



**ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 21, 2017**

PRESENT: Ben Buckwold, Chair
Kelsey Lane, Vice Chair
Ian Watt
David Jackson
Eliza Jackson
Lindsay Slade
Elizabeth Pugh

REGRETS: Councillor Sam Austin
Councillor Tim Outhit
Councillor Lindell Smith
Ella Dodson
James McMillin
Maggie Lucas

STAFF: Sheilagh Edmonds, Legislative Assistant
Leslie Neate, Legislative Support
David MacIsaac, Active Transportation Program Supervisor
Donna Davis, Project Manager, Cogswell Redevelopment Program

The following does not represent a verbatim record of the proceedings of this meeting.

The agenda, reports, supporting documents, and information items circulated are online at halifax.ca.

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. and adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Community Announcements

(Community Announcements were provided following Item 9.1)

Eliza Jackson advised of an event next Thursday evening, 6:30 p.m.—researchers from Simon Fraser University will be conducting a multi-year study on the impact of cycling infrastructure across Canada, and Halifax is one of the mid-size cities included in the study. The researchers collected some base-line data and will be making a public presentation at the Lindsay Children's Room.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – July 20, 2017 and August 17, 2017 (Notes)

MOVED by David Jackson; seconded by Kelsey Lane

THAT the minutes of July 20, 2017 and August 17, 2017 (Notes) be approved, as presented.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

3. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS

Addition:

The Chair noted that in a recent conversation with Donna Davis, she advised that she had updates from her last presentation on the Cogswell Redevelopment Plan that she could provide the Committee. The Chair questioned the members if they wished to hear the update, and there was general consensus to add Donna Davis' verbal update to the agenda.

Due to time constraints and the scheduling of another presenter at 4:30 p.m. the Chair suggested, and it was agreed that Donna's update would be dealt with as the first order of business, followed by the other presenter, Gerry Post; and following Gerry's presentation, the Committee would then proceed with item 8.1, a discussion on the Cogswell Redevelopment Plan.

MOVED by Elizabeth Pugh; seconded by Eliza Jackson

THAT the agenda be accepted, as amended.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES – NONE

5. CALL FOR DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTERESTS – NONE

6. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS - NONE

As agreed during the Approval of the Order of Business, the Committee dealt with item 9.1 at this time.

9. ADDED ITEMS

9.1 Donna Davis, Cogswell Redevelopment Plan Update

The Chair introduced Donna Davis. Donna Davis commented that she attended the Active Transportation meeting of July 20, 2017. There is no change to her presentation from that date; however, updates were available. The focus of today is key areas of interest and new information relating to some extended design of the Cogswell Street. It is not simply a construction project. The goal is to create a vibrant downtown neighbourhood, which extends and reconnects downtown to the waterfront and to the north end, as it used to be many years ago. It's all about city building. The vision for Cogswell has been studied for 17 years. From an active transportation perspective, they wanted it to be walkable, transit oriented, have inspirational spaces, and to reconnect neighbourhoods.

Project status:

- 30% design completion as of June 2017
- Working towards 60 percent design completion, at which time they will be obligated to return to Council to seek approval to proceed or not proceed.
- Council approved the conceptual Cogswell Development Plan in 2014.
- They are now working on detailed design, cost estimates, and revenue projection.
- It is likely not to return to Council until the new year.

With regard to the active transportation components, from a cyclist's perspective, Cogswell will connect the Barrington greenway, as it exists today in the north end, to Hollis and Lower Water Street and the bikeway connections there. The current plans call for bi-directional bikeways. Staff described many of the current conceptual designs for the bikeways including the separation of bike lanes with two-metre wide medians with trees. Multi-purpose trails will continue to be for both bicyclists and pedestrians, as they are now.

For the pedestrian connections, the project is all about connecting the downtown to the neighbourhoods to the north, to the west, and providing those neighbourhoods with safe connections back to the waterfront.

Granville Plaza is planned to be a major urban space with different activities and a connection to waterfront boardwalks between Marriott and Historic properties. It is expected to be a major gathering spot for pedestrians and cyclists, with access to a Transit Hub as well. It is also hoped that this space will help to reinvigorate the Granville Mall area.

In the development, cars and trucks will still need to be accommodated; but they will be secondary. Pedestrian and cyclist focus will be primary in making this a true neighbourhood. Transit is going to be important. They are looking at ways to improve the experience of those waiting for buses on Barrington St., especially in winter.

Conceptual designs for Cogswell St. to the Commons (to Brunswick St. and the north) were displayed. The hope is to do all this development work at once as a phased project instead of stopping at Brunswick St. The challenge with Cogswell St. is the grade; however, the hope would be to incorporate resting places and interactive spaces. It was stressed to the committee that these designs are very-conceptual.

The Chair asked if there was some perspective on the amount of pedestrian and bicycle traffic expected on these facilities. Donna Davis indicated that they understand the vehicular traffic projections better than pedestrians or cyclists. David MacIsaac indicated that the expectation will be to build growth in pedestrian and bicycle traffic, and not to build car and truck traffic.

7. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS - NONE

7.1 Correspondence – None

7.2 Petitions – None

7.3 Presentations

7.3.1 Gerry Post – Accessibility Act

The Chair introduced Gerry Post, Executive Director for Accessibility for NS. Gerry Post joined the meeting to discuss the Accessibility Act and provided the following information:

- Nova Scotia has the highest percentage of people with disabilities in the country as a province at 20 percent. The national average is 14 percent. This is due to our having an aging demographic; the eldest population in Canada.
- Statistics Canada predicts this number will grow to 31 percent by 2026; almost 1/3 of our population.
- Disabilities can happen to anyone and can also have an affect their family members and friends, which translates to 40,000 Nova Scotians.
- We are the third province in Canada to have an Accessibility Act. Ontario led the way nine years ago; Manitoba three years ago.
- We have the best act in Canada due to the interactions and discussions with the other provinces.
- The NS Government came out with an Act that did not fit the needs of the community, last November.
- Our message to the province was, “nothing for us; without us.” The Government then paused to listen to the community and invited them to sit at the table. Members representing all the disabilities sat with the lawyers and policy makers to redraft an act that meet their needs. This re-drafted act was passed.
- The act is nested in the Department of Justice, as the tap root of the act is Human Rights. In the Charter of Human Rights, disability is reflected in all those acts. In the original draft of the act, it was under Social Services.
- The original act had no dates; it was just a promise to act. The new act had the province being completely accessible by 2030.
- The act is about removing and preventing barriers, but not just physical barriers.
- Standards prescribed within the act include focus on the delivery of goods and services and are now well defined (which includes policies and practices). For example, Halifax has done a wonderful job on the conventional buses (kneeling buses, ramps coming out, and announcing systems). At one time, Halifax Transit would only lower ramps for wheelchairs. Now, ramps are deployed when ability requires them.
- Education through all levels needs an accessibility lens, especially with 30 percent of the population with disabilities.
- An Accessibility Advisory Board of 12 members has been created. This board will report to the minister, and the majority of members must be people with disabilities.
- With the Act, the commitment in law says there must be a detailed implementation schedule by the end of September next year showing how we will get to the 2030 deadline.
- Plans are going to be embedded in the normal process of the way governments operate (linked to their business plans and linked to their budgets). Government buildings should be accessible to everyone, yet many are not. All their buildings will be classified based on their function and rated for accessibility.
- All municipal governments will be prescribed an accessibility plan. An agreement with the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities has recently been negotiated. We will work and partner with them to adopt a minimum-standard regulation for all municipalities.
- There will be a Director of Compliance position. Complaints against developers can be lodged. Compliance Inspectors will be able to issue work orders to correct. If not corrected, the Province can take them to court. Fines used to be up to \$25,000; now, the fine can be up to \$250,000.
- On active transportation, people with disabilities need fully-accessible trails. Some of that is starting to happen. Beaches mats are important to allow those in wheel chairs to get to the water’s edge.

Gerry Post concluded his presentation and took the following questions:

David MacIsaac asked for comment on accessible parking spots. Gerry Post advised that there are standards for accessible parking spots; however, they need to be linked to where the users are going. This is the difficult part.

The presenter also noted that in the winter time, cycling paths are used more for those with mobility issues as they are often cleared better than sidewalks.

The Chair asked about the implications of door-to-door access-a-bus service. Gerry Post advised that while the Access-a-bus is a great service, it must be booked seven days in advance. That makes it very difficult on the user having to book so far in advance. Often an accessible cab is easier, if one is available when needed.

The Chair thanked Gerry Post for the presentation.

The Chair retired from the meeting at 5:00 p.m., with the Vice-Chair taking over the meeting.

8. REPORTS/ UPDATES/ DISCUSSION

8.1 Discussion – Cogswell Redevelopment

Donna Davis responded to questions on the Cogswell Development update she provided earlier in the meeting.

Elizabeth Pugh spoke in favour of the separation of multi-use paths and bike lanes. Donna Davis indicated that they can go back and take another look; however, they have constraints and are dependent on the volume of use.

Kelsey Lane provided some recommendations from the Halifax Cycling Coalition to address their concerns. Intersections, driveways, and destinations are a concern for some bi-directional bike lanes. The preference is to have separate bike lanes on each side of some roads. Donna Davis commented that they recognize there is no perfect solution; however, best practices need to be taken into account to make crossings safe. Bi-directional lanes were selected on sides where few driveways and entrances were noted.

Kelsey Lane also ask about the connection from Brunswick St. and how it fits into the whole network. David MacIsaac indicated there will be a connection from Brunswick St. down to the greenway.

The Vice-Chair thanked Donna Davis for her update.

8.2 Staff

8.2.1 David MacIsaac provided the following updates:

- HRM has just started three planning projects. There will be focus-discussion-stakeholder meetings hosted in the October/November timeframe.
- HRM started local street bikeway planning for Allen/Oak and Vernon/Seymore. The intent is for public engagement mid fall. This project plan needs to be completed by December to get it in the budget for next year.
- Planning has started on the Halifax Urban Greenway Project on the west side of the Peninsula.
- Almon Street Update - The original plan was to begin implementation this fall. There has been a lot comments received and meetings regarding this plan. The hope is to get a report to Council this fall and then look for implementation spring/summer next year.

Kelsey Lane requested information regarding work being done by Department of National Defense (DND). Staff advised that DND is doing some work along Barrington Street, from the MacDonald Bridge

north to Niobe Gate. DND is getting rid of a wall between the sidewalk and some of the retaining walls; and further up, they are putting in a system under Barrington Street to prevent any part of the wall falling onto the sidewalk. They are not building another segment of the retaining wall. They are putting up chain-link fencing and rebuilding the sidewalk. HRM will then work with them to determine if we can build on top of that retaining wall and probably build a little more retaining wall as it narrows closer to Niobe Gate. Due to the DND construction, the Municipality's project must wait

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – October 19, 2017

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

Leslie Neate
Legislative Support