

TRANSPORTATION STANDING COMMITTEE  
MINUTES

January 9, 2012

MEMBERS

PRESENT:

Councillor Reg Rankin, Chair  
Councillor Jennifer Watts, Vice-Chair  
Councillor David Hendsbee  
Councillor Darren Fisher  
Councillor Debbie Hum  
Councillor Jerry Blumenthal  
Councillor Jackie Barkhouse

OTHERS

PRESENT:

Councillor Jim Smith

REGRETS:

Councillor Bob Harvey

STAFF:

Mr. Ken Reashor, Director, Transportation & Public Works  
Ms. Jennifer Weagle, Legislative Assistant

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## 1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax.

## 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – October 27 & November 24, 2011

Councillor Watts noted an amendment to the October 27, 2011 minutes, with regard to item 7.4.1 Commuter Rail Feasibility Analysis.

**MOVED by Councillor Fisher, seconded by Councillor Watts, that the Transportation Standing Committee approve the October 27 & November 24, 2011 meeting minutes, as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

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

Additions:

- 8.1 Five Big Moves for Transit – Implementation Phase 1 (Information Item #1)
- 8.2 Open Space Functional Plan – Scope and Process (Information Item #2)
- 8.3 Councillor Nomination to the Halifax Dartmouth Bridge Commission
- 8.4 Councillor Hum - Request for staff report – Opportunity for a Transportation Corridor Parallel to Chain Lake Drive

The Committee agreed to address added items 8.3 and 8.4 as the first orders of business, as both Councillors Blumenthal and Hum have to leave the meeting early.

**MOVED by Councillor Hendsbee, seconded by Councillor Hum, that the Transportation Standing Committee approve the order of business, as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

Councilor Barkhouse arrived at 1:15 p.m.

### 8.3 Councillor Nomination to the Halifax Dartmouth Bridge Commission

**MOVED by Councillor Watts, seconded by Councillor Fisher, that Councillor Blumenthal be re-nominated to the Halifax Dartmouth Bridge Commission, for a term ending October 31, 2012.**

Councillor Blumenthal accepted the nomination.

The Chair called for any further nominations. Hearing none, **MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**8.4 Councillor Hum - Request for staff report – Opportunity for a Transportation Corridor Parallel to Chain Lake Drive**

Councillor Hum indicated that there have been recent changes to the bus stop locations along Chain Lake Drive which have caused difficulties for pedestrians to access the businesses.

**MOVED by Councillor Hum, seconded by Councillor Watts, that the Transportation Standing Committee request a staff report regarding a potential opportunity for a transportation corridor off Washmill Lake Court, parallel to Chain Lake Drive, to alleviate access concerns and for staff to liaise with the owners of this property on this potential opportunity. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

**4. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & PRESENTATIONS**

**4.1 Correspondence - None**

**4.2 Petitions - None**

**4.3 Presentations - None**

**5. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES**

**6. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS**

**7. REPORTS**

**7.1 STAFF**

**7.1.1 Amendment to Administrative Order 15: Parking Permit Fees**

A staff report dated October 25, 2011 was before the Committee.

**MOVED by Councillor Watts, seconded by Councillor Blumenthal, that the Transportation Standing Committee recommend that Regional Council:**

- 1. Approve an amendment to Administrative Order 15, as outlined in the October 25, 2011 report, to reduce the cost of Parking Permits; and**
- 2. Approve using the revenue from Parking by Permit Only to create and enhance options for commuting to and from the Regional Centre by vehicle.**

Councillor Watts commented that this policy has been in effect since 2004. Reducing the cost of the permit is to act as incentive to increase users. She noted that this is an opportunity to alleviate parking problems for neighbourhoods on the peninsula.

Councillor Hendsbee suggested that the number of permits per property be restricted. He also suggested that priority be given to residents where parking is not permitted on their side of the street, but is allowed on the other side of the street.

Mr. David McCusker, Manager, Strategic Transportation Planning, Planning & Infrastructure, clarified that the By-law allows for only one residential exemption per household, and that the exemptions are not allowed for buildings over four units. He further clarified that exemptions are for residents of a street, although permits would be made available to non-residents of the street if space were available.

Responding to further questions from Councillor Hendsbee, Mr. McCusker indicated that the permits are not intended to be resold. Staff are will working on details for the sale of the permits, although a license plate number would be attached to the permit.

#### **MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

#### **7.1.2 Metro Transit Universal Accessibility Plan**

A staff report dated December 12, 2011, including a copy of the Metro Transit Universal Accessibility Plan (final report dated November 2011) was before the Committee.

**MOVED by Councillor Watts, seconded by Councillor Hum, that the Transportation Standing Committee recommend to Halifax Regional Council the approval in principle of the Universal Accessibility Plan and direct staff to use the plan on a go-forward basis as guidance in the development and implementation of Universal Accessibility standards and policies for transit.**

Members of the Committee discussed the Plan, and staff responded to questions.

Councillor Hendsbee suggested that all bus stops should be accessible, and for staff to ensure they are not limited to design standards that are not possible in all areas.

Councillor Blumenthal noted the importance of staff addressing announcement of bus stops for the blind. Mr. Dave Reage, Manager, Service Development, Metro Transit, advised that, as discussed in the report, staff will be working on a technology roadmap to develop a medium term plan for announcement and also for fare boxes.

Councillor Watts asked for more detailed information from staff, such as on the real time schedule info, and the technology roadmap. She inquired whether announcement of stops could be made a priority, and how related it would be to other technology issues with transit. Mr. Reage indicated that they could provide members of Council with further information on these matters.

Councillor Watts also passed on a concern that Councillor Harvey had forwarded from a resident that was told he needs to supply his own straps for his wheelchair to take the bus. Mr. Reage clarified that there are different tie-down systems on older buses, and they encourage people to bring their own straps that work with their wheelchair.

Councillor Watts also continued that the resident also had concerns that he now needs to be ready 30 minutes prior to his scheduled pick up time for the Access-a-Bus. Mr. Reage indicated that the wait times for Access-a-Bus use were a part of changes that came about through the Access-a-Bus review.

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

Councillor Hum left the meeting at 2:00 p.m.

**7.2 MATTERS REFERRED FROM REGIONAL COUNCIL - None**

**7.3 MATTERS REFERRED FROM STANDING COMMITTEES - None**

**7.4 MATTERS REFERRED FROM MEMBERS OF COUNCIL**

**7.4.1 Councillor Watts – Update on the Implementation of the Regional Parking Strategy**

This item was deferred to the February meeting.

**7.5 ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**7.5.1 Update from Councillor Watts (verbal)**

Councillor Watts provided an update on recent business and activities of the Active Transportation Advisory Committee, including:

- Improving safety on shared, multi use trails.
- A mapping exercise about unfriendly bike grates.
- Making trails more accessible.

**7.6 ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**7.6.1 Update from Councillor Blumenthal (verbal)**

Councillor Blumenthal updated that the Accessibility Advisory Committee are continuing to work on updating the accessibility of HRM buildings, and have been working with staff to increase access at the Emera Oval.

## **7.6.2 Transit Stop Annunciation**

A report from the Accessibility Advisory Committee dated December 1, 2011 was before the Committee.

**MOVED by Councillor Blumenthal, seconded by Councillor Fisher , that the Transportation Standing Committee request a staff report on moving forward with, and having a timeline set for, visual and audio announce system instalment for Metro Transit buses and ferries. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

## **8. ADDED ITEMS**

### **8.1 Five Big Moves for Transit – Implementation Phase 1 (Information Item #1)**

An information report dated December 16, 2011 was before the Committee.

Correspondence from the *It's More Than Buses* organizing team dated January 5, 2011 was circulated to the Committee.

The Chair thanked staff for the information report, and asked staff to speak further on the changes proposed for the Burnside/Dartmouth Crossing realignment. Councillor Fisher also asked for staff to comment on deferring the Metro X service for 2013/14.

Mr. Dave Reage, Manager, Service Development, Metro Transit, commented that originally the five year plan focused on services to a central Burnside terminal. Other service improvements have since been made in Burnside, and staff have had a further opportunity to look at demand and uptake in the area. Staff have instead focused, in the Five Big Moves for Transit, on re-aligning services within the park, orienting higher levels of service to the newer areas and Dartmouth Crossing, and focusing on peak hour service, which would avoid the capital cost commitment of building a Burnside transit terminal.

Councillor Watts commented that this discussion should perhaps take place with all of Council in a Committee of the Whole session. Noting acknowledgement that staff are still in the information gathering phase, she questioned when the Five Big Moves for Transit will be coming forward for the decision making phase. Mr. Reage clarified that the report before the Committee looks at the upcoming budget year and the following budget year, and would form the basis for the upcoming annual service plan, which would be brought forward to Council for approval during the budget.

Councillor Watts noted concerns coming from the Greater Burnside Business Association (GBBA), and questioned what level of consultation will take place. Mr. Reage indicated that in order for staff to put together this information quickly for the Committee, the report was based on previous public consultations. He indicated that staff can certainly discuss any concerns with the GBBA.

Councillor Hendsbee noted concern with the proposed deferral of any Metro X services, noting that moving forward with the Metro X service will reduce traffic on the Peninsula.

The Committee at this time agreed to allow Councillor Smith to speak on the matter.

Councillor Smith indicated that the GBBA has very serious concerns about the Burnside/Dartmouth Crossing realignment and not building a Burnside transit terminal. He noted that consultation has taken place on a number of occasions with Burnside business owners and the GBBA, and he is very concerned about this change without their input. Mr. Reage clarified that this will not be impacting the coming year budget and there will be no changes in the annual service plan for Burnside for this year.

Councillor Smith asked that a meeting be arranged with staff and the GBBA. Councillor Watts asked that members of the Committee be invited to the meeting with staff and the GBBA. Mr. Reage indicated that staff would make arrangements for this meeting.

At the request of Councillor Fisher, Mr. Reage indicated he could confirm the budget year that the Burnside terminal was planned for.

Councillor Blumenthal left the meeting at 2:40 p.m.

## **8.2 Open Space Functional Plan – Scope and Process (Information Item #2)**

An information report dated November 20, 2011 was before the Committee.

Ms. Holly Richardson, Coordinator, Real Property Policy, Planning & Infrastructure, presented the information report to the Committee. A copy of this presentation is on file.

Councillor Watts requested that this presentation be made to the Active Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC), noting that there will be representatives of trails groups in attendance. Ms. Richardson agreed to bring this presentation to the ATAC.

At the request of Councillor Watts, Ms. Richardson commented on the public engagement process, noting that they will be starting with a website by late January for an awareness and education campaign. Staff plan to hire a communications firm to undertake a public opinion survey, and will have support from corporate communications. Staff plan to use innovative methods of outreach such as social media and design charettes and will be shaping the engagement program around all interest areas.

Ms. Richardson commented that staff will provide more detail on how the different interest groups are being coordinated as plans are developed. A steering committee will be set up from different HRM departments and technical groups will be set up based on areas of expertise.

Councillor Hendsbee inquired about taking advantage of real estate opportunities as they arise vs. finding a property after a project is identified. As an example, he



suggested that the Miller Road reserve lands would be ideal space for future open space planning. Mr. Peter Bigelow, Manager, Real Property Planning, clarified that the aim of the Plan is to drive strategic land acquisitions, and may also provide an opportunity for strategic rationalization to identify surplus land.

### **8.3 Councillor Nomination to the Halifax Dartmouth Bridge Commission**

This item was addressed earlier in the meeting, see page 3.

### **8.4 Councillor Hum - Request for staff report – Opportunity for a Transportation Corridor Parallel to Chain Lake Drive**

This item was addressed earlier in the meeting, see page 4.

## **9. NEXT MEETING – February 23, 2012**

The next meeting of the Transportation Standing Committee is scheduled for Thursday, February 23, 2012 at 1:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, City Hall, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax.

### **9.1 Approval of the 2012 Meeting Schedule**

**MOVED by Councillor Watts, seconded by Councillor Fisher, that the 2012 Transportation Standing Committee Meeting Schedule be approved as circulated. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

## **10. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:05 p.m.

Jennifer Weagle  
Legislative Assistant

**INFORMATION ITEMS**

1. Information report dated December 16, 2011 re: Five Big Moves for Transit - Implementation Phase 1
2. Information report dated November 30, 2011 re: Open Space Functional Plan – Scope and Process