

Our File/N/Réf.  
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DATE: 7 June 1999

TO/DEST: Co-ordinator  
Transit Services Committee

FROM/EXP: General Manager

SUBJECT/OBJET: **OC TRANSPO COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW -  
MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS**

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**DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION**

**That the Transit Services Committee receive this report for information.**

**INTRODUCTION**

In February the KPMG/IBI team completed their Comprehensive Review of OC Transpo. Their report, entitled "The Way Ahead: Becoming the Best of the Best" represents a blueprint for transit in Ottawa-Carleton.

The KPMG/IBI report contained many recommendations. As we reported to this Committee in February, Management agrees with and supports the recommendations in this report. Indeed, as both the Commission Chair and the consultants indicated previously, during the course of the project, the new management team and staff throughout the organization embraced the study and took ownership in the future of OC Transpo and the transit services provided to our community. Many recommendations have already been implemented.

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to provide more detail (attached) for Committee with respect to the specific actions that Management is proposing regarding each of the recommendations in the report. KPMG/IBI grouped their recommendations into two categories: Long-Term Strategies and Five Year Plan. Accordingly, implementation of these recommendations will span the next several years and will be included in OC Transpo's 5 Year Plan which will be brought to the Committee later this summer.

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

**Attachment**

***The Way Ahead: Becoming The Best of The Best***

***Key Recommendations***

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**Long-term Strategy**

- I- That OC Transpo focus, in both the short term and the long term, on achieving improved service reliability and attentive customer service, and refrain from providing more service than it can provide reliably.

**Management's Response**

*Reliability is, and must be, our primary focus.*

*One of the key factors in OC Transpo's decline the past several years was a steady deterioration in reliability. We will not introduce new service that we cannot provide reliably. We are emphasizing throughout the organization the importance of providing a service that is reliable.*

*We are also stressing with all our employees how essential it is to provide superb customer service.*

*Both reliability and customer service will be a continuing focus for OC Transpo.*

- II- That the capital improvements outlined in the Regional Official Plan for transit improvements be implemented with the emphasis in early years on the transit priority improvements and bus/HOV lane implementation. It is important to maintain exclusive use of the transitway for buses, however consideration should be given to extending the use of new arterial priority lanes to all vehicles with three or more occupants.

**Management's Response**

*The 5 Year plan will include capital requirements for transit priority and Transitway infrastructure spending.*

*This recommendation confirms the importance of retaining exclusivity on the Transitway.*

*OC Transpo's challenge is to move beyond being a conventional bus service provider and play a bigger role in mobility management in the community if the diverse transportation needs of Ottawa-Carleton residents are to be met. This includes the issue of how HOV lanes, and car pooling, can complement transit services.*

- III** That OC Transpo continue moving to make its fixed route system accessible as the key strategy for public transportation services for the disabled, with continued Para Transpo services aimed at serving those who cannot use the accessible fixed route system.

***Management's Response***

*Accessibility for elderly and disabled people is an important goal. All new bus purchases will be low-floor vehicles. Our fixed-route fleet will, therefore, become progressively more accessible. The **Accessibility Plan for Transit in Ottawa-Carleton** is currently being updated with the assistance of a Steering Committee representing a wide range of disability groups. One hundred and forty low-floor standard buses will be arriving this year and thirty seven articulated buses in 2000. We will work towards maximizing the benefits of the low-floor vehicles through the manner in which they are assigned to routes and by greater integration between conventional transit and Para Transpo.*

- IV-** That bus fleet renewal be considered a priority, to improve reliability, meet the needs of the disabled reduce maintenance costs, and meet customer service level expectations.

***Management's Response***

*This is an extremely important issue. Our fleet is old, fragile, unreliable and very expensive to maintain. We appreciate the Commission's support recently for vehicle acquisitions. If we are to succeed at being more reliable and more cost effective, we must continue to accelerate the renewal of our fleet. Fleet renewal will be an important element in our 5 Year plan.*

*The arrival of 140 low-floor Orion VI buses this year will present the organization with major challenges and major opportunities.*

*The Equipment Division will have the challenge of integrating the new buses, which will be arriving at a rate of five per week, into the fleet. It will be necessary to equip the buses with radios, fareboxes, transfer printers, grab bars and perform appropriate MTO inspections, as well as to provide training for mechanics in the new technology of the bus. The fact that the new buses are air conditioned will mean that appropriate staffing and facilities will be required to support this.*

- V-** That the Region, in cooperation with other municipalities, request that the Province of Ontario and the Government of Canada provide the Region with the access to auto user charge revenues.

***Management's Response***

*This issue was presented to, and approved by, Transportation Committee and Council in May 1999. We will continue to press for this funding through the activities of the Canadian Urban Transit Association and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.*

- VI-** That the Region request the provincial government to empower it through enabling legislation to apply parking surcharges and use the revenue as a funding source for its transit/transportation program.

***Management's Response***

*This issue was presented to Transportation Committee and Council in May 1999, but was not approved.*

- VII-** That the Region press the federal government to eliminate the “taxable benefit” status of employer subsidized bus passes, or to treat employer provided parking as a taxable benefit.

***Management's Response***

*This initiative was supported by several Committees, Council and the Commission in 1997, 1998 and 1999. This initiative continues to be a focus for the activities of the CUTA and OC Transpo is playing a key role. It is hopeful that, with continued pressure, this benefit will be announced as part of the federal budget next spring. We are playing a key role in a CUTA working group tasked with the preparation of a marketing strategy and materials so that the transit industry is in a position to gain real benefits as soon as possible.*

*We appreciate and wish to acknowledge the strong role of our union, ATU, Local 279, in this initiative.*

- VIII-** That in the next review of the Official Plan, consideration be given to adjusting the staging of growth outside the Greenbelt to reflect the success each of the urban communities has in implementing transit-friendly development.

***Management's Response***

*Land use development is the most critical factor in the sustained provision of effective transit services. We consider that more needs to be done to ensure transit-friendly development.*

- IX-** That RMOC press for one-tier governance of land use and transportation planning, and in the meantime one or more Task Forces be set up, with appropriate representation from the Region, Area Municipalities and OC Transpo, tasked with achieving early and continuing action towards more transit-supportive land use including:
- A. location-specific and density-related Regional Development Charges (RDCs), and other development incentives to encourage transit supportive development
  - B. transit supportive parking policies
  - C. development approval process improvements to ensure transit priorities are achieved.

***Management's Response***

*OC Transpo recognizes the importance of these issues and is pleased to play a strong supportive role in making these recommendations a reality.*

- X-** That Council consider options for reforming the Urban Transit Area (UTA), including:
- A. phasing out the UTA, with transit funding shifting to the regional levy.
  - B. extending the UTA to include Stittsville.
  - C. including Transitway and transit related roadway capital improvements on the regional levy rather than the UTA levy.
  - D. including the costs of park and ride lots and related service in the regional levy rather than the UTA levy.

***Management's Response***

*We prefer option A since transit is part of the overall transportation system and, as such, should be funded by the entire area.*

- XI-** That the Region undertake a modest public information program with the community associations to inform them that more people in their neighborhoods does not necessarily mean high-rise construction and, in fact could lead to a reversal of declining population and help support existing community services such as schools, sports teams and community centres.

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***Management's Response***

*This will be done as part of a coordinated Transportation Demand Management Program*

- XII-** That OC Transpo encourage and support industry pressure on bus and parts manufacturers for higher quality, longer lasting buses and parts.

***Management's Response***

*In October 1998, OC Transpo participated with 14 other transit properties from Canada and the north east United States to develop a "Common bus requirements document".*

*The document outlines enhanced performance criteria for new buses in the areas of durability, affordability, accessibility and customer amenities.*

*The group has since met with representatives of the major bus manufacturers to present the document and to hear the manufacturer's plans to comply with these requirements. The document has been passed on to the CUTA and the APTA for distribution to all Transit operators.*

*We support the development of standards across the industry to improve the quality of vehicles and better life cycle cost.*

*OC Transpo will use this document when we develop any specifications for new vehicle purchases and will continue to support this group in its efforts to encourage the bus industry to meet the needs of the Transit operators.*

***Five Year Plan***

- XIII-** That the Commission, management, unions and employee associations agree to work together to achieve the following targets by the year 2003:

- A Ridership of 120 rides per capita (an 11.1% increase), or 84 million annual rides (a 19% increase).
- A. Carrying 37 passengers per hour of service (a 4.5% increase).
- C. Reducing average hourly operating costs to \$65.01 per 40 foot bus hour and \$74.53 per articulated bus hour, measured in 1997 dollars (a 7.1% decrease).

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This target assumes fleet renewal will proceed, and that the new generation of low floor buses will have maintenance costs comparable to the older buses once the “bugs” have been worked out, and may therefore require longer than 5 years to fully achieve.

- D. Achieving fare revenue of \$1.10 per passenger carried, measured in 1997 dollars (a 3.5% decrease).

***Management’s Response***

*These targets represent our goals and challenges. They are ambitious and we are committed to achieving them. They will form a key part of our 5 Year plan. However we will need to make realistic estimations of the effects on our costs and efficiency of some of the elements in our future plan. For example:*

- *accessibility requirements of the 5 Year Plan reduce the number of seats per bus, thereby increasing the required frequency on routes and increasing the number of buses required;*
- *reliable routes require more time, and therefore more buses.*

- XIV-** That OC Transpo review these targets every two years, revising the targets as necessary to reflect changing circumstances (including bus renewal and new bus experience), evolving benchmarks and best practices and inflation rates.

***Management’s Response***

*It is important that these targets be realistic and we will revise them to reflect changing circumstances every 2 years.*

- XV-** That the revised Service Design Guidelines be adopted, including the 25% minimum revenue: cost ratio.

***Management’s Response***

*A minimum cost recovery target was approved by the Transit Commission on June 9<sup>th</sup>, 1999. It is important that we serve the maximum number of passengers by reinforcing routes with high ridership.*

- XVI-** That the proposed Route Structure be adopted as the basis for Transplan public consultations and modifications as required before implementation.

***Management's Response***

*The route structure improvements recommended in the OC Transpo Comprehensive Review are being addressed in Transplan 99 and Transplan 2000.*

*Transplan 99 concentrates on the portion of the service area within the Greenbelt while Transplan 2000 will largely address areas outside the Greenbelt.*

*The new route structure will make travel by transit more attractive through the provision of faster, simpler routes, the reduction of transfers and the alignment of service to better reflect today's and tomorrow's travel patterns.*

- XVII-** That the National Capital Commission be urged to make the portion of Colonel By Drive between Hogs Back and Carleton University available for transit service to improve service to the university.

***Management's Response***

*This is an important issue for providing service to Carleton University. Negotiations are ongoing with National Capital Commission staff to secure the use of Colonel By Drive for at least some of OC Transpo's service to Carleton University. However, for this year a route design which avoids using the driveway but still provides significant benefits to Carleton University will be implemented.*

- XVIII-** That the transit priority initiatives identified be considered for inclusion in RMOC capital budgets over the next 5 years.

***Management's Response***

*The Transit Priority Task Force is working to make effective transit priority measures a reality. So far the Region has seen the implementation of shoulder bus lanes, queue jumps, traffic signal priorities and other enhancements. Work focused on securing a higher level of transit priority in the Queensway corridor between the Woodroffe corridor and Moodie Drive and in the Woodroffe corridor from Baseline Station to Fallowfield Road is the top priority, followed by enhancements in the east-west corridor along Baseline Road. One of the elements of the Task Force's work plan is a public awareness campaign to demonstrate the benefits of transit priorities to all users of the transportation system, not just bus users.*

- XIX-** That OC Transpo move forward on implementation of a smart card based fare collection system, Global Positioning System vehicle location and control system, enhanced customer information initiatives and traffic signal priority systems as outlined.

***Management's Response***

*GPS will be installed on buses in 1999/2000 to enhance service control and improve reliability. The next major smart system initiative will be an electronic fare system. In this area technology has moved rapidly so that now smart cards combining both the contactless chip required for short boarding times on transit and the contact chip required for secure financial transactions are available.*

*This is in the work plan for 2000 /2002 and will be included in the 5 Year Plan. Other areas where we will be using technology to improve services to the public include public information, with automated trip planning via the Internet and transit priorities, where vehicle sensors will be used to provide traffic signal preemption for buses.*

- XX-** That a comprehensive demand management system be implemented for Para Transpo services, including:

- A. Eligibility to be determined in three categories:
1. Eligible for all trips, all the time.
  2. Eligible only when accessible fixed routes service not available.
  3. Eligible sometimes, based on variable medical condition, weather or physical barriers.

***Management's Response***

*Eligibility will be reviewed to ensure that, as many trips as possible will be accommodated by low floor buses. This will lead to the revision of the application form to reflect the three recommended categories of eligibility over the next 3 years.*

*We will propose re-registering Para Transpo customers allowing for an appeals process which could include an additional evaluation from a health care professional other than the applicant's doctor*

- B. Certification applications be accepted from any medical practitioner, but OC Transpo retain the right to have its own practioner review applications and/or examine applicants as required.

***Management's Response***

*This will be investigated as part of the eligibility study (above).*

- C. Fare incentives/disincentives to encourage use of the fixed route system.

***Management's response***

*Over 1999/2000, Para Transpo will propose implementing fare incentives/disincentives to encourage the use of OC Transpo's fixed route system whenever possible. Effective June 1, 1999 OC Transpo's Seniors' Pass was reduced from \$28.00 to \$19.99 for the remainder of this year. Para Transpo has continued to accept the lower cost Seniors' Pass but with an additional top-up of one ticket or \$1.25.*

*This will maintain Para Transpo revenue and should reduce the demand for service from customers who can use regular transit.*

*The Accessible Transit Advisory Committee has been developing proposals for changes in ParaTranspo fares which will also assist in managing demand. These will be brought forward with a staff recommendation in the fall of 1999 for implementation later in the year or in early 2000.*

- D. Travel training (in use of fixed route system) for registrants.

***Management's Response***

*In 2000 we will introduce Travel/Mobility training on regular fixed route service for Para Transpo existing and potential clients. Information on accessible buses/routes would be provided as well as assistance in trip planning. Para Transpo would work closely with regular transit to ensure appropriate training/assistance is available. This service could be provided by OC staff and /or volunteers and/or purchased services from mobility specialists.*

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- XXI-** That Para Transpo purchase some services from cabs (including accessible cabs as available) when necessary to serve scheduled trips that existing resources cannot service, and the Region encourage the development of an accessible cab industry.

***Management's Response***

*We will investigate the feasibility of purchasing some services from cabs to cover trips that existing resources cannot handle. This will be investigated in 1999 and in early 2000.*

- XXII-** That the mobility management framework be established within the region with a mandate for managing the mobility of the elderly and disabled community, working with Para Transpo and other community transportation services.

- A. The mobility management framework should identify the transportation requirements that exist within the community and develop a model for meeting them, together with realistic cost estimates and a proposal for cost sharing.
- B. Para Transpo should assist in the planning process, and meet needs beyond its current mandate on a cost recovery basis.

***Management's Response***

*We will investigate the feasibility of setting up a mobility management framework which could be used as a referral system, using a combination of public, volunteer, conventional and specialized transit services to meet the transportation needs of persons with disabilities within the Region. Through a consultant study later this year, we would want to identify the transportation requirements that exists within the Region and develop a model for meeting them, together with realistic cost estimates and a proposal for cost sharing.*

- XXIII-** That OC Transpo continue efforts to improve the real and perceived safety of transit use all times of day. These steps should include:

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- A- creative use of all its mobile resources (including security personnel, inspectors, maintenance staff, etc.) And add additional resources as available to enhance the “uniformed presence” on transitway stations, particularly in the evening.
  - B- expand the use of audio-visual equipment at transitway stations to improve response, enforcement and customer service perception.
  - C- conduct safety audits of transitway stations and surrounding areas.

### ***Management’s Response***

*An active program is in place to improve passenger security. The presence of uniformed security personnel on the Transitway will be increased through the hiring of eight additional municipal Transit Law Enforcement staff. This will allow more “walk and ride” programs to be implemented. By the end of 1999, we will also see the implementation of video monitoring at several Transitway stations and at Place d’Orléans Park and Ride lot. Closed circuit television cameras will be installed at St. Laurent, Blair and Place d’Orléans Transitway stations with remote monitoring by staff located in OC Transpo’s control room. The success of these cameras in reducing incidents and enhancing safety will be evaluated in order to determine the rate of further installations.*

*Another area where emphasis will be placed in 1999 is on the reduction of fare fraud. The Comprehensive Review working group on driver empowerment concluded that there is an urgent need to improve the integrity of the fare system. To this end, six additional fare inspectors have been hired. A task force has been formed to review and improve fare collection policies and procedures and to develop an effective program to reduce fraud through improved customer information and driver training.*

*Plans for 1999 this area also include working with the Women’s Action Centre Against Violence to develop a “blue print” for safety audits which could be used in all Transitway stations. The initial pilot project, which will involve interested community organizations, will take place at Blair Station and will set the stage for a safety audit strategy for the future.*

- XXIV-** That OC Transpo initiate an aggressive marketing and communications strategy, including:

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- A. appointment of an advertising agency of record.
  - B. strengthened marketing capability.
  - C. regular market and customer satisfaction research.
  - D. sustained establishment of a position market identity for OC Transpo
  - E. marketing campaigns integrated with service improvements
  - F. enhance links with key partners, employers, educational institutions, major shopping and entertainment venues and municipal government aimed at increasing transit use
  - G. enhance public information services

### ***Management's Response***

*An advertising agency of record was approved by the Commission in May 1999. We are currently developing a marketing strategy to support the achievement of the Commission's short and long-term goals. This strategy will be based on market research, including OC Transpo's annual attitude and other surveys. Marketing initiatives such as the introduction of the DayPass, a time-period transfer and reduced senior fares to increase ridership have been introduced in June 1999 and will be supported and monitored through 1999 and beyond. Select hotels and the National Capital Info Centre are already on board to promote the DayPass.*

*Business development, partnership and strategic alliance will be key to our success. Work has already begun with major employers such as Nortel. Under development is a payroll deduction program for transit to be offered to employers in the Region in 1999. Discussion are taking place with key employers.*

*Closer working relations with school boards, universities and colleges with supporting marketing initiatives focusing on the students market had begun in 1999 in efforts to address this key market. Extending the annual pass to secondary students and enabling full-time college and university students to use student passes throughout the summer months are fare policy initiatives designed to provide better service to students while increasing ridership on OC Transpo.*

*Informed and supportive employees are critical to successful implementation of mandate therefore a strong internal communications plan is being designed to*

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*reinforce the role of our employees as transit ambassadors. In a 1999 pilot, we plan to use front-line employees to promote public transit in neighborhoods designated as potential growth areas for service utilization.*

*OC Transpo's 1999/2000 service plan will be a turning point for the Commission and a marketing and communications program is being designed to ensure smooth and successful rollout of new services. Public information system improvements such as automated trip planning are planned for 2000/2001. In 1999, work is underway to enhance the 560 automated schedule information program for our customers as well as to increase the number of intranet touch screens for employees in the garages. Upgraded telidon screens and bus stop information as well as touch screens for our customers are all part of our objective to provide accurate, accessible transit to residents.*

- XXV-** That OC Transpo implement changes in the processing and management of customer complaints to reduce turnaround times and improve responsiveness.

***Management's Response***

*We are dealing with the backlog of customer complaints and will soon focus on redesigning the complaints handling process to reduce turnaround times and improve responsiveness.*

***Process***

- I-** That the Steering Committee continue to meet over the next year to review the implementation process and provide a forum for problem resolution.

***Management's Response***

*The Steering Committee will meet at the call of the Chair.*

- II-** That the Working Groups continue with adequate resources to the completion of their respective mandates, including the resources required for re-engineering of selected maintenance activities.

***Management's Response***

*Working Groups represent the commitment of our management, our employees and our unions to work together to achieve the Commission's goals and objectives. The Working Groups formed to date have achieved significant successes and we will continue this teamwork as we move forward. For example, route scheduling Working Groups have been very successful in improving schedules on some routes and will be continued as a major part of the on-going work plan in Planning and Development Division. Our two largest Divisions- Transportation and Equipment- have started major "re-engineering" processes to improve reliability, customer service and cost-effectiveness.*

*Resources required will be included in future budgets.*