February between Dartmouth and Halifax. Sunday service would also be provided on new transit services to be introduced later this year to coincide with the opening of new commercial centres including Dartmouth Crossing and the Rocky Lake Development in Bedford.

This extra Sunday service will result in additional resources including the requirement for additional bus operators. The percentage of cost recovery from the farebox is less on Sunday and is reflected in the budget implications section on revenue. Due to the constraints surrounding the ability to hire and train new bus operators, a quick start date of the additional Sunday service is identified for November 5, 2006 and will include service on four transit routes (Route 55, Route 62, Route 65 and Route 66). New Sunday service on the remaining Route 72 would be introduced with the traditional February schedule changes.

Additional Access-A-Bus service on Sunday would be provided to coincide with changes to the conventional transit routes.

Any modifications to the Community Transit schedules for Sunday would require changes to the approved area rates for the respective services.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

The additional Sunday transit service (Bus, Ferry, Access-A-Bus) would result in the following annualized cost breakdown:

Projected Annual Expenses	\$520,000
Projected Annual Revenue	<u>\$180,000</u>
Net Annual Cost	\$340,000

When budgeting revenue for a weekend service, we normally use a lower cost recovery to reflect the growth in ridership that takes place over time.

Providing this additional transit service for the balance of the 2006/07 fiscal year (five months) would result in a net cost of \$150,000 and a requirement for four new bus operators. Funding for this service would require an increase of \$150,000 in the 2006/07 Operating Budget with funding of \$150,000 as a withdrawal from the Operations Stabilization Reserve,Q308.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Capital budget, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation. If approved, this would increase the 2006/07 Gross Operating Budget and withdrawals from Reserves.

ALTERNATIVES

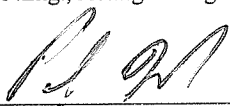
1. Regional Council could choose to not incur the additional cost at this time by not implementing additional Sunday transit service. Council could choose to wait and measure any increased demand for additional Sunday transit service and identify service increases through the 2007/08 budget process.
2. Regional Council could choose to implement a full Saturday transit service level on Sunday. This would result in a demand for an additional 14 bus operators and an annualized net cost of \$1.3M. Metro Transit would require significant lead time to implement this service including the recruitment and training of new bus operators and the development of new bus schedules and public information.

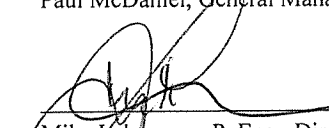
ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments with this report.

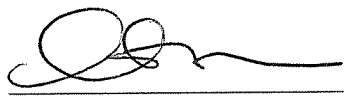
A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/agenda.html> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report Prepared by: Geoff Wright, P.Eng., Acting Manager, Transit Planning & Development, 490-5138

Report Approved by: 
Paul McDaniel, General Manager, Metro Transit, 490-6608

Report Approved by: 
Mike Labrecque, P. Eng., Director, Transportation and Public Works Services, 490-4855

Report Approved by: 
Cathie O'Toole, CGA, Acting Director, Finance 490-6308

Financial Review: 
Catherine Sanderson, Senior Manager, Financial Services, 490-1562