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Info Item No. 3
Transportation Standing Committee
February 26, 2015

TO: Chair and Members of Transportation Standing Committee

Original Signed

SUBMITTED BY:

Eddie Robar, Director, Halifax Transit

DATE: February 19, 2015

SUBJECT: Commuter Rail Feasibility Study Update

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

This information report originates from a request from the Transportation Standing Committee for monthly status updates on the Commuter Rail Feasibility Study.

On January 22, 2015, a motion passed that the Transportation Standing Committee request a second Open House session of the Commuter Rail Feasibility Study occur and that the session be located on the peninsula.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Section 69(1) of the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter* provides the legislative authority for the municipality to provide a public transportation service.

BACKGROUND

Regional Council has directed staff to undertake a feasibility study for commuter rail in the Halifax to Windsor Junction to Enfield corridor. In order to complete this work the services of an external rail consultant was procured in August 2014, and the study began in September 2014.

DISCUSSION

A public open house will be held on February 26, 2015, from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm at the Sunnyside Mall in Bedford. The purpose of the public open house will be to provide the public with information on the initial assessments and evaluations prior to finalizing the study. The information available at the open house will include a thorough analysis of the documented background assessments of existing infrastructure, estimation of traffic demand, potential station locations, and operations design. To ensure the study is thorough and comprehensive, a scope variation to include a Halifax to Beaver Bank scenario is near completion and will also be included. The information provided at the open house will also be available for viewing on the Halifax Transit website and Shape Your City Halifax online engagement portal.

The Transportation Standing Committee has requested an additional open house be held on the Halifax Peninsula. Hosting a second public open house is outside the scope of the study and would require additional funding to be identified. In addition, the purpose of the open house is only to provide information, not to gauge public interest or support for commuter rail. As such, it is not intended to be a comprehensive public engagement process. The rail corridor travels through many communities in the Municipality, from the South End of Halifax to Enfield, and a location in Bedford was selected for the session as a central location. The information presented will also be available online for residents to view. Once the final study is assembled and presented, if Council chooses to pursue commuter rail, a more comprehensive public consultation program may be warranted.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report as it is only providing information to the Committee.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A public open house is being held to share information about this study. Information will also be available on the Halifax Transit website.

ATTACHMENTS

None.

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.php> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210, or Fax 902.490.4208.

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