

Executive Summary

During the February 12, 2019 Council meeting, the *Greater Sudbury Transit Action Plan: Better Routes, Better Schedules. Better Service* received Council approval and staff was directed to implement changes to the transit route structure effective August 26, 2019. A robust Implementation Plan has been developed to ensure a successful transition. This information report provides an update on major activities that have taken place over the past few months.

Background

The Implementation Plan consists of two streams of work. The first consists of technical activities to address the changing service levels and operating requirements. The second stream of work focuses on aligning the communication and marketing requirements necessary to transition transit employees, passengers and the community as a whole through this significant restructuring. The following section will provide a high level update on the activities within each of these streams of work.

Technical Operational Requirements Update:

The following table outlines technical operational activities undertaken:

COMPLETED	
Route Changes	Route information has been updated in the GIS system.
Schedule Changes	Schedules have been revised based on additional service approved by Council and public input sessions held in February to April, 2019.
Bus Stops & Shelters	Bus stop and infrastructure plan developed to guide changes required on street level prior to implementation. Meeting held with Public Works, Sign Shop and internal staff to develop work plan.
Information Technology	All routes and schedules have been entered into the scheduling software.
Training	Supplementary operators will be required for the additional service added on Sundays and early mornings. Training Department has begun training new PT employees and will continue this training throughout the summer months.
Third Party Service (Trans Cab & Handi-Transit)	All contracts and service levels being reviewed to ensure compliance and changes reflected where appropriate. New service contract in effect with specialized transit provider as of July 1st, 2019.
Fare Changes	Ride Cards and fare box coding completed. Testing of cards and new designs for the 6-ride card completed. Preparing communication tools and tactics to remind passengers of changes.

IN PROGRESS	
Work schedules	Update information for software that will assist with the scheduling of drivers.
Bus Stops & Shelters	Initiate work related to cleaning, removing, relocating and repairing shelters.
Information Technology	Software testing to ensure route information is syncing properly to AVL Software, live Google Feed and My Bus App
Training	Continue training of new employees and prepare for training of new service to all operators and key front line staff.
Funding	Prepare Investing in Canada Funding application for submission by May 28th, 2018 based on approved direction from Council and as outlined in the Transit Action Plan.
PLANNED TO OCCUR JUNE – AUGUST 2019	
Work schedules	Prepare new work schedules for operators in alignment with the Collective Bargaining Agreement and review with Union representative. Must be finalized, ready for staff sign-up and assignment one month prior to implementation.
Front Line Staff Route Book	Prepare and distribute route books with directions and specific information for front line staff.
Bus Stops	One day prior to implementation, identify bus stops to be removed from service (ie. bag them). Physical removal of these discontinued stop to occur in the fall. New stops will be added or relocated throughout the summer.
Information Technology	Update and test destination signs, head signs and callout system on buses to reflect new route information.

Communication and Marketing Requirements Update:

The following table outlines marketing and communication activities:

COMPLETED		
Get On Board: A New Direction for Greater Sudbury Transit		Public engagement survey was made available from February 26-March 12, 2019. Residents were encouraged to participate online to provide their opinion on the best way to receive information about routes, schedules, fares and other services. The platform received approximately 700 visitors, and 425 surveys were submitted. The results of the survey will shape how the information is shared with the public now and in the future.
First Look at New Transit Routes & Schedules		New routes and schedules, featuring a new design format were made available online and in person at 25 open houses and stakeholder meetings. The purpose of this engagement was to provide residents the opportunity to review the schedules and share information that could be used to refine and finalize the service prior to implementation. Throughout the month, approximately 5,000 bookmarks directing citizens to the overtoyou.greatersudbury.ca platform were distributed. Approximately 2,000 people attended an open house or meeting and 250 surveys were completed.
Design of Information Material		Redesigned maps and schedules to be more user-friendly and to reflect feedback received during the First Look Open Houses.
Review and Incorporation of Feedback		All comments and information gathered in public engagement initiatives were reviewed. One key outcome of the first survey was the request for the development of a booklet with all routes and schedules. Design of booklet was initiated. Maps and schedules refined and finalized for implementation.
Promotion		New visual identifiers and new name developed to promote system and provide a refreshed look for the service. Information based on Get on Board survey used by creative team in this process.
Marketing		Marketing Strategy developed to support implementation and encourage future new ridership.

IN PROGRESS	
Design of Information Material	Redesign and develop customer information tools such as bus stop signs, shelter maps, rider guide, individual maps, website, etc..
Promotion	Finalize new system look and incorporate into all customer information tools.
Marketing	Develop marketing and promotional tools to ensure awareness of new services (i.e. video, TV monitor information, posters, etc.)
Volunteers	Develop plan and recruit volunteers to support riders during initial transition period (Pre and Post August 26th).
PLANNED TO OCCUR JUNE – AUGUST 2019	
Customer Information	Finalize and print all new customer information material.
Marketing	Begin soft launch of refreshed look of system mid-July with installation of new bus stop signs and changes to design of select buses.
Promotion	Launch new promotional tools to ensure awareness of new services (video, TV monitor information, posters etc.)
Volunteers	Recruit, train, organize teams and coordinate volunteers required for mass information sharing during implementation.
Front -Line Staff	Meetings and training sessions with front-line staff.
Monitoring	Prepare system to track and monitor implementation successes and issues. Information will be used for continuous improvements, to measure success and identify longer-term actions to support continued success.

Next Steps:

Staff will continue to provide updates to the Committee over the next few months on the transformation of the transit network to improve service and better connect the community.

References:

Greater Sudbury Transit Action Plan: Better Routes, Better Schedules. Better Service
<http://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/index.cfm?pg=agenda&action=navigator&id=1312&itemid=13582&lang=en>