

# **2009/10 Council Focus Area Report**

## **Transportation**

**December 15, 2009**

## 1) INTRODUCTION

The origin of better internal coordination on transportation related matters began in 2005. At that time, Council approved the following approaches to guide transportation planning:

- Take care of the transit ridership by achieving core service standards
- Continue to capitalize fleet and technology
- Optimize current transportation network
- Complete the strategic transportation projects
- Plan for the construction of satellite garage
- Plan for the introduction of a rural express route in 2007/2008
- Pursue additional funding for Harbour Link

While many aspects of these approaches have been implemented, others have been absorbed into the current Transportation Focus Area and are now represented as Outcomes and Goals as follows:

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Goal</b>
Transit Enhancements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver the elements of the approved 5 Year Approach to Transit Enhancements</li> <li>• As part of the 5 Year Operating Plan, optimize existing and future service to achieve efficiencies</li> </ul>
Active Transportation (includes multi-use trails, walkways, bike lanes, sidewalks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver elements of the Active Transportation Plan approved in 2006</li> <li>• Emphasis is on the major spines connecting to the city centre and on rail-to-trail opportunities in the rural areas</li> <li>• Develop the Active Transportation Advisory Committee</li> </ul>
Transportation Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce capacity into the network</li> <li>• Optimize the existing network</li> <li>• Continue the Strategic Joint Regional Transportation Planning Committee</li> </ul>

## 2) TRANSPORTATION STEERING COMMITTEE

An internal Transportation Steering Committee has been developed to address the goals and objectives for the Transportation Council Focus Area, as well as to enable better coordination of staff efforts. The Committee developed the following mission and purpose statements:

## **Mission Statement**

*Recommendations to Executive Management regarding the best distribution of capital resources and priorities to support strategic transportation and commuter option initiatives as identified by the HRM Business Planning Process, Council Focus Area, and CAO Goals and Objectives.*

## **Purpose (role)**

- The Committee will provide relevant and timely advice to Council and to the Capital Steering Committee on matters relating to the transportation priorities and commuter option initiatives identified in the Regional Plan and Active Transportation Plan.
- The Committee will perform such other duties as directed by EMT.
- Coordinate and collaborate on communication strategy.
- Maximize HRM capital dollars in support of the approved goals of the organization, through coordination of projects and leveraging of partnerships and external funding.
- Development and maintenance of information regarding transportation infrastructure funding deficiencies & opportunities.
- Development, implementation, and review of performance measures for planning and delivery of transportation capital projects that meet TPW/IAM/EMT/Council requirements.
- Periodic review of status of capital projects in progress, and identification of projects for closure.
- Provide advice and make recommendations to the Strategic Joint Regional Transportation Committee (SJRTC) on joint transportation priorities and commuter option initiatives which benefit any aspects or goals of the Regional Plan or Active Transportation Plan.
- Better coordination at staff level

## **3) TRANSPORTATION CFA PROGRESS 2009/10**

### **a) Transportation Planning -- 2009/2010 Update**

#### **Regional Parking Strategy**

The regional parking strategy is a strategy upon which parking design, supply and creation of bylaws will be based. The strategy addresses the requirement for parking supply to meet the needs of business, residents, tourism and other uses while matching supply to the objective of moderating the growth in vehicle trips. This strategy has strong linkages to Transportation

Demand Management (TDM) initiatives and the park & ride function of regional transit. It is also linked to the Road Network Plan as it strives to match parking supply with the capacity of the network to carry traffic. This strategy was presented to Council on February 3, 2009.

### **Transit Functional Plan**

This plan outlines the expansion of the public transit system, including the development of new service types, to support future settlement pattern and meet targets for transit modal split (transit trips as a percentage of all trips). The Regional Plan mapped the region's best transit opportunities and matched a future settlement plan to those opportunities. This plan provides the documentation to support that strategy. It is currently being reviewed to ensure it meets Federal and Provincial requirements for disposition of various transit supported funds.

Targets for transit modal split must be met in order for the goal of a reduced road network expansion program to be realized. The plan expands the range and effectiveness of transit and provides transit as an option to more residents. A strategic plan of transit expansion linked to future settlement will encourage the development growth nodes best suited to transit service delivery. Success of the plan in meeting aggressive transit modal split targets is critical to moderating the need for road network expansion, the objective of the Road Network Functional Plan.

### **Workplace Commuting Options Pilot**

Launched this year at five workplaces within HRM (including HRM as an employer), the program enhances opportunities for employees to choose ways to commute to work other than driving alone. Initially, programs include an on-line ride-matching database, workplace carshare, and guaranteed ride home.

This is an important element of the TDM Plan in appealing directly to workplaces in influencing trip choice.

### **Network Optimization**

In addition to the above initiatives, Transportation Planning also looks to support HRM's commitment to sustainability, improve traffic issues, signal optimization and intersection improvements. These include:

- **Environmental:** From the environmental perspective for the reduction of green house gas emissions and reduced electrical consumption approximately 2/3rds (175) of our 265 traffic signals have been converted to LED at an 85% cost saving. The remainder will be completed in 2010. An additional 285 LED street lights have been implemented in conjunction with LED Roadway Lighting and EcoTrust. There will be approximately 55% energy savings. Additional funds are required to add further lights and support a dimming pilot installation.

- **Signal Upgrades:** Signal upgrades have been completed at various locations throughout HRM including Akerley Boulevard/Joseph Zatsman Drive, Inglis Street/Tower Road, Lacewood Drive/Thomas Raddall Drive, Glendale Drive/Sackville Sports Stadium, etc., as well as minor signal timing changes on various corridors to reduce delays.
- **Road Upgrades:** Two major road upgrades for 2009 Main Street (MacLaughlin to Riley) and Hammonds Plains Road (Kingswood to Kearney Lake) are designed and tender ready but waiting on land issues. With respect to the impact of the Armdale Rotary redesign, accident statistics are not up-to-date and therefore, it is difficult to evaluate the reduction in the number of accidents. On all accounts and feedback, there has been a significant improvement in operation and likely a decreased incident rate.

### **Strategic Joint Regional Transportation Committee (SJRTC)**

Several long-term needs assessments and gateway-related projects working through SJRTC were completed:

- 1) Third Harbour Crossing Needs Assessment
- 2) Highway 102/Bayers Road Needs Assessment
- 3) Integrated Transportation Corridor
- 4) DistriPark Study
- 5) Fall River Transportation Study
- 6) Highway 107 Extension Plan and Traffic Impacts
- 7) Highway 113 Needs and Environmental Impact Assessment

Regional co-ordination of projects, working within the HRM Regional Plan framework is essential and continues to be successful under the guidance of this Committee.

### **b) Transportation Planning - 2009/2010 Remaining**

#### **EcoMOBILITY Pilot Project**

The project creates a “TDM Migration Fund”, the object of which is to generate revenue from less sustainable modes of transportation (single-occupant vehicles, in particular) and invest that money in more sustainable transportation options. The pilot will begin with a low-level of intervention, but includes a monitoring of public acceptance of these measures to determine whether higher-impact initiatives are desirable.

Measures like this create “pricing signals” for residents when choosing how to commute to work and make other trips. The choice to drive a car will have a greater cost, while other alternatives will have their function improved through greater investment. Any shift in travel pattern created will reduce environmental impact and will be more sustainable from both a fiscal and social perspective.

## **Peninsula Corridor Study**

New MetroX, MetroLink and conventional service enhancements can only be successful in attracting high volumes of new trips if they can match or improve on the same trip made by car. A corridor across the Halifax Peninsula, with a mixture of dedicated transit lanes, intersection queue jumps, and signal priority will be used to create this corridor.

A projection of future vehicle volumes suggests that building additional lanes on Highway 102 and Bayers Road for traffic growth will be needed in 10-15 years. A significant shift to transit, one that can only be achieved by offering fast trips by transit, could play a significant role in delaying the need for that capacity.

### **c) Transit – 2009/2010 Update**

The 2009/10 fiscal year has been focusing on construction and implementation of the Ragged Lake Transit Centre (RLTC), the key enabler of the 5 Year Approach. The RLTC is 40% complete and is on budget and on time, with an anticipated beneficial occupancy of May 2010. Once occupied, the commissioning plan will be executed to ensure a seamless transition of service. Enhanced operational technology necessary to operating in a two facility environment has been acquired and is currently being implemented. Using this technology, staff is currently determining the allocation of service between the two transit centres.

Pending the completion of RLTC, opportunities to expand service are very constrained, however, 20,000 hours of off-peak service (3%) were added in September 2009 to address existing concerns regarding hours of operation and span of service on a number of high demand routes. As part of this service enhancement, Metro Transit was able to convert a further three routes, Route 1, 17 and 18, to fully Accessible Low Floor (ALF) service, thereby improving the accessibility and mobility options for many HRM residents. Mobility has been further improved by the installation of bike racks on all vehicles by the end of the 2010/2011 fiscal year, thus extending the service reach. Additionally, the first MetroX Rural Express route was launched in September from Tantallon to downtown Halifax. The service has been tremendously popular with customers. Metro Transit recently conducted an on-board Customer Survey and the results are very positive. An unprecedented 96% of customers reported they were new Metro Transit customers, and 70% were using the service for four or more days per week in both directions. These results speak directly to the Regional Plan goal of achieving modal split. The launch of a Sambro Rural Transit Pilot also occurred in September, offering a public transit alternative to this rural area of HRM for the first time.

Plans to complete the rebuild of the Bridge Terminal have been delayed to 2010/11 so as to incorporate Dartmouth Commons Master Plan elements into the terminal design. The conceptual design has now been completed based on significant community input and consultation, and construction is planned to commence in Spring of 2010 and completed by the fall of next year. As well, a Site Study is underway for the Lacewood Terminal. A preliminary design has been completed and subject to capital funding, the construction is planned to commence Summer 2010 with completion in 2011. Completion of this terminal is vital to future plans for a Clayton Park MetroLink service.

## 5 year Strategic Operations Plan

Key to delivering future transit service in HRM is the development of the 5 Year Strategic Operations Plan. The plan was received by Regional Council on October 27, 2009 and on November 10, 2009, Council approved the Service Standards recommended in the plan. The 2010/2011 fiscal year will represent the first year of the plan. This plan is the culmination of more than a year's work and has been shaped by the outstanding response from residents to the on-line survey undertaken as part of the plan. It is also the first time that transit service design and expansion has been framed by the Regional Plan which sets out modal split targets, recognizes the importance of the central urban area and designated employment centres, and establishes growth corridors. The 5 Year Strategic Operations Plan contemplates new and redesigned service that will move HRM towards achieving the modal split targets contained in the Regional Plan as well as addressing transit service needs in support of the Regional Plan objectives.

The plan contains several recommendations such as the conversion of Route 1 to a bus rapid transit (BRT) style of service with service every 7.5 minutes connecting the Bridge Terminal to the Mumford Terminal through the downtown. This will combine with enhanced Route 20, 7 and 9 service to significantly improve service levels and connectivity to the downtown. The construction of a new terminal in Burnside and a redesign of the Burnside service will meet the growing demand and changing needs of this key employment centre. The plan also recommends converting seven other routes to Urban Express, providing frequent, limited-stop service that will mitigate the need to build and maintain Park and Ride lots. As well, new routes serving planned communities in the growth concentration areas are recommended in the plan.

The plan is a comprehensive document that specifically looks at conventional transit service but it is not the only plan necessary to ensure Metro Transit services are comprehensive, integrated and innovative. Further planning is needed for Rural Community Transit and Accessibility, however, it is important for Council to know that the 5 Year Capital Plan includes opportunities to incorporate these elements. These combined plans will provide a roadmap rather than a blueprint for all future service changes. As part of the annual Budget and Business Plan approval process, staff will present Council with a proposed Annual Service Plan that will set out specific service changes, enhancements and expansions for Council approval.

### d) Active Transportation – 2009/2010 Update

The objective of active transportation (AT) is to provide a network of human powered transportation choices linking local and regional destinations with the communities that they serve. The modes of Active Transportation include walking, running, bicycling, skateboarding in-line skates, etc., and uses both on road (bike lanes and sidewalks) and off road (linear trails, park trails, utility corridors, abandoned rail corridors) to create a useable public network. Active Transportation occurs in four general categories as follows:

- Active Commuting which involves journeys to and from work,
- Active Workplace Travel which includes trips during work hours such as the delivery of materials or attending meetings,

- Active Destination Oriented Trips which includes trips to and from school, shops, visiting friends and running errands, and
- Active Recreation which involves the use of an Active Transportation mode for fitness or recreational pursuits, such as hiking or cycling.

The AT network of trails and bike lanes is very similar to a conventional roadway network with a hierarchy of arterials (spines), collectors and local routes which connect to the urban core, major hubs and local destinations.

The benefits of a successful Active Transportation system are widespread. They include reduction in traffic congestion and greenhouse gases, improved individual health, creating sustainable communities, active living and recreation benefits and access to affordable transportation as energy prices increase.

AT is strongly linked with other elements of the Alternative Transportation system including transit and transportation demand management. When combined, these approaches extend the capability of the network therefore permitting more individuals, of all ages and abilities, to choose alternative transportation rather than the car. Alternative Transportation is any means of transport other than a personal car, including but not limited to, bus, light rail, ferry and bikes.

Retrofitting a municipality in which AT has not been a consideration is a challenge. A key element in the delivery of the trail component of AT is the partnership with 24 Community Trail Groups who work with HRM and with each other to plan and build the system. Without the commitment of those groups the amount of trail built would be far less and the costs to HRM far more. Through these partnerships, over 220 kms of active transportation trails and 80 kms of bike lanes have been created in the last ten years. A complete list of bikeway infrastructure built in 2009/10 fiscal year is attached as Appendix A. Many of these routes have followed opportunities such as abandoned rail lines, utility corridors, large scale capital projects and roadway retrofits, therefore, the system is being created incrementally at a lower cost per kilometer. This is common in most cities. The result is that what has been built in the system is not continuous and is missing key connections at the moment. The objective over the next five years is to complete the spines (arterial routes) of the system which are under construction in order to provide AT opportunities for the greatest number of citizens.

#### **4) 2010/11 OBJECTIVES**

Continued staff coordination through the Transportation Focus Area Steering Committee will be a priority over the next couple of years, with a particular focus on synchronizing people in time, space and purpose. Staff continue to improve the coordination of project work in this focus area.

##### **a) Transportation Planning**

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) projects will be expanded and enhanced. We will begin to explore the addition of employee transit passes and trip coaching to participants of workplace programs. We will also be looking to increase the number of employers participating



in the program.

We will begin to see trends in a number of transportation indicators that we have been collecting data for over the past two years. These measurements, such as total vehicle kilometers traveled, occupants per vehicle, ship, etc., will help us confirm whether we are making progress in influencing the way people choose to travel.

In preparation for the five-year review of the Regional Plan, we will have built a more advanced computerized trip demand model than was used for the 2006 plan. This model will have much greater capability of projecting demands on both the roadway and transit network and predicting the interaction between the two based on influences such as the ecoMOBILITY project.

A phased plan showing new major roadways and roadway improvements to create additional vehicle capacity was provided in the HRM Regional Plan and provides a framework for a comprehensive road network plan. Although the Regional Plan contains policies, initiatives and investments to direct more of our growth in trips to transit and other alternative modes of travel, a moderate increase in vehicle traffic will remain and this plan provides the rationale for the road expansion projects identified in the Regional Plan. The plan will include an examination of street classification, street standards, emergency evacuation, and freight movement.

### **Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Functional Plan**

This plan will deliver a comprehensive description of the many initiatives currently underway and still in the planning stages. Together, these initiatives have a broad reach in striving to influence the choices residents make in how they commute to work and make other trips. The success of TDM programs is critical to making the Road Network Functional Plan work.

#### **b) Transit**

Transit plans for 2010/11 will continue to focus on construction, with the rebuild of the Bridge Terminal and the commencement of construction on the Lacewood Terminal (subject to budget). With the completion of RLTC and the delivery of ten new expansion vehicles, Metro Transit will be in a position to expand and enhance service significantly. New routes are planned to serve Russell Lake West, Exhibition Park, and the Halifax Waterfront and enhanced service will be provided by adjusting the Route 1 and the Route 72 (servicing the new section of Wright Avenue). Plans include the continued conversion of service to Accessible Low Floor (ALF) for a further two to three routes, and Access-a-Bus (AAB) service will be increased for the first time in several years with the planned addition of new AAB vehicles.

Continued expansion of MetroX service is planned along Highway 103 from Exit 4, as well as to Halifax International Airport along Highway 102. These services are dependent on resolving vehicle acquisition issues and are subject to capital funding.

Metro Transit will also continue to look for ways to exploit technology to improve customer information and service. A key element for 2010/11 is to begin the design and Transport Canada approval process for a new Woodside Ferry. The three existing ferries have been well

maintained and continue to meet the stringent Transport Canada Marine Safety Regulations. However, ranging in age from 25 to 30 years, they are well past their half-life. As well, growing demand for enhanced service from Woodside necessitates that another ferry be built. The process is lengthy due to the scope of work and nature of the regulatory environment, but Metro Transit hopes to have the new ferry in service by late 2012/13 or early 2013/14.

### **c) Active Transportation**

Most recently the emphasis has been on the Bedford Sackville Connector, Shubenacadie Trail, Bedford Highway Bike Lane, Purcells Cove Bike Lane, Dartmouth Harbourfront Trail and Preston Trail. Work to connect into the Burnside Industrial Park and City of Lakes Business Park commenced this year. The purchase of the Chester Spurline represents a key acquisition which will eventually connect Spryfield, Beechville, Bayers Lake, Fairview and Clayton Park with the Peninsula. Plans for 2010/2011 include:

- Advance the Chester Spurline - Through federal/provincial cost sharing the plan is to build eight kms of trail connecting from Beechville to Joseph Howe Drive. This spine connects to future trails connections in Spryfield, Clayton Park/Fairview, Bedford Highway and the Halifax Urban Greenway. The trail also connects to several well served bus routes.
- Portland Hills Connector - Upgrading of six kms of existing local trails to an AT standard to connect Portland Estates and Portland Hills to the Metro Link Terminal Station and to the Mount Hope Interchange. When connected to Mount Hope Avenue commuters will be able to reach the Woodside Ferry, Community College, Dartmouth General and the Dartmouth Harbourfront Trail.
- Various Community Trails - Planning and construction will continue on a number of trails through the Community trails groups. This year grants will be affected by the need to match federal and provincial funding on the Chester Spurline and the Portland Hills Connector.
- ATV/AT Issue - Staff will be wrapping up an agreement with the Province of Nova Scotia on provincially owned trails where motorized use is mixed with active transportation.
- Bike Lanes - An additional 20 kms of bike lane will be created in the road right of way through paving of shoulder and lane realignment.

## **5) MEDIUM AND LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES**

### **a) Transportation Planning**

Continuing to work towards achieving modal split targets and then setting even higher targets will require exploration of new types of transit service delivery and aggressive approaches to transit priority within the roadway network. There are few opportunities for developing near-

exclusive transit corridors that match the opportunity ferry routes on the harbour provide. Once the framework that MetroX provides to rural HRM is in place, exploration of new service delivery types appropriate for rural communities will be explored and developed.

#### **b) Transit**

Transit plans for 2011/12 and later include continued investment in vehicles to expand services for conventional, AAB, MetroX, MetroLink and Rural Community Transit. The extent and mix of service will be dependent on capital and operating budget capacity to launch new service. Infrastructure will also continue to be a focus, with planned completion of the Lacewood Terminal to support MetroLink, construction of a new Burnside Terminal to facilitate the service redesign to this key area, and expansion of the Mumford Terminal at this key transfer point. As noted above, a new Woodside Ferry is expected to be operational by late 2012/2013 or early 2013/14.

#### **c) Active Transportation**

The emphasis in the medium term is to continue to develop the key spines. In the future as the spines become largely developed the emphasis will shift to the collection system which connects individual neighborhoods to the spines and to local destinations such as shopping areas, district schools and recreation centres. Finally emphasis will shift to local neighborhood connections. All new development will have Active Transportation incorporated into the roadway and open space network.

## Appendix A: Bikeway Infrastructure

### Bikeway Infrastructure Installed in 2009 = 20.0 Linear km

Bike Lane - 19.5 linear km (approximately)

Wide Curb Lane - 0.5 linear km (approximately)

### Bikeway Infrastructure Installed prior to 2009 = 60.0 Linear km

Bike Lane - 51 linear km (approximately)

Wide Curb Lane - 9 linear km (approximately)

### Total infrastructure to date = 80 linear km

The following list indicates the roadways that have had bicycle facilities installed during the 2009 construction season.

Location of Bike Lane	Length of bike lane installed
Bedford Highway - Southgate to Meadowbrook Drive	Approximately 2 km of new bike lane on both sides of the road with the exception of a small portion between Moirs Mills Road and Hammonds Plains Road
Dunbrack Street - Lacewood Drive to Willett Street	Approximately 0.75 km of new bike lane installed on both sides of the road
Hines Road	Approximately 1.2 km of new bike lane installed on both sides of the road
Purcell's Cove Road - Wenlock Grove (east end) to Civic # 376	Approximately 1 km of new bike lane installed on both sides of the road
Hammonds Plains Road - Innovation Drive to Bluewater Road	Approximately 0.8 km of new bike lane installed on both sides of the road
St. Margaret's Bay Road - Sleepy Hollow to Devonshire Drive	Approximately 0.5 km of new bike lane installed on one side of the road (inbound)
Horseshoe Lake Drive - Susie Lake Crescent to Chain Lake Drive	Approximately 0.9 km of new bike lane installed on both sides of the road
Herring Cove Road - Sarah Drive to Hebridean Drive	Approximately 2.3 km of new bike lane installed on both sides of the road
Caldwell Road - Cow Bay Road to Seabreeze Drive	Approximately 0.7 km of new bike lane installed on one side of the road