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Item No. 12.1.4
Transportation Standing Committee
January 27, 2022

TO: Chair and Members of Transportation Standing Committee

Original Signed

SUBMITTED BY:

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: January 10, 2022

SUBJECT: **Active Transportation Connection between Westmount Plains Subdivision and Old Lawrencetown Road**

ORIGIN

September 17, 2019 Regional Council (Item 15.3.2)

Moved by Councillor Nicoll, seconded by Councillor Hendsbee

THAT Halifax Regional Council request a staff report regarding the possibility of developing a trail linking the Westmount Plains subdivision to the Old Lawrencetown Road.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, S.N.S. 2008, c.39:

Section 61(5)

The Municipality may

- (a) acquire property, including property outside the Municipality, that the Municipality requires for its purposes or for the use of the public;

Section 79A(1)

Subject to subsections (2) to (4), the Municipality may only spend money for municipal purposes if:

- (a) the expenditure is included in the Municipality's operating budget or capital budget or is otherwise authorized by the Municipality;
- (b) the expenditure is in respect of an emergency under the *Emergency Management Act*; or
- (c) the expenditure is legally required to be paid.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Transportation Standing Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer, under the Regional Plan review, to pursue the planning of an active transportation connection between the Westmount Plains subdivision and the Old Lawrencetown Road Greenway as part of potential secondary planning for this area.

BACKGROUND

In August and September 2019 fifty-eight residents of the Westmount Plains Subdivision signed a petition that requested a link between their neighbourhood and the Old Lawrencetown Road Greenway. The petition was received by Regional Council on October 8, 2019¹. The residents cited rationale such as improved access to Cole Harbour facilities, safer places for people to bicycle, safer places for pedestrians, children and walking dogs, and other factors.

The Old Lawrencetown Road Greenway is a gravel-surface multi-use pathway for people walking and bicycling that extends about 2km and connects residential areas in Cole Harbour to Trunk 207. It also connects into residential streets via Old Miller Road and Ritcey Crescent. The corridor is part of HRM right-of-way, but it is not used to move motor vehicles. The facility was built in 2014 by the Lawrencetown Cole Harbour Connector Association with HRM and Provincial funding support. HRM is currently responsible for maintenance.

Westmount Plains Subdivision is located on Ross Road and connecting streets between Trunk 207 and Main Street/Highway 107 with approximately 75 residences. Ross Road Elementary School is located in the subdivision.

The Active Transportation Priorities Plan guides the planning and construction of walking and facilities in HRM. The Plan identifies proposed corridors and facilities. The connection that the petition requests is a candidate facility in the Active Transportation Priorities Plan as an envisioned corridor connecting communities in Cole Harbour, Lawrencetown and Mineville. This corridor was proposed to both connect these communities with a safer walking and bicycling facility and also as an alternative corridor to the Salt Marsh Trail to connect Dartmouth and the Eastern Shore.

There is no publicly owned corridor connecting the Old Lawrencetown Road Greenway to streets in the Westmount Plains subdivision. The land that would be required to develop this connection is owned by a private property owner. The most logical connection identified on Figure 1 is located on part of a single parcel.

Figure 1 – Area Map Illustrating Communities and Facilities



¹ [October 8, 2019 Halifax Regional Council Minutes | Halifax.ca](#)

The land required for the connection is currently designated as “Urban Reserve” in the HRM Regional Plan. The 2014 Regional Plan applied the Urban Reserve designation to lands that were identified as potentially suitable for serviced urban development beyond the 25-year horizon of the plan. However, the Regional Plan is currently being reviewed and it is being recommended these lands be studied to determine if and how serviced development should proceed.²

DISCUSSION

Two options were explored to determine the possibility of developing an active transportation connection between the Westmount Plains subdivision and the Old Lawrencetown Road Greenway. Both require working with the owner of the private property between the subdivision and the Greenway.

The first option to develop a connection would be to purchase land or negotiate an easement from the property owner. Following such an acquisition, HRM would have to build the facility. Developing the connection in advance of planning for the area risks needing to change the corridor to align with the overall development master plan once it is created.

The second option to develop a connection would be to incorporate active transportation facilities as part of a planning process for the entire area. As noted above, Council will consider designating the land between the Old Lawrencetown Greenway and Westmount Plains subdivision as eligible for secondary planning for development under the Regional Plan review currently underway. This option is the best possibility for developing this connection. The land required could potentially be designated as a public corridor or right-of-way as part of the planning process. As well, it is also possible that construction of such a facility could be incorporated into a future agreement between the developer and HRM.

Staff contacted the owner of the land that would be required to make the trail connection. They expressed interest in learning more about the Municipal AT Plan for the area and indicated that development of such facilities would be subject to master planning, design and subdivision of the lands.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no immediate financial implications associated with the recommendation. Should the active transportation connection between Westmount Plains Subdivision and Old Lawrence Town Road be built by the developer, then operating costs associated with the connection will be calculated at that time.

RISK CONSIDERATION

No risk considerations were identified.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

No community engagement was required.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

No environmental implications were identified.

² Additional information on the Regional Plan Review is available here:
<https://www.shapeyourcityhalifax.ca/regional-plan>

ALTERNATIVES

The Transportation Standing Committee could recommend that Halifax Regional Council direct staff to develop this connection as an immediate priority, independent of the potential planning process for the entire area.

ATTACHMENTS

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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