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Item No. 10.1.4

Halifax Regional Council
April 1, 2008

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Dan English".

Dan English, Chief Administrative Officer

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Wayne Anstey".

Wayne Anstey, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer - Operations

DATE: March 11, 2008

SUBJECT: Draft Neighbourhood and Special District Signage Policy

ORIGIN

- January 20, 2004 - Regional Council requested an Information Report on neighbourhood identification
- February 21, 2006 - Staff submitted an Information Report to Council
- April 4, 2006 - Council requested a Staff Report

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Regional Council:

1. adopt the draft Neighbourhood and Special District Signage Policy (Attachment 1);
2. focus neighbourhood sign projects in the communities of Halifax and Dartmouth in accordance with the policy; and
3. direct staff to initiate a special district sign project for the Fisherman's Cove and the Hydrostone Heritage District pursuant to the policy.

BACKGROUND:

In January 2004, Council requested an information report on neighbourhood identification. An information report was tabled in February and April 2006. At that time staff put forward an action plan to forward a pilot project to design and install a limited number of signs in priority areas within the former City of Halifax and Dartmouth boundaries.

Signage programs have traditionally been used in a number of different ways including information sharing, branding, safety, way finding, and regulation. As such, HRM currently implements a number of different sign programs including, but not limited, to:

a) Community Identification Signage Program is managed and maintained by Civic Addressing. These signs demarcate official community boundaries. The primary purpose is for public safety in that they correlate with 911 emergency services. Neighbourhoods within the communities of Halifax and Dartmouth are not represented under this program.

b) Community Recreation Sign Program focuses on HRM community recreation facilities and programmed beach areas. These signs are more regional in nature and not intended to address neighbourhoods and special districts. Rather the focus of this program is branding of HRM programmed recreation facilities.

c) Neighbourhood Park Signs are administered through the Parks Capital Program. These signs include the name of the park, civic address, and activities that are permitted.

d) Regional Streetscapes - The Streetscape Program is administered by the Real Property Planning division of the Infrastructure & Asset Management business unit. This capital program is divided into Capital District streetscapes (five priority streets) and a Regional streetscapes (three streets). The program is comprehensive covering everything from planting, site furnishings and sidewalk upgrades to the development of parks and transit improvements and the design and/or erection of neighbourhood identity, parks & recreation, heritage/cultural and wayfinding signage.

e) Cultural/ Heritage Signs are managed by Community Relations and Cultural Affairs staff. For the purposes of this policy, these signs will refer to official Cultural and/or Heritage Districts included within a MPS or Zoning By-law as well as unofficial Cultural Districts.

The interest in neighbourhood signage has been expressed for sometime, however, a sign program has not been developed specifically targeting this theme. Given the number of different programs that currently exist, before establishing a neighbourhood and community identity sign program, there is a need for better coordination and clear guiding policies to facilitate new requests. Without an established approach there is the threat of increased sign clutter, inconsistent design and branding, and potential conflict with the Civic Addressing Program.

DISCUSSION

The proposed neighbourhood and special district sign policy is intended to provide a consistent and coordinated approach to neighbourhood and special district signage. The policy sets out the conditions through which neighbourhood and special district signage is managed and integrated in HRM's larger signage program.

In terms of definition, neighbourhood signs are those placed in neighbourhoods or within communities. The purpose of these signs is to acknowledge the neighbourhood, but not to define its boundaries. Neighbourhood signs are merely intended to reinforce a particular neighbourhood's sense of identity.

Special District Signage will be located in Special Districts that have defined boundaries. These include Business Improvement Districts, Regional Streetscape Projects, and Cultural/Heritage Districts. The purpose of the signs is to raise awareness of the district, provide heritage and cultural information, and to demarcate the official boundary.

For clarity, the proposed Signage policy will not address pedestrian and vehicular direction signs (way finding), pedestrian directory signs, monuments and markers, temporary signs (including mobile signs), regulatory signs, trail signs, subdivision signs, street signs, regional park signs, beach signs, and community facility signs

Implementing the Policy

The proposed Policy focuses on using existing sign programs to facilitate new neighbourhood and special district signage. Therefore, all neighbourhood signs will be facilitated through the Park Capital Program (neighbourhood park signs). Whereas, Special District signs, such as Business Improvement Districts, will be facilitated through the Regional Streetscape Program and Culture and Heritage Special Districts, will be facilitated through the existing Culture and Heritage Sign Program. HRM will also work with the community to explore options for identifying neighbourhoods and special districts through community and public art.

Next Steps

The first phase of implementation for neighbourhood signs will be directed at neighbourhoods in Halifax and Dartmouth. This is due to the fact that many neighbourhoods were not included as part of the Community Identification Sign Program noted in the background section. With respect to special district signage, the priority will be on completion of two sign projects for Fisherman's Cove and the Hydrostone Heritage District. Further, existing regional streetscape projects within the Business Improvement District areas of Sackville, and Herring Cove will continue pursuant to existing plans. Finally, it should be noted that any signage projects currently underway that may not comply with this policy would be permitted, but encouraged to align with the policy intent.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

The neighbourhood and special district signage program will be funded through operating account C730. The neighbourhood signage program capital component will be funded through the Capital Projects - Park Sign Program. This will require additional funds of approximately \$10,000.00/year on an ongoing basis and will be included in future budgets for consideration by Council under the normal budget approval process.

Budget Summary

Capital Account CPU00915 Athletic Field/Park Equipment

Cumulative Unspent Budget	\$8,263
Less: Balance of Reservation 1338.1	<u>\$7,813</u>
Balance	\$ 451

Capital Account CPX01007 Athletic Field/Park Equip 08/09

Cumulative Unspent Budget	\$85,000
Less: Remainder of \$10K	<u>\$ 2,187*</u>
Balance	\$82,813

*Pending council approval of the Capital Budget

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN

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

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1 - Council may adopt the draft policy. This is the staff recommendation.

Alternative 2 - Council may amend and then approve the draft policy. This is not recommended by staff. Council should identify the amendments that staff are required to prepare.

Alternative 3 - Council may choose not to approve the policy. This is not recommended by staff


ATTACHMENTS

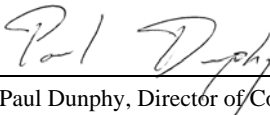
Attachment 1- Draft Neighbourhood and Special District Signage Policy

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

Report Prepared by: Phil Hammond, Community Developer, 490-6577

Report Approved by: 
Andrew Whittemore, A/Manager of Community Relations and Cultural Affairs, 490-1585

Financial Approval by: 
Catherine Sanderson, Senior Manager, Financial Services, 490-1562

Report Approved by: 
Paul Dunphy, Director of Community Development

Attachment 1

HRM's Neighbourhood and Special District Signage Policy Draft

**Prepared by: Philip Hammond
March 11, 2008**

THE STRATEGY - NEIGHBOURHOODS AND SPECIAL DISTRICT SIGNS

Signage can be used for a variety of reasons including identity, civic pride, commemoration of cultural and heritage

significance, community capacity building and mobilizing, as well as fostering a welcoming environment.

The Neighbourhood and Special District Signage Policy provides an integrated approach using existing signage programs to efficiently and effectively facilitate sign requests. The Policy also places value on seeking opportunities for community involvement. The Policy can be implemented over several years.

For the purpose of this Policy, these two categories of signs can be defined as outlined below:

Neighbourhood Signage

Neighbourhoods are smaller areas within communities and tend not to have well defined or official boundaries. The purpose of these signs is to acknowledge the neighbourhood, not to define boundaries like the community identity signage¹. Neighbourhood signs are merely intended to identify a particular neighbourhood and to reinforce a neighbourhood's sense of community. For purposes of this strategy, some of the neighbourhoods include those as identified by Nova Scotia Gazetteer, and are listed in appendix A.

Special District Signage

Special Districts have definable boundaries and include Business Improvement Districts, Regional Street Scape Projects, and Cultural/ Heritage Districts. The purpose of the signs would be to identify the district, provide heritage and cultural information and demarcate the boundary.

THE POLICY - NEIGHBOURHOOD AND SPECIAL DISTRICTS SIGNS

The signage policy is large in scope and will be required to be phased over several years. Moreover, its success will depend on the successful collaboration of several business units with HRM.

1.0 Neighbourhood Signs

- Policy 1.1 HRM will work toward the establishment of new neighbourhood signs in HRM neighbourhood parks. Implementation of the neighbourhood signage program will be facilitated through HRM's Capital Park Program. HRM will also work with the community to explore options for identifying neighbourhoods through community and public art.
- Policy 1.2 HRM will set priorities annually for new neighbourhood signs and replacement through HRM's budget and

¹The Community Identity Signage Program is managed and maintained by Civic Addressing. These signs demarcate official community boundaries. The primary purpose is for public safety in that correlate with 911 emergency services.

business planning process.

- Policy 1.3 HRM will deliver the signage program in phases, with the first phase placing priority on new signage for neighbourhoods located within the communities of Halifax and Dartmouth.
- Policy 1.4 The Nova Scotia Gazetteer will be used as the primary resource for identifying and confirming neighbourhood names as generally identified in Appendix A, as well as through consultation with the community and Councillor.

2.0 Special District Signs

- Policy 2.1 HRM will work toward the establishment of new special district signs in HRM special districts. A special district refers to an official Heritage District included within a MPS or Zoning Bylaw, an official Business Improvement District (BID) as defined in the MGA, a Regional Streetscape identified in the Regional Plan, and unofficial cultural districts as generally defined below:

Cultural District

A cultural district is distinguished by a concentration of arts and cultural resources that play a vital role in the life and cultural development of the community and/or Region. The district is defined as a hub of cultural activity through a geographical concentration or cluster of arts and culture organizations, uses, arts and culture-related businesses, venues, and professional, amateur, and recreational art activities and uses. A Cultural District is also a geographically defined area that conveys a special sense of time and place through a concentration of buildings, structures, and spaces. A district will have a sense of a connectedness through past events or use and have an appearance of visual cohesion and characteristics that set it apart.

Policy 2.2 HRM will also work with the community to explore options through community and public art.

3.0 Governance

Policy 3.1 Community Relations and Cultural Affairs staff will oversee the coordination of the neighbourhood and culture and heritage district signage program.

4.0 Maintenance

Policy 4.1 HRM will maintain an annual operating budget for the maintenance of neighbourhood and special district signage.

Appendix A

List of Defined Neighbourhoods Based on NS Gazetteer

A sample list of Neighborhoods in the Halifax/Dartmouth Area	
Armdale Beechwood Park Albro Lake Wallace Heights Southdale Westphal Woodlawn Birch Cove, Boulderwood, Bridgeview Clayton Park Sherwood Park Spryfield Thornhill Wedgewood	Convoy Place Cowie Hill Fairmount Fernleigh Green Acres Hydrostone Jollimore Kearney Lake Kent Park Leiblin Park Melville Cove Mulgrave Park Princes Lodge Purcells Cove Rockingham Sherwood Heights

* Source - Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations (Gazetteer)