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Halifax Regional Council
August 8, 2006
September 12, 2006
September 19, 2006

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: Sheila Fougere
Councillor Sheila Fougere, Chair
Bikeways Advisory Committee

DATE: June 26, 2006

SUBJECT: Bikeways Advisory Committee Annual Report

ANNUAL REPORT

BACKGROUND

The mandate of the Bikeways Advisory Committee (BAC) is to advise staff on priorities for the allocation of the Capital Budget as it relates to bicycle infrastructure using the Blueprint for a Bicycle Friendly HRM, a document adopted in principle by Regional Council in December 2002, as a guide. BAC's advisory capacity is to ensure thought is given to incorporate cycling requirements during ongoing construction services and projects that are traffic related in terms of design standards and also to advise Regional Council on matters relating to cycling. The Committee's Terms of Reference direct that an annual report be made to Council.

Committee members are: Councillor Sheila Fougere (Chair); Councillor Patrick Murphy; Councillor Stephen Adams; Leslie Dubinsky; William Webster; Ward Skinner; Candace Stevenson; Peter Williams; Laena Garrison (TRAX); Friedemann Brauer (BNS); and Cheryl Bidgood (HDBC). Staff support includes: Roxane MacInnis (Regional Planning); Paul Euloth (Trails); Greg Rice (Design & Construction); Ken Reashor (Traffic Authority); Roddy MacIntyre (Traffic & R.O.W.); and Jennifer Weagle (Municipal Clerk's Office).

DISCUSSION

Key Committee Decisions

Licensing Cyclists : The Committee reviewed an information package including a copy of the City of Halifax Ordinance No. 15 - Bicycle Licensing.

The Committee discussed the history of Ordinance No. 15, including course requirements, costs, procedures and fines, and how the By-Law would be applied to HRM's current legislation.

The Committee agreed that they would not go forward with a recommendation to Council for the implementation of a bicycle licensing program. Members were concerned that the cost to citizens of fees, plates, education and logistics may actually discourage cycling which would be contrary to HRM's Active Transportation Plan.

Proposed 30% Surtax on Imported Bicycles: The Committee reviewed an information package including correspondence from Members of Parliament and newspaper articles.

Councillor Sheila Fougere advised the Committee that she had spoken with a Federal Minister regarding the 30% surtax on bicycles imported to Canada, which is being proposed by the Federal Government.

The surtax may have negative impacts on efforts to promote bicycle use as a means of environmentally friendly transportation, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as per Canada's Kyoto commitments, and would be contrary to HRM's Active Transportation Plan. The surtax may also have negative impacts on efforts to foster healthy trade with China, which is the largest exporter of bicycles to Canada.

As the result of a recommendation from the Committee, Halifax Regional Council forwarded a letter to the Federal Minister of Finance expressing opposition to the proposed surtax on imported bicycles.

Capital Works Projects

In conjunction with various capital works projects such as resurfacing, paving renewal, new curb and new sidewalks, it has been possible to implement the following bicycle infrastructure:

- Two sections of wide curb lane on St. Margaret's Bay Road (inbound)
- Bicycle lane on Bedford Highway (both sides) from Kearney Lake Road to Southgate Drive
- Extend the bicycle lane on Main Street (Dartmouth) from Forest Hills Parkway to Montague Road

There is an on-going initiative to replace diagonal sewer grates (perpendicular to the direction of travel) automatically during renewal projects. Several locations have also been identified and replaced based on input directly from cyclists.

In addition, the following projects will be constructed later this year:

- Bicycle lane on Kearney Lake Road (both sides) from Belle Street to opposite end of Kearney Lake
- Bicycle lane on St. Margaret's Bay Road (both sides) from the overpass at Northwest Arm Drive to Prospect Road

Signing: Bike Route & Share the Road Signs

The BAC continues to work closely with Mr. David Hubley and Mr. Greg Rice of HRM's Design and Construction Services, as well as Mr. Ken Reashor, HRM's Traffic Authority to ensure there is proper/adequate signage along bike routes. Share the Road signs will continue to be placed where required and each location will be reviewed prior to placement of the signs.

Bike route and/or share the road signs have been placed along the following roads:

- St. Margaret's Bay Road (Beechville to Exit 4/Highway 103)
- Akerley Boulevard (Windmill Road to Burnside Drive)
- Wright Avenue (Windmill Road to Williams Avenue)

Additional signage will be placed on Cole Harbour Road, Colby Drive, Delta Drive, Caldwell Road, Wexford Road, Donegal Drive and Hampton Green once construction is completed on the trail linking Donegal Drive to the Portland Hills Transit Terminal.

Public Safety Campaign

With support and cooperation from Global TV, HRM is producing four public service announcements to be aired this summer highlighting various safety issues relating to cycling. In addition to the TV safety campaign, HRM now has a certified Can Bike safety instructor located at the Chocolate Lake Recreation Centre and three police officers have also been trained as instructors.

Bike Racks / Lockers

Bicycle racks have been installed at 13 recreation/community centres throughout HRM and other racks will be installed at other HRM facilities as requested. The Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Coordinator will be working with Mr. Jeff Bray, Streetscape Coordinator to facilitate the installation of additional bicycle racks at locations throughout the Capital District.

The new transit terminals at Portland Hills and Sackville have been outfitted with bicycle lockers {ten (10) at each location} in addition to bicycle racks.

Other Projects

Other cycling related projects that have been completed include:

- Bedford Sackville Greenway Trail
- Bikeway Connection to Angus L. McDonald Bridge Study
- Active Transportation Plan

Traffic and Right of Way Services has hired a graduate student from the Dalhousie School of Planning for the summer. The major function of this position is to assist with the collection of data and synthesis of information with respect to transportation demand management within the Burnside Business Park. The student will be researching transportation management associations (TMAs) and TDM strategies applicable to Burnside; pedestrian and bicycle counts at key locations; surveys of commuters; evaluation of existing infrastructure such as bus stops, shelters, and pedestrian/bicycle facilities; evaluation of potential locations within Burnside for additional commuter-related infrastructure; and assistance with other TDM-related projects in other areas of HRM.

Cycling Profile

Growing interest in cycling is evident by the number of cyclists on the roads and trails.

The BAC formed a Sub-Committee to organize the annual Bike Week event, helping to raise the cycling profile within HRM.

Bike Week Event

Thanks to the support of HRM staff, a team of dedicated volunteers, outside organizations and sponsors, HRM's Bike Week, held from June 3 - 11, 2006 was a success. Despite choosing the rainiest week this spring, there were over 1000 participants in HRM Bike Week events!

Particular successes include our largest Bike Auction yet (attended by over 350 people) with 25% of the auction proceeds going to support a local non-profit group called BikeAgain! They are committed to getting old bikes back on the road and ensuring that bicycles are economically accessible to as many people as possible. BikeAgain!'s support in the auction (sorting bicycles and performing minor tune-ups) means that people are leaving the auction with more road-worthy bicycles, and higher bids are being achieved.

HRM residents also braved the rain and weather to participate in outdoor events such as trail rides, pancake breakfasts and police bicycle rodeos. Weatherproof events like lectures at local libraries and bike maintenance workshops were particularly well attended. Cyclists took advantage of incentives like FREE ferry and MetroLink rides, and the bike and boat event at the St. Mary's Boat Club. Schools encouraged their students to ride in a competition to win a bike rack, and many individuals, both young and old, wrote wonderful stories about cycling in a bid to win a cool new bike.

Bike week would not have been possible without supporting partners who organized and attended individual events under the bike week umbrella. These included: The Ecology Action Centre, Optimist Club, Army Navy Air Force, IdealBikes, Environment Canada, Mountain Equipment Coop, HRM School Board, Trails Groups (BLT, Musquodoboit, and Shearwater Flyer Trail), MS Society, Heart & Stroke, Katimavik, as well as individuals such as Mary Barker and her group of bicycle-tourists and Chantal Killey who had just arrived in Halifax by bicycle from Montreal, and was keen to lend her time to Bike Week.

Supporters also donated a number of prizes and merchandise. These include: C. Robertson Electric Bikes, One Swift Turtle, Economy Shoe Shop, Association of Doctors for the Advancement of Physical Transportation, Royal Bank, IWK Child Safety Link, Halifax Dartmouth Bridge Commission, Cyclesmith, Propeller, Barrington St. Superstore, and St. Mary's University (The Tower).

For the first time, Bike Week was able to attract corporate sponsors who made cash donations. Their support made outside advertising of the event possible. Corporate sponsors include NS Power and KPMG. C-100 radio supported our advertising efforts through a generous in-kind contribution.

Support from a large number of HRM departments demonstrated HRM's commitment to healthy, vibrant and sustainable communities. Staff in Planning and Development, Traffic and Right of Way, Recreation, Metro Transit, HRM Libraries, HRM Police, Special Events, Shared Services, Environment Management Services, Halifax Regional Water Commission, and Procurement all worked together to help make Bike Week a success.

Unfortunately, a lack of core funding (the 2006 budget was not approved before the event started on June 3rd) hampered organizers efforts to make decisions prior to the event. A small amount of seed money (\$5,000 per year) would allow organizers to do their job more effectively. We are also confident that we could leverage this amount into even more money as we use it to demonstrate HRM's commitment to the event and attract more corporate donations, as well as, access funds from other agencies and levels of government.

The support and encouragement of Councillor Sheila Fougere was especially important to putting on Bike Week.

The committee has already met to start planning for an even better event next year.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There are no budget implications.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN

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

ALTERNATIVES

There are no alternatives proposed at this time.

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.

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