

Shifting to Sustainable Transportation
Notes - Task Force Meeting #2 - July 27, 2010

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Review goals of the Task Force
3. Small group work: share our visions for a sustainable transportation system
4. Report back to larger group
5. Discussion: how to turn sustainable transportation into a popular movement?
6. Next steps

Attendance

Marie-Claude Gregoire (ADAPT, IWK Sustainable Transportation Committee)
Murray Metherall (CREST)
Derek Robinson (Dalhousie Office of Sustainability)
Fred Wendt (Planner, HRM)
Bernie Smith (Spring Garden Road Business Association)
Ahsan Habib (Professor, Dalhousie School of Planning)
Peter Lund (HRM councillor for Hammonds Plains - St. Margaret's)
Paul MacKinnon (Downtown Halifax Business Commission)
Marcus Garnet (Planner, HRM)
Lauralee Sim (Halifax Cycling Coalition)
Scott McPhee (Clean Nova Scotia; Dalhousie Sustainable Transportation Project)
Graham Reid (Former HRM councillor; Member of Environmental Panel for Canadian Motorcycle Association)
Mark Poirier (Planner, SNSMR)
Frank Palermo (Professor, Dalhousie Faculty of Architecture and Planning)
Mark Nener (Cities & Environment Unit)
Ali Shaver (Cities & Environment Unit)

Our visions for a sustainable transportation system

Group 1

- Need discussion about the relationship between origin and destination (need to reduce number of trips)
- Difference between passenger and freight transportation
- Shuttle trains to take containers down the rail cut and then shift to trucks from there (limit truck traffic in the downtown)
- Increase space given to alternative transportation modes
- Increase cost of parking spaces and decrease amount of parking
- Downtown circulators
- Transportation should be interactive - part of your daily social life
- 20 minute commute (no more, no less)
- Streetcars
- Few transfers and seamless transfers
- Transit needs to be as convenient as the car
- Need shift in attitude - single passenger car travel is not sexy

- Need a shift in attitude similar to the shift that occurred with smoking
- Car does not define a person
- Need regional public transit options
 - Idea: Metro transit to run a free bus to Crystal Crescent Beach on Sundays
- Need broad support and understanding of pedestrian-only streets and the importance of bike lanes
 - Idea: car free Sundays
- Need to get over the attitude of “we’ve never done it, so it can’t be done”
- Need city wide initiative to help people who are nervous about cycling - buddy with an experienced cyclist (need similar program for transit users as well)
- Connected bike lanes throughout HRM
- Integrated decision-making
- Do something before we’re at a crisis point
- Transportation options must reflect the true costs associated with those options

Group 2

- Plan holistically - take a comprehensive view
- Transportation planning and settlement planning must be integrated
- System is multimodal - diversity matters
- Focus on demand management (connected closely to land use)
- Create a pedestrian precinct or high street - demonstrate need for multimodal system
- Don’t create a small scale Toronto (i.e., sprawl)
- Need to market sustainable transportation - make it cool
- Transportation decisions at all levels and agencies need to be coordinated
- Establish a Transportation Authority to ensure that planning and implementation of plans is coordinated at different levels of governments and across agencies
- We have infrastructure and geography that can work for sustainable transportation - let’s use it more (e.g., harbour, rail right-of-way)
- Transit needs to be cool, reliable and connected - need top quality to appeal to people’s emotions
- Pilot projects can build support for change
- Don’t let CN stand in the way of our vision for sustainable transportation for our region - message that CN management is no longer interested in cooperating on commuter rail is 2nd hand information - is this really true? We should consider trying to meet with high level CN managers.
- Synergy with trail system

Group 3

- Public transport should have priority - needs to be efficient, convenient, frequent and comfortable
- Public transport is cheaper than driving a car
- Need to make public transit the choice people make over a car
- Easily accessible bus schedules - times you can see from far away
- Use rail lines
- Land use decisions need to consider transportation

- Shorter bus routes with major transfer points - make predictable and could develop transit nodes
- Have options to combine walking, biking and transit
- Stagger work hours
- Raise parking fees
- Transit lanes and priority bus lights
- Need to communicate what will happen if we don't move in the direction of sustainable transportation
- We will have to make tough decisions - need political leadership
- Perception of the necessity of parking on the streets needs to change
- Real-time parking information available for drivers
- Roundabouts in the city (?)
- Lots of surface parking is a sign of a city's lack of vitality
- Good transit downtown is essential to economic viability of downtown
- Not everyone has or will have access to a car - taxis and car share are available
- Have parking spaces in variable sizes, i.e., for small cars
- Fuel taxes and large vehicle taxes
- Densify the peninsula

Large Group Discussion

- Need to focus on health (Nova Scotia has high cancer rates, some of the worst health stats in Canada)
- Health, environment and economics
- Think about the needs of the aging population (the current aging population is driving more than the previous generation)
- Need to collect data to get a true picture of specific daily modal splits in HRM
- Need indicators to know whether we're achieving a shift toward sustainable transportation
- We need to make it harder to drive and easier to use transit
- Need to convince malls to give up parking spaces

Next Steps

- CEU to consolidate notes from small groups to create 2-3 Big Ideas toward a sustainable transportation system.
- Next meeting: August 11, 2010 @ 12pm - 2pm