

BIKEWAYS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

NOTES

March 22, 2004

PRESENT: Ken LeMoine
John Smith
Candace Stevenson, *Acting Chair*
Gerald Walsh

ABSENT: Angela Bischoff, Vice-Chair (regrets)
Heather Deighan (regrets)
Ward Skinner
Councillor Stephen D. Adams (regrets)
Councillor Sheila Fougere, Chair (regrets)
Councillor Krista Snow (regrets)

STAFF: Mr. David McCusker, Regional Planning Manager Transportation
Ms. Roxanne MacInnis, TDM Coordinator
Ms. Maria Jacobs, Planner I, Regional Planning (Trails)
Mr. Geoff Wright, Metro Transit
Chris Newson, Legislative Assistant

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The Legislative Assistant called the meeting to order at 12:08 pm without quorum present. Ms. Candace Stevenson answered the call for a volunteer Chair for this meeting.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - February 25, 2004

Deferred to next meeting.

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

Move: Items 7.1 & 7.2 Presentations to be dealt with first on the agenda.

Additions: 4.1.4 Bike Plan Priorities 2004 - Ms. Roxanne MacInnis

The Committee **agreed to** the agenda as amended.

7. PRESENTATIONS:

7.1 MacDonald Bridge Update - Ms. Hanita Koblents

- A copy of the Brunswick Street Bikeway Connection Study, May 2001 was before the Committee.
- Ms. Koblents circulated three copies of maps that were not included in the copies of the CBCL report.

Ms. Koblents introduced herself to the Committee as a Landscape Architect/Planner with a background in assisting consultants with important documents on bicycling including HRM's *Blueprint for a Bicycle Friendly HRM* as well as the 2001 CBCL *Brunswick Street Bikeway Connection Study* that looked specifically at bridge issues. She further advised she has been attending the Ecology Action Centre's Transportation Issues Committee for the last few months where the issue of bicycle access to the bridge was raised.

Ms. Koblents explained she offered to summarize the 2001 CBCL study for the Ecology Action Centre Committee and subsequently was asked to present to the Bikeways Advisory Committee. She added she would also be presenting, on Ms. Angela Bishcoff's behalf, a recommendation from the Ecology Action Centre's Transportation Issues Committee on how to move forward with the issue of bicycles on the bridge.

Ms. Koblents presented the May 2001 CBCL study entitled: *Brunswick Street Bikeway Connection Study*.

Upon completion of her presentation Ms. Koblents presented the recommendation of the Ecology Action Centre's Transportation Issues Committee as:

- 1. Allow shared use pathways for one season on the bridge on a trial basis only. This would be a simple solution to a complex problem.**
- 2. Survey bicycle/pedestrian traffic before and after the change to gauge how well the program is working.**
- 3. Further recommendations to be made after the trial period and survey are complete.**

Ms. Koblents added the rationale for this recommendation is that it would:

- Minimize conflict between cyclists, pedestrians and motor vehicles.
- Would provide most direct route/convenient connections for both user groups.
- Tourism benefit -tourists could take pictures from the bridge.
- Has worked well in other cities/seems to be the most commonly used approach.
- Numerous precedents in various communities throughout North America with benefits to both pedestrians and cyclists.
- Could paint stripping on lanes to separate pedestrian/cyclists and aid directional flow of users.
- Provides a potential solution to HRM's number one bike issue at virtually no cost to HRM, the tax payer or the Halifax-Dartmouth Bridge Commission.
- If the shared pathways do not work, then the structure options could be reviewed.

The Committee thanked Ms. Koblents for her presentation.

Comments from the Committee upon ensuing discussion:

- One thing that is *not* comparable is the grades. As a suspension bridge our bridge is a preambing curve and the High Level, AB bridge is more level. The speed the bicycle(s) could obtain coming on the down side of the bridge and with pedestrians mixed in there it is a concern.
- Option 6 - The Serpentine Route - in the CBCL report (Appendix "A"), is a serpentine path. This option was dismissed as being too dangerous and ineffective for cyclists. It does have some possibilities and is not an expensive option. Some do use this slope to get down from the southside walkway to Barrington Street. Mr. McCusker proposed a single hairpin curve pathway/steps/bicycle rail down this slope. Approximate cost would be roughly \$80,000.00.
- HRM is putting together a list of transportation infrastructure projects to submit to the Federal Government on the strategic highway infrastructure program. Pedestrian and bicycle projects will be included on this list, such as a pedestrian/bicycle overpass on

the circumferential highway between Highfield Park/Burnside and also a grade separated solution to the MacDonald Bridge. A draft list will be put forward to Regional Council for their consideration.

- Most constructive thing to do would be for this Committee to take forward a recommendation to the Bridge Commission today.
- We should have more information first. The door is open for discussion with bridge Commission therefore we should be clear with our proposals before we approach them.
- Signalized crosswalk was never accepted by HRM Traffic Services nor the Bridge Commission.
- EAC strongly recommend the one year trial shared pathway option.
- **A Member of the public - Wayne Broscoe** (permission given by Committee) commented the serpentine proposal is important to consider on its own merit even if it were solely for use by pedestrians. Also, another proposed multi-use pathway to lead from end of the bridge on the Halifax side to downtown Halifax along Barrington Street and there is a great opportunity for it on the unused land. The present use pattern of the Bridge - does not serve cyclists as they cannot get to anywhere from the Halifax side of the bridge. It is absolutely common for cities to have shared use pathways on both sides of the bridges. In favour of Option 1 or Option 2 especially if infrastructure funding could be obtained for them and it could be done in the short term.
- Should go forward with Option 1, the \$600,000 bridge suggestion and consideration given to the discussion from the Bikeways Task Force.
- Bi-directional proposed modes not a go then compromise with graduated steps - to have uni-direction cyclists, bi-directional pedestrians on both sides then move towards going with EAC's proposal.
- Should review in more detail Option 1 and the option of staircase, serpentine path presented by Mr. David McCusker which was one of the alternatives rejected in the CBCL study.

Mr. John Smith suggested that EAC (Ecology Action Centre) bring details of a motion of proposal to the next meeting for consideration by the Bikeways Advisory Committee regarding approaching the Halifax-Dartmouth Bridge Commission.

Mr. Dave McCusker added \$600,000 will be included in the draft budget for projects. He will also provide more information on the grades for the next meeting.

7.2 BRT (Bus Rapid Transit)

- A copy of the *Innovation Towards Integrated Bus Rapid Transit* Proposal by Halifax Regional Municipality to Transport Canada under the Urban Transportation Showcase Program was before the Committee.

Mr. Geoff Wright, Metro Transit, presented the Bus Rapid Transit proposal which includes bikeways and trails connections to the BRT service. He added Ms. Roxanne MacInnis is the Bikeways/Trails Coordinator for the BRT project and Mr. Dave McCusker, also involved with the BRT Showcase, are available to respond to any questions.

The following points were raised during the ensuing discussion:

- Final approval for the bike racks on buses has not been given but it is not expected to be a major hurdle.
- Bikes integrating with buses at intersections - Mr. Wright explained that a Request for Proposal has been submitted regarding designing this aspect and how it will be treated.
- There will be a major education program on how to use the bike racks.
- Suggested that information be available to the cyclists / bus drivers on interacting with each other.
- Suggestion for bike rack design to include a section for advertisement/information and perhaps an information board for cyclists at approach to bridge.
- There will be Park & Rides (free parking) at the BRT terminals.
- Harbourside Trail connecting to the Woodside Terminal - currently cyclists can take their bikes on the ferry. There may be an increase in this.
- Queue jumping lanes were discussed. Mr. Wright explained the details to the Committee.
- The BRT Terminals will have a coffee shop/washrooms.
- Route scheduling information will be available at the terminals.

The Committee thanked Mr. Wright for his presentation.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

4.1 Status Sheet Items

4.1.1 MacDonald Bridge Background Information

- An e-mail dated March 2, 2004 from Ms. Heather Deighan was before the Committee.
- A copy of the Brunswick Street Bikeway Connection Study by CBCL was before the Committee.

Ms. Hanita Koblents made her presentation on this issue. *See comments under Section 7.1, pages 3-5.*

4.1.2 HRM Bikeways Blueprint

- A copy of the HRM Bikeways Blueprint booklet was before the Committee.

This was distributed as background information for the Committee. No further action required.

4.1.3 HRM's Bike Route Map

- A copy of the HRM Bike Route Map (*draft*) was before the Committee.

The Committee agreed to form a Bike Map Sub-Committee with the following members volunteering to serve on this sub-committee: Mr. John Smith, **Ms. Rebecca O'Brien of TRAX**,* Ms. Maria Jacobs, and Mr. Gerard Walsh. This Sub-Committee will use HRM's Bikeways Blueprint and the draft bike route map as well as comments from the Bikeways Advisory Committee to produce an up-to-date bike route map, including secondary routes, for distribution during the Public Works week/Bike Week. Written comments could be sent by e-mail to Ms. Maria Jacobs at jacobsm@region.halifax.ns. The Sub-Committee will provide verbal updates at the Bikeways Advisory Committee meetings.

4.1.4 Bike Plan Priorities 2004 - Ms. Roxanne MacInnis

- A copy of the Bicycle Plan Implementation Capital Priorities 2004-05 was circulated to the Committee.
- Mr. Gerard Walsh circulated the Bicycle Nova Scotia Bike Plan Implementation 2004 Priorities. (*to be included with the Bicycle Plan Implementation Capital Priorities 2004-05 report*).

Ms. Roxanne MacInnis presented her report.

The following comments were raised during the ensuing discussion:

- This report will be going forward to Regional Council during budget discussions.
- The \$600,000.00 will be on the larger Federal/Provincial infrastructure list and it is uncertain when this item will go forward to Regional Council.

No further discussion occurred at this time.

5. **CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS** - None

6. **REPORTS**

6.1 REPORT FROM BIKE WEEK SUB-COMMITTEE - verbal update

Ms. Roxanne MacInnis and Mr. John Smith advised the Sub-Committee met on March 15th and are going forward with plans for the Bike Week. A meeting with HRM staff was also held on March 15th regarding bike week. HRM would prefer Bike Week be driven by the community groups as it is a community event. The theme this year has been determined to be a family oriented Bike Week. It was determined that minutes from these meetings would be sent to

the Legislative Assistant for circulation in the Bikeways Advisory Committee's agenda packages.

6.2 STAFF REPORT

6.2.1 Revised Terms of Reference

- A staff report dated March 16, 2004 was before the Committee.

The Legislative Assistant presented the report. Regional Council recommended the vacant position be filled by an appropriate Automobile Association such as the Canadian Automobile Association rather than a member at large.

MOVED BY Mr. John Smith, seconded by Mr. Ken LeMoine that CAA be approached to appoint a representative on the Bikeways Advisory Committee.

Deferred to next meeting.

7. PRESENTATIONS

7.1 MacDonald Bridge Update

Dealt with earlier in the meeting. *See pages 3-5.*

7.2 BRT (Bus Rapid Transit)

Dealt with earlier in the meeting. *See pages 5 & 6.*

8. ADDED ITEMS

8.1 Added Items - None

8.2 New Business - None

9. NEXT MEETING DATE - Friday, April 15, 2004, 12:00 - 2:00 pm.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:10 pm.

Chris Newson
Legislative Assistant