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Halifax Regional Council
June 17, 2003

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rick Paynter".

Rick Paynter, P. Eng., Director, Public Works & Transportation

DATE: June 6, 2003

SUBJECT: Metro Transit - Bus Availability

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

On May 29, 2003 Metro Transit prepared a memo advising transit service interruptions were being experienced because there were not enough buses available to operate full peak service.

BACKGROUND

Metro Transit Conventional bus ridership has increased over the last several years with ridership increasing by 900,000 passengers over the last two years. During the same time Metro Transit conventional fleet has remained at 177 buses and almost 100 of these are now over 10 years old.

The purchase of expansion and actual fleet replacement buses has been limited to funding levels of the capital budget.

The 2003/04 Public Works & Transportation Business Plan discussed the aging transit fleet and the impact it was having on service reliability. Staff has developed a multi-year fleet replacement program to address the aging fleet issue. There is no firm delivery schedule for the vehicles budgeted this year, but the earliest they would be expected is December, 2003.

DISCUSSION

The Fleet Services section of Real Property and Asset Management advise that the semi-annual bus inspection program currently underway will make it difficult to meet the daily fleet quota required to provide all the scheduled service. The inspection program requires a block of buses be set aside for inspection and any buses requiring further work can be out of service for a longer period of time.

Fleet Services expects the current inspection cycle to be finished by the end of June, 2003. Metro Transit expects that until this inspection program is complete, there could be a few days when there will not be enough buses available to operate all scheduled peak service. Fleet Services is currently working to alleviate this problem. Fleet is currently purchasing surplus equipment from B.C. to replace some of our buses that have passed their useful life. They are using local suppliers to repair buses and are filling positions on the shop floor to catch up on the backlog of work. Fleet Services are working closely with the Utility and Review Board Inspectors to assure that the buses put into service are in good repair.

Metro Transit has identified several trips where a second bus is required to accommodate the passenger load. These "second buses" would not be operated on any day when the full bus quota is not available.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Staff do not anticipate any budget implications. However, staff caution that not being able to meet the peak bus requirements for a longer term, would impact the transit ridership and revenue projections. As well, if the inspection program identifies the need for extensive work on the fleet, it could have an impact on fleet maintenance costs.

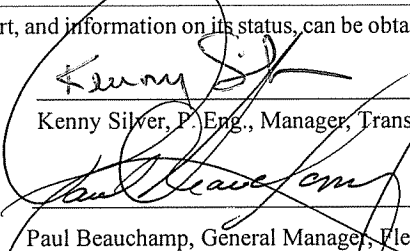
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN

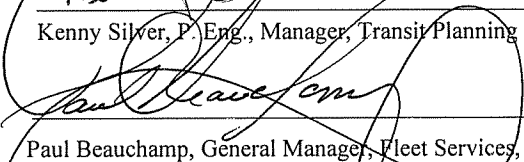
This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

ALTERNATIVES

N/A

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 490-4208.

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