

Request for Council's Consideration

- X **Included on Agenda
(Notice of Motion of
Rescission given Aug 22)** Added Item
(Submitted to Municipal
Clerk's Office by Noon
Monday) Request from the Floor

Date of Council Meeting: September 12, 2023

Subject: Pilot Results of Onboard Wi-Fi for Halifax Transit

Motion for Council to Consider:

That Halifax Regional Council rescind item 15.3.1 "Feasibility of Onboard Wi-Fi for Halifax Transit" from the April 2, 2019 meeting which requested a staff report in part 3 of the motion as follows:

"THAT Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer to:

...

3. Based upon rider interest and findings from the preceding pilot program, consider development of a business case for expanding the service to additional terminals and/or additional buses/ferries and present the results to Regional Council."

Reason:

During IT's planning and deployment of the public wi-fi program, onboard wi-fi was suggested by IT to Halifax Transit as a possible option to further expand the program. Halifax Transit leadership doubted the value of equipping the entire Halifax Transit fleet with wi-fi as such a project would require significant costs to deploy and maintain. To better understand the potential usage of such a solution, IT suggested a pilot on a small number of Halifax Transit's fleet to gauge the public's interest and determine if the cost of such a program would be worth the benefit to the ridership of Halifax Transit. Halifax Transit agreed to a pilot.

Before the pilot could be planned and deployed, the COVID-19 pandemic began and negatively impacted the schedule of the pilot.

An update on the status of the pilot, along with an update on the Public Wifi Implementation was provided to Regional Council on March 25, 2021 (<https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/210504rci09.pdf>). At that time, it was determined that the onboard wi-fi pilot would be put on hold indefinitely as the costs for just the pilot were greater than expected.

Currently, costs for both equipment and service have continued to rise. As such, Halifax Transit firmly believes the cost of even a pilot would not offer value to ridership when those funds would be better used elsewhere. In addition to funds better utilized elsewhere, the effort required from staff for a pilot would draw resources from other projects and initiatives that are in flight and would be at risk of delays should resource shortages be experienced.

Outcome Sought:

Rescission of Council's previous direction

Councillor Waye Mason

District 7