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**Item No. 10.1.1 (ii)**  
**Halifax Regional Council**  
**June 14, 2011**

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

**SUBMITTED BY:** Original Signed  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Councillor David Hendsbee, Chair  
Marine Drive, Valley and Canal Community Council

**DATE:** May 26, 2011

**SUBJECT:** Crosswalk Flag Program

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**ORIGIN**

Motion of the Marine Drive Valley and Canal Community Council at the May 25, 2011 meeting.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**That HRM not object to local community groups/organizations installing, maintaining, and using crosswalk flags at marked crosswalks or traditional sites of significant pedestrian crossing within their community, provided there will be no cost implications to HRM.**

## **BACKGROUND**

The Marine Drive, Valley and Canal Community Council received a presentation from Mr. Norm Collins regarding the use of crosswalk flags at the May 25, 2011 meeting.

## **DISCUSSION**

In his presentation, Mr. Collins made reference to HRM's Traffic Authority not supporting crosswalk flags and pointed out that the Province and other jurisdictions take a different position relative to the flags. Mr. Collins advised that over 3000 residents have signed a petition in favor of the use of crosswalk flags and requested that HRM not object to the use of crosswalk flags where community groups would like to use them. A copy of Mr. Collins presentation is attached.

Councillor Dalrymple noted a number of locations within his District which would benefit from a crosswalk flag program. He noted that these locations will never qualify for signalized crosswalks and suggested that a community group led program will be cost effective and provide safer street crossing for everyone, but children in particular. Councillor Dalrymple pointed out that the crosswalk flag is just another tool in a belt of safety tools such as signalized crossings and street markings. He commented that education of the public would be key to the success of the program and noted that a very effective pamphlet already existed.

The Crosswalk Flag Program was considered by Regional Council at a meeting held October 6, 2009.

## **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

The recommendation specifically requires that the crosswalk flag program be provided at no cost to HRM.

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

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

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The Marine Drive, Valley and Canal Community Council meetings are open to the public. The May 24, 2011 meeting included the Annual Meeting for the Community Council which was advertised in the Chronicle Herald. Agendas and reports for the Community Council are also available online at [www.halifax.ca](http://www.halifax.ca)

## **ALTERNATIVES**

No alternatives were provided by the Marine Drive, Valley and Canal Community Council.

**ATTACHMENTS**

1. Crosswalk Flag Presentation – Mr. Norm Collin – May 25, 2011 Marine Drive Valley and Canal Community Council

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A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.html> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report Prepared by: Sherryl Murphy, Deputy Clerk, Municipal Clerk's Office, 490-4211

Report Approved by: Cathy Mellet, Municipal Clerk, 490-6456

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ATTACHMENT 1

# Crosswalk Flag Presentation

## Marine Drive, Valley & Canal Community Council

May 25, 2011

### Councillors Streach, Dalrymple and Hendsbee

Thank you for your time to once again consider the issue of crosswalk flags. We appreciate this may appear to be the initiative that simply won't go away, but when it comes to public safety, initiatives should not "*just go away*".

As you know HRM's traffic authority does not support crosswalk flags for reasons that are both inconsistent, i.e. if crosswalk flags create a false sense of security surely overhead lights do as well, and unsupported by any data or evidence. Neither the traffic authority nor TAC has provided any justification for their position on this issue.

On the other hand the only study we have uncovered, published by the Transit Cooperative Research Program presents results showing crossing flags were 38% more effective than overhead flashing amber beacons in terms of motorist yielding rates, on average 65% effective versus 47%.

The report states

*"... anecdotal information indicated these crossing flags are effective in improving driver yielding behavior", and "pedestrian crossing flags ... were effective in prompting motorist yielding"*

The Province takes a much different position than HRM re crosswalk flags. David Darrow, the Deputy Minister of Transportation writes

*"...I did request and receive a legal opinion on this issue ... the Department has no objections to crosswalk flags being used by pedestrians ... on provincially-owned roads"*

With this support the Village of Port Williams implemented a crosswalk flag program throughout the village in March of this year. Shortly after implementation David Darrow wrote:

*"I drove through Port Williams early morning. While it was too early for anyone to be out and about and using the flags, it occurred to me the very presence of the flags in their holders was a good reminder to motorists to slow down. Kudos to the Village."*

Lewis Benedict, chairman of the village observed he has noticed drivers are slowing down and using more caution because of the new flags. He says

*"I see young, old, middle aged, everybody's using (the flags)" "Everybody I've talked to, they figure it it's going to help save a life, it's worth doing"*

The Kings County News covered the initiative with an article titled **'Port Williams' eye catching flags'**, reporting the idea is simple – but effective, with the buckets of bright orange flags themselves making the crosswalks more noticeable, giving drivers a 'heads up'

Then last week both the Village of Canning and the Village of Bible Hill approached us, both requesting information for the purpose of proposing similar crosswalk flag programs in their communities.

While perhaps not a controlled scientific study I want to mention a science project completed by Nicholas Doiron, a grade 9 student at Ecole du Carrefour. Nick won the grade 9-10 science fair project at his school, and placed 4<sup>th</sup> in the provincial French science fair at his level with his study of the effects of crosswalk flags. Nick hypothesized that *"...pedestrian safety will be greatly improved through the use of fluorescent flags"*. Based on the data Nick collected he observed vehicles were 4.6 times as likely to yield when he carried a crosswalk flag versus when he did not.

This initiative is all about safety. The Chronicle Herald, in its Aug 3, 2009 editorial wrote

*"What flags add is an aid to safety – like defensive driving courses or advising walkers to wear bright clothing after dusk – and one that can be effectively delivered by community partnerships"*

*"In Salt Lake City...media attention and neighbourhood participation have boosted safety education and awareness. Sounds like a model of common-sense co-operation."*

Crosswalk flag programs continue to be expanded or created including a number of examples over the past two months - expansions in Clearwater / St. Pete Beach, Florida and Charleston, South Carolina new programs in Everett, Washington and just last week in Park Ridge, Illinois.

We have all been told that to improve our safety we should wear bright clothing during the daytime and reflective clothing in low light or nighttime conditions. A crosswalk flag provides both – bright colour with reflective tape.

One can debate whether not mid-block crosswalks should exist in the first place, but given they do it makes sense to make both the crosswalk and the pedestrian as visible as possible. Crosswalk flags achieve this objective. Over 3,000 individuals signed a petition in support of crosswalk flags. We ask you to recommend that HRM not object to the use crosswalk flags where local community groups wish to use them.

Thank you for your time and attention.