

Request for Standing Committee Consideration

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda Item
(Submitted to Municipal Clerk's Office by Noon at least 5 working days prior to the meeting) | <input type="checkbox"/> Added Item
(Submitted to Municipal Clerk's Office by Noon at least one day prior to meeting) | <input type="checkbox"/> Request from the Floor |
|--|---|--|

Date of Meeting: June 18, 2015

Subject: Mobile Food Market Pilot Project

Motion for Standing Committee to consider:

That the Standing Committee on Community Planning and Economic Development request a staff report to:

- 1) In support of the Healthy Communities Core Priority Area, and working with the Mobile Market Project Team, evaluate a request to provide a Halifax Transit bus in-kind for the purpose of initiating a mobile market pilot project in the communities of Spryfield, Fairview, North Preston, East Preston, Halifax North, and Dartmouth North over a 21 week period. The request is for a bus to be made available once a week on Saturday or Sunday, and to visit each selected community every second week over the duration of the pilot for a period of time up to 1.5 hours at each location.

Reason:

On January 21, 2014, Regional Council passed a Recommendation to "work with the appropriate Standing Committees to determine what further opportunities exist to achieve a higher level of health and liveability in HRM." On September 9th, 2014, Dr. Gaynor Watson-Creed, Medical Officer of Health for Halifax, wrote Mayor Savage, requesting the consideration of a partnership with Public Health to develop a mobile healthy food provision service for residents of Halifax. This request led to the formation of a Mobile Market Project Team, with representatives of Public Health, the Mayor's Office, and more recently, the Ecology Action Centre.

The purpose of a mobile food market would be to bring fresh and affordable vegetables and fruit to neighbourhoods that have limited access to healthy food. The project would be a proposed partnership between Public Health, the municipality, community partners, private business and funders. This project follows the recent release of *Food Counts: Halifax Food Assessment*, which found that Halifax has the highest reported household food insecurity among 33 major urban centres in Canada, and one in five households has trouble affording healthy food.

Public Health has identified the communities of Spryfield, Fairview, North Preston, East Preston, Halifax North and Dartmouth North as potential pilot sites based on indicators and data related to health and food insecurity on communities throughout Halifax from the *2013 Population Health Status Report* and the related Community Profiles. Over the winter, Public Health, with the support of the Mayor's Office, secured funding from the Department of Health and Wellness through *Thrive! A Plan for a Healthier Nova Scotia* to build connections with community partners and to develop a governance and delivery model to pilot a mobile healthy food market. This led to extensive consultation with each of these communities, including a meeting in April with over 40 stakeholders. Regional Councillors representing the proposed pilot communities were invited to this meeting, and the meeting was attended by Councillor Watts. A smaller meeting, with representatives of the pilot communities, took place in early June. The Mobile Market Project Team continues to work with each of these communities to identify specific sites for the mobile market.

Based on the consultations that have taken place thus far, it has been determined that each of the selected communities is likely to have the capacity to host a mobile market. At the same time, promising conversations have taken place with potential food suppliers and funding partners. However, the delivery of a mobile market pilot project is ultimately dependent upon Halifax Transit's in-kind contribution of a bus.

Outcome Sought:

An in-kind bus provided by Halifax Transit once a week over the duration of 21 weeks for the purpose of launching a mobile market pilot project in select communities throughout Halifax.

*Mayor Mike Savage
Councillor Steve Craig*

District 15



September 9th, 2014

Dear Mr. Mayor:

I take this opportunity to follow up on some of the work highlighted in your Healthy Communities initiative, and in the Regional Plan, and to invite you to consider a partnership with CDHA regarding food security.

As you well know, *food security* is the basic capacity of all residents to have access to enough healthy and safe food through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice. As you and I have discussed in the past, achieving food security is a constant challenge for many of our residents. This is because of many factors, including the cost of healthy food, the availability of healthy food, the availability of culturally appropriate foods, and the quality of these foods. Food security is further confounded by the presence of food swamps, where the availability of unhealthy (fast/junk) food vastly out numbers the presence of healthy food, and food deserts, where healthy food is simply not available at all.

In some of our PH work related to food security, including the work that has supported the Halifax Food Strategy group, we have come across some evidence that food swamps and food deserts indeed exist in Halifax. In addition to that, we are aware that for many residents, the cost of healthy food – fresh and locally produced fruits and vegetables, for example – is simply too high (1).

With that in mind, we have been exploring ways in which healthy food might be made more accessible to residents through mobile food provision. You may already be aware that this type of approach is being used by some of our sister municipalities, working in concert with local public health (2, 3).

I am wondering if HRM would consider such a partnership with Capital Health Public Health Services, to develop a mobile healthy food provision service for residents of HRM.

I would suspect that many local colleagues in this work, including the Halifax Food Strategy group, the Ecology Action Centre, the Food ARC at Mount St. Vincent University, the United Way, and others would be keenly interested in such a program.

A different today. A better tomorrow.

Would you like to meet to discuss how such a thing might come to be? I am happy to do so at your convenience. At these early stages, I think the contribution from PH would be from our Understanding Communities Unit (UCU), where our team, that includes epidemiologists, an evaluator, and nutritionists, could offer advice regarding where the “in need” neighborhoods are, what the definition of “healthy” food could be, and how to evaluate the success of the program.

Warmly,

Gaynor Watson-Creed, MSc, MD, CCFP, FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health, Capital District Health Authority

cc: Chris Power, CEO, Capital District Health Authority
Linda Young, Director and co-Leader, Public Health Services, CDHA
Marcia DeSantis, Manager, UCU, CDHA

1. MSVU Nova Scotia Participatory Food Costing Project 2012: http://foodarc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/NSFoodCosting2012_Report.pdf
2. Toronto PH/City of Toronto initiative: http://www.cpha.ca/en/programs/social-determinants/frontlinehealth/stories/food_markets.aspx
3. Ottawa PH/City of Ottawa initiative: <http://www.marketmobileottawa.ca/#!media/c17j4>