



P.O. Box 1749  
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**Item No. 16.1**  
**Harbour East Marine Drive Community Council**  
**April 1, 2021**

**TO:** Chair and Members of Harbour East Marine Drive Community Council

**-Original Signed-**

**SUBMITTED BY:**

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Denise Schofield, Executive Director, Parks & Recreation

**-Original Signed-**

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Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** February 19, 2021

**SUBJECT:** New access point to the Silver Sands Beach

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**ORIGIN**

September 10, 2020 Motion from Harbour East Marine Drive Community Council:

**MOVED** by Councillor Karsten and seconded by Councillor Mancini  
THAT Harbour East Marine Drive Community Council request a staff report to review all options  
for a potential new entrance giving access to the Silver Sands Beach in Cow Bay.  
**MOTION PUT AND PASSED**

**LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

*Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*

- 25 The powers and duties of a community council include
- (a) monitoring the provision of services to the community and recommending the appropriate level of services, areas where additional services are required and ways in which the provision of services can be improved;
  - (e) making recommendations to the Council respecting any matter intended to improve conditions in the community including, but not limited to, recommendations respecting
    - (i) inadequacies in existing services provided to the community and the manner in which they might be resolved, additional services that might be required and the manner in which the costs of funding these services might be raised...

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Harbour East Marine Drive Community Council (HEMDCC) recommend that Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to explore the acquisition of lands for an improved or alternative access to Silver Sands Beach, pursuant to Real Property Transactions Policy Administrative Order, 2018-004-ADM.

## **BACKGROUND**

Silver Sands Beach is a municipal park in the community of Cow Bay that is comprised of the beach and a parking lot/interpretive area, which are joined by path across a private residential property under the terms of an easement. The beach directly faces the Atlantic Ocean and is long and narrow, behind which there is a pond and an island (Attachment A).

Extensive erosion has occurred along the beach. When the beach was privately owned, it was the subject of an industrial excavation operation that resulted in extensive removal of sand and rock over several decades. This activity and the beach's direct exposure to the ocean has likely contributed to the extensive erosion and inward movement of its location. Consequently, the path to the beach has also been impacted and is being compromised by being increasingly moved beyond the bounds of the municipality's easement. There have also been conflicts between local property owners and users of the easement.

As a result of these challenges, HEMDCC requested a report to review all options for a potential new access to the beach.

## **DISCUSSION**

Over the past two decades, the location of the beach has changed extensively. It has retracted inland, pushing the access path to the beach further inland. This is compromising the existing access and may ultimately result in a situation where the beach is unreachable from this location within the boundaries of the municipality's property.

There are limited immediate opportunities to secure a new access point to the beach from the existing parking lot. The following options have been considered from the existing parking lot and from the easement area:

- The parking lot property has extensive ocean frontage but is comprised of a steep elevation change to the shore. Therefore, it would only provide access to the beach at low tide. This elevation issue precludes the possibility of installing stairs or other means to address the elevation change.
- The easement area that the municipality obtained for access to the beach is large, affording opportunities to relocate or develop a new path. However, this access does not address the location of the path at the beach which has now retreated to such an extent that it may be beyond the boundaries of the easement area and extending across an adjoining property. Further, the path at this location may ultimately be compromised by erosion to such an extent that access to the beach from the parking lot will not be possible.

With the beach and its access increasingly retreating, an alternate access at the current location is not likely viable for the long term. There may be opportunities to secure additional lands to help stabilize the existing access or create a completely different access from another location along Cow Bay Road. A new access point would require a new parking area and development of a path to the beach. Staff have completed preliminary assessments of potential options and there may be opportunities to acquire land for either of these options.

Regional Council is the appropriate body to direct the Chief Administrative Officer to advance detailed assessments and possible acquisitions. Therefore, it is recommended that the HEMDCC recommend this course of action to Regional Council. Depending on the possibility for acquisition of additional lands, the necessary process pursuant to the Real Property Transactions Policy (AO 2018-004-ADM) would be completed which may require a subsequent report back to Council. Depending on the outcome of potential acquisitions of additional lands, the existing easement may need to be adjusted or may no longer be required. Therefore, decisions on the future use of the existing easement would also be explored through that process.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Funding is available in the Q611, Parkland Reserve for acquisitions of this nature. A subsequent report to Regional Council may be required depending on the value of a potential acquisition.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

There has been no community engagement in the preparation of this report.

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no immediate environmental implications to the recommendation within this report.

**ALTERNATIVES**

Harbour East Marine Drive Community Council could recommend that Regional Council take no further action on securing a new access point to the Silver Sands Beach

**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A Reference Map

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A copy of this report can be obtained online at [halifax.ca](http://halifax.ca) or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

Report Prepared by: Richard Harvey, Manager, Policy and Planning 902-476-5822

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ATTACHMENT A - REFERENCE MAP  
SILVER SANDS BEACH ACCESS

**HALIFAX**  
Parks & Recreation  
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