

**Transportation Standing Committee
February 5, 2014**

TO: Chair and Members of Transportation Standing Committee

SUBMITTED BY: Original signed

Ms. Lisa Pottie, Chair, and Members, Accessibility Advisory Committee

DATE: January 27, 2014

SUBJECT: Service Dog Exercise Area – Rainnie Drive & Cogswell Road

ORIGIN

December 16, 2013 & January 20, 2014 Accessibility Advisory Committee meetings.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The main responsibility of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, as set out in its Terms of Reference, 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

It is recommended that the Transportation Standing Committee request staff, as a part of the North Park Intersection Redesign project, consider relocating the service dog exercise area at Rainnie Drive and Cogswell Street to a more accessible area located within the urban core, that has more space, that the area be grassed, that the rules be clearly posted in writing and braille, and that the relocation be done in consultation with the individuals who use the area.

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

At the December 16, 2013 meeting of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, Transportation & Public Works staff provided the Committee with an update on the North Park Intersection Redesign project, which has reached 50% completion at the design stage. Staff reviewed the project scope, which includes intersection modifications, pedestrian and cycling facilities, streetscaping, undergrounding of overhead utilities, tree planting and seating opportunities.

The Committee and staff discussed the Service Dog Exercise Area at Rainnie Drive and Cogswell Street. Staff indicated that this area will need to be modified or relocated in 2015 due to the North Park Intersection Redesign project. Staff indicated that they would be meeting with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) and the Canadian Council of the Blind (CCB) in January to discuss the service dog exercise area. A Committee member indicated that she would be attending that meeting. The Committee requested that following that meeting, she inform the Committee of CNIB and CCB's wishes relative to the service dog relocation or modification.

At the January 20, 2014 meeting of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, the Committee member updated on her discussions about the service dog exercise area. She shared that individuals who use the area have agreed that there should be a designated space within the urban core for a service dog exercise area but in a more convenient location. They are also hoping that the location changes soon and in consultation with the individuals who use it. Users have stated that while this is their preference, they will settle for a smaller service dog exercise area in the same location if that is the only option.

The Committee discussed that the current location is difficult for those with visual impairments to access, due to high traffic volumes. The Committee further discussed that the rules for the service dog exercise area should be clearly posted for users and non-users in both writing and braille, and that it would be preferable if the surface area were grassed, instead of asphalt or concrete.

The Committee approved the recommendation as contained on the first page of this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Should staff determine that the location of the service dog exercise area is to be maintained in its current location and modified to fit with intersection redesign, it will be included in the North Park Intersection Redesign project budget. If staff determine that a new location is the best option for the service dog exercise area, a separate budget and project will be required, which would be brought forward for consideration via a separate staff report.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Accessibility Advisory Committee is a Committee of Council, reporting through the Transportation Standing Committee. The Committee is made up of eight volunteer citizen members, and two members of Regional Council. The Committee meets monthly and the meetings are open to the public. Agendas, minutes and reports are available online.

A Public Engagement Session on the North Park Intersection Redesign project was held in February 2013. Further sessions are scheduled for January and March 2014.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

None identified.

ALTERNATIVES

None identified.

ATTACHMENTS

None

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/commcoun/index.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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