

General Manager's Report

February 17th, 2022

1. COVID Update

On January 31st, classes at Memorial University with less than 100 students returned to campus. On the same date, we returned to a full service schedule which is the newly branded ZIP network with improved service on routes 1, 2, 3 and 10. Ridership in January was approximately 55% of January 2019 ridership. To date in February, ridership is at about 80% of January 2019.

2. Sign – Shelter opposite the Gathering Place

At the request of Commissioner Burton, a sign was installed at the shelter informing customers that they can wait in the shelter for the bus (as the shelter is not located directly next to the bus stop sign).

3. Bus Stop – Allandale Road

Commissioner Burton requested consideration be given to installing an additional bus stop on Allandale Road (opposite the entrance to the Arts & Culture Centre). Our Planner evaluated the request, including contacting the City's Traffic Division. A bus stop cannot be installed in the area as it would impede the crosswalk. In order to install an additional stop, it would need to be installed closer to Elizabeth Avenue which would put it in close proximity to existing stop. It would not meet our standards for bus stop distancing.

4. Bus Shelter – St. John's Convention Centre

Verbal update to be provided

5. GoBus Eligibility Assessments

A meeting was held with Telus. A new administrative person has been hired and a new kinesiologist will be hired within the next week. The addition of these staff will increase the dedicated hours to our project. They anticipate that the assessments for all current customers will be completed by the end of September.

6. Stop Announcements

Staff have met with two vendors for on-board stop announcement systems. They will be following up with more information and budget estimates which will be needed for a funding application under ICIP. It will be important that the system acquired integrate with existing technologies and applications as well as provide a needed upgrade to our AVL system and other identified software solutions required.

When the information is received from the vendors, a recommended solution will be presented to the Commission with a request for approval to proceed with an application for funding.

7. Bus Stops – Gathering Place

A bus stop on each side of Military Road was installed in late October-November 2019.

To date, there have been nine panes of glass replaced at these shelters, five in the past six weeks, at a cost of \$450 each.

Besides the cost of glass replacement, a total of \$4050.00, there are issues with garbage, people sleeping and drinking in both shelters, urine and feces in the shelters on a regular basis, as well as needles and drug paraphernalia (bongs, pipes, syringe packages). The Utility crew are uncomfortable and have raised safety concerns in dealing with the needles as well as being harassed while trying to clean the property.

We have also had to replace the information posts twice @ a cost of \$250.00 each. Repairs to the shelters have cost \$4,550.00 in materials and approximately \$1,800 in labour costs. This is related only to replacing glass and does not include labour and expenses to clean up shelters.

Currently, there are two panes of glass missing in the shelter by the Gathering Place and one missing on the opposite side of the road. I have advised Maintenance not to immediately replace the glass. We have posted signs in the shelters advising that if the vandalism and excessive garbage continues, the shelters will be removed. We have also contacted the Gathering Place to advise of the issues and asked them to post a notice as well. We will continue to monitor the shelters.

8. Radio System

Work continues on moving the radio system from the CBC tower in Shea Heights to the NTV tower. Estimates to move the system are approximately \$80,000 - \$90,000. This is an unbudgeted expense.

9. Electrification Plan

We have been invited to Stage II of the federal government's funding for the feasibility study. The funding model (below) will minimize administrative workload of procuring a qualified consultant to do the assessment. This means that we have up to \$250,000 to fund the study.

Infrastructure Canada is in the process of completing a funding agreement with one or more organization(s) that will work with transit bus operators on planning activities required for the adoption of zero emission bus (ZEB) technology. This process is in its final stage and is expected to be in place in the next few weeks.

- *Under this second option, Infrastructure Canada will cover up to 80% of the costs incurred by the selected organization(s) for planning projects, while transit bus operators will be expected to cover the remaining 20% of the costs.*
- *The submission of a Planning Application form and the negotiation of a contribution agreement with Infrastructure Canada will not be required under this option.*

10. Shelter Update

Notice of approval of ICIP funding for 10 new shelters has been received. Once the agreement is signed, a tender will be released.

In St. John's, there are 715 bus stops of which 80 have shelters for a ratio of 11%. With the additional 10 to be installed, the ratio will improve to 12.6%. As requested, attached is a summary of the current shelter ratios for 12 other Canadian properties, all of which have not set targets.

11. Via Software – GoBus

Staff continue to work with Via on outstanding issues with the software. Progress is being made with noticeable improvement. Newfoundland started using Via software this week and working through some issues as they adjust to the new system.