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May 31, 2012

Mayor and Members of Council

Re: Removal of Buses from Dundas Street

The Commission, at its meeting of May 30, 2012, confirmed the following:

- That any re-routing of transit service along Dundas Street (between Wellington Street and Ridout Street) should be identified as a strategy supporting the re-definition and re-vitalization of the downtown as provided in an approved *Downtown Master Plan*.
- The *Downtown Master Plan* should be congruent with the *Transportation Master Plan*.
- Any re-routing of transit service along Dundas Street (between Wellington Street and Ridout Street) be supported by investment from the City of London to effect the re-routing, with such investment covering both one time and ongoing costs.
- Subject to the approval of the respective master plans and investment requirements, it would take a minimum of six month lead time to effect the re-routing, with the earliest start time to commence work on the re-routing being the late fall 2012.

The above confirmation is in response to the May 22, 2012 Municipal Council resolution requesting the London Transit Commission consider the removal of all LTC buses from Dundas Street, from Wellington Street to Ridout Street

The confirmation also recognizes that the overarching issue is not about the re-routing of transit service from Dundas Street but rather the re-definition of the downtown, including economic revitalization, sustainability and presentation (i.e. flexible, pedestrian-friendly environment, which would attract more opportunities and people to the downtown).

As indicated, the Commission response is predicated on the principle that the re-definition should be supported by an approved Downtown Master Plan, which in addition to defining the expectation for the downtown, would also set out an implementation strategy and investment requirements to meet the desired expectation. In addition, the expectation is that the Downtown Master Plan would be congruent with the Transportation Master Plan versus the two plans being competing. The importance of having the master plans in place is that they have the effect of setting expectations (objectives), establishing priorities and defining investment requirements.

The routes utilizing the identified Dundas Street corridor are high ridership routes providing a high revenue/cost recovery supported by a high level of service. Dundas Street provides an effective and efficient means for delivering public transit services; however, the use may not be conducive to supporting an approved re-defined downtown. Accordingly, an investment supporting the re-definition of the downtown would be the re-routing of transit services from Dundas Street between Wellington Street

and Ridout Street utilizing King Street and Queens Avenue. The re-routing, while maintaining existing service levels requires investment which based upon 2010 costing estimates, includes:

- ongoing operating costs (i.e. net additional time and distance) of \$276,900 per year
- one time moving costs – relocation of stops, shelters, wayside signs estimated at \$125,000
- capital cost for three additional buses required to maintain current service levels on impacted routes (\$1.4 million)

The investment requirement does not consider the risk of ridership loss (and/or gain) noting of particular concern is the issue of access and accessibility for seniors and the disabled. Further, the costing does not take into account any potential impact on specialized transit services or the impact on available parking along King Street and Queens Avenue given the need to install amenities to support transit use.

A permanent re-routing of this nature is a significant undertaking. Unlike temporary re-routing such as during construction periods, new schedules have to be prepared, transfer and major time points defined, stop locations identified, approved and programmed for the purpose of providing automatic stop announcements as well as real-time service information and integrating the changes with the entire system for the purpose of run-cutting (i.e. creating work assignments). In addition, an appropriate public information campaign would have to be undertaken.

In situations of temporary re-routing the above work is not completed, the service schedule is set aside, including headways and timed transfer connections, temporary stops are not linked to the system and accordingly are not announced. The expectation of a lower service standard is communicated to customers advising it is temporary in nature. The course of action followed by the Commission for temporary re-routing is predicated on mitigating costs recognizing the re-routing is temporary. This was evident with the recent shave and pave of Dundas Street which limited the incremental cost associated with the detour for the approximate three week period to between \$1,500 and \$2,000 per week and resulted in some 30 complaints, notwithstanding public communication of the temporary change.

Given the significance of the permanent change, a minimum six month lead time would be required to properly effect the change. The first opportunity to commence working on the change would be late fall 2012 noting the staff responsible for effecting the change are currently working on finalizing and implementing the 2012 service plans which are scheduled to take effect in September 2012. LTC would work with the city to effectively accommodate the re-alignment which could include employing potential transit priority measures to mitigate operating cost requirements and the negative impact on customer service.

Yours truly,



Larry E. Ducharme
General Manager