

HALIFAX

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Item No. 6

Halifax Regional Council
June 28, 2022

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed by 

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: May 3, 2022

SUBJECT: HRM Application to the Active Transportation Fund – Highway 111 AT overpass and Community Connections

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

Active Transportation Priorities Plan Recommendation #38: Halifax should consider building AT Bridges or crossings to overcome barriers in the AT network particularly between high density residential areas and business/ commercial areas.

Integrated Mobility Plan, Action 83: Identify and implement solutions to facilitate active transportation links across railways, highways and watercourses, consistent with the Active Transportation Priorities Plan.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*, Subsection 74(1) provides:

74(1) “The Municipality may agree with one or more municipalities, villages, service commissions, the Government of the Province or of Canada or a department or agency of either of them or a band council pursuant to the Indian Act (Canada) to provide or administer municipal or village services.”

BACKGROUND

In January 2022, the federal government opened an application process for the Active Transportation Fund with a deadline of March 27, 2022. The Fund amounts to \$400 million over five years “...to support a modal shift away from cars and toward active transportation (AT). The Fund is in support of Canada’s National Active Transportation Strategy. Unlike other federal infrastructure funding programs, the Province is not involved in the Active Transportation Fund.

The five objectives of the program are to:

- Improve community connections and promote social equity amongst vulnerable Canadians

- Make travel by active transportation easier, more convenient and enjoyable, and enhance user safety and security
- Encourage people to choose active transportation over personal vehicles (including supporting walking and cycling to access transit)
- Contribute to long-term, sustainable, inclusive economic growth, while setting the foundation for achieving a more inclusive Canada and net-zero climate emissions by 2050
- Support the Canadian economy through a reduction in congestion, the creation of jobs and enhanced access via active transportation modes to businesses

The program covers up to 60% of project costs and projects need to be built by 2026. There will be future requests for funding applications, however, these have not yet been announced. There is no timeline for announcing decisions.

DISCUSSION

Staff considered a number of potential projects based on factors such as accessibility, existing plans and policies, land use, safety, proximity to transit and other factors. These factors related to both the funding program criteria and the need and potential use of the facility. Another factor was whether or not the project was funded by an existing infrastructure funding program (e.g. Regional Centre AAA Bikeway) or whether HRM had submitted the project to another funding program (e.g. the projects HRM submitted to the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program Climate Change Mitigation Stream in fall 2020).

Staff decided to submit a project to build a new active transportation bridge over Highway 111 at Portland Street along with separated AT facilities that connect to the bridge on either side of the bridge. There would be a multi-use pathway connection to Woodlawn Road to the east and Manor Drive to the west. Consideration of a wider facility that separates people walking and people bicycling would happen in the design process. The total value of the project is estimated at \$6 million, and it would be built over two years. See Attachment 1 for a diagram illustrating the project.

The project was chosen for several reasons, including:

- There is no accessible crossing of Highway 111 at Portland Street for people walking. The current space for pedestrians on the provincially owned bridge is under the minimal width for a sidewalk and there is no buffer from the heavy, fast vehicle traffic.
- The current corridor functional planning process for Portland Street – Cole Harbour Road identified the need for an improved AT crossing of Highway 111 in this location.
- The Active Transportation Priorities Plan includes an objective for a safer crossing of Highway 111 at Portland Street and the Integrated Mobility Plan Action 83 aims to facilitate active transportation links across barriers such as highways.
- There will be significant population growth in this area in the next number of years. The Penhorn Mall site is identified in the Centre Plan as a future growth node. There is currently an active planning application for a development agreement that covers part of the site and that would include over 900 new residential units. Part of this new development would include AT connections between Portland Street and Penhorn Lake Park as well as between the stores, services and residences being planned for the former Penhorn Mall site. The information submitted was based on information earlier in the site application process. The final site plan will continue to have strong active transportation connections to the Highway 111 AT crossing project. There may also be redevelopment on the east side of the corridor in the Woodlawn-Athorpe area.

- The project would connect directly with Halifax Transit's Penhorn Terminal. This helps facilitate safe, accessible, and comfortable connections for people walking and bicycling to and from the Terminal. Portland Street is also the location of a planned bus rapid transit corridor.
- There are currently about 6,000 people living in the area. About 13% of these residents are low income. These connections will make it easier and safer for residents to move within their communities.
- This crossing will be an important regional AT connection. It will connect to the Penhorn Greenway and from there into downtown Dartmouth via the Lake Banook Greenway. It will also make part of the connection to the Portland Hills Greenway and to a potential future AT facility on Woodlawn Road.
- The AT bridge would be built on Provincial land and they are supportive of the project.
- The project should be constructable entirely on HRM land without changes to the existing street.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The total project value is estimated at \$6M, of which up to 60% (\$3.6M) would be funded by the Active Transportation Fund. Therefore, an estimated \$2.4M would need to be identified in future Capital Budgets.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The project supports planning and visioning by the Penhorn Lake Area Trail Association. The improved AT crossing at this location was supported in engagement for the Portland Street-Cole Harbour Road Functional Plan.

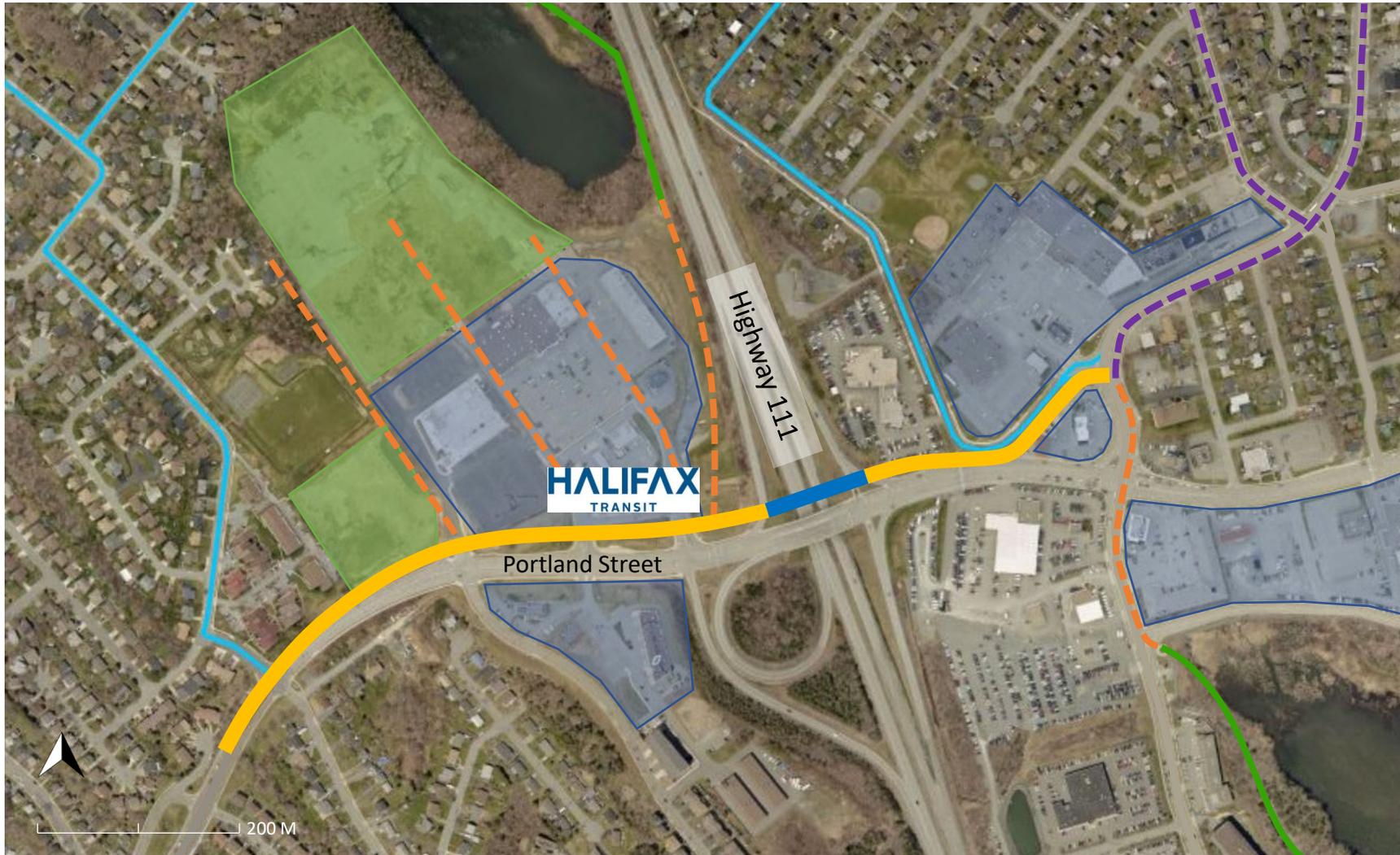
ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Project Map

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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Attachment 1: Project Context Map



Legend	
	Proposed Multi-Use Pathway
	Proposed AT Bridge
	Existing Multi-Use Pathways
	Planned Multi-Use Pathways
	Planned Bike Lanes
	Suggested Bike Routes on Local Road
	Penhorn Transit Terminal
	New Residential Development Areas
	Commercial Areas

ATF-1507-Connecting Dartmouth - Highway 111 Overpass and Community Connections