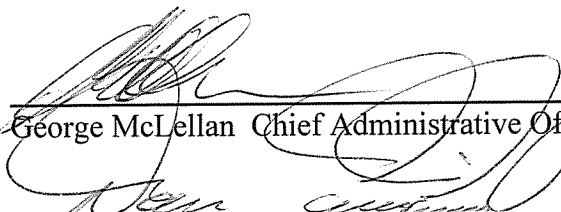
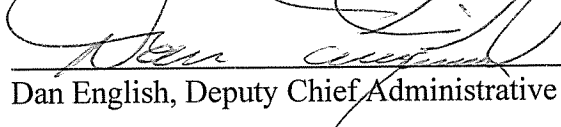

Halifax Regional Council
September 17, 2002

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:


George McLellan Chief Administrative Officer


Dan English, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: September 12, 2002

SUBJECT: **New Sidewalks - Birchwood Terrace and Lawnsdale Drive,
District 10 - East Region**

ORIGIN

Halifax Regional Council Meeting of September 10, 2002, item 10.2.2.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the two requested new sidewalks for Birchwood Terrace and Lawnsdale Drive not be approved at this time but rather they be referred for consideration as part of HRM's normal Capital Budget process.

BACKGROUND

Earlier this year, the Halifax Regional School Board announced its intent to close Northbrook School located on Victoria Road and transfer the elementary school children to Crichton Park School located on Lyngby Avenue in District 10. As a result of this announcement, HRM has been approached to undertake new sidewalk construction on Birchwood Terrace and a portion of Lawnsdale Drive for the purpose of completing a sidewalk walking route for the relocated school children.

DISCUSSION

The closure of Northbrook School on Victoria Road in Dartmouth has prompted correspondence from Derek Carter, Principal, Crichton Park Elementary School, requesting HRM's consideration to construction a sidewalk on Birchwood Terrace and on a portion of Lawnsdale Drive. A similar letter of support was also received from Sandra Everett, Member, District 9, Halifax Regional School Board. A presentation requesting sidewalks on Birchwood Terrace and Lawnsdale Drive was also made to Halifax Regional Council September 10, 2002 by Mr. Jack Potter, North Brook School Advisory Committee.

This request for two new sidewalks well after the approval of the 2002/03 Capital Budget would thus constitute an addition to that budget. Staff has estimated the costs to be \$105,000 for Birchwood Terrace and \$20,000 for Lawnsdale Drive.

Existing Sidewalk Network

Students walking from the Pinehill Road area to Crichton Park Elementary have two options available:

1. walking along an existing sidewalk on Woodland Avenue and MicMac Boulevard to a paved walkway leading into the school. This route is completely covered by sidewalks and a paved walking path. The distance is approximately 1100 metres.
2. walking up Frederick Street to Birchwood Terrace, along Birchwood Terrace to Lawnsdale Drive, along Lawnsdale Drive to Lyngby Avenue and along Lyngby Avenue to the school. The distance is approximately 1320 metres. Approximately 70% of this route is already covered by sidewalks.

Priority Status:

Using the rating system developed by staff for prioritizing new sidewalks for budget consideration, both sidewalks in question have been rated at 70/100. To place this rating within context, staff would advise that their spreadsheet database for all new sidewalk requests presently contains 159 listings, 49 of which have ratings higher than 70/100 including the majority of the projects listed for the tentative 2003 new sidewalk budget.

Safety Concerns:

On the afternoon of Wednesday, September 11, 2002, Mr. Rick Paynter, P.Eng., examined both of the above-noted walking routes with Inspector Greg Murray of the HRM Police Department. Following this site inspection, it was acknowledged that Woodland Avenue is a high traffic collector roadway with legitimate safety concerns for small children. Thus, the preferred walking route would be Frederick/Birchwood/Lawnsdale and Lyngby. With regards to this preferred walking route, Inspector Murray advised that he had no information that would support the existence of any undo safety concerns. It was noted that the Birchwood Terrace and Lawnsdale Drive sections in question are streets with good open visibility and this walking route is located within a predominate residential neighbourhood setting.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

New sidewalks require the recovery of a Local Improvement Charge which for 2002, has been approved at \$14.56 per lineal foot of frontage. We would note that the residents of these two streets have not been petitioned to determine their acceptance of this frontage charge. The Local Improvement recovery may be by frontage or by an area rate over a part or all of the District area. For the two sidewalks in question, the required Local Improvement recovery has been established at \$41,147.

Regarding the funding for the two requested sidewalks, staff has examined the present status of a capital account for new sidewalk construction - Account No. CJR00956. The present uncommitted balance is 1,119,420 which must accommodate one 2001 project and three 2002 projects not yet tendered and which also includes surplus funds in the amount of approximately \$456,000 that has been accrued through tendered 2002 projects coming in lower than budget allocations. Staff would contend that the appropriate utilization of those surplus funds should be for implementing other new sidewalk projects listed in the approved budget Shopping List before any unapproved sidewalk projects are considered.

Use of District 9 Capital Funds

The question was raised whether or not Councillor Smith could allocate \$10,000 of his District Funds towards the installation of these sidewalks located in District 10. Finance advises that in the absence of any specific policy direction on this, this proposal is probably acceptable although generally district allocated funds are intended to be spent within their specific districts.

Conclusions:

While any street where elementary school children must walk and which contains no sidewalk is of general concern, the Birchwood Terrace and Lawnsdale Drive area is no different than many others across HRM where this situation exists. In that regard, staff is having difficulty supporting the portrayed urgency relative to these two sidewalks and would recommend that they be referred to our normal Capital Budget process.

In addition to the above recommendation, staff understands that a formal letter will be written to the Halifax Regional School Board requesting that in their future considerations for school closures, issues such as safety concerns for school children having to walk to an adjacent school be taken into consideration.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN

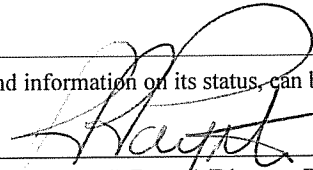
This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

ALTERNATIVES

Council could choose to override staff's recommendation and direct that these two sidewalks be implemented using surplus funds available within the capital new sidewalk bulk account.

Additional copies of this report, and information on its status, can be obtained by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report Prepared/Approved by: _____


Rick Paynter, P.Eng., A/Director, Public Works & Transportation Services at 490-4855

/klz