

Our File/N/Réf.
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DATE: 9 March 1999

TO/DEST: Co-ordinator
Transit Services Committee

FROM/EXP: General Manager

SUBJECT/OBJET: **BIKE RACKS ON BUSES PILOT PROJECT**

DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION

That the Transit Services Committee recommend to the Commission the expenditure of \$50,000 for a pilot project of bike racks on buses, to be introduced on route 97 as soon as possible to the end of October 1999 as part of the Transportation Demand Management Program.

BACKGROUND

At its meeting of 27 January 1999, the Transit Services Committee directed staff to develop a plan for a demonstration project for bicycles on buses for 1999.

The report responds to that request and recommends a demonstration project on route 97 starting as soon as possible and finishing at the end of October, when daylight saving time ends.

The project would enable the use of bike racks to be evaluated in terms of:

- X usage by customers
- X operator acceptance
- X safety
- X maintenance requirements
- X reliability

DISCUSSION

The desirability of allowing cyclists to use transit for part of their trip has long been recognized by transit companies worldwide, although the United States and Canada have only recently been developing bikes-on-buses programs on a widespread basis. While it is a good idea in principle, there are many concerns from the Operations and Equipment perspectives which need to be addressed in a pilot project before going ahead with bike racks on a larger scale. A pilot project

with a structured evaluation program will allow the legitimate concerns to be identified and addressed, and those with no basis to be put to rest.

It is recommended that the scope of the pilot project be to examine the impact of front-mounted bicycle racks on one route. Experience to date in the United States and Canada can be tapped to assist in the development of operator instructions, maintenance procedures and a public education and communication plan. We have already been in touch with staff in places where some of the more successful programs are in operation to obtain copies of their materials.

Route Selection

It is recommended that the pilot project be implemented for regular service on route 97, which is well situated in terms of the access it could provide for cyclists. This route travels from Kanata Town Centre to South Keys Transitway Station, travelling through the Central Business District on Albert and Slater Streets (Exhibit 1). It serves stations connected to the Ottawa River Parkway bicycle paths, provides convenient access to downtown Ottawa, the University of Ottawa, Algonquin College Campus at Lees Avenue, Billings Bridge and Greenboro/South Keys. Regular service on that route requires 21 buses.

Changes are proposed for route 97 as part of Transplan 99. The revised route would operate more frequently and travel from Kanata Town Centre to the Airport. It is unlikely that the number of bus racks purchased for today's route 97 service could cover all service on the expanded route. However, it is likely that it will be possible to identify relatively frequent trips on the new route which would be covered by bike rack equipped buses.

Operational Issues

The speed and frequency with which the racks will be used are key issues, in terms of the impact on schedule reliability. Another area which will need to be monitored and evaluated is the impact on Albert and Slater Street operations where high volumes of buses operate in near-capacity conditions.

A statement of the responsibilities of operators and a training program will need to be developed.

Other things that are of concern are the possibility of passengers forgetting their bicycles or being unable to work out how to use the rack.

Maintenance Issues

Sending a rack-equipped bus out onto all the regular runs on the route is the responsibility of the Equipment Division. Because the runs on routes can be scheduled from any of our three garages, there will need to be more rack-equipped buses than there are runs. Twice as many racks would be ordered as there are regular runs on route 97. The buses not used in the designated bike rack routes will be placed into service on any run at any time. The appearance of buses on non designated bike rack routes will require an education campaign to explain that although the

current bus is bike rack equipped there is no promise that a bike rack equipped bus will be provided for the return trip.

The amount of effort required to attach the racks and ensure that they remain securely in place and functioning, and their impact on storage and on other equipment, are issues which need to be assessed.

During the winter months, all buses are parked indoors in heated garages when not in service. The addition of bike racks to a significant number of buses will increase the space required to park buses in the garages. The parking lanes are fixed in length and the addition of bike racks will cause the buses to extend into walkways, fire exit routes and possibly extend outside the doors.

Storage and handling of bikes inadvertently left on the racks will also have to be considered.

Communications

We have already developed a close relationship with the Citizens for Safe Cycling group and propose to use their network to communicate information about the project to the cycling community. Using the racks safely will be a message which needs to be very clear.

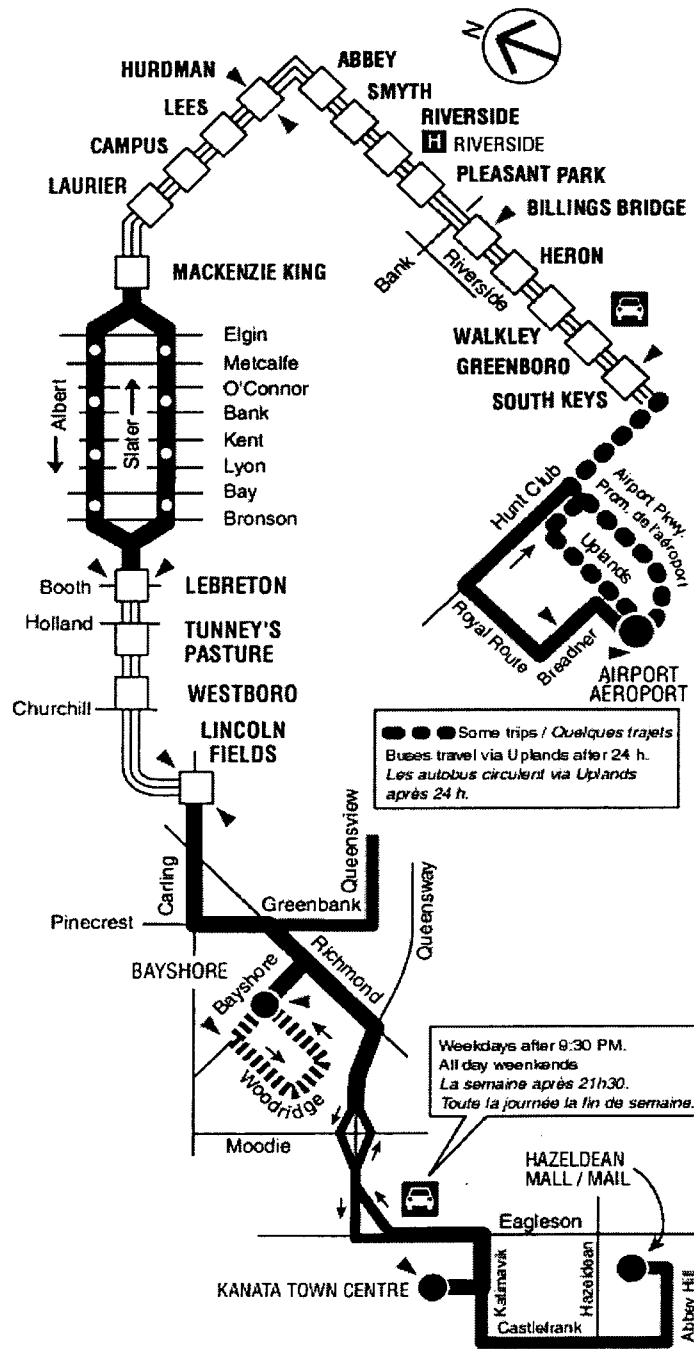
We will review publicity and timetables from programs elsewhere to develop information for the pilot project.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

This project will cost about \$50,000, the majority of which will be spent on purchasing 42 bike racks at approximately \$1,000 each. The objective of increasing transit ridership through this multi modal approach is consistent with the objectives of the Regional Transportation Demand Management Program and it is proposed that this is how it should be funded.

*Approved by
M.J.E. Sheflin, P.Eng.*

EXHIBIT 1



●●● Some trips / Quelques trajets
 Buses travel via Uplands after 24 h.
 Les autobus circuleront via Uplands
 après 24 h.

Weekdays after 9:30 PM.
 All day weekends
 La semaine après 21h30.
 Toute la journée la fin de semaine.

Legend • Légende

- Transitway & Station
- X97 : Mon.-Fri. Peak periods only
 X97: Lun.-ven. période de pointe seulement
- EARLY MORNING SERVICE • SERVICE MATINAL
 Before 6 AM between Hazeldean Mall and the Airport
 Avant 6 h entre le Mail Hazeldean et l'aéroport
- Early morning service only / Service matinal seulement
- Park & Ride / Parc-o-Bus
- Time point / Poste d'attente