

Our File/N/Réf.
Your File/V/Réf.

DATE: 8 February 1999

TO/DEST: Co-ordinator
Transit Services Committee

FROM/EXP: CEO and General Manager

SUBJECT/OBJET: **INTERPROVINCIAL TRANSIT SERVICE**

DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION

That the Transit Services Committee receive this report for information.

INTRODUCTION

From time to time questions are asked about the efficiency, effectiveness and equity of interprovincial transit services. This report has been prepared to provide the Committee with information about the current arrangements and to discuss future directions.

BACKGROUND

OC Transpo and the Société de Transport de l'Outaouais (STO) operate in a cooperative manner with the objective of maximizing customer convenience. Legally, OC Transpo can operate service to Hull while STO can operate service to Ottawa. In practice, because the bulk of passengers on both services are destined for locations on the Ottawa side, nearly all STO's service terminates in downtown Ottawa. On the other hand, only 8% of OC Transpo's peak period commuters wish to travel to and from Hull and, for this reason, OC Transpo's service into Hull is proportionately less.

Between them, OC Transpo and STO carry 27,000 passenger trips per day across the Ottawa River, with approximately 6,000 carried by OC Transpo and 21,000 by STO. OC Transpo operates limited service, with one all-day route (route 8) and seven peak-only routes. These routes serve two major federal government employment centres, Terrasses de la Chaudière and Place du Portage. Most STO service operates to downtown Ottawa, using Wellington Street, Rideau Street and King Edward Avenue.

Major interprovincial service reviews were undertaken in 1983 and again in 1995. The more recent review was carried out as a joint project with STO and covered:

- an evaluation of the cost-effectiveness of the existing service;
- a review of terminal facilities at Place d'Accueil and Terrasses de la Chaudière; and
- a review of the public information available to interprovincial transit passengers.

It was found that there are few opportunities to further improve the cost-effectiveness of the existing interprovincial services through restructuring routes. The options which could potentially reduce costs were accompanied by unacceptable inconveniences to customers, such as a long walk to make a transfer. Beyond fine-tuning schedules to ensure that supply and demand were well matched on existing routes, no changes to the existing route structure were recommended.

Improvements in passenger amenities and the arrangements of bus stops at Terrasses de la Chaudière and Place d'Accueil (Place du Portage) were identified and have been implemented through the addition of seating, schedule information, improved signage and the reorganization of stops. In addition, transit priority through traffic signal timing was pursued at Terrasses de la Chaudière.

Interprovincial passenger information was improved as a result of the project by, among other things:

- developing a joint map for posting inside bus shelters along Rideau/Wellington and in Hull at locations served by OC Transpo and STO;
- more information about both systems was included in the Guide de l'utilisateur (STO) and the Riders' Guide (OC Transpo);
- inclusion of major transfer points on the route maps of both transit companies.

Over the last four years we have maintained close contact at a staff level with STO to ensure that fares and service were coordinated and information was shared across the National Capital Region.

Changes to interprovincial service on the part of either STO or OC Transpo are discussed in a cooperative manner and, to date, there have been no significant problems. The biggest change to service in recent years was the extension of STO's Casino route 21 deeper into Ottawa. This route now follows a zig zag routing through downtown Ottawa in order to make stops near most of the major hotels. This arrangement was discussed and agreed at the staff level with attention paid to practical considerations of finding safe stopping areas and avoiding interference with OC Transpo's routes.

In terms of fares, STO and OC Transpo have a reciprocal agreement whereby they honour each other's passes. However, the STO cash/ticket fares are significantly higher than OC Transpo's, at \$2.60 and \$2.00 compared with \$2.25 and \$1.50, and STO asks OC Transpo cash/ticket users to top up. This is clearly not ideal but fare policy for each transit company is determined by its Commission.

DISCUSSION

As part of Transplan 99, we are looking at a change in the way OC Transpo service is provided to Hull. Over the years, we have had a number of requests to provide direct service from the west, as we do from the south and east. To this end, a new route from Baseline station to Place du Portage via the Chaudière Bridge is proposed as part of Transplan 99. This would allow west-enders to make their transfer to Hull at any of the stations from LeBreton to Baseline.

Another problem with our service to Hull is that, because the bulk of it is interline tripper service (which means that after buses arrive in Hull, they deadhead to the start of a trip on another route) congestion in Hull can cause unreliable service across the region. Roadworks on either of the bridges, for example, can have disastrous consequences for service in Kanata and Orleans. We are therefore proposing to provide a portion of the service to Hull in the form of a dedicated shuttle travelling on the Chaudière Bridge. This and the route from Baseline would be supplemented by a route from Orleans via the park and ride lot and a route from the south end which passes through Greenboro station and hence serves that park and ride lot.

These proposals were developed as part of the Comprehensive Review and will be the subject of a full public consultation process.

Overall service levels will be tailored to the demand, as is the current situation.

*Approved by
M.J.E. Sheflin, P.Eng.*