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Item No. 15.1
Transportation Standing Committee
January 24, 2019

TO: Chair and Members of Transportation Standing Committee

Original Signed

SUBMITTED BY:

Brad Anguish, P.Eng., Director, Transportation and Public Works

Original Signed

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: November 26, 2018

SUBJECT: **South Park Bicycle Lane Evaluation Plan**

ORIGIN

Regional Council, March 6, 2018. Item 14.3.2 South Park Bicycle Lane Extension and Enhancement, Motion approved as amended that Halifax Regional Council: 2. That a supplementary staff report with a recommendation be requested, regarding a two-year monitoring and evaluation program for the bicycle lane, monitoring to include vehicle flows, bicycle volumes, pedestrian activity and transit ridership and further to explore methods to measure impact on retail and commercial activity, reporting back to Council annually during the first two years after implementation.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

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

Motor Vehicle Act, subsection 90 (3) "The traffic authority may also mark lanes for traffic on street pavements at such places as they may deem advisable, consistent with this Act and may erect traffic signals consistent with this Act to control the use of lanes for traffic."

Administrative Order One, the Procedures of Council Administrative Order, Schedule 7, Transportation Standing Committee Terms of Reference, clause 7(b) which states: "The Transportation Standing Committee shall... (b) promote and encourage the Municipality's Active Transportation corridor initiatives which supports the overall Transportation Strategy as outlined in the Regional Plan."

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Transportation Standing Committee recommend that Regional Council approve the evaluation plan as described in the Discussion section of this report.

BACKGROUND

On March 6, 2018, Regional Council approved implementation of protected bike lanes on South Park Street from Inglis Street to Sackville Street. This was in support of Integrated Mobility Plan objectives for safer and more comfortable bike facilities.

The project is being implemented in phases, as follows:

- 1) Spring Garden Road to Inglis Street is scheduled to be installed in 2019. The project includes the use of precast concrete curb barriers for the bike lanes, integrated bus stops, parking protected segments, planters and more. There are some parking control changes for streets south of South Street to address resident needs and add short-term customer parking on several side streets. Implementation will also include public education on the new facility type;
- 2) Sackville to Spring Garden Road is scheduled to be installed in 2020 and/or 2021. This depends in part on timing for a development encroachment and partially on a planning process on the Bell Road, Sackville Street, South Park Street intersection.

As part of the planning for the project information was gathered on vehicle volumes and speeds, bicycle volumes, transit volumes, and parking inventory and utilization.

DISCUSSION

A project evaluation plan to monitor changes will be implemented. The following table highlights the factors that will be monitored and the proposed method of data collection.

Figure 1., South Park Street Bicycle Lane Evaluation Approach

Mode/Factor	Metric	Desired Outcome
Bicycle Volume	Bicycle volume counts at screenlines (e.g. Week-long counts or permanent counter)	Increase in number of bicycle trips.
Transit ridership and use	Average daily boardings / Change in boardings Change in travel time (estimated)	Increase in transit ridership. Reliable transit time
Motor vehicle volume and speeds	Vehicle volume counts at screenlines. Change in 85th percentile speed	Vehicle volumes remain consistent Decrease in 85 th percentile speeds.
Pedestrian Activity	Pedestrian counts at screenlines.	Number of pedestrians remains the same or increases.

Mode/Factor	Metric	Desired Outcome
Collisions/Safety	Number of collisions reported	Reduction in, or no serious collisions.
	Number of transit related collisions along the corridor Safe operation of shared bus stop / bike lane segments	Reduction in, or no collisions. Reports by police and transit operators, 311 calls and observations.
On-street parking	Utilization of spaces	The 85th percentile parking occupancy is at or less than 85%.

A report will be prepared annually for this project and will be tabled at the Transportation Standing Committee before March 31 for the preceding calendar year in 2020 and 2021. There would have to be alignment with monitoring approaches used by internal HRM units such as Parking Management, Halifax Transit and Traffic Management. The installation of a permanent bike counter in the bike lane is being considered, pending available budget.

The collection of this information is connected to the monitoring plan for Integrated Mobility Plan implementation. There would be consistency between the methods to evaluate this facility and the methods used for other bicycle lanes and transportation projects.

Development of a project evaluation plan that would “measure impact on retail and commercial activity” as a result of the installation of the bike lane would require a separate study. This study would have to be funded from the 2019-20 budget. The cost of such a study would depend on the scope, but a rough starting point would be \$25,000 to contract-out development of a study framework. The scope and intent of such a study would have to be determined by various internal stakeholders and likely external organizations such as the Business Improvements Association.

There have been studies regarding the economic impact of bike lane projects from other jurisdictions. Recent studies include “Economic Impact of Bloor Street Bike Lanes” (Toronto Centre for Active Transportation) and “Bicycle Lanes and Business Success: A San Francisco Examination” (National Transportation Research Board). The methodologies of these studies could inform the South Park Bicycle Lane analysis. Those studies found that the implementation of the bike lane did not negatively impact the economic viability of the subject business districts.

There was a 2018 “State of the Area” report in the Spring Garden Road area that was conducted by the Spring Garden Area Business Association and HRM staff. This study provides some basic information on who is traveling to the area and their modes as well as opinions about how to enhance the area. The study also has some information on customer volumes.

It can be difficult to make direct attributions between a bike lane project and economic vitality. This is due to the range of factors that can impact economic vitality (e.g. interest rates, rents, overall economic growth), and due to the availability and quality of business and customer data. An initial scoping study would help to determine what information on economic impact could be reliably generated and what would be helpful for HRM and project stakeholders.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The costs associated with a permanent bike counter and the economic impact scoping study are included in the 2019-20 Capital Budget submission which has not yet been approved by Council. The work associated with the overall evaluation plan implementation can be absorbed within existing staff levels.

RISK CONSIDERATION

There are no significant risks associated with the recommendations in this Report. The risks considered rate Low. To reach this conclusion, consideration was given to operational and financial risks.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

No community engagement was conducted in the development of this report. Should Council support further work on an economic impact study, staff would engage with the area business improvement association and other stakeholders.

The South Park bike lane project included various public and stakeholder engagement opportunities.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct environmental implications to this report.

ALTERNATIVES

The Transportation Standing Committee may recommend to Regional Council that staff not proceed with this evaluation plan.

ATTACHMENTS

n/a

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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