



"Promoting Affordable & Accessible Public Transit"
CITIZENS FOR PUBLIC TRANSIT SOCIETY'S
AGM 2011 Round Tables Flip Sheet Notes

COMMUNICATIONS TABLE

To Whom: - Government;
- Users;
- Providers.

How: - Newspaper, Radio, etc;
- Public;
- Mock-up of bus to display in communities;
- Testimonials: - Stories of persons with limited mobility;
- From valley residents,
↳ x – section of ridership;
- Comparison to Fire Dept. as essential service (E/S);
- Environmental impact,
↳ Green Buses;
↳ Reduced emissions.
- Essential Service,
↳ Persons with dementia;
↳ Hitch hikers;
↳ Seniors;
↳ School kids – after school program.

Attitudes: - Cost of private transportation;
- Lunenburg County Oldest in Canada;
- Ask leading question,
↳ Value of car vs small tax;
- Car culture,
↳ Not dependant;
↳ Freedom.
- Need to help people support public good even if not used,
↳ Value to others.
- Cost to run car,
↳ Check Alzheimer site.
- Cost benefit analysis;
- Increase segment of people, to be more part of community.
- How to change driving public,
↳
- People can stay in home longer,
↳ Continue social life.
- Cost ↓ to health care.

HOW TO GET THE MESSAGE OUT

- Essential Service (E/S);
- Interest in bus service ↑;
- Effective ways to Communicate,
 - eMail to residents,
 - ↳ Ask if bus an E/S;
 - ↳ Must be titled interesting;
 - ↳ Bulletin title articles.
- No direct mail ⇒ waste / disinterests (*include in utility bills*);
- Target mail can work in some areas (*include in utility bills*);
- Facebook;
- Constant message / consistent message;
- Free bus this summer;
- Radio (*very important to Lunenburg residence*);
- Eastlink free service;
- ~ 30% do not have access to car;
- Target message to seniors, to schools, family support centres, churches, etc.;
- Cost of car operation;
- Location of potential riders are along main bus route;
- Use web site;
- Testimonials from x – section,
 - ↳ Videos, vignettes;
 - Videos, etc.,
 - ↳ Summer activities - getting kids back and forth to activities.
- How to change attitudes,
 - Fitter population;
 - Reduce health care;
 - Safer roads.
- Bus social activities for riders;
- Make area more attractive to newcomers;
- Good for community;
- Testimonial to include,
 - ↳ Real estate agents;
 - ↳ Business leaders ⇒ need to attract employees.
- School ⇔ Jobs – students need jobs;
- Premier of NS opening transit system in Inverness;
- Where are riders going?
 - ↳ “You could be here on a bus”.
- Get sister town testimonials,
 - ↳ Lunenburg and Riverport (*Do they have buses*);
 - ↳ Mahone Bay and Lunenburg (*Do they have buses*);
 - ↳ Bridgewater and Mahone Bay (*Do they have buses*);
 - ↳ Lunenburg and Bridgewater (*Do they have buses*).

- Communication functions where people aren't already supporters (*eg. Fishermen's Breakfast*);
 - Naysayers cannot see the situation that prevent personal mobility;
 - Contacting members to be volunteers at special events;
 - Petitions, sample letters, mail-in cards*
 - ↳ * I support public transit for the following reasons:
(*a list of e.g. 10 reasons that people can check off*);
 - Storytelling;
 - Posters;
 - Ask questions – How am I going to get a job? etc.;
 - Target messages to different groups – teens, seniors, etc.;
 - Name the bus?
-

Community Initiatives Table

Group One:

What would you do?

- Meetings;
- Attend and present on behalf;
- Spread word to neighbours / others;
- Community events,
 - Growing Green.
- Sign-on sheet
 -
- Information;
- Seniors helping Seniors,
 - Experience with reluctance to seek help.
- Figure out how to leverage organizations with similar agenda,
 - Like Seniors helping Seniors and Mahone Bay Centre survey going forward, need inclusion of question, RE: Transit.
- Buy-in of centres of influence,
 - Bridgewater Development Association, Chamber of Commercies, Service Groups, Congregations, High School, Drumlin Hills, Fire Departments, etc. (*Task is to present to them*).
- Letter Campaign (*Template Letter*);
- Resolve issue of perception that transit system will “feed Bridgewater”;
- Facebook page,
 - Promote / Repost testimonies of need for transit – Needs work.

How could public transit serve your community?

Also for people who have vehicles!

- Retirement demographics – include (Need);
- Seniors Wheels / Community Transit currently very busy;
- Transit might not meet people's mobility needs – within towns;
- Could be used to commute to work,
 - Issues of schedule, culture of independence, duration of trip,
 - ↪ Culture shift, need for talking, demo bus ride;
 - ↪ Gauge incr. to property values;
 - ↪
- Buy in – is there a need for specifics to get people interested;
- Role of CPT – To facilitate tangible action.

How would you participate?

- ~ Try to take bus once in awhile to get ride of second car ⇒ promote as a concept!
- ~ No Recruits!

How would a bus service the needs of your area?

- ~ Works for people on fixed schedule (work);
- ~ Works for older people – more independent;
- ~ Parents would appreciate ⇒ stop being chauffeurs (timing important!);
- ~ Keep people living in rural communities ⇒ and work in town.

1. Need to know people are interested

a. Find groups – Sell idea to them!

b. Children who are transported privately to school – Will they use the bus?

2. Scheduling – need – specific information

- Speaker;
- Letters to the Editor.

3. Use the bus for:

a. The need for specific tests, i.e. Fisherman's Memorial;

b. Attend concerts, etc. in other areas.

Suggestion: Fluctuation schedules!

OPERATIONS/FINANCIAL TABLE

- Do the advantages of public transit support the additional cost to homeowners who must pay for a part of this service in the way of an additional Municipal tax (e.g., an estimate of \$100 per family in some communities);
- What would be a reasonable rate for bus fare (e.g., \$3.50 Kings Transit)?
- What would the hours and days of Operating a public transit service support?
- What is your view of the safety issue with regard to “flagging”???

Question #1:

- Users happy to pay;
- Payment model should be flexible based on people's ability to pay;
- Non-users would have to pay more – system must be supported equally by all citizens;
- Changes in demographics, and increase in fuel costs suggest advantage will outweigh costs;
- Cost need to be widely shared by all stakeholders;
- Difficult to sell Public Transit to Public who do not use it, or don't have access to it,
↳ PPL along the route benefit the most.

Question #2:

- Must be affordable fare;
- Fare could be tied to distance (e.g. shorter legs cost less);
- \$5.00 fare would be reasonable;
- King's Transit – 30% costs covered by fares, and 60% covered by municipal units

SECOND ROUND TABLE, notes by Doug Reid

Question #1:

Do the advantages of Transit support the (disadvantage of) additional costs to homeowners?

- **The full picture needs to be known** about the advantages of having transit: there are costs savings to the general public (homeowners) - savings for the health system, transportation and justice were identified - these savings are not put up as figures when discussing transit, instead there is only identification of the new tax burden on the household - this isn't the full picture...
- People looking only at the cost side of the equation because they do not know / no one has calculated for them the outlined benefits as a dollar figure. The "costs" factor for transit seems one-sided.
- Positive effects of transit cut across different segments (re-iteration of above - note of health & social services, costs to individual, costs to public). A number of the benefits (advantages) are seen as intangible - there are quality of life components that are not accountable directly into a \$1.00, like the cost of a bus - i.e. like the fact that riding a bus makes interaction with various neighbours in the community more likely, rather than people now each having their own cars, and no interaction. (Learning that a community is made up of diverse people, etc) There is also the benefits of better connecting the various communities - that advantage isn't costed as a specific economic benefit, but it has an intangible benefit in community development, etc.
- Some of the advantages / intangibles are considered to be of benefit to provincial government services and savings, more removed from the local services.

- It is recognized that not all rural communities still have local groceries, nor are they provided same level of public services (health, schools, etc) or have the same opportunities for employment - you have to go outside your own community to get to these items - without a transit system, this means it is often the people who move, so the small communities continue to get smaller and smaller.
- Makes it so “You can’t live here, if you can’t afford to live here” is the outcome > people living in communities where they have to be able to also afford a car as well, to get to work/services//etc as part of the cost of living - this can drive people away from certian places, go to live in those communities / cities that can offer transit services.

Question #2:

What would be appropriate/reasonable for the user to pay, and for the taxpayer to pay for the service?

- One participant felt this was the wrong question to ask, as it re-iterated (point made above) that it gets directly to the idea that there is a new ‘cost’ to the taxpayer discrete from the benefits (above) of transit. People (taxpayer) will not want to pay as much, if you put the Question to them in that context.
- Another participant highlighted that people are willing to pay different amounts, based on where transit fits in their perception as a public service - i.e. the difference between when it is seen as a “we could have transit” versus it being “we should have transit” versus “we must have transit” - the higher up the pyramid you go, the more people (and perhaps more amount) people are willing to pay through tax.
- The efficiency of the bus system - its design, general use, what people it would look to service - would greatly impact the amount of funds that would need to be collected from the taxpayer - considered too difficult to try to break down without knowing more details first.
- Recognized point where having a fare set too high would diminish ridership, will on the other side, having a fare set too low won’t bring in much revenue from the users - there is a point to be identified somewhere where ridership will remain somewhat high.
- After discussion, there was some consensus at the table that identifying an “area rate” for those who lived on the specific bus route wasn’t as good an idea as having a more universal sharing of costs from all taxpayers - the sense was that someone right on the route, and someone 200m away, would both be allowed to use the system, so there wasn’t a sense that it was only a service to those directly on the route.
- The point was raised that determining how best to find the local funds to help pay for transit was sensitive, and could easily divide a community.
- Following the statement above: Agreement that “paying for transit” shouldn’t be seen as another way to divide the community, as there is already a lot of “inequity” in the tax collection system - example being that everyone pays for garbage pick-up through (different) assessed rates, so someone with a higher assessment is paying more for bags, even if they are putting fewer bags out, than someone else whose assessment is lower -

using a user pay system, or area rate system might lead to same issue being raised for other services being provided, acrimony between communities, etc..

- Seeing “Everybody pay” would acknowledge that transit is a public good - “everyone benefits” from having the system in our community, overall benefit to the region’s long term population.
- A question from a participant - what examination has there been of different governance - does it have to be a public system, maybe a public-private system might reduce the costs to the taxpayer. (*gentleman was directed to CPT website, study’s highlight of different models in iTRANS study.*)
- Consideration of working / cooperating with school board, so that there are students using transit rather than a school bus.
- Further partnerships to explore? >> Does HRM or Kings have surplus buses, second-hand buses that would work to reduce costs of providing transit system, trial buses?

Question #3:

Thoughts around the Safety Issue regarding flagging.

- Most (if not all who spoke up) speakers were not in favour of a flagging system, given concerns on safety. Accessibility issues and lack of space also cited. Considered there was a better chance for bus use if there were well marked pull-offs or park-n-ride locations in villages (convenience stores or church etc) along the rural routes - considered these spots would be seen as natural hubs / stops in any case.
-

Key Points from the Annual General Meeting

Citizens for Public Transit [C.P.T.]

February 23, 2010

Question A: *How does the lack of public transportation affect your life (or the lives of others that you know) in your community?*

Answer:

Public transportation is needed for:

- Travel to:
 - medical appointments
 - community activities
 - grocery store
 - employment
 - recreation facilities (new Recreation Centre, and the Fieldhouse, for example)
- The viability of Rural life. Transportation is a significant cost for rural families.

Who would use the service?

- ALL ages, but especially seniors, youth.
- Clients of Community Services

The Environment

- Reduce greenhouse gases.
- Need to encourage lifestyles without a car

Encourage Tourism

- Touring our beautiful area by bus
- Attending summer activities in the Towns (parking an issue)

Question B: *Given the core route proposed, please give your suggestions for a successful bus service:*

- **Important locations in your community that should have service...**
- **Whether service should be provided on weekends/evenings...**

Answer:

1. Bus stops:

Mahone Bay - post office and Save-Easy

Blockhouse

Maders Cove (intersection with Route #3)

Riverport - Community Centre

Rose Bay - store

Lunenburg - old post office, below monument

- Save Easy

First South - church

Feltzen South - restaurant

Indian Path Road - both ends

LaHave Ferry

Middle Lahave - churches

Upper Lahave - Junction of 332 and Crouses Settlement Rod

Dayspring - Fire Hall

- MARC

- Quikmart

Bridgewater - Hospital

- Community College and Justice Centre and Shopping Centre
- Cookville
- Drumlin Hills, and the Fieldhouse
- Hollingsworth and Glen Allan
- new Recreation Centre
- Rink
- schools (including Parkview)
- South Bridgewater (Shipyard Landing)
- Frenchys
- the Malls
- Michelin
- Bowater

2. Start small - system needs to show SUCCESS.
 - What is basic level of operation? Requires careful thought
3. Include bike racks on buses/at bus stops
4. Current Dial-a-Ride transportation systems not adequate, but could compliment fixed route
5. Accessibility of bus stops – a key question. “Flagging” could be dangerous, slow the service
6. Flexibility of schedule – allow for attendance at special events/evening events.
7. Money to support the service – will taxpayers be willing to pay an increase to support this? Competing priorities for municipal dollars.
8. Advertise the service well. Partner with businesses to promote service.
9. Bridgewater may need a designated bus within the service.

Question C: *As residents of Lunenburg County, what steps can we take to move this initiative forward?*

Answer:

1. Gather input – Survey community stakeholders
2. Gather needed data from other transit services. Provide solid facts to community. Anticipate questions.
3. Garner support – government, business, potential riders
4. A financial model is needed. Establish govt. dollars that are available.
5. Timing of the service is critical.