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Item No. 6
Transportation Standing Committee
December 13, 2018

TO: Chair and Members of Transportation Standing Committee

Original Signed

SUBMITTED BY:

Kelly Denty, Director of Planning & Development

Original Signed

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: October 2, 2018

SUBJECT: **Complete Streets Approach and Traffic Supplement Update**

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

Halifax Regional Council Meeting, August 7, 2012, Item 11.6.3:

MOVED by Councillor Nicoll, seconded by Councillor Hendsbee that Halifax Regional Council request that staff prepare and forward a report to the Transportation Standing Committee in regard to the March 15, 2011 Council request for staff to prepare an implementation plan for the Complete Streets Policy identified in the Transportation Demand Management Functional Plan adopted in principle by Regional Council on March 15, 2011.

Halifax Regional Council Meeting, April 10, 2018, Item 14.3.4:

MOVED by Councillor Nicoll, seconded by Councillor Mancini that Halifax Regional Council

1. Direct staff to amend the Traffic Control Practises & Warrants document as appropriate to remain consistent with the principals of the Integrated Mobility Plan and to support the Complete Streets policy and revisions to the Municipal Design Guidelines (Red Book) and;
2. That staff prepare bi-annual reports for the Transportation Standing Committee respecting updates or amendments to the Traffic Control Practises and Warrants document.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, Part XII, subsection 322 (1) "The Council may design, lay out, open, expand, construct, maintain, improve, alter, repair, light, water, clean, and clear streets in the Municipality".

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, Part XII, subsection 321(8), “The Traffic Authority for the Municipality has, with respect to highways in the Municipality, excluding those for which the Provincial Traffic Authority has authority, the powers conferred upon a traffic authority by or pursuant to the Motor Vehicle Act.”

Nova Scotia Motor Vehicle Act, Part V, subsection 89(1), “Subject to such authority as may be vested in the Minister, the Registrar or the Department, traffic authorities in regard to highways under their respective authority may cause appropriate signs to be erected and maintained designating business and residence districts and railway grade crossings and such other signs, markings and traffic control signals as may be deemed necessary to direct and regulate traffic and to carry out the provisions of this Act.”

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this report is to address two requests from Council identified in the Origin.

Complete Streets Policy

The 2006 Regional Municipal Planning Strategy (RMPS) recommended the creation of six functional plans to guide implementation of its transportation goals and objectives. On March 5, 2011, Regional Council approved the Halifax Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Functional Plan. This Plan recommended policies, programs and services to mitigate automobile congestion by influencing travel behavior through providing travel options besides single occupant vehicles.

The TDM Functional Plan recommended that Halifax adopt a complete streets policy that “*would be a high-level statement outlining and defining the community’s intention to approach all future roadway projects from a complete streets perspective*”. The intent of the policy would be to “*outline the types of projects that must adhere to the...policy, as well as the types of users that are to be considered in each project*”. The plan went on to recommend that HRM consider developing a “*Complete Streets Design Guide to provide guidance on how to incorporate complete streets elements into conventional roadway design standards*”.

On December 5, 2017, the Integrated Mobility Plan (IMP) was approved by Council. The IMP is an overarching transportation plan that ties together the six previous mode-specific functional plans (i.e. transit, road network, parking, TDM, active transportation, and goods movement) and links them to the plan’s ‘foundational policies’. **Complete Streets** is one of the foundational policies that underlay the entire plan, and essentially guide the municipality’s desired shift towards more sustainable transportation.

Traffic Control Practices & Warrants

HRM Traffic Control Practices and Warrants were presented to the Transportation Standing Committee in March 26, 2018 with a recommendation that staff amend the practices and warrants as appropriate to support implementation of the Integrated Mobility Plan and its Complete Streets Policy. As outlined in the report to TSC, the document is used as a guide to provide staff with a starting point and/or methodology to use when assessing locations for various traffic controls (e.g. installation of marked crosswalks).

DISCUSSION

Complete Streets Policy Overview & Implementation

As a foundational policy of the IMP, “Complete Streets” aims to “*Meet the needs of all ages, abilities and travel modes in the design and maintenance of streets*”. This policy directs all transportation projects including, but not limited to, planning, design, construction, maintenance, operations, and temporary conditions to consider the policy objective. Complete Streets reflect a multi-disciplinary and multi-modal approach to mobility that embeds the IMP pillars into street design. There is no uniform standard for a complete street, but rather a variety of options to make a street complete, based on its context, function, and surrounding land use.

The Complete Streets approach also recognizes that in addition to moving people and goods, streets can

be destinations and important public spaces. While the policy generally prioritizes sustainable modes (walking, bicycling, transit, etc.) over trucks and private vehicles, it recognizes that truck routes and key commercial and industrial streets should accommodate large vehicles as well. Employing this policy, streets undergo a Complete Streets review prior to capital projects, and depending on the situation, designs are modified to the extent possible, to achieve the best accommodation of the right mix of modes.

The IMP is very clear that there is no single way to make a street ‘complete’. The approach may use multiple design features in different contexts to accommodate various transportation modes. It can be applied to a wide variety of streets and is adaptable to urban, suburban and rural contexts.

Features for pedestrians may include sidewalks, traffic-calming, street trees, and reduced crossing distances. The policy suggests these should be employed in areas with high pedestrian volumes and important links to transit. Features for people on bicycles may include protected bicycle lanes and connected bicycle routes. These should be employed on candidate routes identified in the IMP and AT Priorities Plan. The approach also considers transit, where measures like queue jumps, transit priority signals, and bus lanes should be considered on strategic corridor routes identified in the IMP and Moving Forward Together Plan (MFTP). Understanding the context and intended role of a street as a “link” or a “place” are critical factors in establishing a Complete Street design.

To implement the Complete Streets policy, the IMP describes a process for the design of new and reconstructed streets (pages 64/65) and identifies various strategies to be employed such as ‘right sizing’ (i.e. reallocating space to better serve the desired modes) and greening (to improve the pedestrian realm and support open space objectives). It also identifies design features such as curb extensions and refuge medians to reduce pedestrian crossing distances and directs to the AT Priorities Plan to identify the desired cycling facility type (i.e. multi-use path, protected or painted bike lane, or local street bikeway).

There can be a wide range of effort involved in implementing Complete Streets elements. Some features can be implemented quickly through simple modifications to existing projects or pilot projects that do not permanently impact a street. The designs of capital street projects are constantly reviewed for these opportunities. Other Complete Streets elements require extensive research, data collection, functional planning and detailed design. Features like curb extensions and right sizing a street can be major projects, and are not as quick to implement. Major Complete Streets projects are ideally completed in a three-year cycle, with functional planning and design taking place in the first year, detailed design and review in the second year, and construction in the final year. These larger projects are identified during the annual capital budget planning process.

In addition to design features included in the current *Municipal Design Guidelines* (Red Book), the IMP also points to the need to consider guidelines published by other agencies such as NACTO (National Association of City Transportation Officials) and TAC (Transportation Association of Canada) when making corridor changes. It identifies the need to adopt successful design details into the Red Book as it is updated. An update to the Red Book is currently being scoped, and this update will determine how the structure and content of the Red Book needs to be amended to reflect the complete streets approach to design.

Influence of Complete Streets Policy since IMP Adoption

Within the first 10 months of the IMP’s approval, the number of projects including complete street considerations have begun to make an impact. This will become even more noticeable as more projects are designed and constructed. Approaching a project through the Complete Streets lens is becoming regular practice and it remains the intention to incorporate the appropriate complete streets design features into the Red Book update once that project is underway. A few examples of how this approach has influenced projects are described below:

- The Gottingen Street Transit Priority Measures project was originally a transit focused project, and consisted solely of a northbound transit-only lane. While this enacted direction in the MFTP, it did not consider the street’s role as a pedestrian oriented commercial destination. With the support of the provincial Connect2 Program, the design was enhanced to include features that improve the level of comfort for pedestrians such as side street curb extensions, a soil trench for three new

street trees, and additional bike racks and benches to support activity in this vibrant district.

- Queue jump lanes on Windmill Road and Wyse Road, and transit-only lanes on Mumford Road are examples of recently implemented transit priority measures on strategic corridor routes. Additional transit priority measures currently undergoing planning and design include transit only lanes on Bayers Road and Robie Street, and a queue jump lane on Main Street, Dartmouth.
- Minor examples of modifications to existing streets further to the Complete Streets approach have also been undertaken. An excessively large curb radius at Lady Hammond and High Street has been tightened to reduce the speed of right turning traffic onto a residential street. Curb extensions to reduce pedestrian crossing distance are being incorporated in recapitalization projects for Coburg Road, and future plans for Agricola Street, and others.

Traffic Control Practices & Warrants Update

Although there have been no changes to the Traffic Control Warrants & Practices document to date, various practices that are consistent with the principles of the Integrated Mobility Plan and that support the Complete Streets approach, are being incorporated into standard practice throughout the municipality:

- Several new marked crosswalks have been installed using RRFB's (Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacons), a relatively new device shown through research to increase driver yielding rates to pedestrians.
- The use of "leading pedestrian interval" (LPI) signal phasing has been installed at 8 initial intersections. LPI's give pedestrians a head-start when entering an intersection and can increase the visibility of pedestrians and reinforce their right-of-way.
- Basic crosswalks throughout the municipality have been enhanced with the installation of reflective strips on their posts - a simple, cost-effective effort to improve their visibility.

The Traffic Control Practices and Warrants can be updated as appropriate to reflect the more common practices that emerge over time.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no immediate financial implications of this report.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Significant public engagement was completed for the Integrated Mobility Plan. No additional public engagement was undertaken related to this information in this report.

ATTACHMENTS

None.

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.

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