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Halifax Regional Council
March 7, 2006

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:

Mike Labrecque, P.Eng., Director, Transportation & Public Works

DATE: March 1, 2006

SUBJECT: Traffic Study - Burnside City of Lakes Business Park

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

Item 9.2.1 raised at the December 6, 2005 meeting of Halifax Regional Council.

BACKGROUND

Dartmouth Crossing Limited is developing a retail centre on the lands formerly known as the Countryview Lands east of the City of Lakes area of Burnside Business Park. The development is as-of-right but a traffic study was provided in support of the application. At least one business owner in the nearby City of Lakes area has protested approval of the Dartmouth Crossing Limited proposal. The matter was raised at the November 18, 2005 meeting of Harbour East Community Council and a request forwarded to Regional Council that an independent traffic study be done.

At the Regional Council meeting of December 6, 2005 the following motion was passed after some discussion:

MOVED by Councillor Smith, seconded by Councillor McCluskey, that a report be requested on the feasibility of conducting an independent traffic study on all development and lands east of Burnside Drive with the objective of determining the congruence of the present and future street systems with the City of Lakes Business Park. MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

DISCUSSION

Studies that have been done:

There has been a series of traffic studies covering the Dartmouth Crossing Limited lands and other nearby lands. In 1994 EDM •• Environmental Design and Management Limited prepared a study called *North Dartmouth Planning Study* which included projected development for all the lands between Burnside Drive and Highway 118 north of Highway 111. This study included a proposed road pattern that included an intersection of Wright Avenue with Burnside Drive, a grade-separated intersection of Wright Avenue with Highway 118, and Commodore Drive to be extended from the City of Lakes area east and north-east to connect to Wright Avenue west of Highway 118.

As Burnside Business Park was expanding eastward it became apparent that a study of the future roadway access to the Business Park was needed. The operations of the intersection at Burnside Drive - Commodore Drive - Ronald Smith Avenue were of particular concern.

A traffic study, *Burnside Drive Traffic Study*, covering the whole of Burnside Business Park, including the then Countryview Lands, was done by Atlantic Road and Traffic Management with Beasy Nicoll Engineering Limited and reported in October 1999. The land-use used in modelling the area east of Burnside Drive was drawn from the 1994 EDM study with adjustments for development that had occurred to date. Estimates were also made of future land use west of Burnside Drive. This study recommended that Wright Avenue be extended to connect at-grade with Burnside Drive and eventually be further extended to connect to Highway 118 at a grade-separated interchange and that Commodore Drive be connected into the Countryview Lands from the City of Lakes area.

At the time Burnside Drive was entirely in the control of the Nova Scotia Department of Transportation and Public Works (NSTPW). Before NSTPW would agree to an at-grade Wright Avenue - Burnside Drive intersection the NSTPW staff requested a second traffic impact study be done using the HRM QRS II computer traffic model.

The firm of Lea Associates, in conjunction with SNC Lavalin and Transpro Systems and Services Limited, prepared a study of the whole of Burnside Business Park, including the then Countryview Lands, and submitted a report, *Burnside Industrial Park Major Routes Traffic Access Study*, in May of 2001. This report verified the recommendations of the Atlantic Road and Traffic Management/Beasy Nicoll Engineering Limited study and included traffic volume estimates for the proposed new roads and intersections.

To facilitate planning for the expansion of Burnside Business Park, a study was made of a route and design for the Wright Avenue extension including a preliminary design of the interchange proposed at Highway 118. This study, *Wright Avenue Extension and Interchange Preliminary Location and Design Study*, was done by CBCL Limited and a report submitted in June 2004. This study did no traffic estimates but relied on the estimates in the Lea Associates et al study referred to above. Part of the work of this study was to try to determine a cost-sharing breakdown between HRM and

NSTPW for the cost of the interchange and nearby roadways. NSTPW were obligated to provide some sort of access to allow development of the Countryview Lands. This obligation originated when the right-of-way for Highway 118 was acquired. The obligation did not include whatever extra infrastructure would be needed to serve the needs of Burnside Business Park - that would be the responsibility of HRM. The report included calculations of the proportional shares of NSTPW and HRM.

While the CBCL Wright Avenue Extension location study was being done, the Countryview Lands were sold. A proposal for an as-of-right development (Dartmouth Crossing Limited - DCL) was submitted which included a different land-use scheme than the 1994 EDM study had contemplated. Therefore a new traffic impact study was required to be submitted so that the design of the roadway network could be done to properly handle traffic anticipated from the proposed development at buildout of the Countryview Lands south of Wright Avenue and other Burnside Business Park lands to the west. An allowance was included for development of the Countryview Lands north of the proposed Wright Avenue extension.

A traffic impact study for the DCL scheme was prepared by BA Consulting Group Ltd. and a report submitted in October 2004 (*Wright Avenue Extension and Highway 118 Interchange - Traffic and Functional Design Review - Burnside Business Park and Countryview Centre*). This study included the newly proposed DCL land use and recommended additional infrastructure to serve the traffic expected to be generated by the proposed developments including the DCL lands and other Burnside Business Park lands. The report recommended a larger version of the interchange contemplated in the CBCL report and also a collector-distributor on/off ramp design on Highway 118 with a right-turns-only connection of the extension of Commodore Drive. The study also included examination of the traffic volumes expected on Burnside Drive and showed that, with the change in proposed land use from the business park concept used in the 1994 EDL study to a retail power centre, in combination with the larger interchange, the connection of Wright Avenue through to Burnside Drive and the right-turns-only connection of Commodore Drive to Highway 118, there was actually less traffic expected on Burnside Drive than would otherwise be the case.

All of the traffic studies referred to above were reviewed by HRM Traffic and Right of Way Services staff as well as by NSTPW staff and were accepted by them. It should be noted that while NSTPW no longer has responsibility for Burnside Drive at the Commodore/Ronald Smith intersection it still has responsibility for the operations of Burnside Drive at the Burnside Drive - Highway 111 interchange. Therefore, the review by NSTPW staff included operations in that area as well as operations at Highway 118. Any improvements on Burnside Drive would include changes in the right-of-way owned by NSTPW.

Only the BA Group study for the DCL proposal was paid for by an applicant. The other studies were paid for by the City of Dartmouth or HRM with cost sharing on some studies by NSTPW.

It is the opinion of HRM Traffic and Right of Way staff and staff of HRM Development Services that an additional independent traffic study is not needed to allow proper design roadway networks to properly serve the proposed expansion of Burnside Business Park and the Dartmouth Crossing

Lands. It is recommended a study not be done in addition to the studies already completed.

Possible Study

If HRM Council so directs it is possible for another traffic study be done by a transportation consultant. It is estimated that preparation of a terms of reference would take at least approximately six weeks to ensure that sufficient agreement is reached with all concerned parties on the contents of the study. Then it is estimated a study to do the work suggested would take perhaps 12 months or longer. The main problem is generating and calibrating a new computer traffic model, but other elements, such as decisions on forecast land uses, would also consume considerable time.

A good estimate of the potential cost of such a study would of course require consideration of the agreed-upon terms of reference, but making a best-effort estimate before the terms of reference are available, it might be expected such a study would cost over \$150,000 plus taxes.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

The recommended action is not to do another traffic study. This would have no effect on the current or proposed HRM budgets.

If a study is directed then it is expected approximately \$150,000 plus taxes will need to be provided from HRM funds, either through re-allocation of currently authorized project funding or through provision of "new" funding". Of course re-allocation of study funds will mean some other projects will need to be delayed.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

ALTERNATIVES

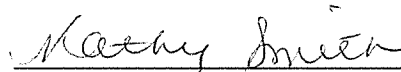
Halifax Regional Council could direct staff to begin preparation of a detailed terms of reference and put the study out in a Request for Proposals. This alternative is not recommended.

ATTACHMENTS

None.

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.html> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

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