

**Transportation Standing Committee  
October 2, 2013**

**TO:** Chair and Members of Transportation Standing Committee

Original signed

**SUBMITTED BY:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Peter Stickings, Acting Director, Planning & Infrastructure

**DATE:** August 29, 2013

**SUBJECT:** Paving Highway Shoulders for Active Transportation

**INFORMATION REPORT**

**ORIGIN**

At the August 7, 2013, meeting of the Transportation Standing Committee, Councillor Hendsbee requested that staff investigate the possibility of utilizing Active Transportation project funds to pave the shoulder of the road in rural areas to improve active transportation. The DCAO indicated he would report back on this possibility.

**LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

The following sections of the Halifax Regional Municipality Act apply:

**73** The Municipality may enter into and carry out agreements:

(a) for highway construction, improvement and maintenance and other purposes pursuant to the *Public Highways Act*;

(c) with the Government of the Province with respect to the development, operation or maintenance of trails on land of Her Majesty in right of the Province.

**79 (1)** The Council may expend money required by the Municipality for:

(o) public transportation services;

(ah) playgrounds, trails, including trails developed, operated or maintained pursuant to an agreement made under clause 73(c), bicycle paths, swimming pools, ice arenas and other recreational facilities;

**83 (4)** The Municipality may borrow money:

(a) with the approval of the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, to improve a street that is the property of Her Majesty in right of the Province.

## **BACKGROUND**

Further information provided by Councillor Hendsbee indicates that the focus of his request is related to a road rehabilitation project by Nova Scotia Transportation & Infrastructure Renewal (NSTIR) on a 5.6 km section of Route #207 scheduled for this year. This highway has gravel shoulders like other similar rural roadways. The Councillor indicated he would like to see the shoulders paved during rehabilitation projects to better accommodate active transportation, even if HRM has to provide funding for work on NSTIR projects.

Key points related to this issue are:

- The province does pave shoulders, just not on this particular project;
- Their decision not to pave shoulders on this particular project is consistent with what HRM has done in the past; and
- The cost of paving the shoulders would be approximately \$1.5 million and this is not available in the budget.

## **DISCUSSION**

NSTIR, like HRM, strives to better accommodate active transportation on rural roadways. All roadway rehabilitation projects are evaluated for the feasibility of extending the paved surface to create a paved shoulder combined with the need for accommodating active transportation demands. NSTIR, for example, will be paving the shoulders of a section of Trunk 3 this year and HRM is partway through a multi-year program of paving shoulders on Hammonds Plains Road.

NSTIR has indicated to HRM staff that the paving of shoulders will not be part of the Route #207 rehabilitation project, due to the proximity of a parallel off-road multi-use trail. HRM used that same rationale in recommending against paving shoulders on Bissett Road in 2013.

Although paved shoulders are desirable from several aspects, they are very expensive to implement and both HRM and NSTIR recommendations considered that investments are best made where alternative active transportation options are less available. It is important to note that, while a parallel trail is available, the condition of this trail is not currently well-suited to active transportation uses.

HRM had developed a budgeting figure (from three recent tenders) of \$130,000 per kilometer per side for projects of this nature, although existing surfaced width and condition of existing shoulder can influence this cost significantly. The total cost of paving both shoulders for this 5.6 km section of roadway would be approximately \$1.5 million.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There is no approved budget for HRM contributing to the paving of shoulders on NSTIR projects. This has not been seen as a priority as the approach by HRM and NSTIR in determining the need for paving shoulders seems consistent.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

No community engagement on this project has been undertaken, although HRM has recently consulted with the community in general for the five-year review of the Active Transportation Plan.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

There are no attachments.

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A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/commcoun/cc.html> then choose the appropriate Community Council and meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

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