



The Daily Gleaner

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Try Some New Ways to 'Get Around'

Being involved with the East Coast Music Awards event in Fredericton in 2008 was a highlight of my life. Many creative ideas and new initiatives came out of that event that have lived on in the event itself as it continues in other Atlantic cities, and some left a legacy here in our own city. One of those initiatives was the amazing city transit system that was set up to shuttle conference guests, organizers and music fans from venue to venue all week long, free of charge.

This idea has since been passed on to the Harvest Jazz and Blues Festival and for the second year, the festival has coordinated a Park and Ride system. Running from 3pm to 3am, each day of the event festival-goers can park their car at the FREX and head downtown to the heart of all the action with no worries of traffic congestion or limited parking space. Additionally, this year, buses have also been doing a hotel and university route transporting patrons to downtown venues. You can find the schedule on the Harvest website at <http://harvestjazzandblues.com/parkandride.html>. Take advantage of it tonight!

And coinciding with this year's Harvest Jazz and Blues Festival is the City of Fredericton's green initiative – **Free Transit Day**, happening today! The end result - our streets are less congested, our air cleaner and our lifestyle healthier. Today's Free Transit Day is very good timing considering there will be less parking downtown with street closures and the huge influx of visitors to our city.

Another great program Harvest has signed onto is **PickUp Pal**. [PickUp Pal](#) is a global eco-friendly transportation revolution, operating in 104 countries that connects drivers and passengers via their common destinations. The objectives "are to reduce carbon emissions, combat road traffic congestion, fight high gas prices and enable people to connect and improve the environment." So if you are coming from out of town or even from the north side of the city and want to carpool, check out the PickUp Pal link on the Festival website.

On a regular basis, Fredericton Transit operates 28 buses on nine routes, Monday to Saturday, 6:15 a.m. until 11 p.m., providing safe, affordable transportation. The system, like others in the country, is designed to transport people from area to area, not door to door. The goal is to have buses travel along interconnected routes, moving passengers between residential and commercial areas of the city. In an effort to maintain a balance between municipal subsidy and transit fees, the goal is a 35-45 percent cost recovery from users of the service.

Did you know that one city bus can replace 40 vehicles on our streets? A report put out by the Canadian Urban Transit Association states that there is substantial potential for public transit to reduce national GHG emissions by shifting travel from the automobile. Urban passenger travel causes 8 percent of Canada's national GHG emissions, but public transit operations cause less than 0.3 percent. Furthermore,

one passenger-kilometre of travel by public transit creates 65 percent fewer GHG emissions than the same travel by automobile. And of note, many urban centres, including Fredericton are switching to greener fuel sources for their public transit systems as well.

Because I am fortunate to live in a central location to my workplace, the grocery store, and many events and arts venues, I don't take a bus very often as I typically walk or bike. However, in early 2010 I will be traveling to the big city of Vancouver for a few months. I have already been studying the transit and commuter systems, which will be our main source of transportation and a new experience for me. I can't wait to learn all the ins and outs of mass public transportation and feel good knowing I am treading lighter on the earth.

Valerie Hillier is a Frederictonian who also tries to tread lightly; and notices when other people do too! If you have a topic you would like our Green Matters writers to write about e-mail us at greenmatters@fredericton.ca.