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Halifax Regional Council  
January 27, 2004

**TO:** Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

**SUBMITTED BY:**

  
Councillor Stephen Adams, Chair, Taxi and Limousine Committee

**DATE:** January 20, 2003

**SUBJECT:** By-law T-128 - Amendment to By-Law T-108 re Geography Testing

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**ORIGIN**

Taxi and Limousine Committee meeting of January 19, 2003

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Regional Council:

1. Approve in principle the amendments to By-Law T-108 found in Appendix "A" of this report, and direct staff to arrange for their formal adoption by Council.

## **BACKGROUND**

The issue of administering a general geography test was referred from the Hotel Standards Committee and was first discussed at the June 16, 2003 meeting of the Regional Taxi and Limousine Committee. The matter was subsequently considered at meetings held on August 18, 2003, September 15, 2003 and November 17, 2003. The Committee approved the above recommendation at its January 19, 2004 meeting.

## **DISCUSSION**

During the discussion of this matter input was sought from each of the taxi driver representatives regarding appropriate additional "general" geography questions. The test developed recognizes the input received.

## **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

There are no budgetary implications inherent in this document.

## **FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN**

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

1. Approve in principle the amendments to By-Law T-108 attached as Appendix "A" to this report, and direct staff to arrange for their formal adoption by Council.
2. Refuse to amend the By-law as set out in this report.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Appendix "A", By-law T-128
2. Extract of Draft Minutes of the June 16, 2003, August 18, 2003, September 15, 2003, and November 17, 2003 meeting of the Regional Taxi and Limousine Committee

3. Memorandum from David A. Steele, Taxi and Limousine Inspector, dated November 14, 2003 re General Geography Test
4. E-mail dated June 5, 2003 re Hotel Standards Recommendation to Taxi Committee

Additional copies of this report, and information on its status, can be obtained by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.  
Report prepared by: Sherrill Murphy, Legislative Assistant, 490-6517.

APPENDIX "A"

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY  
BY-LAW NUMBER T-128

Respecting Geography Test for Taxi Drivers

BE IT ENACTED by the Council of the Halifax Regional Municipality that By-law T-108, the Halifax Regional Municipality Taxi and Limousine be amended as follows:

1. Clause (b) of subsection (2) of Section 37 of said By-law T-108 is repealed and the following substituted therefor:

- (b) after successfully completing the English language proficiency test referred to in clause (a), the applicant successfully completes an examination on the Taxi By-law and on the location of streets and prominent buildings and locations in the entire municipality but with emphasis on the specific zone for which the applicant is applying.

Done and Passed in Council this                      day of                      , 2003.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Municipal Clerk

**4.2 Review of By-law and Geography Exams**

A brief discussion ensued with Mr. Steele confirming that the English testing is done before the geography testing. He went on to note that TIANS does have a written portion within their testing and suggested this may be the difficulty in terms of English.

Mr. Hatcher noted that clarifying the needs in terms of the English testing appears to be a step in the right direction and provides the foundation for all the rest of the required testing.

No further action was taken with regard to the By-law and Geography exams.

## EXTRACT - AUGUST 18, 2003 - REGIONAL TAXI AND LIMOUSINE COMMITTEE

### **4.5 Amendment re General Geography Test for all Drivers**

- A draft amendment Respecting Geography Test for Taxi Drivers was before the Committee for consideration.

Don Shannon expressed concern regarding the bundling of geography testing. He commented that diluting the geography testing for a particular zone to ensure that the potential drivers have an understanding of the geography of another zone does not sit well with him. Mr. Shannon noted that he did not see any reason why the Committee should make it easier to get a taxi license, nor make the testing inadequate.

A brief discussion ensued with Mr. Withrow suggesting that the proposed testing would be in addition to that which presently exists.

The Chair went on to suggest that staff develop a supplemental test of approximately 25 questions for each of the zones.

A discussion ensued regarding how the Committee could be assured that the testing is appropriate. Mr. Dave Steele indicated that he was hesitant to bring the testing to this Committee given the public nature of the discussions. In an effort to allay the fears of Committee members regarding the appropriateness of the testing, members are encouraged to contact Dave Steele and provide input as to the make up of the test. Input provided to Mr. Steele will be brought to the Committee at it's next meeting, however, Mr. Steele will decide what is included in the test.

### **Susan Bowers, 1419 St. Margaret's Bay Road**

Ms. Bowers addressed the Committee noting that drivers that are new to the country often have a very difficult time with the language and thus the geography of the municipality. Ms. Bowers encouraged more support for these drivers. She went on to express concern that the language/geography problems result in violence.

Mr. Shannon pointed out that the emphasis placed on the supplemental tests in terms of a pass or fail should not be too onerous.

**It was agreed that** this matter be dealt with at the next meeting of the Committee as noted above.

**EXTRACT - REGIONAL TAXI AND LIMOUSINE COMMITTEE -  
SEPTEMBER 15, 2003**

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**4.4 General Geography Test for all Drivers**

- A document entitled 'Respecting Geography Testing for Taxi Drivers' from Dave Withrow was distributed to the Committee.

Mr. Dave Steele advised that he had received the above document from Mr. Withrow. He went on to thank Mr. Withrow for his input and to encourage input from the other Zones. Mr. Steele indicated that he would utilize the information provided and bring back a report for the next meeting. Mr. Rozee provided 25 locations which should be included in a general geography test relating to the County.

## EXTRACT - REGIONAL TAXI AND LIMOUSINE COMMITTEE - NOVEMBER 17, 2003

### 4.1 General Geography Test for all Drivers

- A memorandum dated November 14, 2003 from David A. Steele, Taxi and Limousine Inspector, was before Council for consideration.

Mr. Steele briefly reviewed the submitted memorandum and responded to questions from members of the Committee.

Mr. Steele clarified that 25 general geography questions would replace 25 of the current questions in each of the three zone exams. The testing period would be approximately one hour. Mr. Steele confirmed that 70% is the pass for the exam.



MEMORANDUM

TO: Chairman and Members of the Taxi and Limousine Committee

FROM: David A. Steele, Taxi and Limousine Inspector

DATE: November 14, 2003

SUBJECT: General Geography Test

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At the Taxi and Limousine committee meeting of June 5, 2003, a recommendation from the Hotel Standards Committee to the Taxi and Limousine Committee to consider administering a general knowledge geography test to all new taxi and limousine drivers was discussed. This recommendation was approved.

With input from representatives of the Taxi and Limousine Committee, staff has compiled a list of questions representing points of interest, historical sites and personalities thru out Halifax Regional Municipality.

Attached is a sample page from the new general knowledge exam and upon approval of the Taxi and Limousine Committee, the new exam will be included in the overall geography testing.

Proposed wording of By-law T-108 amendment attached.

## PART B - GENERAL

Halifax Regional Municipality is a locale known internationally for its friendliness, diverse cultures, and excellent scenery. In order to provide the best service possible to not only the thousands of annual visitors, but to our year-long residents as well, standard exams now include questions on points of interest, historical sites and personalities.

1. The Dingle Tower is located in:
  - a) **Sir Sanford Fleming Park**
  - b) Point Pleasant Park
  - c) Public Gardens
  
2. The Public Gardens are located on:
  - a) Bell Farm Road
  - b) University Avenue
  - c) **Spring Garden Road**
  
3. Africville, a black community on the northern end of the Halifax Peninsula, is now the site of:
  - a) **Seaview Park**
  - b) Clayton Park
  - c) Convoy Run
  
4. York Redoubt, a National Historic Site, is located on:
  - a) Herring Cove Road
  - b) **Purcell's Cove Road**
  - c) Old Sambro Road
  
5. Halifax International Airport Authority is:
  - a) **located at Exit #6, Highway #102**
  - b) located at Exit #5, Highway #101
  - c) located at Exit #7, Highway #103
  
6. The "S. S. Atlantic" Heritage Interpretation Park is located on:
  - a) Highway #3
  - b) Highway #103
  - c) **Highway #333**

**HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY  
BY-LAW NUMBER T-XXX**

**Respecting Geography Test For Taxi Drivers**

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**From:** Chris Newson  
**To:** Sherryl Murphy  
**Date:** 6/5/03 1:59PM  
**Subject:** Hotel Standards recommendation to Taxi Committee

During today's meeting of the Hotel Standards Committee (June 5/03) the following issue was raised and motion passed:

Mr. Dave Steele, Taxi Inspector, advised that a complaint has been received from a Hotel Concierge who reported that a Hotel customer requested a trip to Peggy's Cove and the new taxi driver who answered the call did not know how to get to Peggy's Cove. Mr. Steele further advised that new drivers are only tested for their knowledge of the streets and buildings for their particular zone. He recommended that the Taxi Committee consider administering a general geography test for the region so that the major tourist sites and routes would be common knowledge among all drivers.

Mr. Lorne Baccardax commented that some locations drivers should be aware of would be the major golf courses, beaches such as Lawrencetown, Peggy's Cove, Wolfville - Annapolis Valley area.

**MOVED BY Mr. Lorne Baccardax, seconded by Councillor Stephen Adams that the Taxi and Limousine Committee consider administering a general geography test to all drivers in all zones so that they are familiar with tourist sites in Nova Scotia and the routes to these destinations. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Dave Steele confirmed that 80 - 85% of all new applications to become a taxi driver are non-native Canadians and they may not be as familiar with the region therefore, this testing would be a benefit to all new drivers.

Mr. Gerald Duffy commented that one of the requirements for airport drivers is that they have a knowledge of the major routes in Nova Scotia.

Mr. Jonathan Toms added that there is a lot of information available for the drivers to use as reference material such as the Tourist Guide book, maps etc.

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