

New routes to downtown Halifax make daily commuting by bus possible for HRM

(Halifax, Nova Scotia, Monday, August 31, 2009) – The Honourable Peter MacKay, Minister of National Defence and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway, and the Honourable Denise Peterson-Rafuse, Minister of Community Services, on behalf of the Honourable Ramona Jennex, Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, along with His Worship Peter Kelly, Mayor of the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM), officially launched a new Regional Express Transit System today in Tantallon.

The new bus service, called MetroX, will be operated by HRM's Regional Transportation system, Metro Transit. It has been designed to provide direct, wheelchair and bike-accessible public transit to free Park & Ride lots situated along 100-series highways within HRM.

"Our Government understands that public transit plays an important role in strengthening the economy and contributing to a healthier, more sustainable environment," said Minister MacKay. "This new regional express service provides a fantastic option for people living in rural Halifax to use public transit to get them downtown, improving the daily commute for all HRM residents and their families."

"This new service will allow for future growth and help meet the ongoing transit needs of HRM," said Minister Peterson-Refuse. "It represents another step in building a greener future for all."

"We are pleased to launch this new regional express transit service, the latest in a series being developed to meet the unique requirements of our growing communities within HRM, in addition to the public transit service which has traditionally operated only in the urban core," said Mayor Kelly. "The introduction of this regional express service will provide another key ingredient in allowing HRM to move forward to expand our regional Metro Transit bus service. Infrastructure development is a priority for the Municipality as it has far reaching benefits for residents in and outside our community."

The regional express transit service will operate a fleet of 10 buses along Highway 103 from the Park & Ride Lot at Hubley Centre, which features 185 parking spaces, to the downtown Halifax core. This makes for easy connections to other Metro Transit bus services. Over the next few years, MetroX service will be expanded to other communities in the region, outside the traditional transit service boundaries, to become an integral part of an efficient regional transit network.

This nearly \$5.8 million regional transit initiative benefitted from a federal contribution of \$3.1 million from the Public Transit Capital Trust (PTCT). The province of Nova Scotia contributed \$96,000 with the remaining \$2.5 million contributed by HRM.

Please visit www.infrastructure.gc.ca for background information on the Canada – Nova Scotia Agreement on the Transfer of Federal Public Transit Funds 2006-2010.