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Item No. 12.1.2
Transportation Standing Committee
March 26, 2018

TO: Chair and Members of Transportation Standing Committee

Original Signed

SUBMITTED BY:

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

Original Signed

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: February 8, 2018

SUBJECT: Participation of the Chain of Lakes Trail in the Rum Runners Trail

ORIGIN

Item 13.1, July 27, 2017, the Transportation Standing Committee, MOVED by Councillor Cleary, seconded by Councillor Nicoll THAT the Transportation Standing Committee request a staff report regarding the participation of the Chain of Lakes Trail in the Rum Runners Trail. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

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

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Transportation Standing Committee recommend that Regional Council approve the participation of the Chain of Lakes Trail as part of the Rum Runners Trail, subject to the conditions of participation described in the Discussion section of this report.

BACKGROUND

The Chain of Lakes Trail is a paved 7 km multi-use pathway that extends from Joseph Howe Drive in Halifax to a point just past Lakeside Park Dr. in the Beechville area. The former rail corridor was purchased by HRM from CN in 2009 and developed as an active transportation facility in 2010. It is maintained by Parks and Recreation. The facility is a key part of Halifax's active transportation network. In 2015 the trail was completely recapitalized after Halifax Water used the corridor to install a new waste-water pipe.

The Chain of Lakes Trail is a "rails-to-trails" facility that is one segment of an approximately 110km former rail corridor extending from Halifax to Lunenburg. All other segments of the corridor are owned by the provincial government and are maintained and operated by volunteer community groups under "letters of authority" from the Department of Natural Resources. These are all motorized facilities. After the Chain of Lakes, the next segment is the Beechville, Lakeside, Timberlea Trail (BLT Trail), and then the Saint Margaret's Bay Rails to Trails within HRM. Halifax contributes to the recapitalization and maintenance of these two facilities via grants to the community associations as part of support for the Halifax Regional Trails Association and its members.

The Chain of Lakes Trails Association (COLTA) is a volunteer community association that has a licence agreement with HRM to build and maintain the Chain of Lakes Trail. This association is a member of the Halifax Regional Trails Association. Given the complexity of developing and maintaining such a facility, the association has played a stewardship, promotion and advocacy role over the years, with HRM leading construction and maintenance. Current projects that the association has prioritized for the facility are wayfinding signage and kiosk development. There is funding in the active transportation capital budget for these projects and HRM staff will be working with the Association in 2018 to implement these.

Current HRM planning and capital project priorities related to the Chain of Lakes Trail are to:

- work with the Association on implementing trail signage and kiosks;
- develop and build a connection to the facility to and from peninsular Halifax;
- develop and build a connection to the facility to Walter Havill Drive and making the connection to the Long Lake Provincial Park trail network; and,
- install safety fencing at several points along the corridor.

Rum Runners describes itself as a "partnership of seven trails to develop and manage the 110km trail corridor collaboratively for the greater good of the community including the economic, health and social benefits." The project was initiated in 2012 and involves seven segments of trail. The project involved coordination and funding from the Province, Federal government and others to develop the corridor as a "destination trail". The web site for the trail already includes Chain of Lakes Trail because COLTA originally signaled its support for the project and after the Association reconsidered its support the Rumrunners lacked the funding to remove it from the site. Attachment "A" has a copy of the Rum Runners Trail map.

The governance structure for Rum Runners involves a co-ordinating committee composed of representatives from the six volunteer community groups who manage segments of the facility. There is a high-level Memorandum of Understanding that identifies roles and responsibilities (Attachment "B"). There are two main obligations associated with a trail becoming a participant in the Rum Runners:

- that the trail segment is identified and branded as part of the Rum Runners network in promotions and the Rum Runners web site; and,
- that the trail segment has at least some Rum Runners branding on trail signage. Each trail can decide on the amount and location of such signage.

Should Regional Council decide to become a partner in the Rum Runners, HRM would sign on as a party to the MOU.

Tourism Nova Scotia (TNS) is a private sector-led provincial Crown corporation with a mandate to grow Nova Scotia's tourism industry and maximize the value of tourism to Nova Scotia's economy. Recognizing the cycling tourism opportunity of a Blue Route trail connecting Halifax and Lunenburg, TNS has been

engaged with Rum Runners Trail stakeholders by sharing market insights, best practices, and tourism development advice from the beginning. Rum Runners Trail stakeholders have been successful in project applications to TNS for funding, including trail enhancements such as branding and signage, and development of photography and video marketing assets. TNS continues to provide advice to Rum Runners Trail stakeholders on matters related to the trail's tourism experience.

In 2012 COLTA assumed that they had the authority to decide on whether to become a part of the Rum Runners destination trail initiative and HRM staff were not involved. At that time, COLTA was approached by representatives of the Rum Runners partnership (from other community groups along the corridor) to become a formal member of the partnership on several occasions. Initially COLTA was supportive of being involved, but, for reasons described below, the Association decided not to be a member at a meeting in May 2015. The COLTA Board discussed this position at subsequent meetings and did not change their position.

In February 2016, a representative of the Rum Runners Trail made a presentation to the HRM Active Transportation Advisory Committee to update the Committee on the non-participation of the Chain of Lakes Trail. As follow-up to this presentation, staff noted that the Chain of Lakes Trail is owned by HRM and the licence agreement possessed by the Chain of Lakes Trails Association only speaks to maintenance and construction responsibilities. Therefore, the final decision on whether the Chain of Lakes Trail becomes part of the Rum Runners Trail rests with Regional Council. COLTA reported to HRM that they received independent legal advice that confirmed that they did not have the authority to decide on whether they could participate in the Rum Runners.

There is direction in the Active Transportation Priorities Plan (AT Plan), and the Integrated Mobility Plan (IMP) to develop a comprehensive AT wayfinding system. Funding has been identified as a carry-over item in the proposed 2018-19 HRM Capital Budget to develop and begin implementing this system.

DISCUSSION

In developing the recommended approach, consideration was given to HRM policy and plans related to this issue and to the views of the Chain of Lakes Trails Association.

From an HRM policy and planning perspective the following were considered to determine the recommendation in this report.

- 1) Administrative Order 46, "Respecting HRM Asset Naming Policies". Branding the Chain of Lakes Trail as a segment of the Rum Runners destination trail does not contravene this order.
- 2) The Active Transportation Plan does not provide specific direction on such partnerships. Section 7.2.2 on Active Transportation Signage does acknowledge that as HRM develops a wayfinding system, co-branding with other initiatives such as Trans Canada Trail or the Blue Route provincial cycling network should be considered.
- 3) The Integrated Mobility Plan includes direction on such partnerships; but it does include a commitment to an active transportation branding and wayfinding system (Action 75).
- 4) The Regional Plan does include objectives to support rural economic development through encouraging tourism (section 5.3.5). EC-15 in this section states that:
HRM shall, in collaboration with the Province and other partners, work to ensure that the economic viability of rural communities is included as an integral aim of regional economic growth strategies and their implementation. Consideration shall be given to:
 - (a) cooperating with senior government levels to collaboratively work with rural communities, business owners and citizens, in community economic development planning and projects, and facilitate partnerships for successful implementation;
 - (b) working with relevant authorities to encourage the provision of good communication linkages in the rural areas - including road improvements, active transportation facilities and telecommunications.
- 5) COLTA's concerns with being part of the Rum Runners are:

- a) Signage clutter. The group fears that it would be confusing for users to have a facility with various brands and names. They are also concerned about having too many signs and the potential impact to the visual appeal of the facility;
- b) User safety and enforcement. The Chain of Lakes Trail is a popular facility for pedestrians and bicyclists and there are already concerns about pedestrian safety due to fast moving bicycles. The group is concerned that further promotion of bicycling as part of the Rum Runners, without investment in improved enforcement or other interventions to compel safer sharing of the facility, will exacerbate the current situation;
- c) Incursion of motorized vehicles. The Chain of Lakes Trail is the only facility on the 110km corridor that does not permit ATVs. COLTA is concerned that by becoming a member of the Rum Runners there will be confusion among users and ATVs will be on the HRM-owned portion of the Corridor. The Rum Runners web site currently describes the corridor as “shared use” which, to many, implies that ATVs are permitted;
- d) Distinction between rural trails and an urban facility. COLTA did not see involvement in Rum Runners as a good fit because of the distinct user groups, trail surface and community-types adjoining the corridor. The other parts of Rum Runners are surfaced with gravel and permit ATVs. Chain of Lakes Trail is maintained in the winter, but the other segments are not;
- e) There is no benefit for Chain of Lakes to become part of Rum Runners. Other trail group members of Rum Runners have leveraged their involvement to secure funding for upgrades and to install signage. Chain of Lakes Trail does not need funding for upgrades and there is already funding secured for way finding.

The main benefit to HRM participating in the Rum Runners Trail is in support of rural economic development objectives. It is an opportunity for HRM to support a regional tourism initiative and to co-operate with community groups inside and outside the Municipality in support of active transportation linkages. If promotion and branding of the Rum Runners Trail results in more users of the Chain of Lakes trail, that does contribute to a municipal objective for more bicycle trips. However, HRM’s active transportation goal is to increase bicycle and pedestrian trips for utilitarian purposes (e.g. trips to work and school) rather than recreational purposes (such as tourism).

There are no significant incremental costs for HRM to become a partner. The only cost would be to include some Rum Runners co-branding on several of the wayfinding signs that will be planned for the Chain of Lakes Trail.

The fact that COLTA does not wish to be involved is an important factor. This volunteer, community-based group plays an important role in advocating for, and promoting the trail. They see no benefits to being involved and see some potential downsides.

The conditions described below would help mitigate some of their concerns should Council decide to participate in Rum Runners.

- 1) All Rum Runners signage needs to be approved by HRM and there needs to be consultation with COLTA on this signage. User safety and comfort, facility navigation and aesthetics should be the key factors in the overall Chain of Lakes wayfinding signage and kiosk design;
- 2) The main identity of the facility remains Chain of Lakes Trail. While the Trail could be part of Rum Runners, the Provincial Blue Route Cycling network and Trans Canada Trail, its primary current identity and brand should remain;
- 3) Measures need to be implemented to facilitate safe sharing of the trail between bicyclists and pedestrians. For example, the new signage for the facility should aim to encourage user etiquette. Other measures should also be explored. These would be helpful for all multi-use pathways in HRM;
- 4) ATV incursions need to be monitored and investigated. Additional physical measures to prevent ATV incursions should be explored. Rum Runners must add information to their web site to make it clear that Chain of Lakes Trail is non-motorized;
- 5) HRM should have membership on the Rum Runners co-ordinating committee.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications to this report. There may be minor costs associated with adding the Rum Runners logo on signage that will be developed in 2018.

RISK CONSIDERATION

There are no significant risks associated with the recommendation in this report. The risks considered rate low. To reach this conclusion, consideration was given to financial, legal and compliance, and service delivery risks.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Chain of Lakes Trails Association was consulted in advance of preparing this report.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct environmental implications to this report.

ALTERNATIVES

The Transportation Standing Committee may recommend that Regional Council not approve the participation of the Chain of Lakes Trail in the Rum Runners Trail.

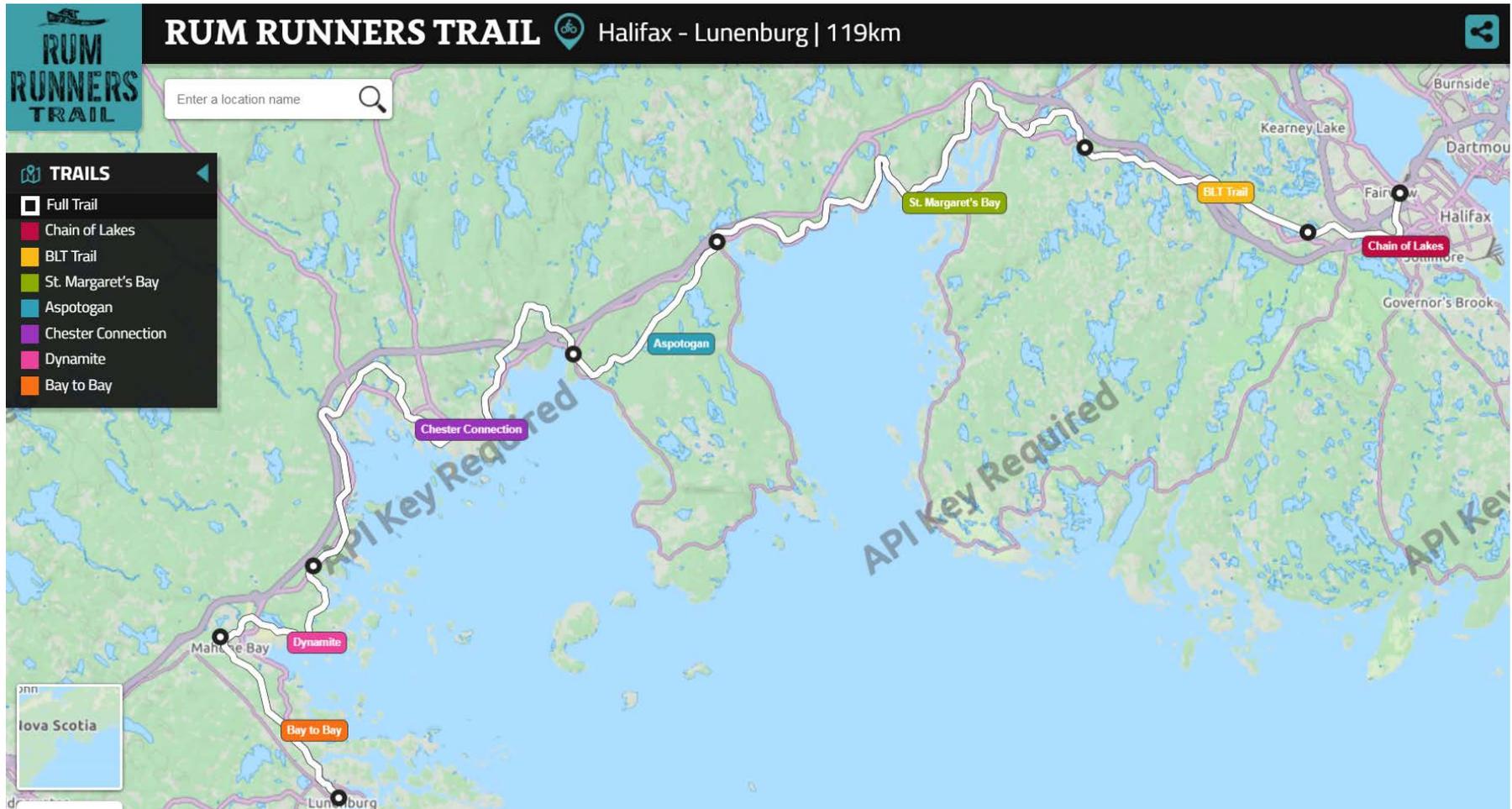
ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Rum Runners Trail map from Rum Runners Web Site
Attachment B: Copy of Rum Runners Trail MOU Template

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

Report Prepared by: David MacIsaac, Active Transportation Supervisor, 902-490-1665

Attachment "A": Rum Runners Trail map from Rum Runners Web Site



Attachment “B”: Copy of Rum Runners Trail MOU Template

Rum Runners Trail
Memorandum of Understanding

Between:

Chain of Lakes Trail Association

Beechville Lakeside Timberlea Rails to Trails Association

St. Margaret’s Bay Area Rails to Trails Association

Municipality of Chester (Aspotogan Trail & Chester Connection Trail)

Dynamite Trail Association

Bay to Bay Trail Association

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) sets forth the terms and understanding between the above named trail partners associated with the development and oversight of the Rum Runners Trail, a destination trail project.

Background

Each of the six trail groups have permission through the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources or Halifax Regional Municipality to manage the rail trail within their respective communities. The six trails are linked to each other forming a continuous 106 kilometer trail from Bayer’s Lake to the Town of Lunenburg. Each trail group has an interest in developing and managing their trail for the greater good of the community including the economic, health and social benefits.

In the summer of 2012, the Atlantic Canada Trails Association completed an assessment of the trail between Halifax and Lunenburg and the results indicated that there is potential for the development of a destination trail. All six trail groups recognized that the ACTA assessment stated that none of the trail groups had the requirements to be a destination trail alone; but synergistically had more

value than necessary to be a destination trail collectively. Agreement was immediately reached to pursue the destination trail as a whole; but retain individual trail status

Purpose

This partnership will bring together the six trail groups to work collaboratively on the development of a destination trail. A working committee made up of a representative(s) from each of the six trail groups will lead the initiative based on the established Terms of Reference.

The success of the destination trail will be accomplished by undertaking the following activities:

- Each trail group will designate a representative(s) to attend and actively participate in the working committee meetings.
- Trail representatives will provide regular and detailed updates back to their individual trail groups.
- Trail representatives will seek input from their trail group and will provide timely feedback to the working committee.
- The working committee will develop a uniform brand and marketing strategy to promote the trail.
- The committee will work together to source funding opportunities to move the project forward.
- The committee will seek input and advice from staff at Nova Scotia Trails and Nova Scotia Tourism Agency.
- Trail groups will consider the impact of individual trail group decisions on the larger trail.
- Trail groups will be committed to the project, will work cooperatively and will be advocates for the success of the destination trail.

Decision Making

As all of the trail representatives have years of experience building community trails and understand their respective communities; decision will be made on a consensus basis. The trail groups will work co-operatively to develop a destination trail which meets the requirements of all communities.

Reporting

It is the responsibility of the trail group representatives to report back to the individual trail group. Communication is important so that all groups are aware of the project status and so that decisions can be made in a timely fashion.

Duration

This MOU shall become effective upon signature by the authorized officials from each of the six trail groups and will remain in effect until such time that the group determines the Committee is no longer required.

Signatures

By signing this MOU, partners agree to the terms outlined above.

Partner: **Chain of Lakes Trail Association**

Name: _____

Position: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Partner: **Beechville Lakeside Timberlea Rails to Trails Association**

Name: _____

Position: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Partner: **St. Margaret's Bay Area Rails to Trails Association**

Name: _____

Position: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Partner: **Municipality of Chester (Aspotogan Trail & Chester Connection Trail)**

Name: _____

Position: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Partner: **Dynamite Trail Association**

Name: _____

Position: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Partner: **Bay to Bay Trail Association**

Name: _____

Position: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____