



**ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
April 16, 2015**

PRESENT: Mr. Ben Buckwold, Vice Chair
Councillor David Hendsbee
Councillor Tim Outhit
Councillor Waye Mason
Ms. Terry Walker
Ms. Elizabeth Pugh
Ms. Juile Tompa
Mr. David Jackson
Ms. Janet Barlow

REGRETS: Mr. Walker Regan
Mr. Jeremy Josey

STAFF: Mr. David MacIsaac, TDM Program Supervisor
Ms. Hanita Koblenz, Active Transportation Coordinator
Ms. Jessie Debaie, Assistant Trails Coordinator
Ms. Sheilagh Edmonds, Legislative Assistant
Ms. Cathy Collett, Legislative Support

The following does not represent a verbatim record of the proceedings of this meeting.

*The agenda, supporting documents, and information items circulated to Active Transportation Advisory Committee are available online:
<http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/ActiveTransportationAdvisoryCommittee.php>*

The meeting was called to order at 4:04 p.m. and adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m. in Halifax Hall, City Hall.

1.1 Election of the Chair and Vice Chair

ELECTION OF CHAIR

The Legislative Assistant called for nominations for Chair of the Active Transportation Advisory Committee for 2015.

MOVED by Terry Walker, seconded by Elizabeth Pugh that Ben Buckwold be nominated as Chair of the Active Transportation Advisory Committee for 2015.

The Legislative Assistant called three times for any further nominations; there being none, the Legislative Assistant declared Ben Buckwold Chair.

ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

The Chair called for nominations for Vice-Chair of the Active Transportation Advisory Committee for 2015.

MOVED by Ben Buckwold, seconded by Elizabeth Pugh that Councillor Wayne Mason be nominated as Vice-Chair of the Active Transportation Advisory Committee for 2015.

The Chair called three times for any further nominations; there being none, the Chair declared Councillor Mason Vice-Chair.

Councillor Mason agreed that, in the absence of a willing citizen member, he would be an interim Vice Chair for six months, at which point the matter could be revisited.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – February 19, 2015

MOVED by Councillor Wayne Mason, seconded by Councillor David Hendsbee that the minutes of February 19, 2015 be approved as presented.

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

Additions: 6.1.3 Presentation: Halifax Cycling Coalition – The Creation of More Protected Bike Lanes – Mr. Ben Wedge

8.1 Janet Barlow – Adding to the membership of the Committee

Deletions: 6.1.3 Pro Walk, Pro Bike, Pro Place Conference

MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by David Jackson that the agenda be approved as amended.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES - NONE

5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS – NONE

6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS

6.1 Correspondence - NONE

6.2 Petitions- NONE

6.3 Presentation

6.3.1 The Creation of More Protected Bike Lanes – Mr. Ben Wedge, Co-Chair of the Halifax Cycling Coalition

Mr. Ben Wedge, Co-Chair of the Halifax Cycling Coalition, gave a presentation on the program On Track for 2020. He explained that this program is aimed at creating a city in which all citizens who are interested in cycling are able to travel the city in a safe and convenient manner. According to their data, 69% of citizens in the HRM would consider travelling by bicycle if the infrastructure was in place to make them feel confident in their safety on the road. As such, On Track for 2020 calls for 100 km of protected bike lanes in the regional center.

One possible method of temporary and affordable protected bike lanes is the installation of plastic bollards similar to those used in Chicago. By implementing such methods as the plastic bollards or bike lanes protected by a parking lane, the streets of Halifax could be reconfigured to provide a safe cycling network.

Mr. Wedge acknowledged that the city has done a great job drafting a cycling network, but that if the goal of getting more people traveling by bicycle is to be achieved, the cycling network requires protective infrastructure. In an effort to compile the data needed to plan for such a project, Mr. Wedge went out with a survey wheel and measured most of the streets included in the cycling network. He determined that the width of the streets was not an issue and the Halifax Cycling Coalition created a plan for putting protected bike lanes on each of the required streets. The street layouts, with measurements, are available in the 40 page report that can be accessed on the Halifax Cycling Coalition's website <http://cyclehalifax.ca/campaigns/on-track-for-2020/>.

According to the Halifax Cycling Coalition's calculations, the actual cost of the project, exclusive of consultation and design and implemented with pilot-quality materials, would be \$1,586,000. This would cover the cost of the paint and plastic bollards and would provide 37.5 km of protected bike lanes at a cost of \$3.75 per Halifaxian. The remaining 62.3 km would consist of on-street bikeways and traffic calming along residential side streets.

Mr. Wedge showed pictures of Halifax's winter streets covered with snow along the sides of the roads, untouched by ploughs and cars. He suggested that this visual demonstrates that the city would have no problem functioning with roads narrowed by protected bike lanes. He emphasized that the Macdonald Bridge Bike Lane needs to be convenient and safe and requires a better crossing and that the current state of cycling-access to the bridge prevents a lot of people from riding their bicycles along this route.

Mr. Wedge concluded his presentation by informing the Committee of an event coming up on June 12, 2015. The event is a NACTO workshop on designing main streets and is \$250.00 per person; lunch is included.

Mr. Wedge responded to questions from the Committee:

Ms. Tompa questioned how the plastic bollards affect snow removal and if this was considered in the cost analysis for the project? Mr. Wedge informed the Committee that operational costs were not included in the estimate.

Mr. MacIsaac informed the Committee that Dalhousie will look after snow clearing for the pilot project if the protected bike lane along University Avenue is approved and that this will provide a good test-case for how protected bike lanes effect snow removal.

Councillor Hendsbee questioned if the project is inline with HRM's proposed bike corridors? Mr. Wedge replied that the Halifax Cycling Coalition's map is a carbon copy of the city's map, with the addition of Sackville Street.

Ms. Barlow requested a response from staff on the feasibility of such a project. Mr. MacIsaac and Ms. Koblents replied that while the cost estimates might be a bit light, it is certainly possible.

Councillor Mason commented that is easier to implement protected bikes lanes on a wide street where there is no parking impact, as impacts to parking slows the process down.

Ms. Koblents informed the Committee that national guidelines for bike lanes and cycling infrastructure are currently being considered.

7. REPORTS

7.1 STAFF

7.1.1 Active Transportation Staff – Consideration of Options for June 11, 2015 meeting in conjunction with Bike Week

Mr. David MacIsaac informed the Committee that, in discussion with his manager, he is recommending the June 11, 2015 meeting of the Committee be structured as a report and annual update on the state of active transportation in HRM. He suggested that the presentations could be given either solely by HRM, or could include the other groups involved with active transportation. Councillor Hendsbee suggested that since Bike Week is a public event, why not have affiliated organizations make pamphlets available at the meeting on what they are doing and use the meeting as an information showcase.

The Committee agreed to discuss the agenda for the June meeting at the meeting on May 21, 2015.

Ms. Koblents informed the Committee that the open house for University Avenue protected Bike Lane went well and that a Staff report was drafted and would be coming back to Council, hopefully by May 12, 2015. Staff will be recommending that Council approve the pilot project. One of the outcomes is that Staff is addressing any issues with accessible parking and revisiting the subject to ensure that coverage is adequate.

Staff have been looking at moving the design of the bike lane on Hollis Street to be a left side bike lane and will hold one more open house on the matter, which will mostly be an information session. The hope is that it will be built this summer. Ms. Koblents informed the Committee that it is a buffer lane, but not protected. Staff had considered a protected bike lane, but this would require a loading management plan for the businesses along the street.

Ms. Koblents discussed a number of other projects that are under consideration, including the St. Pat's Greenway that has already been awarded and will be completed before the end of asphalt season on October 31, 2015. She informed the Committee that she has started going out to assess the damage to the bike racks that occurred this winter and that the damage is unprecedented. Usually only 5-10 are lost a year, but the numbers will be much higher this year. She is about half-way through the inspections and new racks have been ordered.

7.1.2 Regional Trails Staff

Ms. Jessie Debaie reported to the Committee on updates from the Halifax Regional Trails Association:

- The pre-tender review will be commencing to build a portion of the Sackville Greenway this summer. A construction easement is presently being negotiated with NS Housing, one of the principle landowners.

- The carry-over funds from this year will, as recommended, be allocated to a project that is “shovel-ready.” \$350,000 of carry over funds from the Regional Trails program will be re-allocated to the Sackville Greenway, over and above the \$390.00 requested from the 15/16 budget.
- The Shore Active Transportation Study, the community group AT, and Trail staff are currently working with WSP consultants to develop a feasibility study for the Acadian Marsh Greenway. The study is being jointly funded by TCT, NS Health & Wellness, and Councillor Hendsbee.
- The Cole Harbour Parks and Trails Association is in the process of completing the planning for the phase of the Bissett Greenway that will connect Cole Harbour Road at Jennifer Place. This section of the greenway is scheduled to be constructed this summer.
- The Shubie Watershed Environmental Society has been working with WSP to design an AT greenway in the Fall River Area. Because of complications with acquiring the land required for this project, the funds that could be allocated to the project in this year’s budget are at risk of re-allocation.
- Penhorn Lake Area Trails Associated has been working over the winter with Ekistics. Stakeholder consultation and a community consultation meeting were held in February. Plans may be viewed on the group’s Facebook page.
- HRM Regional Trails Staff is now part of the Halifax Project Planning and Design Services. The staff had recently been assigned to Halifax Parks and Recreation, and with the move several of the Active Recreation Trails Groups and Projects remain with Parks and Recreation: McNabs Island, McIntosh Run single track Mountain bike Trail, Sackville Lakes Parking lot, and the First Lake (South Side) Recreational Trail.
- In 2010 the North Preston Waterline Greenway was constructed on top of the Halifax Water Line to North Preston. The greenway was built until it came to a water crossing section at Long Lake. The future plans were to build a trail bridge or culvert there, and funding was carried over for a number of years and was ultimately reallocated to the Sackville Greenway; however, staff has just been notified that Halifax Water will be fixing the bridge this year and could add a culvert at this time at a cost of \$50,000. Staff is looking for opportunities to fund the project and Councillor Hendsbee has agreed to cover \$10,000.
- Halifax Regional Trails Association had their AGM on Monday April 13. This was their first opportunity to meet new manager, Mr. David Hubley, HRM Project Planning and Design Services. HRTA looks forward to working with Mr. Hubley and the rest of his team.
- At the central region meeting for the Nova Scotia Provincial Trails Strategy it was announced that the RFD (Recreational Facility Development funding) from Nova Scotia Health and Wellness has been cut this year. This is a serious blow to the community trail group who have been leveraging HRM funding for many years.

Ms. Debaie responded to questions from the Committee.

Councillor Outhit left the meeting.

7.2 HALIFAX REGIONAL TRAILS ASSOCIATION – NONE

7.3 BIKE WEEK SUB-COMMITTEE

Ms. Hanita Koblents informed the Committee that the Bike Week Sub-Committee has launched a call to invite schools to register their events and are test-driving a pilot project with Bike Again! using some of the funds that Mountain Equipment Co-op donates to Bike Week. Bike Again! will offer flat tire workshops to schools. They are also promoting the MEC “bike to school day” in which kids can bike to school and enter a contest and are invited to invent their own bike-week project. There are a few \$100 grants available for this initiative and the funding winners will be notified early next week. The schedule will be made public in a few more weeks and projects will be announced as confirmed.

7.4 COMMITTEE MEMBERS

7.4.1 Ben Buckwold – Discussion on Information Items

The following was before the Committee:

- Information Report Re: Summary of Proposed Active Transportation Spending in 2015/2016 Capital Budget submitted to the Committee of the Whole Budget meeting.
- Information Report Re: Capital Budget 2015-2016 Project Implications submitted to the Committee of the Whole Budget Meeting.

The Committee discussed the budget implications for Active Transportation projects. Mr. MacIsaac provided an update on the Macdonald Bridge project and responded to questions from Committee members.

Ms. Koblenz explained to the Committee that the origin of the Information Report on Project Implications for Active Transportation was a request from Council made several years ago regarding the implications of increasing the Active Transportation budget to \$5 million. The report brings together all the disparate areas in which spending on Active Transportation projects occurs and demonstrates that with all the different projects combined, \$5 million is already being put towards Active Transportation initiatives.

Councillor Hendsbee stated that he believes that Active Transportation initiatives should be included in the Regional Transportation Tax because the greenways, trails, and corridors are essentially about interconnectivity and the mobility of citizens.

Councillor Mason commented that one year is not necessarily indicative, and that the next year could have large projects, such as the bridge, and the average will work out. The other big upcoming piece that will be expensive is the other pedestrian bridges.

Mr. Buckwold questioned if anyone could speak to the potential of bridge pieces going outside of HRM. Mr. MacIsaac confirmed that this is the case, as HRM only agreed to take on a percentage of the old bridge deck pieces. These pieces can very easily span short distances. Mr. Buckwold asked if there was a process by which an interested party could obtain a bridge deck piece and Mr. MacIsaac suggested that the first step would be to call the Bridge Commission.

7.4.2 Terry Walker – Discussion on Side guards

The following was before the Committee:

- An e-mail from Mr. Ben Wedge re: Side guards on heavy trucks

Ms. Walker read the e-mail from Mr. Ben Wedge aloud to the Committee.

Mr. Buckwold explained to the Committee that this e-mail is a request from the Halifax Cycling Coalition for the Active Transportation Committee to recommend that the Transportation Standing Committee request a staff report from Council. Councillor Hendsbee questioned if the Trucking Association of Nova Scotia has been contacted. Mr. Wedge replied that the Province would not legislate it provincially as it is a federal issue since trucks drive across provincial barriers. Councillor Mason suggested that if HRM does decide to implement this, it is something that could be phased in over a number of years and could be part of the retendering process.

MOVED by Terry Walker, seconded by Councillor Mason that the Active Transportation Advisory Committee recommend the Transportation Standing Committee request a staff report be completed by July 15, 2015 to investigate the implications of installing side guards on city-owned and contracted vehicles in the 2016-2017 fiscal year.

Specifically, the ATAC request the following items be addressed:

- 1. The cost of installing side guards on all city-owned heavy trucks, plows, and other heavy equipment.**

2. The cost and legal authority of requiring long-term contractors (such as garbage collection and snow removal) to install side guards on all heavy vehicles.
3. The cost and legal authority of requiring all city-contracted (including hourly/daily jobs) vehicles to be equipped with side guards.
4. The cost of including side guards on all newly-purchased city vehicles.
5. The timeline for achieving items 1-4 above.
6. Count of collisions involving pedestrians, cyclists, and heavy trucks from 2004-2014, including information on serious injury and/or death.
7. Any other pieces of information relevant to the discussion of side guards.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

7.5 CROSSWALK SAFETY COMMITTEE

Ms. Janet Barlow informed the Committee that earlier in March they held a Crosswalk Safety Café to provide information and receive feedback; this was a very successful event. The Crosswalk Safety Committee has also recently heard that Council will send a letter to the province around non-monetary penalties for crosswalk violations for pedestrian, motorists, and cyclists, as recommended by the Crosswalk Safety Committee. A non-monetary penalty could include mandatory attendance at a crosswalk safety school.

Ms. Barlow requested that the Committee allow her to give a brief update from the Ecology Action Center and the Committee agreed. Ms. Barlow announced that the EAC and the Child Safety Link are partnering with the Halifax Regional School Board (HRSB) to come up with an active transportation charter for the Board. A draft charter has been written and is currently being reviewed by HRSB and the hope is that there will be a soft launch in June. While it will not be policy, it will be considered as a guideline that schools are required to follow and it will be the first of its kind in the province.

Ms. Barlow advised the Committee that the Ecology Action Center has unfortunately had their transportation projects budget cut by 1/3. This means that, potentially, 3 full-time staff and 1 part-time staff will be let go, Ms. Barlow being one of them. The EAC is currently investigating alternative funding sources and approaching the Department of Health and Wellness that administered the cuts. She advised that the most upsetting part is that the work with the school board will be severely impacted. The cuts were part of the cuts to the Recreation Facilities Development Grant, which is under the jurisdiction of the Department of Health and Wellness.

Mr. MacIsaac acknowledged how important the “soft projects” such as school planning, outreach, and education are to active transportation initiatives, noting that without them, the physical infrastructure would not be as successful. He commented further that this work is being done across the country and across North America, so it is alarming that Nova Scotia is suddenly not doing it.

Elizabeth Pugh suggested that the Committee should recommend the Municipality write a letter on how important the “soft side” of active transportation work is.

MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Elizabeth Pugh, that the Active Transportation Standing Committee recommends to the Transportation Standing Committee that they request the Mayor, on behalf of Regional Council, write a letter to the Minister of Health and Wellness regarding cuts to the Recreation Facilities Development Grant, specifically in regard to the Halifax Ecology Action Centre and the effected outreach programs such as school travel planning.
MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

8. ADDED ITEMS – NONE

8.1 Adding to the Membership of the Active Transportation Advisory Committee

Ms. Barlow explained to the Committee that there is a new organization in HRM called Walk N Roll HFX, which is essentially the walking version of the Halifax Cycling Coalition, and that she believes they should have a presence in the Active Transportation Advisory Committee. Ms. Barlow questioned what the process would be for making this happen. The Committee informed her that while the request must go to the Transportation Standing Committee and then through Regional Council for consideration and subsequent approve. It was noted though, that in the interim, a representative could be invited to come to meetings in an observatory role.

MOVED by Janet Barlow, seconded by Councillor Hendsbee that the Committee request the Transportation Standing Committee recommend to Council that a representative of Walk N Roll HFX be added to the membership of the Active Transportation Standing Committee. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Councillor Hendsbee and Ben Buckwold each made a community announcement.

9. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: May 21, 2015

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Cathy Collett
Legislative Support