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**Halifax Regional Council**  
**March 21, 2006**

**TO:** Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

**SUBMITTED BY:**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Labrecque", written over a horizontal line.

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

**DATE:** March 8, 2006

**SUBJECT:** Petition - Chebucto Road Widening

## INFORMATION REPORT

### ORIGIN

At the Halifax Regional Council meeting of February 28, 2006, item 9.2.2, Councillor Fougere submitted a petition on behalf of residents against the proposal to widen Chebucto Road to accommodate an additional through lane of traffic.

### BACKGROUND

The Rotary Conversion/Chebucto Reversing Lane project was included in the approved 2005-06 HRM Capital Budget and is included in the HRM Regional Plan (Draft). The portion of this project related to widening the Chebucto/Mumford intersection was first identified to Regional Council at its meeting of May 11, 2004 as a component of the Roadway Network Optimization Plan. At that meeting, a motion was passed to “endorse the intent of the Roadway Network Optimization Plan as described in the staff report dated April 28, 2004, with the exception of the Robie Street/Cunard Street component which was deferred.”

## **DISCUSSION**

The Roadway Network Optimization Plan identified several locations within the HRM roadway network where short sections of “corridor discontinuity” resulted in the existing investment in roadways being not fully realized. Addressing these issues was intended to be a prerequisite to the functional transportation plan being developed under the HRM Regional Plan. Simply put, it was suggested that simple “fixups” to address capacity deficiencies needed to be dealt with before considering major investments in additional roadway infrastructure or transit systems.

The existing Chebucto/Mumford intersection illustrates the capacity discontinuity issue well. In the westbound direction, Chebucto Road is three lanes wide from Connaught to Westmount and two lanes wide from Sherwood to the Rotary. But there is only a single lane for through traffic connecting these two sections across Mumford Road. Widening through the Mumford intersection will allow the existing roadway on either side of the intersection to be used to fuller potential.

The residents’ petition focuses on three areas of concern:

- the impact of road widening on safety;
- the lack of public consultation; and
- the encouragement, in general, of more traffic instead of developing alternatives.

On the issue of safety, it is important to recognize that since the project is aimed at making best use of existing roadway width, widening is limited to a section only 125m in length. Since this section spans either side of a signalized intersection, pedestrian crossings can be made at a crosswalk which crosses five traffic lanes, a standard for major urban intersections which does not result in unsafe conditions. Traffic entering from driveways can do so into queued traffic or traffic flow broken by signal phase changes.

The Roadway Network Optimization Plan sought and received direction from Council that the principle of widening short sections of arterial roads to achieve capacity continuity was needed for the region and that receiving the agreement of adjacent neighbourhoods was neither likely nor necessary. Staff did, however, pledge to meet with adjacent neighbourhoods to review project plans and to discuss means of modifying the design to mitigate impacts or meet specific needs, but not to discuss the validity of the project objective. These sessions will be organized by staff for the Chebucto/Mumford area once the engineering design work for the project is underway.

In terms of developing alternatives to handling increasing trip demand, HRM’s Regional Plan (Draft) makes it very clear that transit and active transportation are priorities in handling future growth. Computerized modelling undertaken during the development of the plan indicates, however, that increasing demand for roadway capacity can be significantly lowered, but not eliminated. Accordingly, the plan relies on a small number of new major roadway projects to manage

transportation growth.

It is important to remember that the roadway strategy developed by the Regional Plan (Draft) relies on projects like the Chebucto/Mumford intersection to be in place before major projects are contemplated. By not completing smaller projects like this, more major roadway projects must be undertaken to provide adequate transportation capacity.

**BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

Any budget implications have been addressed through the 2005-06 capital budgeting process.

**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**

There are no recommended alternatives.

**ATTACHMENTS**

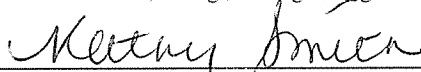
Functional Plan of the Chebucto/Mumford Intersection project.

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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