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Item No. 12.1.2
Transportation Standing Committee
Special Meeting
March 25, 2021

TO: Chair and Members of Transportation Standing Committee

-Original Signed-

SUBMITTED BY:

Brad Anguish, P.Eng., Executive Director, Transportation and Public Works

-Original Signed-

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: March 16, 2021

SUBJECT: Improvements on Devonshire Avenue

ORIGIN

On December 12, 2019, the Transportation Standing Committee put and passed the following motion:

THAT the Transportation Standing Committee request a staff report recommending improvements to Devonshire Avenue for the benefit of all users by applying a “Complete Streets” approach as outlined in the Integrated Mobility Plan, including upgrading the existing bike lanes, improving pedestrian crossings, reducing vehicle speeds and beautifying the neighbourhood.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, Section 322(1): Council may design, lay out, open, expand, construct, maintain, improve, alter, repair, light, water, clean, and clear streets in the Municipality.

Motor Vehicle Act, 90(3): The traffic authority may also mark lanes for traffic on street pavements at such places as they may deem advisable, consistent with this Act and may erect traffic signals consistent with this Act to control the use of lanes for traffic.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Transportation Standing Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer to pursue improvements to Devonshire Avenue as described in the Discussion section of this report.

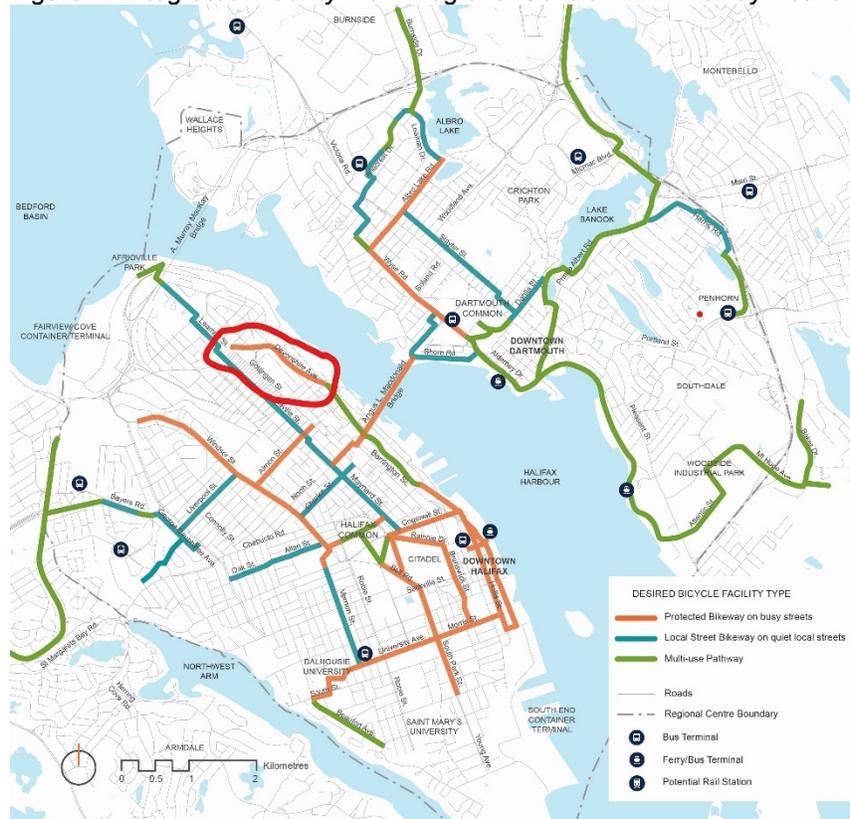
BACKGROUND

Devonshire Avenue was identified as a candidate for proposed bicycle lanes in the 2014 Active Transportation Priorities Plan. On May 10, 2016, following a planning exercise with community and resident engagement, Regional Council approved a new cross section for Devonshire Avenue. The street transitioned from a four-lane cross section to a two-lane cross section with painted bike lanes. The project also added shortened pedestrian crossings at several locations. This new cross section was implemented as part of a larger street rehabilitation project in 2016.

Devonshire Avenue is fronted by single residences, several institutional uses (Veith House, Needham Centre, Family Law Courts, Bethel Church, etc.) and a new multi-unit building at the corner of Young Street. There are at least three daycare facilities in the immediate vicinity and crossing Devonshire is part of pedestrian route between the Mulgrave Park neighbourhood and the schools, parks and other community destinations.

The December 14, 2018 Information Report to Council entitled “Integrated Mobility Plan Implementation of Regional Centre “AAA” Bikeway Network” informed Regional Council that Devonshire Avenue was being added to the candidate Regional Centre All Ages and Abilities (AAA) bicycle network. The street was added after the opportunity to construct a segment of the Barrington Greenway between North Street and Devonshire Avenue was confirmed. Devonshire Avenue is part of a proposed five km AAA bikeway corridor linking the North End of the Halifax peninsula to downtown, via the Barrington Greenway, forthcoming Cogswell District bike lanes and new AAA bicycle facilities on Hollis and Lower Water streets.

Figure 1: Integrated Mobility Plan. Regional Centre AAA Bikeway Network, with Devonshire Avenue circled.



DISCUSSION

Devonshire Avenue is one of several streets in the proposed Regional Centre All Ages and Abilities (AAA) bikeway network that have painted bike lanes. As part of the implementation of this network, it will be the subject of a design exercise to determine the best options to improve safety and connectivity of the facility. The facility is currently not considered “all ages and abilities” as traffic volumes and speeds exceed the recommended limit for designating a street with painted bike lanes as “AAA”.

The design exercise would consider broader “complete street” factors such as safety, aesthetics, access, overall street operations, resident and abutter needs and other factors. At this time, it is anticipated that improvements would not be part of a larger street rehabilitation project. Rather, features would be added to the corridor within the existing curb-to-curb dimensions (e.g. precast concrete curb or planters). The project also includes the intersection of Devonshire Avenue, Novalea Drive and Duffus Street and the block of Duffus Street between Novalea Drive and Isleville Street. The exact timeline for implementation of this AAA project will be determined following evaluation of the proposed tactical improvements (see below) and preliminary design.

Devonshire is also a candidate street for the introduction of “tactical” or temporary improvements to improve safety and connectivity as part of HRM’s [Street Improvement Pilot Projects](#) (Tactical Urbanism) program. The treatments would include measures to separate bicycles and motor vehicles and potentially other enhancements. Implementation is being considered for 2021. Measures that are used in the tactical treatment would be assessed in the design process for the more permanent changes.

Operations and maintenance of any facilities that are constructed would be factored into the design process. Any costs would have to be added to annual operations budgets.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Any changes associated with the Street Improvement Pilot Projects (Tactical Urbanism) program would be funded from existing budgets. If implemented in 2021 this would be from account CT200008, Tactical Urbanism.

Any permanent changes following a design exercise would be funded from account CR200007, Regional Centre AAA Bikeways.

RISK CONSIDERATION

There are no significant risks associated with the proposed direction in this report.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

There was community engagement as part of the original decision to add painted bike lanes to Devonshire Avenue.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Improving the safety and connectivity of bicycle facilities on Devonshire Avenue will increase the potential for its use by people bicycling. The proximity of the facility to some of the largest employers in Halifax and its connectivity to downtown bike facilities make the facility a viable route for commuting. This supports efforts to make it easier and safer for residents to choose more sustainable forms of transportation.

ALTERNATIVES

The Transportation Standing Committee may wish to recommend that Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer to not proceed with improvements on Devonshire Avenue. This is not recommended as it is considered a key link in the Regional Centre All Ages and Abilities bicycle network and would be contrary to the objectives of the *Integrated Mobility Plan*.

ATTACHMENTS

N/A

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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