

REPORT

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

MEETING DATE: DECEMBER 07, 2015

FROM: Oakville Transit

DATE: November 11, 2015

SUBJECT: Transit Service New Year's Eve

LOCATION: Town wide

WARD: Town wide

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RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the report from Oakville Transit dated November 11, 2015 entitled "Transit Service New Year's Eve" be received;
2. That Oakville Transit provide all rides free of charge on New Year's Eve from 7:00 pm on December 31st until 4:00 am on January 1st.

KEY FACTS:

The following are key points for consideration with respect to this report:

- Oakville Transit provides increased levels of service and extended hours of operation on New Year's Eve
- Oakville Transit is one of only two transit systems in the GTHA that do not provide free transit on New Year's Eve
- Making public transit available at no cost on New Year's Eve will contribute to safer streets for pedestrians and users of the roads by reducing incidents of impaired driving
- Providing free rides on New Year's Eve would cost approximately \$1,500 in lost revenue

BACKGROUND:

On New Year's Eve, Oakville Transit traditionally offers a modified service schedule with increased service levels in the mid afternoon and extended hours in the late night. For New Year's Eve, GO Transit increases the number of afternoon outbound trains from Union Station to accommodate commuters who are leaving work early. GO Transit also extends its hours of operation on the Lakeshore West line to provide a means of transportation for anyone electing to stay late to participate in celebrations.

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Most transit service providers in the GTHA also increase service levels in a similar manner. Oakville Transit does so by starting a limited rush hour service at approximately noon on New Year's Eve. This service is scheduled to connect with the additional early out bound trips offered by GO Transit. In addition, Oakville Transit extends the hours of operation for its Late Night Zone Drop-off service to ensure connectivity with the last GO Trains out of Union Station. As a result, our late Night Service is operating until approximately 4:00 am on January 1st.

In addition, to its extended hours of operation GO Transit does not charge a fare for anyone using its service after 7:00 pm on New Year's Eve. This is an initiative that has been adopted by almost every transit service provider in the GTHA, with only slight variations to the start times. Only Oakville Transit and one other service provider continue to charge a fare for transit use on New Year's Eve.

Each year Oakville Transit drivers experience issues around payment of fares as customers transferring from their free ride on GO Transit or MiWay to our service and are asked to pay a fare. For many of these customers the trip by transit originated in either Toronto or Mississauga where the TTC and MiWay are also providing free transit service. Customers frustrated with having to pay a fare on arrival in Oakville often take this frustration out on our drivers. For others the request for a fare simply creates a negative perception of Oakville Transit.

COMMENT/OPTIONS:

Offering free transit service on New Year's Eve is a way of helping to ensure that anyone participating in celebration events are able to arrive home safely. For those residents of Oakville who rely on transit for all of their transportation needs, free transit removes a potential barrier to participation in events within and even outside of their community. For residents who normally rely on their personal automobile for transportation, free transit service provides a safe, reliable, no cost travel option.

Over the last three years Oakville Transit has provided an average of approximately 625 paid rides after 7:00 pm on New Year's Eve. If those rides were provided for free, the lost revenue would amount to approximately \$1,500. As this initiative requires no increase to the already planned level of service, lost revenue represents its total cost.

Oakville Transit is recommending that its services be provided to riders free of charge on New Year's Eve from the hours of 7:00 pm December 31st until 4:00 am on January 1st.

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CONSIDERATIONS:**(A) PUBLIC**

Residents wishing to attend New Year's Eve celebration events will be provided with a safe, reliable, no cost alternative to personal automobile use.

(B) FINANCIAL

The cost of this initiative is equivalent to the forecasted \$1,500 in lost revenue. As there is no specific provision for this expense in Oakville Transit's 2015 operating budget, the amount will be offset within the Transit advertising account (54410.5701). Future years' cost could be offset by securing appropriate corporate sponsorship. Should sponsorship not be available, the 2016 lost revenue would be offset again within the Transit advertising budget. For 2017 and beyond an adjustment would be made to the Transit external revenue accounts.

(C) IMPACT ON OTHER DEPARTMENTS & USERS

There is no impact on any other town department.

(D) CORPORATE AND/OR DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC GOALS

This report addresses the corporate strategic goal to:
Enhance our social environment
To continuously improve our programs and services

(E) COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY

This issue impacts on social sustainability as it provides a safe, reliable, no cost transportation option for residents wishing to travel to and from annual New Year's Eve celebrations and events where alcohol may be consumed.

Prepared and Submitted by:

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Oakville Transit