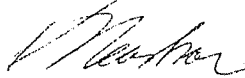


**Transportation Standing Committee  
May 26, 2011**

**TO:** Chair and Members of Transportation Standing Committee



**SUBMITTED BY:** Ken Reashor, P.Eng., Director, Public Works & Transportation

**DATE:** April 24, 2011

**SUBJECT:** ecoMOBILITY Project: Second Initiative

**ORIGIN**

At its December 13, 2010 meeting, Peninsula Community Council passed a motion that staff prepare a second submission to Halifax Regional Council of an initiative for the ecoMOBILITY project and that this initiative consist of a Halifax Commons Pay-and-Display component and a Neighbourhood Parking by Permit Only expansion component.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Transportation Standing Committee recommend to Regional Council the ecoMOBILITY project proceed with a Halifax Commons Pay-and-Display component and a Neighbourhood Parking by Permit Only expansion component as described in this report.

## **BACKGROUND**

HRM's ecoMOBILITY Project was approved for the purpose of submitting a funding proposal to Transport Canada at the May 27, 2008 meeting of Regional Council, item 10.1.4. Once funding was awarded through a competitive process, the project was confirmed at the April 28, 2009 meeting of Regional Council, item 11.1.1.

At the January 26, 2010 meeting of Regional Council (item 10.1.1) staff presented a recommendation to move forward with one component of that project. An initiative to implement Parking by Permit Only on streets around the Halifax Commons was recommended by staff, moved, and defeated.

## **DISCUSSION**

HRM's ecoMOBILITY project contains two sub-projects: Guaranteed Ride Home and the Sustainable Transportation Migration Fund. This report deals exclusively with the Sustainable Transportation Migration Fund.

The Sustainable Transportation Migration Fund recognizes that the street network in HRM's Regional Centre is limited in how much additional traffic loading it can bear. While making investments in transit and active transportation can be fruitful in encouraging some trips away from cars, measures that influence the trip choice in an economic sense are likely required to make the meaningful changes necessary.

Within the scope of the ecoMOBILITY project, the idea was to introduce minor, yet tangible, measures to convey to the public the idea that the choice to commute to work by car into the Regional Centre is placing a social, environmental and fiscal burden on HRM. The Sustainable Transportation Migration Fund has been established as a mechanism to place new user charges on those who choose to commute by car and to channel those funds directly to projects that enhance alternative commuting choices. Ultimately, those charges could be as aggressive as cordon tolls and/or fuel surtax. Initially, it was felt that this message could be conveyed through charging moderate rates for on-street parking that is currently available for free. Public response to such a measure would be measured to help guide decisions on the feasibility and acceptability of extending the program.

The initiative originally proposed by HRM staff was to designate approximately 300 parking spaces around the Halifax Commons as Parking by Permit Only. This would effectively require users of those spaces to pay for a monthly permit to park rather than parking there all day for free as they currently do. Many points of concern were raised by Regional Council regarding this proposal. Some of those points were fundamentally opposed to the concept of adding a new cost to the choice of commuting by car, but many were concerns only about the specifics of the initiative recommended and not the idea in principle.

Despite being unable to adopt the first proposed ecoMOBILITY initiative, staff believes it is important to the integrity of the project and its external funders that another effort be made to

implement a trial measure. As this project has its most profound effect on the Halifax Peninsula, staff undertook the step of discussing a modified initiative with Peninsula Community Council first.

#### COMPONENT 1: COMMONS PARKING PAY-AND-DISPLAY

Some concern was expressed by Regional Council about the application of Parking by Permit Only to the Commons area as well as limiting the ability of some to find short-term parking. The use of “pay-and-display” technology may be a better approach to management of parking in this area. A proposed layout, which scales down the area originally planned for paid parking, is shown in Attachment One. Staff do not believe that implementation of this initiative will result in all-day parkers being pushed out into adjacent residential areas. The rate for parking will be set and adjusted based on observation, so that parking spaces are fully, or nearly fully, utilized. We believe that, in this way, for every parker who chooses to park farther out to avoid paying, another parker who currently parks farther out will move in to take that space which currently is full when they arrive.

The parking shown in Attachment One is slightly modified from what was first presented to Peninsula Community Council. The original proposal included 70 spaces, 60 of which are currently unlimited parking and the remaining 10 are two hour time limit. The revised proposal includes 90 spaces as follows:

- 30 spaces are “new” spaces (parking is not currently allowed but has been accepted as allowable parking by the Traffic Authority)
- 30 spaces are currently limited to two hour parking
- 30 spaces are unlimited

Using pay-and-display technology at this location also has the benefit of being able to convert from catering to all-day parkers for most of the year to switching to hourly parking should the proposed skating oval remain at its original location. The lack of available parking was often cited as one of the few negatives to the oval the past season.

#### COMPONENT TWO: NEIGHBOURHOOD PARKING BY PERMIT ONLY EXPANSION

HRM staff could actively seek streets and neighbourhoods experiencing infiltration of non-resident parkers to participate in the approved policy for parking by permit only. These could be streets that currently have no parking controls on them, or streets that have parking controls (ex: two hour parking) that are over or under used.

The purpose of this policy is to control the availability of parking on certain blocks to “outsiders” while retaining sufficient space for the residents who live along them. These residents are issued a Resident Exemption to the parking controls that are implemented, for which they pay \$30 per year. Once a determination is made regarding how much surplus parking space there is on the street, after the needs of the residents are accommodated, a certain number of monthly permits are made available to the public. The objective is to have a maximum of 75% of the available

parking utilized, so that spaces are always available for residents who require them and the effects of a street “saturated” with parking are avoided.

### **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

Implementation of a Sustainable Transportation Migration Fund would be achieved through the creation of a new cost centre. Revenues generated from initiatives would be used to fund sustainable transportation projects such as transit, active transportation, and transportation demand management programs.

The revenue from Component One is projected to be \$135,000 per year using a rate of \$1.50 per hour and a daily maximum of \$7.50. Component One would have both an initial capital cost and an ongoing operating cost. The initial capital cost for acquisition and installation of six pay-and-display parking machines is \$70,000. This cost can be accommodated within capital project CTR00908. The ongoing operating cost for these machines is estimated to be \$1,000 per month which includes collection of cash and processing of credit card payments. These costs would be recovered from revenues.

There is no additional cost to implementing Component Two as this is implementation of approved policy and can be applied through existing resources.

Both components add to the magnitude of on-street parking controls that HRM must enforce. As the controls proposed in this initiative are only a small fraction of all controlled parking within the region, no additional cost has been assumed.

### **FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN**

This report complies with the Municipality’s Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Project and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Project and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Community engagement on the concept of funding options for transportation was conducted through the ecoMOBILITY project. This consisted of a focus group session and an online survey which generated over one thousand responses.

Information on Component One of has been sent to the following groups:

- ☐ Downtown Halifax Downtown Business Commission
- ☐ Spring Garden Road Merchants Association
- ☐ Quinpool Road Merchants Association
- ☐ QEII Health Sciences Centre
- ☐ Citadel High School

The three business associations have raised no concern with Component One. The Quinpool Road Merchants Association has expressed concern regarding the potential of Component Two to take away from customer and employee parking supply on side streets along Quinpool Road.

Upon receipt of information regarding Component One, the QEII Health Sciences Centre asked HRM staff to meet with employees and clients of the centre to discuss the project and receive feedback. Feedback was predominantly opposed to the loss of free on-street parking.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

As an alternative to the recommendation, the Transportation Standing Committee may choose to:

- (1) direct staff to proceed with preparation of a proposal to Regional Council based on one, but not both, of the components described,
- (2) direct staff to proceed with a different initiative that would generate revenue from vehicle drivers consistent with the Sustainable Transportation Migration Fund goal,
- (3) direct staff to discontinue efforts in developing an ecoMOBILITY initiative. This alternative is not recommended as it would reflect badly on HRM's commitment to its funding partners in exploring mechanisms that support sustainable transportation through charges to those choosing to commute by driving.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

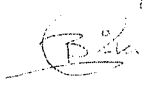
Attachment One: Proposed Areas for Pay-and-Display Parking

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A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/commcoun/cc.html> then choose the appropriate Community Council and meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

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