

ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

NOTES

October 17, 2005

PRESENT: Patrick Harrington, Chair
Councillor Gary Meade
Joeanne Coffey
Mary Newcombe
Gus "Warren" Reed, Vice Chair

REGRETS Jen Powley
Nancy Mann
Betty Macdonald
Councillor Patrick Murphy (Absent)
Meredith Hutchings (Absent)
Terry Myer (Absent)
Mary Wallworth (Absent)
Lynn DeMont (Absent)
Jeff Wall (Absent)

STAFF: Ms. Tatjana Zatelo, Diversity Consultant
Superintendent Cliff Falkenham, Halifax Regional Police
Mr. Larry Hilton, Supervisor, Special Services, Metro Transit
Mr. Geoff Wright, Project Manager, Metro Transit
Ms. Stephanie Parsons, Legislative Assistant

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The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m. without a quorum being present in Halifax Hall, City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street.

The Legislative Assistant circulated an e-mail dated October 17, 2005 regarding the Bringing Transit Home Conference.

The Committee agreed to hear the HRM Active Transformation Plan and Metro Link Presentations.

1. HRM Active Transportation Plan

Mr. Chris Lowe, Chief Planner, SGE Acres, advised the Committee that the Active Transportation Plan is almost complete. The Active Transportation Plan is an effort to encourage a healthy life style.

The Steering Committee had requested that SGE Acres analyze what HRM currently has in the context of the Regional Plan and determine if it makes sense today and if it will make sense over the next 20 years. A draft plan will be presented to the Steering Committee the first week of November.

A series of public consultation workshops will be scheduled and the Advisory Committee for Persons With Disabilities is encouraged to attend. The next phase will consist of an implementation strategy and management component. One of the key management components is the ability of HRM to manage liability and risk. Costing and funding details should be complete by December 2005, the final program will be completed in January 2006.

The plan will include recommendations for marketing and promoting active transportation in HRM. The primary objective is to create a plan that will create a healthy community.

In response to questions from the Committee Mr. Lowe advised of the following:

- The dates of the public consultation meetings are being confirmed by Ms. Roxanne MacInnis, Planner, HRM.
- All cities and municipalities are looking at ways to reduce their transfer risk by looking at innovative opportunities. For example, when a new development is approved, there maybe a need to compare it to a health impact statement. An example is, how healthy is this new subdivision for seniors. Mr. Lilly, Planner SGE Acres advised that there are design principles that include crime prevention through environmental design.
- Recommendations and an implementation schedule by year will be provided. There are solutions that are moderately priced that have a positive impact.

- Parking is not part of the mandate. However, they understand that restrictions on parking would encourage active transportation and make it more difficult to use a vehicle.
- Some municipalities have implemented policies that require a portion of the operating budget be allocated to active transportation.
- Some challenges of HRM are climate, geography and development patterns. An HRM solution is required. HRM cannot copy what other cities have done.

The Chair thanked Mr. Lowe and Mr. Lilly for their presentation.

2. Metro Link

Mr. Larry Hilton, Supervisor, Special Services, Metro Transit provided an overview of the Metro Link Service and informed the Committee of the following:

- C The service is a result of two years of planning after HRM was awarded funding through Transport Canada's Urban Transportation Showcase Program. The program is designed to attract new riders to public transit and ultimately help reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

Mr. Geoff Wright, Project Manager, Metro Transit informed the Committee of the following:

- C HRM's Rapid Transit Showcase is a \$13.3 million project which entails the establishment of two Metro Link corridors using Transit Signal Priority and limited station stops to reduce trip times.
- C Transport Canada is contributing \$4.1 million toward the Metro Link service. The Province of Nova Scotia contributed \$780,000, while HRM contributed 8.5 million.
- C Approximately nine million was spent on vehicles. The remainder was spent on the infrastructure.
- C Other features of the new MetroLink service include air conditioning, highway-coach style seats, padded seating; bicycle racks and large Park & Ride Lots at the terminals. The terminal is heated in the winter and provides air conditioning the summer. It also includes public washrooms. Staff is considering the addition of coffee kiosks.
- C Phase II of the MetroLink service is expected to be introduced in Sackville by February 2006.

In response to questions from the Committee Mr. Hilton advised of the following:

- C Two wheelchairs can be accommodated on the bus.
- C The car parking lot is at capacity.
- C The Metro Link bus is used mainly by able-bodied persons. This could be a result of the door to door service that Access A Bus provides.
- C Staff is considering the possibility of a shuttle to take Access A Bus users to the Portland terminal.
- C The Access A Bus does not have priority signaling.

In response to questions from the Committee Mr. Wright advised of the following:

- C The Transit Signal Priority is not automatic. A receiver is activated by the presence of a bus in the Transit Queue Jump Lanes. If the signal is green, it extends the time it remains green and shortens the red signal in advance of an intersection. This provides transit with priority over other vehicle movements at the intersection.
- C The Transit Signal Priority does not give full priority clearance to the intersection like the Fire Emergency Vehicles. It completes the entire cycle. The Transit Priority Signal is made by 3M. The Traffic Signal Controller is made by a different company. Staff will contact Traffic Services to determine the impact on pedestrian signals.
- C The Metro Link is D435 compliant. The wheelchair backs up to the iron board that has one strap. It allows the person to lock the wheelchair in place. It also accommodates scooters.
- C Staff is considering the use of Tactile Warning strips at transit stops.

The Chair thanked staff for their presentation.

3. Membership

Committee members raised concern regarding the participation level of some of the members. The Chair advised the Committee of those members whose terms expire in November.

4. Accessible Playground Update

Mr. Gus Reed provided an update and noted the following:

- C Construction of the playground has been deferred until spring 2006 due to a six-week delay in the delivery of the equipment.
- C There was an extra \$30,000 which allowed the Committee to add some additional features.

- C The Ronald Macdonald foundation has expressed interest in the playground.
- C There is concern that once the playground is complete that people will lose interest. He suggested that the Recreation Department add a regular program of events for the playground.

There was a brief discussion regarding supervision at playgrounds. Councillor Meade advised that HRM does not provide supervised playgrounds. He further advised that a wheelchair accessible stop, Access A Bus service and ramps are required

The Chair advised that the Hamilton accessibility audit tool will not be available until the end of October.

5. ADOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:04 p.m.

Stephanie Parsons

Legislative Assistant