

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



## HRM's Fast Ferry (HarbourLink) Project

HRM's Five-Year Transit Plan approved by Regional Council in April, 2008 includes funding for initiation of HarbourLink, a project which would create high speed ferry transit between Bedford and Halifax. Development of additional ferry route destinations around the harbour may follow in future phases.

Further work is underway to design the project, but it is known that the service will begin with two ferries large enough to carry between 250 and 350 passengers and travel at a speed between 24 and 30 knots (45 to 55 km/h) or about four times the speed of our existing ferries.

### How much do the ferries cost?

*Many passenger ferries of this size are built in North America and around the world every year so the costs can be accurately predicted. Each ferry is expected to cost between six and eight million dollars to construct.*

### Wouldn't that money be better spent on buses?

*Some of HRM's commuting trips, like Bedford-to-downtown, are now generating enough trips that more economic means of carrying high volumes of passengers must be considered. The daily cost of operating transit services far outweighs the initial cost of purchasing buses or ferries. There are significant economies of scale to be realized by carrying high volumes of passengers on a large ferry compared to carrying that same volume on several buses. Our data suggests that the operating cost per seat for fast ferry is less than one-half of the cost by bus.*

### Where will the ferries be built?

*There are shipyards within Nova Scotia that are capable of building the type of ferry being considered for this project. Tendering of the vessel construction will be done in such a way that Nova Scotia shipbuilders will be well-positioned to participate in the construction of the ferries.*

### Where will the Bedford Ferry terminal be?

*Although an exact site for the Bedford Ferry Terminal has not been finalized, it will be located somewhere in Mill Cove. The value of a ferry terminal as an anchor for growth at Mill Cove was recognized by the Community Vision for the Bedford Waterfront.*

### Are there speed limits in the harbour?

*There are no speed limits on the harbour, but all vessels must operate in a safe and prudent manner. High speed ferries of this type operate in harbours throughout the world. At top operating speed, the catamaran design raises the ferry up out of the water resulting in reduced wake generation, reduced drag, and quick stops once the power is cut.*

### What about ice and fog?

*Ferries like this operate in all kinds of climates and can be designed to handle the icing expected during a hard winter. The ferries will be fitted with special equipment, used in other parts of the world, that permit safe operation under low visibility conditions.*

### Will container ships get in the way?

*Some simulation modeling has already been conducted with the Navy, the Port Authority and the Harbour Pilots. This modeling has determined that when a container ship is passing through "The Narrows" two fast ferries can pass safely, one on either side of the container ship.*

### What will the fare be?

*The fare for riding the ferry will be set just before its operation begins. The ferry will be an integral part of the Metro Transit network so the fare will be consistent with other higher-order regional services and, like our existing ferries, transferring to other parts of the transit network will be permitted. To ensure that the number of passengers carried by the ferries is maximized, passenger demand will have an influence on the fare that is charged.*



# MORE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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### Where will the ferry passengers come from? How will they get to the ferry terminal?

*It is expected that ferry passengers will walk or bicycle to the ferry terminal, get dropped off, transfer from a bus serving nearby neighborhoods, or "park-and-ride".*

*The ferry terminal will be located within walking distance of many current residents of Bedford. Equally important is the potential for new residential units in the next phase of the Bedford waterfront development. These are residents who will choose to locate in this neighborhood knowing that high quality ferry service to downtown is in place. It is very likely that a high percentage of residents who will make this location choice will do so because they can make use of the ferry in their trip to work.*

*An emphasis will be placed on making access to the ferry terminal convenient and safe for both walking and bicycling. Connections will be made to the waterfront walking trail and the bicycle lanes on the Bedford Highway.*

*The overall project includes funding to improve transit connections on both ends of the ferry trip. The aim is to maximize the number of people who will find the ferry a valuable part of a combined transit trip. The Downtown Transit Shuttle project envisages hybrid-diesel electric buses waiting for the arrival of each ferry at the downtown terminal to shuttle them quickly to major employers such as the universities, hospitals, and dockyard. New collector bus routes will connect existing communities like Bedford and Rockingham and new communities like Bedford South and Bedford West to the terminal.*

*Park-and-ride traffic will be managed in a way that provides convenience for the customer without saturating the Bedford waterfront lands with parking. A large, no-cost park-and-ride lot will be constructed on Hammonds Plains Road near the Highway 102 interchange. This park-and-ride lot will be serviced regularly by shuttle buses that will be timed to match the arrival and departure of each ferry. Some parking will be provided at the terminal, but it will be limited and will have a daily and hourly charge.*

### Are other fast ferry routes possible?

*Success of the Bedford fast ferry would certainly generate interest in developing additional ferry routes. There are a number of potential destinations around the harbour for future service. The blue dots on the map to the right show possible future locations for ferry service. Market surveys will be undertaken soon to gauge the viability of these routes.*



For more information on HRM's transit planning visit [www.halifax.ca](http://www.halifax.ca)  
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