



P.O. Box 1749  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
B3J 3A5 Canada

**Item No. 12.1.2**  
**Transportation Standing Committee**  
**June 7, 2017**

**TO:** Chair and Members of Transportation Standing Committee

Original Signed

**SUBMITTED BY:**

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Dave Reage, MCIP, LPP, Director, Halifax Transit

**DATE:** April 12, 2017

**SUBJECT:** 2018/19 Moving Forward Together Plan Corridor Routes Review

**ORIGIN**

At the December 6, 2016 meeting of Regional Council, the following motion was put and passed:  
That Halifax Regional Council:

*Request a staff report regarding engaging a consultant to review the Corridor Routes in the Moving Forward Together Plan and provide advice for modifications that may be warranted for the 2018/19 service year, and this review will incorporate any relevant information available at that time, including the outcomes of the Integrated Mobility Plan, updates on the bus rapid transit pilot proposal, commuter rail proposal, transit priority measures implementation, including any approved direction for Bayers Road and Gottingen Street, Mumford Terminal site selection, updated ridership data, and travel time mapping.*

**LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

Section 69(1) of the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter provides the legislative authority for the municipality to provide a public transportation service. Section 79(1)(o) provides the authority for Council to expend money required by the municipality for public transportation services.

In addition to the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, authority is also provided by Section T-5 of the 2014 Regional Municipal Planning Strategy which reads "Transit Service Plans shall be prepared at regular intervals for consideration by HRM. These plans will be developed in consultation with the public and other stakeholders and, upon adoption by HRM, shall provide guidance for investment in transit services."

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Transportation Standing Committee recommend that Regional Council:

Direct staff to prepare a report in 18/19 that outlines any recommended modifications to Corridor Routes, as shown in the *Moving Forward Together Plan*. The report is to consider new or updated data, specifically including ridership data, as well as the findings of the following studies/projects:

**Recommendation continued on page 2**

- The Integrated Mobility Plan;
- The Bus Rapid Transit Feasibility Study;
- The Mumford Terminal Replacement Opportunities Assessment; and
- The Transit Priorities Corridor Study.

## **BACKGROUND**

On February 26, 2013, Regional Council initiated the development of a new five-year strategic planning framework for Metro Transit (called Moving Forward Together: The Metro Transit Five Year Service Plan). A multifaceted public and stakeholder engagement plan for the first round of consultation was developed and presented to the Transportation Standing Committee in July of 2013. The formal public and stakeholder engagement process began in August of 2013, and continued until October 15, 2013. Based on the feedback received in consultation in January 2014, Regional Council endorsed a broadened scope for the *Moving Forward Together Plan* which included a redesign of the existing transit network. Regional Council also unanimously endorsed the four Moving Forward Principles, the foundation upon which the draft plan was developed.

The draft *Moving Forward Together Plan*, including the proposed future transit network, was released for public consultation in February 2015. The subsequent ten-week engagement process was the most diverse and comprehensive consultation strategy ever undertaken by the municipality. A variety of opportunities for consultation was provided to members of the public and stakeholder groups over a ten-week consultation period.

On April 22, 2016, Regional Council approved the *Moving Forward Together Plan* and requested a supplemental report addressing 23 items for further information or consideration. At the December 6, 2016 meeting of Regional Council, based on the findings of the supplemental report noted above, the *Moving Forward Together Plan* approval was re-confirmed with some minor amendments, and a report was requested regarding the potential for an additional review of the Corridor Routes pending the completion of several related studies.

## **DISCUSSION**

In the 2017/18 fiscal year, Halifax Transit will complete or contribute to several different initiatives which will provide insight into the long-term growth of the Halifax Transit network. These projects include:

- **The Integrated Mobility Plan:** This year will see the presentation of the staff recommended Integrated Mobility Plan (IMP), a plan which will lay the groundwork for investment in the transportation network in Halifax. This plan is currently under development and is jointly authored by Halifax Transit, Planning and Development, and Transportation & Public Works. The IMP will create a regional vision for mobility and help to direct future investment in transportation demand management, transit, active transportation, and the roadway network. Stemming from municipal policy direction on public transit, transportation, and land use contained in the Regional Plan and other policy documents, the IMP will strive to identify the two-way relationship between land development patterns and investment in mobility and personal access, with the objective of better linking people and their communities.
- **The Bus Rapid Transit Feasibility Study:** In March 2017, a Request for Proposals (RFP) was issued by Halifax Transit to hire a consultant to undertake a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) feasibility study, select a preferred BRT Corridor, and complete the functional design of a selected corridor. This study will capture the capital and operating costs and potential savings created by the project, identify a recommended corridor and phased implementation. This study will be completed in late 2017.

- **Transit Priority Measures Corridor Study (Gottingen Street and Bayers Road):** This two-phase study will complete the preferred functional and detailed design of Bayers Road (Romans Street to Windsor Street), and Gottingen Street (North Street to Cogswell Street). In March 2017, a Request for Proposals (RFP) was issued by Halifax Transit to hire a consultant to undertake the first phase of work associated with this project, which includes the functional design of the TPM corridors and public consultation. Following completion of this phase, the preferred functional design will be brought forward to Regional Council before proceeding with phase two, which will consist of detailed design. In addition to the Gottingen Street and Bayers Road corridors, the scope of this work may be extended in part to include corridors on Young Street (Windsor Street to Robie Street) and Robie Street (Young Street to Inglis Street).
- **The Mumford Terminal Replacement Opportunities Assessment:** The existing Mumford Terminal is over capacity and requires an upgrade to meet operational and customer service requirements as well as to help support the goal of transit oriented development. In February 2017, an RFP was issued by Halifax Transit to hire a consultant to assist in the site selection for the new Mumford Terminal.
- **Commuter Rail Proposal:** The motion of Regional Council also references the ongoing analysis regarding the potential for commuter rail. It is anticipated that the Integrated Mobility Plan (IMP) will provide further direction regarding commuter rail.

In addition, the 2017/18 fiscal year is the first year in which Halifax Transit will be collecting Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) and Automatic Passenger Count (APC) data which will allow for a much more data rich analysis to take place during implementation of the *Moving Forward Together Plan* routings.

#### Review of Corridor Routes

The *Moving Forward Together Plan* is intended to act as a guiding document, while still being responsive to observed changes in the network, needs of customers, availability of resources, and patterns of development. The implementation of service changes, including those described in the *Moving Forward Together Plan*, are presented to Regional Council for approval each year through Halifax Transit's Annual Service Plans, coinciding with annual budget approval.

Annual Service Plans incorporate the results of several on-going activities, including:

- Regular route assessments based on performance measures and including feedback from employees and consideration of operational issues;
- Review and evaluation of customer requests for new and/or changes to existing services; and
- The effect of external influences such as land-use changes, development proposals and ridership changes.

Section 8.3 of the *Moving Forward Together Plan* identifies that, "*Proposed routing is subject to change during detailed implementation. Minor modifications to routes based on operational needs, demand, or integration with land uses are anticipated. More substantial modifications are not anticipated but may be necessary to accommodate a significant change to the transportation network or change of circumstances, and will be outlined in each year's Annual Service Plan.*"

The request by Council was for a separate report that specifically identifies any potential modifications to Corridor Routes as a result of the findings of the studies, projects, or data sources mentioned above.

Although modifications to any route may be highlighted in Annual Service Plans, staff understand that the requested report will be focused on recommended changes to the ten Corridor Routes and it will not include a comprehensive re-review of the network. Any modifications would be reflected in the 2019/20 Annual Service Plan for routes being implemented in 2019/20, or in a future Annual Service Plan for those being implemented in later years.

### Undertaking the Review

The approved *Moving Forward Together Plan* is the result of an intensive three-year planning process. It was led by Halifax Transit staff, and benefited from insight and expertise from several external sources. At the commencement of the project, Halifax Transit engaged an industry expert (Bill Menzies, Dillion Consulting, formerly of Winnipeg Transit) as an external peer reviewer. He was able to provide knowledge from his work with other Canadian transit agencies comparable to Halifax Transit (i.e. including Edmonton, London, and Quebec City), and ensure that the project represented industry best practices. Throughout the planning process, Halifax Transit also benefited from advice and opinions from other peer agencies that have undergone similar network redesign processes.

Halifax Transit is aware of consultants who are qualified to undertake a review of the Corridor Routes and provide the requested report. However, this review and report can be provided more effectively and efficiently by staff for the following reasons:

- Halifax Transit has been a key team member in the development of the Integrated Mobility Plan and will be leading the remainder of the studies identified in the motion;
- Halifax Transit collects, compiles, and evaluates ridership data;
- Halifax Transit can leverage an internal knowledge of local geography, demand, and development patterns;
- The *Moving Forward Together Plan* development reflects the largest public engagement program ever undertaken in Halifax. As active participants in that engagement, Halifax Transit staff have the added benefit of first hand participation at extensive public consultation and an intimate knowledge of concerns and context about the public feedback received through consultation, an important factor which a consultant leading this study would not have; and
- Halifax Transit has internal staff with the experience and expertise to complete the review.

It is important to note that even without the motion which initiated this report, a similar review would have been undertaken by staff through the roll out of the plan in light of the findings of forthcoming studies and changing conditions across the network.

### Travel Time Mapping

Travel time mapping is a tool to evaluate the access to transit in a particular location. It can be used to demonstrate the distance that an individual passenger may travel by transit in a given time period, or indicate the likely travel time between two points within the area served by transit.

Some free source travel time mapping tools currently exist online, including:

- **Mapnificent:** Shows the area you can reach with public transit from any point in a given period of time. Mapnificent shows many cities in North America, including Halifax; and
- **Mapumental:** Shows public transport travel times, from or to a chosen postcode, on a timebanded map. At this time, Mapumental only covers Great Britain.

Calculations to inform tools like those noted above use information available online including stop locations and scheduling data. Since it is based on scheduling information which is supplied by the transit agency, the tool is able to integrate scheduled travel time as well as any time required to make a transfer to paint a fairly accurate picture of trip times.

The request for travel time mapping for the *Moving Forward Together Plan* routing, however, would require that mapping be produced in the absence of accurate scheduled running time, or transfer times between

routes. This would limit the utility of the output substantially and may be misleading to users reviewing the data.

Travel time mapping is in some cases completed as part of a public engagement exercise as a decision-making tool to provide members of the public a sense of how a particular routing change may impact their travel time. This was not completed as part of the *Moving Forward Together Plan* engagement, and as the plan has been approved and confirmed by Regional Council, it is not clear at this point how this information could be used, particularly as scheduled running times would not be available.

To complete accurate travel time mapping, the following tasks would need to be undertaken:

- Estimate run times for all routes described in the *Moving Forward Together Plan* based on existing running times for similar routes in today's transit network. This would be informed by schedule adherence data now being collected through the new Automated Vehicle Location (AVL) units mounted on all Halifax Transit buses; and
- Estimate likely transfer times between all routes in both directions based on running times and each route's planned headways. These transfer time estimates could vary significantly from what will actually occur once the routes are scheduled.

The production of travel time maps is a significant undertaking, and would be time and resource intensive. Unfortunately, despite the level of investment, there would be a low level of confidence in the resulting maps. As Halifax Transit does not have the capacity to undertake travel time mapping in addition to actively planning and scheduling for implementation of the *Moving Forward Together Plan*, a consultant would be required to complete the mapping, with significant input from the Halifax Transit Planning & Scheduling Department.

It is not anticipated that travel time mapping can function to inform routing decisions. Therefore, should Council wish to pursue this initiative, further direction on the objective or desired outcomes would assist with project delivery.

#### Timeline

The requested report would commence in the 2018/19 fiscal year following the completion of the relevant projects/studies. Any changes approved by Regional Council would be reflected in future Annual Service Plans (2019/20 or later).

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

No financial implications are associated with the recommendation.

Should Regional Council direct staff to engage a consultant to conduct travel time mapping it is estimated that it would cost approximately \$60,000.

Should Regional Council alternatively direct staff to engage a consultant to undertake a review of the studies noted above and complete a report to recommend changes to Corridor Routes and conduct travel time mapping as described above it would cost approximately \$85,000 - \$100,000.

If Regional Council were to direct staff to undertake this work with the help of an external consultant, the costs associated with this would be incurred in the 2018-19 fiscal year. Regional Council has approved in principle a 2018-19 budget which does not include funding specific to this undertaking. If it is determined that a consultant would be required to lead this study, the estimated cost would need to be incorporated into the approved budget.

## **RISK CONSIDERATION**

There are no significant risks associated with the recommendations in this report. The risks considered rate low.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Public consultation on the draft *Moving Forward Together Plan* included a large number of ways for citizens and stakeholder groups to provide insight and direction into plan refinement. The draft *Moving Forward Together Plan*, including the proposed future transit network, was released for public consultation in February 2015. The subsequent ten-week engagement process was the most diverse and comprehensive consultation strategy ever undertaken by the municipality. The following describes the variety of opportunities for consultation provided to members of the public and stakeholder groups. It included the following activities:

- **Project Consultation Page - *MakeTransitBetter.ca*:** This website allowed residents to access information on proposed routing and frequencies in order to understand the impact the proposed changes would have on their transit trips. The website resulted in over 50,000 unique website visitor and 15,370 survey responses;
- **Pop-Up Engagement Events:** Halifax Transit had hosted 20 pop up engagement events and interacted with 2,480 individuals;
- **Stakeholder Consultation Sessions:** Three stakeholder sessions were held in the first week of consultation, and a fourth one was held near the end of consultation in order to ensure that all groups who were interested had the opportunity to participate. A total of 37 groups or agencies took part;
- **ShapeYourCityHalifax.ca:** The Municipality's online engagement portal served as a source of comprehensive information and provided the opportunity for deeper engagement through discussion forums. At the end of the consultation period, the site had hosted 2,190 unique visitors, of which 605 provided their feedback;
- **Public Opinion Research:** A sample of 800 Halifax residents indicated that there was a 65% awareness of proposed network changes (an increase of 14% over the 10-week engagement period), and a 73% level of public support for proposed changes;
- **Twitter Town Halls:** As part of the consultation strategy, two Twitter Town halls were held in April 2015. These events facilitated direct engagement with residents and allowed significant distribution of information to, and through, Halifax Transit's more than 23,000 Twitter followers. These events together hosted 173 participants, and resulted in 486 tweets; and
- **Written Submissions:** Nearly 1,000 email submissions were received by Halifax Transit over the ten-week consultation period, consisting of both questions and comments.

No additional public consultation has taken place as a result of this report.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

No environmental implications were identified in the preparation of this report.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

The Committee may recommend that Regional Council direct staff to engage a consultant to prepare a report in 18/19 that outlines any recommended modifications to Corridor Routes, as shown in the *Moving Forward Together Plan*. The report would take into account new or updated data, specifically including ridership data, as well as the findings of the following studies/projects: the Integrated Mobility Plan, the Bus Rapid Transit Feasibility Study, the Mumford Terminal Replacement Opportunities Assessment, and the Transit Priorities Corridor Study, and also to complete travel time mapping. It is estimated that the cost for this exercise would be \$85,000 - \$100,000.

The Committee may recommend that Regional Council direct staff to engage a consultant to conduct travel time mapping only for an estimated cost of \$60,000.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

None.

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A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/commcoun/index.php> then choose the appropriate Committee and meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210, or Fax 902.490.4208.

Report Prepared by: Erin Blay, MCIP, LPP, Supervisor, Service Design & Projects 902.490.4942

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