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## Waterstone Neighbourhood Association

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132 Waterstone Run, Lucasville, Nova Scotia B4B 1X5

January 21, 2010

Brad Johns  
Deputy Mayor and Regional Councillor for District 19  
Halifax Regional Municipality  
P.O. Box 203, Sackville  
Nova Scotia B4C 2S9

### **Re: Proposed Connector Road – Margeson Drive**

Dear Deputy Mayor Johns:

This letter has been written on behalf of the Waterstone Neighbourhood Association and our membership with respect to the proposed roadway known as Margeson Drive.

Our Association and its members (the residents of the Waterstone community) have actively worked for the past six years to provide a voice for our community on issues affecting HRM and our surrounding neighbourhoods. This work has included submissions to the Regional Planning process and participation on the Community Liaison Group of the Middle, Upper Sackville & Lucasville Community Vision. In addition, our Association has worked hard to build a strong sense of community and ensure our area of HRM remains a desirable place to live.

As you are aware, there are plans to create Margeson Drive and to have this connector road routed through the Waterstone neighbourhood. Margeson Drive, as proposed, will connect from the new interchange on highway 101, proceed westward, cross the Sackville River by way of a new bridge, intersect with Stonewick Cross, and continue to a connection at the Lucasville Road (via Cranley Road) opposite the business known as Atlantic Playland.

Other cross-connector streets will provide road links to the areas known as Glen Arbour, Maplewood, and White Hills. In addition, new homes will be constructed on vacant lands along the proposed route of Margeson Drive. The portion of Margeson Drive between the Sackville River Bridge and Stonewick Cross is intended to serve as a major collector road, while the portion between Stonewick Cross and the Lucasville Road is intended to be a minor collector road.

While the Waterstone community understands and appreciates the merits of the efficient movement of vehicular traffic in the area, this road will have a direct impact on our existing community in a number of ways and will physically divide our community at two separate locations -- at Stonewick Cross and at Cranley Road.

Our Association has been aware of the proposed Margeson Drive since 2004, and over the past six years has, in good faith, participated in discussions with HRM regarding the road's alignment and other community concerns. The Association in 2004 initiated this dialogue because we wanted to have a constructive stakeholder role as the final road design and route was fine-tuned. Our desire has always been to work cooperatively with HRM in an effort to minimize negative impacts the road will have on our neighbourhood and to maximize the benefits to local residents and surrounding communities.

Since 2004, our community has grown and many more homes have been constructed in the Waterstone neighbourhood -- approximately 160 occupied homes now exist. It has been challenging to keep the residents of our community informed about Margeson Drive, particularly as more houses are built and occupied and new residents move to the area.

In the winter of 2009, the Association met with David McCusker, Manager of Strategic Transportation Planning, HRM for a second time to share our concerns and discuss possible options for mitigating the potential negative impacts of the road and to maximize the benefits this road could create for our community. These discussions prepared the Association for the commencement of a comprehensive community engagement strategy with respect to Margeson Drive.

In the spring of 2009, the Association shared a detailed information bulletin with our members and held an open house information session (attended by more than 100 residents) to ensure our membership fully understood the implications of this road and rationale for its creation. Subsequently, every household within the Waterstone community was asked to complete a survey regarding the proposed Margeson Drive. The purpose of the survey was to provide specific direction to the Association and identify the concerns and desire of the community with respect to Margeson Drive. Our community engagement strategy was highly successful and the majority of our membership actively participated.

Through this comprehensive community engagement process, the Association has a clear mandate and direction from our members regarding Margeson Drive. Of particular note, most individuals who responded to the survey indicated they were well informed regarding Margeson Drive. Our process has ensured community members are well educated and their input based on accurate and unbiased information put forward by the Association, HRM staff, and our regional councillor.

While the majority of survey respondents indicated they wished to have the Association work with HRM to secure road design standards that would offer some protection to the neighbourhood, nearly half indicated they were not pleased about the road.

Based on our engagement process the following issues have been identified and recommendations developed.

## 1. Build all of Margeson Drive In One Phase

The current proposal calls for Margeson Drive to be constructed in two or more phases. The first phase (the portion of Margeson Drive from the Sackville River west to Stonewick Cross) is intended to serve as a limited access minor collector road for the Waterstone neighbourhood. Our understanding is HRM will design and build this portion of the road.

The current plans allow for the balance of Margeson Drive to be built by the developers in subsequent phases westward from Stonewick Cross through to Lucasville Road. At present, there is no defined timetable for this later phase(s) and the developers are free to build the road as they see fit on a schedule they determine.

The planned phasing of this construction has created considerable concern within our community. During the period between the construction of phase one and subsequent construction of Margeson Drive, all traffic using Margeson Drive to access Highway 101 or other amenities in the area of the new interchange will be channeled onto Stonewick Cross and Waterstone Run through to Lucasville Road.

Waterstone is a quiet residential subdivision. Our community and its roadways were not designed to carry the volume of traffic, beyond that created by the local residents. Both of these roads are nearly fully occupied with residential homes and thus, this situation will directly impact nearly half of the current residents of the Waterstone neighbourhood.

Should the road be constructed in phases, this situation will drastically alter the nature of the neighbourhood resulting in a loss of quality of life with increased noise, traffic congestion, hazards and safety issues. Many of our residents are active and routinely walk, cycle, and jog along these roads. We believe we serve as a model of a healthy and active HRM community. Additionally, there are many young families and children in the community. As an active community we are deeply concerned that our existing streets will become unsafe for residents unless plans are made to create walkways and bike lanes along Stonewick Cross and Waterstone Run.

In addition, we strongly believe that introducing collector road traffic to residential streets violates HRM's Neighbourhood Shortcutting Policy.

[http://www.halifax.ca/traffic/calming/Shortcut\\_Policy.html](http://www.halifax.ca/traffic/calming/Shortcut_Policy.html)

### Recommendation:

Construct Margeson Drive as one phase from the Sackville River crossing through to Lucasville Road. The timing of construction should be coordinated by HRM with the other land developers to allow for a single phase of complete construction. If agreement cannot be reached by HRM and the developer, HRM should undertake the complete construction on its own, with consideration for billing the developers for the portion between Stonewick Cross and Lucasville Road.

**2. Shift the Alignment of Margeson Drive away from Cranley Road to a route that follows the Nova Scotia Power (NSP) transmission lines to Lucasville Road.**

The current Margeson Drive proposal calls for the road to connect from Lucasville Road, along Cranley Road where it will run through the vacant lands and across Stonewick Drive. The primary issue with this alignment is that Cranley Road is not designed to handle a collector road traffic volume. Cranley Road is currently a local residential street with frequent driveways and houses situated in close proximity to the road right of way. To introduce collector road traffic to residential streets would violate HRM's Neighbourhood Shortcutting Policy.

[http://www.halifax.ca/traffic/calming/Shortcut\\_Policy.html](http://www.halifax.ca/traffic/calming/Shortcut_Policy.html)

**Recommendation:**

Re-align Margeson Drive so it is constructed further to the west rather than connecting to Cranley Road. Shifting the alignment of Margeson Drive along the power line route is a logical action, and will accomplish the goal of connecting to Lucasville Road while limiting the direct and excessive negative impact to the residents of Cranley Road.

**3. Establish and enforce clear and effective truck restrictions on the portion of Margeson Drive from the Sackville River westward to Lucasville Road.**

HRM currently has a network of truck routes throughout the area that are intended to provide for orderly truck access. Both Lucasville and Hammonds Plains Roads are not official truck routes, restricting trucks to local traffic only. It is logical and consistent with Lucasville Road, Hammonds Plains Road and HRM's Truck Bylaw to establish and enforce Margeson Drive as a restricted truck access road. Moreover, it is critical that this measure be taken to prevent Margeson Drive from becoming a short cut for trucks to access Highway 103 from Highway 101 and vice versa.

<http://www.halifax.ca/legislation/bylaws/hrm/blt400.pdf>

**Recommendation:**

Create a truck route strategy for the Waterstone, Glen Arbour, Maplewood and White Hills area to effectively deal with truck shortcutting and local service trucking. Designate Margeson Drive to the west of the Sackville River Bridge as a non-truck route similar to Glendale Drive in Lower Sackville.

**4. Design vehicle noise and light abatement strategies.**

The construction of a major collector road through the middle of an existing residential subdivision will bring substantial motor vehicle noise and light pollution to our community where none currently exists. Appropriate road design can reduce the impact of both noise and light pollution. This is particularly important since there is an abundance of open water in the area, and the road sound will travel long distances especially in the winter.

Additionally, the original proposed route of Margeson Drive has been altered and is now proposed to pass directly adjacent to existing houses on Stonewick Cross. When constructed, these homes were not situated next to a planned collector road. These families will be most directly impacted by noise and light pollution from Margeson Drive.

The road design for Sunset Ridge in Middle Sackville serves as an example of how strategies can be deployed, using earthwork berms to deflect noise and light.

**Recommendation:**

Provide effective vehicle noise and light abatement through appropriate roadway design and engineering measures along Margeson Drive from the Sackville River crossing to Lucasville Road.

**5. Address neighbourhood safety concerns:**

In the summer of 2009, the Waterstone Association and HRM completed a boardwalk access to McCabe Lake at the neighbourhood park located on Westpoint Drive. This boardwalk lake access and park is intended for playing, canoeing, walking and sitting. Many of our residents are young families who walk or bicycle to and from this park from their homes on Stonewick Cross and Waterstone Run. Once Margeson Drive is constructed to Stonewick Cross the current workability of pedestrian access to the Westpoint Park will be changed by the presence of a major intersection. There will also be increased safety hazards and new scheduling issues relating to school bus stops along Stonewick Cross. Margeson Drive will intersect with Stonewick Cross partway up a steep hill (Stonewick Cross). It will be crucial to address this issue with the design of the intersection as this hill presents a hazard in winter conditions and may also lead to restricted lines of sight for drivers as they approach the intersection.

Recommendation:

The road design for the intersection of Margeson Drive and Stonewick Cross should include a pedestrian crossing system and appropriate warning signage that will slow Margeson Drive vehicular movement as it approaches the intersection and reduces from a major collector street to a minor collector street.

There must be appropriate design and engineering measures to address the issues created by the intersection of these two roads on a steep hill.

**6. Active Transportation Opportunities:**

As previously stated, our neighbourhood should serve as a model for others in HRM when it comes to an active lifestyle. Both the Waterstone neighbourhood and the Middle, Upper Sackville & Lucasville Community Vision has identified active transportation as an important aspect of the greater community for the future. With the planned Metro Link Park and Ride between the new Highway 101 Interchange and the Sackville River, there is an opportunity for active transportation to be very successful. In addition, walkers, cyclists, and joggers should be afforded new opportunities to safely engage in these activities along the entire length of Margeson Drive.

Recommendation:

Margeson Drive and the Sackville River Bridge should be designed and built with active transportation measures including on-road bikeways and a parallel multi-use non-motorized vehicle trail.

**7. Minor / Major Collector Road designation for Margeson Drive:**

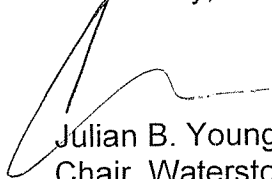
The portion of Margeson Drive from the Sackville River Bridge westward to Stonewick Cross is proposed to be a “major collector” with controlled access. This means there will be no driveways with direct access. This also makes the development of the adjacent lands difficult, if not impossible. A preferred solution would be for this portion of Margeson Drive to be designed and built as a minor collector, which would be consistent with the portion that runs from Stonewick Cross to Lucasville Road, having driveway access and a 50 km per hour speed limit.

**Recommendation:**

Designate the full length of Margeson Drive from the Sackville River westward to the Lucasville Road as a minor collector road with a speed limit of 50 km per hour. Given the anticipated volume of traffic and design of a relatively straight roadway, Margeson Drive will require routine speed enforcement by police.

In closing, the Waterstone Neighbourhood Association thanks HRM staff and our area councillors for their ongoing willingness to communicate with our Association over the past number of years on this important issue. As always, with issues like this one, we have some residents who are fundamentally opposed to the road, while others support it. We have concluded, through significant efforts, that the majority of our current residents want to have our Board interact with HRM cooperatively on this matter to secure a safe design and appropriate alignment and phasing of Margeson Drive. We are committed to an approach that will balance the needs of our residents with those of surrounding communities. We look forward to cooperatively working with HRM staff, Council, and the developers to achieve this balance. We believe we have acted in good faith and we are proud of the level of community input and engagement we have achieved.

Yours truly,



Julian B. Young  
Chair, Waterstone Neighbourhood Association