

Integrated Mobility Plan Response Summary

The Ecology Action Centre is an environmental charity that takes leadership on critical environmental issues from biodiversity protection to climate change to environmental justice. Our transportation team works to ensure that people across Nova Scotia have access to sustainable transportation options to reduce emissions from vehicles and limit car dependency. At this time, we want to applaud Halifax Regional Municipality's efforts in the development of the Integrated Mobility Plan (IMP) and believe that this plan has the ability to transform the way people get around the city. We were especially excited to see the following included in the IMP:

1) The marriage of land use and transportation planning. In the planning profession, it is often said that the best transportation plan is a great land use plan. The IMP aligns well with municipal plans like the draft Centre Plan and Green Network Plan and encourages future development in areas that are or can be well-served by transit and discourages car-dependent sprawl through several policies.

2) Moving away from investing in car travel. The municipality understands that building more highways is a costly investment that negatively impacts our health and our environment and does little to help with congestion. Instead, the IMP recommends shifting investment to more sustainable transportation modes and providing transit and active transportation connections along highway corridors where new construction is unavoidable.

3) A shift to the prioritization of sustainable transportation modes. Some of the "Big Moves" in the IMP include a Complete Streets program, a proposed network of protected bicycle lanes for downtown Halifax and Dartmouth, and a robust transit priority corridor plan. These initiatives are similar to projects that other modern cities are doing to get people out of their cars by making it convenient, comfortable, and safe to walk, cycle, or take transit.

4) Opportunities to implement 21st Century mobility solutions. The IMP includes provisions for exploring ride hailing, car share, bike share, and more. Innovative solutions like these can help break down some of the barriers that stop people from giving up their car.

While we feel that the IMP provides very positive direction for the future of Halifax's transportation networks, the following are some considerations to ensure the plan really achieves the bold vision it sets out:

1) Set mode share targets higher than 30% for sustainable transportation modes. With the right level of investment, we can easily achieve this target well before the year 2031. When Vancouver adopted their Transportation 2040 plan in 2010, they set a target for 50% sustainable transportation mode share (a 10% increase) by 2020 and reached that goal within only four years. Even on a smaller scale, cities that have worked to roll out their bicycle lane networks saw a surge in the number of people riding bicycles in just a few short years.

2) Set aggressive timelines for breaking ground on the projects that can move forward now and stick to them. The rates of walking, cycling, and transit use in Halifax have remained stagnant

over the past 10 years while car ridership continues to increase steadily. We can't afford to wait another 10 years to see some of the "Big Moves" in the IMP come to fruition. Big moves need to be coupled with bold investment if we can hope to get people out of their cars and onto buses, bikes, or sidewalks.

3) Create an evaluation framework that measures not only the number of trips taken using sustainable transportation options but who is taking them. For example, many cities evaluate their cycling infrastructure using metrics like the ratio of women to men cycling. A city's transportation system can only truly be sustainable if everyone has access to it. When we think about measuring the success of the IMP, we should be evaluating how equitable the system is for those of different demographic backgrounds and income levels.

4) Start a dialogue now with all levels of government to ensure that sustainable transportation is a shared priority. The provincial and federal governments have the ability to make legislative, budgetary, land use, and roadway decisions that can either support or undermine the efforts of the IMP. It is crucial for all levels of government to support the direction of the IMP in order to ensure the plan's success.

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