

Item No. 3 (iv)
Committee of the Whole
March 26, 2014

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: Original signed by 
Richard Butts, Chief Administrative Officer

Original Signed by 
Mike Labrecque, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: March 21, 2014

SUBJECT: Bike Lane Maintenance - Implications of Increased Year Round
Maintenance in HRM

ORIGIN

January 15, 2014 Committee of the Whole: Moved by Councillor Watts, seconded by Councillor Mason to request a staff report for developing a year round standard for maintenance of bike lanes and funding implications in time for consideration of the 2014/2015 budget.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Clause 79 (1) (aa) of the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter provides that Council may expend money required by the Municipality for streets, culverts, retaining walls, sidewalks, curbs and gutters.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council:

1. Approve the maintenance improvements to bike lane facilities as outlined in the Discussion section of this report; and
2. Refer any further considerations to bike lane facility maintenance improvements to the five year review of the Active Transportation Plan.

BACKGROUND

Regular maintenance considerations of bicycle facilities include maintenance during the main cycling season (sweeping, surface patching, traffic marking painting, curb repair, debris removal and signage repair) as well as winter maintenance. The maintenance needs depend on the type of bicycle facility - whether it is on the road (bike lanes, paved shoulders, local street bikeways) or off the road (AT Greenways, Protected Bike Lanes).

Currently there are in existence a variety of types of bicycle facilities across the HRM. The three types that the above recommendations pertain to are:

Bicycle Lanes: designated lane on the roadway for bicycles marked with a white painted line and associated regulatory signage, typically 1.5m wide. *There are 108km of bicycle lanes in HRM.*

Paved Shoulder Bicycle Routes: On roads with a rural cross section (i.e. ditch instead of curb and gutter), a paved area outside the edge line of the main travelled portion of the roadway, preferably 1.5m in width and signed with green bike route signs, instead of regulatory signage. *There are 14 km of paved shoulder bike routes in HRM.*

AT Greenways: A multi-use trail suitable for the broadest range of AT users (walkers, cyclists, skateboarders, inline skaters, etc.). They are typically 3.0m wide, or more where higher user volumes are expected. The surface may be paved or crusher dust. *There are 146 km of AT Greenways in HRM.*

DISCUSSION

Following staff's review of the options to develop year round maintenance standards for bike lane facilities, staff has concluded that there are some immediate opportunities for improvement which can be managed within the current proposed operating 14/15 budget. These improvements require effort and coordination by Municipal Operations staff and have no significant budget impact. Therefore staff recommends the following improvements:

- Deploy street sweeper capability to streets with existing bike lanes or paved shoulders before other roadways;
- Complete bi-weekly sweeping of bicycle lanes and paved shoulders and monitor after one bi-weekly cycle. After the review period, upgrade to weekly frequency along those routes with significant accumulated debris; and
- Modify winter snow removal practices along designated lanes to include the use of liquid de-icers and snow clearing according to P1 street maintenance standards.

Any further improvements or consideration of year-round maintenance requires further work of staff to better understand the service and budget implications. This is currently being considered as part of the review of the Active Transportation Plan and will be before Council in the 14/15 Fiscal year.

In consultation with Active Transportation Staff, a number of pilot projects are being proposed for consideration by Council, these will include identification of potential winter routes and the need for corresponding enhanced winter maintenance. The routes include locations in Halifax and Dartmouth.

Some further maintenance efforts could include:

- Specific standards for asphalt defects
- Specific standards for obstruction removal
- Further improvements during the winter season for other bike lane facilities
- Consideration of standards for off-road facilities

Therefore it is recommended that further considerations for annual maintenance of bike facilities be considered within the scope of the Active Transportation Plan to ensure a holistic and systematic review is completed.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The proposed recommendations are able to be implemented at no additional cost through schedule modifications using existing personnel, equipment and performance based contracts.

Any potential increases to existing service standards (maintenance or snow removal) would have corresponding requirements for budget adjustment.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The AT Committee has completed various community engagements and the recommendations noted above have been formed by the results of those engagements.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no environmental implications identified at this time.

ALTERNATIVES

Council could direct that staff increase service standards prior to completion of trials being implemented through the AT Committee, but this is not recommended.

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.

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