



P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

Item No. 2
Community Planning and Economic Development
December 13, 2018

TO: Chair and Members of Community Planning and Economic Development

Original Signed

SUBMITTED BY:

Kelly Denty, Director, Planning and Development

Original Signed

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: October 31, 2018

SUBJECT: Integrated HRM Wayfinding Strategy - Update

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

On July 20, 2017 the following motion of the Community Planning & Economic Development Standing Committee was put and passed:

That CPED request a staff report outlining the staff and financial resources necessary to create and implement an integrated HRM Wayfinding Strategy considering the various programs outlined in the March 1, 2017 Information Report on the Current Approach to Wayfinding. (Item No. Info 2).

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter

61 (3) The property vested in the Municipality, absolutely or in trust, is under the exclusive management and control of the Council, unless an Act of the Legislature provides otherwise.

Motor Vehicle Act

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 Active Transportation Priorities Plan (2014-19) recommends the development of a “consistent and uniform AT wayfinding and route identification system for Greenways (i.e. multi-use pathways) which is integrated with the signage proposed for Local Street Bikeways”.

Additionally, the Integrated Mobility Plan recommends the implementation of a branding and wayfinding system by 2022 for the Regional Centre ‘all ages & abilities’ bicycle network.

To implement the AT Priorities Plan recommendation and IMP action, a joint project has been initiated with Bicycle Nova Scotia to develop a wayfinding system for municipal bicycle routes and trails, that will also be consistent with the wayfinding system for the growing provincial bicycling network (the Blue Route). This bicycle wayfinding project will include consultation with important stakeholders such as the Halifax Regional Trails Association whose member groups have worked closely with municipal staff in developing regional AT trails.

It is important to note that the Municipality does not have any pedestrian-specific wayfinding policies or programs. As a result, there may be busy pedestrian areas where people on foot find it difficult to orient themselves or get to where they are going. For example, people leaving Transit Terminals such as the Alderney Ferry Terminal, are provided little information about municipal facilities or other transportation connections within walking distance.

There is also a lack of coordination between municipal wayfinding and other signage programs. Although some signage programs are in the process of being visually integrated through consistent graphic design and the municipal branding strategy, an overarching wayfinding strategy is beyond the scope of the branding initiative. Further, there is no general guidance to identify what types of destinations are important to direct people to, and in what situations wayfinding assistance is warranted. There is also no consistent approach to wayfinding within municipal parks and facilities. While there have been some efforts to introduce wayfinding in such places, such as maps at some trailheads and signage within some parks, they do not follow consistent graphic standards, or necessarily contain similar types of information.

DISCUSSION

In the originating motion for this Wayfinding Strategy report, CPED requested an outline of the staff and resources needed to develop and implement an integrated Wayfinding Strategy. To help understand the full scope of this, staff have retained a local consulting firm to develop a wayfinding strategy for pedestrians and to address the main gap found in the scan of HRM’s current approaches to wayfinding. A wayfinding system for pedestrians would differ from utility cycling needs in terms of a greater willingness to stop, greater amount of time / information that can be taken in, smaller text size, and lower mounting height. Pedestrians also generally travel within a smaller destination range of 400m to 1,600m (a five to twenty-minute walk).

The consultants have been tasked to identify a strategy that would be unique for Halifax, compatible with the joint project with Bicycle Nova Scotia currently underway, based on research into best practices for wayfinding from other cities, and integrated with the existing municipal signage programs described above and in the March 1, 2017 Information Report¹ on the Current Approach to Wayfinding.

The deliverables of this project will generally be conceptual, and will be presented to show information hierarchies, the range of recommended signage components, the relationships between various signage and non-signage elements of the system, and criteria for prioritizing locations for implementation.

¹ Report available online at <https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/standing-committees/170720cped111.pdf>

Opportunities for the use of “Smart City” tools (i.e., smartphone apps; digital maps; GPS; etc.) will be explored. This conceptual documentation will then serve as a guide for the identification of a series of pilot wayfinding projects including a phasing plan and budget for implementation and maintenance. Implementation of the pilot projects and the strategy itself would be subject to the direction of Council and approval of future budgets for this work.

This consulting project was enabled in part with a \$30,000 grant from the NS Department of Energy’s *Connect2* program, with matching funds from the municipal active transportation budget. It is expected that this work will be complete before the end of March 2019, in accordance with spending deadlines from the provincial funding agency. Following completion of this work, a report will be brought back to CPED seeking a recommendation for Council’s consideration on the strategy and its implementation.

To provide Council with a sense of the experience of other municipalities with wayfinding, a case study of Toronto’s experience was also undertaken. A summary of Toronto’s approach and the associated cost of developing and implementing its wayfinding strategy can be found in Attachment A.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The project described in the Discussion section of this report is being carried out with existing resources and within approved budgets.

The consulting services required for the development of the two wayfinding projects described above are being contracted at a cost of \$47,250 (bicycle wayfinding) and \$52,750 (pedestrian wayfinding). A *Connect2* grant of \$30,000 from the Province has recently been confirmed to support the two projects. The balance of \$70,000 (required HRM funding) has been approved and is available in capital project account no. CR180001 – Active Transportation Strategies.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

No community engagement was undertaken in the writing of this report; however, stakeholder engagement has been identified as a component of both wayfinding projects described in this report. Should Council choose to proceed with implementation of identified pilot projects, further community engagement will be undertaken as part of that work.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A Wayfinding in Toronto

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: Barry Yanchyshyn, Landscape Architect, 902.490.3967

Report Approved by: Peter Duncan, Manager of Infrastructure Planning, 902.489.4634

Attachment A - Wayfinding in Toronto

In 2011 Toronto initiated a three-phased process to develop a wayfinding system now called “Toronto 360”. The development of an integrated wayfinding strategy represented the first stage of the process. The second phase implemented a portion of the strategy on a pilot basis, and the third phase, which is currently underway, will fully implement the strategy and incorporate lessons learned.

The Toronto 360 Wayfinding Strategy was developed at a cost of approximately \$150,000 primarily associated with consultant services and stakeholder engagement. The Strategy focuses implementation on pedestrian-oriented wayfinding, but includes guidance for bicycle and vehicular wayfinding, and is coordinated with wayfinding in Toronto’s parks and trails, its pedway network, and with MetroLinx.

Implementation of the strategy’s suite of pedestrian wayfinding tools (wide signs, narrow signs, finger posts, wall mounted signs, bike share station maps, and transit shelter walking maps) is expected to cost over \$10 million to implement, plus an expected annual operations and maintenance cost of 15% or \$1.5 million per year. The program requires 2.5 FTE’s (“full time equivalent” staff positions) on a permanent basis to oversee.

Details concerning the project are available online at <https://www.toronto.ca/services-payments/streets-parking-transportation/walking-in-toronto/wayfinding/>