



P.O. Box 1749
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Item No.

**Grants Committee
November 3, 2014**

TO: Chair and Members of the Grants Committee
Original Signed

SUBMITTED BY: _____
Eddie Robar, Director, Halifax Transit

DATE: October 7, 2014

SUBJECT: Rural Transit Funding Program 2014/2015

ORIGIN

At the August 2, 2014 meeting of Regional Council, the following motion was passed:

MOVED by Councillor Dalrymple, seconded by Councillor Whitman that Halifax Regional Council:

- 1. Adopt Administrative Order Number 2014-012-ADM Respecting Grants for Rural Transit as outlined in Attachment 1 of the staff report dated June 23, 2014, and repeal the HRM Community Based Transit Funding Program approved by Regional Council on March 26, 2013.**
- 2. Approve the amendments to Administrative Order Number 2014-012-ADM Respecting Grants for Rural Transit as outlined in Attachment 2 of the Audit and Finance Standing Committee report dated July 25, 2014.**

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The Authority to expend money required by the Municipality for a grant or contribution to any charitable community organization is granted by section 79(1)(av) of the *HRM Charter*.

Administrative Order number 2014-012-ADM *Rural Transit Grants Administrative Order* provides the authority to provide grants specifically to community organizations that provide community-based transit services in rural communities within the Halifax Regional Municipality.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Grants Committee recommend that Regional Council approve the funding application submitted by Musgo Rider under Administrative Order Number 2014-012-ADM Respecting Grants for Rural Transit.

BACKGROUND

The Rural Transit Funding Program, as approved by Regional Council on August 5, 2014, provides grants to approved community based transit agencies at a flat rate \$0.50/km for every vehicle kilometer logged in-service within the Municipality, limited by budget availability from year to year. The program also provides either \$5,000 or \$10,000 in additional support per year to an organization depending on the level of service they are providing.

Applications for 2014/15 were due September 15, 2014 as the program was adopted mid-year. Quarterly payments will begin starting the third quarter of the fiscal year.

The 2014/2015 Rural Transit Funding Program received one funding request by Musgo Rider for approximately \$46,348.00, based on projected in-service kilometers.

DISCUSSION

Halifax Transit received one application to the Rural Transit Funding Program for the 2014/2015 fiscal year. This funding request is summarized below.

Musgo Rider Funding Request

Musgo Rider is a demand responsive transit service which provides door to door, accessible transportation to residents of Musquodoboit Harbour and the surrounding community. Musgo Rider has received funding from Halifax Regional Municipality in the past, and also receives annual funding from the Province of Nova Scotia to subsidize its operations.

Halifax Transit staff have reviewed the Musgo Rider Rural Transit Funding Program application submitted on September 15, 2014, and have found it to be compliant with the evaluation criteria established in Section 23 of Administrative Order Number 2014-012-ADM. These criteria and a description of the Musgo Rider application are summarized in the table below:

Table 1: Musgo Rider Application Evaluation

Evaluation Criteria	Musgo Rider Application	Criteria Met?
a) Completeness of application	Application was complete upon submission.	Yes.
b) Appropriateness of Business and Governance Model	Musgo Rider is a door to door service which operates six days per week. It is governed by a volunteer board of directors. This is an appropriate business model and governance structure for the service.	Yes.
c) Appropriateness of Market Assessment	Musgo Rider provides affordable door to door service to residents including persons with disabilities, seniors, those who are economically disadvantaged and those with limited access to transportation. Riders use Musgo Rider to travel to a variety of destinations including work, the airport, the grocery store, social events, medical appointments, and to connect to Halifax Transit services. Musgo Rider's service area extends from Lawrencetown, Lake Echo in the west to Ship Harbour in the east. The market assessment states that there are no competing services in the area which offer door to door accessible transportation.	Yes.

Table 2: Musgo Rider Application Evaluation (continued)

Evaluation Criteria	Musgo Rider Application	Criteria Met?
d) Appropriateness of Financial Assessment	Although there appear to be some inconsistencies in past financial reporting, this is not unusual for a volunteer operated organization. Ridership projections and anticipated funding for future years appear reasonable.	Yes.
e) Use of Community Resources	Musgo Rider has a volunteer board that oversees operations, and free advertisements for the service are provided by a local publication. Musgo Rider has also formed a partnership with the local medical centre and further promoted the service through local organizations.	Yes.
f) Any other matter staff considers relevant	Musgo Rider provided approximately 200 trips to residents per month in 2013/2014 and appears to be a valuable service to this community.	Yes.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

If approved, \$10,000 will be awarded to Musgo Rider immediately in accordance with the annual lump sum payment outlined in Administrative Order #2014-012-ADM *Rural Transit Grants*. In addition, payments will be made to Musgo Rider for each in-service kilometer, effective from the beginning of the fiscal year. As the program was approved part way through the fiscal year, the first three quarterly per kilometer payments will be paid out upon the submission of third quarter reporting.

Based on projections prepared by Musgo Rider at the beginning of the 2014/2015 fiscal year, it is anticipated that the per kilometer payments will be approximately \$36,348.00, reflecting the provision of 72,696 in-service kilometers in 2014/2015. Funding is commensurate with actual in-service kilometers reported, and could vary.

Funding for Rural Transit Funding Program is available in Operating Account R953. This cost centre provides funding towards implementation of the Transportation Demand Management Plan. For 2014-15, projected funding from this cost centre is \$72,000 of which \$32,000 is from parking rentals and the remaining \$40,000 from the general tax rate.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Information regarding program eligibility, application timelines, and applicant evaluation are posted on the Halifax Transit website. Legislation mandates that the general public be informed of any grant or contribution through a notice in a newspaper in circulation throughout the region. The Rural Transit Funding Program criteria were approved by Regional Council and formal reports are posted on the HRM web site and a notice publicizing awards is placed in the Municipal Notices section of the Chronicle-Herald newspaper.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

No environmental implications were identified associated with this report.

ALTERNATIVES

1. The Committee could choose not to approve the funding request made by Musgo Rider under the Rural Transit Funding Program.
2. The Committee could choose to approve some part of the funding requested by Musgo Rider.

ATTACHMENTS

None.

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/commcoun/index.php> then choose the appropriate Community Council and meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210, or Fax 902.490.4208.

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