

MINUTES

TRANSIT SERVICES COMMITTEE

OTTAWA-CARLETON REGIONAL TRANSIT COMMISSION

CHAMPLAIN ROOM

14 OCTOBER 1998

8:45 A.M.

PRESENT

Chair: A. Loney

Members: M. Bellemare, W. Byrne, C. Doucet, L. Davis, D. Holmes, H. Kreling

Regrets: R. Chiarelli, J. Legendre

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

That the Transit Services Committee confirm the Minutes of the Meeting of 26 August 1998.

CARRIED

PRESENTATION

The Transit Services Committee Chair, A. Loney, congratulated OC Transpo staff for winning one of the American Public Transit Association's AdWheel Awards for Print Media in a Large Transit System for a poster and for an Employee Communications Program.

The Manager, Marketing and Customer Services, Moxana Sawka, described a number of marketing initiatives currently underway:

- 4 - 15 second television commercials will air for six weeks in prime-time slots and will focus on taking the bus as opposed to dealing with car troubles;
- tear-off postcards will be carried in buses, encouraging Finance Minister Paul Martin to respond to the demand for employer-provided tax-exempt bus passes in the next federal budget;

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- Notes:
1. Underlining indicates new or amended recommendations approved by the Committee.
 2. Reports requiring Commission consideration will be presented to the Commission on 14 October 1998 in Transit Services Committee Report 98-07.

- gift certificates in ten dollar denominations will be available for the holiday season;
- the Liquor Control Board of Ontario will allow OC Transpo into the LCBO's outlets with point-of-purchase information on public transit, in furtherance of it's commitment to responsible drinking.

The Committee received this report for information.

RECEIVED

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The Financial Statements for July and August 1998 were RECEIVED

REGULAR ITEMS

COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW UPDATE

- Verbal Presentation by Committee Chair

Chair A. Loney indicated that the consultants involved in the Comprehensive Review will make a presentation to the Transit Services Committee at the 28 October 1998 meeting. The final report will have many implications and many decisions will need to be taken in order to achieve the ridership goals set out in the Regional Official Plan and the Transportation Master Plan.

Chair Loney continued by saying the comprehensive review process is ongoing. The Interim Report has been circulated to all Commissioners and is available on the Internet. A second Public Forum was held, and although it was reasonably well attended, there are problems attracting non-transit users. Part of convincing people to use the transit system will be through marketing initiatives similar to those described earlier by staff. Chair Loney pointed out that, for a system the size of OC Transpo, very little marketing has been done: this situation will have to change and there will be associated budget implications.

Chair Loney spoke about concerns expressed by the Unions about contracting out. This issue has been thoroughly discussed and the Steering Committee is on record as saying it does not intend to contract out. The preference is to have the system change and evolve from within and this will be accomplished by concentrating efforts on both customers and staff. The intent is to grow the business substantially, thereby creating more jobs. Chair Loney posited that if the focus is on delivering good, friendly service to clients, things will go well.

Chair Loney concluded his presentation by saying that a lot of work has been done in terms of not increasing transit usage and ridership: in every instance, costs have been higher when this is not done. The “watch-word” for the review process has been to achieve the growth targets and this will need to be the focus of all parties concerned.

RECEIVED

1. IMPROVING PUBLIC TRANSIT ACCESSIBILITY IN OTTAWA-CARLETON
- Interim General Manager OC Transpo report dated 28 Aug 98

The Interim General Manager, M. Sheflin, began by saying that the Regional Official Plan calls for OC Transpo to achieve a certain ridership and the consequences of not achieving this goal are unacceptable. The Commission is looking at ways of attracting people to transit and, to this end, the equipment used will be of paramount importance. The vehicles under consideration will increase the number of people who can access regular bus service and, wherever possible, this service will be provided on regular runs.

The Committee heard from Jeffrey Alguire, Chair, Accessible Transit Advisory Committee (ATAC). Mr. Alguire pointed out that the community of people with disabilities has been seeking better accessibility, and especially low-floor buses in the conventional fleet, for a number of years. He indicated that, in some segments of the community, patience has begun to wear thin, and any means to accelerate the process will receive support. In addition, ATAC and other members of the community want to be involved in the implementation process.

Mr. Alguire raised the following issues with regard to the Accessibility Plan for Ottawa-Carleton, adopted in September 1994:

The fleet to be completely low-floor by 2011: ATAC supports adopting a 12 year life for 1998 standard buses because (1) the Accessibility Plan is already behind schedule and (2) maintenance costs will be reduced;

Bus Stop Facilities Standards: with respect to bus shelters being made fully accessible where feasible, each individual case should be reviewed with as open a mind as possible and staff should be as ingenious as possible in achieving the accessibility guidelines;

Sidewalk Standards: the success of the low-floor bus initiative is dependent upon the appropriate state of sidewalks, as well as on the ability to access low-floor buses. This should include new as well as existing streets, and has to be seen as an overall plan, requiring the involvement of other Committees, where appropriate;

ParaTranspo: the current high level of refused trips is entirely unacceptable to ATAC and to the community of disabled persons in Ottawa-Carleton. ParaTranspo will remain a key element of the unified plan for accessibility of transit and having low-floor buses will not remove the need for vigilance on this issue.

The review of eligibility criteria for ParaTranspo should only be undertaken once the critical mass of low-floor vehicles has been reached. In the immediate term, the number of refused trips must be reduced. In the longer term, the Commission can expect benefits, in the non-winter season, from reduced demand on ParaTranspo through the use of low-floor vehicles.

Commissioner W. Byrne asked whether the large number of refused trips will be reduced with the new automated scheduling system, and what problems have been encountered to explain the delay in implementing this system. The Manager, Transportation Operations, Mary Whelan, said staff believe the problems are virtually resolved and training will begin in November. She added that most of the implementation testing will be done during week-end service to minimize the impact on regular service.

Councillor H. Kreling asked whether staff have had discussions with Orion about capacity and problems with brakes that need to be replaced early-on. The Manager, Equipment Division, P. Newgard, said discussions have been held with Orion and with Nova, since both their low floor buses will be purchased. Staff have been assured the newer axles are more supportable and will be a lot more reliable, thereby lowering maintenance costs. Speaking to vehicle capacity, Mr. Newgard explained that the buses removed from service by the Toronto Transit Commission were powered by natural gas, adding extra weight and decreasing passenger capacity. The Commission's buses are diesel-powered, and with the design of the vehicles being considered will allow a carrying capacity of 76 passengers.

The Committee then considered the report recommendations. Chair Loney suggested Point C be deleted, indicating, in reference to comments made by Mr. Alguire, that the standard in the United States is currently twelve years. Chair Loney felt it would not be necessary for staff to undertake the work described in Point C.

That the Transit Services Committee recommend the Ottawa-Carleton Regional Transit Commission approve the following:

- a. **the advanced purchase to 1999 of the 70 low-floor Orion VI buses currently ordered for the year 2000;**
- b. **the advanced purchase to 2001 of 30 low-floor articulated buses planned for 2002;**
- c. **that point c. be deleted;**
- d. **that the Government of Ontario be requested to cover the full \$1.9 million financing cost of accelerating the purchase of low-floor accessible vehicles to help people with disabilities in Ottawa-Carleton;**
- e. **that the Accessible Transit Steering Committee be reconstituted with the addition of representatives from the Canadian National Institute for the**

Blind and the Canadian Hearing Society, to review and update all aspects of the Commission's Accessibility Plan.

- f. that Councillor W. Byrne be appointed as Commission representative on the Accessible Transit Steering Committee.**

CARRIED, as amended

2. ACCESSIBLE TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
- Interim General Manager OC Transpo report dated 3 Sep 98

That the Transit Services Committee confirm the re-appointment of the current Accessible Transit Advisory Committee members for the period 1 Nov 98 to 31 Oct 99

CARRIED

3. PUBLIC TRANSIT FOR ONTARIO WORKS PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS
- Commissioner, Social Services Department and Interim General Manager,
OC Transpo joint report dated 1 Sep 98

The Social Services Commissioner, D. Stewart, began by saying the Ontario Works Program has \$2.8 million earmarked for "employment related expenses", key among which are mobility services, for the 22,000 registered Ontario Works participants in Ottawa-Carleton. He indicated the recommendation is an attempt to "lever" \$1.5 million of that amount to expand the department's purchasing power and give persons on assistance the mobility they require.

M. Shefin, Interim General Manager, said that while it is felt this initiative can increase ridership, there will be a cost implication. He expressed the view the risk is a reasonable one, with definite social advantages, and will be subject to re-evaluation in one year's time.

In response to questions from Commissioner H. Kreling, Mr. Stewart indicated that the Ontario Works budget is capped and that additional provincial funding will not be forthcoming. M. Sheflin noted the RMOC will lead the way with this program.

Commissioner L. Davis asked about the criteria used to assess eligibility for tickets/passes. D. Stewart replied the program will focus on participants in the Ontario Works Program, clients in self-employment programs, and clients already employed, as well as on participants in approved skills training programs. Replying to a further question from Commissioner Davis, Mr. Stewart said he did not anticipate there would be a large shift in demand.

That the Transit Services Committee recommend the Ottawa-Carleton Regional Transit Commission approve the discount of up to \$375,000 on the purchase of \$1.5 million of OC Transpo services by the Social Services Department; and,

That this arrangement be reviewed within one (1) year through a report to the Transit Services and Community Services Committees.

CARRIED

4. **AWARD OF MULTI-YEAR CONTRACT FOR THE SUPPLY OF
LOW-FLOOR, ARTICULATED BUSES**

- Interim General Manager OC Transpo report dated 2 Sep 98

The Finance Commissioner, Mr. J. LeBelle, circulated additional information relative to this item. In reply to a question from Councillor M. Bellemare, Mr. LeBelle indicated Council has already approved the acquisition and the project authority is on the books. The report before Committee speaks about spending that money sooner than later and incurring short-term financing costs.

Councillor Bellemare asked if it would be appropriate to refer this matter to the Budget Sub-Committee to weigh the imperatives in terms of the RMOC's budget. Mr. LeBelle clarified that \$700,000 of the \$1.9 million will not be a cost until 2001, making the final amount \$1.2 million. Mr. LeBelle suggested this could be part of OC Transpo's submission to the Budget Sub-Committee.

Responding to a question from Councillor Bellemare about why this item cannot be deferred, Chair Loney indicated part of the problem is the availability of vehicles; the manufacturer has indicated that a reply is needed by 15 October 1998 in order to meet the timelines set out in the report.

That the Transit Services Committee recommend the Ottawa-Carleton Regional Transit Commission approve:

- a. **the award of a contract to New Flyer Industries for the supply of 15 low-floor accessible articulated buses for delivery in 2000 at a price not to exceed \$9,960,000, subject to U.S. dollar exchange rates;**
- b. **the award of a continuing multi-year contract for 115 low-floor accessible articulated buses for delivery from 2001 to 2004 at a price based on the year 2000 price and defined escalation provisions, subject to the availability of annual funding.**
- c. **the establishment of additional debenture authority in the amount of \$17.3 million to finance the purchase of 45 low-floor, articulated buses**

CARRIED, as amended

5. **ST LAURENT GARAGE NORTH - TRANSPORTATION
OPERATIONS CONTROL ROOM RENOVATIONS**

- Interim General Manager, OC Transpo report dated 8 Sep 98

That the Transit Services Committee confirm the award of a contract to Donald M. Bell Construction at a cost not to exceed \$69,870.

CARRIED

6. CHANGE IN SEAT SPECIFICATION FOR 140 NEW LOW FLOOR BUSES

- Interim General Manager, OC Transpo report dated 6 Oct 98

That the Transit Services Committee recommend the Ottawa-Carleton Regional Transit Commission delegate authority to the Interim General Manager to:

- a. **approve a change in the seat specification for 140 low floor Orion VI buses and all future bus purchases.**
- b. **approve the final seat specification and arrangement for 140 Orion VI low floor buses, and;**
- c. **negotiate the final price increase which will not exceed \$3,100 per bus over the current contract price of \$446,000 per bus.**

CARRIED

COMMISSIONERS' ITEMS

7. REZONING APPLICATION - BY-LAW 164/98: TEMPORARY USE - SURFACE PARKING, 82 METCALFE (AT SLATER)

- Committee Co-ordinator's report dated 30 Sep 98

The Manager, Planning and Development, Dr. Helen Gault, indicated that OC Transpo has objected to temporary parking being supplied immediately adjacent to the Transitway in downtown Ottawa as this encourages more cars to come into the central area.

Mr. Barry Edgington, Director, Development Approvals Division, (RMOC) made reference to a Memorandum where he indicates that, from an implementation standpoint, the Regional Official Plan (ROP) does not have the policies to object to or appeal temporary use zoning by-laws. He pointed out that the City of Ottawa's Zoning By-law and Official Plan (OP) are equally vague and that the City is not enforcing its own policies.

Ms. Linda Hoad, posited regional staff reach the right conclusion about not appealing the City's Zoning By-law but for the wrong reasons. The City can approve temporary uses but it has to prove need in the case of surface parking. Ms. Hoad said she did not believe this could be proven in this instances. Secondly, the fact that the ROP was not in effect is irrelevant, as evidenced by the strong position the Region took with respect to the Nortel Development. Finally, as to whether or not an appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) would be successful, Ms. Hoad recalled a successful appeal of a temporary zoning by-law by the King Edward Avenue Task Force several years ago (corner King Edward Avenue and St Patrick Street).

Ms. Hoad continued by saying she shares concerns about the replacement building and new parking spaces that would be provided. She said City staff must be made aware that a parking problem exists, that it affects transit services and will continue to do so unless supply is reduced and the cost of parking in the central area is increased. Temporary zoning problems are compounded by the flagrant abuse of the City's parking by-laws: tandem, or wall-to-wall, parking is illegal and should not occur, except in the few cases where it has been sanctioned by a Site Plan Agreement or by a Variance approved by the Committee of Adjustment.

Ms. Hoad expressed the hope the City could be convinced of the urgency of the problem and that it needs to enforce it's own by-laws. All taxpayers contribute to OC Transpo and will benefit if transit is more successful: policies in both the OP and the ROP require this. She posited staff may not be aware of the implications of their decisions, and may not be committed to OC Transpo's success. She suggested that both regional staff and politicians approach the City, requesting it's cooperation. Ms. Hoad spoke about two ongoing studies, one on Temporary Surface Parking, the other on the zoning by-law review for the central area. The Federation of Citizens' Associations takes the matter very seriously and would support more involvement from regional staff in both these studies. Responding to a question from Councillor D. Holmes, Ms. Carol Christensen, Policy Planning Branch, indicated the RMOC was not successful in becoming a member of the zoning by-law review committee: as well, staff were not aware there was a committee examining temporary surface parking.

Councillor C. Doucet asked whether Ms. Hoad would suggest ways the Region could be more effective in bringing policies in line and making the central area more transit friendly. Ms. Hoad said she would encourage OC Transpo to continue commenting on rezoning matters, and if niceties don't work, perhaps the threat of an OMB Hearing would be more effective. OC Transpo could undertake appeals on it's own or work through citizens and/or citizens' groups, offering financial and legal assistance. The Committee Chair could attend City Planning meetings to make presentations, as well as encourage staff to attend when zoning matters come before that body.

Councillor D. Holmes expressed her frustration when considering what should be done to increase OC Transpo ridership and seeing that everything being done is in direct opposition to this goal. She cited the example of 400 short-term spaces at the World Exchange Plaza being converted into 400 long-term spaces for commuter travel, with no opportunity for the RMOC to appeal because this was done through a development agreement. She posited the new tax system encourages the creation of additional parking lots through lower tax rates, another step in the wrong direction. She asked that staff report back on whether the subject property, 82 Metcalfe, should be rezoned, or whether the RMOC should join the appeal launched by the Centretown Community Association against the temporary use by-law. With respect to the ROP relying on the City's OP because it contains all the safeguards, Councillor Holmes felt the next steps would be for the ROP to have it's own, strong policies on the central area.

Tim Marc, Legal Department, suggested the Committee consider joining the appeal of the temporary by-law by the Centretown group. In a property rezoning, the Board would expect staff to point to policies in the ROP on which the rezoning is based, and these are not as strong as they should be. Seeking party status to the Centretown Citizens' appeal would entail relying on policies contained in the City of Ottawa Official Plan.

Replying to questions of clarification from the Committee Chair, A. Loney, Mr. Marc indicated there is nothing preventing the Transit Commission from seeking party status at the OMB. The Commission may refer the request to have the RMOC take a similar position to the Planning and Environment Committee (P&E), and the request for stronger policies in the ROP must be referred to P&E. In response to a question from Councillor H. Kreling, Mr. Marc indicated the RMOC has sought party status in Consent to Sever matters in rural areas where it was neither the appellant nor the respondent.

The Interim General Manager, M. Sheflin, suggested the Chair write to the City of Ottawa on behalf of the Transit Services Committee, pointing out the urgency of controlling parking in the central area.

Moved by D. Holmes

That the R.M.O.C. and OC Transpo join the Centretown Citizens' Community Association in the Ontario Municipal Board appeal to By-law 164/98: Temporary Use- Surface Parking, 82Metcalfe (at Slater).

CARRIED, as amended

That the Ottawa-Carleton Regional Transit Commission recommend to the Planning and Environment Committee that more detailed policies on Central Area Parking be added to the Regional Official Plan.

CARRIED

LEGAL

8. AMENDMENTS TO FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION PROCEDURES MANUAL
- Regional Solicitor report dated 7 Oct 98

That the Transit Services Committee recommend the Transit Commission approve an amendment to the Finance and Administration Procedures Manual concerning the signing officers of the Commission in the form as attached as Annex A.

CARRIED

INFORMATION PREVIOUSLY DISTRIBUTED

1. CONTRACT AWARDED UNDER CHAIR'S DELEGATED AUTHORITY
- Interim General Manager, OC Transpo memorandum dated 9 Sep 98

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

NEXT MEETING(S)

**Transit Commission
Transit Services Committee**

**14 October 1998 - Following Council
28 October 1998 - 8:45 a.m.**

CHAIR

CO-ORDINATOR