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Item No. 13.1
Halifax Regional Council
April 26, 2016
May 10, 2016

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed by Director
Bruce Zvaniga, P. Eng., Director Transportation & Public Works

DATE: March 15, 2016

SUBJECT: Review of 2007 Crosswalk Task Force Policy

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

Item 11.7.2 of the October 6, 2015 session of Halifax Regional Council;

MOVED by Councillor Karsten, seconded by Councillor Mason:

THAT Halifax Regional Council request a report to review the following 2007 Crosswalk Safety Task Force recommendation: "The road authority must require the assessment of existing marked crosswalks when refurbishing highways and roadways to ensure they reflect current traffic situations, guidelines and standards. Where existing marked crosswalks are not warranted they must be removed due to potential safety hazards,"

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Part XII, Section 321 (8) "Traffic Authority" of the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter and Part IV, Section 90 (1) "Crosswalks, prohibited turns, etc. and parades" of the Nova Scotia Motor Vehicle Act.

BACKGROUND

The Crosswalk Safety Task Force (Task Force) was formed in April of 2007 in response to concerns from residents across Nova Scotia for the safety of pedestrians in crosswalks. The Task Force consisted of representatives from both Provincial / Municipal government and academia with strong backgrounds in transportation and focusing on the areas of engineering, education and enforcement.

The work of the Task Force was completed independently and transparently, hearing from experts in the fields of traffic and transportation engineering, education and law enforcement. Submissions from the public were also accepted and carefully reviewed.

The resulting recommendations from the Task Force were based on review of current literature and research, expert and professional experience and information gathered from the public. Within the theme of engineering, the Task Force made the general recommendation:

“The Task Force recommends the Provincial & Municipal Traffic Authorities install crosswalk treatments based on technical merit & national standards to ensure consistency & uniformity for drivers and pedestrians.”

And specifically:

“The road authority must require the assessment of existing marked crosswalks when refurbishing highways and roadways to ensure they reflect current traffic situations, guidelines and standards. When existing marked crosswalks are not warranted, they must be removed due to potential safety hazards.”

DISCUSSION

The authority to designate or mark crosswalks on public roadways is governed under Section 90(1) of the Nova Scotia Motor Vehicle Act (MVA). This section indicates that Traffic Authorities may establish, designate and maintain crosswalks at locations where, in the opinion of the Traffic Authority, there is particular danger to pedestrians when crossing the roadway.

When assessing a location for the installation of a marked crosswalk, HRM follows the nationally accepted Pedestrian Crossing Control Guide produced by the Transportation Association of Canada (TAC). If an existing marked crosswalk is identified to fall within the limits of a road resurfacing project, the TAC guidelines are used to assess the location to determine if any changes are required or if the marked crosswalk meets the warrants outlined in the guide. If it is determined that the existing marked crosswalk does not meet the warrant, it is recommended for removal as part of the capital project.

The above practice has been the approach used by staff since the release of the Task Force report and recommendations, is in keeping with the approach of promoting and maintaining uniformity in the placement and maintenance of marked crosswalks as recommended by the Task Force and is in line with the responsibilities of the Traffic Authority as outlined in the MVA.

When an existing marked crosswalk is identified for assessment as part of a capital roadway project, staff considers factors specific to the location in addition to applying the warrants. Consideration is given to:

- sight lines – should the crosswalk be removed because of limited visibility on either approach to the crossing that would make it an unsafe location to cross
- connectivity – should the crosswalk be kept because there is a need to provide continuity along existing infrastructure (i.e. sidewalk switches sides of a road)
- pedestrian desire lines – should the crosswalk be kept because the location fits within a desired route to/from a particular area of facility and there is no other appropriate crossing location nearby
- nearby facilities – should the crosswalk be kept because of certain pedestrian generators nearby (seniors' facilities, schools, etc.)

The above list is not exhaustive, but is intended to illustrate that staff consider more than just the numbers when assessing existing marked crosswalk locations. The overall goal is to achieve consistency in how and where marked crosswalks are placed in order to maintain their conspicuity and effectiveness.

In order to provide clarity and context, in 2015, there were 8 new marked crosswalks installed, 35 existing crosswalks upgraded and 3 marked crosswalks removed.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement was not considered necessary as this report addresses a request to review internal practices.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

None identified.

ATTACHMENTS

None

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.php> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210, or Fax 902.490.4208.

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