

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Municipality of the District of Lunenburg, the Towns of Bridgewater, Lunenburg, and Mahone Bay (collectively called the Region) commissioned HDR | iTRANS to conduct a *Public Transportation Feasibility Study*. The early stakeholder consultations clearly revealed that there was a need for a publicly funded transportation service. To determine what form the service should take was the key objective of the study.

The next step was to identify and estimate the resources required to provide a public transportation service. In effect, this will allow the Councils of the four aforementioned Municipalities to determine if an investment in Public Transportation is warranted within their jurisdiction and to confirm their participation in a subsequent *Implementation Plan*.

The study follows a methodology that begins with identifying high level order of magnitude service and costs via a peer review, a description of the types of services that could be considered, and the corresponding vehicles that can be used. The study continues with an assessment of four service models against six criteria: demand, governance, cost, marketing, environmental and economic benefits. And it concludes with an objective evaluation, leading to the selection of a preferred service model.

Through the process identified, the following service framework was supported:

- **Fixed Route Service:** A scheduled fixed route service, regardless of the routing, better meets the Region's requirements than a demand response service.
- **System Are Coverage:** Greater service area coverage via a fixed route service with multiple routes best allows the Region to provide mobility to those seeking transportation.
- **Demand:** At full service implementation in Year 5, approximately 45,000 passengers per annum will board a bus or van in the Region. This equates to an average of 8 passengers per vehicle per hour (greater in the peak hours than the off-peak hours).
- **Governance:** The availability of Provincial or Federal funds will determine the Region's preferred governance model. Without funding, it is most cost effective to contract the provision and operation of vehicles to a private operator. With funding, vehicles can be purchased by the Region and operated by a private operator.
 - Regardless of which governance model is selected, a service agreement and financial agreement is required to outline the roles and responsibilities of all participating Municipalities.
- **Cost:** In the worst case scenario, the Net Present Value of capital and net operating cash flows over 5 years would equate to negative \$900,000, This figure would be lessened should Provincial or Federal funding become available.

8. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the preceding assessment of the four (4) service models against six (6) criteria, the following conclusions and recommendations are made.

8.1 Conclusions

Based on the preceding study, the following conclusions are made:

- Communities across Canada with similar populations and service areas commit resources annually to provide public transportation to service their community.
- Stakeholder consultations revealed that the status quo – no transit service – has a negative impact on the quality of life for many individuals from varying demographics and groups.
- Feasibility Sub-committee identified that the primary service philosophy is the provision of mobility to those seeking transportation.
- Multiple and varying transit service concepts are currently in practice across Canada, but a conventional transit, bus, pre-booked service and fixed route shared ride taxi service are most applicable in the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg
- Multiple new and used vehicle options exist, but a community bus or van is most applicable given the type of services designed.
- Demand for public transit service is approximately between 45,000 and 50,000 for the fixed route service and 16,000 for the pre-booked service.
- Municipal cost sharing service agreements can be based on total population and service area population.
- Multiple governance models exist, however each has a cost implication.
- Cost of a private ownership and operation transit service is the most cost effective governance model.
- Multiple marketing promotions and programs exist and can be implemented strategically.
- Each transit service model has a positive impact on the environment as CAC, fuel, and GHG are reduced; the model with the greatest demand (Model A) will have the greatest impact.
- Economic cost and benefits analysis shows that a private ownership and private operation governance model generates a positive NPV over a 15 year evaluation in all but Model C.

8.2 Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of this study, the Feasibility Sub-committee should recommend service Model D as the preferred alternative. Further, upon confirmation from the Joint Transit Committee and the Region's respective Councils that a transit system is feasible, the following recommendations are made:

- Begin discussions with Provincial and Federal agencies to determine the availability of capital funding for new vehicle purchases
- Prepare an Implementation Plan to identify the appropriate governance model (depending on funding) and service agreements, precise routing, schedule, bus stops and shelters, marketing program, and revised Policy Framework including Performance Goals