

# It's More Than Buses

Transit is about access, mobility and a better city!

Join the conversation about the future of public transportation in Halifax.

## Notes from Session 1 (June 28, 2011)

### Group Discussion Question #1

What role do you envision for public transportation in the future of HRM? What short-term actions are required? What long-term actions are required?

### Ideas put forward from groups on cue cards, organized by theme:

#### Communities, Places and Planning

- Transit as identity for the city (i.e., NY – “subway”, Paris – “Metro”, London – “tube”, Halifax – “??”)
- Build transit-supportive places/communities/streets
- *People and Public Pavements and Pathways Act* replaces *Motor Vehicle Act*
- Connect stops to people – instead of in a sea of parking lot/traffic
- Long term action: reduce the need for moving people and goods; live/work/play nodes (e.g., Downtown Halifax)
- Long term action: regional connections
- Design for transit; identify corridors for frequent service; urban development around the transit system

#### Leadership and Governance

- Create transportation agency/department overseeing all modes of transportation (roads, bikes, ferries, etc.) that increases focus of transit from being a commuter centric system to also be inclusive of recreation and other uses
- New sources of funding for transit, and more provincial funding to municipalities (e.g., gas tax)
- Add municipal fuel tax to support transit
- Elect creative innovative leaders for implementing positive changes

#### User-Friendly Experience

- An ever-present ‘layer’ running in the background – easily accessed and used when you need it, minimized and out of mind when you don’t
- Easier to use system (map, schedule, stops – improve these)
- Attractive – frequency, fair vs. fare, convenient, modern, reduce stigma
- Accessibility – scheduling, routes, frequency, information, buses/bike racks
- Make it more pleasurable – waiting, riding, transferring, paying
- 3D, colour-coordinated signage
- Inclusion/integration of bikes and other AT methods into any public transit system
- Consistency – scheduling, frequency, bike racks/lean buses, information, routes
- Long term action: encourage private enterprises to play a part (harbour taxis/ green rider), return people to downtown

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## Improving Services on Key Corridors

- Move people through choke points
- Increase frequency of many routes and expand coverage of network to include un-serviced/under-serviced areas
- Increase the distance between bus stops
- Make better use of the roads we have (e.g., No cars on Spring Garden and Quinpool Rd.), revise parking
- Better frequency, clarity, convenience in the core – attract people back to live on the peninsula
- Short term: priority for transit through choke points
- Short term: improved combined headway planning along corridors, improved use of communication tools (technology, social networking), improve awareness of service “how to ride bus”
- Short term: rationalized system, focus on the Core (frequency/connections, clarify/simplify maps/signs)

## Group Discussion Question #2

What shared values should guide the development of our public transportation system? (i.e., how do we determine priorities? What are the trade-offs?)

## Ideas put forward from groups on cue cards, organized by theme:

### Diversity

- Accessibility – ages, incomes, ability, literacy
- Full spectrum of accessibility – age, economic location, ability, with bike stroller, walker, lots of bags
- Value the Riders – people with economic disadvantage, quality of seats, better signage, maps, better info, respect for elderly, ppl with kids, ppl with groceries, ‘we are all transit users at some point!’
- Values – value the loyal customer, child-friendly transit prioritization of transit over single occupant vehicles (SOV) people over cars, re-evaluate parking requirements and eliminate free parking

### Convenient and Competitive

- Convenient and easy public transportation
- Stigma rooted in inefficient/failing transit system?
- Get from one place to the other
- Time is not as important as ease
- Simple is crucial
- Stigma with riding (Metrolink versus ferry versus “regular bus”)

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- Trade-offs: frequency vs. number of routes, parking stat vs. transit, urban vs. non-urban
- Long-term detailed transit plan
- Priority to buses over cars
- How do you combat image vs. utility? Bus vs. car vs. subway vs. planes
- Shared values – convenience (simple), connectivity, wayfinding, accessibility/affordability, security, equitable
- Priorities – frequency, core services, price, node services, connect to the airport, accessibility
- Value – provide options: route, time, type of vehicles
- Will pay more for reliability
- Value – convenience and speed of buses/transit are the priority over cars
- Start in the core with reliable high frequency

## **Prioritize People**

- People before cars!
- Value -- make people the priority; everyone is a pedestrian affected by street design
- Value – people first, accessibility
- Value – make driving more expensive and difficult

## **Quality Streetscapes and Communities**

- People and transit-centred streetscape
- Human, pedestrian, cyclist safety
- Value – think about the whole trip
- Value – community neighbourhood feel, inviting streetscape

## **Sustainability**

- Community values environment, air quality, noise issues
- Hybrid vehicles, taking the bus as an environmental statement
- Engage big employers in HRM, in sustainable transportation policies/programs

## **Comments from *It's More Than Buses* Facebook Page (as of July 11)**

- How about making the developers pay for infrastructure to get residents from the new lots to/from their most likely destination: downtown?
- It is more than buses. For some it's the way of life. It's their only option for transportation.
- More frequent busses, well-timed connections, bike routes to/from terminals and stops, affordable taxi rides, bus shelters everywhere that protect from the elements, space for strollers and shopping carts on busses, bicycle parking on every block of downtown,

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protective barriers between bicycle lanes and high-speed traffic, change rooms for cyclists in offices.

- More buses more frequent to outer areas and later routes. It ends early to Sackville. not everyone lives on or off of Sackville drive.
- Maps and schedules at each bus stop. Especially since tourists don't have local cell phones at their disposal nor would they know that you have to go to a pharmacy of all places to get a map and schedule. And a night bus would be nice. I live... in Dartmouth and I hate that I have to be like Cinderella and be home by midnight if I don't want to pay a fortune for a cab! It wouldn't have to run often; maybe even just once an hour, but it would at least give me an option! And fix the bike lane on the bridge!! That ramp on the Halifax side is not only a detour, but it endangers my life every time!!!
- If my husband still worked in downtown Dartmouth and got off work at his usual 10:30, it would take him more than an hour and even maybe an hour and a half plus to get home to Sackville, with no connector to Glendale which is where our street connects. he has to walk from Sackville Drive over.
- Complete and timely snow clearing of walking paths and sidewalks to get to the bus stops
- Clearing away snow banks at bus stops so you can actually get on/off the bus without climbing over them
- In general I'd like to see some data on mobility in HRM. Where are people coming from on a typical morning, where are they going, and how is the flow? Same for other peak times like Canada Day events, University student moves, etc. If we don't know, how can we possibly decide where to put extra lanes, bike paths, infrastructure?
- I'd like to see the downtown core with a tram again, one that would go south on Hollis and north/south on Lower Water, and back down Barrington in the other direction, after it becomes a one way street that is. It is not wide enough for two way mixed mode car/ bus traffic.
- Having Shearwater as the international airport would have been an interesting choice. The runways are certainly long enough, but they're very unkempt and have been decommissioned as far as I know.
- I think one important feature of public transit that everyone can agree on is speed. When public transport begins to win the commute, it will succeed. When solo drivers are sitting in cars in traffic and see buses going by them, they will be more likely to get on that bus later. I think speed is something all citizens would agree is important.