

MEMORANDUM

To: Chair and Members of Transportation Standing Committee

CC: Mr. Taso Koutroulakis, Manager Traffic & Right of Way Service

From: Councillor Barry Dalrymple, Chair, Crosswalk Safety Advisory Committee

Date: November 28, 2013

Subject: Update on report to Transportation Standing Committee

MANDATE

The Crosswalk Safety Advisory Committee will serve as a forum to develop and present input and advice with respect to crosswalks with the objective of improving the safety of pedestrians using crosswalks in HRM.

The Crosswalk Safety Advisory Committee will develop a report, along with action plans to improve the safety of pedestrians using crosswalks, both marked and unmarked.

Issues to be addressed in the report include, but are not limited to

- education
- enforcement
- traffic control measures
- standards and consistency

as they relate to crosswalks, including budget implications.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION

The Crosswalk Safety Advisory Committee agreed at their July 25, 2013 meeting to have a work plan and that any recommendations will go to the Transportation Standing Committee.

Subsequently, the Committee has held Work Plan Sessions on September 26th and October 24, 2013 with HRM Volunteer Services staff. The Committee is scheduled to meet December 19, 2013 to finalize their Work Plan and start the process of preparing their report to the Transportation Standing Committee.

The attached information provides an overview of the Committee's development of their Work Plan from the September 26th and October 24, 2013 sessions.

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The Committee has also received correspondence from residents and interest groups, as well as heard presentations and had discussion sessions from the following:

- Halifax Regional Police re: Crosswalk Statistics
- Traffic & Right of Way Services policies, procedures and standards
- Taso Koutroulakis, Manager, Traffic & Right of Way Service re: Factors in Crosswalk Determination
- Kyle Miller re: Crosswalks around the world
- Sally Christie, Corporate Communication re: HRM Pedestrian Safety Campaign
- Dr. Ahsan Habib re: Overview of Nova Scotia Collision Study 2007-2011
- Angela Comeau, Principal of Shatford Memorial Elementary and Ann Gagnon, Parent Representative re: Schools and Crosswalk Safety
- Sgt David Reynolds, Halifax Regional Police re: Overview of laws and regulations relative to crosswalks/pedestrians
- Cst Bryan Naas, Halifax Regional Police re: Crossing Guard Program

The Committee projects they will have their report completed and submitted to the Transportation Standing Committee by early 2014.

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Crosswalk Safety Advisory Committee notes

Date: Sept. 26
Oct. 24

Notes

Purpose: To prepare a report with action plans that will identify and address concerns for crosswalks as they relate to crosswalk safety including budget implications. Issues to be addressed in the report include, but are not limited to...

- Education
- Enforcement
- Traffic control measures
- Standards and consistency
- Other

Workplan process: The committee was divided in 2 smaller groups; each group was to assign a recorder and a presenter to present back to the larger group. Following the presentation, time was provided for clarification, to ask questions or add relevant information.

Each issue was addressed by answering the following questions...

- What's currently happening?
- What improvements are required?
- What do you see as challenges?
- What steps are required to make the necessary improvements?

Discussion as follows...

1. Education:

A. What's currently happening?

Discussion notes:

- HRM's "distraction Kills"
 - Social media
 - Traditional media
- Norm Collins
- Making tracks EAC (Ecology Action Centre)
- Pedestrian Safety brochure – Province
- Nothing happening in schools

B. What improvements are required?

Discussion notes:

- School “road safety” curriculum (after school programs)
- Increased HRM ads.
- School board and Province involvement
- Positive messaging
- Coordination between interest groups (HRM should be the lead)

C. What do you see as challenges?

- a. Identification of possible solutions

Discussion notes:

- Budgets
- Getting into the schools
 - Schools to teach kids themselves
 - Shared responsibility (Province)
- Affecting behavioural challenges
- Pedestrian/driver style in HRM

D. What steps are required to make the necessary improvements?

What are you able to do?

What resources are required?

Discussion Notes:

- Municipality to approach Province and school board
- Enforcement and education to change current lifestyle
- Government (2 – 3 levels) of funding
- Positive messaging
- Be bold!! Cultural shift
- Shared responsibility

2. Enforcement:

A. What’s currently happening?

Is it working and why? If not, why?

Discussion notes:

- What penalties currently exist?
 - Pedestrians – is there any?
 - Driver?
- Does anyone know what rules are in place?
- What does MVA say?
 - Need clarity on pedestrian penalties
 - Section 125 (3)
 - definition of unmarked crosswalks
- Entrapment? Plainclothes officers (radio ahead)
- Unmarked legal crosswalks never
- Enforced speaks to education (little knowledge recognizing the need for education)

- What's currently happening HRM wide?

B. What improvements are required?

What is no longer relevant?

What are the gaps?

Discussion notes:

- Increase in clarity and enforcement
- Change in priorities for enforcement
- So many policing issues – what's most important?
- Crossing guards
- Informal enforcement – community enforcement stewardship examples like neighbourhood watch
- Citizens taking control
- It should be noted that there are success stories, and is there opportunity to improve on these?
- How are we utilizing our staff?

C. What do you see as challenges?

b. Identification of possible solutions

Discussion notes:

- Budgets + priorities (perceived level of importance)
- Education or lack of
- No strong message coming from unified sources
- Difficult or unwillingness to change legislation
- Cultural change needed
- Overlap between issues

D. What steps are required to make the necessary improvements?

What are you able to do?

What resources are required?

Discussion notes:

- Clarify what is legal and what is not
- Simplify training around crosswalk safety
- Can residents be involved in enforcement? (take plates? Give info hand-outs)

3. Traffic Control Measures:

A. What's currently happening?

Discussion notes:

- Parking too close to crosswalk
- Right turns. Pedestrians are vulnerable at islands.
- Buttons on wrong side of poles
- Hierarchy of painted and unpainted crossings

- Overhead and painted lines
- Full traffic signals
- Signs for playgrounds

B. What improvements are required?

Discussion notes:

- Zebra crossings instead of parallel lines
- Add flags
- No right island turns
- Pathway system. Connectivity
- Staggered crosswalks + physical barriers & buttons
- Move buttons downstream
- Make sure pedestrians are visible
- Evaluate crosswalks & parking

C. What do you see as challenges?

Discussion notes:

- Right of way limitations
- Money

D. What steps are required to make the necessary improvements?

What are you able to do?

What resources are required?

Discussion Notes:

- Council report on books, staff need to respond re zebras
- Try to avoid RT Islands, easier for new sections
- Staggered – pilot it somewhere
- Evaluate parking around crosswalks
- Solar research could create opportunity to add beacons
- Zebra crossings at schools
- Evaluate crossing for visibility barriers – bus-stops, parking etc
- Connections between control measures & standards
- Solar powered beacons at crossings
- What can be done to affect change in private property like Dartmouth Crossing
- Can be part development agreements.
- No differentiation between private property and HRM. It all looks the same to the public

4. Standards and Consistency

A. What's currently happening?

Discussion notes:

- Standards are in place, but there are always exceptions
- Consistency is absolute
- But there is wiggle room

B. What improvements are required?

Discussion notes:

- Standards need to be different for urban, suburban and rural areas
- Need decision making mechanism, not just 1 person making decisions.
- Community should have opportunity to make case
- Revise standards to reflect urban, suburban and rural (traffic, speed, pedestrian counts, etc)
- Standards need to reflect school issues
 - No crosswalk because no pedestrians
 - No pedestrians because there is no crosswalk
- Pilot ideas – try it out

C. What do you see as challenges?

Discussion notes:

- Current structure of traffic authority
- Need to look at other models as HRM geography is unique (size, make up)
- Resistance to change
- Sharing decision making
- Budget
- What is in place is not working

D. What steps are required to make the necessary improvements?

What are you able to do?

What resources are required?

Discussion Notes:

- Committee should recommend standards to reflect urban, suburban and rural areas
- Standards have to change
- Some authority over standards has to change
- Need understanding as to why standards are what they are and the rationale behind them
- Research best practices
- Review policies and goals
- Current model flexible – HRM traffic can decide
- Research on many bp's already done
- New document out (1 yr old)
- Still evolving through so still open to new considerations
- Are we using best practices? Recommended, desirable, optional
- Want to hear research and be able to recommend
- How to give public more of a voice

5. Other

Notes:

- Value in continuing existing services which may be lost due to standards if equipment fails.
Ex. Overhead lights on crosswalks on single lane roads would not qualify under current standards
- Need to have wiggle room
- Need community context in applying standards
- Using guidelines not standards
- Need modelling and predictions for pedestrians the same as they model traffic
- Evaluation is missing
 - Tracking #of conflicts at crosswalks
 - Difference in levels of injuries at crosswalks
 - Need good data
- We have no baseline data
- Next meeting we should create a section called Data Collection and discuss.