



The Corporation of the Town of Tecumseh

Development Services

To: Mayor and Members of Council

From: Brian Hillman, Director Development Services

Date to Council: April 25, 2023

Report Number: DS-2023-08

Subject: Summary of Public Consultation and Recommendations
Regarding Proposed Changes to the Tecumseh Transit Service
Route for 2023
OUR FILE: T03 TTS

Recommendations

It is recommended:

That Report DS-2023-08 entitled “Summary of Public Consultation and Recommendations Regarding Proposed Changes to the Tecumseh Transit Service for 2023”, **be received**;

And that the changes to the Tecumseh Transit Service Route, as noted in DS-2023-08, **be authorized**.

Executive Summary

Following the conclusion of the Tecumseh Transit Service (TTS) On-Demand Pilot Program, Council authorized reverting back to a fixed-route service from Monday to Friday and continuing with on-demand service for Saturday only. In addition, Council authorized the assessment of proposed changes to the fixed-route service in the first quarter of 2023 to ensure the optimal performance of the TTS. As part of that assessment, the ridership and general public were to be consulted. This Report provides a summary of the results of the engagement process and corresponding

assessment as well as recommendations on the proposed changes to the fixed-route to be implemented on June 1, 2023.

Background

The Tecumseh Transit Service (TTS) is now into its fourteenth year of operation since it was introduced to the northerly urban area of the Town in December of 2009. Until late March of 2022, the TTS operated on a fixed-route with a one-hour schedule ("headway") covering approximately 30 kilometres and 43 stops. From March 28, 2022 to December 31, 2022, the TTS operated as an on-demand service with no fixed-route as part of a transit pilot program. The Town manages the service but contracts the operation and maintenance of the two Town-owned buses to First Student Canada.

Report [DS-2022-47](#) summarized the results of the on-demand pilot program. The Report included the following recommendation which was approved by Council on December 13, 2022:

1. reverting to the pre-pilot program fixed-route service Monday to Friday and continuing to operate as an on-demand service for Saturdays only beginning January 2, 2023;
2. negotiate an Amending Agreement to the existing Transit Delivery and Maintenance Services Agreement between the Town of Tecumseh and First Canada ULC, which will facilitate an extension to the existing contract to the end of 2023; and
3. further assess potential changes to the fixed-route in the first quarter of 2023, including public engagement, and that the findings be brought forward by way of a future report for Council's consideration.

The proposed reassessment involved potential route changes comprising the removal and/or relocation of bus stops in areas of low ridership and the introduction of new bus stops for proposed new route areas to ensure an improved level of service and dependability for the TTS. The bus has operated on a fixed-route for most of its 13 years, however due to a gradual increase in traffic congestion over that time, it has become increasingly difficult to maintain the one-hour headway.

Accordingly, to obtain ridership/public feedback on the proposed changes, the following initiatives were undertaken:

- an Open House was held at Town Hall on April 4, 2023;
- a survey questionnaire was distributed directly to the riders on the bus;
- the same survey questionnaire was posted on the Town's website;
- an on-line survey was posted on Placespeak.

Once all the comments were obtained and tabulated, Administration met with First Student management and the bus drivers to review and discuss final recommended changes.

The purpose of this Report is to provide Council with a summary of the public feedback and to recommend changes to the TTS for implementation on June 1, 2023.

Comments

Results of the Public Consultation Process

A total of 120 surveys were distributed to users of the TTS over a two-week period ending in early April. Those surveys, combined with the comments received through Placespeak and the Open House, resulted in a total of 29 responses. A summary of the proposed changes, mapping comparing current to proposed routes, public feedback on the proposed changes and a recommended course of action on each change is provided below.

Proposed Change #1 – Re-Introduce Service to and Change Route Leading to/from Tecumseh Towne Centre Plaza

In 2018, through a previous review of the TTS service and route, the bus stop located at the Tecumseh Towne Centre Plaza was removed due to lack of ridership at this location. During the on-demand pilot project, however, ridership at this stop increased. In addition, removing this stop from the fixed-route at the cessation of the pilot project forced riders south of County Road 22 to cross the road to access the service. Given the volume and nature of traffic on County Road 22, this prompted safety concerns.

Changes to the route leading to and from the Tecumseh Towne Centre Plaza include:

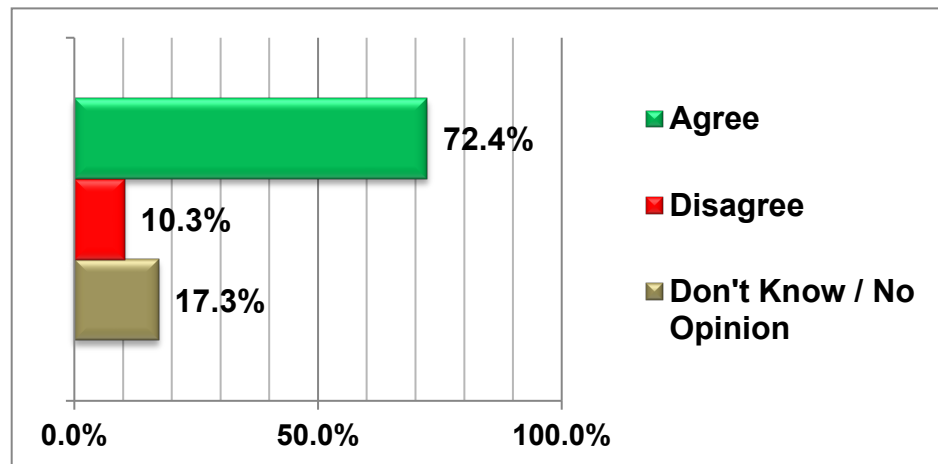
- rerouting the bus southerly from Tecumseh Road onto St. Anne's Street to Arbour Street to avoid the intersection at Tecumseh Road/Lesperance Road. The tendency for delays at this intersection resulting from increased traffic congestion during peak commuting hours prompted the need for this change;
- removal of the Renaud Street to Bedell Street route due to low ridership and adding new stops on Lesperance Road at Lanoue Street and on Tecumseh Road at Ticonderoga Park.

The foregoing changes (see map below) were in part due to the suggestions of the drivers who believed significant time savings would result, thereby enhancing the service.



Public Feedback

Overall, the majority (72.4%) of respondents were in favour of the re-installation of a bus stop at the Tecumseh Towne Centre Plaza while only 10.3% disagreed with the proposed change.



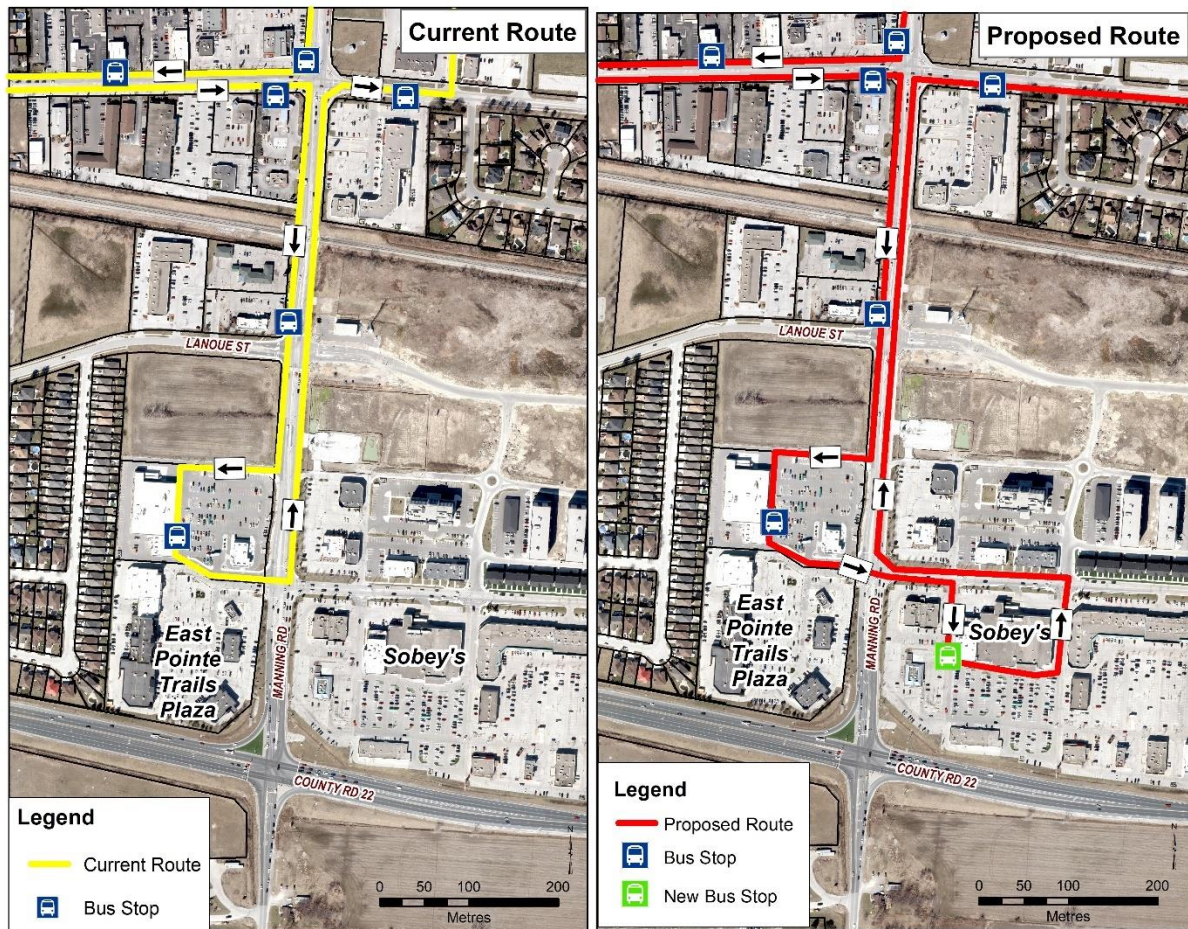
Recommendation

Based on the public feedback received, along with discussions with First Student Canada, Administration recommends that the TTS route be revised as proposed but with the following additional revision: rather than continuing northerly along Shawnee Road to Tecumseh Road, the bus would turn easterly along Arbour Street to Lesperance Road (see map below). This proposed additional revision will continue to provide access to Tecumseh Road within a reasonable walking distance while avoiding the traffic delays associated with the Tecumseh Road/Lesperance Road intersection. It will also provide better access to the service for ridership within the neighbourhoods north and south of Arbour Street.



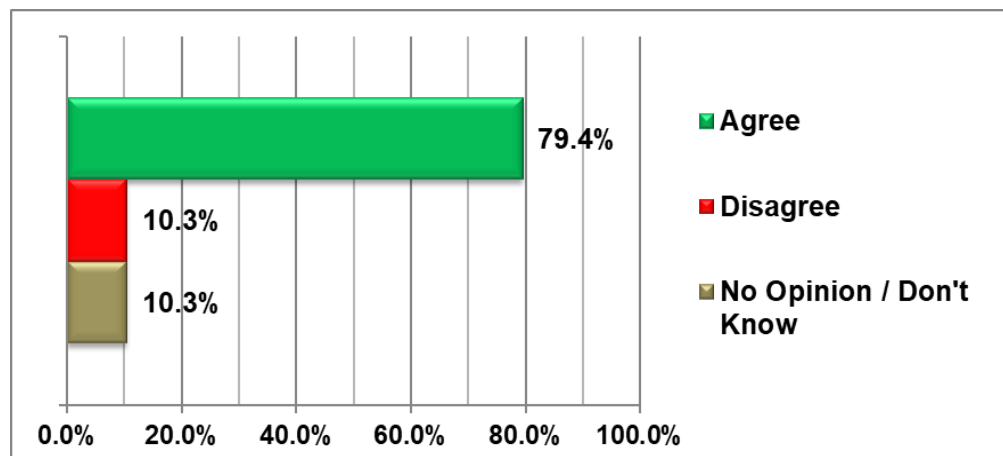
Proposed Change #2 – Re-Introduce Service to Sobeys' Plaza (Municipality of Lakeshore)

For several years, the TTS previously extended into the Municipality of Lakeshore at the Sobeys' Grocery Store located in the St. Clair Shores Shopping Centre and was a popular destination. However, once the Food Basics grocery store was constructed in the East Pointe Trails Plaza on the west side of Manning Road in Tecumseh, a new bus stop was added at that location. Due to difficulties in maintaining a one-hour headway, the Sobeys' bus stop location was removed. Accordingly, riders who wanted to access the Sobeys' grocery store or surrounding establishments in the St. Clair Shores Shopping Centre had to walk to/from the Food Basics stop, crossing Manning Road in the process.



Public Feedback

Overall, the majority (79.4%) of respondents were in favour of the proposed re-introduction of the Sobeys Plaza bus stop location while only 10.3% disagreed with it.



Recommendation

Given its popularity, it is recommended that this stop be reintroduced. This stop also provides, to a limited extent, connectivity between the Town of Tecumseh and the Municipality of Lakeshore and is consistent with the recommendations of the Shared Commercial Economic Development Strategy undertaken collaboratively by the two municipalities. Even with this extension, it is believed that time savings achieved through the other route modifications will support adherence to the one-hour headway.

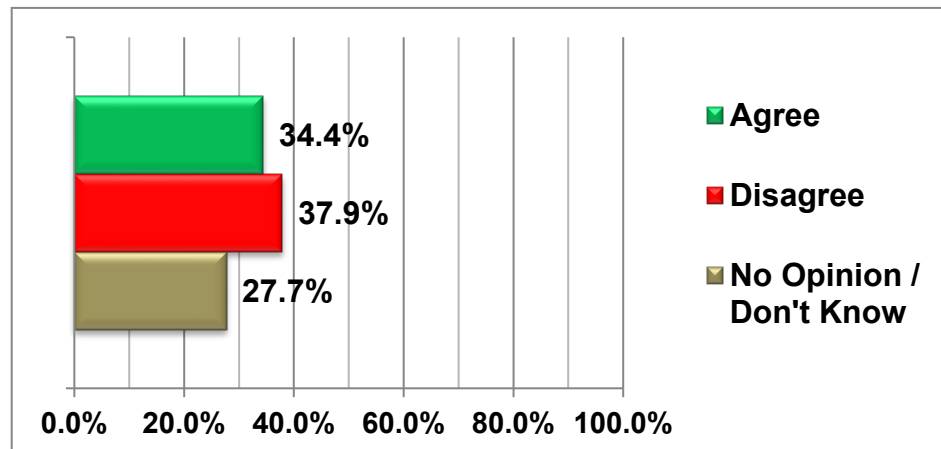
Proposed Change #3 – Removal of Brighton Road Loop

The rationale for the removal of the Brighton Road loop is the very low ridership at the bus stops located along this portion of the route and the corresponding significant time savings that would enable the reintroduction of the higher demand stops at the Sobeys's Grocery Store and Tecumseh Towne Centre Plaza while maintaining the one-hour headway. The four stops within the Brighton Road Loop (Stops 9-12) accounted for a total of 6% of all pick-up requests in 2022 during the on-demand pilot project. However, before the on-demand pilot project, when the TTS operated solely as a fixed-route service, these same stops accounted for only 1% of all ridership.



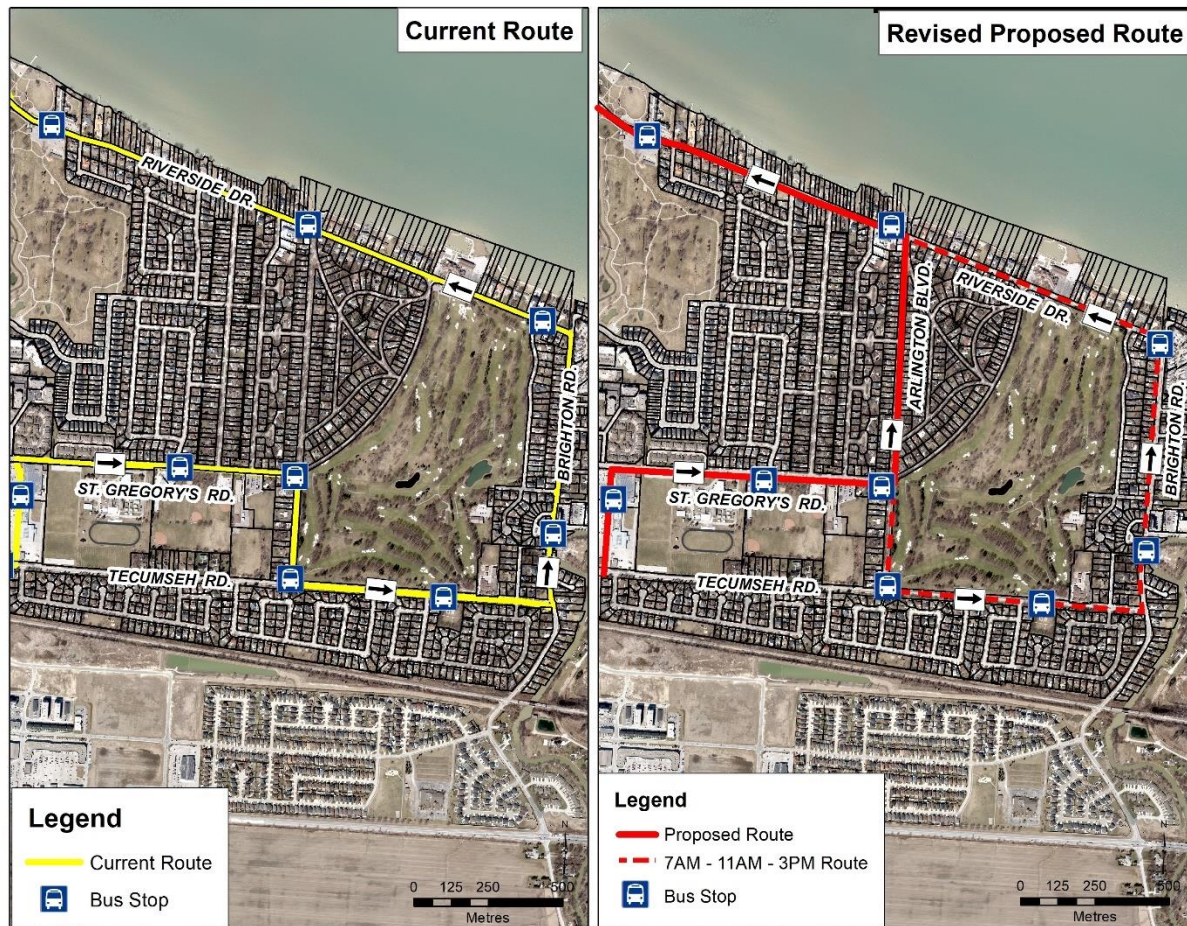
Public Feedback

Overall, 34.4% agreed with this change while 37.9% disagreed and 27.7% had no opinion.



Recommendation

Based on the public feedback received, along with discussions with First Student Canada, Administration recommends the TTS route be revised as proposed for most of the daily service. However, to maintain a basic level of service to this area, it is proposed that these stops be serviced three times per day – at 7:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., with a courtesy drop-off as necessary (see map below). These proposed changes will still provide for residents of this area to use the service while enabling the bus to better maintain its schedule for the balance of the route. It should also be noted that the Saturday on-demand service will continue to be available to these stops. The Brighton Road loop will be monitored and assessed over the course of this year to determine the feasibility of continuing to provide partial service to this area.



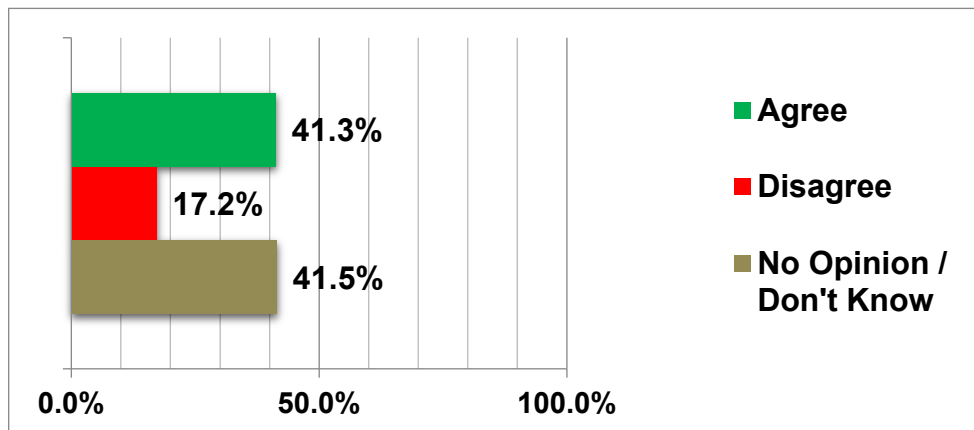
Proposed Change #4 – Relocate Route from Dillon Drive to Little River Boulevard

The Town has received requests in recent years to remove the service from Dillon Drive due to the lack of ridership. Accordingly, relocating the route from Dillon Drive to Little River Boulevard was proposed, necessitating the use of a small portion of St. Pierre Street and Wood Street to connect to Lesperance Road. This revision would still enable future residents of the Briday development to directly access the TTS through a pathway to be constructed from the development southerly to Little River Boulevard.



Public Feedback

Overall, the majority of respondents either had no opinion or were in favour (41.5 % and 41.3% respectively) of the proposed route change from Dillon Drive to Little River Boulevard. Only 17.2% of respondents disagreed with the proposed change.



Recommendation

Based on the public feedback received, together with discussions with First Student Canada, Administration recommends the TTS route be revised as proposed. Although marginal, the time savings resulting from this change will assist with maintaining the desired one-hour headway for the service.

Additional Comments/Suggestions from Ridership

In addition to the responses received with regards to the proposed route changes, the following additional comments and suggestions were submitted through the stakeholder engagement process:

- keep current route and just add more stops in high-demand areas;
- add more bus shelters and benches;
- extend service hours into the evening past 6:00 p.m.;
- extend services to Lakeshore Cinemas;
- monthly bus pass price is too high;
- TTS riders should be able to transfer onto Transit Windsor system for free;
- remove eastbound/return leg of Brouillette Court area

Currently, Administration is not recommending the implementation of the foregoing suggestions with the exception of adding more benches where appropriate.

Enhancements to the TTS, including additional hours of operation, extension of service areas and acceptance of transfers onto the Transit Windsor system, will be assessed as part of future discussions with neighbouring municipalities and service providers regarding future service integration.

Summary

It is believed that the proposed revised transit route (see Attachment 1) will enable the TTS to maintain the desired one-hour headway while improving access to most residents and key destinations within the transit service catchment area. The Saturday on-demand service will continue to operate and has been well-received since its inception in January of this year. Together, it is believed that the proposed changes to the fixed-route system and existing Saturday on-demand service will result in an improved service and higher levels of ridership.

As there are several bus stop relocations/additions necessary to accommodate the proposed route revisions, as well as a need to communicate the revisions to the ridership and community, it is recommended that the proposed changes be implemented on June 1, 2023.

Consultations

First Student Canada
Financial Services

Financial Implications

Estimated cost for the purchase and installation of bus stop signs/benches may be up to \$5,000, including the labour to install bench pads. The 2023 approved transit operating budget will be able to absorb only a portion of these costs. Should the approved transit operating budget be exceeded at year-end variance, Administration recommends funding the operating shortfall from the LC Transit Reserve. It should be noted that these expenditures are grant eligible such that up to 75% would be recoverable through the Provincial Dedicated Gas Tax Funds for Public Transportation Program.

Link to Strategic Priorities

Applicable	2019-22 Strategic Priorities
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Make the Town of Tecumseh an even better place to live, work and invest through a shared vision for our residents and newcomers.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ensure that Tecumseh's current and future growth is built upon the principles of sustainability and strategic decision-making.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Integrate the principles of health and wellness into all of Tecumseh's plans and priorities.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Steward the Town's "continuous improvement" approach to municipal service delivery to residents and businesses.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Demonstrate the Town's leadership role in the community by promoting good governance and community engagement, by bringing together organizations serving the Town and the region to pursue common goals.

Communications

Not applicable ☒

Website ☐

Social Media ☐

News Release ☐

Local Newspaper ☐

This report has been reviewed by Senior Administration as indicated below and recommended for submission by the Chief Administrative Officer.

Prepared by:

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Reviewed by:

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Reviewed by:

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Director Development Services

Recommended by:

Margaret Misek-Evans, MCIP, RPP
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachment Number	Attachment Name
1	Recommended Bus Route Map