



SUBJECT: Transit in-source bus cleaning pilot

TO: Community Planning, Regulation & Mobility Cttee.

FROM: Transit Department

Report Number: TR-07-20

Wards Affected: All

File Numbers: 770-05-01

Date to Committee: August 11, 2020

Date to Council: August 24, 2020

Recommendation:

Authorize the Director of Transit to implement a bus cleaning pilot program for 12 months, starting as soon as possible as outlined in transit department report TR-07-20; and

Direct the Director of Transit to issue an RFI for transit cleaning services to provide a market comparison of outsourcing and insourcing bus cleaning and refueling options and report back to the Community Planning, Regulation and Mobility Committee on the results of the pilot program in Q4 of 2021.

PURPOSE:

Vision to Focus Alignment:

- Improve integrated city mobility

Background and Discussion:

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Burlington Transit has implemented several cleaning measures on buses to protect transit workers and passengers from the threat of COVID-19.

Transit has been operating as an essential service since the onset of the emergency declaration and has followed recommendations from the Province and Transit industry

on cleaning guidelines for buses. As per corporate policies and recommendations for enhanced cleaning, Burlington Transit's spare operators (bus operators who were not assigned a bus driving shift), were assigned to detailed bus cleaning. This involved vacuuming, scrubbing and thoroughly cleaning the buses. CUPE local 2723 has agreed to this approach for the short term. With transit schedules being enhanced for late summer, there will be fewer spare operators to perform this extra cleaning that is required to ensure the health and safety of operators and riders.

Burlington Transit was pro-active in having an antimicrobial spray applied to all conventional and specialized vehicles in mid-March 2020. This product, which has been used by most transit agencies within the GTA, creates an invisible protective barrier on bus surfaces by rendering surfaces inhospitable for germs. This antimicrobial treatment can last up to a year. It is recommended to continue with this approach as we continue to improve our standards.

Based on surveys conducted nationwide, one of the key drivers of getting former riders and new riders back on buses, is to ensure that buses are cleaned and disinfected daily. This was also echoed in a recent Burlington Transit customer survey whereby clean buses was ranked the highest, in terms of respondents being comfortable using Burlington Transit during the pandemic.

While this service has been contracted out to a 3rd party contractor, evidence continues to show that the cleaning done by this contracted service is below standards. Before the pandemic started, Burlington Transit buses did not have full interior cleans, as this was not part of the contractor's scope of work. This lack of cleaning has been compounded over the years and was evident in the length of time required to clean a bus and the amount of cleaning supplies required to get the bus up to COVID-19 cleaning standards. Transit systems normally do full interior cleans on a monthly cycle, and major cleanings every six months. This has not been part of the contracted service for Burlington Transit.

Risks:

There is a significant risk to riders, transit operators and to the bus if cleaning is not done properly. The risks are as follows:

- Bus operators face risk of illness if buses are not cleaned and disinfected properly. This could cause further risk to the transit workforce and not having enough staff to operate the buses. Transit operators need to have assurance that they are safe in their working environment.
- Passengers and the vulnerable population face risks of contracting illnesses and/or spreading illnesses to other people while riding transit.

- Infrequent cleaning can cause safety issues on the bus by causing abnormal corrosion on metal fasteners holding the seats in place on the bus.
- Maintenance issues with accessibility ramps at the front door.
- HVAC system strain due to added dust and dirt cause plugged filters and air flow restrictions resulting in poor air quality and potential increased costs for repair

Strategy/process

With service levels increasing due to moving into Phase 3 of the recovery, Burlington Transit will have fewer spare operators to perform cleaning duties as they will be required to drive buses. Therefore, there is a potential that come the fall, at the time when a second wave may begin, that the buses will not be cleaned properly.

Burlington Transit is recommending that a pilot project be initiated whereby 6 full time and 4 part time staff are hired to clean and refuel buses. They would be responsible for the following:

- Daily cleaning of buses which would include:
 - Sweeping of floors and ramps
 - Empty waste containers
 - Cleaning and disinfecting of high touch points, this includes all handrails, pull cords, doors, fare collection systems
 - Thorough cleaning and disinfecting of drivers areas
 - Exterior clean
 - Spot cleaning windows
- Daily service lane duties which include:
 - Fueling of buses
 - Check and refill fluids including washer fluid
 - Emptying cashbox into vault and downloading farebox data (probing)
 - Replenishing of PRESTO farebox supplies
 - Visual inspection for damage and defects and write up notes for maintenance staff
 - Visual inspection for extra cleaning that requires extra work/time (for example graffiti, soiled seats)
- Monthly full cleaning includes:
 - Windows
 - Detailed cleaning of floors including vacuuming and mopping
 - Passenger Seats (inspected, wiped, steam-cleaned)
 - Drivers area thoroughly detailed and sanitized

- Bi-Annual major bus cleaning will be added and will include a complete interior and exterior cleaning. This includes a full cleaning and sanitizing of all of the seating on the bus and a full ceiling clean.

A total of 76 Burlington Transit vehicles would require cleaning and fueling services during the week; and 60 vehicles each day on the weekend. Non-revenue vehicles would also be included in this pilot.

Benchmarking has been done to estimate the time to service and clean a bus daily, as well as the time to do a complete interior clean. However, the added COVID-19 cleaning and disinfecting requirements would increase that number considerably. Therefore, a proper clean and disinfecting of a bus would take upwards of 25 to 30 minutes per bus. Additional time per bus would be allocated for fueling of the buses and daily farebox tasks. As part of this pilot project a monthly full cleaning and twice-yearly major cleaning would also be scheduled for the buses. This type of cleaning was not included in the original outsourced contract and would be an added service level to ensure buses stay clean and that the structure and systems are maintained for the full life of the bus.

In many transit agencies, this work is typically done by a General Service Persons (GSP's). This is a classification that is not currently covered under the Collective Agreement so it would have to be discussed with our CUPE local.

Alternatively, staff from other areas of the City could be redeployed but this could raise concerns with the unionized staff.

Opportunities:

During the pandemic, Burlington Transit buses have maintained a clean interior, and this has been noticed by the passengers. Clean buses provide a positive experience for riders, many of whom have the added anxiety of commuting on public transit during a pandemic. This helps build our brand and ensures that transit continues to be a viable option for transportation across the City.

The insource cleaning pilot will help define the best process for cleaning and disinfecting buses. It is also anticipated that hiring dedicated staff to clean buses, creates consistency in the cleaning process, and generates the pride and loyalty of being a City employee.

Options Considered

The current option of outsourcing the cleaning and refueling of buses will be reviewed as part of this plan. The current contract expires on December 31, 2020; and it is not

recommended to renew until a thorough analysis of insourcing versus outsourcing can be completed. Due to the time to hire and properly train staff to perform the GSP tasks, canceling the contract is not recommended.

An RFI process will be initiated in the fall of 2020 which will add the additional cleaning requirements to the scope of work. It is anticipated that the additional requirements will add to the final contract amount; and as such the costs will be comparable.

Financial Matters:

The project would require one-time funding for the year pilot; with the intent of making this a permanent program as part of the 2021 budget cycle. A business case will be provided that will include the analysis and details from the RFI.

The pilot costs are outlined as follows:

Staffing Costs (6 full time / 4 part time) – 1 year	\$ 514,280.00
Cleaning Supplies	\$ 12,000.00
Total Cost for Insource Bus Cleaning	\$ 526,280.00
Current Outsourcing Costs (annual cost)	\$ (278,100.00)
Total Financial Impact (one-time funding for pilot)	\$ 248,180.00

Total Financial Impact

The total financial impact is \$248,180.

Source of Funding

The source of funding would be the Tax Rate Stabilization Reserve Fund.

Other Resource Impacts

This pilot project would require 7.6 FTE's this is based on hiring 6 full time General Service Persons (GSP) and 4 part time GSP's.

Climate Implications

Not Applicable.

Engagement Matters:

In June 2020, Burlington Transit engaged with transit riders and residents by launching the “Return to Service Survey”. This survey asked questions related to

how comfortable they were with using transit and what would be required for them to return to using transit. The survey was conducted throughout the month of June.

Over 440 people responded to the survey, with almost 90% of the respondents Burlington residents. Highlights of the survey include:

- 37.6% of respondents were still going to their places of employment
 - 23% of respondents were working from home
 - 83% used Burlington Transit prior to COVID-19 and 43% were using Burlington Transit during the pandemic
 - Most riders who used transit during COVID-19, did so to get groceries.
 - For riders to be comfortable using Burlington Transit, clean buses ranked the highest.
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Conclusion:

Burlington Transit is committed to providing staff and riders clean and safe buses. To ensure cleaning standards are maintained it is recommended that having this work done by dedicated staff is the best approach. A one-year pilot project would enable Burlington Transit to develop and implement a proper cleaning process. In addition, it would allow Burlington Transit staff to issue an RFI and complete a comparison of internal versus external cleaning options.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Connor

Director, Transit

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Report Approval:

All reports are reviewed and/or approved by Department Director, the Chief Financial Officer and the Executive Director of Legal Services & Corporation Council.