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Item No. 11.3
Transportation Standing Committee
December 8, 2016

TO: Chair and Members of Transportation Standing Committee

Original Signed

SUBMITTED BY:

Dave Reage, MCIP, LPP, Director, Halifax Transit

Original Signed

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

DATE: November 28, 2016

SUBJECT: Petition – Africville Museum Accessibility

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

Petition submitted containing over 600 signatures requesting Regional Council to make the Africville Museum accessible with public transit and sidewalks.

At the August 2, 2016 meeting of Regional Council, the following motion was passed:

That Halifax Regional Council direct staff to prepare reports responding to the petitions presented to Regional Council on August 2, 2016.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Section 69(1) of the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter provides the legislative authority for the municipality to provide a public transportation service. Section 79(1)(o) provides the authority for Council to expend money required by the municipality for public transportation services.

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;

BACKGROUND

After a history of more than 100 years, the African Nova Scotian community of Africville, located on the northern shore of the Halifax peninsula was demolished in the 1960s. In February 2010, Halifax Mayor, Peter Kelly delivered an apology to the people of Africville for the destruction of their community. The apology was supported by the allocation of land and \$3 million for the construction of a replica of the Church that had stood in Africville.

The Africville Museum and the Africville Park are located on Africville Road, and are relatively disconnected from the surrounding urban area. The museum is separated from the rest of Halifax peninsula by CN railroad tracks and by the ramps approaching the MacKay Bridge and Barrington Street. Africville Road currently lacks any formalized pedestrian access to connect it to adjacent neighbourhoods.

For further background information on the Museum refer to Attachment B of this report.

Existing Pedestrian and Bicycle Access

There are currently no formal pedestrian facilities that connect Africville Park and Museum to the Halifax sidewalk network. The closest sidewalk is 1.2km away at the corner of Barrington and Glebe Streets. There is a network of park trails in Seaview Look-off Park that have informal pathways extending down to Africville Park, however, these are not accessible, not maintained and require crossing active rail tracks.

There are no bicycle connections to the park, except sharing the roadway with vehicles. The access from Barrington Street is challenging in this regard due to the number and size of motor vehicles using the street.

The 2014-2019 Active Transportation Priorities Plan identifies this area as an envisioned part of the municipal active transportation greenway network. Given the key destinations of a park and a significant cultural and historical site, walking and bicycling access is justified. The 2003 Bayne Street Land Use Study that was commissioned by HRM considered how to improve pedestrian access in this area

Existing Transit Access

The Africville Museum is currently outside of Halifax Transit's walking distance guideline¹, and is therefore not considered to be served by transit. The bus stops nearest to the site are located approximately 1.3 km from the museum on Barrington Street between Glebe Street and Vestry Street. These stops are serviced on weekdays by the peak only Urban Express Routes 84 and 85.

The nearest stops with all day transit service are located approximately 1.7 km from the Museum on Duffus Street near Barrington Street. These bus stops are served by the Route 9 Barrington. Stops on Northridge Road served by the Route 7 are significantly closer in proximity, but lack proper pedestrian facilities for safely crossing the approaches to the MacKay Bridge and Barrington Street which have a posted speed limit of 70 km/h.

DISCUSSION

Improving Pedestrian access to Africville Museum

In response to this petition, a planning study will be proposed in the 2017-18 Active Transportation budget to consider options for providing a pedestrian connection to the Park. A preliminary review of options suggests that making these connections is a challenge. There is limited right-of-way, steep slopes, significant motor vehicle traffic, and active rail tracks to consider.

¹ Halifax Transit considers a resident to be served by transit if they are within 500 metres of a transit stop, or within 1000 metres of a transit terminal (*Moving Forward Together Plan* section 6.3).

The planning study will consider how to improve access from three directions as indicated in Figure 2. These are:

- 1) Extending the sidewalk to the Africville Museum from Barrington Street from where it terminates now at Glebe Street;
- 2) Formalizing and improving connectivity to the Museum from Seaview Look-off Park and Novalea Dr. via a 3m wide greenway trail facility; and,
- 3) Reconsidering previous plans to connect Seaview Look-off Park with the former rail corridor that begins on Kempt Road and then runs parallel to Memorial Drive, until it ends at MacKay Bridge ramps. This would be a 3m wide greenway trail facility that would then connect down to the Africville Museum.

Other pedestrian options may also be considered, as well as bicycle access. All of the options noted above would improve pedestrian connectivity to existing transit services, and improve the overall accessibility of the Museum to existing Halifax Transit service.

This study will explore the feasibility of each option from perspectives of cost, land requirements, topography, public and stakeholder views, cost and other factors. Preferred options will be identified and then, pending Regional Council direction, considered for implementation in subsequent years.

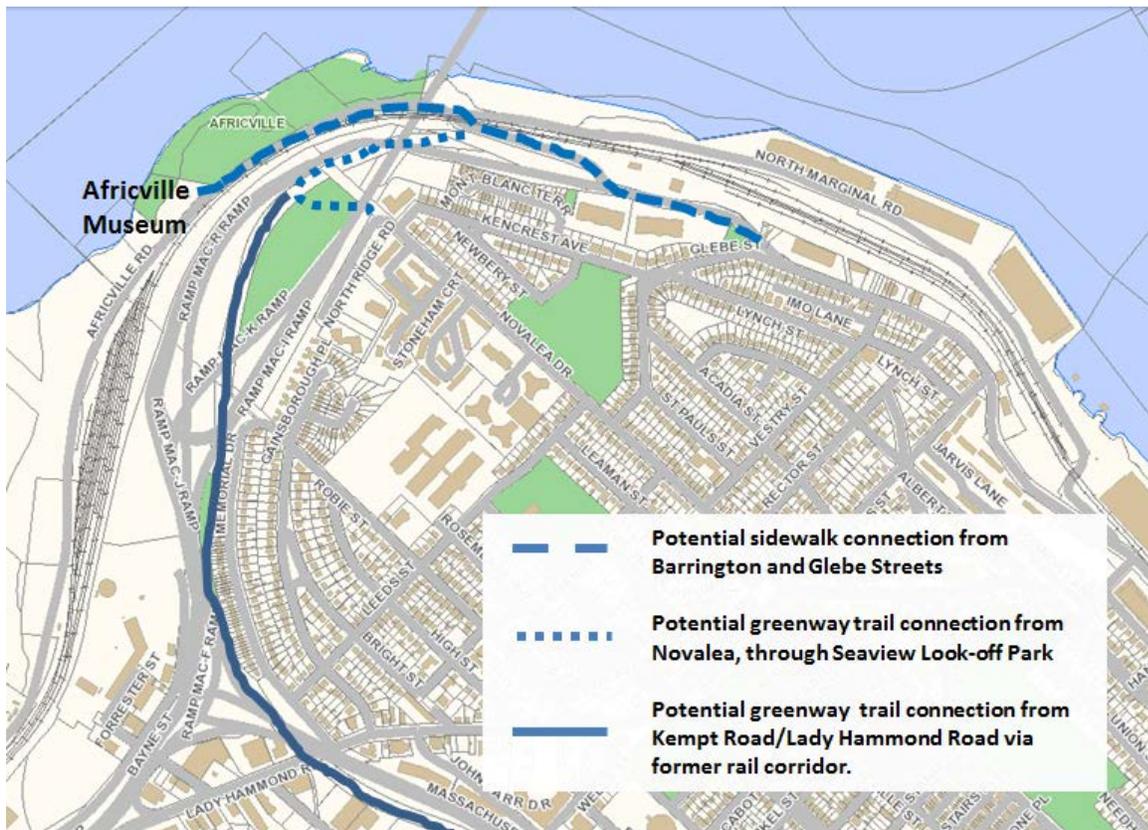


Figure 1: Three potential pedestrian routes to and from Africville Museum

Transit Routing Options

The most direct means to provide transit service to the Museum would be with the existing Route 9 (Route 29 in *Moving Forward Together Plan*). The route would travel along Barrington Street to Africville Road, continue to the Africville Museum, turn around at the museum and return to Barrington Street, and Duffus Street to resume regular routing. This would add approximately 3.4 kilometres, and at least 8 minutes of travel time to each one-way trip. This represents a 30% increase in route length. The ability to service the Museum would require at least one additional vehicle be purchased and an increase to the operating budget of approximately \$100,000 to 250,000 annually.

Routing a Halifax Transit Route to the Africville Museum as described above would not be consistent with the Moving Forward Together Plan’s Route Directness Guideline (section 6.4) which states:

- For safety reasons, route deviations through parking lots will not be considered; and
- Deviations from the basic route alignment to serve activity centres will be made only when the potential net increase in travel time for riders is less than the net reduction in travel time for those who would benefit from the deviation.

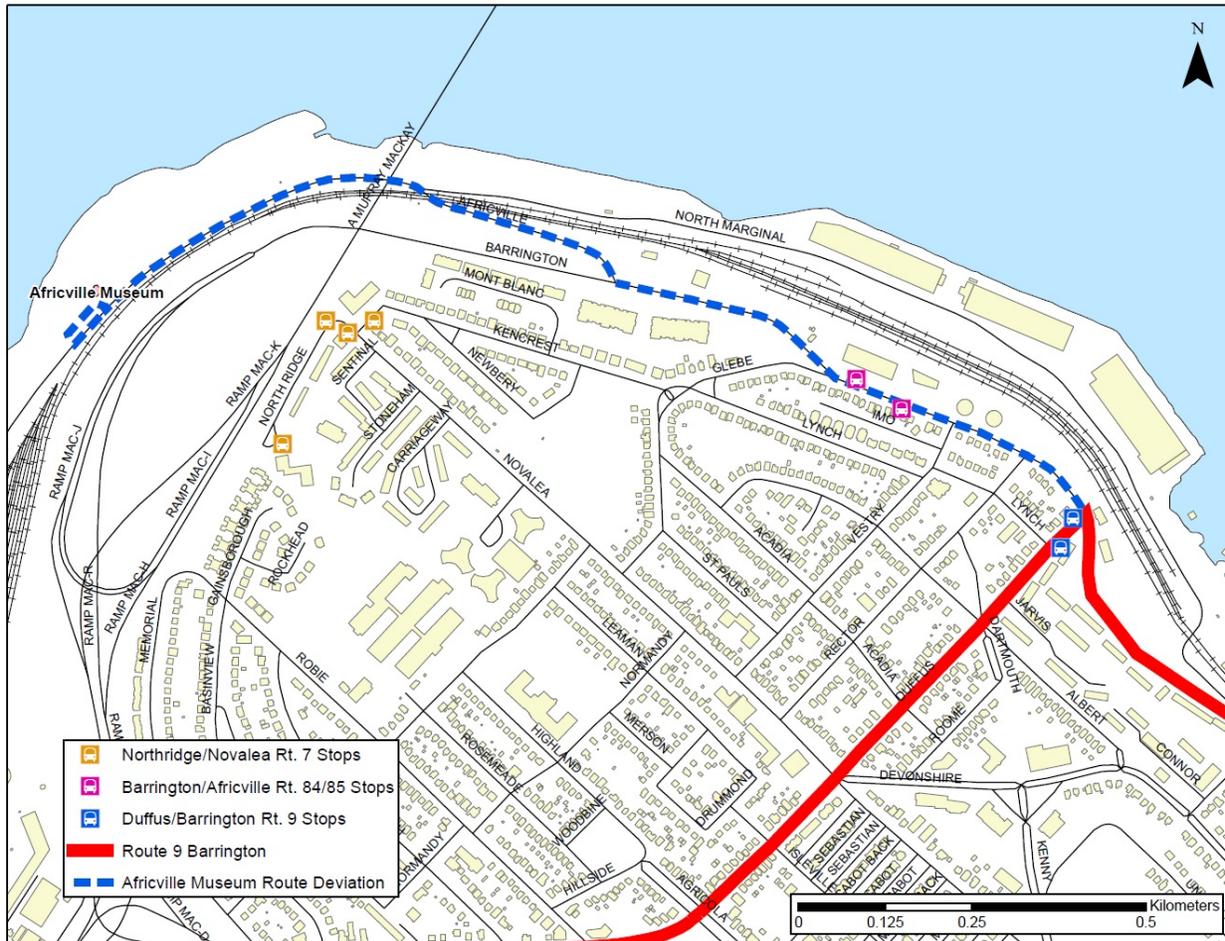


Figure 2: Potential Route Deviation

Based on existing ridership statistics for the Route 9 Barrington, there is an average of 12 to 14 passengers onboard the Route 9 when it travels past Duffus Street at Barrington Street. By introducing the route deviation to serve the Museum as described above, over the entire service day approximately 882 passengers would have at least 8 minutes added to their trip. This would result in a total of 117 passenger hours per weekday. It is possible that, given the increased travel time for these passengers, this route would experience ridership loss if this routing change were implemented.

Walking to the Museum from existing Route 9 stops on Duffus Street near Barrington Street will take approximately 20 minutes in each direction according to Google Maps.

Museum Trip Generation

The Africville Museum’s hours of service vary during the year. It is open during high season² Tuesday to Sunday from 10am to 4pm; and during low season³ Tuesday to Friday from 10am to 4pm. Other trip

² June to Labour Day

generators along Africville Road are the Africville Park, and the industrial uses associated with the Fairview Terminal, neither of which are likely to attract significant transit ridership. It is anticipated that, if a transit route were provided to serve the Africville Museum directly, a sufficient number of passenger trips would not be generated to meet minimum ridership standards as described in the *Moving Forward Together Plan*.

Although costs associated with the introduction of this route change would be significant and would likely not generate substantial revenue, the introduction of this routing change would improve the accessibility of the Africville Heritage Museum, a National Historic Site and important cultural heritage resource to Halifax and Nova Scotia residents. The introduction of transit service may also positively impact attendance at this important site, and facilitate visits from residents, school groups and visitors to the city.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this Information Report.

If the route deviation described in the report were implemented it would require at least one additional vehicle be purchased (approximately \$600,000) and the increase to the operating budget annually would be approximately \$100,000 to \$250,000. Additionally, if ridership were negatively impacted by this deviation as noted above, it is possible that would be an associated revenue loss due to decreased boardings.

Funding for the pedestrian access improvement planning study would be included in the proposed 2017-18 Active Transportation Capital Budget.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

No community engagement was undertaken as part of this report.

Through public consultation for the *Moving Forward Together Plan* a total of 26 requests for bus service to Africville Museum were received.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Petition to Make the Africville Museum Accessible with Public Transit and Sidewalks

Attachment B – Africville Background

Attachment C – Africville Heritage Trust *Moving Forward Together Plan* Correspondence

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

Report Prepared by: Colin Redding, A/Coordinator, Project Planning, Halifax Transit Planning & Scheduling
902.490.6632

David Maclsaac, Active Transportation Supervisor, Project Planning and Design, TPW,
902.490.1665

³ Labour Day through May

Submitted by
 W. Cameron Watts
 Aug 21, 2016

Petition to Make the Africville Museum Accessible with Public Transit and Sidewalks

Full Name or Anonymous	Email	Country	State, County or Province	City or Town
Tristen Sutherland	[REDACTED]	Canada	Ontario	Maple
CAROL Sutherland	[REDACTED]	Canada	Ontario	Maple
Phillip Sutherland	[REDACTED]	11	Ontario	Maple
DAVID T NURSE	[REDACTED]	CANADA	ONT	BRIMPTON
RAYMOND FACEY	[REDACTED]	mail ONT	CANADA	
RAMONA Facey	[REDACTED]	@gmail.com		PICKERING
MARION NURSE	[REDACTED]	Canada	ONT.	BRIMPTON
MONICA Clark	[REDACTED]	Canada	N.S	Halifax
Tyler Marrott	[REDACTED]	Canada	A.B	Calgary
Michael Johnson	[REDACTED]	CANADA	N.S	HALIFAX
Allison Grisanti Simms	[REDACTED]	USA	Georgia	Atlanta
Shari Langvin	[REDACTED]	Canada	ON	Ottawa
Natye Wilson	[REDACTED]	USA	North Carolina	Wilson
Jordana Begum	[REDACTED]	US	NEW JERSEY	Cherry Hill
Ashley Wilson	[REDACTED]	USA	New York	Queens
Benita Solola	[REDACTED]	USA	DELAWARE	Greenwood
Kam. Fletcher	[REDACTED]	USA	TOWSON, MD	Baltimore
Ad Tommiea Nore	[REDACTED]	USA	DELAWARE	Smayona
Audrey Jones	[REDACTED]	USA	SOUTH CAROLINA	ANDERSON
Kimberly Klinkenberg	[REDACTED]	USA	Delaware	Hartly
Jaylyn Fletcher Strong	[REDACTED]	USA	Maryland	Towson
Ashana Jackson	[REDACTED]	USA	PA	Chester
Janet Corders	[REDACTED]	USA	DE	Dover
Karulle C. Dawson	[REDACTED]	USA	Arkansas, TX, TEXAS	THE HILLES
Mark G. Dawson	[REDACTED]	USA	TEXAS	Arlington
PHILIP NIVEN	[REDACTED]		N.S.	Halifax
LOIS NIVEN	[REDACTED]		California, Canada	
Paula Dvernichuk	[REDACTED]		British Columbia	Regina
Nigel Briell	[REDACTED]	CANADA	Ontario	Brampton
Lisa Browne	[REDACTED]		Can. Ont.	Mississauga
Garin McCombie	[REDACTED]	Canada	N.S	Dartmouth
Brooke McCallum	[REDACTED]	Canada	N.S	Hammondsport
Courtney Booth	[REDACTED]	Canada	B.C	Nanaimo
Alison Macleod	[REDACTED]	Canada	B.C	Nanaimo
Kedeen Adams	[REDACTED]		N.S	Halifax
CHARLES TURNER	[REDACTED]		Ont	Toronto, Ont
Remy Baptiste	[REDACTED]		ONT / CANADA	Toronto, Ont
Ann Marie Macneil	[REDACTED]	CANADA	N.S	Halifax
Breeden MacNeil	[REDACTED]	CANADA	N.S	Sydney
		CANADA	N.S	Halifax

Attachment B – Africville Background

On the northern edge of peninsular Halifax on the shore of the Bedford Basin lies the site of Africville. For over 150 years, this African Nova Scotian community was home to hundreds of individuals and families who settled there. Some Africville residents could trace their roots in Nova Scotia back to the late 1700s.

Africville was a vibrant, self-sustaining community that thrived despite the harshest opposition. Over the years, public facilities that no one else wanted were established in or near Africville: an abattoir, a prison, an infectious diseases hospital, and a dump. Rail and industrialization encroached on the community. The community lost its school, post office, and shops.

In the 1960s Africville was destroyed to make way for industrial development. Its residents were relocated and their homes and community torn down.

In 2010, thanks to negotiations between the Africville Genealogy Society (which represented the people of Africville and their descendants) and municipal officials, the people of Africville finally received an apology for the heartbreak and loss of their community. That February, then Halifax Mayor Peter Kelly apologized to the people of Africville for the destruction of their community nearly 40 years before. The apology was supported by the allocation of land and \$3 million for the construction of a replica of the church that had stood at the geographic and emotional heart of Africville.

Today, the Africville Museum, housed in the replica of the Church, tells the story of the survival of a community and celebrates its spirit. The museum looks across the land where the people of Africville lived, worked, and raised their families. Museum exhibits tell the story of a community that met the indignities of racism with grace and faith.

The Africville Heritage Trust manages the museum and the site. The Trust works to increase awareness of the historical significance of Africville through visitation to the site. The Trust is also making plans for future development.

Lack of public access is a barrier to the overall sustainability and development of the Africville Museum and future plans of the Trust for use of the park and other parts of the Africville site.

The Museum depends heavily on entry fees for revenue. It has struggled to increase attendance because the site is inaccessible by public transit and difficult and dangerous to reach on foot or by bicycle.

Public school and university groups that wish to tour the facility currently have no choice but to charter costly external bus service or not come at all. Transit service would be more affordable for public schools and university students, the general public, and visitors.

See <http://africvillemuseum.org/> for more information on Africville.

Africville Heritage Trust



www.africvillemuseum.org ~ tel: 902.455.6558 ~ fax: 902.455.6461 ~ mail:admin@africvillemuseum.org
5795 Africville Road ~ P.O. Box 46053 ~ RPO Novalea Drive ~ Halifax, Nova Scotia ~ B3K 5V8

April 24, 2015

VIA EMAIL

Erin Harrison
Coordinator, Project Planning
Halifax Transit
P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

Re: Moving Forward Project – Bus Service on Africville Road

Dear Ms. Harrison,

I am writing to you from the Africville Museum with respect to Halifax Transit's proposed transit network redesign project.

We are a registered Museum which is situated on land that has been deemed a National Historic Site, more commonly known as Africville. The Museum is housed within a replica of the Seaview United Baptist Church, which was the heart of the former community, and part of the 2010 settlement between the city of Halifax and the Africville Genealogy Society. The Museum opened its doors to the public in May of 2012 and is open year-round. Since opening, we have seen over 2600 visitors pass through our doors who come from all over the world, as well as locally. Each season has seen an average increase of 115% in visitor-ship over the previous year.

One of the most common complaints we receive from our visitors is accessibility, or rather the lack thereof. There are basically 3 different routes one can take to get to the Museum by public transit. All three routes require at least a 30 minute walk from the closest bus stop. One of those routes is a hike from the foot of Novalea Drive, through the bushes and over the railroad tracks. None of the 3 routes offer a sidewalk at any point along the way and pedestrians are subject to walking on the grass alongside busy roads (i.e. Barrington St. and Africville Road/Bayne St.).

Although many of our visitors have transportation, many do not. To date we have had various school and other groups cancel tours because they could not get to the Museum via public transit. As a historic site that is so rich in culture and history, it attracts people from near and far who want to learn more about the Community of Africville. We should not be losing people because they cannot access the site. We are so close to the city that it is almost embarrassing that we cannot offer a bus route to our visitors. Another consideration for a bus route on Africville Rd. is the future development of the Africville Park and adjacent lands which, in turn, will draw even more visitors.

At the present time, a bus stop close to the entrance of the Africville Museum at 5795 Africville Road would be ideal. The Museum hours of operation during peak season (mid-May to September) are 10:00 am to 4:00pm Tuesday to Sunday. A bus routed to Africville during these times will allow access to people without transportation, encourage visitors with transportation to take public transit instead and would be a commuting option for employees from the surrounding industries.

If we can provide anything further, please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Sunday Miller, Executive Director at [REDACTED] Thank you for taking the time to consider our request.

Sincerely,

Tracey McCallum
Africville Heritage Trust/Museum