



P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

Item No. 1
Halifax Regional Council
December 12, 2023

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed

Cathie O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: October 24, 2023

SUBJECT: **Colour Coded Street Signs**

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

Item 15.8.1 of the August 22, 2023, meeting of Halifax Regional Council:

MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Councillor Hendsbee

THAT Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to provide a staff report regarding options and costs related to the possible adoption of colour coded street signs to identify ownership (municipal, provincial, or private) of roads in HRM.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, Part XII, section 317, and subsection 318(2) provide:

Section 317: In this Part, "street" means a public street, highway, road, lane, sidewalk, thoroughfare, bridge, square and the curbs, gutters, culverts and retaining walls in connection therewith, but does not include bridges vested in the Halifax-Dartmouth Bridge Commission and streets vested in His Majesty in right of the Province.

Subsection 318(2) In so far as is consistent with their use by the public, the Council has full control over the streets in the Municipality.

BACKGROUND

In 2002, staff from HRM's Sign Shop, in collaboration with the Civic Addressing department, developed the Halifax Regional Municipality Road Sign Standards (Attachment 1). This document provides the requirements for lettering type, size, and font, and standardizes the text and sign colour associated with

public and private street name signs. As outlined within the standard, street name signs identifying public roads are to be green with white lettering and those identifying private roads are to be white with black lettering. HRM by-law C-300 Respecting Civic Addressing references this standard for requirements in relation to street name signage for private roads.

The province also maintains a policy and procedure related to conventions used for street name signage which, like HRM's standards for street name signs, requires public roads to be identified using green signs with white lettering and private roads to be identified using white signs with black lettering.

DISCUSSION

HRM and the province already have standards in place whereby a colour coded system is used to distinguish between publicly owned roads versus privately owned roads. Neither standard provides for a further distinction of publicly owned roads to identify ownership by jurisdiction (i.e., municipal vs provincial).

Since a colour coded system of street name signs to distinguish between public and private roads is already in place, it is understood that the intent behind using a different colour street name sign to further distinguish public roads as being either municipally or provincially owned, would be to serve as a visual means for residents to determine which agency to contact with questions or requests for services related to roadway maintenance (asphalt, shoulders, snow/ice control, etc.).

Road ownership for streets within HRM is not limited to public (HRM / province) or private. There are multiple ownership situations, including:

- Municipal (HRM)
- Provincial
- Federal
- Dept of National Defense
- Private
- Non-Accepted
- Unknown Ownership
- Not Taken Over

Changes to signage on provincially owned roads would require amendments to provincial policy and procedures to allow a different colour sign for provincially owned public roads. Where such changes have the potential to result in widespread inconsistency and cost to the province, it is unlikely such a change in policy would be considered. Since HRM would only have jurisdiction to make sign changes on streets owned by the Municipality, distinguishing between HRM owned vs. other public streets would need to be done by changing the colour scheme identified in the current road sign standards.

Based on HRM data, a rough estimate of about 3600 street name signs would need to be replaced to identify municipally owned roads from other public roads. Using current rates for materials and labour, manufacturing the required signs would cost approximately \$200,000, if manufactured in-house. This cost is based on all signs being standard street name signs. Overall manufacturing cost would be greater given there are many oversized street name signs that would also need to be replaced. Installation costs are difficult to estimate and would depend on whether internal resources or external contractors are used to complete the work. Undertaking a project of this scope would have a significant impact on staff resources for both manufacturing and installation, resulting in the diversion of resources away from other priority work. Outsourcing the manufacturing and installation of the signs would be an option, however more detailed estimation of signage requirements would need to be done to get a realistic cost for budgeting purposes.

In addition, there are several different scenarios relating to road ownership and the provision of various maintenance services. For example, there are many roads inside and outside the service exchange boundary with the province where one agency owns the road, but the other provides services (i.e., provincially owned road where HRM provides snow removal and vice versa). There are also different scenarios with some privately owned roads and non-accepted streets, where HRM or the province provides some limited maintenance services.

Systems already exist where residents can get information about road ownership and service providers. HRM's open data and mapping, available on the Halifax.ca website, provides this information and for those who may not have the technology to access these data sets, the information can be easily obtained by calling 311. Given that simple visual identification of ownership via street name signage among agencies for public roads would not address the issue of service delivery questions (especially where service agreements can change annually), cost, potential need for on-going sign changes due to road transfers, impact on staff capacity to deliver other priorities and that HRM would only have authority to change signage on roads under ownership by the Municipality, continuing to make use of and leverage existing information systems would be the most appropriate approach.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no immediate financial implications associated with the information provided in this report. If, however, Council was to decide to move forward with pursuing changes to existing street name signs as per the original motion, a project with associated budget would need to be identified.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement was not required.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Halifax Regional Municipality Road Sign Standards

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: Roddy MacIntyre, P.Eng., Manager, Traffic Services & Road Safety, Public Works

Halifax Regional Municipality Road Sign Standards

Private Road Signs:

1. lettering on the sign shall be black on white background
2. sign blade shall be coated with white 3M High Intensity
3. the black lettering shall be 3M Electrocal Scotchal vinyl
4. letter height shall be at least 3.75 inches (96mm)
5. lettering shall be in Clearview font
6. the sign pole shall be of 2 inch (50mm) diameter aluminum and 10 feet (3m) length
7. to the extent possible, the signpost shall be located in an unobstructed line of sight for vehicles approaching the private road from either direction along the street and shall be set back a minimum of 11 ft (3.5m) from the travelled portion of the street.
8. the signpost shall be sufficiently fastened to the ground to hold the sign rigidly in place and to prevent turning of the sign in the wind.
9. the sign shall be attached to the post so that the said street name is clearly visible from either direction

Public Road Signs:

1. lettering on the sign shall be white on green background
2. sign blade shall be coated with white 3M High Intensity
3. lettering on the sign shall be cut out of transparent green 3M Electoral Scotchal film
4. letter height shall be at least 3.75 (96 mm)
5. lettering shall be in Clearview font
6. the sign pole shall be of 2 inch (50mm) diameter aluminum and 10 feet (3m) length
7. to the extent possible, the signpost shall be located in an unobstructed line of sight for vehicles approaching the private road from either direction along the street and shall be set back a minimum of 11 ft (3.5m) from the travelled portion of the street.
8. the signpost shall be sufficiently fastened to the ground to hold the sign rigidly in place and to prevent turning of the sign in the wind.