



**TRANSPORTATION STANDING COMMITTEE
MINUTES
June 4, 2014**

PRESENT: Councillor Reg Rankin, Chair
Councillor Tim Outhit, Vice-Chair
Councillor Barry Dalrymple
Councillor David Hendsbee
Councillor Waye Mason
Councillor Jennifer Watts
Councillor Russell Walker

REGRETS: Deputy Mayor Darren Fisher

STAFF: Mr. Mike Labrecque, Deputy CAO
Ms. Kirby Grant, Senior Solicitor
Ms. Jennifer Weagle, Legislative Assistant

The following does not represent a verbatim record of the proceedings of this meeting.

The agenda, supporting documents, and information items circulated to the Committee are available online: <http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/SCtransp/index.html>

**Transportation Standing Committee Minutes
June 4, 2014**

*The meeting was called to order at 2:10 p.m., and the Standing Committee
adjourned at 4:00 p.m.*

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 2:10 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – May 7, 2014

MOVED by Councillor Watts, seconded by Councillor Mason, that the Minutes of May 7, 2014 be approved as circulated. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

3. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS

Additions:

- 12.1 Commuter Rail Study Update – Councillor Outhit
- 12.2 Request for Report - Hot Spot Parking – Councillor Mason
- 12.3 Information Item No. 3 – Crosswalk Safety Work Plan – Councillor Dalrymple

Councillor Walker requested that the following Information reports be added to the July 23, 2014 Transportation Standing Committee agenda, noting that he is awaiting an additional taxi related staff report to come forward at the same time:

- Information Item No. 1: Accessible Taxis and Owner/Operators (information report dated May 16/14); and
- Information Item No. 2: 2013 Annual Review – Taxi & Limousine Liaison Group (information report dated May 6/14)

MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Councillor Watts, that the agenda be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

4.1 Passenger Rail Motion of May 7, 2014

A memorandum from the Legislative Assistant dated May 7, 2014 was before the Committee.

The memorandum was received by the Committee without discussion.

5. MOTIONS OF RECONSIDERATION – None

6. MOTIONS OF RESCISSION – None

7. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS – None

8. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS

8.1 Correspondence

Correspondence was received from Mr. Norm Collins dated April 25, 2014 with regard to Information Item No. 3 “Crosswalk Safety Advisory Committee – Crosswalk Safety Work Plan” and circulated to the Committee.

8.2 Petitions - None

Councillor Hendsbee arrived at 2:13 p.m.

8.3 Presentation

8.3.1 Accessible Transit Operations Update – Ahmad Kidwai, Manager, Accessible Transit, Metro Transit

A copy of the staff presentation was before the Committee.

Mr. Ahmad Kidwai, Manager, Accessible Transit, Metro Transit, presented a Metro Transit accessible transit operations update to the Committee. A copy of Mr. Kidwai’s presentation is online and on file.

Councillor Watts thanked Mr. Kidwai for his presentation. She spoke of the role of the Access-A-Bus Committee, of which she is the Council representative, explaining that the membership is elected during the general meeting from members and users and noting that the Committee has made good progress in last two years. Councillor Watts commented on the challenges with maintaining service for the number of users applying for service. She indicated that options to meet these challenges include:

1. HRM to keep purchasing busses and adding to the service.
2. To continue make conventional transit more accessible, and integrate Access-A-Bus users.
3. To improve management of bookings, including handling no-shows and cancellations.

At the request of Councillor Watts, Mr. Kidwai commented on technology improvements planned for the dispatch service, noting that six weeks ago telephone capabilities for the service were doubled, which has resulted in diminished complaints about getting through to dispatch.

Councillor Mason noted in a future update he would like to learn more about the timeliness of making conventional transit stops accessible. He noted that he has heard complaints about the bus stop in front of Access Nova Scotia in Bayers Lake not having a cement pad.

Responding to questions from Councillor Outhit with regard to the wait list, Mr. Kidwai clarified that the monthly wait list numbers in the presentation are reflective of registered clients, who are accepted based on eligibility requirements. He explained that Access-A-Bus service bookings are taken on a first come, first served basis as efficiently as possible.

Councillor Hendsbee suggested that it would be good to know the geographic location of clients. In response to a question from Councillor Hendsbee, Mr. Kidwai indicated that the cut off for service is within a boundary of 1000 metres from a fixed conventional transit stop.

At the request of Councillor Hendsbee, Mr. Kidwai explained that statistics are not available for Access-A-Bus users switching to conventional transit after taking the conventional bus travel training because it is a new program. Councillor Hendsbee further inquired how many passengers assisting users with disabilities are taking advantage of their ability to ride for free. Mr. Kidwai indicated that he did not have these figures.

The Committee thanked Mr. Kidwai for his presentation.

9. REPORTS

9.1 STAFF

9.1.1 Temporary On-Street Parking During Construction (*information report dated March 25, 2014*)

The following was before the Committee:

- A staff information report dated March 25, 2014
- At the May 7, 2014 meeting, this report was added to the June 4, 2014 meeting for discussion. An extract of the draft May 7, 2014 minutes were before the Committee.

Councillor Mason commented that the intent of the Committee's motion of October 2, 2013 was to request a report outlining the establishment of temporary on-street parking for residents with time-limited on-street parking, who temporarily lose access to that parking due to road and sidewalk construction. He noted that other municipalities offer residents temporary parking passes for a day or two when they lose their residential parking due to construction.

MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Councillor Hendsbee, that the Transportation Standing Committee recommend that Regional Council request staff implement a temporary on-street parking program in time for the 2015 construction season for residents of neighbourhoods with time limited on street parking and who temporarily lose access to their residential parking due to road and sidewalk construction.

Councillor Watts requested clarification that this program would not be for people that have permit parking, but would be for residents that park on street because they have no driveway. Councillor Mason confirmed that is the intent.

Mr. Taso Koutroulakis, Manager, Traffic & Right-of-Way Services, advised that currently, through By-law P-1000 (Respecting On-Street Parking Exemptions and Permits), residents can apply for an on-street parking permit for the street they reside on. He indicated that staff recognize that sidewalk and street construction can cause parking difficulties for residents when they are not able to park on their street or unable to access their driveway. Mr. Koutroulakis advised that amendments to By-law P-1000 will be brought forward to Council this fall, part of

which is to expand the parking pass program to allow parking within a designated area, instead of restricting parking to one street.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

9.1.2 Integration of Transit Routes 401 & 370 and Re-route of Route 401 (*information report dated April 3, 2014*)

The following was before the Committee:

- A staff information report dated April 3, 2014
- At the May 7, 2014 meeting, this report was added to the June 4, 2014 meeting for discussion. An extract of the draft May 7, 2014 minutes were before the Committee.

Councillor Hendsbee indicated that as a simple way to enhance transit service in the eastern shore area, he would like transit routes 401 and 370 integrated, and route 401 be extended by six kilometers to East Preston.

The Chair and Mr. Mike Labrecque, Deputy CAO, indicated that this was addressed in the two information reports before the Committee.

Councillor Watts noted that there are several minor route adjustments she would like to see District 8, although she is waiting for the completion of the Metro Transit service review.

Councillor Mason commented that the mandate of the Transportation Standing Committee is one of policy oversight, and proposing route changes is operational matter.

Councillor Outhit indicated that when the Metro Transit service review was approved by Council, he at that time requested clarification from the CAO and Director of Metro Transit, who confirmed that the service review would not mean a moratorium on service changes for the two years that it will take to complete the service review. He indicated support of Councillor Hendsbee's suggestion, noting that it would be an opportunity to service the public better.

Councillor Hendsbee noted that there are only two bus routes that run through the area, and that the cost of expanding the service as set out in the information report would only be \$45,000. He advised that this would get more passengers to the Porters Lake Metro X service.

MOVED by Councillor Hendsbee, seconded by Councillor Outhit, that the Transportation Standing Committee recommend that Regional Council request that staff implement a pilot project for the integration of Metro Transit routes 401 & 370.

Councillor Watts suggested that there should be a framework going forward for when members of Council wish to bring forward pilot projects for Metro Transit route changes.

Councillor Walker commented that a new staff report would be required for the motion, with a business case to support the change for a few passengers.

Mr. Dave Reage, Manager, Planning & Scheduling, Metro Transit, indicated that the information would be the same as has already been provided in the two reports.

MOVED by Councillor Hendsbee, seconded by Councillor Mason, that the motion be tabled. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Responding to an inquiry from Councillor Hendsbee, Mr. Reage advised that service adjustments are made in August, November, February, and May of each year, although planning for service adjustments starts at least six months before they take effect.

9.1.3 Modified SmartTrip E-Pass for Carshare Operators

The following was before the Committee:

- A staff recommendation report dated May 3, 2014

MOVED by Councillor Watts, seconded by Councillor Hendsbee, that the Transportation Standing Committee not support modification of the SmartTrip E-Pass Program to accommodate clients of carshare operators.

Councillor Watts asked that Committee members not support the staff recommendation. She instead proposed recommending modifications to the program including waiving the employer discount and annual membership fee, as a way to support options and modal shifts in public transportation. She noted that the costs of such modifications to the program would not be substantial and would encourage people to use the options before them and support a shift of limiting car use.

MOTION DEFEATED.

MOVED by Councillor Watts, seconded by Councillor Mason, that the Transportation Standing Committee recommends to Regional Council modifications to the SmartTrip E-Pass program to accommodate clients of carshare operators. These modifications include waiving of the employer discount and waiving of the annual SmartTrip E-Pass membership fee. This exemption is being offered specifically to carshare businesses in recognition of the unique role they play in the management of regional transportation demand.

Councillor Hendsbee suggested that it would be beneficial for rural residents to have car share services in park and ride lots.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

The Committee agreed to move item 12.1 to the next order of business.

12.1 Commuter Rail Study Update

Mr. Reage provided a brief verbal update, noting that multiple requests were received from bidders for an extension of the deadline for the RFP for the Commuter Rail Study. He indicated that the RFP will be closing next week, with an award date in early July.

Councillor Outhit noted that he hopes the successful bidder comes to talk to the Committee, and that public consultation is part of the process.

Mr. Reage advised that the RFP includes one public information meeting, noting that the study will be a technical review and the purpose of the public information meeting will be to share information with the community. Councillor Outhit indicated that there are members of the public that have expertise and experience and would be able to provide input.

The Chair noted that there are two affected communities, Bedford and Fall River, and Mr. Reage advised that staff would be strategic in planning the location of the public information meeting.

9.1.5 Crosswalk Safety Work Plan

The following information was before the Committee:

- A staff information report dated April 25, 2014
- Correspondence from Mr. Norm Collins dated June 1, 2014 (circulated)

Councillor Dalrymple thanked staff for the updates contained in the information report. He noted concern with the lack of positive examples of crosswalk flag programs included in the report. Councillor Dalrymple indicated that staff have advised him through earlier discussions that while they are not in favour of crosswalk flag programs, they will work with community groups to ensure the programs are properly implemented.

Councillor Dalrymple requested clarification whether implementation of a crosswalk flag program needs to go to Regional Council for approval, noting that he believed the Crosswalk Safety Work Plan to be already approved by Council.

Mr. Labrecque asked that members leave this matter with staff to determine whether the implementation of a crosswalk flag program would have to go back to Council approval to be implemented, depending on what type of a program or staff support would be provided.

Councillor Dalrymple noted that there are a number of community-led crosswalk flag programs ready to go.

Ms. Kathleen Lewellen-Thomas, Acting Director, Transportation and Public Works, indicated that staff recently determined that it would be appropriate to support community groups wishing to carry out a crosswalk flag program. She clarified that while this would not be considered an HRM program in terms of allocation of resources, staff will partner lightly with community groups to ensure that programs are being carried out appropriately and safely.

Mr. Taso Koutroulakis, Manager, Traffic & Right-of-Way Services, clarified that the action in the work plan, as detailed on page 10 of the staff information report, was to approve the use of crosswalk flags n HRM at crosswalks where the community takes on the responsibility of installing and maintaining them.

Ms. Kirby Grant, Solicitor, advised that it would be appropriate that staff double check that Council approval for the work plan is in place.

Responding to questions from Councillor Outhit, Mr. Koutroulakis confirmed that as long as the flags are used as a device to increase visibility, they would not be considered a traffic control device.

9.2 COMMITTEE MEMBERS - None

9.3 ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

9.3.1 Accessibility Evaluation of HRM Pedestrian Infrastructure

The following was before the Committee:

- A recommendation report from the Accessibility Advisory Committee dated May 14, 2014

Councillor Watts commented that the exterior pedestrian environment can be very unfriendly to those with disabilities in particular areas around HRM, for example around the Nova Scotia Rehabilitation Centre.

Mr. Labrecque indicated that would be helpful for staff to have more specific information from the Committee.

Councillor Watts indicated that she will discuss this with the Accessibility Advisory Committee at their next meeting, and bring it back to the Transportation Standing Committee. She suggested that this may require a staff report to look at whether staff have the ability to examine geographic areas to do an accessibility update, and how that would move forward.

9.3.2 Update from Councillor Watts

An Advisory Committee Updates brief was before the Committee.

9.4 ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

9.4.1 Update from Councillor Watts

An Advisory Committee Updates brief was before the Committee.

9.5 CROSSWALK SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

9.5.1 Update from Councillor Dalrymple

An Advisory Committee Updates brief was before the Committee.

10. MOTIONS

10.1 Councillor Mason

- Notice of motion was provided at the May 7, 2014 meeting.
- A streetscape plan “Sharing the Possibilities on Argyle Street” by the Planning & Design Centre was circulated to members.

MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Councillor Walker, that the Transportation Standing Committee request a staff report outlining a pilot project to test the pedestrian vehicle shared street concept on Argyle Street during the construction phase of the Nova Centre, to use that test to inform the Committee regarding a permanent installation, and to ensure a report back on results so that the Committee may consider recommending to Council creating a permanent shared street on Argyle when the road is reinstated upon completion of the Nova Centre.

Councillor Mason provided some background, noting that there have been discussions with the Downtown Halifax Business Commission, the Argyle Street entertainment district business owners and HRM staff on this matter. He noted that there is no Council direction on this initiative, which originated from a Dalhousie School of Planning student project. Councillor Mason commented that while there are significant grade and drainage issues associated with having a street with no curbs, he feels it is a worthwhile idea to explore.

Councillor Hendsbee commented that he assumes this would become a part of the 5 year, \$50 million capital improvement campaign, and inquired whether there are any other projects on the list for inclusion in the campaign. Councillor Mason noted that with the construction of the Nova Centre, Argyle Street will be torn up for water and sewer installation, and this may be an opportune time to implement the initiative. Mr. Labrecque indicated that this proposal is for a street design and would be separate from the 5 year, \$50 million capital improvement campaign.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

11. IN CAMERA - None

12. ADDED ITEMS

12.1 Commuter Rail Study Update

This item was addressed earlier in the meeting. Refer to page 7.

12.2 Request for Report - Hot Spot Parking

Councillor Mason advised that Hot Spot Parking is an initiative being brought forward by the Downtown Halifax Business Commission and the Spring Garden Road Area Business Association. He noted that he has discussed it with staff and they are in favour of exploring the initiative.

MOVED by Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Watts, that the Transportation Standing Committee request a staff report regarding the rapid implementation of a Hot Spot style paid parking solution in addition to existing meters. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

12.3 Crosswalk Safety Work Plan (Information Item #3)

This item was addressed earlier in the meeting. Refer to page 7.

13. NOTICES OF MOTION

13.1 Councillor Hendsbee

Councillor Hendsbee gave Notice of Motion that at the next meeting of the Transportation Standing Committee he intends to request a staff report to provide a policy and fiscal framework for Regional Councillors to make requests for pilot projects to suggest slight service adjustments to any Metro Transit route as an attempt to enhance quality and increase service reliability of existing transit routes.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Wednesday, July 23, 2014, 2:00 p.m.

15. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Jennifer Weagle
Legislative Assistant

INFORMATION ITEMS

- 1. Accessible Taxis and Owner/Operators** *(information report dated May 16/14)*
 - 2. 2013 Annual Review – Taxi & Limousine Liaison Group** *(information report dated May 6/14)*
 - 3. Crosswalk Safety Advisory Committee – Crosswalk Safety Work Plan** *(information report dated April 25/14)*
 - 4. Memorandum from Legislative Assistant re: Requests for Presentation to the Transportation Standing Committee** *(information report dated May 27/14)*
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