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Item No. 12.1.1
Transportation Standing Committee
October 26, 2017

TO: Chair and Members of Transportation Standing Committee

SUBMITTED BY: **Original signed**

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

DATE: August 18, 2017

SUBJECT: **On-Street Parking for Carshare Vehicles**

ORIGIN

This report is initiated by staff.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Motor Vehicle Act, R.S.N.S. 1989, c.293, s.154 allows Council to make a by-law “exempting persons or vehicles from parking restrictions within the city, town or municipality and providing permits to be issued to those who are exempted”.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Transportation Standing Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Municipality direct the CAO to include provision in amendments to By-law P-1000 to:

- (1) Create designated parking spaces and associated permits for operators of non-station-based carshare vehicles; and
- (2) Include all carshare vehicles as being eligible for residential parking exemptions.

BACKGROUND

Carsharing is a service that provides its residential and business customers access to a pool of vehicles for their as-needed use. Carsharing vehicles are typically offered in one of two forms:

- Station-based – Every vehicle has a “home” station where the vehicle is picked up from and must be returned to at the end of the booking.
- Non-station-based – Vehicles may be picked up or dropped off at any location within a large defined service area. The locations where these vehicles are available at any one time is communicated to customers online.

Currently, Carshare Atlantic is the only business in Halifax operating a carshare service. It has been operating station-based carsharing since 2008 and currently has a fleet size of 64. In June, 2017 Carshare Atlantic announced that they had added twenty new non-station-based vehicles to their service.

DISCUSSION

The Integrated Mobility Plan, scheduled to be presented to Transportation Standing Committee at its October 2017 meeting, focuses on the value of developing a variety of mobility options and how they can be integrated. To foster carsharing as one of these options, the section in the Plan on parking identifies a hierarchy for management of curbside parking and gives high priority to the needs of carsharing. The rationale for considering carsharing to be an important aspect of regional transportation demand management is that it allows households to strongly consider not owning a vehicle. Households with no vehicle ownership travel more by transit and active transportation but still have access to a vehicle when that option is needed. Zero-vehicle households also support the principles of the proposed Centre Plan by reducing the need to supply parking.

The Municipality manages on-street parking through By-law P-1000 (Parking in Residential Areas) with the designation of reserved parking and the issuing of permits and exemptions. To support the carsharing objectives of the Integrated Mobility Plan, the by-law needs to be expanded to support carsharing needs. It will be important to target any new regulations at carsharing as a service and not at specific businesses that operate carsharing.

There are three specific issues related to the management of on-street parking that need to be considered in potentially expanding By-law P-1000 to include carsharing needs and are each discussed below.

On-Street Stations for Carshare Vehicles

The Transportation Standing Committee previously addressed the issue of designated parking spaces for Carshare Atlantic vehicles at its May 28, 2015 when the following motion passed, stating “that the Transportation Standing Committee recommends that Halifax Regional Council not request the designation of parking spaces specifically for carshare vehicles within the right-of-way for implementation within Halifax.” The report presented to the committee at that meeting commented that “staff does not consider it reasonable to provide space within the public right-of-way for the exclusive use of one particular private business”. Further concerns were identified regarding the potential for vehicles to remain parked in violation of Motor Vehicle Act provisions regarding a 24-hour parking maximum and the winter parking ban.

While staff continue to support that recommendation, and the motion made by the Standing Committee, this discussion occurred at a time when carsharing in Halifax was limited to station-based vehicles. The characteristics of non-station-based carshare vehicles allay the concerns expressed by staff in the 2015 report and merit additional consideration, which is the subject of the following section.

Designated Parking for Non-station-based Carshare Vehicles

Providing designated on-street parking space for non-station-based carshare vehicles has two key differences from designating a parking space for a station-based vehicle. Firstly, a station-based parking space must necessarily be designated for a single vehicle and therefore a specific carsharing company. A designated space for non-station-based vehicles, on the other hand, can be used by any non-station-based vehicle operated by any company. This is similar to the way on-street space is designated for taxis but not for any one specific taxi company. Secondly, carsharing customers rely on knowing that a station-based carshare vehicle is available at its particular station and can be booked well in advance. Non-station-based vehicles do not offer that same predictability and can therefore be easily removed from the system or relocated by the carshare company when there is a threat of them being in violation of Motor Vehicle Act provisions.

Staff recommends that the Municipality should have the ability to designate on-street spaces for non-station-based carshare vehicles and to issue (and charge money for) permits to use these spaces.

Issuing Residential Parking Exemptions to All Carshare Vehicles

By-law P-1000 and the associated Residential On-Street Parking Policy (approved by Regional Council in 2002) are designed to allow the placement of parking controls in residential areas with high outside parking demand to manage parking occupancy. Residents who live on a particular street where such controls have been implemented can be exempted if they demonstrate that their vehicle is registered to an address on that street. While this policy is well-suited to residents who own a vehicle, it does not easily accommodate residents who choose carsharing over of owning a vehicle.

In November, 2016, a twelve-month pilot was initiated to test the impact of issuing Residential Parking Exemptions to Carshare Atlantic vehicles. These exemptions were valid in all residential areas covered by residential parking controls and Carshare Atlantic paid the full cost of the exemptions. To date, this pilot has not generated any negative feedback and occupancy surveys of parking-controlled areas has not seen a significant volume of carshare vehicles parked.

Staff recommends that By-law P-1000 provide for sale of all-zone resident parking exemptions for any carshare vehicle.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The sale of parking permits and residential parking exemptions to carsharing companies can be expected to generate new revenue for the Municipality. In some cases, where designated parking spaces are being created in locations that currently have parking meters, that revenue may be reduced or negated. The exact value of permits and exemptions will be identified when changes to By-law P-1000 are presented.

RISK CONSIDERATION

There is risk that not taking steps to better accommodate carsharing in Halifax with on-street parking will result in this service not thriving or failing completely. This would be harmful to the success of the Integrated Mobility Plan objective of an integrated system reducing the need for car ownership. Staff believe that the risk to carsharing by not creating designated non-station-based parking and not exempting carshare vehicles from residential controls (as recommended by staff) is much greater than it is by not designating home-based parking spaces (as recommended against by staff).

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Extensive community engagement was held as part of the Integrated Mobility Plan and identified significant public support for carsharing as an essential component of an integrated transportation system.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The Integrated Mobility Plan suggests that carsharing is one method of reducing the total amount of vehicle travel within the region. This has a positive effect on the emission of greenhouse gases.

ALTERNATIVES

Transportation Standing Committee may choose to recommend one or all the following to Regional Council in directing the CAO on whether or not to include provisions in By-law P-1000 for carsharing:

- (1) Allow station-based carshare vehicles to have their home base parking designated on-street;
- (2) Not allow for the designation of parking spaces on-street for non-station-based carshare vehicles;
- (3) Not allow for carshare vehicles to be issued residential parking exemptions.

ATTACHMENTS

There are 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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