

Item No. 3
Halifax Regional Council
February 11, 2014

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

Original Signed by Director

SUBMITTED BY:

Jane Fraser, Director, Planning and Infrastructure

Original Signed by Director

David Hubley, Acting Director, Transportation & Public Works

DATE: December 2, 2013

SUBJECT: **Petition: Lakeshore Runners “Circle of Safety”**

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

At the July 23, 2013 meeting of Regional Council Councillor Craig submitted a petition containing approximately 50 signatures from the Lakeshore Runners Club seeking a well-lit and maintained seven km running route including Kingfisher Way, sections of First Lake Drive, Cobequid Road, Sandrick, Maple Grove and Birch Grove Avenues.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Charter Section 322(1), Street Related Powers:

“The Council may design, lay out, open, expand, construct, maintain, improve, alter, repair, light, water, clean, and clear streets in the Municipality” and Section 79 “Halifax Regional Council may expend money for municipal purposes.”

Halifax Charter, definitions:

(bu) “street” means a public street, highway, road, lane, **sidewalk**, thoroughfare, bridge, square and the curbs, gutters, culverts and retaining walls in connection therewith, except as otherwise defined in this Act;

BACKGROUND

HRM Sidewalk and AT Program

New concrete sidewalks cost approximately \$300 per meter where curb and gutter is already in place to upwards of \$3000 per metre if elements like curb, gutter, storm pipe, and/or retaining walls are required. At present, there are more than 300 outstanding requests for sidewalk construction in HRM representing a total of 127 km of requested sidewalk.

The construction of new sidewalks in established communities is funded through the urban general tax rate (www.halifax.ca/revenue/taxbill/Rates.html). Capital budgets for construction of new sidewalks since 2007 have ranged from \$1.5 to \$2.7 million per year (refer to Table below). With current levels of funding, HRM is able to construct roughly 4 km of new sidewalk each year.

Year	New Sidewalks
07/08	\$2,400,000
08/09	\$2,725,000
09/10	\$2,260,000
10/11	\$1,750,000
11/12	\$1,596,000
12/13	\$2,500,000

To make best use of available funds, sidewalk requests are ranked according to a number of criteria and efforts are made to integrate sidewalk projects with adjacent roadway projects to achieve the best unit prices.

HRM staff evaluates all requests for new sidewalks and prioritizes each location based on the rating system. This rating system takes into account the ability of a proposed location to satisfy AT objectives. Sidewalk requests that rate high are in proximity to daycares, seniors residences, schools, and busy bus stops, and are adjacent to higher traffic volume roads. Requests may receive a lower ranking on quiet residential streets and streets without transit service. It is noted that some requests rate high; however, they may have significant constructability issues that prohibit or impede the installation of the sidewalk (i.e., land acquisition required, significant topographical features, etc.).

Shoulders may be paved on roads with a rural cross section (i.e. no curb) in conjunction with other roadway projects (i.e. repaving). This is currently only done if they are identified on the HRM Active Transportation Plan as ‘candidate’ bicycle routes. This is subject to available funds in the “AT Plan Implementation” budget, and other priorities for plan implementation in that fiscal year. AT Plan implementation has received between \$0 and \$1,000,000 per year since 2007, averaging about \$400,000 per year since the plan was approved in 2006. Shoulders are not typically paved to provide pedestrian infrastructure because there are no local, regional, or nationally accepted practices that HRM staff are aware of for shoulder paving as a pedestrian facility. The need and ability to accommodate pedestrians on streets of this nature is being evaluated in the current review of the Active Transportation Plan.

Petition from Lakeshore Running Club

The petition received by Regional Council on July 23, 2013 requested “a well-lit and maintained 7 km route that circles First Lake and includes Kingfisher Way, sections of First Lake Drive, Cobequid Road, Sandrick, Maple Grove and Birch Grove Avenues”. The petition specifically requested:

- Construction of sidewalk or paved shoulder from Judy Ann Court to First Lake Drive along Cobequid Road;
- Paved Shoulder on First Lake Drive to the top of Eddie LeBlanc ball field;
- Construction of sidewalk on Glendale Drive to Damascus Road; and
- Construction of sidewalk or paved shoulder on Metropolitan Avenue, leading to Kingfisher Way.

The petition concluded that “these small changes will go a long way in establishing Sackville as a safe, caring and welcoming community that encourages physical activity and the health of its inhabitants”

Each request is dealt with individually in the Discussion section below.

DISCUSSION

A map showing the existing and requested components of a complete active transportation circuit of First Lake is shown in Attachment A. The following discussion presents the results of the evaluation of each sidewalk request (whether it ranks below average, average, or above average) according to the rating system and presents very preliminary cost estimates based on the length of the request multiplied by an average unit cost for similar situations.

Request: Sidewalk or Paved Shoulder (Map #2)

Location: Cobequid Road from Judy Ann Court to First Lake Drive

This sidewalk request rates slightly below average. This section along Cobequid Road is approximately 1 km. To construct a sidewalk along this section would cost approximately \$1,500,000.

Request: Paved Shoulder (Map #3B)

Location: First Lake Drive from Cobequid Rd to Eddie Le Blanc Ball Field

First Lake Drive is not a candidate bike route on the Active Transportation Plan and there is an existing parallel multi-use trail nearby along the lake (First Lake Glen Slauenwhite Trail). Paving the shoulder would not be carried out under the AT Plan Implementation Program. The cost of paving the shoulders would be approximately \$170,000 per side (\$130/m for +/- 1300m) provided sufficient gravel shoulder width is available to pave.

This section was rated for the construction of a sidewalk and ranked below average. This section would cost approximately \$1,900,000.

Request: Sidewalk or Paved Shoulder (Map #6B)

Location: Metropolitan Avenue, from Glendale to Kingfisher Way

There is an existing sidewalk on the west side of Metropolitan Avenue between Glendale and Kingfisher Way, but there is no sidewalk on the east side. A sidewalk on the east side of Metropolitan Avenue would provide the best connection to the school and sports facility and ranks above average. Constructing a sidewalk on the east side may be challenging as there is a steep ditch in this location. The distance is approximately 180m, and the estimated cost would be \$300,000.

Request: Sidewalk (Map #8)

Location: Glendale Drive from end of sidewalk to Damascus Road (including Duke St.)

This sidewalk request ranks above average and is approximately 1.5 km in length.

The existing sidewalks on the south side of Glendale Drive veer off to a point at which they currently end on Murdoch Mackay Court. Extending them by 1.5 km to Damascus Road would require:

- 400m of sidewalk where there is existing curb and gutter on Glendale (+/- \$120,000);
- 300m with existing curb and gutter on Duke (+/- \$90,000)
- Approximately 800m between these two sections, discussed below.

The last section includes areas of provincial jurisdiction (crossing Highway #102) and has significant constructability issues. Duke Street is built on high fill which would need to be widened to accommodate a sidewalk. While there is a sidewalk on the south side of the bridge over Hwy #102, another existing bridge, provincially owned, to the east on Duke Street would require the addition of a sidewalk or more likely the construction of a separate AT Bridge. The magnitude of this project is such that preliminary cost estimates are not available at this time and alternative pedestrian connections should likely be investigated.

A project of this magnitude would require budgets that exceed typical annual budgets for the Sidewalk and AT programs combined.

Conclusion

HRM has significant demand for new sidewalks across the municipality and prioritizes pedestrian needs through the rating system, the Active Transportation Plan and integration opportunities. In many cases the cost to construct a new sidewalk is expensive as outlined above, and in some situations there are significant constructability challenges. Constructing costly infrastructure for single purposes, when alternatives are available, may not be the best use of limited infrastructure funds from a policy perspective.

The Lakeshore Runner’s Club has access to roughly 7km of multi-use crusher dust surface trails through HRM-owned and Provincial Parks in Sackville around First and Second Lakes. The petition specifically raised the concern that safe routes for runners were required in **winter** with

adequate lighting and snow/ ice removal. Since these trails are not lighted or maintained in winter, the runners have the option to use sidewalks where they already exist in the winter months. A 7 km loop from the Sackville Sports Stadium which already has sidewalks and streetlights, includes Glendale Drive to Beaverbank, Sackville Drive, Skyridge Drive, Pinehill Drive and back to the Sports Stadium.

The Sackville Rivers Association has developed a concept plan for a connected greenway corridor (multi-use trail) following the Little Sackville River from the Cobequid Transit Terminal through Downsview Park, Millwood and up to Feely Lake. The draft review of the AT Plan (which is currently under review) supports in principle the construction of the Downsview Park section as a priority project for the next five years of AT Plan Implementation. Budget will need to be approved by Council once a detailed design has been finalized. The draft review of the AT Plan also identifies a need for HRM to develop a strategy for retrofitting existing major roadways which lack pedestrian facilities. In the meantime, future sidewalk installations will continue to provide more options for Active Transportation and running in Lower Sackville. Additionally staff will continue to monitor the existing list of new sidewalk requests in support of developing future projects.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

No community engagement has been undertaken.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Circle of Safety – Existing and Requested Components

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

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 Anne Sherwood, Design Engineer, 490-6872

Original Signed

Report Approved by: _____
 Austin French, Manager, Planning Services 490-6717



1	Existing	Sidewalk
2	Petition Request	Sidewalk or paved shoulder
3A	Existing	Off-road multi-use trail
3B	Petition Request	Paved shoulder
4	Existing	Sidewalk
5	Existing	Sidewalk (both sides)
6A	Existing	Sidewalk (west side)
6B	Petition Request	Sidewalk (east side)
7	Existing	Sidewalk
8	Petition Request	Sidewalk