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**Item No. 12.2**  
**Halifax Regional Council**  
**May 1, 2012**

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

**SUBMITTED BY:**   
for: Councillor Reg Rankin, Chair, Transportation Standing Committee

**DATE:** April 27, 2012

**SUBJECT:** Metro Transit Evening Ferry Service

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**ORIGIN**

April 24, 2012 Halifax Regional Council meeting – referral of a request to reinstate evening ferry service as it was prior to the budget approval to the Transportation Standing Committee for staff report and discussion.

April 26, 2012 Recommendation of the Transportation Standing Committee.

**RECOMMENDATION**

The Transportation Standing Committee recommends that Halifax Regional Council defer the implementation of cuts to ferry service until the end of August and direct staff to prepare a staff report regarding funding options to maintain the status quo service.

## **BACKGROUND**

At the April 24, 2012 Halifax Regional Council meeting, "Reduction of Metro Transit ferry service hours of operation as approved in the 2012-2013 Operating Budget" was added to the agenda.

Regional Council approved a motion to refer the request to reinstate evening ferry service as it was prior to the 2012-13 budget approval, to the Transportation Standing Committee for staff report and discussion.

## **DISCUSSION**

At the April 26, 2012 meeting of the Transportation Standing Committee, the reduction in hours of operation were discussed as an added item.

Mr. Dave Reage, Manager, Planning & Scheduling, Metro Transit, clarified that the reduced hours of service were intended to come into effect as of May 21, 2012. He indicated that, should Council choose to delay implementation of the reduction in ferry service hours to the end of June or the end of August 2012, such a reduction could be funded within the 2012-13 Metro Transit Operational budget.

The Committee discussed options for the service adjustments, including extended service Friday and Saturday nights only.

Members of the Committee noted that many people rely on the ferry for evening classes and programs at the Nova Scotia Community College Waterfront Campus, and employment at the Dartmouth General Hospital. They further noted that there are upcoming developments in downtown Dartmouth that will utilize the ferry, and businesses that rely on the ferry to bring customers to downtown Dartmouth. HRM needs the ferry service to grow, recognizing its value as an integral part of the transportation system, and needs a consistent service to capture the market.

In light of these concerns, the Committee passed a motion requesting that Regional Council defer the implementation of the reduced hours of service for the Metro Transit ferry service to the end of August 2012 and that Regional Council request a staff report regarding funding options to maintain the current service levels.

Members requested that the following areas be included in the staff report:

- That staff develop a list upcoming special events in the Capital District that would likely affect ferry ridership;
- A breakdown of ridership figures and costs for different scenarios;
- Options for funding;
- Policy implications for non-adherence to Council service standards for reductions for both ferry and bus transit services.

**BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

There are no budget implications outside of the current 2012/13 approved budget, as the approved budget was based on the ferry service running until August in its current form.

Financial implications will be outlined in a future staff report to Regional Council

**FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES/BUSINESS PLAN**

Financial implications will be outlined in a future staff report to Regional Council.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The Transportation Standing Committee is comprised of eight members of Regional Council who have been duly elected to represent their districts. Transportation Standing Committee meetings are held once a month and are open to the public, unless otherwise stated. Agendas, reports, and minutes from these meetings are posted online.

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

Implications not identified.

**ALTERNATIVES**

Council may choose to not defer the implementation of cuts to ferry service until the end of August, or may choose another deferral time line.

Council may provide alternative direction to staff.

**ATTACHMENTS**

None

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