

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION TASK FORCE

Attendance

Jonathan Lampier (Director, Urban Development Action Team, FUSION Halifax)
Frank Palermo (Dalhousie Faculty of Architecture and Planning)
Leonard Preyra (MLA Halifax Citadel - Sable Island)
Brian Weadick (FUSION Urban Development Action Team)
Kaitlin Pianosi (FUSION Sustainability Action Team)
Spencer Fowlie (Clean Nova Scotia)
Bernard Smith (Agricola/Gottingen St. initiative)
Derek Robinson (Dalhousie Office of Sustainability)
Mark Nener (Cities & Environment Unit)

Agenda

1. Welcome & introductions
2. Introduction to FUSION Halifax Action Teams
3. Advance "What if?" public engagement idea
4. Next steps

Discussion

"What if?" Public Engagement Sessions

- Great way to get talking about improving the transit system
- FUSION's Green Light Halifax event last year – asked participants: how can we make Halifax's transit system that best in the world? Laundry list of improvements? Mid, long-range goals? What do you like about Halifax's system? Good turn out considering it was a great summer day. Intend to produce a report. Met with the Mayor to review the outcomes. Considering a survey to prioritize ideas with FUSION membership.
- "What if?" sessions a great follow up to Green Light Halifax
- Moving forward is what we are trying to do. So many related initiatives, easy for them to become background noise. We don't have a choice but to move forward – have to find a way of bringing ideas together in a concerted way. Not any one group has the answers. Starting to be a loud public voice – business as usual, incremental change is not the right way to move forward. Need a strong vision and identify some immediate first steps to get there. Change is not going to happen relying on individual efforts of various govt. departments – very difficult to overcome limitations of different departmental mandates.
- Cohesive voice is important to make a difference.

- Proposed "What If?" panel discussion on public transit is a good approach – get different perspectives, brings all issues out and makes them accessible to the public, e.g., public is less knowledgeable of funding rationale & issues
- What should come out of sessions is an enriched version of the arguments made at the session. Pull out conclusions at the meeting and identify topic for next session.
- Keep panelists focused on desired aspects of transit system (i.e., Task Force Guiding Principles: transit system must be easy, accessible, comfortable, convenient, predictable and permanent; investing in transit is an important investment in public infrastructure) – don't focus on obstacles right away (i.e., \$\$)
- Public transit keeps coming up as an issue in this city – good topic to focus on.
- Idea of multi-modal system has been around for a long time – much of it comes down to capacity of institutions, etc. One idea that has been around for a while is a transportation authority.
- A lot of consensus around better use of the rail cut. The pieces for a better system are out there. We can bring them together and think about implementation, e.g., transportation authority. Rail cut is a big investment, will require a lot of work to build political consensus around that kind of investment.
- Shouldn't start with the transportation authority, explore if authority is the right way to achieve the goals.
- Money for transit is there, it's being spent on subsidizing automobile travel. Need a re-appropriation of the funds.
- Metro-Link demonstrates that there is a lot of demand for better transit.
- Demonstrate to people what is possible and get them excited to try an alternative to their cars.
- "What if?" session: open with a speaker who could introduce a transit concept? e.g., Kaitlin saw presentation by Marcus Garnet. He has real, workable ideas. Or, start with the question: why are we widening Bayers Rd? For buses or cars?
- "What if?" session on land-use, i.e., density. We want transit, but we are also sprawling, it is contradictory.
- Panelists should propose solutions, not just discuss.

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION TASK FORCE

- Regional Plan not being implemented, we're still sprawling.
- The biggest deficiency in the current system is that it's not competitive. Travel & transfer times are not competitive with travel by car. Needs to be addressed first! Not a resource issue, it's a planning issue. Need competitive, integrated schedules.
- Coast article about \$\$ spent on highway interchanges. What are the priorities? We're spending money making the problem worse. Coast article: *Business as usual: Subsidizing suburban sprawl* <http://www.thecoast.ca/RealityBites/archives/2011/01/17/business-as-usual-subsidizing-suburban-sprawl>
- Scheduling at Metro Transit – many complaints about schedule. Go Time system is not reliable. Riders don't have faith in the reliability of the system. Very difficult to plan & time out your trip. What are the issues at Metro Transit?
- Panel, format, venue, timing of first session?
- Panel & breakout sessions?
- Do breakout sessions lead to a lot of discussion, but not necessarily action? CEU has hosted public sessions where outcomes are consolidated at the meeting and presented back to participants at the session. Sessions and outcomes need to move forward quickly, each session resolves things, builds momentum.
- Bring examples of easy, accessible, comfortable, convenient, predictable and permanent systems from other places. Show people what's possible.
- Downtown Halifax Business Commission communicated to Mark their interest in this topic, and a broad partnership generating transit ideas.
- We will form a Working Group - meet Monday, Jan. 24th at 5pm to advance the planning of the first "What if?" events.

Next Steps

- Form Public Engagement Working Group: first meeting next Monday, Jan. 24th at 5pm.
- Think about specific content for a few different "What if?" sessions
- Think about who should be on the panel. Bring ideas to the first Working Group meeting.
- Explore funding options for public sessions

Next Task Force Meeting

DATE: Wednesday, February 16, 2011

TIME: 12pm - 1:30 pm

WHERE: Cities & Environment Unit offices

ADDRESS: 5257 Morris Street

Next Ciclovía Working Group Meeting

DATE: Wednesday, February 2, 2011

TIME: 12pm - 1:30 pm

WHERE: Cities & Environment Unit offices

ADDRESS: 5257 Morris Street

FIRST Public Engagement Working Group Meeting

DATE: Monday, January 24, 2011

TIME: 5pm - 6pm

WHERE: Cities & Environment Unit offices

ADDRESS: 5257 Morris Street