



P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
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Item No. 2
Halifax Regional Council
June 28, 2011

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed
for: Councilor Reg Rankin, Chair, Transportation Standing Committee

DATE: June 15, 2011

SUBJECT: HRM SmartCar Update

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

Transportation Standing Committee meeting of May 26, 2011.

BACKGROUND

At the November 23, 2010 meeting of Halifax Regional Council a request was made for an analysis and update of the HRM SmartCar program.

The Transportation Standing Committee received an Information Report dated April 27, 2011, which was discussed at the May 26, 2011 meeting.

Further background on the Smart Car Program is provided in the attached April 27, 2011 Information report.

DISCUSSION

The Transportation Standing Committee reviewed and discussed the April 27, 2011 Information Report at their May 26, 2011 meeting.

Further analysis of the program was requested in the following areas:

- what is the baseline of this evaluation?
- there should be a before and after comparison.
- how many users were there?
- how many of those users were frequent users?

Staff advised that they would undertake further analysis on the program in these areas. Staff have since submitted an Information Report dated June 10, 2011 to Regional Council in this regard.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There are no budget implications with this report.

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 Transportation Standing Committee is comprised of eight duly elected members of Council. Composition is made up of a member from each of HRM's six Community Councils, along with two members at large.

Transportation Standing Committee meetings are held once a month and are open to the public, unless otherwise stated. Agendas, reports, and minutes from these meetings are posted online.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Information Report to the Transportation Standing Committee dated April 27, 2011.

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/agenda.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: Jennifer Weagle, Legislative Assistant, Office of the Municipal Clerk, 490-6517



P.O. Box 1749
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Transportation Standing Committee
May 26, 2011

TO: Chair and Members of Transportation Standing Committee

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed
Ken Reashor, P.Eng., Director, Transportation & Public Works

DATE: April 27, 2011

SUBJECT: HRM SmartCar Update

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

At the November 23, 2010 meeting of Halifax Regional Council a request was made for an analysis and update of the HRM SmartCar program.

BACKGROUND

The Smart Car program was developed within HRM to help decrease the dependence upon single occupant vehicle trips for the commute to and from work. This car-share program provides vehicles to be signed out for meetings, site visits and other business and acts as an incentive to encourage staff to be more conscious of their travel decisions for the commute to work.

DISCUSSION

The SmartCar program for HRM was initiated on April 22nd, 2009 following a year-and-a-half of planning. In two years of operation the program has been consistently utilized by a number of HRM employees. Obtaining access to a car has been simple and effective. SmartCars are efficient and their fuel costs are low.

The table below shows the deployment of SmartCars at HRM workplace sites both at the program launch in 2009 and currently.

	SmartCars at Program Launch	SmartCars Today
Duke Tower	1	2
Alderney Gate	1	2
Eric Spicer Bldg.	1	1
Bayers Road	0	1

TABLE 1: SmartCars at HRM Work Sites

Employees needing a SmartCar will reserve it for the date and time they need it through Groupwise in the same way that meeting rooms are booked. In addition to daytime bookings, the vehicles may be booked out overnight for evening meetings. When the client needs the vehicle, they go to the coordinator at each worksite to pick up and return the key. The coordinator verifies that the client has a valid driver's license.

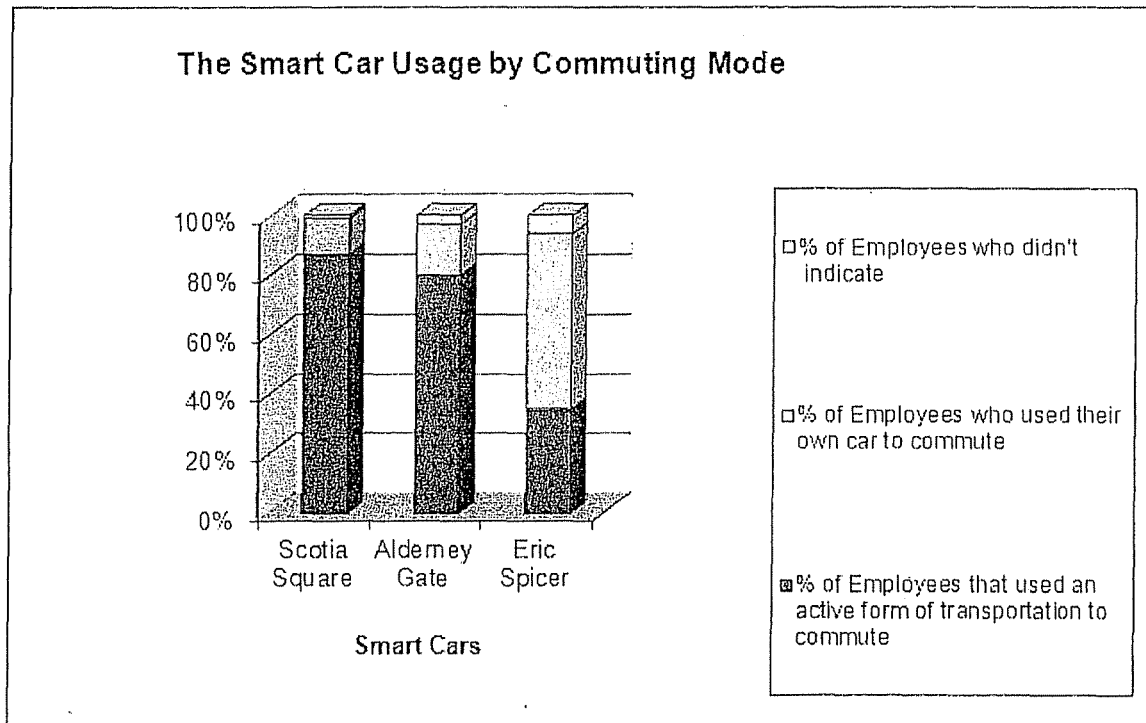
The table below shows SmartCar usage during the first year of operation.

	TOTAL TRIPS PER YEAR	TOTAL KM PER YEAR
SmartCar #1	216	5236 km
SmartCar #2	144	2887 km
SmartCar#3	132	3535 km
TOTAL	492 Trips	11,658 km

TABLE 2: SmartCar Usage

A workplace-based car-share program is valuable for employers who want to encourage more active modes of transportation within the workplace environment. Such a program offers vehicles to be signed out by staff for meetings, site visits and other office business. Providing vehicles to employees for work-related trips will help to eliminate their reliance on single occupancy vehicles to commute to work.

For HRM, this program is particularly valuable to students and younger staff, who may need access to a vehicle for field work. The availability of the SmartCar program has prompted a number of staff to switch to more active forms of transportation such as walking, biking, carpooling and transit. Increased promotion of the Transportation Demand Management initiatives will hopefully encourage more people to switch from single occupancy vehicle trips to more sustainable options.



In December 2010, an online survey of the HRM SmartCar users and non-users (440 respondents) was undertaken and indicated a number of things:

- 81% of the survey respondents were aware of the SmartCar program. 29% have booked and used the vehicles, and 60% of the respondents don't currently use the Smart Car for offsite meetings. The main reason HRM employees did not choose to use the Smart Car for meetings was lack of confidence that the vehicle would be available when they needed it.
- From those users currently taking advantage of the program it is deemed an excellent service provided by HRM to its employees and is very positively received for its convenience, lack of travel claims and reduction of environmental footprints. It was stated that there needs to be more awareness and promotion of the program among all HRM employees.
- Most felt that using the SmartCar was an efficient means of attending meetings, although there was some confusion about how to book the vehicles through the GroupWise system and the overnight booking policy.

- The size of the vehicle was of concern to some respondents; they commented that they did not feel safe on the highway, and felt uncomfortable filling up the gas tank at certain locations.

Overall the findings concluded that the SmartCar program is a definite benefit to those who chose to take advantage of the service

When planning for the Smart Car program was first undertaken, there were no private-sector opportunities for car-share. That has since changed and staff is in the process of soliciting Requests for Proposal for the provision of car-share to HRM work sites in downtown Halifax and/or Dartmouth for an eighteen month trial. Other HRM workplaces outside of the Regional Centre are less attractive to private sector providers and will, for the time being, continue to be serviced by the internal SmartCar program.

The table below shows a rough comparison of three alternatives for managing HRM employee work-related trips that a SmartCar was used for during the program's first year of operation. While reimbursing an employee for use of a personal vehicle (mileage and parking) shows to be a sound business practice, it does not adequately deal with the issue of reducing the use of the personal vehicle for commuting trips. While an internally operated car-share program appears to cost-comparative to a private sector service, it is a difficult comparison to make without at least a trial implementation.

SUMMARY OF SMART CAR PROGRAM (3 CARS)		
Operating Costs 2009/10 (3 Cars)		
R&M	\$	5,059
Parking Cost at Base Site	\$	2,280
Gas	\$	603
Total	\$	7,941
Capital Cost		
Purchase Price (per car)	\$	17,475
Amortized over 7 years	\$	2,496
# of Smart Cars		3
Capital Cost per Year	\$	7,489
Yearly Cost of Program with 3 Cars	\$	15,431
Kms Driven		
		11,658
Mileage Rate	\$	0.46
HRM Cost if Mileage Paid	\$	5,363
Kms Driven		
		11,658
Ace Y Taxi cost per Km 2009/10*	\$	1.30
HRM Cost for Taxi Use	\$	15,155
* Current Taxi rate is \$1.50 per km		
Above costs do not include parking at destination, only at base site		

TABLE 3: Summary SmartCar Costs 2009/2011

SERVICE DELIVERY OPTIONS (Average Per Car)	YEARLY COST
HRM SmartCar (1) - Destination parking not included	\$ 5,150
Private sector car-share (1) - Destination parking not included	\$6,600
Reimbursement for private vehicle - Destination parking not included	\$1,800
Taxi – No parking costs	\$5,050

TABLE 4: First-Year SmartCar Usage Applied to Different Service Delivery Options

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Until a bid for an external service provider is considered, there are no budget implications.

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

No broad community engagement has been undertaken. Feedback from our employee clients has been solicited on two occasions.

ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments.

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. Caroline King, Student Planner

Report Approved by **Original Signed**
David McCusker, P.Eng., Manager, Strategic Transportation Planning, 490-6696
