

# INTEGRATED MOBILITY PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

Q2 / Q3 2020. Produced in September 2020

## COVID-19 AND MOBILITY IN HRM

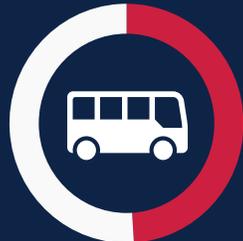
COVID-19 has greatly impacted just about everything we do in our daily lives, including how we get around the region. Working from home, coupled with transit restrictions, saw many people start walking and cycling to get some fresh air, exercise and run essential errands. Mobility and mode share in the region shifted significantly resulting in fewer overall and peak-hour vehicle trips, fewer transit boardings, and an apparent increase in cycling trips.

The analysis for the cycling data compares the week of August 10, 2020 to data collected in November & December 2019. It does not take into account seasonal variations.



**-64%**

Pedestrians in Downtown Halifax Compared to Aug 2019



**-49%**

Transit Passengers Compared to Aug 2019



**+317%**

Cyclists on South Park Street Compared to Nov 2019

Pedestrian volumes were provided by the Downtown Halifax Business Commission and Develop NS.

The analysis for the traffic data compares the week of August 10, 2020 to pre-COVID-19 data collected in March 2020. Seasonal variation of traffic volumes have not been taken into account.

### Traffic Volumes on the Macdonald and MacKay Bridges



**-18%**



**-24%**



**-14%**

Bridge traffic data were provided by Halifax Harbour Bridges.

### Traffic Volumes at Suburban Locations



**-6%**



**-27%**



**-11%**

## MOBILITY RESPONSE PLAN

In response to these shifting transportation needs, Halifax Regional Municipality initiated the Mobility Response Plan. This initiative had four focus areas:



**MOVE**

Provide space for people to move



**QUEUE**

Provide space for queuing on sidewalks



**LOAD**

Provide space for loading and curbside pick-ups/drop-offs



**SUPPORT**

Provide space for people to support businesses

### Actions from the Mobility Response Plan included:

1. Revised traffic signal timings to reduce the wait times
2. Rolled-out 16 km of Slow Streets. Making space for people to walk, roll, and cycle while physical-distancing
3. Provided extra patio space for businesses across the municipality & temporarily expanded sidewalk on Spring Garden Road
4. Addition of several 15-minute loading zones in front of businesses to support curbside pick-ups and drop-offs
5. Acceleration of temporary projects through the Tactical Urbanism program to make it safer to walk, roll, and cycle
6. Closure of portions of Argyle Street and Bedford Row to support more patio space for restaurants on those streets
7. Modified sections of Grafton and Argyle Streets to make more space for restaurant patios (i.e. converted to one-way, closed to vehicles, etc.)

The [Mobility Response Plan](#) focused on temporary measures to support these goals and encouraged residents to provide ideas on a [Shape Your City project page](#).

## HEADING BACK TO WORK or SCHOOL?



### LEARN ABOUT YOUR OPTIONS

We're making it more comfortable & convenient to walk, roll, cycle & take transit. Now is the perfect time to re-think your mobility habits and explore other ways of getting around in Halifax.



### WORK FROM HOME WHEN POSSIBLE

Working from home a few days a week can be a long-term solution to decrease commuting costs, spend less time in traffic, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.



### BACK ON THE BUS

With Halifax Transit service back up to 100% and measures in place like enhanced cleaning, mandatory masks, & physical separation for transit operators, taking the bus or ferry is a comfortable option for getting around the region. Consider taking public transit to save money on your commute and reduce the number of vehicles on the road.



### GET THERE BY BIKE

With new temporary and permanent bicycle lanes, it's more comfortable than ever to ride a bicycle in Halifax. Check out our [bike map](#) to plan your next trip. We have also partnered with the Ecology Action Centre to bring you [videos](#) to help you make the transition to cycling.



### RETHINK YOUR CARPOOL

If you are returning to work, carpool with someone from your bubble. Contact your local public health office for carpooling tips. Or if you don't feel comfortable getting back into a car with your carpool group just yet, reach out to a friend or colleague who cycles to work and ask them if they can show you the way. Riding together is a great way to build your confidence cycling on the street, and includes "built-in" physical distancing (a bicycle is about 2m in length).



### SHOP SMART

Be strategic, plan ahead and group your errands together to limit your number of weekly trips.

## IMP ACTION ITEMS

The *Integrated Mobility Plan (IMP)*, adopted by HRM Regional Council in December 2017, is a priorities plan that informs the municipality's approach to mobility and land use planning. HRM is in the midst of implementing the IMP's 137 actions.



**31**

COMPLETE



**81**

IN PROGRESS



**25**

NOT STARTED

## IMP PROJECTS

Advancing planned IMP projects continued during COVID-19. The following pages provide an overview of some of the projects. Here's a sample of some of the work:



- Rapid Transit Strategy
- Electric Bus Proposal
- Transit only lanes on Bayers Road and Robie Street



- Hollis Street Bicycle Lane
- Lower Water Street Bicycle Lane between Prince Street & George Street
- South Park St (SGR to Sackville)



- Parking Pay Stations



# STRATEGIC TRANSIT PROJECTS

On May 26, 2020 Halifax Regional Council unanimously adopted two initiatives to transform Halifax's transportation system: (1) Rapid Transit Strategy that includes a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system and new ferry service; and (2) Electric Bus Proposal to replace Halifax Transit's conventional buses to electric vehicles.

The **Rapid Transit Strategy** includes four proposed BRT lines and three new ferry routes. The BRT lines will operate every ten minutes and will be within walking distance of over 120,000 people and 100,000 jobs. The ferries will make direct connections between downtown Halifax and new terminals at Mill Cove, Larry Uteck and Shannon Park.

The **Electric Bus Proposal** recommends converting Halifax Transit's bus fleet to a low-carbon or zero-emission fleet. The goal is to electrify 50% of the fleet by 2028.

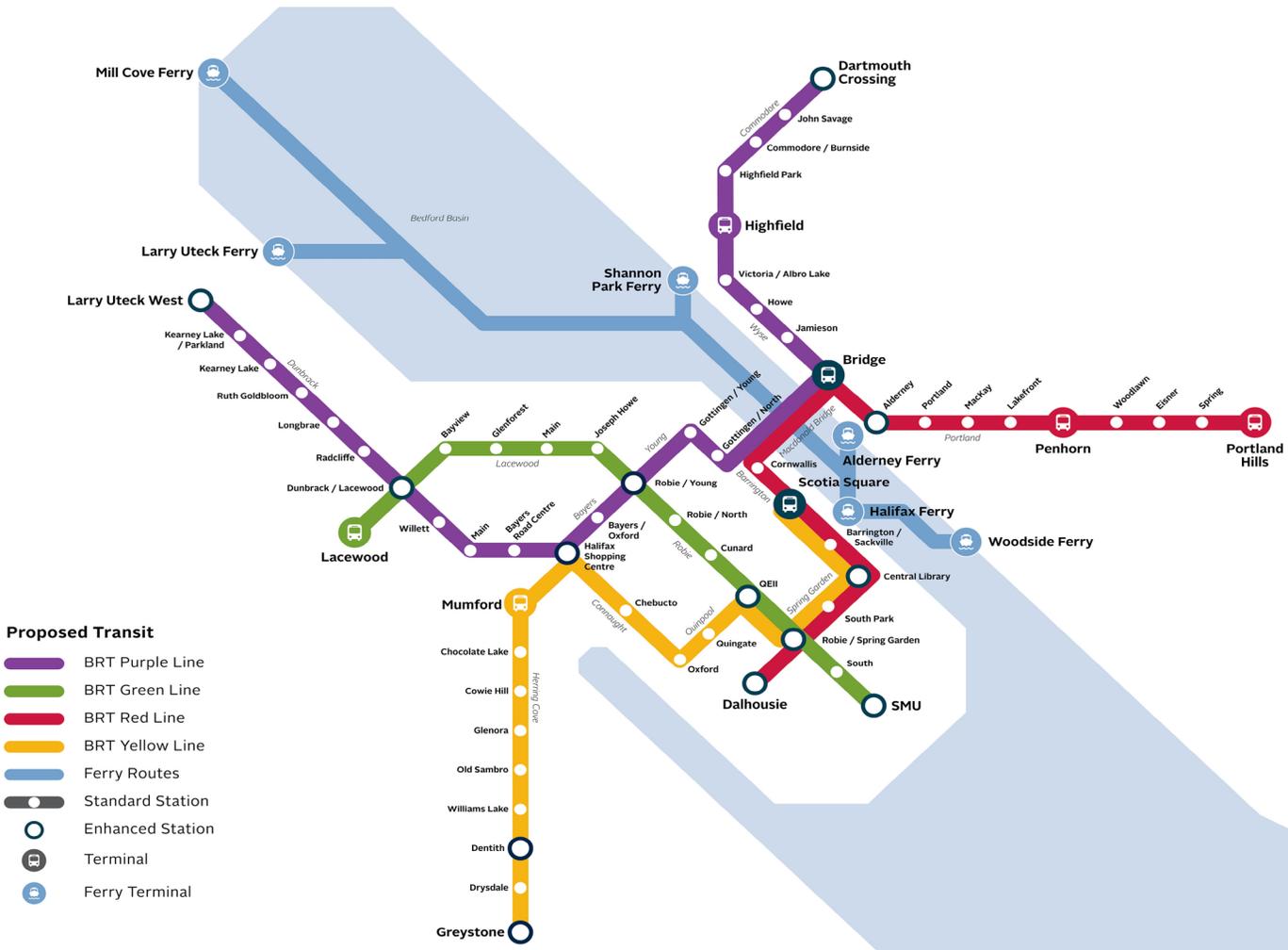
The municipality believes these proposals are well positioned to receive support from other levels of government, as they align with key provincial and federal priorities aimed at tackling climate change & improving public transit.

Both proposals have been submitted to the Province of Nova Scotia for funding consideration through the federal Public Transit Infrastructure Fund & the Green Infrastructure Fund, as well as, any additional stimulus funding streams that may become available.

For more information please refer to the [Rapid Transit Strategy](#) or the [staff report](#).

**These projects will generate numerous benefits including:**

- Improving mobility options by providing more reliable, frequent, faster, connected and easier to use service.
- Lowering household transportation costs.
- Making transportation more sustainable by reducing vehicle use and decreasing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.
- Building more equitable communities by providing mobility options for those unable to access private vehicles.
- Reducing air and noise pollution compared to traditional diesel buses, helping make streets and communities safer and healthier for all.





# DOWNTOWN BIKEWAYS IMPLEMENTATION

## HOLLIS STREET BICYCLE LANE

Construction of a protected bicycle lane on Hollis Street to create an “all-ages-and abilities” (AAA) cycling connection through downtown Halifax is nearing completion. The one-way, protected, bicycle lane includes pre-cast concrete curb and flexible bollards to separate bicycle and vehicle traffic. Also, pre-cast concrete platforms at bus stops, which provide shared space for people cycling and bus passengers, have been added to eliminate conflicts between buses and cyclists along the route.

## LOWER WATER STREET

Recent changes to a section of Lower Water Street, completed in coordination with the ongoing Queens Marque development, provide significant improvements to the streetscape, as well as the comfort and safety of people walking, rolling, and cycling. The section of Lower Water Street between Prince Street and George Street now includes widened sidewalks, a raised bicycle lane, and reduced street crossing distances.

The Hollis Street protected bicycle lane and the new segment of raised bicycle lane on Lower Water Street are part of the implementation of the Downtown Bikeways plan, which was approved by Council in April 2019.

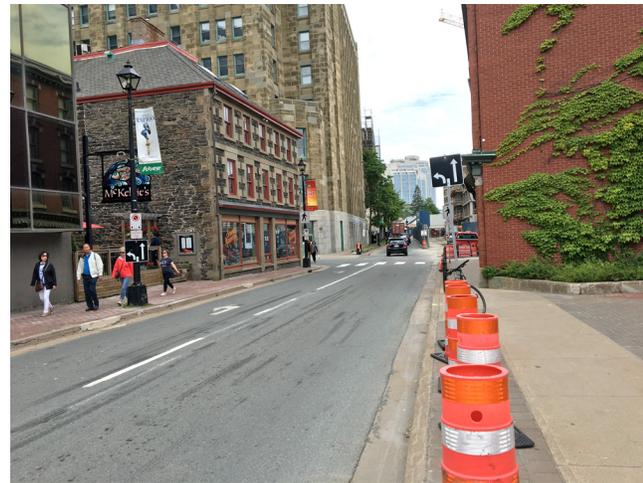
These projects also advance the IMP goal of creating a connected network of All Ages and Abilities (AAA) bicycle routes in the Regional Centre to make it more comfortable and convenient for residents to get around Halifax by cycling.

These routes will eventually connect to other Downtown Halifax ‘AAA’ bikeways, including facilities planned for George Street, Morris Street, Terminal Road, the redeveloped Cogswell District, and the remainder of Lower Water Street.

**HOLLIS STREET BICYCLE LANE: BEFORE**



**LOWER WATER STREET: BEFORE**



**HOLLIS STREET BICYCLE LANE: AFTER**



**LOWER WATER STREET: AFTER**



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# PARKING PAY STATIONS

Coming this fall to municipal streets, we are moving from individual meters to pay stations – this is a pay-by-plate, pay-by-zone system. You will notice concrete pads, pay stations, and signage being installed in the coming weeks and month

All municipal parking meters will be removed and pay stations will be installed throughout the paid parking areas. Signs will be installed on these blocks where the parking meters are being removed to indicate that payment is required on that street.

New parking technology will make it easier to pay by introducing more payment options like credit card, debit card, and smart pay. The ability to pay for and manage parking sessions with the mobile application HotSpot will continue. Payment is attached to your vehicle, not the parking space. This means your vehicle can move freely within the parking zone up to the time purchased or the maximum time allowed.

For more information on the new parking stations visit the [project's webpage](#).

