

Greg O'Brien  
WSP  
1 Spectacle Lake Dr,  
Dartmouth, NS  
B3B 1X7

July 27, 2017

**RE: Implementation Plan for Halifax Urban Greenway**

Dear Mr. O'Brien:

Halifax Regional Municipality is seeking the services of a transportation engineering and planning consultancy to evaluate alignment options, and to develop a preliminary design and implementation plan for the Halifax Urban Greenway project. This is an invitation to pre-qualified consultants from the consulting roster RFQ 13-082.

**Background**

The 2014-2019 Active Transportation Priorities Plan identifies the need for a walking and cycling facility running north-south on the western side of the Halifax peninsula. This has been conceptualized as an off-road AT greenway facility built alongside (above) the CN rail cut on land that is primarily owned by CN. Named the Halifax Urban Greenway, this multi-use pathway is envisioned to connect the Chain of Lakes Trail at Joseph Howe/Bayers Rd all the way to Point Pleasant Park at Tower/Point Pleasant Drive for AT users of all ages and abilities (AAA). There is direction in the 2014-2019 AT Plan to identify and secure the required land from CN to develop the Halifax Urban Greenway within the rail cut whenever possible.

This alignment is consistent with the vision of the Halifax Urban Greenway Association (HUGA), a community group that has been advocating for the project for about 15 years. This group originally envisioned a greenway corridor along the full length of the CN rail cut from Chebucto Road to Point Pleasant Park, approximately 4 km in length.

To date, HRM has partnered with HUGA in the development the first segment of trail on Beaufort Ave from Bellevue Ave to South St in 2010. HUGA continues to act as stewards for this segment and wishes to partner again with HRM to expand and help realize the full potential of the Halifax Urban Greenway.

**Past Studies and Routing Options**

Two studies have been completed to explore how to best implement the Halifax Urban Greenway:

1. [2002 Halifax Urban Greenway Report -- Gordon Ratcliffe Landscape Architects \(attached\)](#)

This report, commissioned by HUGA, outlines the original concept of the Halifax Urban Greenway as an entirely off-road AT greenway facility along the east side of the CN rail cut spanning from Chebucto Road to Point Pleasant Park, approximately 4 km in length. The trail aims to accommodate a variety of AT uses (e.g. cycling, walking, running, and wheeling) with the widest possible user types (e.g. children, families, seniors). While the original plan also incorporates a system of nature trails, this project is only concerned with the wider, AT greenway facility. The report acknowledges that implementation will require securing access to the necessary land for public use through purchase, leasing, or other legal arrangements with private land owners.

2. 2015 Halifax Urban Greenway Plan for a mix of AT Greenway and Local Street Bikeway Facilities -- HRM Staff (attached)

The 2014-2019 AT Plan renewed interest in establishing this AT greenway connection. In collaboration with HUGA, HRM staff explored some alignment alternatives for the Halifax Urban Greenway that would be “all ages and abilities” and may have had fewer implementation barriers. These would incorporate local street bikeways (when necessary) and require less property negotiation and/or acquisition. The concept plan also extends the greenway vision to connect with Bayers/Joseph Howe Rd and the Chain of Lakes Trail, satisfying the Municipality’s AT objectives of a north-south AT walking and cycling connection along the West side of the peninsula.

Some planning has also taken place on extending the Halifax Urban Greenway south through Saint Mary’s and CN property and over the CN rail cut to Francklyn Street (see attached plans). While this segment is not a focus on this project, this element should be reviewed and these plans and any additional ideas should be incorporated into the final report.

### **AT Facility Types with Definition**

Past studies considered the following two facility types, defined by the 2014-2019 AT Plan as follows:

1. AT Greenway

A multi-use pathway suitable for the broadest range of AT users (walkers, cyclists, skateboarders, inline skaters, etc.). They are typically 3.0m wide, or more where higher user volumes are expected. The surface may be paved or crusher dust, but a paved surface is required if winter maintenance is expected.

2. Local Street Bikeway

Low speed, low volume streets that have been optimized for bicycle through traffic. They typically include a mix of traffic calming and bicycle priority measures to minimize traffic volumes and speeds and create a comfortable cycling environment suited to a wide range of users. Signs and pavement markings designate the route and convenient bicycle crossings of busier streets are provided if possible. Regional Council has recently enacted an Administrative Order (AO 2016-002OP) that guides the implementation of Local Street Bikeways. Please see attached AO.

### **Current Visions**

At the 2017 Annual General Meeting of HUGA, the group reaffirmed their desire for a completely off-road AT greenway along the CN rail cut. HUGA’s concern is that the proposed local street bikeways are not accessible for users of all ages and abilities. In particular, crossing busier streets such as Connaught and Quinpool is not perceived as safe by the attendees at the group’s 2017 AGM.

The 2017 HUGA vision is to develop a multi-use trail that is:

- Family-friendly;
- Accessible;
- Integrated with rail cut and natural environment; and,
- Off-street.

HUGA’s main priority is establishing an off-road AT greenway up to Quinpool Road. HUGA would be interested in pursuing a greenway beyond Quinpool Road, but only if it were to be off-street along the edge of the rail line. The group is also concerned about a 130 m segment of sub-standard trail between Regina Terrace and Inglis Street that should be widened for safety purposes. Please see attached PowerPoint presentation for details.

While HRM staff support the goal of a separated AT greenway at the top of the rail cut, more planning and analysis is required in order to advance that objective and move to detailed design and construction. Key factors include property requirements, terrain, road crossings, ability to construct in a constrained space, public and stakeholder perspectives, among other factors.

The HRM staff position shares the HUGA vision, but also includes:

- The need to understand a full north-south connection through West End Halifax (Bayers Road to South Street) to link with core AT network on peninsula;
- The requirement for the facility to be safe, comfortable and convenient for pedestrians and cyclists of all ages and abilities (AAA); and,
- The desire for the project implementable (time and cost) by 2021. This may be a temporary solution en route to a more permanent solution that takes longer to implement.

Past HRM planning studies have also explored alternatives to the preferred alignment. This is particularly important for this project as there may be significant barriers to achieving the HUGA group vision of a separated AT greenway on the top of the rail cut. The attached 2015 concept alignment is a possible alternative, however, this project may identify others. Depending on the findings of this study, the recommendation may include suggestions for an interim alignment that is not in the on top of the rail cut, but that achieves the objectives of an AAA facility.

To assist the HRM make decisions and advance implementation, this study was proposed. The preliminary design requested below will serve as a 'proof of concept' to determine the feasibility of the various AT facilities and alignment options, what they cost and what steps must be taken to make the preferred option a reality (e.g. land use agreements, phasing, etc.).

### **Geographical Scope**

The scope of the Halifax Urban Greenway project starts at the entrance to Point Pleasant Park and extends up to the Chain of Lakes Trail at Bayers Road. The proposed study will explore and evaluate the alignment options necessary to create a connected pathway along the entirety of the route. A particular focus will be placed on the segment between South Street and Quinpool Road. For this segment only, a preliminary design and implementation plan will be developed based on public and stakeholder feedback. Looking forward, a phasing plan will be recommended to establish the remaining greenway connections, and to explore the transition from any interim solutions to long term route alignment goals.

The map on the following page visually denotes the existing segments of the Halifax Urban Greenway as well as instructions for establishing the preferred alignment of the remaining sections.



## Tasks/Deliverables

- Conduct at least one initial site walk with the steering committee and additional steering committee update meetings as required (total of four meetings anticipated). The Steering Committee will consist of representatives from HUGA and HRM.
- Develop a baseline understanding of the area, including existing AT facilities, roadway width and right-of-way width for CN rail line, key street intersection locations, traffic volume and flow, cyclist and pedestrian volume and flow, key origins and destinations.
- Review the 2002 Halifax Urban Greenway Plan and the 2015 Alternative Alignment Concept Plan, investigating these alignment options as well as any others you may see fit.
- Perform site analysis, including identification of opportunities and constraints of various alignments options for the Halifax Urban Greenway.
- Host stakeholder meetings (potentially including but not limited to pedestrian/cycling groups, neighbouring residents, CN, utilities, and other HRM departments such as Traffic, Parks, Real Estate, Legal, Maintenance, Fire, Halifax Transit, and Halifax Water) to gauge interest, needs, and concerns with the project. Continue to liaise with the client, property owners and stakeholders as necessary. HUGA and HRM staff may be available to assist with this task.
- Develop evaluation criteria for comparing various alignment options in collaboration with the client. Criteria may include: safety, aesthetics, public and stakeholder perspectives, land ownership, ease of construction, slope, connectivity to other AT routes and key origins and destinations, cost, and other factors as determined by the steering committee.
- Produce a draft report that illustrates the potential alignment options, and includes a preliminary evaluation of options with major feasibility considerations. Maps and materials should be in colour and suitable for sharing with the public (print and digital formats).
- Assist in hosting a public open house / community engagement session to present the options for alignment of the Halifax Urban Greenway and the evaluation criteria. This includes development of a presentation, visual representations of the project area and facility options, engagement questions, and text to describe the project for online engagement. These discussions could also include exploration of shorter-term (temporary) options towards achieving a long term permanent greenway alignment. The proponent will be responsible for documenting responses and summarizing feedback from engagement. HRM will be responsible for logistics and promotion of public engagement session and online engagement.
- Present findings to the Active Transportation Advisory Committee (at a regularly scheduled session i.e. third Thursday of every month from 4 to 6pm) for their input.
- Complete evaluation of alignment alternatives based on public, stakeholder, and AT Advisory Committee feedback. Identify preferred option for Quinpool-South segment with Steering Committee. This may include a shorter-term solution en route to a permanent, preferred alignment in the long term.
- Produce final report including preliminary design (30%) of the preferred alignment option for the Quinpool-South segment of the Halifax Urban Greenway, including Class "C" cost estimates. Recommend a phasing plan to develop the remaining segments of the route based on public and stakeholder evaluation and complexity of implementation. One set of paper copies should be provided, as well as a digital copy compatible with CAD and MS Word format.

## Assumptions

- The following resources will be made available by HRM to the successful proponent: GIS extracts of the project area, any traffic count or speed studies available. Data will be made available once the consultant has signed the license agreement with HRM.
- Traffic control devices for bicycles that are currently not enabled under the Nova Scotia Motor Vehicle Act (e.g. bicycle traffic signals, crossrides) but are sometimes recommended for use by other agencies and may be proposed for consideration.
- The budget for this project will not exceed \$50 000 including HST.
- The work will be completed and submitted to the client by no later than **March 1st, 2018**.

## Submission

If you wish to be considered for this assignment, I invite you to submit a letter proposal of no more than five pages in length. The letter should describe your understanding of, and approach to the assignment, the tasks you would undertake, the personnel you would assign, an estimate of the time to complete, and a fixed budget as well as per diem rates. Your firm is already pre-qualified to undertake assignments of this nature so a description of your qualifications and previous project work is not requested and will not form part of the evaluation.

By submitting a proposal, you agree to the attached Conditions of Agreement. Your proposals will be evaluated based on its ability to meet our needs and provide value for money. Your response must be received by **4:30pm Monday, August 21, 2017** to be considered. Submission of a pdf document by email is preferred. I look forward to your response and welcome a call if you need any further clarification.

Sincerely,

Siobhan Witherbee  
Active Transportation Planner  
Halifax Regional Municipality  
Tel: (902) 490-6822  
Email: withers@halifax.ca

Attached:

- 2002 Halifax Urban Greenway Report (Gordon Ratcliffe Landscape Architects)
- 2015 Halifax Urban Greenway Alternative Alignment Concept Plan (HRM staff)
- 2017 HUGA Renewed Vision PowerPoint
- 2016 Administrative Order 2016-002OP Respecting the Implementation of Local Street Bikeways