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Item No. 12.1.2
Transportation Standing Committee
January 26, 2017

TO: Chair and Members of Transportation Standing Committee

Original Signed

SUBMITTED BY:

Bruce Zvaniga, P.Eng., Director, Transportation and Public Works

DATE: January 9th, 2017

SUBJECT: Trans Canada Trail Route in Halifax Regional Municipality

ORIGIN

April 28, 2016 meeting of the Transportation Standing Committee, Item 12.4.3, MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Councillor Rankin, that the Motion be Amended to read THAT the Transportation Standing Committee request a staff report regarding endorsement of the Trans Canada Trail (TCT) request regarding the completion of the Trans Canada Trail before Canada 150 and steps to complete the Shearwater Flyer connection as the preferred option.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Section 79 (1) (ah) of the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter states that Council may expend money required by the Municipality for playgrounds, trails, including trails developed, operated or maintained pursuant to an agreement made under clause 73(c), bicycle paths, swimming pools, ice arenas and other recreational facilities.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Transportation Standing Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council endorse the proposed interim alignment of the Trans Canada Trail through Halifax Regional Municipality and endorse ongoing collaboration between the municipality, the Nova Scotia Trails Federation and the Trans Canada Trail (TCT) on the development of a connected and complete TCT route within the municipality.

BACKGROUND

The Trans Canada Trail (TCT) is working toward connecting “The Great Trail” in time for Canada’s 150th anniversary of Confederation in 2017. Once fully connected, the Trail will link three oceans – the Atlantic, the Pacific and the Arctic – and just over 15,000 communities. The project was initiated in 1992 and today the Trail is currently just over 20,000 km long and 86 % connected. The 2017 goal is to connect the Country by linking adjacent provinces and connecting to provincial capitals only. TCT recognises that their grand vision will require some sections to be connected via interim routes where the Trail is not yet completed and a next phase will be launched in 2017, with a goal to continually improve the Trail.

In Nova Scotia, the Nova Scotia Trails Federation (NS Trails) is the provincial partner for the TCT and has an agreement to coordinate the development of the Trail in Nova Scotia. In HRM, NS Trails and the TCT have worked primarily with local community trails associations and the Shubenacadie Canal Commission to determine the designated TCT route (illustrated in “Attachment 1”). The TCT has contributed to the development of the Carrolls Corner’s Mastodon Trail, Cole Harbour Parks and Trail Association’s greenway system, the Barrington Street Greenway, the walking and bicycling bridge across the channel between Lake Banook and Lake Micmac, and other trail projects and related engineering studies along the 2017 connection route.

Representatives of NS Trails and TCT approached HRM’s Active Transportation staff in early 2016 to discuss how to make interim connections in the municipality in time for Canada’s 150th birthday in 2017. It is recognized that to complete the Trail in HRM by July 1, 2017 some sections will be interim and that work to complete the TCT route will continue after 2017. In winter 2016 these representatives worked with HRM staff to consider a number of interim options and presented these to the Active Transportation Advisory Committee in spring 2016 for their views.

A particular challenge to connect the designated TCT route is that a 7 km proposed segment would be built alongside the Forest Hills Extension (Highway 107) between Main Street and Highway 118, where it would then connect with the trails in Shubie Park (illustrated in “Attachment 2”). Currently, there are no plans to construct this section, however, there may be opportunities to develop this segment with the proposed development of the Port Wallace area. As a result, an interim connection in HRM is proposed using the Shearwater Flyer Trail, Pleasant Street and the Dartmouth Harbourfront Greenway to downtown Dartmouth.

HRM’s Active Transportation Priorities Plan was approved by Regional Council in September 2014. This Plan identifies the existing and proposed walking and bicycling routes in the municipality. Almost all of the existing and to-be-built TCT route and the proposed interim route are part of the AT Plan. The sections that are not in the AT Plan are primarily the provincial roads between Meaghers Grant and Carrolls Corner.

DISCUSSION

The TCT route through HRM is incomplete and will likely be an ongoing project for years to come. Based on information received from the NS Trails and local community trails associations, the post-2017 TCT route could include the main spine as well as loops and extensions throughout the municipality. For the 2017 connection and in time for the Canada 150 Celebrations, the TCT wishes to connect the Trail in HRM and wishes to sign it and market it. The TCT route and proposed interim connection is shown in “Attachment 3”.

Most of the TCT route in HRM is on existing or proposed active transportation facilities and is under the jurisdiction of other groups. The segments that are proposed as on-road facilities on provincial roads were assessed by the province for their suitability for safe sharing of the road and are now designated TCT by the province. Only short segments of the TCT route being proposed are under the jurisdiction of HRM. The entire TCT route in HRM is described below and the descriptions start in the northeast and head to

the Halifax waterfront. The two segments of the incomplete designated route will also be considered part of the TCT and are described below.

- 1) The TCT route enters HRM from Lantz along a short provincial on-road section, and transitions to the Mastodon Trail which was built by the Carroll's Corner Community Association with partial funding from TCT and HRM.
- 2) From Carroll's Corner, it transitions to a provincial on-road route, using Antrim Road, route 212 and 357. Along this route it passes Dollar Lake Provincial Park.
- 3) At the trail head of the Musquodoboit Trailway, the TCT route continues as an off-road, active transportation greenway (and rails to trails corridor) through to Musquodoboit Harbour. The Trailway is maintained and operated by the Musquodoboit Trailway Association. This association receives annual maintenance funding from HRM.
- 4) From Musquodoboit Harbour to Porters Lake, the TCT route will be a 12 km "purple route" as there is no off-road route and the provincial on-road options (Trunk 7 and Highway 107) do not meet the Province's thresholds for safe sharing of the road. There will be no designated interim route in this section.
- 5) The TCT route will pick up again near Porters Lake using a short on-road connection on the provincial route 207 and then HRM's Les Collins Ave., where it will connect into the Blueberry Run Trail, a provincially-owned facility that is operated by the Marine Riders ATV club.
- 6) The route continues on the former rail corridor on the Atlantic View Greenway and the Cole Harbour Salt Marsh Greenway, which are owned by the province and operated and maintained by two community groups who receive annual maintenance funding from HRM.

Interim Connection

- 7) The proposed TCT interim connection will start at the intersection of the Salt Marsh Trail and Bissett Road and continue along the Shearwater Flyer Trail until it ends at Pleasant Street at CFB Shearwater. The Cole Harbour Parks and Trails Association, which has the Letter of Authority from the Province is supportive of this, as is the NS Trails and the designation of this section is now under review by TCT.
- 8) From the terminus of the Shearwater Flyer Trail at Corsair Dr., the TCT interim connection would be on-road along HRM's Pleasant Street to the Woodside Ferry Terminal and the beginning of the Dartmouth Harbourfront Greenway. This segment has continuous sidewalk which is beneficial. The on-road environment for bicycling is less advantageous as there are high motor vehicle speeds and volumes. Trans Canada Trails will have signage at either end of the Pleasant Street segment and in other communications about the route to indicate that this segment does not have a bicycling facility. HRM will be initiating a planning study in 2017 or 2018 to determine if and how a safer and more comfortable bicycling and walking route could be built through this section.
- 9) From the Woodside Ferry Terminal, the TCT interim connection will follow the Dartmouth Harbourfront Greenway through to the Alderney Ferry Terminal. There are some minor gaps along this segment that will be managed through signage.

Cole Harbour and Shubie Park Segments of Designated TCT Route

- 10) At the intersection of the Salt Marsh Greenway and Bissett Road (#6 above) the TCT route will follow Cole Harbour's Heritage, Bissett and Forest Hills Greenways through to Main Street. Most of this alignment is built or underway and is already designated as the TCT route, except for the municipal

on-road sections which connect the Trail sections. Until the Forest Hills extension to Shubie Park is completed, the TCT route would end at the Main Street area.

- 11) The TCT route picks up again in Shubie Park, from, roughly Highway 107, through to MicMac Boulevard and then continuing alongside Lake Banook and Sullivan's Pond. This section is also part of the designated TCT route.

Two Designated TCT Routes from Downtown Dartmouth to Halifax Waterfront

- 12) At the Alderney Ferry Terminal, the TCT route will diverge. One direction will be across the Halifax Transit Ferry to the Halifax Ferry Terminal. The other will be along HRM's Alderney Drive, Shore Road, and Lyle Street up to the Macdonald Bridge pedway and bikeway. Sections of this route to the bridge will require some signage.
- 13) From the Macdonald Bridge, the TCT route joins the Barrington Street Greenway from North Street to Cornwallis. There is another on-road connection with sidewalks in place from this point to the Halifax Waterfront. It is expected that in the interim there is a gap for cyclists, but this will be filled as part of the Cogswell Interchange redevelopment.

Because some of the sections of the TCT route and the proposed interim connection will be on HRM streets, the TCT requests that HRM approve the installation of route identification and wayfinding in the right-of-way. HRM's Traffic Management group will assess this request as soon as the route is confirmed.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications. The Trans Canada Trail Foundation provides all signage and posts and has offered to cover the costs of installation.

RISK CONSIDERATION

There are no significant risks associated with the recommendations in this Report. The risks considered rate "Low". To reach this conclusion, consideration was given to financial, and legal and compliance risks.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The interim route for the TCT described above was endorsed by Halifax's Active Transportation Advisory Committee.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Walking and bicycling infrastructure provide opportunities for residents to travel via modes that have minimal environmental impact compared with other alternatives.

ALTERNATIVES

The Transportation Standing Committee may chose not to endorse the proposed interim TCT route through the municipality and HRM's ongoing collaboration in developing a connected route. This is not recommended as many of these segments align with the existing and proposed active transportation network in the municipality and their development helps to attain existing municipal transportation objectives.

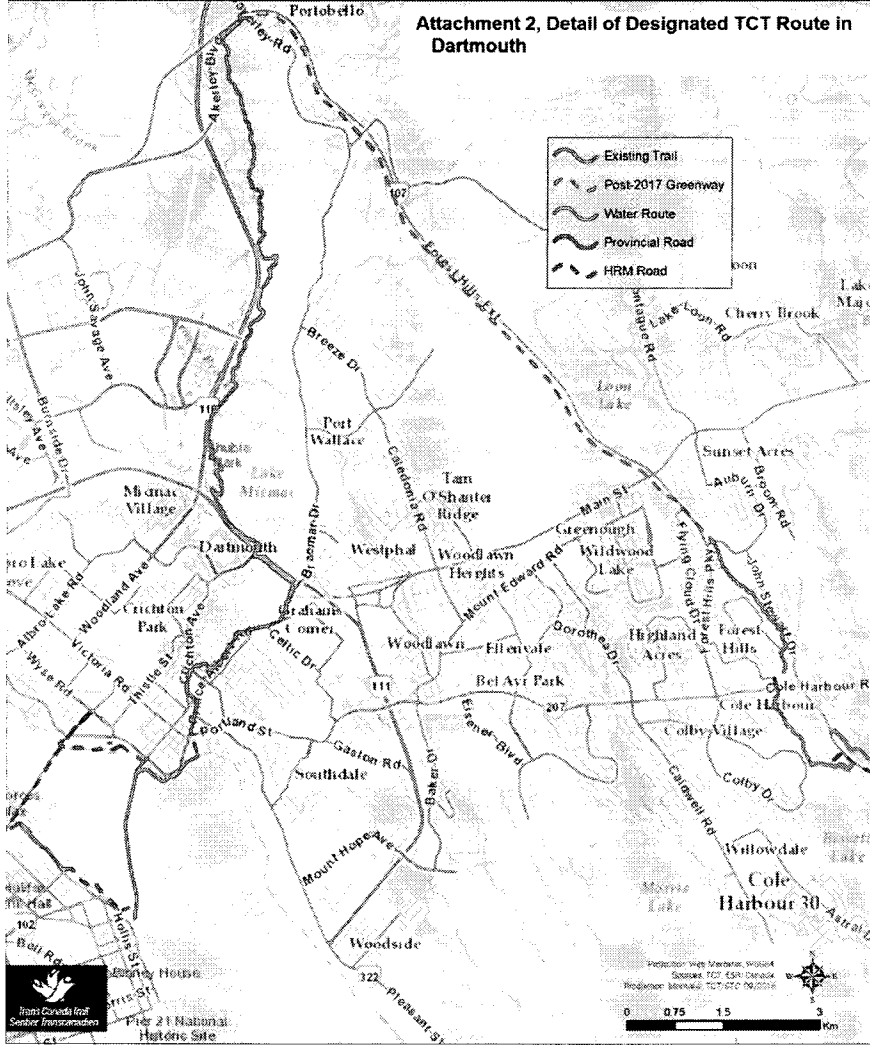
ATTACHMENTS

- 1) Attachment 1, Designated TCT Route in HRM
- 2) Attachment 2, Detail of Designated TCT Route in Dartmouth
- 3) Attachment 3, Proposed Interim TCT route in HRM

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

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Attachment 2, Detail of Designated TCT Route in Dartmouth



Pier 21 National Historic Site

