

Beat: Travel

Halifax Transit Suspends Routes

While Requesting Fare Increase

Halifax, Nova Scotia, 23.02.2023, 18:52 Time

USPA NEWS - Beginning Monday, February 27, 2023

Halifax Transit will be making schedule adjustments to 32 routes and suspending service on three bus routes. The suspended routes are thought to be temporary lasting til August, but could remain permanent.

At a time when Halifax Transit has announced that it will be suspending several routes, it is set to request a 25-cent increase to bus fares at the city's budget meeting on March 1st. Transit says the new fare should generate \$847,848 in revenue over the next year and would bring the fares in line with other Canadian transit systems.

Halifax Transit says that beginning February 27th, routes 41, 178 and 179 will be temporarily suspended due to "ongoing staffing shortages."

Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 508 president Shane O'Leary says the staffing shortages are the result of Halifax Transit creating an environment where people don't want to work.

O'Leary went on to say, "You can work up to, easily, 60 plus hours a week, and that's too much. One of the reasons the three bus routes has to be cut is because the limited bus staff is being overworked."

O'Leary explained that recruitment efforts are impeded by the lack of retention.

"When somebody comes out of training and they find out they're working 60 hours a week and they're not getting their days off, they can't get vacations when they need them, and they can't get time off for doctors appointments...that's just not acceptable."

Speaking exclusively with USPA 24 News, a tenured driver with Halifax Transit, who asked us not to publish his name, had this to say, " In the nearly 15 years that I have been employed with Halifax Transit, I have never experienced morale to be so low among employees company wide. Bus drivers are dealing with both mental and physical exhaustion which is leading to burnout.

If that is not enough, operators are dealing with many unrealistic scheduling requirements causing many riders to take out their anger and frustration on the the driver who often has little to no control over these situations." He added that these are just a few of the issues surrounding retention.

After speaking with a number Halifax Transit riders, USPA 24 News has learned that many regular passengers that frequently use the routes that are set to be suspended are reliant on these services for getting to and from work and other important obligations. The cuts will mean longer commute times, walking further to catch another bus, or the need to make additional transfers to get to the same destination. Many question the timing of a potential fare increase and feel that paying more money for less service is not appropriate. That said, many expressed appreciation and support for all of the bus operators that come to work each day and do their best to provide the best service possible for the riding public.

While a fare increase remains to be seen, remember that it does not cost a cent to be kind to bus operators and considerate to other riders as it will make for a better commute for everyone.

BREAKONG NEWS: Halifax Regional Police....Feb 22 2023.

Police have charged a youth in relation to an incident that occurred on a Halifax Transit bus last week in Halifax..... "On February 17 at approximately 10:45 p.m. officers responded to a report of a disturbance on a Halifax Transit bus that was stopped on Mountain Road. A group of three youths were arguing with the driver of the transit bus when one of the youths pulled at the steering wheel while the bus was in motion to get the driver to stop. The driver stopped the bus, pulled to the side of the road when it was safe to do so, and asked the youths to exit the bus. The youth who had grabbed the steering wheel then threatened the driver. Officers arrested one of the youths and released the other two without charges. The 17-year-old youth is scheduled to appear in Halifax provincial youth court at a later date to face charges: of Threats, Mischief, and Failing to obey conditions of a youth court order." (SOURCE HRP PRESS RELEASE) Although incidents like this are rare, operator safety is an ongoing concern and no doubt has an affect on employee

retention.

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-22337/halifax-transit-suspends-routes.html>

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