

Transportation

1. Do you think there is a need for a transportation authority which would combine Metro Transit, HRM transportation and the Bridge Commission?

Response from: Barry Dalrymple- Dist 1

No Response

Response from: Steve Streach- Dist 1

No Response

Response from: Laurie Cook- Dist 2

The lack of adequate community transportation is a major concern from North Preston all the way to Ecum Secum. It is not clear on the face of it that another level of bureaucracy is a solution. Regardless of how many agencies are involved, what seems to have been missing is a coordinated approach that once and for all rejects building more roads as the only way to address transportation problems.

We also need more alternative modes for delivering transportation in rural areas, including new community models like Musgo Rider, which grew out of the Musquodoboit Harbour community visioning process (www.musgorider.com).

Key.

Response from: Will Gilligan- Dist 2

A single authority would eliminate confusion and duplication, as well as, we would be able to draw some revenue from the gas tax. We have a need for new routes in HRM, and we have a massive lack of transit in the rural areas. A partnership with the Province will be

Response from: David Hendsbee-Dist 2

No Response

Response from: Jason Josey- Dist 2

I think that more study and information needs to be available before a decision like this could be made. I also feel that this would be something the employees and the general public should absolutely have input on. Transportation in HRM is a huge issue at all times and I don't feel

that the people are always being listened to. Council needs to start putting the needs of the people first. A transportation authority could be a great positive as long as it was established in the right way.

Response from: Gail McQuarrie- Dist 2

No Response

Response from: Keith Leahy- Dist 2

I would be supportive of any agency that eliminates duplication, increase efficiency and enhances the experience of HRM's citizens. In saying that, as councilor for District 2 I would be open to exploring such a scenario and if it meets the criteria I have listed above I would work to implement it.

Response from: Jackie Barkhouse- Dist 3

There is always value in discussing ways to make the transportation system more efficient and easier to use and creating an overarching transportation authority can be part of that discussion.

Response from: Bill Karsten- District 3

No response

Response from: Jim MacDonald- District 3

No response

Response from: Lorelei Nicoll- Dist 4

It makes sense to coordinate efforts, whether facilitated by an independent transportation authority or by some other mechanism. Effective coordination of transportation policy will depend on active cooperation from the municipality, the province, the federal government, the Bridge Commission, and many other potential stakeholders who may have something to offer, including the private sector. As councillor, I support the formation of such a body provided that it does not just add another layer of bureaucracy.

Response from: Barry A. Smith-Dist 4

No Response

Response from: Sam Austin- Dist 5

I do believe that our transportation systems need to be more integrated. I'm open to the idea of a higher-level transportation authority that can take account of the bigger picture.

Transportation problems we need to solve include:

- Lack of focus on active transportation;
- Better coordination of ferry and bus schedules;
- Making public transit a faster option for users than driving by creating dedicated bus lanes and signals;
- Recognizing that rural and suburban areas cannot and should not be serviced in the same way as our Downtowns;
- Flexibility in adding transit service during special events and holidays;
- Bringing back FRED or a similar service to ensure cruise ship visitors make it past the waterfront;

The creation of any new transportation authority must have clear goals. I would not want to add another layer of bureaucracy without clear responsibility, authority and targets for success.

Response from: Sonya Dudka- Dist 5

I believe there is a great deal of merit in this concept. Council will have to fully understand the impact and costs of such a merger to ensure the benefits outweigh the costs. Council must also ensure that a Transportation Authority would have sufficient resources and scope of responsibility to truly be empowered to create a unified system for moving people around our city. The focus must be on moving people and not just moving cars. There is a lot to be said about having all of these organizations sitting around the same table sharing information and working together.

Response from: Ken Bowman- Dist 5

This is an excellent question and without looking at the financial statements nor the business structure, it is hard for me to give an answer to which I can commit. However, on the surface, yes, I do think they should be combined. It appears to me that combining these separate transportation-specific entities under one corporate structure will make them more efficient and cost effective. As with any organization, though, we need to put a person at the top who is organized, a leader, and someone who is not swayed by bureaucracy. We need to give this person a well defined contract with defined parameters while still giving them enough free range to organize this new entity so that it becomes more profitable collectively than the separate organizations are at present.

Response from: Bryn Jones-Vaillancourt- Dist 5

Yes, I feel this could be beneficial. Presently, these three bodies at times seem to work counter to each other. To centre them under one banner of a city transportation network would streamline the delivery of transportation services across Halifax. However, I feel it would be important for control of a transportation authority to remain at the municipal level. Also, if a transportation authority was created, we could inject the savings from that merge into improving our municipal transportations networks.

Response from: Gloria McCluskey- Dist 5

No Response

Response from: Kate Watson- Dist 5

I think we could create a more efficient and cost-effective transit system if we brought the management of these entities together in an Integrated Transit Authority.

Response from: Bill Zebedee- Dist 5

I am not opposed to this idea, but it needs to be a government regulated and operated authority that works in synergy. However, if each of these entities were to operate effectively and efficiently, there would be no need to amalgamate them into one authority. For example, it is time to stop putting band-aides on Metro Transit (MT) to deal with the injuries. MT needs a complete overhaul starting with an explanation why the number of managers has increased from one for every 30 employees to one for every 8 employees. As that is happening a complete review of each bus route can be conducted to determine best use of resources. Is there a need to keep the route 63 running between the Bridge Terminal and Woodside Terminal when there are two route 60s that do the same route? There are many examples of buses driving by completely empty during peak times, and we need to know why.

Response from: Darren Fisher-Dist 6

No Response

Response from: Jerry Pie- Dist 6

No Response

Response from: Mike MacDonell- Dist 7

The current state of the transportation system in this city can be summed up as disorganized and mismanaged, and there are multiple cases to support this assessment. From the new platform to offer senior days on Tuesdays, which conveniently ends after this upcoming election (vote pandering) to the upheaval that was the bus strike. The need for a singular body to govern transportation in the city is more than apparent it will allow for a more coordinated

approach to all forms of transportation and will establish a system to handle any issues that may arise between these currently autonomous bodies.

Response from: Wayne Mason- District 7

No. The bridges work fine as they are. HRM already has a transportation functional plan. Council needs to be the final arbiter- all stakeholders and residents need to be consulted and the elected representatives preside over that process. There is no indication to me that a TA would in more money better implementation of existing or new plans.

Council should move to immediately re-create the provincially mandated "Traffic Authority" as a separate office, rather than vest that power in the senior civil servant in charge of the TRW. Our traffic and transportation problems are compounded by having a senior staffer who is statutorily empowered to say "No" to both council and senior staff, based on his/her interpretation of international traffic standards.

Transit needs to be considered in an urban transportation context. In the city, we have commuters taking cars, walking, biking, and taking transit to get to work.

At rush hour, a full bus has 50 people on it. A ferry has 300, A train has 200. That's a lot of cars taken off our roads.

Our transportation strategy must include bike lanes, paths and all the active transportation planning we have talking about since 2006. It needs to be funded and built. This will also help take pressure off the road system, but it's critical transit receive the funding it takes to build a system that is second to none.

When we talk about transit, a good year sees just \$25-35 million invested in infrastructure and vehicles. Contrast that with Ottawa spending \$2.1 billion on light rail. Edmonton: \$425. Vancouver is spending \$1.4 billion to expand existing systems. Even acknowledge our smaller population we just don't measure up.

Halifax needs to get in the game. And it needs leadership prepared to what it takes.

Response from: Dawgfather PHD- Dist 7

No Response

Response from: Sue Uteck- Dist 7

This idea has been around since 2005 and I do not think it is the answer. If you are having one authority for the betterment of the region then that sounds good. If you are having one authority so you can tap into their credit rating and resources (ex. Bridge Commission) then I don't think you are going to solve the issues that currently exist.

The issues are one of availability, quality of infrastructure and antiquated legislation that discourage the private sector from participating. As we look for a new municipal infrastructure deal with the federal government in 2014 with respect to funding, transportation will be a key issue across the country.

Response from: Gerry Walsh- Dist 7

Another of my key priorities is “build confidence in public transit.” Residents of Halifax want a transit system that is easy to understand, convenient to use, and efficient. Clearly, Metro Transit is not serving the needs of residents. Instead of putting more bus capacity in the more heavily populated urban core, they are expanding services into increasingly sparsely populated areas. This strategy not only drives up the overall cost of the service (now \$80 million vs \$27 million in 2000), it diverts valuable bus capacity from the more populated urban core. The result is that HRM has one of the lowest levels of transit users, per capita, in Canada. It is not immediately evident to me that a Regional Transportation Authority will solve these problems but I am willing to listen to the argument.

Response from: Karen Demsey- Dist 8

No Response

Response from: Doug Madonald-Dist 8

No Response

Response from: James McKay- Dist 8

No

Response from: Dawn Marie Sloane- Dist 8

Yes! We to become more congruent in our means of mobility. Halifax Regional needs to become more effective and efficient on how it moves our residents and businesses around. Our mobility is crippled with poor transit routes and ferry scheduling. We need to adopt programs such as Car-Share, Van Pools, and other means of mobility that would take the pressure off our arterials with one person occupied vehicles.

Free parking for those willing to participate in programs like Car- Share, Van Pools, and motorcycles/mopeds.

Response from: Jennifer Watts- Dist 8

I am not sure that a transportation authority is entirely needed – it could just add another layer

of bureaucracy. I think there needs to be a clearer vision and integration but strong council leadership can really help move this. These groups meet already at a staff level but one of issue is that their discussions are not part of the public record; so direction is discussed but it is not through a process that is transparent. I think Council's Transportation Standing Committee needs to play a stronger role in directing and coordinating so that these discussions are part of the public record. There has been some discussion of having public representation on an authority but again the meetings and decision making process would need to be part of the public record.

Response from: Giovanni (John) Abati- Dist 9

Interesting Concept - Need to discuss with the staff at the 3 Organizations

May have benefits, however the Devil is in the Details

The 3 groups should work in Partnership. The Debate is whether to be as a single Authority, or as 3 separate groups.

Response from: Richard MacLean- Dist 9

I would be supportive of any combination that streamlines transportation and increases efficiencies within the system.

Response from: Linda Mosher- Dist 9

Absolutely! Based on the success of Transportation Authority's in other areas, I have brought this to Council on two occasions. My most recent motion that was approved by Regional Council on November 2, 2010 was "Regional Council move forward to establish a Regional Transportation Authority". Under the rationale for adding this to the agenda I added "For almost a decade, the Province and HRM have discussed setting up this body which would allow for more effective management, planning, and fiscal control of traffic and transportation systems within HRM". Outcome Sought: "Halifax Regional Municipality and the Province of Nova Scotia reactivate this proposal which has been the topic of at least one previous Provincial Bill and a number of Regional Council Motions. My original motion was approved by Council in February 19, 2009. Now is the ideal time to form an authority as the five year integrated transportation plan is almost over and we need a new plan and vision. Having an independent body would enable them to continually work on transportation priorities as one voice instead of separate mandates. As well, this type of independent body may be able to leverage external funds in ways that the individual organizations might not be able to access.

Response from: John Wimberly- Dist 9

No response

Response from: Kurt Bulger- Dist 10

No response

Response from: John Thibeau- Dist 10

Though these three particular authorities may have overlapping responsibilities they also have direct responsibilities not shared by the other two. It has been my experience that allotting too much responsibility for too many issues to too few people can lead to poorer service and lowered productivity.

When there is any sort of amalgamation of any type of organizations, there are always fewer people in the new single group than in the original group. This means that though we have the possible efficiency of one “streamlined” group, the number of issues and responsibilities being dealt with increase in scope and number, yet there are fewer people to address those same issues and responsibilities. This is counter-productive to running efficient public services. If there is difficulty for each one of these groups now, those difficulties will manifest and have a much bigger impact under the guise of a single organization run with fewer people. If a plan to amalgamate the different authorities without negatively impacting operations or services were proposed, I would be open to investigating the possibility. Again, I would rather see investment into these services than penny-saving strategies made at the cost of employment and service standards. Public services should not operate under the more familiar idea of ‘bottom line is profit’ that private business has. Public services are not created for profit, but because they are essential to the day to day activities of citizens. It should be understood that public services should not (or are not meant to) operate to make money.

I do not support combining the three as it now stands. However, as always I am open to new ideas and points that would change my stance on it. Being open to the ideas of the residents of District 10 and all of HRM will help to bring new and innovative solutions to the table.

Response from: Russell Walker- Dist 10

I would want to see a business case for a proposed transportation authority as there are reasons for and against this proposal.

Response from: Steve Adams-Dist 11

No Response

Response from: Peter Grabosky-Dist 11

No Response

Response from: Jim Hoskins-Dist 11

No Response

Response from: Tom Lavers-Dist 11

No Response

Response from: P. Rano Khokar- Dist 12

No Response

Response from: Reg Rankin- Dist 12

Yes, I believe there is a considerable joint interest (Province and HRM) to establish a transportation authority- such as Vancouver has done. This new committee should be appointed as a competency based body.

Response from: Mary Wile- Dist 12

Serving on different Boards and Commissions, including the Bridge Commission, has proven invaluable as a Councillor in understanding not only how these entities operate but the challenges they face. Strategic transportation planning is a priority in HRM and involves a sustainable transportation network and infrastructure (streets, vehicles, parks, etc). I support the Transport Demand Management approach that outlines a set of initiatives to improve the efficiency of the transportation network, including encouraging alternatives to the single occupant vehicle trips (extended public transit service, cycling, car pooling, etc).

Response from: Bruce Smith- Dist 12

The immediate need lays what the redirection of Metro Transit. Over the next 10 years West Halifax will see the construction of approximately 10,000 household units, about 30,000 people. We need to plan and be ready for this growth. A Transit Terminal, with a multi-level Park & Ride, will be required for Clayton Park West. Dedicated bus lanes will be required into the City Core. Smaller buses, such as those used as Access-a-Bus, should be employed on low rider-ship routes rather than canceling those services.

The Bridge Commission appears to be well managed and working fine.

If it's not broke, let's not spend the taxpayer's money to create more or a larger bureaucracy.

Response from: Peter Lund- Dist 13

No Response

Response from: Doug Poulton- Dist 13

No Response

Response from: Matt Whitman- Dist 13

No Response

Response from: Brad Johns-Dist 14

No Response

Response from: Laurier Sauers- Dist 14

In order to answer this question effectively, I would need more research. This is a very important issue, not to be taken lightly. I would be open to considering the idea but I am not comfortable addressing it at this time.

Response from: Steve Craig- Dist 15

At some point there needs to be a body that is solely focused on and responsible for ensuring the overall cost effective and efficient movement of citizens and commerce throughout HRM. A transportation authority is an option.

Response from: Janet Langille- Dist 15

No Response

Response from: Stephen Taylor-Dist 15

No Response

Response from: Curt Wentzell- Dist 15

No Response

Response from: Ian Wilson- Dist 15

No Response

Response from: Tim Outhit- Dist 16

Response from: Tim Outhit- Dist 16

Yes, I would support this initiative.

Response from: Mark Ward- Dist 16

No Response