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DATE 18 March 1999

TO/DEST. Co-ordinator Transportation Committee

FROM/EXP. Acting Deputy Commissioner
 Environment and Transportation Department

SUBJECT/OBJET **BIKE RACKS ON BUSES - PILOT PROJECT**

DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION

That the Transportation Committee approve a pilot project to assess the transportation demand management benefits of bike racks on buses.

BACKGROUND

This is a joint report prepared by the Mobility Services Division of the Environment and Transportation Department and OC Transpo.

At its meeting of 27 January 1999, the Transit Services Committee directed OC Transpo staff to develop a plan for a demonstration project for bicycles on buses for 1999. The Co-ordinator, Transit Services Committee (TSC), has advised that the pilot project was approved by the TSC on 24 Mar 99.

This report recommends a demonstration project on OC Transpo route 97 starting as soon as possible and finishing at the end of October, when daylight saving time ends.

The project would enable the use of bike racks to be evaluated in terms of:

- usage by customers
- bus operator acceptance
- safety
- maintenance requirements
- reliability

DISCUSSION

The desirability of allowing cyclists to use transit for part of their trip has long been recognized world-wide as a way of promoting the Transportation Demand Management philosophy, although the United States and Canada have only recently been developing bikes-on-buses programs on a widespread basis. OC Transpo staff have many concerns regarding operations and equipment issues which need to be addressed in a pilot project before we would recommend the installation of bike racks on a larger scale. A pilot project with a structured evaluation program will allow concerns to be identified and addressed.

It is recommended that the scope of the pilot project be to examine the impact of front-mounted bicycle racks on one route. Experience to date in the United States and Canada can be reviewed to assist in the development of bus operator instructions, maintenance procedures and a public education and communication plan. We have already established contact with staff in places where some of the more successful programs are in operation to obtain copies of their materials.

Route Selection

It is recommended that the pilot project be implemented for regular service on route 97, which is well situated in terms of the access it could provide for cyclists. This route travels from the Kanata Town Centre to the South Keys Transitway Station, travelling through the Central Business District on Albert and Slater Streets. It serves stations connected to the Ottawa River Parkway bicycle paths, provides convenient access to downtown Ottawa, the University of Ottawa, Algonquin College Campus at Lees Avenue, Billings Bridge and Greenboro/South Keys. Regular service on that route requires 21 buses.

Changes are proposed for route 97 as part of Transplan 99. The revised route would operate more frequently and travel from the Kanata Town Centre to the Airport. It is unlikely that the number of bus racks purchased for today's route 97 service could cover all service on the expanded route. However, it is likely that it will be possible to identify relatively frequent trips on the new route which would be covered by bike rack equipped buses.

Operational Issues

The speed and frequency with which the racks will be used are key issues, in terms of the impact on schedule reliability. Another area which will need to be monitored and evaluated is the impact on Albert and Slater Street operations where high volumes of buses operate in near-capacity conditions.

OC Transpo also indicates that a statement of the responsibilities of operators and a training program will need to be developed.

Other things that are of concern are the possibility of passengers forgetting their bicycles or being unable to work out how to use the rack.

Maintenance Issues

Sending a rack-equipped bus out onto all the regular runs on the route is the responsibility of OC Transpo. They advise that because the runs on routes can be scheduled from any of our three garages, there will need to be more rack-equipped buses than there are runs. Twice as many racks will be ordered as there are regular runs on route 97.

The buses not used in the “designated bike rack routes” will be placed into service on any run at any time. The appearance of buses on non-designated bike rack routes will require an education campaign to explain that although the current bus is bike rack equipped there is no promise that a bike rack equipped bus will be provided for the return trip.

The amount of effort required to attach the racks and ensure that they remain securely in place and functioning, and their impact on storage and on other equipment, are issues which OC Transpo will need to assess.

Storage and handling of bikes inadvertently left on the racks will also have to be considered.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The Regional Cycling Advisory Group will be asked to support the program by using their network to communicate information about the project to the cycling community. Using the racks safely will be a message which needs to be very clear. We will also be asking for their input on assessing the success of the pilot.

We will review publicity and timetables from programs elsewhere to develop information for the pilot project.

CONFORMITY TO THE TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN

The objective of increasing transit and bicycle ridership through this multi-modal approach is consistent with the objectives of the Regional Transportation Demand Management Program and it is proposed that this is how it should be funded.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

This project is estimated to cost about \$50,000, the majority of which will be spent on purchasing 42 bike racks at approximately \$1,000 each.

Funds are available in the Transportation Demand Management Account 912-33413.

*Approved by
Doug Brousseau*

EXHIBIT 1

