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Item No. 12.3.2

Transportation Standing Committee
January 21, 2016

TO: Chair and Members of the Transportation Standing Committee

Original Signed

SUBMITTED BY:

Patricia Gates, Chair, HRM Accessibility Advisory Committee _____

DATE: October 21, 2015

SUBJECT: Permit Parking for Accessible Vehicles at Parking Metres

ORIGIN

Discussion held and motion approved at the October 19, 2015 Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The Objective of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, as set out in its Terms of Reference:

1. OBJECTIVE

The main responsibility of the Committee is to advise Halifax Regional Council, through the Transportation Standing Committee, on the impact of Municipal policies, programs and services on persons with disabilities.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Transportation Standing Committee request staff, within the current parking by permit review underway, consider options toward the possibility of creating on-street parking by permit for accessible vehicles at parking metres.

BACKGROUND

In October 2015 a resident brought forward to the Office of the Mayor concerns regarding finding suitable accessible parking in the downtown area. This individual uses a wheelchair and drives a vehicle equipped with a hoist to facilitate getting the wheelchair in and out of the vehicle. He works on Spring Garden Road during regular business hours; however, the hoist is too high to operate in parking garages in the area. He is unable to use surface parking lots in the area as he cannot reach the machines in the lots to obtain a parking voucher or pay for parking. His only option is to park at accessible on-street parking spots in the area; however these spots are regulated so that vehicles cannot be parked at one spot for the entire day, with spots varying from 0.5 to 3 hours in length of time. He must obtain an on-street accessible parking spot early in the morning, and go out throughout the day to move his vehicle to another accessible spot, if one is available. As a result of trying to avoid getting parking tickets, he misses time from work. He reported receiving 140 parking tickets last year, although most were thrown out in court.

DISCUSSION

The Accessibility Advisory Committee at their October 19, 2015 meeting discussed with staff from Municipal Compliance and Transportation Planning the problems encountered by this individual in finding accessible parking in the downtown core, as an illustration of the barriers encountered by persons with disabilities integrating into the workforce, and what could be done to facilitate this process.

Members of the Committee commented on the possibility of providing an avenue for accessible on-street parking by way of special parking permits for those with disabilities that cannot be accommodated by other parking options.

Staff indicated that that in order for the Municipality to be able to issue special permits, this would require amendments to By-laws P-500 Respecting Parking Meters and By-law P-1000 Respecting On-Street Parking Exemptions and Permits. Staff further advised that a parking review is currently underway involving options for different types of parking permits, and indicated that with direction from the Transportation Standing Committee, this could be included in that review.

The Committee approved a motion to recommend that the Transportation Standing Committee request staff, within the current parking by permit review underway, consider options toward the possibility of creating parking by permit for accessible vehicles at parking metres.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no Financial Implications associated this report.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) is comprised of eight volunteer citizen members and two members of Regional Council, plus staff liaison members from a number of HRM business units. 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.

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