

STAFF REPORT



TO Operations, Transit & Emergency Services Committee

SERVICE AREA Operations, Transit & Emergency Services

DATE February 4, 2014

SUBJECT Recasting Guelph Transit

REPORT NUMBER OTES021405

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide the Operations, Transit & Emergency Services Committee an overview of the plan to recast Transit, in response to the overtime audit. Identifying activities to processes and systems to improve the Transit service provided to the community.

KEY FINDINGS

- Guelph Transit Update Presentation of November 2013 identified staffing, fleet and community relations as issues affecting current service.
- The overtime audit recommended management develop a 90-day plan to transform the Transit business unit.
- A cross-functional taskforce has been created to address issues and develop a 90-day plan.
- *Recasting Transit* is an internal initiative that addresses six (6) themes
 - Customer Connection
 - Staffing
 - Driver Ambassadors
 - Oversight
 - Engagement
 - Fleet
- Each theme identifies the issue, objective, plan to achieve the objective, and how actions will be measured and communicated
- Reporting and communicating on the initiative status is considered paramount to its success.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

All implementation costs in 2014 will be completed within the current approved budget. Future year implementation costs will be brought forward through the budget process, as required.

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ACTION REQUIRED

That the Operations, Transit & Emergency Services Report #OTES021405 dated February 4, 2014 regarding Recasting Transit be received for information.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Operations, Transit & Emergency Services Committee report #OTES021405, Recasting Guelph Transit, dated February 4, 2014 be received.

BACKGROUND

The Overtime Audit, completed by the Internal Auditor and presented to the Audit Committee in November 2013, identified the following finding *'it is the Auditor's opinion that this service area is facing critical overtime and attendance issues that are unacceptable.'* and recommended *'Management should urgently develop and implement a 90-day plan to transform this business unit.'*

Guelph Transit is experiencing other operational issues pertaining to its reputation and performance. This was addressed through the Guelph Transit Update presentation to Committee at its November meeting.

Refer to http://guelph.ca/wp-content/uploads/OTES_agenda_110613.pdf

These issues will all be addressed through the Transit Plan Working Group, a working group within the Overtime Taskforce, and presented to Operations, Transit and Emergency Services Committee.

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A cross functional working group including staff from Guelph Transit, Human Resources, Finance and OTES Administration has been created to address the issues identified in the Guelph Transit Update presentation and the transit-specific recommendations from the Overtime Audit. The Working Group has developed an initiative called *Recasting Guelph Transit*; this plan consists of six (6) themes supported by reporting and communications, as illustrated in figure 1: Recasting Guelph Transit.

The goal of the Recasting Guelph Transit Working Group is to identify and implement system and process improvements that will **rebuild the reliability of Guelph Transit as a viable transportation alternative**. It will focus energies on addressing performance issues and ensure Guelph Transit, collectively and individually, provides a customer-first focussed service.

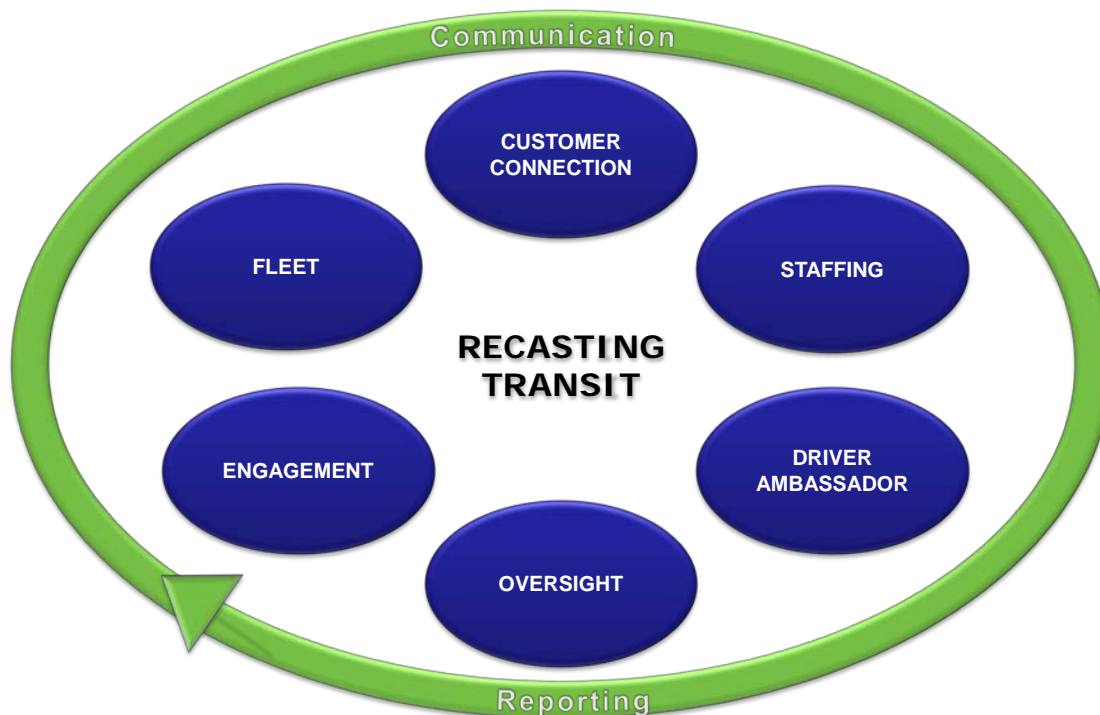


Figure 1: Recasting Guelph Transit

Recasting Guelph Transit Themes

For all six (6) themes of *Recasting Guelph Transit*, the following identifies the issue to be addressed, the objectives to be achieved and the plan to achieve them, as well as the measurement methods/targets to track and validate performance. The following outlines these areas for each theme.

Customer Connection

- Issue
 - Timeliness in response to customer contacts.
- Objective
 - Improve performance in responsiveness to customer contacts and increase customer satisfaction.
 - increase confidence in the delivery of reliable, convenient service
- Plan
 - Development of standards for responsiveness to all customer/community contacts.
 - Continued implementation of the Transit Strategic Communication Plan
 - Proactively solicit feedback and engage the community on transit service.

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- Implement customer contact management software to better to manage and administer customer contacts and corresponding acknowledgements and responses.
 - Reconvene the Transit Advisory Committee to provide an additional channel of communication for the community.
- Measurement/Target
 - Customer Response Timeliness
 - 100% of acknowledgements within the defined standard timelines.
 - 95% of responses within the committed timelines.

Staffing

- Issue
 - Staffing levels not being maintained
- Objective
 - Achieve a full complement of qualified, trained staff to provide Transit service.
 - Have systems in place to address vacancies in a timely manner to ensure all extra board positions are filled and allow for service provision with minimal overtime requirements.
- Plan
 - Develop a business model identifying the baseline labour requirements to meet the established service level standards with no disruptions as a result of absenteeism or vacancies
 - Manage and administer the attendance management support program.
- Measurement/Target
 - Workforce compliment to be at 100% of defined levels.
 - Maintain overtime at acceptable levels.
 - Absenteeism levels to be at 3.5% or lower.

Driver Ambassador

- Issue
 - Inconsistent level of customer service.
- Objective
 - Have a customer-first or 'citizen focused' operation.
 - Establish a customer service standard.
 - Provide trained operators to deliver exceptional Transit service.
- Plan
 - Develop a '*Drivers as Ambassadors*' training program.
 - Train all Transit operators, full time and extra board.
 - Develop continual evaluation and performance measurement methods.
- Measurement/Target
 - Customer complaints pertaining to driver conduct to be zero (0).
 - Increase in the number of commendations or compliments on driver conduct and service provision.

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Oversight

- Issue
 - Insufficient management practices in areas of training, auditing and compensating controls.
- Objective
 - Enhanced service performance through improved training and management practices.
 - Development of auditing practices at the supervision level.
 - Creation of a system for work planning and accountability
 - Increased spirit of co-operation between management and Amalgamated Transit Union Local.
- Plan
 - Continuation of the Labour Management Committee, membership to include senior management of Transit operations and the ATU union executive.
 - Implementation of compensating controls for overtime and attendance.
 - Development and completion of the Supervisor training program.
- Measurement/Target
 - Reduction in the number of grievances within the Transit operation.
 - Maintain overtime at acceptable levels.
 - Schedule adherence to maintain at 85%.
 - Dropped runs to be less than 0.20%.

Engagement

- Issue
 - Need to recognize the importance and significance of the work environment in providing excellence in Transit service.
- Objective
 - Promote an environment of continuous improvement.
 - Develop an environment of cooperation at Transit.
- Plan
 - Continuation of the Employee Engagement Committee.
 - Development of a recognition program.
 - Review of all Transit department committee structures and objectives.
 - Development of a Driver Engagement program.
- Measurement/Target
 - Increase in the employee engagement results from the 2012 survey score.
 - Reduction in the number of grievances within the Transit operation.
 - Increase in the number of commendations or compliments on driver conduct and service provision.

Fleet

- Issue
 - Sufficient fleet levels to provide Transit service.

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- Objective
 - Increase reliability of Transit fleet.
 - Improve performance monitoring and reporting.
- Plan
 - Develop key performance indicator for Fleet uptime.
 - Define service level requirements for Fleet.
 - Develop and implement formal service level agreements.
- Measurement/Target
 - Schedule adherence to maintain at 85%.
 - Dropped runs to be less than 0.20%.
 - Fleet Uptime to be at 95%.

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A key component of successful projects is open and strong lines of communication. Reporting on project performance is a vital communications need to keep stakeholders abreast of progress in accomplishing the project objectives. To that end, staff has developed the following approaches to ensure *Recasting Guelph Transit* remains a focal point for 2014.

Transit Strategic Communications Plan

A plan has been created identifying specific actions related to increasing riders' confidence in the ability of Guelph Transit to deliver reliable service. The action items include the following items that are currently underway;

- Communicating positive changes and improved performance to key stakeholders. *Key performance measures (Adherence to Customer Service Standards, Schedule Adherence and Customer Concern Level) will be included on the Transit webpage at guelph.ca to provide on-going information to the community.* This is a commitment to our customers to be transparent in the delivery of service and to allow them to see firsthand how we are progressing.
- Proactively engage the community. *One avenue already underway to address this is the Transit Advisory Committee.* The Committee comprises transit-oriented community leaders and is considered a vital feedback mechanism on the pulse of Guelph Transit as described by our customers.
- Developing a proactive media relations program to increase the positive media coverage specific to Guelph Transit. *The Marketing and Communications Plan is under development.* Again, communicating realized performance improvement is critical to re-establishing Guelph Transit's reputation as a reliable mode of transportation.

Committee Reporting

Recasting Guelph Transit is a long term plan to address the issues currently affecting service. The initial plan is being presented to the Operations, Transit & Emergency Services Committee, Council and the Community through this report.

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It is suggested the performance of Guelph Transit is of community interest and as such, staff will bring forward a report on a quarterly basis that provides Committee with an update on performance changes and opportunity to dialogue on staff efforts.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

All implementation costs in 2014 will be completed within the current approved budget. Future year implementation costs will be brought forward through the budget process, as required.

CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN

- 1.1 Engage employees through excellence in leadership
- 1.3 Build robust systems, structures and frameworks aligned to strategy
- 2.2 Deliver better public service
- 2.3 Provide accountability, transparency and engagement
- 3.3 Strengthen citizen and stakeholder engagement and communications

DEPARTMENTAL CONSULTATION

Public Works – Fleet
Communications
Finance
Human Resources

COMMUNICATIONS

The Transit Working Group has the following communications plan;

What	To Whom	Purpose	Frequency	Method
Initial Project Plan	Operations, Transit & Emergency Services Committee, Council and Community	To provide information on the initial plan for Recasting Guelph Transit	Once – February 2014	Report and presentation
Ongoing Project Reporting	Operations, Transit & Emergency Services Committee, Council and Community	To inform of any changes to the plan to achieve the objectives and of service improvements realized	Quarterly	Report
Performance Reporting	All stakeholders	To provide ongoing performance information for customer concerns and schedule adherence	Monthly	Dashboard on guelph.ca

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Feedback	All stakeholders	To provide additional method of communication to the community	ongoing	Submission form on guelph.ca . Active feedback solicitation of riders.
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ATTACHMENTS

None

Report Author: Katherine Gray
Supervisor, Service Performance & Development
Operations, Transit & Emergency Services

Recommended By
Phil Meagher
General Manager
Guelph Transit
519-822-1260 x3321
phil.meagher@guelph.ca

Approved By
Derek McCaughan
Executive Director,
Operations, Transit & Emergency Services
519-822-1260, x 2018
derek.mccaughan@guelph.ca