

Request for Decision City Council



Type of Decision									
Meeting Date		April 12, 2006				Report Date		April 3, 2006	
Decision Requested		X	Yes		No	Priority		x	High
		Direction Only				Type of Meeting		x	Open
									Closed

Report Title
Ridership Growth Strategy & Asset Management Plan Recommendations

Budget Impact & Policy Implication		Recommendation
x	This report has been reviewed by the Finance Division and the funding source has been identified.	
Initiatives recommended in this report will be financed through Provincial Gas Tax - Federal funding - Equipment Reserve Fund - Provincial Grants and current transit budget.		That Council endorses the first six actions resulting from the Growth Ridership Strategy and directs staff to proceed as identified in the report dated April 3, 2006.
Background Attached		Recommendation Continued

Recommended by the Department	Recommended by the C.A.O.
 Doug Naddrozny General Manager Growth & Development	 Mark Mieto Chief Administrative Officer

Date: April 3, 2006

Report Prepared By
 Roger Sauve Director of Transit

Division Review
Name Title

Report

February 2006, Transit staff along with consultants from Entra consulting and the Gooderham Group presented a Ridership Growth Strategy and an Asset Management plan to council. In order to continue receiving its portion of Provincial Gas Tax the City was required to approve the two plans in principal and submit them to the Ministry by March 31, 2006.

Council requested that staff return with recommendations for approval and direction. The following are the first strategies and initiatives staff believes will increase transit ridership.

1- Capital

Replace and rebuild transit buses as detailed in the transit capital plan. Ridership growth can be stimulated by ensuring that travel is safe, comfortable, accessible and environmentally friendly. Transit fleet must also be expanded to meet continued ridership growth. This item is covered under contract GDD06-01.

2- U-Pass.

Luc Norton, Laurentian University SGA president has confirmed that students have voted in favour of a Universal Pass. Staff must now enter into an agreement with the students and the University to determine service levels, pass types and administration of the program. If an agreement can be reached in time the program could start as soon as September 2006. A U-Pass program will significantly increase transit ridership and will require additional buses. Staff recommends that council authorise the general manager to negotiate an agreement with the University and the SGA. The final agreement will be brought back to council for approval.

3- Improvements to the Transit Terminal.

Part of the Ridership Growth Strategy identifies the need to provide a safe comfortable environment for passengers to access the transit system. This issues was raised by council at an earlier date. With over 10,000 people travelling through the terminal on a daily basis it is very difficult to maintain a high level of cleanliness and security. Customers have indicated that they would more likely to use the transit system more often if improvements were made to the terminal. Staff recommends that security and maintenance be increased at the transit terminal and that cost be financed through Provincial Gas tax as improvements will increase ridership.

4- Automatic Vehicle Location

Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) is an electronic system allowing transit operations to identify and track the location of each transit bus. An AVL system can provide many service enhancements such as transit signal priority, real-time information, customer information online and route reporting. Realtime information would be invaluable to transit inspectors and information staff. Data collected will allow staff to track schedule adherence, speed, stops and idle time. Staff recommend that an AVL system be purchased, installed and maintained using Provincial Gas Tax as the system will generate ridership growth. Staff will return to council for approval of the Request For Proposal when a vendor is selected

Date: April 3, 2006

5- Fare Collection System

After reviewing the report prepared by the Gooderham Group, staff recommends moving forward with the purchase of a new fare collection system and Smart Card Technology. However staff recommends purchasing the new system in phases with the Smart Card Technology purchased in year two. Council has approved the purchase of the New Fare collection system through the 2005 budget process. Staff will return to council for approval of the Request For Proposal when a vendor is selected. A new system will allow staff and council to implement new fare strategies which will have as a goal to increase ridership. This project will be financed using Provincial Gas Tax, Federal funding and Equipment Reserve Funds.

6- Service Standards

It is recommended that council approve service standards as presented by Entra Consultants in principal. Transit staff is not recommending making wholesale changes to the route network at this time. Although recommendations have been made staff would like to an opportunity to collect valuable data from a new fare collection system and an AVL system. With proper data staff will be able to review transit routes and apply standards or make recommendations using approved standards. Implementation of the U-Pass and the new senior rate could potentially have a drastic impact on transit ridership. Transit staff will return with route strategies once the impacts of the new initiatives are known.

As well as increasing ridership, approval of these recommendations will ensure that our transit system continues to improve providing safe, efficient and accessible transportation to residents of Greater Sudbury.