



Halifax Regional Municipality Budget 2010-11 Snapshot TRANSIT

Making improvements to the municipality's transportation network, including transit, is one of Regional Council's focus areas. The 2010/11 budget allows for significant transit expansion. This investment, including the completion of the new Ragged Lake Transit Centre, will help to build on the recent success of Metro Transit.

Five-Year Operational Plan

In 2009, Regional Council approved a five-year Strategic Operations Plan. Metro Transit has been guided by this plan in service recommendations for the upcoming year, and has applied the associated service standards to existing services to ensure all transit service is operating efficiently and effectively. The resulting efficiencies have been reinvested in new services to meet changing customer and community demands.

Service Enhancements

During 2009/10, Metro Transit delivered more than 790,000 scheduled annual service hours, including 729,600 hours of bus service, 9,300 hours of ferry service, and 51,300 hours of Access-A-Bus service. Service enhancements planned for 2010/11 include re-organizing service in the Portland Street corridor, reducing passenger overloads, increasing Accessible Low Floor service, and shifting service to utilize the new Ragged Lake Transit Centre. These changes will be made possible through fleet expansion, scheduling efficiencies resulting from new technology, and operational improvements as a result of adding the new Ragged Lake Centre, due to become fully operational in late August.

Fleet Expansion

The addition of ten expansion vehicles in 2010/11 will allow for an increase of more than 570,000 new route kilometres and 30,000 annual service hours. All new conventional vehicles purchased will be low floor accessible, including articulated buses. These new vehicles will allow Metro Transit to have 56 percent of all routes fully accessible. In addition, the Access-A-Bus service will add a number of new vehicles. The additional Access-A-Bus vehicles will allow for an increase of 13,080 annual service hours, representing the first significant increase to this vital service for some time.



Transit Area Rate

Transit is one of Halifax Regional Council's top priorities, so the municipality needs to ensure that the service is adequately funded. As part of the vote in support of the 2009/10 budget, Council approved a new transit tax rate structure. The approach of funding transit expansion through these rates, rather than the general tax rate, was approved by Council to take both regional and local transit benefits into account. Under this structure, revenue is raised using a combination of an assessment-based regional transit tax as well as a local transit rate, paid by all properties within a one-kilometre walking distance to any Metro Transit stop. It is important to note that when this change in structure was made, the impact was revenue neutral on an HRM-wide basis.

The draft 2010/11 budget proposes to generate \$10 million in revenue through an increase in the Transit area rate. This will be achieved through Transit Regional Rate increase of 17% (\$0.008 added to the regional rate) and a Transit Local Rate increase of 23% (\$0.02 added to the local rate). The impact of the rates on the annual tax bill of an average home (fully capped assessment of \$180,200) is approximately \$55.

