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Information Item No. 2
Halifax and West Community Council
March 29, 2016

TO: Members of Halifax and West Community Council

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed

Bruce Zvaniga, Director, Transportation and Public Works

Original Signed

Brad Anguish, Director, Parks and Recreation

DATE: February 22, 2016

SUBJECT: Access and Trail Development in the Hemlock Ravine Park Area

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

July 9, 2012 Chebucto Community Council, Item 14.1. MOVED by Councillor Hum, seconded by Councillor Walker that Chebucto Community Council:

1. Request a staff report regarding access and trail development in Hemlock Ravine Park as well as in the overall Royal Hemlock Estates and Wentworth Estates area in reference to outstanding issues including parkland dedication; and
2. That this matter be forwarded to the Active Transportation Advisory Committee.

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.

BACKGROUND

At the July 9, 2012 meeting of Chebucto Community Council, Councillor Hum introduced correspondence dated July 8, 2012 that was submitted by a resident who expressed concern regarding the lack of active transportation in the Royal Hemlock community and also the fact that there was no access from that area to the trails in Hemlock Ravine Park. Councillor Hum advised that she had forwarded this to staff, however, there was also a larger issue as this was an environmentally sensitive area and the

management plan states to protect the Ravine by not permitting access. She indicated that the Friends of Hemlock Ravine were reviewing this matter and may bring forward a proposal for staff.

In September 2014, Regional Council approved the Active Transportation Priorities Plan. This plan identifies the projects, policies and other initiatives that municipality will take between 2014 and 2019 to increase the modal share of walking and bicycling, to expand and connect the walking and bicycling network and to promote safety and promote active transportation modes.

The Plan has two proposed active transportation corridors that are connected to the Royal Hemlock subdivision (see Attachment "A" for map illustrating this area). They are both part of the "Regional Greenways Vision". They are:

- 1) Corridor "A": This corridor parallels Highway 102 and extends from Kearney Lake Rd. to Larry Uteck Boulevard. Most of this corridor consists of an informal "Waterline Trail", has several private landowners, and runs on top of a Halifax Water pipe. There is a segment of this alignment just south of Larry Uteck Boulevard which may have to be in the Highway 102 right-of-way and through a short natural segment that is privately owned;
- 2) Corridor "B": This is an "envisioned" corridor that runs from the northwest corner of the Park, across the Royal Hemlock subdivision, and connects with the "Old Coach Road" trail. As conceptualized, this would eventually connect with other active transportation facilities in Bedford. No formal planning has happened on this conceptual alignment and it is not identified as a priority in the AT Plan.

DISCUSSION

One of the two above-mentioned active transportation corridors is currently being planned. The "Waterline Trail" alignment parallel to Highway 102 (Corridor "A") is currently part of a functional planning exercise to determine the optimal alignments to extend the Mainland Linear Trail north to Larry Uteck Boulevard and south to the Chain of Lakes AT Greenway. This plan is being developed in partnership with the Halifax North West Trails Association and is expected to be complete early in 2016. The plan also considers potential future connections to adjacent neighbourhoods, destinations, and the street network.

The alignment for Corridor "B" follows a combination of parks trails and streets including on the Old Coach Road Trail. This is an "envisioned" alignment and no planning has taken place to support its future development. It is not identified as a priority in the 2014-19 AT Priorities Plan. The exact route and alignment are only conceptual at this point.

A potential park trail connection off of Corridor A has been identified by Parks and Recreation (roughly located behind the Holiday Inn Express). This would link the Waterline Trail to the existing Hemlock Ravine Park trail system allowing public access through the park. Plans are to construct it, subject to budget approval, once the Waterline Trail is available for public use. Connections between the Corridor B alignment and Hemlock Ravine Park trails to the south would have to cross the Ravine itself. The Hemlock Ravine Management Plan advises against such cross connections owing to the ecological and cultural sensitivities within the ravine. Steep slopes would require significant intervention in these sensitive areas. Corridors A and B were designed to skirt these sensitive areas.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications related to the content of this report.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The 2014-19 Active Transportation Priorities Plan had extensive public engagement. The current Mainland Linear Trail extension plan also features extensive public engagement.

The Hemlock Ravine Management Plan was developed with significant public consultation and approved by Community Council.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Proposed Active Transportation Corridors Close to the Royal Hemlock subdivision.

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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Attachment A – Proposed Active Transportation Corridors Close to the Royal Hemlock subdivision.

