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**Halifax Regional Council**  
**June 13, 2006**

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

**SUBMITTED BY:**

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

Ken Reashor, P.Eng., Traffic Authority

**DATE:** May 16, 2006

**SUBJECT:** Old Sackville Road (between Lucasville Road and Beaver Bank Connector) Short-Cutting Study

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## **INFORMATION REPORT**

### **ORIGIN**

Neighbourhood Short-Cutting Study has been underway on Old Sackville Road between Lucasville Road and Beaver Bank Connector for several years. In many neighbourhood short-cutting studies Regional Council has a role in making permanent any final satisfactory measures. In this case, the only measures are all-way stop signs which are under the jurisdiction of the HRM Traffic Authority therefore, this is an information report to inform Regional Council of the results of the trial and the decision of the HRM Traffic Authority.

### **BACKGROUND**

As a trial, all-way stop signs were installed in December, 2004 at three intersections along Old Sackville Road between Lucasville Road and Beaver Bank Connector.

## **DISCUSSION**

All-way stop signs are installed on HRM roadways only under two sets of circumstances: The more common circumstance is that the intersection meets a set of criteria for installation of all-way stop signs due to the relative volumes of traffic on the two roads concerned. This is what is called meeting the warrants.

The second circumstance is that all-way stop signs which are not warranted may be installed only on a street as part of a study under the Neighbourhood Short-Cutting Policy **and** only if that street is a fire and emergency services response route **and** only if there are no other possible solutions feasible such as road closures or turn restrictions. Such is the case for Old Sackville Road in this study area. Other typical short-cutting or traffic-calming measures such as speed humps or chicanes have been shown to be unacceptable to fire and emergency services because of the potential for damage to emergency vehicles or injury to vehicle occupants unless the emergency vehicles slow down quite a bit. All-way stops do not require as much increase in travel time, nor will they cause harm to the emergency vehicles or occupants. In a balanced approach to the problems of neighbourhoods due to short-cutting traffic and the need for the quickest emergency response time all-way stops may be used on emergency response routes (which otherwise would have no tool to reduce speeds and volumes) while other measures (but not unwarranted all-way stops) may be used on streets which are not emergency response routes.

The intent of installation of all-way stop signs on Old Sackville Road was to reduce the speeds and potentially the volumes of through traffic on Old Sackville Road. Speed surveys done before installation and repeated after installation have shown speeds on Old Sackville Road decreased or remained the same with the introduction of the all-way stops. Significant decreases were observed between Lucasville Road and First Street (southeast-bound), between Connolly Road and Wynn Castle Drive (both directions) and between Wynn Castle Drive/Meadowlands Park Drive and Peter Buckley Drive (southeast-bound).

Speeds on First St. and Connolly Rd. were also observed. On First St. speeds decreased slightly or remained the same with the installation of the all-way stops. The speeds on Connolly Rd. decreased slightly in the northeast-bound direction and increased slightly in the southwest-bound direction.

Traffic volumes on Old Sackville Drive have decreased or remained unchanged in both directions between Lucasville Road and Meadowlands Drive/Wynn Castle Drive with the introduction of the all-way stops. The section of Old Sackville Rd. between Meadowlands Drive/Wynn Castle Drive and Peter Buckley Drive showed an increase in traffic in both directions. One can speculate that the traffic may have increased more if the all-way stop signs were not installed.

The Neighborhood Short-Cutting Policy requires traffic volumes in the neighborhood to be monitored to determine if traffic from the project street is significantly diverted to nearby local streets. Appendix C of the Policy identifies the allowable limit of traffic diversion to roadways adjacent to the project street. Section 1.a) states that an increase of up to 150 vehicles per day as a result of a short-cutting reduction project is acceptable on any street, regardless of its prior volume.

Traffic on First St. (between Old Sackville Road and Second Ave.) increased by 76 vehicles (33.2%) and 21 vehicles (8.1%) for northeast-bound and southwest-bound travel, respectively. Traffic on Connolly Road (between Old Sackville Rd. and the school) increased by 20 vehicles (6.1%) in the northeast-bound direction. Traffic in the southwest-bound direction actually decreased by 15 vehicles (2.8%). The traffic volumes on both First Street and Connolly Road are within the acceptable diversion limits as outlined in the Policy.

Halifax Regional Municipality Fire and Emergency Services have agreed with making permanent the all-way stop signs on Old Sackville Road.

The Neighbourhood Short-Cutting Policy requires a survey/vote be taken of residents of the problem street and up to 60 metres from the problem street on connecting local streets. The intention is to discern the opinions of those residents with the most to gain from a proposed measure. If they are in favour then the measure is likely useful and will have support. Residents of side streets may or may not support proposed measures. For example, many side-street residents have called in support of the all-way stop signs on Old Sackville Road because aside from the benefits they have seen on Old Sackville Road they now find it easier to turn into and out of their own streets off of Old Sackville Road. This may not always be the case - for example if the question were a series of speed humps that would require all road users to slow down but which provides little direct benefit to side street residents.

Survey ballots were mailed out on February 27, 2006. Ballots returned as of Monday March 20, 2006 were counted. There were 102 ballots mailed out. Under the Neighbourhood Short-Cutting Policy at least 51 have to be returned before a valid vote has been made and the ballots counted. 61 total ballots were received back, so that condition is satisfied.

The ballots were printed on two sheets of paper. 16 people tore off the back page and sent only that page in. Actually there were three who sent in two copies in one reply envelope - only one reply was marked down for each of those. (So there were 16 envelopes received with torn-off pages, totalling 19 "replies" but only 16 were marked down.) All of these were yes votes.

Of the ballots received back that could be identified by address, two were from the January ballot although mailed in March. These two were not duplicated by March ballots. Of the ballots received that could be identified by address there were 39 in favour (with March ballots, 41 if we add the January ballots) and 4 against. HRM staff didn't want to count the unidentifiable ballots as "yes" votes because they could duplicate other yes votes, but it was thought fair to count them as returned ballots against the requirement of 51 needed. Therefore, HRM staff opinion is the valid survey/vote is 39 in favour, 4 opposed (91% yes, 9% no).

Under provincial law, all-way stop signs on HRM streets are only placed or made permanent by the HRM Traffic Authority, Mr. Ken Reashor. On Old Sackville Road there has been no increase in reported collisions as a result of the installation of the unwarranted stop signs. Mr. Reashor has determined that given the favourable results of the trial and with the survey/vote in agreement these all-way stop signs shall remain permanently.

### **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

The all-way stop signs with all necessary warning signs and markings were installed using funds from Capital Account No. CTR00423, Traffic Calming. The trial installations are to the same standards as permanent installations. No additional funds are needed from any capital account. Normal maintenance costs from year to year are small and already have been handled in the operating budget.

### **FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN**

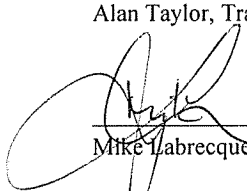
This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

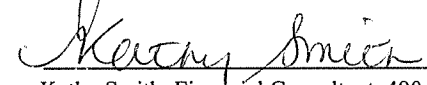
### **ALTERNATIVES**

There are no recommended alternatives.

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