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Info Item 2
Transportation Standing Committee
March 23, 2017

TO: Chair and Members of Transportation Standing Committee

SUBMITTED BY: ORIGINAL SIGNED

Beverley Audet, A/ Director, Transportation & Public Works

DATE: March 16, 2017

SUBJECT: Pedestrian Safety Semi-Annual Reporting

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

Item 14.2.3 of the May 10, 2016 session of Halifax Regional Council; MOVED by Deputy Mayor Whitman, THAT Halifax Regional Council direct staff to prepare a semi-annual report on crosswalk and pedestrian safety for the Transportation Standing Committee.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The Terms of Reference for the Transportation Standing Committee are defined in Administrative Order 1, Schedule 7, and include “*road and pedestrian safety*” in the Transportation Standing Committee’s Terms of Reference.

BACKGROUND

The Pedestrian Safety Action Plan (PSAP) was created in 2014 in order to provide a review of activities carried out in promoting pedestrian safety as well as an assessment of any trends or recurring issues impacting the safety of pedestrians on Halifax’s roadways. The document was updated annually from 2014 to 2016/17.

As outlined at the November 10, 2015 and November 24, 2015 Committee of the Whole meetings, a new road safety strategy will be developed moving forward in lieu of the PSAP as shown in the 2016/17 TPW Business Plan. This new road safety strategy will encompass all road users including pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists to ensure that our roads provide safe mobility.

On May 10, 2016 Regional Council directed staff to prepare a separate semi-annual report on crosswalk and pedestrian safety for the Transportation Standing Committee. The first semi-annual report was presented to Transportation Standing Committee on September 22, 2016

DISCUSSION

Evaluation

Throughout 2016 Police and Traffic Management staff worked together to share vehicle-pedestrian collision information. Data shared and reviewed included factors such as time of day, gender and age of driver and pedestrian, collision location, etc.

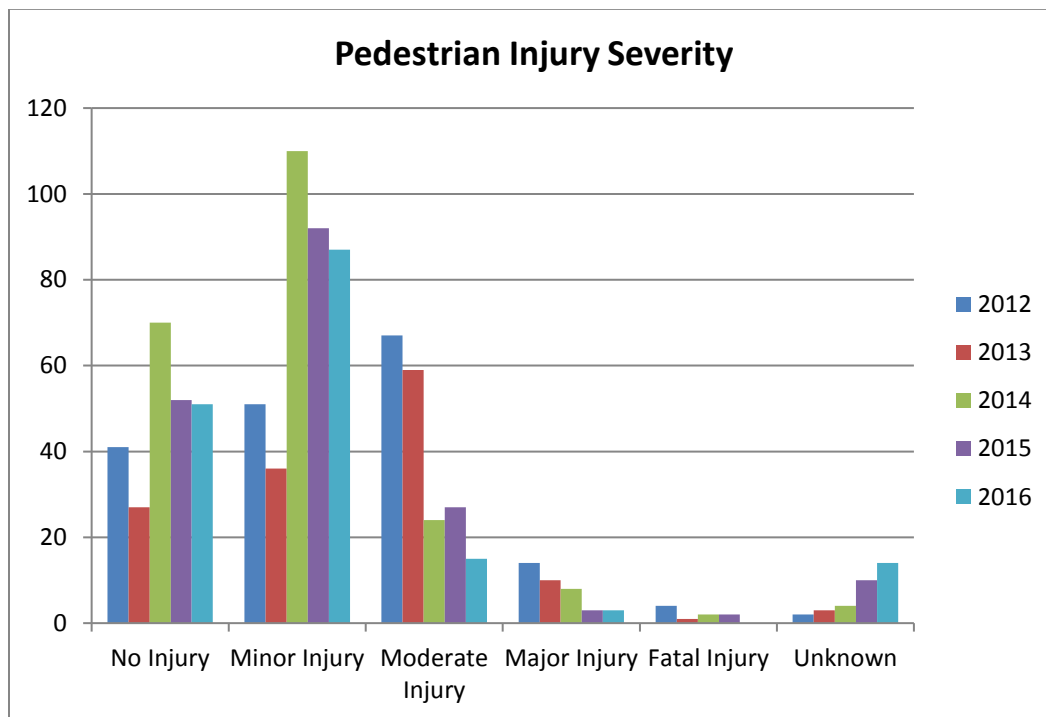
Statistics compiled from police reports from January to December 2016 indicate a decline in the number of pedestrian-vehicle collisions within the public Right of Way (ROW). Table No. 1 provides a summary of the findings in comparison to previous years:

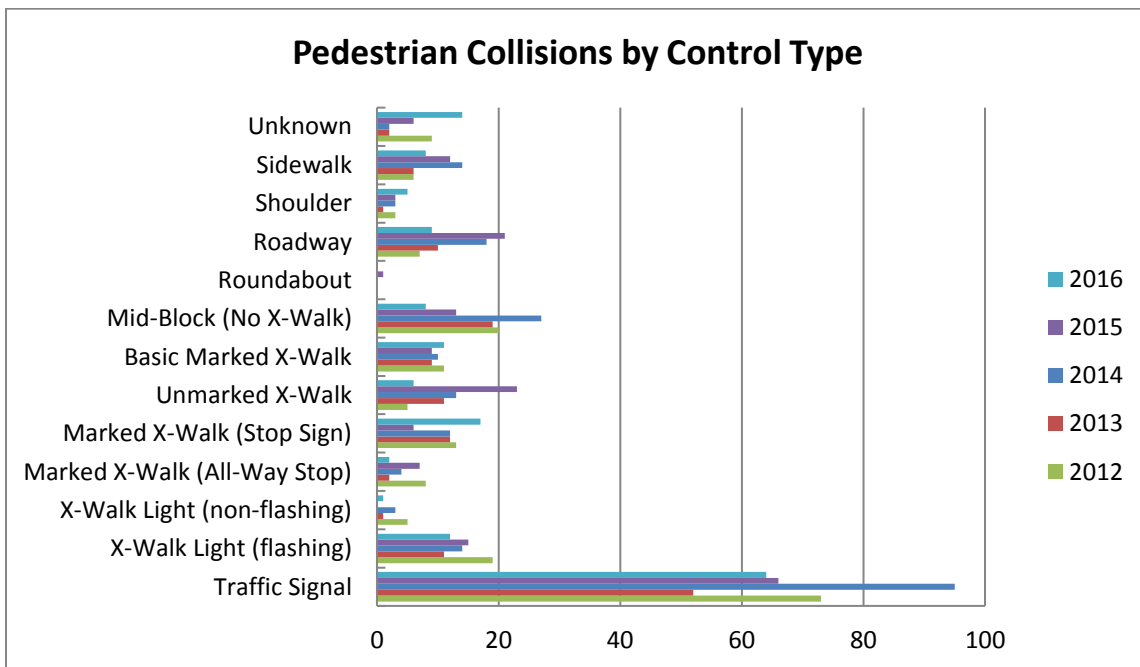
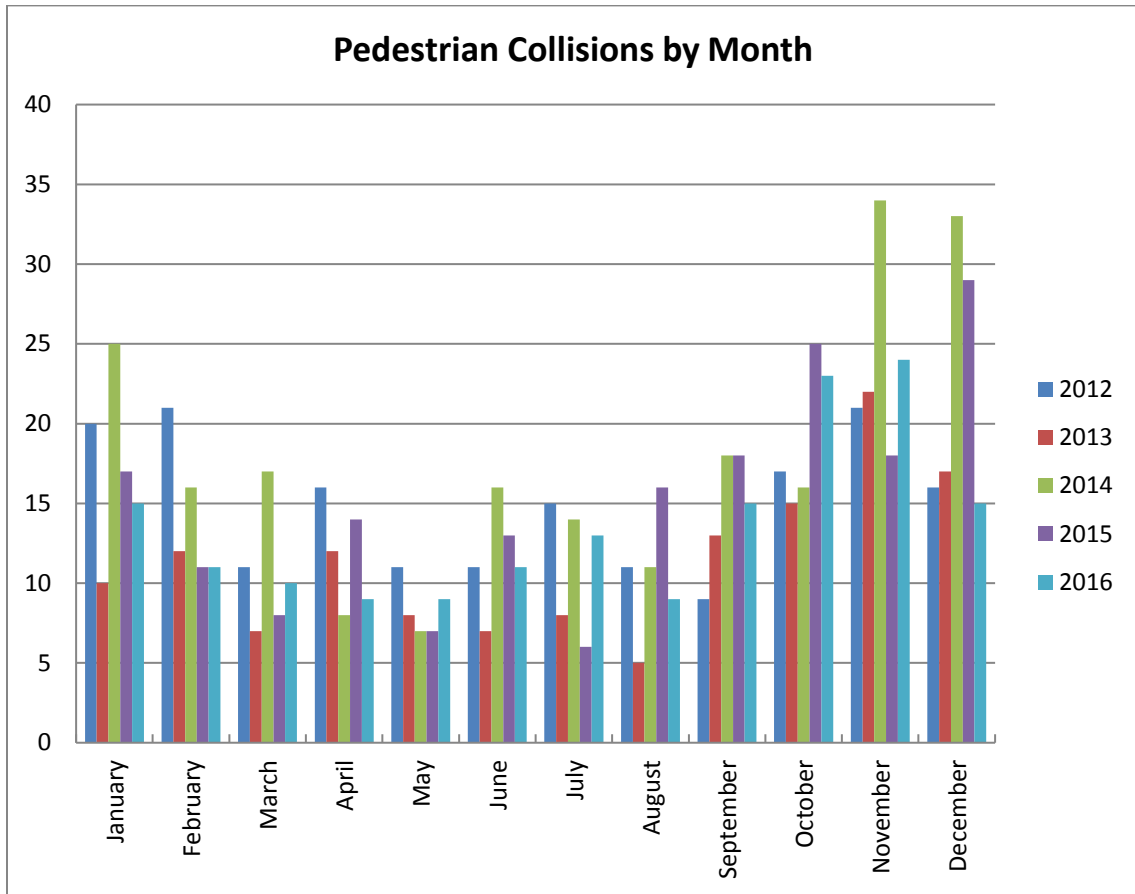
Table No. 1
Pedestrian Collision History

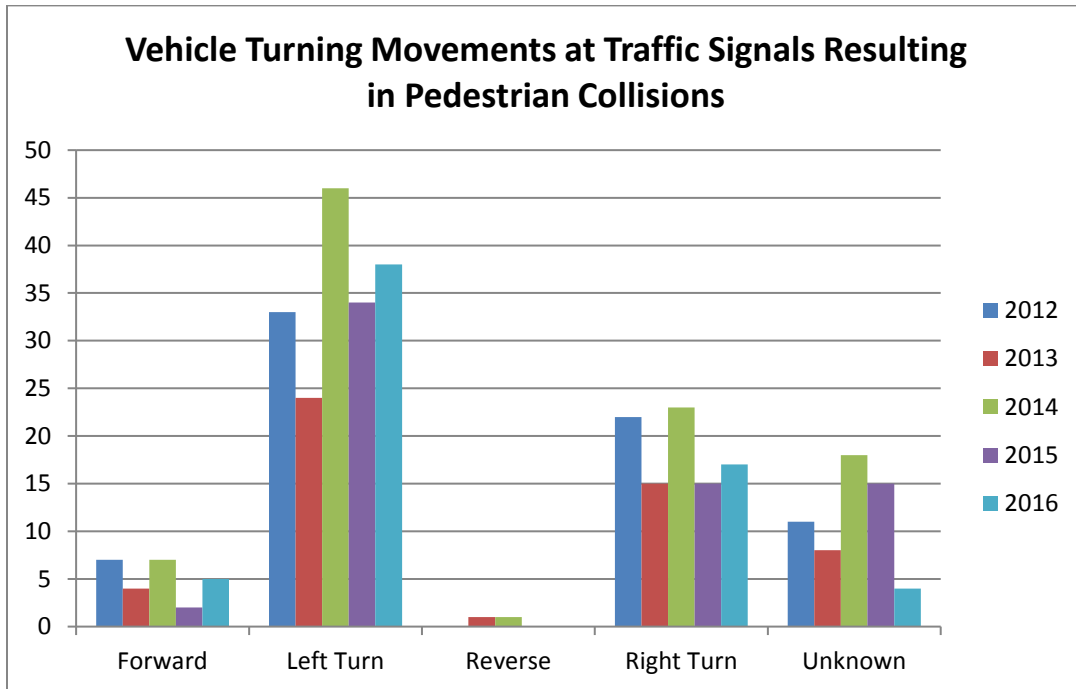
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total Pedestrian Collisions Occurring within ROW	179	136	215	182	164

An assessment of the data compiled for 2016 shows that the most common pedestrian-vehicle collisions are occurring at traffic signals, with left hand turns being the most predominant vehicle movement. A total of 64 pedestrian-vehicle collisions occurred at a traffic signal in 2016, 38 were related to a left turn movement. This is consistent with previous years' findings.

The following four charts provide an update to the results presented in the 2016/17 Pedestrian Safety Action Plan to include results from 2016:







Engineering

HRM Traffic Management is currently involved with multiple crosswalk and pedestrian safety initiatives.

In 2016 a tender was awarded for the installation of Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB's) at four separate pilot locations. Installation is planned for spring 2017. Yielding compliance studies have been completed at each location before the installation and further observations will be conducted after installation to evaluate the potential benefits.

Yielding compliance and usage studies were also completed for a separate ongoing crosswalk flag study. Under that study, staff conducted observations and assessments at crosswalk locations with and without flags in 2015 and 2016. Information on the use and impact of crosswalk flags was gathered.

The 2016 data confirmed much of what was found in 2015, but went further to better assess driver yielding rates. Based on the data collected and observations made, staff were able to identify the following:

- At locations where flags were present, usage was identified to be approximately 5%;
- Flag usage was most common among young children and seniors; and
- Driver yielding behaviour for the various crossing locations observed is outlined in the following table.

Table No. 2 2016 Crosswalk Driver Yielding Compliance

Crosswalk Type	Without Flags	With Flags
Crosswalk with pavement markings and signs only	90%	88%
Crosswalk with pedestrian activated flashing beacons (RA-5)	96%	93%

It was also observed that there were instances where the flags at some locations were all on one side of the crosswalk or, there were no flags in the containers at all. This could indicate a lack of “ownership” being taken to monitor and maintain these locations after they have been installed.

HRM Traffic Management reviews crosswalk installation, modification and removal based on criteria which provide an objective basis for an evaluation to identify where marked crosswalks are installed. Marked crosswalks are installed at locations where this evaluation has determined that a marked crosswalk is warranted, based on national standards.

Infrastructure upgrades include: installing pedestrian ramps, extending concrete pads for better access to push buttons, extending curb openings, adding curb bump-outs, installing brighter LED down lighting, installing side mounted flashing beacons and adjusting crosswalk controller boxes to include a Pedestrian Extend Feature. All work is undertaken under existing operating and capital budgets.

A summary of the crosswalk modifications conducted 2016 is presented in Table No. 3:

Table No. 3 2016 Crosswalk Modifications

Crosswalk Type	Addition*	Change**	Rehab	Removal	Grand Total
All-Way Stop			2		2
Marked X-Walk with Crossing Guard			1		1
Basic Marked X-Walk	11	2	12	8	33
X-Walk Light (both flashing and non-flashing)	4	1	76***		81
Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons	1	3			4
Traffic Signal			5		5
Accessible Pedestrian Signals	9	2			11
Unmarked			1		1
Grand Total	16	17	97	8	138

*Three additions and one removal have been tendered in 2016 and are scheduled for completion in early 2017

**Existing crosswalk type was changed (upgrade or downgrade)

***Eight are ongoing at the time of this report

Education

HRM Corporate Communications undertook a media campaign from early March to mid-April 2016 featuring the slogan “Heads Up Halifax” and the television advertising creative suggesting cellphone use while driving or walking across a crosswalk is equivalent to being blindfolded. The campaign included radio, television, print newspapers, bus advertising, paid and unpaid social media, website, and digital screens:

- Halifax Metro – 10 insertions between February 26 - March 28th
- Chronicle Herald – February 27 - March 12
- Chronicle Herald Community Papers (three) – March 2
- The Coast – March 10 and March 17
- Community Papers – Shop the Shore, Parkview News, Cole Harbour Merchant, The Beacon, The Masthead News, The Weekly Press, The Laker, The Town Cryer, Eastern Shore Cooperator – one insertion in each publication (ether March or April)
- CTV – Five-week campaign that began on February 29 – over 180 spots
- CBC – Three-week campaign that began on March 7 – 110 spots
- Q104 – 79 spots
- C100 – 100 spots
- 101.9 – 100 spots
- 101.3 – 68 spots

- Busboards – 20 exterior and 100 interior, running in March-April
- Facebook – Paid advertising throughout March

Other unpaid activities included Twitter, Facebook, Halifax.ca posts and deployment on the municipal digital screen network. Additionally, in July staff handed out some 20,000 buttons, stickers and temporary tattoos of the Heads Up Halifax logo using a rainbow crosswalk design at the annual Pride Parade.

While the total impressions of the message and call to action to be vigilant at crosswalks was substantial, past campaigns have shown that even with a high degree of public awareness and agreement with the responsibility we all share for each other's safety there is a disconnect between individual risk assessment and behaviour. It will take a sustained social marketing effort to help people overcome the sense that "it isn't going to happen to me."

Fall 2016 marked the third year the municipality recognized Crosswalk Safety Awareness Day (CSAD) as part of a broader pedestrian safety awareness campaign. As noted in previous reports, despite significant public awareness of the crosswalk safety issue and the broad belief that crosswalk safety is everyone's responsibility, it remains a challenge to move people beyond simple awareness to change their behavior and reduce vehicle-pedestrian collisions.

New habits are hard to form. It takes time and a sustained, genuine effort from people. They have to do something differently and keep doing it. To develop better crosswalk habits, the call to action needs to be easy, memorable and clear so that they are more likely to adopt it themselves and share it with others. To create a better call-to-action and realize a better return on investment, Corporate Communications ran a campaign from October 24 through January 2017 to promote CSAD (November 15) and to encourage citizens to practice safe crosswalk behaviours including:

- Ensuring drivers and pedestrians make eye contact at crosswalks and understand each other's intentions
- Slowing vehicles down and scanning the street when approaching crosswalks and intersections
- Not crossing the street when the flashing hand sign is present
- Activating the overhead lights at crosswalks where such equipment exists, and
- Avoiding all distractions when driving or walking into a crosswalk area whether people are present or not

People were also asked to share on social media their actions and tips on staying safe at crosswalks, which were aggregated on halifax.ca. Corporate Communications promoted these initiatives through bus boards, print ads, and digital media using extensive paid and organic social media placements.

Survey results for 2016 are relatively consistent with past campaigns in that a majority of respondents consider traffic safety a key issue for the municipality, although public awareness of *any* communications relating to traffic safety has notably declined over the past year (down to 52% from 71% in 2015).

Similarly, while there is still strong public support for the Heads Up Halifax campaign, there is still limited public awareness of the campaign (18-30 % of respondents recalled some element) and its creative components (ads, video), as well as CSAD itself (26%), with back-of-the bus advertising generating the greatest recall. That said, the video was well received by residents, with the bulk of those surveyed clearly understanding its message and expressing positive opinions about its effectiveness in:

- Raising awareness about crosswalk safety issues
- Making residents more aware of staying alert while travelling, and
- Raising concern about crosswalk safety

This year also marks a significant increase in the number of residents who identified the municipality as the sponsor of ads or messages related to traffic safety (up to 43% of survey respondents vs 14% in both 2014 and 2015 campaigns).

While the new approach to using a social media campaign to influence behavior did not increase campaign awareness as planned, it did provide the first opportunity measure specific actions taken by those who did see and engage the creative elements online (YouTube video, paid Facebook, twitter and Instagram ads). The following are some high level insights of the social media campaign:

- The video was the most successful part of the campaign (130,000+ unique users saw the video, with 1,433 clicking through to the halifax.ca/headsuphalifax web page for more info and 70,000+ viewers taking some action (like, share, comment)
- Paid video views offered the best value of the campaign at approximately \$0.03 per view
- Paid Facebook advertising generated 117,000+ unique users who saw the ad, with 2,604 clicking through to the website and 2,698 taking some action
- Paid Instagram advertising resulted in 71,000+ unique users who saw the ad, with 283 clicking through to the website and 548 taking some action
- Paid Twitter posts reached 58,000+ users with 344 clicking through to the website and 861 taking some action
- Website traffic, hashtag use, contest participation and video reach all peaked on Nov 15, Crosswalk Safety Awareness Day
- halifax.ca/headsuphalifax experienced a total of more than 4,000 page views during the campaign, and 240 residents entered the contest that prompted them to promote safe crosswalk actions using the #headsuphalifax hashtag

Corporate Communications will continue to adjust campaign elements to improve audience awareness and recall of the campaign while developing ways to increase audience participation, engagement and promote taking specific individual actions to make crosswalks safer for everyone. Given the success of the medium, advertising will continue on the exterior and interior of Halifax Transit buses throughout the winter/spring months in 2017. Planning will begin this spring for a new, longer campaign culminating on CSAD (currently scheduled for November 8, 2017), with the reinstatement of organized crosswalk safety awareness teams at crosswalks throughout the municipality.

Enforcement

Halifax Regional Police have three planned crosswalk safety months each year in February, April and November. During these months, traffic officers, patrol officers and community response officers target enforcement in the areas of crosswalks. Special checks are also conducted in the area of crosswalks. These special checks not only include enforcement of the Nova Scotia Motor Vehicle Act but also perform as a proactive measure as there is increased visibility of police in these areas. As a result, there is not only an increase in charged violations due to targeted enforcement, but also corrective driving behaviour due to the additional presence of police in crosswalk areas.

Table No. 4 summarizes the number of special checks and tickets issued during the three crosswalk safety months of 2016. In addition to the infractions noted below, 19 of all tickets issued for using hand held cellular telephone while driving were directly related to crosswalks.

Table No. 4

HRP Enforcement - Crosswalk Safety Months
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	Feb	April	November
Special Checks	366	465	167
HRM Pedestrian / Crosswalk Related Tickets Issued			
Total Drivers and Pedestrians	62	114	45
<i>Drivers</i>	<i>41</i>	<i>103</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>Pedestrians</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>14</i>

One of the recommendations from the 2016/2017 Pedestrian Safety Action Plan was the full roll-out of electronic collision reporting software for HRP. In September of 2016 the initial soft roll-out of this system occurred and was utilized by the HRP front door staff for reporting motor vehicle collisions. The full roll-out of the system for all patrol officers at HRP is planned for early 2017.

Moving Forward

Staff will continue to provide semi-annual updates to the Transportation Standing Committee. The next update will report on crosswalk and pedestrian safety initiatives planned for 2017 along with pedestrian-vehicle collision statistics from January to June 2017.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no new financial implications associated with this report. All activities are anticipated to be carried out as part of existing capital and operating budgets.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement was not undertaken as part of this report as there are ongoing engagement initiatives with the public through education campaigns and enforcement programs.

ATTACHMENTS

No attachments

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

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