



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

Item No. 12.1.2
Transportation Standing Committee
October 26, 2017

TO: Chair and Members of Transportation Standing Committee

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed by

Dave Reage, Halifax Transit

DATE: September 11, 2017

SUBJECT: Alderney Ferry Schedule Adjustments

ORIGIN

At the July 18, 2017 meeting of Regional Council the following motion was put and passed.

That Regional Council request a staff report on adjusting the schedule for the Alderney Ferry as detailed in Attachment C of the "17/18 Multi-year Budget Options for Consideration REVISED" that was before Council on February 15, 2017.

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.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that additional service that was introduced on the Alderney – Halifax ferry service for The Big Lift project be retained until the end of 2017/18, and that these trips be rescheduled to provide a 15 minute frequency during the weekday midday period instead of during the evening period, as outlined in Attachment A.

BACKGROUND

In March 2015, in response to The Big Lift Macdonald Bridge re-decking project, additional service was introduced on the Alderney – Halifax ferry service. This additional service provides a 15 minute frequency from 1:00 pm until the end of the service day on weekdays. Sunday and holiday service was also expanded to provide service every 30 minutes from 6:30 am until 11:30 pm. Service was added primarily during evening hours and on Sundays to mitigate the effects of evening bridge closures and disruptions to conventional bus service. During The Big Lift project, ridership on the Alderney - Halifax ferry service has increased by approximately 50%. The redecking project is expected to be completed late this year.

DISCUSSION

Weekday Service

Additional trips added to the weekday Alderney – Halifax ferry service are currently scheduled to provide 15 minute frequency from 1:00 pm until the end of the service day. With this scheduling arrangement the period between 9:00 am and 1:00 pm has a 30 minute frequency. These same trips, if rescheduled to run during the midday could instead provide a 15 minute frequency from 7:00 am to 8:00 pm, and a 30 minute frequency from 8:00 pm until the end of the service day. The following table demonstrates when service levels change throughout the service day; a more detailed schedule is provided in Attachment A.

Alderney Terminal Departure Times	Pre Big Lift	During Big Lift (current)	Recommended Post Big Lift
6:30am	1 trip	1 trip	1 trip
7:00 am to 9:00 am	15 minutes	15 minutes	15 minutes
9:00 am to 1:00 pm	30 minutes	30 minutes	15 minutes
1:00 pm to 6:00 pm	15 minutes	15 minutes	15 minutes
6:00 pm to 8:00 pm	30 minutes	15 minutes	15 minutes
8:00 pm to 11:30pm	30 minutes	15 minutes	30 minutes

Note: All times in this report indicate round trips departing Alderney Ferry Terminal.

The following table shows average weekday boardings on the Alderney Ferry during the midday and evening periods where frequencies could be altered.

Average Daily Weekday Alderney Ferry Ridership						
Period	Pre Big Lift			During Big Lift		
	Daily Boardings	Round Trips	Passengers per Trip	Daily Boardings	Round Trips	Passengers per Trip
Midday (9:00 am - 1:00 pm)	442	7	63	498	7	71
Evening (8:00 pm onward)	185	7	26	459	14	33

While evening boardings have increased by about 150% during the Big Lift, there has also been a 100% increase in service provided during those hours. On a per trip basis, trips operating during the midday period continue to carry more than double the amount of passengers compared with trips in the evening period. It is anticipated that with the completion of the Big Lift project there will be a decline in demand for Ferry service, particularly during the evening period when bridge closures have most impacted transit users.

Sunday Service

Additional trips added to the Sunday Alderney – Halifax ferry service are currently scheduled to provide 30 minute frequency from 6:30 am until 11:30 pm. Prior to The Big Lift this service operated every 30 minutes

from 11:00 am until 6:00 pm. The service increase on weekdays created an opportunity to provide increased service on Sundays, where service levels were not consistent with other conventional transit services or with passenger demands and expectations, while still meeting ferry crew staffing requirements.

The following table demonstrates service levels on Sunday, a more detailed schedule is provided in Attachment A.

Alderney Terminal Departure Times	Pre Big Lift	During Big Lift (current)	Recommended Post Big Lift
6:30 am to 11:00 am	No Service	30 minutes	30 minutes
11:00 am to 6:00 pm	30 minutes	30 minutes	30 minutes
6:00 pm to 11:30 pm	No Service	30 minutes	30 minutes

The following table shows average Sunday boardings on the Alderney Ferry during the periods where service could be altered.

Average Daily Sunday Alderney Ferry Ridership						
Period	Pre Big Lift			During Big Lift		
	Daily Boardings	Round Trips	Passengers per Trip	Daily Boardings	Round Trips	Passengers per Trip
6:30 am to 11:00 am	No Service			193	9	21
11:00 am to 6:00 pm	997	15	66	1,444	15	96
6:00 pm to 11:30pm	No Service			285	11	26

While the newly introduced trips on Sundays have not shown substantial uptake in ridership, ridership on existing trips from 11am until 6pm has increased by 45%. This increase on existing service is likely due in part to interruptions due to bridge closures, as well as increased usability and reliability of the ferry service from expanded service hours. Providing all day service on Sundays allows users to plan for a variety of trips that would not be possible with limited 11:00 am to 6:00 pm service hours.

Service Consistency

In addition to optimizing service to meet existing ridership demand, a further advantage of implementing this recommendation would be consistency and simplicity of the schedule for potential passengers. Currently the frequency changes twice throughout the service day on weekdays, from 15 minutes to 30 minutes at 9:00 am and back to 15 minutes at 1:00 pm. The recommended schedule would change only once during the service day, from every 15 minutes to every 30 minutes at 8:00 pm.

Maintaining expanded Sunday service would result in Saturday and Sunday schedules that are identical, which also works to improve the understandability and simplicity of the service.

Crewing

Due to ferry crew staffing requirements, specifically, the ability to create shifts that can be adequately crewed, increased Sunday service and increased weekday service are linked and cannot be considered in isolation.

If additional weekday Alderney – Halifax Ferry service is maintained, either via the recommended schedule or by maintaining the existing schedule, the additional Sunday service will also remain.

If weekday service returns to the original schedule, prior to The Big Lift, the additional Sunday service will also be removed.

Implementation Challenges

Currently Ferry service is not fully integrated with the transit scheduling system; therefore, it is possible to implement the recommended schedule change within a few weeks of a Council decision. However, implementing the schedule change outside of the quarterly transit service adjustment date will impact the public facing technology and other marketing material.

Implementing a revised ferry schedule will result in public facing technology such as Departure Boards, Departure Line, Google Transit and all transit Apps having incorrect schedules and will impact customer's trip planning. Additionally, the Halifax Transit Riders' Guide will contain incorrect schedules.

There is no ability to update the information provided in the schedules until the quarterly service adjustment date, which will occur on February 19, 2018. Due to the number of public-facing interfaces currently utilized by Halifax Transit, any change to the service network (including ferry) requires numerous steps (both manual and automated) within the planning application and the various technology systems prior to the change going live.

Each step of the process used to implement changes to the service network requires considerable testing to ensure both the desired changes and the unchanged services are configured correctly for use in all public interfaces. Due to the number of data handoffs and the extensive testing required, this process is time-consuming. The significant time requirement is necessary; however, as any problems not discovered in this process would be very visible to the public once implemented.

All the new technology utilized by Halifax Transit allows for improved services available to the public but it does mean Halifax Transit is less agile when it comes to making changes to service provided. In the past, issues or workarounds could be hidden behind the scenes but that is no longer a possibility.

Moving Forward Together Plan

This recommendation aligns with all four of the Moving Forward Principles on which the *Moving Forward Together Plan* is based.

1. Increase the proportion of resources allocated towards high ridership services.
 - The Alderney – Halifax Ferry Route is one of the highest ridership services provided by Halifax Transit. Increasing service and shifting service to higher ridership periods supports this principle.
2. Build a simplified transfer based system.
 - This recommendation simplifies the schedule of the Alderney Ferry so that the weekday frequency changes only once per day; and that Saturday and Sunday service are identical.
3. Invest in service quality and reliability.
 - Improving the frequency and service span of this route works to improve the quality and reliability of the service.
4. Give transit increased priority in the transportation network.
 - Ferry services have the distinct advantage of operating in their own right of way, as they are not impacted by normal traffic congestion they have excellent on time performance.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The incremental cost to maintain the extended service from November 27, 2017 to March 31, 2018 is \$155K. The additional budget was approved during the 17/18 budget process so there is no impact to 17/18 budget. Should the service be extended into 18/19, the estimated annual incremental cost of the service is \$465K in 18/19 is not contemplated or approved in principle in year 2 of the multi-year budget. This would need to be identified as a new pressure and addressed during the update and review of the fiscal strategy.

RISK CONSIDERATION

The recommendation will result in changes to the ferry schedule without the ability to update print and digital materials to reflect the changes. There is a risk that passengers will not be aware of the changes, and will have longer wait times in late evening or miss connections/transfers as a result. This risk can be mitigated by providing signage and marketing materials to advise of the change, however, infrequent passengers may still be negatively impacted.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

There is no community engagement associated with this recommendation report.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

It is anticipated that the recommendation will increase transit ridership, potentially reducing private vehicle usage. This would result in a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

ALTERNATIVES

- 1) Regional Council could decide to maintain the additional service with the current schedule, as outlined in Attachment A.
- 2) Regional Council could decide to remove the additional service, returning to the Pre Big Lift schedule as outlined in Attachment A.
- 3) Regional Council could decide to delay the implementation of the recommendation to align with the quarterly service adjustment date (February 19th, 2018), to remove the impact of incorrect public facing schedule information.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Alderney – Halifax Ferry Schedule

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

Report Prepared by: Colin Redding, Transit Planning Technician, 902.490.6632

Attachment A - Alderney - Halifax Ferry Schedule
Weekday Schedule

Alderney to Halifax			Halifax to Alderney		
Pre Big Lift (Alternative 2)	During Big Lift (Alternative 1)	Recommended Post Big Lift	Pre Big Lift (Alternative 2)	During Big Lift (Alternative 1)	Recommended Post Big Lift
630a	630a	630a	645a	645a	645a
700a	700a	700a	715a	715a	715a
715a	715a	715a	730a	730a	730a
730a	730a	730a	745a	745a	745a
745a	745a	745a	800a	800a	800a
800a	800a	800a	815a	815a	815a
815a	815a	815a	830a	830a	830a
830a	830a	830a	845a	845a	845a
845a	845a	845a	900a	900a	900a
900a	900a	900a	915a	915a	915a
		915a			930a
930a	930a	930a	945a	945a	945a
		945a			1000a
1000a	1000a	1000a	1015a	1015a	1015a
		1015a			1030a
1030a	1030a	1030a	1045a	1045a	1045a
		1045a			1100a
1100a	1100a	1100a	1115a	1115a	1115a
		1115a			1130a
1130a	1130a	1130a	1145a	1145a	1145a
		1145a			1200p
1200p	1200p	1200p	1215p	1215p	1215p
		1215p			1230p
1230p	1230p	1230p	1245p	1245p	1245p
		1245p			100p
100p	100p	100p	115p	115p	115p
	115p	115p		130p	130p
130p	130p	130p	145p	145p	145p
145p	145p	145p	200p	200p	200p
200p	200p	200p	215p	215p	215p
215p	215p	215p	230p	230p	230p
230p	230p	230p	245p	245p	245p
245p	245p	245p	300p	300p	300p
300p	300p	300p	315p	315p	315p

Weekday Schedule continued

Alderney to Halifax			Halifax to Alderney		
Pre Big Lift (Alternative 2)	During Big Lift (Alternative 1)	Recommended Post Big Lift	Pre Big Lift (Alternative 2)	During Big Lift (Alternative 1)	Recommended Post Big Lift
315p	315p	315p	330p	330p	330p
330p	330p	330p	345p	345p	345p
345p	345p	345p	400p	400p	400p
400p	400p	400p	415p	415p	415p
415p	415p	415p	430p	430p	430p
430p	430p	430p	445p	445p	445p
445p	445p	445p	500p	500p	500p
500p	500p	500p	515p	515p	515p
515p	515p	515p	530p	530p	530p
530p	530p	530p	545p	545p	545p
545p	545p	545p	600p	600p	600p
600p	600p	600p	615p	615p	615p
	615p	615p		630p	630p
630p	630p	630p	645p	645p	645p
	645p	645p		700p	700p
700p	700p	700p	715p	715p	715p
	715p	715p		730p	730p
730p	730p	730p	745p	745p	745p
	745p	745p		800p	800p
800p	800p	800p	815p	815p	815p
	815p			830p	
830p	830p	830p	845p	845p	845p
	845p			900p	
900p	900p	900p	915p	915p	915p
	915p			930p	
930p	930p	930p	945p	945p	945p
	945p			1000p	
1000p	1000p	1000p	1015p	1015p	1015p
	1015p			1030p	
1030p	1030p	1030p	1045p	1045p	1045p
	1045p			1100p	
1100p	1100p	1100p	1115p	1115p	1115p
	1115p			1130p	
1130p	1130p	1130p	1145p	1145p	1145p

Sunday Schedule

Alderney to Halifax		Halifax to Alderney	
Pre Big Lift (Alternative 2)	During Big Lift (Recommendation or Alternative 1)	Pre Big Lift (Alternative 2)	During Big Lift (Recommendation or Alternative 1)
	630a		645a
	700a		715a
	730a		745a
	800a		815a
	830a		845a
	900a		915a
	930a		945a
	1000a		1015a
	1030a		1045a
1100a	1100a	1115a	1115a
1130a	1130a	1145a	1145a
1200p	1200p	1215p	1215p
1230p	1230p	1245p	1245p
100p	100p	115p	115p
130p	130p	145p	145p
200p	200p	215p	215p
230p	230p	245p	245p
300p	300p	315p	315p
330p	330p	345p	345p
400p	400p	415p	415p
430p	430p	445p	445p
500p	500p	515p	515p
530p	530p	545p	545p
600p	600p	615p	615p
	630p		645p
	700p		715p
	730p		745p
	800p		815p
	830p		845p
	900p		915p
	930p		945p
	1000p		1015p
	1030p		1045p
	1100p		1115p
	1130p		1145p