



MEDIA RELEASE

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Town Council Supports Enhanced Transit Five Year Plan

During Monday night's Council-in-Committee meeting, Town Council adopted in principle recommendations presented by the Transit Consulting Network (TCN) to improve the current transit services in Fort Erie progressively over the next five years.

"We conducted our last transit study in 2011," said Carla Stout, Manager, Transit Services. "Recommendations from the study resulted in extended service hours, an additional bus and new fare options. The changes had a positive impact on our transit system and community as a whole, but times have changed and our community is growing which is placing more pressure on our transit services."

In June 2016, the Town hired TCN to review the current transit services and to assess the transit needs based on community feedback. To accomplish this, TCN conducted stakeholder meetings with staff, Council, bus operators, the general public, local service organizations and community agencies. In addition, a community-wide online/on-board public transit survey was conducted resulting in almost 300 submissions.

Overall, the comments received supported the need to provide public transit access to jobs, services, medical facilities, retail centres, and to accommodate students. Furthermore, many comments pointed out the lack of service to parts of Fort Erie, the need to expand hours of operation and a desire to add Sunday service.

"Public transit is one of the most important services we offer our residents because it can directly affect a person's livelihood and economic well-being. It is a key to future growth and to attracting and retaining our young people," said Mayor Wayne Redekop. "Results of this study have shown us that our current transit system is not meeting the needs of all members of our community and we can't let that continue. The recommendations provided will help increase the efficiency of our current transit system and facilitate its integration with the regional transit system."

The TCN study provided Town Council with a proposed five year service concept and plan with enhanced service levels and additional routes. Some recommendations include:

- Increasing the current bus fleet from two to three in 2017
- Extending the transit services to include transportation to new areas of the town
- Implementing greater service frequency during peak times of the day

- Extending the hours of operation to accommodate for people's work and school schedules
- Considering adding a new Sunday bus route to the schedule
- Replacing "Flag Stop Services" in urban areas with bus stops

"Geographically, Fort Erie is hard for a transit system to operate effectively because there is a lot of area to cover with population nodes spread out across all of Fort Erie; however, that's no excuse. We should be servicing all of Fort Erie not just some of it," said Chris Knutt, Ward 6 Councillor. "The inclusion of Blackcreek and Stevensville has been a long time coming and I'm happy to say that we're finally at the point where we can begin to make it happen."

Although the plan has been approved in principle, TCN is recommending a significant increase in budget over the next five years. Therefore, implementation of the plan is dependent on Town Council's approval of funding during its annual budget deliberations. For more information about the Transit Route, Bus Stop & Facility Improvements Plan report, visit forterie.ca.