

**ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

Thursday, December 17, 2009

- PRESENT:** Councillor Jennifer Watts, Vice Chair
Mr. Friedemann Brauer
Ms. Janet Barlow
Mr. Michael Beiswanger
Mr. Ibrahim Orengo
Mr. Ted Scrutton
Mr. Steve Bedard
Mr. Tom Boyd
- REGRETS:** Councillor Linda Mosher, Chair
Mr. Walter Regan
Ms. Gai Thomas
Ms. Allison MacDonald
- STAFF:** Ms. Roxane MacInnis, Transportation Demand Management
Planner, Regional Planning
Ms. Jessie Debaie, Assistant Regional Trails Coordinator,
Regional Planning
Mr. Roddy MacIntyre, Transportation Engineer
Ms. Gabrielle Riley-Gallagher, Active Living Coordinator
Mr. Tylor McDuff, Legislative Support

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The Vice Chair called the meeting to order at 3:57 p.m. at the Bloomfield Centre, 2786 Agricola Street, Halifax.

2. COMMITTEE UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Regan, via email, reported on the Trail Opening in Bedford on Dec. 5th, noting that about 30 people attended for the ribbon cutting. He added that Macintosh Run in Spryfield had also opened.

Mr. Phillip Hammond, Community Developer, updated the Committee on the upcoming facilitated meeting in January 2010. He explained that Community Development have done similar workshops with other Council Committees and that these workshops focus on purpose and group process. He asked that any ideas be submitted to Ms. Debaie, Assistant Regional Trails Coordinator, or through the Chair or the Legislative Assistant.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - November 19, 2009

MOVED BY Mr. Boyd, seconded by Ms. Barlow, that the minutes of November 19, 2009 be approved as presented. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS

Additions:

- 9.1 2009/2010 Focus Area Report - Councillor Watts
- 9.2 Shifting to Sustainable Transportation - Councillor Watts

The agenda was accepted as amended.

5. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

5.1 School Travel Planning - Ms. Janet Barlow, Active and Safe Routes to School, Ecology Action Centre

- November 19, 2009 letter to Councillor Linda Mosher from Janet Barlow requesting funding for Active and Safe Routes to School was submitted.
- Making Tracks: HRM Funding Proposal was submitted.
- Revised School Travel Planning Project Multi-Partner Funding Proposal was submitted

Ms. Barlow provided the presentation on the Active and Safe Routes to School project (ASRTS) with the intention of requesting a letter of support from the Committee.

Ms. Barlow explained that ASRTS is a partnership between the NS Department of Health Promotion and Protection and the Ecology Action Centre. She stated that the purpose of ASRTS was to get children, youth and families involved in active transportation.

Ms. Barlow described the various components that make up the ASRTS program. She indicated a school could receive assistance with the development of a comprehensive School Travel Plan or access individual components that include incentive for students to engage more active transportation or safety training for walking, biking, skateboarding and in-line skating. She advised that a report was currently being compiled around school locations and surrounding infrastructure with the intent of establishing a school siting policy in Nova Scotia.

Ms. Barlow reported that establishing a School Travel plan was a two-year process. She stated that the first year involves setting up a team, collecting data, action planning and implementation, which leads to the development and implementation of a School Travel Plan in the second year.

Ms. Barlow indicated that there were seven schools currently in the program and that current data, based on one year only, indicated that active transportation to these schools increased by two percent.

Ms. Barlow noted that HRM should support ASRTS as it produces results and also supports health promotion in schools. She indicated that the ASRTS program supports the Nova Scotia safety mandate and also recognizes students who walk to school. She explained that provinces across Canada and many other countries do School Travel Planning and are achieving results. She added that the project supports other municipal and provincial initiatives such as the physical education strategy, pedestrian safety concerns, the Nova Scotia Road Safety Strategy, sustainable transportation as well as efforts to reduce the impacts of climate change.

Ms. Barlow reported that the EAC hoped to get the project started by April 2010 and the cost for one year was \$60,000 however they are hoping to access funding for two years. She explained that they are currently approaching Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations and the Department of Education. She added that they have also approached other potential partners such as the Halifax Regional School Board, HRM, Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board and the Cape Breton Regional Municipality.

Ms. Barlow indicated that the EAC are asking for \$8750 specifically from HRM and that they are seeking an additional \$6200 from HRM to support Making Tracks. She explained that Making Tracks was already being delivered in some schools and community centres, noting that it teaches children and youth safety around walking, biking, skateboarding and in line skating.

A discussion ensued regarding the Committee's ability to recommend funding for the proposal. Ms. MacInnis noted that regarding the Active Transportation Plan, no actual budget was required and it had been accepted in principal alone. She indicated that capital funding for sustainable transportation varied and that the budget for next year was not looking promising.

Councillor Watts indicated that the Ecology Action Centre already receives funding for some projects in the form of grants and this fact confuses the issue with regards to another request.

Mr. Scrutton highlighted that the education piece was vital and stressed that the Ecology Action Centre is well suited to these types of projects and that there should be a mechanism to allow groups to pursue these types of activities.

Mr. Hammond noted that this issue could be looked at during the facilitated meeting in January.

Councillor Watts requested a more detailed budget of the ASRTS project so the Committee could explore what other support may be available.

6. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS - None

7. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS, AND PRESENTATIONS

7.1 Correspondence - None

7.2 Petitions - None

7.3 Presentations

7.3.1 Nova Scotia Bikeways Vision - Nova Scotia Health Promotion and Protection Staff

Ms. Suzanne Fuller, from NS Health and Promotion Protection, presented to the Committee on The Nova Scotia Blue Route. She stated that the idea developed from three consecutive summits of the bicycling community and uses the Velo Quebec and

Route Verte Model. She explained that Phase One included an inventory of existing assets, identifying gaps and making recommendations and that they were now presenting the results from the first phase to local and provincial officials.

Ms. Fuller indicated that the vision of The Nova Scotia Blue Route was that all municipalities in NS should be accessible by safe bikeways. She explained that bicycle infrastructure and bikeways planning were integrated into transportation strategies at municipal, provincial and federal levels.

Ms. Fuller differentiated between bikeways software and bikeways hardware. She explained that bikeways software includes mapping and planning, education, social marketing, creating a “bicycle culture,” promotion, and active and safe routes to school. She added that bikeways hardware includes bike racks and parking, Share the Road signs, bike route signs, lane painting and dividers, a shoulder paving, and workplace infrastructure.

Ms. Fuller indicated that according to a study done in Denmark, one dollar in health care spending is saved for every mile cycled. She reported on the relevance of bikeways to transportation infrastructure as paved shoulders have long term benefits for road maintenance.

Ms. Fuller noted the key recommendations of the Nova Scotia Blue Route as follows:

- To create or evolve a dedicated organization to move the vision forward
- To create an interdepartmental active transportation committee at the provincial level
- To establish an active transportation seat on the Tourism Partnership Council
- To create a bikeways coordinator/liaison at Transportation Infrastructure Renewal.

Ms. Fuller reported that the Tourism Industry of Nova Scotia (TIANS) has included a vision for bikeways and pointed to the need to develop an overarching provincial bicycle policy. She explained that bicycle networks needed to be integrated into transportation planning at the municipal and provincial levels as well as into community sustainability plans and school board policies for active transportation.

Ms. Fuller expanded on HRM’s specific role in The Blue Route. She stated that HRM was the centre of the provincial network and could provide leadership for urban and suburban infrastructure as well as provide a model for bicycle culture in Atlantic Canada.

Ms. Fuller indicated that the report can be downloaded from eastlinkcycle.com.

A discussion on the presentation ensued.

Mr. Ken Reashor, Acting Director of the Traffic Authority, reported that there was an Active Transportation account that currently contained half a million dollars. He stated that attempts were made to spread the money out as much as possible by consolidating capital works projects.

Mr. Reashor suggested that the Committee could exercise its advisory capacity in order to support the Active Transportation fund by making a recommendation as a push is needed to get more money into roadway projects so Active Transportation infrastructure could be realized.

Mr. MacIntyre noted that a barrier in HRM was that many of the roads are narrow and would cost available parking space in order to include bike lanes, noting that parking was already an issue on the peninsula.

MOVED BY Ms. Barlow, seconded by Mr. Brauer, that the Active Transportation Advisory Committee send a letter to Council requesting consideration that the allotted \$500,000 for infrastructure be maintained for the upcoming year during budget deliberations. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Ms. Barlow suggested that the letter should noted the various departments impacted, including Transportation Demand Management, community development and active transportation.

7.3.2 Active Transportation Plan - Mr. Steve Bedard, Halifax Cycling Coalition

This item was deferred to the next regular agenda.

7.3.3 Nova Scotians Promoting Active Transportation on Community Trails

- NS PATS Policy Paper was submitted.
- NS PATS Newsletter was submitted.

Ms. Debaie provided the presentation on behalf of Nova Scotians Promoting Active Transportation on Community Trails (NSPAT), explaining that it was a group of different regional groups that were looking at using existing railways as greenways. She noted that packages have been sent to officials at all levels of government and dialogue has been opened with other stakeholders and potential partners in order to move forward with one unified voice.

A map was displayed showing existing rails in Nova Scotia.

Ms. Debaie noted that the railroads were constructed where people live and therefore provide access to large segments of the population. She advised that a newsletter was scheduled to be issued in February and the group would like HRM to add some material.

8. REPORTS

8.1 Proposed 2010 Meeting Schedule

- 2010 Meeting Schedule was before the Committee.

The schedule was approved with the acknowledgement that some dates or times may need to be changed.

9. ADDED ITEMS

9.1 09/10 Council Focus Area Report

Councillor Watts noted that the 09/10 Council Focus Area Report had been completed and asked members for their review, noting that comments and feedback could be forwarded to Ms. Debaie.

9.2 Shifting to Sustainable Transportation Report

Councillor Watts indicated that the Sustainable Transportation Report involved HRM's city environment unit from Dalhousie University, the Ecology Action Centre, HRM's Sustainable Environment Mentor Program and Transport 2000.

Councillor Watts asked that a link to the report be sent out to members for their review.

10. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no one wishing to speak at this time.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was scheduled for January 21, 2010 at 2:00 p.m.

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:47 p.m.

Tylor McDuff
Legislative Support