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Item No. 12.1.1
Transportation Standing Committee
June 23, 2016

TO: Members of the Transportation Standing Committee

SUBMITTED BY: **Original Signed**

Bruce Zvaniga, P. Eng., Director, Transportation & Public Works

DATE: May 12, 2016

SUBJECT: Prospect Road Sidewalk

ORIGIN

November 10, 2015, Regional Council, Item 11.7.4. It was moved by Councillor Adams, seconded by Deputy Mayor Whitman that Halifax Regional Council request a staff report outlining the feasibility and process to install a sidewalk along a 444 meter portion of Prospect Road from PID#'s 00380667 to 40805129.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter; section 82(a) The Municipality may enter into and carry out agreements for highway construction, improvement and maintenance and other purposes pursuant to the *Public Highways Act*;

Sections 88(1) (x), (aa) and (ah) The Council may expend money required by the Municipality for lands and buildings required for a municipal purpose; streets, culverts, retaining walls, sidewalks, curbs and gutters; playgrounds, trails, including trails developed, operated or maintained pursuant to an agreement made under clause 82(c), bicycle paths, swimming pools, ice arenas and other recreational facilities;

Section 105 (1) The Council may spend money in an area, or for the benefit of an area, for any purpose for which the Municipality may expend funds or borrow;

Section 105(2) The Council may recover annually from the area the amount required or as much of that sum as the Council considers advisable to collect in any one fiscal year by an area rate of so much on the dollar on the assessed value of the taxable property or occupancy assessments in the area.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Transportation Standing Committee recommend that Council not direct the installation of the proposed sidewalk until such time as recommendation 5 from the approved 2014-2019 Halifax Active Transportation Priorities Plan is implemented to provide a framework for systematic evaluation of active transportation infrastructure requests.

BACKGROUND

The community of Hatchet Lake in Halifax includes a community center, the Prospect Road Elementary school, the Brookside Junior High School and a small retail service area, along the Prospect Road. There is a cross walk with a button operated overhead flashing pedestrian light at the intersection of Prospect Road and Brookside Road and pedestrian trail exists connecting the community centre to Prospect Road Elementary School. No sidewalk or other pedestrian facility currently exists between the elementary school and the crosswalk at Brookside Road (See map attached as appendix A).

The current Council motion requests process and feasibility recommendations regarding the installation of a sidewalk to provide a pedestrian connection between the crosswalk at PID 0038067 (Civic 2273 Prospect Road) to PID 40805129 (Brookside Junior High School). The approximate length of this sidewalk connection would be 200m and it would terminate roughly 150m away from the Prospect Road Elementary School and the trail connection to the Prospect Road Community Centre.

In order to provide a comprehensive recommendation, staff has included background on the sidewalk requested in the motion as well as the additional 150 m extension to the Prospect Road Elementary School (Civic 2199). Both potential sidewalks and the existing trail are shown in Attachment A.

DISCUSSION

Process:

Council is within its authority to direct that a sidewalk be installed as described above in whole or in part.

This section of Prospect Road is outside the urban tax area. The current tax structure specifies that sidewalks in the urban tax area are funded from the general rate and those in the suburban and rural areas are funded locally. This applies to both capital and operating costs, e.g. maintenance, repairs and snow removal. The capital costs could be funded through a local improvement charge to recover 100% of associated construction costs from area residents or, alternatively, an area rate could be considered, since the sidewalk is intended for use by those from a broad area served by the schools and Community Center. On-going operating costs would be funded by an area rate.

This work is not included in the current capital plan but, in response to Council's direction, it could be accommodated in future years. Should Council direct that this work be considered during the current fiscal cycle, funding and resources would have to be diverted from currently planned projects to accommodate the construction. This would require reprioritizing the capital budget and would include a review by the Audit and Finance Committee.

This section of Prospect Road is owned and maintained by the Nova Scotia Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal (NSTIR); therefore, provincial approval would be required for any construction within their right of way.

A preliminary design and cost estimate would first be developed by HRM TPW staff, reviewed by NSTIR and a catchment area identified for local improvement charges. A more detailed assessment would then be required to confirm design feasibility and cost estimates for the proposed construction. As a note, preliminary cost estimates for new sidewalks range from \$500 to \$3,000 per meter.

Public engagement may also be considered in the community to review the proposed project, and future maintenance and capital cost recovery plans would need to be explored in more detail along with any necessary service exchange agreements with the Province.

Feasibility:

HRM has several kinds of AT infrastructure in rural areas of the municipality. Most consist of off-road greenways for walking, bicycling or shared-use (ATVs on provincial crown land). There are also some

limited segments of sidewalk and paved shoulders. The approach to providing AT infrastructure in rural areas needs to consider factors such as jurisdiction, community-types, costs and potential user types. The clustering of institutions, services and adjacent residential areas that is present in the subject area of this report is consistent with the type of areas that could benefit from the addition of AT facilities in rural areas.

The 2014-2019 Halifax Active Transportation Priorities Plan (AT Priorities Plan) was approved by Regional Council in September 2014. That plan included recommendation #5 which states:

“Halifax needs to develop a comprehensive approach to the delivery of rural AT facilities, including criteria for determining the most appropriate AT facility type, and consideration of the financial implications (capital and operating) of doing so.”

HRM staff is currently working through a number of AT Priorities Plan recommendations and it is anticipated this recommendation will be delivered to Council for consideration within the next 12 months.

Staff does not support the installation of the proposed sidewalk or other similar AT infrastructure until such time as the above referenced framework is in place to provide for a systematic evaluation of requests, identification of opportunities for intergovernmental cooperation, coordination of construction and maintenance, and clarification of the facility types that should be considered.

If the recommendation is approved by Council staff would proceed with the necessary review over the next twelve months which will allow future action not only on the request for Prospect Road, but other rural AT project requests.

As a note when a new sidewalk is constructed and maintained to HRM Municipal Standards, the insurance coverage would be the same as any other municipally owned sidewalk.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Should Council direct staff to proceed with the installation of the proposed infrastructure, alterations will be required to the approved Capital Budget to provide the required funding. Detailed costs estimates will be provided for Council's consideration at a future date. Local improvement charges or area rates could not be determined until cost estimates are completed and the LIC/area rate boundary(s) are known.

RISK CONSIDERATIONS

There are no significant risks associated with the recommendations of this report.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The comprehensive approach to the potential delivery of rural AT facilities would include community engagement.

Should Council elect to proceed with this project in advance of the implementation of Recommendation 5 from the approved AT plan, local public engagement may also be considered in the community to review the proposed project.

ALTERNATIVE

Council could chose to proceed with preliminary design and cost estimates, and develop a catchment area for local improvement charges for this project in advance of the implementation of Recommendation 5 from the approved AT plan. Staff does not recommend this alternative for reasons identified in this report.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Map of area

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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