

MEMORANDUM

To: Transportation Standing Committee – Chair & Members

From: Jennifer Weagle, Legislative Assistant

Date: July 16, 2014

**Subject: AAC report deferred from June 4, 2014 TSC meeting
Accessibility Evaluation of HRM Pedestrian Infrastructure**

At the June 4, 2014 meeting of the Transportation Standing Committee (TSC), under agenda item 9.3.1., a report from the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) entitled “Accessibility Evaluation of HRM Pedestrian Infrastructure” was referred back to the AAC for clarification.

The AAC met on June 16, 2014, and discussed the intent of the motion made at their April 28, 2014 meeting. Committee members clarified that the intent was to ensure that Halifax has a process to identify standards for mobility and accessibility to enable those with disabilities to get around outside. The Committee questioned what the processes are and standards used for evaluating high traffic outdoor areas. They discussed the benefits of having accessibility standards ready and available for staff to follow when undertaking infrastructure and streetscape projects.

Item No. 9.3.1

Extract from the draft minutes of the June 4, 2014 Transportation Standing Committee meeting

9.3.1 Accessibility Evaluation of HRM Pedestrian Infrastructure

The following was before the Committee:

- A recommendation report from the Accessibility Advisory Committee dated May 14, 2014

Councillor Watts commented that the exterior pedestrian environment can be very unfriendly to those with disabilities in particular areas around HRM, for example around the Nova Scotia Rehabilitation Centre.

Mr. Mike Labrecque, Deputy CAO, indicated that would be helpful for staff to have more specific information from the Committee.

Councillor Watts indicated that she will discuss this with the Accessibility Advisory Committee at their next meeting, and bring it back to the Transportation Standing Committee. She suggested that this may require a staff report to look at whether staff have the ability to examine geographic areas to do an accessibility update, and how that would move forward.

Transportation Standing Committee
June 4, 2014

TO: Chair and Members of the Transportation Standing Committee

Original signed

SUBMITTED BY: _____
Lisa Pottie, Chair, HRM Accessibility Advisory Committee

DATE: May 14, 2014

SUBJECT: Accessibility Evaluation of HRM Pedestrian Infrastructure

ORIGIN

Discussion held and motion approved at April 28, 2014 Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The Terms of Reference of the Accessibility Advisory Committee sets out the purpose of the Committee “to advise and assist Halifax Regional Council, through the Transportation Standing Committee, to facilitate and to promote the access and accessibility of all citizens to their community including municipal governments, programs and services.”

RECOMMENDATION

That the Transportation Standing Committee consider adopting, as one of their priorities put forward for consideration under the Healthy Communities Core Priority Areas adopted by Regional Council on January 28, 2014, funding within HRM business units, supported by advice from the Accessibility Advisory Committee, “to identify, evaluate and respond to high traffic outdoor pedestrian infrastructure areas, such as bus stops, sidewalks, cross walks and curb cuts, where there are problems identified for individuals with mobility issues”

BACKGROUND

On January 28, 2014 Regional Council approved a series of recommendations coming out of the Mayor's Conversation on a Healthy and Livable Community (recommendation report dated January 21, 2014), including the following:

3. *For consideration in the 2015-16 budget, as part of the Healthy Communities Core Priority Area, work with the appropriate Standing Committees to determine what further opportunities exist to achieve a higher level of health and livability in HRM, as outlined in the Background section of the January 21, 2014 staff report, and reports back no later than September 30, 2014.*

DISCUSSION

At the April 28, 2014 meeting of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, a discussion was held on previous work undertaken over the last few years by Committee members in performing accessibility assessments of HRM owned and operated facilities, and making recommendation to staff for accessibility improvements required in those facilities. It was also noted that accessibility is a priority of the Mayor and members of Council. The Committee discussed the need for a focus on the exterior pedestrian environment, such as bus stops, sidewalks, and curb cuts, which may present safety concerns for those with mobility issues.

The Committee approved a motion recommending that HRM establish a process to identify and evaluate high traffic outdoor pedestrian infrastructure areas where there may be concerns for individuals with mobility issues such as bus stops, sidewalks and problematic curb cuts.

This recommendation fits within the Regional Council direction referenced within the Background section of this report, for Standing Committees to determine what further opportunities exist to achieve a higher level of health and livability in HRM for consideration in the 2015/16 budget, as part of the Healthy Communities Core Priority Area.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial implications associated with this recommendation would be explored for consideration in the 2015/16 budget, as a part of the Healthy Communities Core Priority Area.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Accessibility Advisory Committee is comprised of eight volunteer citizen members and two members of Regional Council, plus staff liaison members from a number of HRM business units including Metro Transit, Planning & Infrastructure, Human Resources, Community & Recreation Services, and Halifax Regional Police. Meetings are held monthly and are open to the public. Minutes, agendas, reports and other information on the AAC are posted on the HRM website.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

None identified.

ALTERNATIVES

None identified.

ATTACHMENTS

None.

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: Jennifer Weagle, Legislative Assistant, 490-6517
