

Town of Riverview

COUNCIL REPORT FORM



Presented to: Mayor and Town Council

Presented by: Colin Smith, CAO

Date: March 8, 2021

Subject: Codiac Transpo Proposal for additional service during Causeway closures 2021

BACKGROUND

In developing the 2021 General Operating Budget, Council planned ahead by setting aside an additional \$140,000 for transit services in 2021 to provide further transit options for residents during the causeway closure. At budget time, Council asked Codiac Transpo to develop a transit option that could be implemented at the time of the causeway closure.

As we were just recently informed by the Province that they have decided to move up the causeway closure to start April 5, instead of May 1 as was previously communicated to us, we need to move quickly to authorize this new route.

Codiac Transpo has proposed the following route option that can be implemented to help alleviate some of the traffic congestion that is expected.

Codiac Transpo's Riverview Causeway Proposal

During the six month Causeway closure to complete the new bridge, additional transit services are planned. This plan was included in the 2021 budget. It is intended to provide continued service to current passengers and to attract new passengers with the provision of a new park and ride service. Should the COVID-19 vaccination roll out, expected to occur over the summer, result in traffic volumes increasing to pre pandemic high levels, additional busing could be implemented at added cost.

The two buses owned by the Town of Riverview will be utilized Monday to Friday with one bus continuing to provide the current weekend service. Details of the plan include:

- *3 Bus Routes servicing Riverview during the Causeway closure, Monday to Friday*
- *One route provides East to West service area coverage during peak hours that has not existed in the past*
 - *The 85 Riverview Connector will operate strictly in Riverview during the a.m. and p.m. rush hours. Passengers boarding in East Riverview who wish to disembark at businesses in West Riverview, and vice versa, can stay on board the same bus with no need to transfer.*

- *Passengers who require transport to Moncton will transfer to bus route 86 Riverview Park and Ride Express bus.*
- *Transfer connections to the “86 Park and Ride” bus will occur at 2 locations:*
 - *Proposed “Park and Ride” location @ Pine Glen and Whitepine*
 - *Connection is also available at Riverview Place. The #86 will be routed to this location before traveling to the “Park and Ride” location. This accommodates current passengers travelling to work at Riverview Place.*
- *One bus provides service to two different routes. The #81 Riverview will resume the present daily routing after the a.m. and p.m. rush hours, once the #85 terminates.*
- *East Riverview residents will be provided service on route #85; East Riverview will recover service trips similar to what was offered prior to the pandemic.*
- *Saturday schedule will remain the same as today with one bus servicing all of Riverview.*
- *Sunday schedule will remain served by one bus.*
- *Due to the unknown traffic patterns / congestion, this plan permits sufficient time for the #86 Park and Ride route to travel back and forth between Riverview and Moncton*
- *Continual monitoring of passenger loads and traffic congestion affecting service will be conducted in case adjustments are required*
- *Service to Crystal Drive will be maintained except for one trip at 19:20 weeknights due to one bus serving two routes.*
- *Passenger seating capacity may be affected due to Provincial COVID-19 guidelines and recovery level status*
- *All buses are equipped with bike racks and are viable options for customers that may consider using bicycles as part of their travel plan.*
- *A Riverview communications plan will be developed of the planned transit service, active transportation and other options to encourage citizens to make their own plans.*

Codiac Transpo has also recommended that Riverview may want to consider offering free transit to residents for the duration of the construction, to encourage residents to consider travelling by transit and to use the Park and Ride system. The estimated revenue impact if the Town was to offer this for the 6 months is \$30,000 (\$5,000 a month). The pros of this approach as this may be an incentive for individuals to use the transit service. The cons of this approach is it could be expected, free transit continue beyond the six months and current riders who have paid for years may feel offering free service for this time period unfair (i.e. pre-purchased passes; why transit is free now; etc.)

Council’s options are to:

- Approve the proposed route plan;
- Decline the proposed route plan and seek an additional option (risk – limited time to review; and Codiac Transpo has looked at various route options with the available funds and in their opinion this is the best route option)
- Decline and continue the current service level that is being offered.

For the Park and Ride option, the Public Works Team will have the Old Public Works site ready for use when this new service is introduced.

Maps and description of stops are attached.

CONSIDERATIONS

Legal: n/a

Financial: funds have been included in 2021 budget for additional services. If Council supported free transit fares during this time period to encourage use of system the anticipated revenue loss is about \$5,000 per month. (\$30,000 impact – not budgeted)

Policy: n/a

Stakeholders: Codiac Transpo

Strategic Plan: n/a

Interdepartmental Consultation: N/A

Communication Plan: Codiac Transpo would make riders and public aware. Town to support their communication efforts.

Recommendation of Staff

That Riverview Town Council approve the new route options including the Park and Ride system and to start this new service prior to April 5, 2021.
