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Item No. 15
Halifax Regional Council
April 26, 2016

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed by Director

Bruce Zvaniga, P.Eng., Director, Transportation and Public Works

DATE: March 21, 2016

SUBJECT: Staffing Direction in the Active Transportation Unit

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

Item 4, Committee of the Whole, January 27, 2016, MOVED by Councillor Watts, seconded by Councillor Mason THAT the Committee of the Whole request an information report on staffing direction with the Active Transportation unit.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Charter sections 34(2) ; 35(2)(b), 35(2)(d). Part VIII of the Halifax Charter including section 229.

Section 4.2.2. of the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy identifies the Active Transportation objectives of the Municipality.

In September 2016, Regional Council adopted the Active Transportation Priorities Plan 2014-2019. Within this Plan there is a statement that provides as follows:

Staff and community capacity. Planning, designing and co-ordinating project construction and programs requires professional resources. Achieving the expanded scope in this plan may necessitate increased reliance on consultants or temporary staff and will continue to require resources from a range of municipal business units.

BACKGROUND

The current configuration of the Active Transportation group was established in two stages, in fall 2014 and spring 2015, to support the implementation of the “2014-19 Active Transportation Priorities Plan” (AT Plan).

Previous to October 2014, responsibility for implementing the Active Transportation program was split into three groups:

- 1) The Design and Construction group within the Transportation and Public Works business unit was responsible for the planning, tendering and construction of new sidewalks (approximately 0.25 staff);
- 2) The Regional Transportation Planning group within the former Planning and Infrastructure business unit was responsible for planning and implementing bicycle lanes and some municipality-led active transportation greenways, education and promotion activities (e.g. Bike Week and the Bike Map), as well as the writing of the Active Transportation Priorities Plan (roughly two staff); and,
- 3) The Regional Trails Program group within the former Infrastructure and Planning business unit and subsequently Parks and Recreation business unit was responsible for the planning, implementation, maintenance and promotion of active transportation greenways in conjunction with community trails associations (four staff until 2014, and reduced to three staff thereafter).

As of March 2016 there are 3.25 staff with direct responsibility for implementing the AT Plan, all working in the Project Planning and Design group within the Transportation and Public Works business unit. There are also two vacancies within the group as of this date.

HRM Corporate Planning has been engaged to undertake an organizational review of the AT group. The goal of this review is to help the Project Planning and Design AT group plan and “optimize” the newly formed organization within the context of the broader Project Planning and Design team, thus enabling them to accomplish the objectives set out in the AT Plan. Another goal of this review is to establish the points of integration / collaboration between the AT Priorities Plan and other HRM strategic plans such as the forthcoming Integrated Mobility Plan, the Centre Plan and the work of other business units within HRM (e.g. Road Operations and Construction).

DISCUSSION

In the past, direct responsibility for implementing active transportation facilities in HRM has been shared between various business units. The October 2014 realignment of HRM business units was the impetus to unite these groups into one Active Transportation work group and to situate the group in the Project Planning and Design group within Transportation and Public Works.

The organizational review of the group that is currently underway should be complete in summer/fall 2016. Planned outcomes of this review include: an understanding of the current workload and processes in the group; an inventory of current and needed skills; and, documenting how the AT group interfaces with other groups within and outside HRM. This information will be the basis for recommending appropriate staffing levels, updating the work descriptions/functions of staff, clarifying the model for working with the Halifax Regional Trails Association, and ensuring clear roles and responsibilities for HRM business units with respect to AT .

The above description of the staffing levels and the evolution of the core work group responsible for implementing the AT Plan do not take into consideration the role of other business units in supporting the implementation of the AT Plan. For example:

- HRM Corporate Communications dedicates staff time to the annual Bike Week, to public engagement processes to plan new AT facilities, and to producing promotional and educational material;

- Parks and Recreation staff support bicycling promotion and education projects;
- Operations and maintenance staff from the Transportation and Public Works and Parks and Recreation business units ensure that AT facilities are maintained and repaired;
- Within Transportation and Public Works, Traffic Management staff dedicate time to regulating on road walking and bicycling facilities;
- Also within Transportation and Public Works, Project Planning and Design staff design and oversee the tendering of some AT facilities. This function will be included in the organizational review.
- Halifax Transit ensures that new busses and the ferries have bicycle racks, that transit terminals have bike parking, and they aim to have transit terminals and stops connected to the walking and bicycling network;
- Traffic Management regulates all AT facilities in the right-of-way (e.g. bike lanes, sidewalks, intersections); and,

Planning and Development was responsible for the development of the AT Priorities Plan, is currently considering AT in the development of the Integrated Mobility Plan and Centre Plan, and also ensures AT objectives are considered in the specific development approval processes and community planning exercises..

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

n/a

ATTACHMENTS

n/a

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.php> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210, or Fax 902.490.4208.

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