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Item No. 12.1.1
Transportation Standing Committee
February 27, 2020

TO: Chair and Members of Transportation Standing Committee

SUBMITTED BY: - Original Signed -
Caroline Blair-Smith, Director, Human Resources

- Original Signed -
Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: December 17, 2019

SUBJECT: **Flexible Working Hours**

ORIGIN

On June 20, 2019 the Transportation Standing Committee passed the following motion:

MOVED by Councillor Cleary, seconded by Councillor Mason:

THAT the Transportation Standing Committee request a staff report to explore an HRM policy for flexible hours as recommended in the Integrated Mobility Plan (IMP).

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Administrative Order One, Schedule 7 – Transportation Standing Committee Terms of Reference

Section 5: Coordination of Priorities and Initiatives

7. The Transportation Standing Committee shall:
- (a) promote and enable public safety campaigns and outcomes that advocate safety;
 - (b) provide policy direction related to neighbourhood transportation initiatives for traffic calming and mitigation;
 - (c) provide input and review of By-law S-300, the Streets By-law, as it relates to approaches to routing, right-of-way management, accessibility and management of priorities for uses; and
 - (d) oversee the Municipality's transportation demand management strategies.

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, subsection 34 (3):

The Council shall provide direction on the administration, plans, policies and programs of the Municipality to the Chief Administrative Officer.

Integrated Mobility Plan, Action 61

Work across municipal departments to implement flexible work schedule pilot programs for employees.

Recommendation on page 2

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Transportation Standing Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer to promote and encourage the use of the Flexible Work Arrangements Business Practice for all non-union employees as an option for managing congestion and reducing single occupancy vehicle trips in alignment with the Integrated Mobility Plan (IMP).

BACKGROUND

In December 2017, Halifax Regional Council approved the *Integrated Mobility Plan* (IMP) to direct future investment in transportation demand management, transit, active transportation and the roadway network with the goal of diversifying transportation in Halifax to include more active, sustainable, and affordable modes. The IMP stems from municipal policy direction on public transit and transportation, land use and growth centres contained within the *Regional Municipal Planning Strategy*. The IMP is focused on providing a choice of integrated and connected travel options emphasizing public and community-based transit, active transportation, carpooling and other viable alternatives to the single occupant vehicle.

One of the principles of the IMP is managing congestion. Until the recent adoption of the IMP, Halifax historically, like many other cities, has added lanes to existing roadways and built new road connections to try and provide better traffic flow during the morning and evening peak hours. However, this approach was and remains costly due to construction and maintenance costs, and roadways often operate well below capacity for all other hours of the day. Managing congestion, instead, focuses on using multiple tactics to encourage people to choose other travel options or to travel at different times of the day to reduce the demand on the existing road network during the peak hours. Small reductions in peak hour volumes can often have significant reductions in travel time during the peak hour commutes. One of the ways that peak hour traffic can be spread out to reduce demand and help to manage congestion is by shifting hours or location of work for employees. The IMP directs staff to “work across municipal departments to implement flexible work schedule pilot programs for employees” (Action 61).

DISCUSSION

The Municipality currently has a Flexible Work Arrangements Business Practice for Non-Union Employees (Attachment A) and an Earned Day Off (EDO) Business Practice for Non-Union Employees (Attachment B). Additionally, some individual business units and divisions already have flex time/location and EDO arrangements in place. Halifax Transit, Transportation and Public Works, and Finance have internal EDO policies for both non-union and NSUPE employees. There are also individual teams throughout business units that work adjusted hours (7:00 – 3:00) for the specific purpose of avoiding traffic congestion and some managers/supervisors provide working from home options. Teams within Halifax Transit, ICT, and Corporate and Customer Services have been piloting work from home programs for the past year. While the Municipality has had a flexible work arrangement business practice in place since 1999, it is not used consistently across all business units where such arrangements may be possible. Often the primary barrier to flexible work arrangements is a managerial approach that relies on observable daily work habits for employee evaluation, as opposed to the quality and timeliness of outcomes and deliverables. Directing the CAO to support and encourage flexible work arrangements may increase managers’ comfort level for considering flexible work options for their teams and strengthen the cultural change required for implementation to be successful. Encouraging the use of flexible arrangements may include internal communication that directs employees to the Flexible Work Arrangements Business Practice and provides information as to how flexing work time and locations can be used as a traffic mitigation strategy, a system for tracking how many employees are utilizing this strategy, and the development of tools for managers and employees to assist in implementing flexible work arrangements.

Flexible work times can be an effective transportation demand management strategy where employers allow employees to shift their start and end times each day. Introducing flexible work times has been shown to increase transit ridership by allowing employees to better align their travel times to transit schedules. It also reduces demand on the road network for those employees driving to work by allowing them to travel outside of peak hours. In addition to flexible work times, teleworking (also referred to as flexible work location or “working from home”) and Compressed Work Weeks (also referred to as “Earned Days Off”) can be used effectively as a strategy for managing transportation demand by reducing overall trips in single occupancy vehicles.

As recommended by the IMP, employer’s support for flexible work times and teleworking can provide an effective management strategy for the current and future levels of demand on Halifax’s road network and promote more sustainable modes of transportation. Public and private sector employers across Canada promote flexible work arrangements, including the cities of Hamilton, Edmonton, Winnipeg and Vancouver. Flexible work arrangements, policies and programs have a co-benefit of supporting employee health and wellbeing, contributing to higher levels of productivity and reducing vehicle kilometers traveled by commuters. More locally, this strategy was employed by DND to address the traffic congestion and reduced capacity created by The Big Lift project on the MacDonald Bridge. Local organizations, such as the Nova Scotia Health Authority and the Government of Nova Scotia, have adopted policies or guidelines to support flexible work times and locations.

While flexible arrangements will not work for all employees, it can be a valuable strategy for “anchored” employees who work primarily at a personal computer during regular business hours. Employees who work shifts determined by their collective agreement (ex. police officers and transit operators) already have schedules that meet the objectives of flexible work arrangements as these employees travel to and from work during non-peak traffic times and have days off between shifts to address personal and family obligations. The organizational work required to implement flexible work arrangements is relatively low but can greatly reduce the number of employees who drive alone to work, or the number of kilometers that they drive each week and the space needed for employee parking. Supporting the strategic use of flexible work arrangements for municipal employees would allow Halifax to lead by example in promoting this strategy to other employers within the municipality.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There is no cost to flex work times. Work is expected to run and function as usual with only changes to start and end times.

RISK CONSIDERATION

There are no significant risks associated with the recommendations in this Report. The risks considered rate Low.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

N/A

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Currently, 27% of the greenhouse gas emissions in Nova Scotia come from the transportation sector, the second-largest contributor after energy production. Of that 27%, over half of the emissions come from passenger and light duty vehicles used for commuting and other personal trips. With the number of jobs in Halifax expected to increase by 42,000 over the next 15 years, the demand on our road network is expected to increase as well. Without the proper interventions, this will likely result in increased congestion into the Regional Centre and increased time spent idling in traffic, resulting in higher emissions and poorer air quality.

ALTERNATIVES

The Transportation Standing Committee could choose not to recommend that Halifax Regional Council direct the CAO to promote and encourage Flexible Work Arrangements. This is not advisable as Flexible Work Arrangements and Transportation Demand Management are key elements of the Integrated Mobility Plan.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Flexible Work Arrangements Business Practice
Attachment B: EDO (Earned Day Off) Business Practice

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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Flexible Work Arrangements

Original Implementation Date		Approved by	
Date of Last Revision	1999	Approved by	
Effective Date of Last Revision		Approved by	

1 - Business Practice Name

Flexible Work Arrangements

2 - Scope

This applies to all non-union HRM employees.

3 - Procedures

An employee or a group of employees who are interested in a flexible work arrangement may submit a proposal to their manager outlining the proposed flex arrangement and identifying the benefits to the individual(s) and the organization.

Flex work hours (“flextime”) may include adjusted daily start/end times, compressed work week or other “earned time off” arrangements, adjustments to the scheduling of lunch breaks or shifts, job sharing or other part-time arrangements.

Flex workplace (“flex place”) may include working from home, or some other site apart from the usual work location, providing such arrangements provide the employee with full access to the tools and facilities required to perform the work safely and effectively.

Managers are encouraged to make every reasonable effort to accommodate employees’ request for flexible work arrangements, taking into consideration the need to meet operational requirements. Consideration must be given to the impact on group insurance and pension when flexible work arrangements affect earnings (for example, job sharing). A flexible work arrangement may be approved on a trial basis, subject to review or modification after a specified period of time.

4 - Contact

HR Business Partners, Human Resources

5 - Related Policies and Practices

Job Sharing
Earned Day Off (EDO)

Earned Day Off (EDO)

Original Implementation Date		Approved by	
Date of Last Revision	2003	Approved by	
Effective Date of Last Revision		Approved by	

1 - Business Practice Name

Earned Day Off (EDO)

2 - Purpose

Compressed Workweek/Earned Day Off (EDO) may be the flexible work arrangement employees need as part of their work and family balance management strategy. Flexible work arrangements allow employees to work their regular hours in fewer days. Many employees appreciate having a regular full day off, while still preserving full-time income.

3 - Scope

This applies to all non-union HRM employees.

4 - Procedures

Managers are encouraged to make every reasonable effort to accommodate employee's request to participate in the Earned Day Off (EDO) program, taking into consideration the need to meet operational requirements.

- 1) EDO's are to be taken when they are scheduled (no banking of days). Exceptions may be made under extenuating circumstances.
- 2) Staff who participate in the EDO program will be required to ensure there is sufficient cover-off of job responsibilities.
- 3) In the event of time missed, due to sick leave for example, the extra time required for the next earned day off shall be made up prior to taking the scheduled EDO.
- 4) Staff will be responsible to track their own time worked and required to maintain a record of additional time worked.

EXAMPLE:

Staff may choose to work on a two (2) week cycle to provide an additional day off every second week. To be eligible for an additional day off (EDO), staff are required to work forty-five (45) minutes longer over eight working days (8) and work one (1) hour longer on the ninth (9th) day with the tenth (10th) day off. Similarly, for a three (3) week cycle, staff must work seven (7) hours extra over fourteen working (14) days to take an EDO.

5 - Contact

HR Business Partners

6 - Related Policies and Practices

Flexible Work Arrangements

7 - Attachments & Links

Link to HRM intranet forms (examples only - currently located under Finance & ICT):

<http://insidehrm/Forms/Index.html>:

<http://insidehrm/BusinessUnits/Finance/Documents/EDOTimesheetsTwoWeeks.pdf>

<http://insidehrm/BusinessUnits/Finance/Documents/EDOTimesheetsThreeWeeks.pdf>