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Item No. 4
Halifax Regional Council
September 8, 2009

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: 
for Phil Townsend, Director, Infrastructure and Asset Management

DATE: August 13, 2009

SUBJECT: Licensing of Bicycles

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

October 23, 2007 request by Regional Council (Councillor Krista Snow), item 7.1, for staff to provide a report regarding the licensing of bicycles within HRM.

BACKGROUND

Bicycle licensing is not a new concept in HRM. In fact, it dates back to at least 1936. Archival records from the former City of Halifax outline the history of bicycle licensing. On December 17, 1936 Ordinance 15, respecting bicycles was passed by Halifax City Council. The ordinance required a permit for all bicycles and established a fee of \$1.00 for the permit. Also included was a penalty not exceeding \$5.00 if it was found that a bicycle was being operated without a permit or license (number) plate for everyday up to one (1) week. Numerous changes were made over time to this ordinance which ultimately led to its abolishment by Halifax City Council on October 30, 1980 as it was no longer seen to be economical and represented an administrative cost to the City.

DISCUSSION

Since the bicycle licensing ordinance was repealed in 1980, there has been no formal mandatory program within HRM or the four former municipalities, requiring bicycles to be licensed and a plate to be displayed on the bicycle. Halifax Regional Police however, operate a bicycle registration program for the recovery of lost or stolen bikes and offer training and education programs.

The concept of licensing bicycles has been brought forward more recently. In October 2005, the members of the Bikeways Advisory Committee were provided with an information package about Ordinance 15. The minutes of the meeting note that the members of the committee discussed the ordinance, bicycle course requirements, costs, procedures and fines, as well as how a new bicycle licensing program could be applied within HRM's current by-laws. The following are salient points from this discussion as recorded in the minutes:

1. If the ordinance is re-instated, the by-law would be administered by By-law Enforcement, which is a division of Community Projects;
2. Re-enacting the By-law would provide education to cyclists and be a minor source of revenue but would not cover the administrative costs or other costs associated with the program;
3. In the United States, some states have implemented bicycle programs,
4. Halifax Regional Police have a registry program and safety education programs which are free to the public,
5. Costs associated with fees, plates, education and logistics may discourage cycling, which is contrary to the Active Transportation Plan, and
6. At the end of the discussion, the committee agreed not to forward a recommendation to Regional Council for the implementation of a bicycle licensing program.

Based on the evaluation of this Committee, and no pressing need, staff do not intend to develop a process for the licensing of bicycles.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There are no budget implications for this report.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES/BUSINESS PLAN

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

ATTACHMENTS

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.html> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

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