



Municipality of the District of Argyle

Item: Active Transportation Strategy and Sidewalks

Date: September 23, 2021

VISION

We see Argyle as home to a healthy and thriving rural population. Our municipality promotes and supports economic and social opportunities for the region and engages in the active expression of our unique Acadian heritage. We are a place of choice for rural living and are widely recognized for our warm hospitality and joie de vivre. Surrounded by fresh air and cool ocean breezes, we work and play in the great outdoors. People choose to live in Argyle because of our commitment to each other, to our community and to our neighbors. Argyle is a place we are proud to call home.

Background:

Council has asked administration to provide policy development to assist Council in determining if and how sidewalks are to be addressed in the Municipality, and staff committed to bring this work to Council in the fall of 2021.

Municipal Clerk Canning led the work. The work began with an environmental scan of existing policies. This did not result in the intent of the work. Sidewalk policies are often maintenance related, ie how to maintain sidewalks, when to plow etc. The intention of Council was to develop criteria to prioritize sidewalk additions, if and when we can afford to do so. Also, a firm document stating how they would be funded.

Recent funding announcements in the Town of Yarmouth sparked CAO Muisse to chat with the staff responsible for the successful application. The result of that conversation was clear; any funding for Active Transportation would rely heavily on an Active Transportation Strategy. If the trail (paved or not) is not included in the strategy, it will not attract funding from other levels of government.

In the absence of relevant policy, we reached out to WSP and Jared from a planning perspective. WSP confirmed that a revision to the Active Transportation Strategy to include this information, along with a larger list of wants, would be the most effective first step in the process, rather than by policy. Policy would be effective in defining how Council and staff would proceed in this development, but it would not assist us to obtain third party funding.

The federal government has recently announced funding for Active Transportation Strategies, which would include amendments to existing strategy.

Meeting with WSP – September 23, 2021

CAO Muisse and Municipal Clerk Canning participated in a conference call with WSP's planning team that included two project planners and a transportation engineer. During this call, WSP discussed different options in amending MODA's existing Active Transportation plan, that was originally done in 2016 but was not inclusive of all community requirements within the Municipality. Also, transportation engineer McCarthy advised that most data and estimates

provided, is done in coordination with the Department of Public Works of Nova Scotia and traffic data is good for 3 to 5 years, based on the assumption that traffic patterns have not changed. A prioritization of communities is done based upon major roadways, schools, and population density. There are other factors that contribute to the prioritization process, but those listed are the major factors of determining what communities should get a sidewalk, crosswalk and/or sidewalk extension. After reviewing existing data, WSP put together a Class D Estimate listed below of work that needs to be done to ensure MODA's Active Transportation Plan:

Preliminary Scope:

1. Project Management & Review of Existing AT Plan - \$1,700
 - a. Includes project management time for duration of project (communication, invoicing, progress reporting, etc.)
 - b. Reviewing existing AT Plan to inform public engagement and start setting direction for revisions
 - c. Meeting with MODA staff to confirm understanding of AT Plan and give preliminary findings
2. Public Engagement -
 - a. Pop-ups (2), Workshop (1), Public Open House (1) - \$3,750
 - i. Two pop-ups at different locations in MODA
 - ii. One public open house with presentation slides and/or boards at central location
 - iii. "Key informant" workshop with group identified by staff and/or Council
 - b. Online survey - \$2,500
 - i. Traditional online survey (advertised with the help of staff)
 - ii. Possibility to do online forum/meeting
 - c. Summary memo of Public Engagement Findings - \$700
3. Updates to the AT Plan
 - a. Revised proposed projects & timeline memo (for 5-10 year priority projects) - \$6,500
 - i. Including proposed changes to AT Plan & updated policies where necessary
 - ii. Including a summary of proposed projects and preferred facilities for these projects (Sidewalk, crosswalk, MUP, etc.)
 - iii. Including timeline and rough cost estimates for priority projects

Total Cost = \$15,150

MGA considerations:

Sidewalks and active transportation is an eligible municipal expense under Section 65 of the Act.

CAO's Recommendation:

The federal government has recently announced funding for Active Transportation Strategies, which would include amendments to existing strategy.

It would be the collective recommendation of the Clerk and CAO that we engage WSP to lead the amendments to the plan, and that we seek funding to support this work through the federal application.

Suggested motion:

That Council approve staff to engage WSP to lead the amendments to the Active Transportation plan, and that staff seek funding to support this work through the federal application.