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Info Item No. 3
Transportation Standing Committee
September 22, 2016

TO: Chair and Members of Transportation Standing Committee

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed
Bruce Zvaniga, P.Eng., Director, Transportation & Public Works

DATE: August 10, 2016

SUBJECT: Crosswalk and Pedestrian Safety Semi-Annual Report

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

Item 14.2.3 of the May 10, 2016 session of Halifax Regional Council; MOVED by Deputy Mayor Whitman, THAT Halifax Regional Council direct staff to prepare a semi-annual report on crosswalk and pedestrian safety for the Transportation Standing Committee.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The Terms of Reference for the Transportation Standing Committee, are defined in Administrative Order 1, Schedule 7, and include "*such other duties and responsibilities as may be determined by the Council.*" Council's direction to staff on May 10, 2016 falls under this provision. It is anticipated that changes will be made to Administrative Order 1 in the near future to specifically include road and pedestrian safety in the Transportation Standing Committee's Terms of Reference.

BACKGROUND

The Pedestrian Safety Action Plan (PSAP) was created in 2014 in order to provide a review of activities carried out in promoting pedestrian safety as well as an assessment of any trends or recurring issues impacting the safety of pedestrians on Halifax's roadways. The document has been updated annually since its creation in 2014.

As outlined at the November 10, 2015 and November 24, 2015 Committee of the Whole meetings, a new road safety strategy will be developed moving forward as shown in the 2016/17 TPW Business Plan. This new road safety strategy will encompass all road users including pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists to ensure that our roads provide safe mobility.

In addition, Council has directed staff to prepare a separate semi-annual report on crosswalk and pedestrian safety for the Transportation Standing Committee.

DISCUSSION

Statistics compiled from police reports from January 2016 to June 2016 indicate a decline in the number of pedestrian-vehicle collisions within the public right of way. The following table provides a summary of the findings in comparison to previous years:

| Pedestrian Collision History (Months of January to June) | | | | | |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 |
| Total Pedestrian Collisions Occurring within ROW | 89 | 56 | 89 | 70 | 65 |

Assessment of the data compiled for 2016 shows that the majority of pedestrian-vehicle collisions are occurring at traffic signals as a result of vehicles making left hand turns. The data also shows that injury rates are lower in comparison to other jurisdictions in Canada. This is consistent with previous years' findings.

HRM Traffic Management is currently involved with multiple crosswalk and pedestrian safety initiatives. Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB's) are on schedule for installation in 2016 at four separate pilot locations. Yielding compliance studies have been completed before the installations and further observations will be conducted after the installations to evaluate the potential benefits. Yielding compliance and usage studies are also ongoing for a separate crosswalk flag study.

Three existing signalized intersections have been upgraded to include accessible pedestrian signals (APS) thus far in 2016. Five more locations are currently being reviewed for new installations and/or upgrades. More than ten RA-5 crosswalk locations have been upgraded through the traffic signal maintenance group this year.

Through HRM's Capital Program, countdown timers are being installed at existing and/or new signalized intersections where warranted. Uncontrolled marked crosswalk locations have been reviewed for changes during this construction season. Other infrastructure upgrades such as pedestrian ramp installations are also being implemented under this program.

Halifax Regional Police have themed traffic initiatives each month of the year. Two out of three planned crosswalk safety months have been completed thus far in 2016 in February and April. During these months, traffic officers, patrol officers and community response officers target enforcement in the areas of crosswalks. Each month there have been over three hundred special checks conducted in the area of crosswalks. These special checks not only include enforcement of the Nova Scotia Motor Vehicle Act but also perform as a proactive measure as there is increased visibility of police in these areas. As a result, there is not only an increase in charged violations due to targeted enforcement, but also corrective driving behaviour due to the additional presence of police in crosswalk areas.

HRM Corporate Communications deployed a paid media campaign from early March to mid-April 2016 again featuring the slogan "Heads Up Halifax" and the television advertising creative suggesting cellphone use while driving or walking across a crosswalk is equivalent to being blindfolded. The campaign included radio, television, print newspapers, bus advertising, paid and unpaid social media, website, and digital screens:

- Halifax Metro – 10 insertions between February 26 - March 28th
- Chronicle Herald – February 27 - March 12
- Chronicle Herald Community Papers (three) – March 2
- The Coast – March 10 and March 17
- Community Papers – Shop the Shore, Parkview News, Cole Harbour Merchant, The Beacon, The Masthead News, The Weekly Press, The Laker, The Town Cryer, Eastern Shore Cooperator – one insertion in each publication (ether March or April)

- CTV – Five-week campaign that began on February 29 – over 180 spots
- CBC – Three-week campaign that began on March 7 – 110 spots
- Q104 – 79 spots
- C100 – 100 spots
- 101.9 – 100 spots
- 101.3 – 68 spots
- Busboards – 20 exterior and 100 interior, running in March-April
- Facebook – Paid advertising throughout March

Other activities included Twitter, Facebook, and Halifax.ca posts and deployment on the municipal digital screen network. Additionally, in July staff handed out some 20,000 buttons, stickers and temporary tattoos of the Heads Up Halifax logo using a rainbow crosswalk design at the annual Pride Parade. While the total impressions of the message and call to action to be vigilant at crosswalks was substantial, past campaigns have shown that even with a high degree of public awareness and agreement with the responsibility we all share for each other's safety there is a disconnect between individual risk assessment and behaviour. It will take a sustained social marketing effort to help people overcome the sense that "it isn't going to happen to me."

To that end, Corporate Communications will launch a September to December campaign in fall 2016 to increase the frequency of refreshed messages and more heavily promote Crosswalk Safety Awareness Day in November.

Staff will continue to provide semi-annual updates to the Transportation Standing Committee. The next update will report on the remainder of crosswalk and pedestrian safety initiatives completed in 2016 along with finalized pedestrian-vehicle collision statistics.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no new financial implications associated with this report. All activities are anticipated to be carried out as part of existing capital and operating budgets.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement was not undertaken as part of this report as there are ongoing engagement initiatives with the public through education campaigns and enforcement programs.

ATTACHMENTS

No attachments.

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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