

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed by 

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: October 20, 2021

SUBJECT: Regional Parks for Winter Maintenance – Supplemental Report

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT

ORIGIN

March 9, 2021, motion of Regional Council:
MOVED by Councillor Cuttell, seconded by Councillor Russell

THAT Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer to:

1. Add Sir Sandford Fleming Park Seawall Pathway to the regional park pathways that are winter maintained in 2021/22 winter works season;
2. Approve the Park Snow and Ice Removal Guidelines (Attachment 2 of the staff report dated January 20, 2021) for all regional park pathways receiving winter maintenance;
3. Include the paving of main pathways in Africville Park for consideration in the 2022/23 capital budget deliberations to further winter maintenance capabilities; and
4. Undertake a review of the park pathways and guidelines in 5 years in association with the review of Transportation and Public Works winter operations service review standards previously approved by Council.

MOVED by Councillor Cuttell, seconded by Councillor Cleary
THAT the motion be amended to include:

5. Review McIntosh Run Regional Park and any others found to be designated incorrectly and return to Council with a supplemental report with recommendations for those parks.

Councillor Austin requested an addition to the amendment to include a review of Dartmouth Commons. As set out in Section 53 (2) of *Administrative Order One, Respecting the Procedures of the Council*, this change to the amendment was accepted as friendly.

The question was called on the amendment to the motion as follows:

MOVED by Councillor Cuttell, seconded by Councillor Cleary
THAT the motion be amended to include:

5. Review McIntosh Run Regional Park, the Dartmouth Common and any others Regional Parks found to be designated incorrectly and return to Council with a supplemental report with recommendations for those parks.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

RECOMMENDATIONS ON PAGE 2

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter 2008, c. 39,

s.320 (1), s. 320 (2) and s. 320 (3) confers legislative authority for Council to make by-laws relating to snow and ice removal.

s. 322 (3) The Council may expend funds for the purpose of clearing snow and ice from streets, sidewalks and public places in all, or part, of the Municipality.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer to:

1. Add Dartmouth Common (East/West pathways) to winter pathway list for winter clearing.
2. Not add McIntosh Run Regional Park to winter pathway list for winter clearing; and
3. Reclassify parks that were designated incorrectly as per Table 2 - Parks with New Designations & Winter Maintenance Status.

BACKGROUND

HRM's Regional Plan outlines that the primary objective of a regional park is to preserve and protect significant natural or cultural resources. The essential features of a regional park may include, but are not be limited to, open space, wilderness, scenic beauty, flora, fauna, and recreational, archaeological, historical, cultural and/or geological resources. A Regional Park will also have sufficient land area to support outdoor recreational opportunities for the enjoyment and education of the public. As such, site amenities may include play structures, sport courts and fields, parking, and pathways.

The expectation of HRM residents to have access to parks and recreational spaces year-round continues to grow, especially as weather patterns change resulting in more temperate weather through the winter months. Currently, most park spaces are accessible to residents throughout spring, summer, and fall. While there are several parks with pathways cleared for winter activities, not all regional parks have snow clearing maintenance. It is important to note however that, although not all parks are winter maintained, they are still open for recreation and leisure pursuits.

At February 25, 2021 meeting, Regional Council considered a report regarding the inclusion of some regional parks for winter maintenance. Regional Council also requested a supplementary report to review McIntosh Run Regional Park, the Dartmouth Common and any other Regional Parks found to be designated incorrectly and directed staff to return to Council with winter maintenance recommendations for those parks.

DISCUSSION

Throughout HRM, several Regional Park pathways and Multi-use Pathways are winter maintained (Table 1: Regional Parks in HRM -Status of Winter Maintenance). These areas are maintained by Transportation and Public Works (TPW) as part of the Winter Operations program, and Parks where staffing and equipment resources allow. The pathways maintained by TPW are completed to the sidewalk clearing standards, while the remaining pathway clearing completed by Parks is to Parks Snow & Ice Removal Guidelines.

Table 1: Regional Parks - Status of Winter Maintenance

Regional Park	Description	Current Snow Removal (Y/N)	Service Provider	Priority Standard
Admiral Cove Park	Gravel/Natural pathway	N		
Africville Park	Gravel pathway, winter maintained once paved	Y	Parks	G2
Bedford Barrens	Gravel/Natural pathway	N		
Cole Harbour Common	Asphalt pathway	Y	Parks	P2
Chain of Lakes Trail Park	Multi-use Pathway (Add to Multi-use Pathway sub-type – see Table 2)	Y	TPW	P1
Dartmouth Common	Multi-use Pathway & asphalt pathways	Y	TPW	P3
Deadman’s Island Park	Gravel pathway	N		
Ferry Terminal Park	Asphalt pathways	Y	TPW	P3
First Lake Regional Park	Gravel/Natural pathway	N		
Fort Needham Memorial Park	Asphalt pathway	Y	TPW	P3
Halifax Central Common	Asphalt pathway	Y	TPW	P1
Halifax North Common	Asphalt pathway	Y	TPW	P1
Henry Findlay Park	From Hawthorne St to Nowlan St	Y	TPW	P2
Hemlock Ravine	Gravel/Natural pathway	N		
Lake Banook Regional Park	Multi-use Pathway	Y	TPW	P1
Mainland North Trail	Multi-use Pathway (Add to Multi-use Pathway sub-type – see Table 2)	Y	TPW	P2
Mainland Common	Asphalt pathway near ball diamond and dog park	Y	TPW	P1
McIntosh Run Regional Park	Gravel/natural pathway	N		
Oakwood Park	Asphalt pathway	Y	TPW	P3
Point Pleasant Park	Multi-use Pathway, other select areas	Y	Parks	G1
Public Gardens	Main pathways	Y	Parks	G1
Sandy Lake Park	Gravel/Natural pathway	N		
Shaw Wilderness Park	Gravel/Natural pathway	N		
Shubie Park	Select AT trails cleared	Y	TPW	G1
Sir Sandford Fleming Park	Asphalt pathway along seawall *Added as of March 9, 2021	Y	Parks	G2
Starr Park	Asphalt pathway	Y	TPW	P3
Sullivan’s Pond Park	Asphalt pathway	Y	TPW	P2
Western Wilderness Common	Gravel/natural pathway	N		
Woodside Area Park	Multi-use Pathway	Y	TPW	P2

Recommended Service Adjustments

This supplemental report is to address some locations which were raised during the original Regional Council debate as missing from the report as well as some that were determined to be incorrectly categorized as regional parks in the asset registry. The following sections outlines the recommended approach for each of those.

Additional Regional Parks

As noted in Table 1: Regional Parks - Status of Winter Maintenance, the east and west pathways in the Dartmouth Common can be added to the winter maintenance list as it would be an extension of the existing service provided by the TPW winter program at a P3 service level. This would have minimal financial impact to the existing winter maintenance budget. Ferry Terminal Park was not specifically referenced in the original report as the Dartmouth Waterfront Greenway multi-use pathway that runs through Woodside Area Park concludes in Ferry Terminal Park. But, for clarity, the additional paved pathways in Ferry Terminal Park would simply be an extension of the existing service provided by the TPW winter program at a P3 service level. This would have minimal financial impact to the existing winter maintenance budget.

Wilderness Parks

The Halifax Regional Municipal Planning Strategy Plan Review, Theme 7: Integrating Community Facilities and Parks, speaks to the Level of Service expectations for parks and outdoor spaces. The service expectations help define park’s amenities and service guidelines. McIntosh Run is included as a Wilderness Park (a sub-type of Regional Park). . These large parks typically contain vast wilderness areas which are to remain in a predominately natural state and offer backcountry style recreation experiences. The widening of the multi-use pathway at McIntosh Run would require significant tree removal and excavation of the existing material to create a gravel base for paving and as such would impact the naturalized state. For these reasons, it is not recommended for winter clearing. Halifax Regional Trails Association partners also support leaving wilderness parks in a natural state with no winter pathway maintenance.

Hemlock Ravine, Admiral Cove, First Lake and Bedford Barren are Regional Parks that contain wilderness areas but are not designated as Wilderness Parks. While they aren’t large enough to offer the same type of back country experience as those in the Wilderness Park sub-type, they offer access to significant pockets of nature in urban areas and should also be maintained in their natural state.

New Designations

In the initial Winter Pathway Maintenance report, it was noted that some parks were not included as staff determined that their classifications were incorrect and/or referenced incorrectly in the Asset Registry data base. As a result, the new classifications for those parks shown below in Table 2 will correct the database.

Table 2: New Designations & Winter Maintenance Status

Park	Description	Proper Park Classification	Snow Removal (Y/N)	Service Provider
Atlantic View Regional Trail Park	Provincially owned, maintained by a trails group	Multi-use Pathway	N	
Beechville Lakeside Timberlea Trail Park	Provincially owned, maintained by a trails group	Multi-use Pathway	N	
Chain of Lakes Trail Park	Multi-Use Pathway owned by HRM	Multi-Use Pathway	Y	TPW
Cole Harbour Salt Marsh Trail	Provincially owned, maintained by a trails group	Multi-use Pathway	N	
Dartmouth High School Park	Concrete pathways around terminal maintained by Transit, Halifax Regional Centre for Education (HRCE) maintain pathways	Regional	Y	Transit
Gary Martin Drive Park	HRM 4-Pad pathways cleared by Nustadia	District	N	Nustadia

Grosvenor-Wentworth Elementary School Park	HRCE maintain pathways	Community	N	
Halifax West High School Park	Multi-use Pathway within Mainland Common	Regional	Y	TPW
Historic Properties	Currently cleared around the Ferry Terminal and Nathan Green Square	Plaza	Y	Facilities
Mainland North Trail	Multi-Use Pathway owned by HRM	Multi-Use Pathway	Y	TPW
Owls Nest Island	Small island, included as part of Shubie Park	N/A	N	
Shearwater Flyer Trail Park	Provincially owned, maintained by a trails group	Multi-use Pathway	N	
Skora Park	Small, rural park	Neighborhood	N	
St. Andrew's Community Centre Park	Pathways around community center to parking lot	District	Y	Facilities
St. Margaret's Bay Rails to Trails Park	Provincially owned, maintained by a trails group	Multi-use Pathway	N	

Multi-use Pathways

There are currently several multi-use pathways currently identified as Regional Parks in the Asset Registry, namely Beechville Lakeside Timberlea Trail Park, St. Margaret's Bay Rails to Trails Park, Atlantic View Regional Trail Park, Cole Harbour Salt Marsh Trail and Shearwater Flyer Trail, Chain of Lakes Trail and Linear Trail. Since these have a unique function within the park network, a new sub-type of 'Multi-use Pathway' should be applied. With the exception of the Chain of Lakes Trail and Linear Trail, the others are owned by the Province. As noted in Table 1, HRM provides winter maintenance for the Chain of Lakes Trail and Linear Trail Multi-use Pathways. The provincially owned trails are maintained by private trail groups.

Recreation Facility Parks

District Parks are intended to provide park space for a larger community compared to Community Parks and often include assets for active recreation. Assets found within this classification may include, but are not limited to walking trails, sportfields, supervised beaches and play facilities. St. Andrews Community Centre Park and Gary Martin Drive Park fit into this category well based on the recreational facilities located within these parks.

Schools

There are three school sites that are identified as Regional Parks currently in the Asset Registry: Dartmouth High School Park, Halifax West High School Park and Grosvenor-Wentworth Elementary School Park. Halifax West High School Park and Dartmouth High School Park are parks located within the regionally classified Mainland Common and Dartmouth Common respectively. Therefore, their classifications would remain as Regional, to reflect their location within the broader park. It is recommended that Grosvenor-Wentworth Elementary School Park be reclassified as a Community Park as it is located on a standalone parcel and it would be consistent with many other standalone park parcels that have schools. Community Parks are primarily intended to serve the recreation needs of three or four neighborhoods and these parks are designed for youth play and recreational adult level sports. Assets may include sport fields, ball diamonds and playgrounds.

Plazas

Historic Properties is unique and should be redefined as a plaza as it is designed and built to be a public square versus a regional park. It does not have typical park assets such as a sport field or garden features.

Neighbourhood Parks

Of the remaining previously classified Regional Parks, Skora Park should be re-classified as a Neighborhood Park. These parks are primarily designed for unorganized play with seating and rest areas, provide linear linkages between other parks and open spaces and are centrally located to provide recreational spaces for a smaller number of households. This undeveloped park does not meet the Regional Park definition because it does not contain any of the assets found in a Regional Parks and is not intended to serve a large number of residents.

Conclusion

Based on the reasons outlined in this report, it is recommended to add additional pathways in the Dartmouth Common and Ferry Terminal Park for winter maintenance. These additions would supplement existing maintenance and as a result would be able to be easily added within current operational capacity. Further, it is not recommended to add MacIntosh Run due to the fact that it is designated as a Wilderness Park and as a result is intended to remain in a natural state. Finally, the amendments to the Asset Registry as noted will help to ensure parks data reflects updated and accurate information.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are minimal financial implications associated with the addition of Ferry Terminal Park and Dartmouth Commons. These areas can be done with existing equipment and internal staffing as the clearing is an extension of established winter pathway clearing.

RISK CONSIDERATION

The risks associated with this recommendation rate low. Based on previous history of adding winter maintenance to parks assets, there has been minimal risk as it provides for safer usage of pathways for residents.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

No community engagement has been conducted for this report.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no environmental implications associated with the recommendations in this report.

ALTERNATIVES

Regional Council could direct the Chief Administrative Officer to:

1. Include paving of the main pathways in McIntosh Run Regional Park to for consideration in the 2022/23 capital budget to further winter maintenance capabilities.
2. Not add Dartmouth Common (East/West pathways) and Ferry Terminal Park to winter pathway maintenance list for winter clearing.
3. Not reclassify parks that were designated incorrectly as per Table 2: New Designations & Winter Maintenance Status.

ATTACHMENTS

No attachments.

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: Alana Tapper, Superintendent Parks West, 902.490.6534
