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Information Item No. 2
Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee
July 18, 2024

TO: Chair and Members of the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee

-Original Signed-

SUBMITTED BY:

Cathie O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: May 5, 2024

SUBJECT: **Cycling Without Age Program**

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

September 14, 2023, Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee motion (Item No. 10.3.1):

MOVED by Councillor Purdy, seconded by Councillor Outhit:

THAT the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee request a staff report exploring the expansion of the Cycling Without Age program to Musquodoboit Harbour, including staff resources, budget allocation, and insurance.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, S.N.S. 2008, c. 39:

7A The purposes of the Municipality are to:

- (a) provide good government;
- (b) provide services, facilities, and other things that, in the opinion of the Council, are necessary or desirable for all or part of the Municipality; and
- (c) develop and maintain safe and viable communities.

21 (1) The Council may establish standing, special and advisory committees.

(2) Each committee shall perform the duties conferred on it by this Act, any other Act of the Legislature or the by-laws or policies of the municipality.

[...]

Administrative Order One, *The Procedure of the Council Administrative Order*, Schedule 3

BACKGROUND

On Sept 14, 2023, the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee requested a staff report exploring the feasibility of an expansion of the Cycling Without Age (CWA) program to Musquodoboit Harbour, including staff resources, budget allocation, and insurance.

CWA Canada is a national volunteer operated organization aimed at reducing social isolation and increasing both mental and physical health for all Canadians. Local volunteers visit care homes and senior centres to offer rides on specialized electric pedal-assisted trishaws. Each trishaw can carry up to two passengers and a driver on a ride throughout the community. The program provides an opportunity for seniors to be outdoors and to reconnect with the community.

There are currently 41 CWA chapters across Canada with 39 of the CWA chapters in Canada being operated by seniors' facilities and non-profits and two being operated by a municipality. There is a CWA chapter located in Halifax, which is operated by Northwood, a continuing care facility for seniors.

A typical CWA chapter is operated by a non-profit society or seniors continuing care facility. A key volunteer or staff person manages the daily operations of recruiting, training, and scheduling volunteers to drive the trishaw. They also are responsible for booking rides for seniors while ensuring the maintenance, storage and battery charging of the trishaw. A group of volunteers (typically between 6-12) sign up for a few hours per week, between the months of April and October, to provide a 30-60-minute ride for up to two seniors. Most chapters fundraise to purchase the trishaw and have an average operating budget of \$5,000/year, with the cost of insurance being the largest line item.

DISCUSSION

The CWA program is a simple concept with many benefits to the community. This report considers two potential delivery models for a CWA in Musquodoboit Harbour.

Community Partnership Opportunity

There are two organizations in the Musquodoboit Harbour community that are interested in providing the CWA program. One is an established organization that operates a seniors' care facility, and the other is a local non-profit organization. The seniors' care facility is constructing a new facility adjacent to the non-profit facility/organization with construction scheduled to be completed by 2026. The new seniors' care facility will not have capacity to operate the program until the new facility is completed.

The non-profit organization is exploring the feasibility of operating the program as it aligns with their current operations and is located in an ideal location for the CWA program. The non-profit organization is a gathering place for the community as it has free parking, therefore, many people are already using this space to access the trail. The non-profit organization is also starting a bicycle rental program and has direct access to the Musquodoboit Harbour Trailway. With this direct access to the trail system, there is reduced risk as the trishaw will not be required to be driven next to, or to cross, the #7 Highway. The non-profit organization has staff to coordinate the program and would be able to commence the program as soon as funding for storage and the purchase of the trishaw is obtained.

HRM staff have met with both organizations to discuss the operation of the program in partnership with each other and/or the municipality. Discussions have been centered around the non-profit organization owning, operating, and insuring the operation of the trishaw program with the seniors' care facility using it for a day/week to take their residents for rides. Most residents of the seniors' care facility have high needs, which would require the staff and/or volunteers of the Seniors' care facility to support the seniors when using the trishaw.

The non-profit organization is currently working on grant applications for financial support for the purchase of the trishaw and to build the required storage facility. The Municipality could support the non-profit led operating model by assisting with volunteer recruitment, board development, and grant writing (through the community developers).

Municipal Implementation

For the municipality to successfully operate the program in Musquodoboit Harbour there are budget, insurance, storage and logistical considerations that would have to be addressed. If the municipality was to run the CWA Program, it would require \$25,000 to purchase the trishaw and to secure a storage facility and an annual operating cost of approximately \$39,200 plus insurance costs which cannot be estimated accurately at this time but could be in excess of \$10,000 if a provider can be secured. A breakdown of these costs is included in Table 1 below.

Table 1:

Item	Capital Costs	Operating Costs	Notes
Trishaw	\$21,000		
Storage Shed	\$4,000		
Insurance		N/A	HRM insurance providers will not extend coverage to this program as envisioned, costs could be in excess of \$10,000/year
Maintenance		\$1,500	
Program Coordinator		\$8,830	
Pt Time Staff		(up to) \$28,000	To drive the trishaw (Number of hours dependent on demand)
Uniforms		\$150	
Training		\$720	
Total	\$25,000	\$39,200	

DISCUSSION

Insurance

As per information from HRM Risk and Insurance, HRM's insurance providers will not provide or extend any liability insurance coverage for this program. This is due in large part to the municipal program delivery constraints outlined below, particularly if run out of the Musquodoboit Harbour Recreation Centre and the associated traffic related concerns.

Staffing

Staffing requirements to operate the CWA program consist of a program coordinator and a minimum of six staff to act as "drivers" from April to October; a minimum of two staff would be required to accompany the trishaw at all times. The program coordinator will be needed for 15 hours a week to supervise staff, book appointments, monitor the weather, perform routine maintenance and identify any larger maintenance issues for the Community Recreation Coordinator, manage cancellations and general communications.

Location/Storage/Logistics

The Municipality could operate the CWA program from the Musquodoboit Recreation Centre. This provides a location where participants could gather and would be readily able to be supported by staff. There is

currently no appropriate storage at the Musquodoboit Harbour Recreation Centre for a trishaw, therefore a secure storage shed would have to be purchased/built. On the recreation centre property, a shed could be placed on the septic field, alternatively, a section of trees could be removed to make room for the shed. There is challenge associated with this location as staff driving seniors on a trishaw along the #7 highway to get to the trail and back from the Musquodoboit Harbour Recreation Centre poses a safety risk as there are no sidewalks, and the only gap between the road and the ditch is a narrow gravel maintenance strip. The trishaw would also need to cross the highway to get to a side street before entering the trail. Due to the lack of bike lane or multi-use trail between the Recreation Centre and the trail head, along with the current infrastructure not in place to support this type of slow moving vehicle and that the trishaw would be commuting a short distance along the highway with minimal road shoulder or proper infrastructure available, taking up approximately half of a road lane thereby increasing the potential for a collision. Risk and Insurance has advised that they will not provide or extend any liability insurance coverage for this program.

An HRM-owned shed/structure could be located near the trail for easier trail access, for example, though lease agreement with the Musquodoboit Railways Museum or the Musquodoboit Recreation Association. HRM Recreation would also require a place to store equipment and seniors' belongings while out on the trishaw.

Active Transportation

As the trishaw is motor assisted, staff from Active Transportation were consulted and confirm there are no impediments to having the e-assist trishaws on the Musquodoboit Harbour Trailway

Summary

The CWA program has many merits including socialization, enjoyment of the outdoor environment and access to trails that might not otherwise be accessible to those with mobility limitations. The most efficient, effective and cost-effective way to deliver this service in this case, is through a local volunteer owned and operated model. Such a model could also be reproduced in different communities.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with the approach of a volunteer owned and operated service delivery model.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

No community engagement was required.

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.

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