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Halifax Regional Council
April 25, 2006

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:

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

DATE: April 13, 2006

SUBJECT: **Petition for Traffic Signals at the Intersection of Commodore Drive and Brownlow Avenue**

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

Item 9.2.3 raised at the January 31, 2006 meeting of Halifax Regional Council.

A petition signed by 55 employers located within the City of Lakes Business Park was presented by Councillor Smith. The petition requests HRM install traffic signal lights at the intersection of Commodore Drive and Brownlow Avenue.

BACKGROUND

The City of Lakes Business Park traffic accesses Commodore Drive via two intersections: either Brownlow Avenue or Eileen Stubbs Avenue/Spectacle Lake Drive.

DISCUSSION

Installation of traffic signals at intersections in Halifax Regional Municipality is done only when the intersection meets a set of criteria called a warrant. (Under some circumstances, a signal may be installed when the warrants are expected to be met very soon.) The warrant is a numerical calculation based on an analysis method formulated by the Transportation Association of Canada.

The input to the warrant calculations includes information with regard to the various volumes of traffic on each approach to the intersection and how many vehicles are turning left or right or proceeding straight through. Information on the intersection geometry and pedestrian traffic volumes is also included. The data covers the busiest six hours of the day. The result is a single number. The warrant is said to be met (a signal possibly should be installed) when the number exceeds 100 points. It is possible the warrant could be met but a signal is not really needed when, for example, there is a considerable pedestrian volume but pedestrians are well served by a flashing yellow light RA-5 type crosswalk. Another purpose of calculating signal warrants is to assign priorities to various locations in the municipality. The higher the warrant number the more likely a signal should be installed sooner.

In the case of Brownlow/Commodore there were two considerations that have held back HRM from installing a traffic signal until now. One consideration is that for many years Commodore has been expected to be extended beyond Eileen Stubbs. When the extension is done, then Eileen Stubbs is a more logical place for a traffic signal because it has a better spacing from the traffic signal at the intersection of Burnside Drive and Commodore Drive. The other consideration is that motorists do have the option of using Eileen Stubbs instead of Brownlow. In addition, the warrant points for Brownlow are lower than at some other intersections in HRM - possibly because it is a "T" intersection and possibly (or likely) because some drivers already avoid it because of congestion but may use it if there were a signal.

Councillors are aware that the Dartmouth Crossing Development is expected soon to be opening with its early phases. It has been made clear to the Dartmouth Crossing developer that Commodore Drive in City of Lakes Business Park will not be permitted to connect until Wright Avenue is also connected between the DCL lands and Burnside Drive. It is possible that both Wright Avenue and Commodore will be ready in the fall or early winter of 2006.

Therefore, since the intersection of Brownlow and Commodore does meet the warrants now, and the extension of Commodore is likely to be connected sometime in late 2006 the Traffic Authority has determined that traffic signals here should be installed as soon as reasonably possible.

Design work and tendering is intended to be done in 2006 although it is possible the signals will not be in service until the first half of 2007.

As noted above, Dartmouth Crossing may be connected before that time. It is expected that in the time between Commodore connecting to Dartmouth Crossing and the new signals going into service that the new availability of an alternate route for City of Lakes Business Park travellers (via

Commodore to Highway 118) and the incremental growth of the Dartmouth Crossing lands (not all new businesses will be open on day one) will allow Brownlow/Commodore to function satisfactorily.

The petition also mentions that backups from the signal lights at Commodore and Burnside Drive sometimes occur. That intersection is of course very busy at this time. When the Dartmouth Crossing connections of Commodore and Wright Avenue are made there may be some relief to Burnside Drive traffic. In addition, a widening of Burnside Drive on the approaches to Commodore/Ronald Smith has been designed and is in the plan for construction in the 2007-2008 fiscal year, subject to Council approval.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Funds for construction of the new signals at Brownlow/Commodore are already budgeted. Council will likely have to approve the tender amount once the tender comes up for award.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN

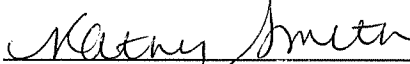
This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

ALTERNATIVES

There are no recommended alternatives.

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/agenda.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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