

HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
June 25, 2002

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:



George McLellan, Chief Administrative Officer



Dan R. English, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: June 17, 2002

SUBJECT: Classification of Pressing Transportation Issues

ORIGIN

Council has expressed ongoing interest that the resolution of pressing transportation issues not be delayed by Regional Planning. Council also recognizes that infrastructure investments need to be considered in light of the opportunities for growth identified through Regional Planning.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

1. Council adopt the definitions and criteria for the “Local Modifications”, “Strategic Additions” and “Major Regional Undertakings” project categories, attached to the June 17, 2002 Council report as Attachment “A”.

Classification of Pressing Transportation Issues

BACKGROUND

Requests for traffic flow improvements to decrease congestion and address issues such as short-cutting on residential streets have come forward from several sources over the past two years. In many cases it was stated at the time that they needed to be addressed within a regional context, and decisions were set aside until Regional Planning began. This has caused a degree of frustration for Council and the public. In addition, other matters such as the desire to support cycling and to improve the transit system have been added into the mix. As an early deliverable of Regional Planning, the Chief Administrative Officer directed staff to develop a process for identifying pressing transportation issues which can and should be dealt with through an interim strategy, without affecting or waiting for the completion of the Regional Plan.

DISCUSSION

An Integrated Transportation Strategy Working Group comprised of staff from Public Works and Transportation, Transit Services, Planning and Development Services and Regional Planning, has developed a decision-making framework to address the implementation of transportation projects in the context of the Regional Planning Project.

Project Categories

In the proposed framework, criteria are used to define three categories of projects - **Local Modification; Strategic Additions, and Major Regional Undertakings**. These categories are designed to define their relationship to the Regional Planning Project. They clarify which projects have a strategic significance and which do not, and if they fall into the former group, the circumstances which can allow them to proceed as an early deliverable of Regional Planning. The three project categories are:

- *Local Modifications* - which include projects intended to have a negligible effect on regional transportation patterns and are small, isolated projects which permit Traffic Services to maintain safe and effective operation of the street network.
- *Strategic Additions* - which include projects that are broad in scope and have regional implications, but by meeting established criteria can be considered early deliverables of the Regional Plan.
- *Major Regional Undertakings* - which include projects or studies which require further evaluation and integration with the growth scenarios being proposed for consideration by Council under the Regional Plan.

Classification of Pressing Transportation Issues

DISCUSSION CON'T

Using this framework, decisions can be made about whether or not to proceed with transportation related projects and studies while the Regional Planning process is underway. Prioritization, budgeting and implementation of the actual projects will remain under the direction and mandate of the applicable Business Units.

Defining Criteria

Specific criteria were developed for each of the project categories. These criteria serve as the primary method of filtering the projects into the most appropriate category and determining whether they should proceed to implementation before, during or after completion of the Regional Planning process. These criteria, along with the definitions for each of the project categories, are provided as Attachment "A" of this report.

Local Modifications

The criteria for this project category generally include localized measures affecting the safety and general functionality of the overall transportation network. Most projects that are implemented by Traffic Services fall under this category. A list of potential or example projects is included as Attachment "B" of this report. This list is not intended to be exhaustive, and will continue to evolve over time. Projects which are already funded are identified on the list as Project Numbers 1 - 10. Project Numbers 11 - 15 represent general groupings of remaining projects and activities.

Strategic Additions

Projects qualifying under this category have a regional scope but are appropriate for interim implementation because they meet several of the required project category criteria and thus can be considered an early deliverable of the Regional Plan. The criteria (see Attachment "A") include:

1. Funding has been approved or is pending;
2. The project has been identified in a Master Plan under the Capital Cost Contributions Policy;
3. The project is likely to contribute to the regional planning objective of alternative transportation modes;
4. The project is likely to contribute to the regional planning objective of compact infill growth, and,
5. The project is likely to be an unavoidable part of the final Regional Plan due to existing capacity deficiencies and already committed growth patterns (a list of potential projects which would qualify under this category is included in Attachment "B".)

Classification of Pressing Transportation IssuesMajor Regional Undertakings

Regional Undertakings projects and studies are essentially all the remaining transportation projects which do not meet the definitions and criteria for either the Local Modifications or Strategic Additions project categories. These projects will typically require some justification for completion under the Regional Plan policies, and should not be addressed until a decision on the regional growth strategy is made by Council. Potential projects which would qualify under this category are included in Attachment "B".

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Appearance of a project on any of the three project lists (Attachment "B") does not mean that the project has already received a budget allocation. Projects not yet budgeted will be considered as part of the annual budget process for capital projects.

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

1. Develop and adopt alternative criteria for categorizing and prioritizing transportation issues to be addressed while the Regional Planning process is undertaken.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment "A": Definitions and Criteria for the "Local Modifications", "Strategic Additions" and "Major Regional Undertakings" project categories.

Attachment "B": List of Potential Transportation Projects for the "Local Modifications", "Strategic Additions" and "Major Regional Undertakings" project categories.

Additional copies of this report and information on its status can be obtained by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

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LOCAL MODIFICATIONS - PROJECT CATEGORY

Definition

Local Modifications are intended to be those projects which have negligible effect on regional transportation patterns. They are normally small, isolated projects which permit HRM Traffic Services to address the ongoing need to maintain the safe and effective operation of the street network. Due to changing operational needs and priorities it is not possible to identify all projects that will be undertaken in the next few years which will qualify under the Local Modifications criteria. Similarly, projects that appear on the list are not guaranteed implementation.

Budget Implications

These projects have funding currently approved or will be funded through ongoing capital funding programs.

Criteria

To qualify as a Local Modification, a project must meet one of the following criteria:

Physical Modifications:

#1 A project limited to a single intersection or interchange which does not have a negative impact on other transportation modes and includes the following:

- installation of emergency response measures or transit priority measures
- installation of bicycle markings
- relocation of lane lines
- redesignation of turning requirements/prohibitions
- modification of parking controls
- installation or modification of traffic signals
- minor relocation of curb lines

The purposes of these projects are to improve intersection alignment, safety, access or general functionality, such as truck turning, and turn storage and improve the speed of transit service. Projects which primarily add capacity increases do not qualify under this criterion.

#2 Modifications that remove any capacity restriction of one block or less, by adding only one additional lane. It is important to note these projects have merit on their own and are not an initial stage toward a future widening plan.

#3 Localized measures taken under the *Neighbourhood Short-cutting Policy*.

#4 Localized measures taken to mitigate impacts of an approved development.

#5 Expansion of pedestrian, bicycle and park-and-ride facilities and any on-street parking issues.

#6 Localized transportation improvements within the Capital District, as will be identified and presented to Council through the Capital District Transportation/Transit/Access Working Group.

Acquisition/Designation of Land:

#7 Acquisition of land or designation of a transportation corridor in cases where a needed transportation corridor has been identified in a public document and is clearly threatened by impending development.

Studies & Policy Development:

#8 Studies conducted to identify possible future long-term transportation requirements.

#9 Creation of or modification to policies or bylaws related to the use of streets or on-street parking. (Examples include: the *Truck Route Bylaw*, *Dangerous Goods Routing*, and *Residential Parking Permits*.)

STRATEGIC ADDITIONS - PROJECT CATEGORY

Definition

Strategic Additions projects are those which are broad enough in scope to have regional implications, but by meeting the criteria outlined below, should be considered as an early deliverable of the Regional Plan.

Budget Implications

These are projects that either have budgeting approved or which may be brought forward to Council for Capital funding approval within the next two budget years.

Criteria

To qualify under the Strategic Additions category, a project must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- #1 Funding has been approved or is pending.
- #2 The project has been identified in an approved Master Plan under the Capital Cost Contributions Policy.
- #3 The project is likely to contribute to the regional planning objective of alternative transportation modes.
- #4 The project is likely to contribute to the regional planning objective of compact infill growth.
- #5 The project is likely to be an unavoidable part of the final Regional Plan due to existing capacity deficiencies and already committed growth patterns.

MAJOR REGIONAL UNDERTAKINGS - PROJECT CATEGORY

Definitions

Major Regional Undertakings are those projects and studies which do not qualify under the Local Modifications and Strategic Additions project categories. Major Regional Undertakings will require further study, evaluation and integration with the growth scenarios being proposed for consideration by Council under the Regional Plan.

Budget Implications

Feasibility and implication studies will need to be budgeted for and brought forward to Council for capital funding approval in the next two years. The implementation of any of these projects represents large infrastructure investment on the part of HRM.

Public Consultation

Major Regional Undertakings will have significant implications for the nature and shape of the Region over the next 25 years. These implications will be not only be in regard to transportation but will also affect the nature of communities and neighbourhoods in both established and new growth areas. As large infrastructure investments, these projects will have financial implications for the future tax rate in HRM. A public consultation process that links discussion of these projects to the larger growth scenarios for HRM will be important for public understanding and acceptance.

Criteria

Criteria for the Major Regional Undertakings category will be developed during the Regional Planning process and will serve to evaluate and prioritize major regional undertakings.

LIST OF POTENTIAL TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS BY PROJECT CATEGORY

Local Modifications Project	Criteria Number	Rationale/Comments	Cost/Timing	Page i
1 Robie Street Modification (Cunard to West)	2	This project provides continuity in the northbound direction of Robie between the three lane section south of Cunard and the two-lane section north of West. It also improves safety by reducing the intersection offset and by providing left turn storage in the southbound direction.	\$230,000 Approved in 2001/02. Awaiting land acquisition.	
2 Realignment of Bayers/Windsor Intersection	1	This project creates a direct connection between Bayers Road and Young Street. Safety is improved by reducing turning movements. Will also reduce volumes on the local section of Young Street west of Oxford.	\$350,000 Approved in 2000/01. Awaiting land acquisition.	
3 Nantucket realignment and Victoria Road signals	1	Project provides needed signalization onto Victoria Road for bridge traffic. Consolidation of two one-way legs into single two-way leg benefits Commons lands. Expected to reduce shortcutting on Boland and Maple/Thistle.	\$350,000 Approved in 2001/02. Construction phase underway.	
4 Median opening on Alderney at Portland	1	Improves accessibility to Portland Street and downtown Dartmouth in general.	\$100,000 Approved in 2002/03. Design phase underway.	
5 North Street Modification at Chebucto	2	This project connects westbound North Street with an existing receiving lane west of Kline Street. This eliminates the need for North Street traffic to merge with Chebucto Road traffic.	\$50,000 Initiated in 2001 under Minor Intersection Upgrade Program. Awaiting utility pole relocation.	
6 Main Street five-lane project	4	Management of left turning traffic generated by new and existing commercial development required for safety.	\$180,000 Portion approved in 2001/02. Remainder will be cost-shared with developers and/or proposed for funding in 2003/04.	
7 Intersection upgrade and signals - Akerley Blvd/Mosher Drive	1	Signalization warranted, intersection widening required for proper function.	\$270,000 Proposed in business park expansion plan. Design phase underway.	
8 Intersection upgrade and signals - Wright Ave/McDonald Ave	1	Signalization warranted, intersection widening required for proper function.	\$310,000 Proposed in business park expansion plan. Design phase underway.	
9 Kingswood Interchange on Hwy 113 Scoping Study	7	Study needed to determine land required to preserve future opportunity.	\$50,000 Initiated in 2002 under Various Traffic Studies program	

LIST OF POTENTIAL TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS BY PROJECT CATEGORY

Local Modifications Project	Criteria Number	Rationale/Comments	Cost/Timing	Page ii
10 Akerley/Windmill - additional turn lane	1	Widening the Akerley approach to allow two lanes of traffic to turn right simultaneously onto Windmill Road will reduce congestion and provide safer truck turning.	\$60,000 Funding not yet requested	
11 Transit Priority Pilot Projects	1	Pilot projects allow staff assessment and provide public demonstration.	Ongoing program with funding subject to approval annually.	
12 Installation/upgrade of traffic signals at various locations	1	Installed when national warrants are met to maintain adequate safety and operation. Projects scheduled for 2002-03 include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lacewood/Parkland Victoria/Nantucket Wright/MacDonald 	Ongoing program with funding subject to approval annually.	
13 Neighbourhood Short-cutting Policy	3	Measures include initiation of new projects, public consultation, and implementation of recommendations as set out in the Policy. Projects currently underway include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Armview/Pryor/Jubilee Romans Old Sackville Road Bayview/Flamingo 	Ongoing program with funding subject to approval annually.	
14 Expansion of the pedestrian and bicycle network within urban core	5	Key projects currently under development are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lake Banook Trail crossing Lacewood/Chain Lake sidewalk Multi-purpose trail connecting the Dartmouth ferry terminals MacDonald Bridge Bikeway - Halifax Access 	Ongoing program with funding subject to approval annually.	
15 Expansion of the SCOOT and Opticom Systems	1	Maximizes operation of existing intersections and provides priority to emergency response vehicles.	Ongoing program with funding subject to approval annually.	

LIST OF POTENTIAL TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS BY PROJECT CATEGORY

Strategic Additions Project		Rationale/Comments	Cost/Timing	Page iii
1	Main Street/Forest Hills Drive Intersection Expansion	This intersection currently has a poor level of service which will worsen with development of nearby vacant land.	\$200,000 Funding approved in 2001-02 budget. Design phase underway.	
2	Bicycle Master Plan Policies	Master plan will develop strategy to integrate bicycling into the transportation system.	\$70,000 Planning project underway with funding in approved 2001-02 budget.	
3	Extension of Parkland Drive to Kearney Lake Road	Will complete arterial connection between Lacewood Drive and Kearney Lake Road.	\$140,000 Will be completed as development proceeds, only cost to HRM is signalization.	
4	Shearwater Interchange and Collector	Project will facilitate development of new lands and redevelopment of Shearwater lands. Completed project will relieve traffic loading from Portland Street.	\$7,000,000 (one-third HRM) Funding applied for under Federal Infrastructure Program.	
5	MicMac Boulevard/Hwy 111 Interchange Expansion	Backups onto Highway 111 occur now and present a safety hazard. This will increase with potential growth at the mall and at vacant and underutilized parcels of land in the immediate area.	\$3,200,000 (one-third HRM) Proposed three-way cost sharing with the province and developers. Construction in 2003 is proposed.	
6	Upgrade to Burnside Drive/Commodore/Ronald Smith	Intersection currently has poor level of service which will worsen as the Business Park expands and John Savage Drive is connected to Commodore Drive.	\$1,000,000 Funding proposed in the Business Park Expansion Plan.	
7	Lacewood/Hwy 102 Interchange Expansion	Capacity of existing interchange will be strained by approved development in Regency Park and potential expansion in Bayers Lake Park.	\$1,200,000 Funding proposed in Business Park Expansion Plan. Provincial cost-sharing being sought.	
8	Extension of John Savage Dr to Commodore	Extension of this collector is needed to service lands proposed for development within the Burnside Business Park.	\$6,000,000 Funding proposed in the Business Park Expansion Plan.	
9	Hammonds Plains Road Widening	This project will result in a continuous three-lane width from Bedford Highway to Brookshire Court. The primary benefit of this project is safe storage of left turning traffic as opposed to overall corridor capacity.	\$350,000 Funding not yet approved. This project must be undertaken in 2003 to take advantage of synergies with scheduled construction of a water transmission main.	
10	Recommendations of IBI Transit Study	Study completed in 2002 with strategic recommendations which will go forward over the next two years.	Not determined.	
11	Phase 2 Transit Study	Phase 2 of proposals for long term enhancement to Metro Transit Services.	Not determined	

LIST OF POTENTIAL TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS BY PROJECT CATEGORY

Strategic Additions Project	Rationale/Comments	Cost/Timing	Page iv
12 Bedford South Interchange on Hwy 102	This project is necessary to capture traffic from the Wentworth Estates master planning area. Limited capacity on the Bedford Highway dictates the timing.	\$6,500,000 Cost distribution and timing to be determined through CCC.	
13 Replacement of Cogswell Interchange	Land use opportunity project led by the Capital District Task Force. A separate report to Council is being prepared by the Capital District Project Manager.	Not determined. Study costs and financing alternatives will be identified in subsequent reports to Council. It is anticipated that the project will commence in 2003.	
14 Peninsula Rail Cut Greenway/Multi-Use Trail	Phased concept planning and implementation further to the Halifax Parkland Strategy and subsequent analysis and consultation. The proposed trail location is above and alongside the existing railway corridor.	Funding to be determined at each phase.	
15 Pedestrian connection across Highway 111 from Highfield Park to Burnside Business Park.	Pedestrian connection will consist of pedestrian overpass or fences and new facilities on existing overpasses.	\$100,000 to \$250,000 Pending further study.	
16 HRM Street Classification	The classification of streets into their role within the roadway hierarchy is out-of-date and inconsistent across former jurisdictions. A harmonized, updated system would allow staff to deal with design and functional issues.	Minimal cost.	

LIST OF POTENTIAL TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS BY PROJECT CATEGORY

Major Regional Undertakings Project Expected Benefits/Implications

1	Bayers Road Widening - Hwy 102 to Connaught (4 lanes to 6 lanes)	Intended to deal with existing congestion and to provide capacity for growth in traffic entering from Hwy 102 and 103. Additional capacity on Bayers Road is expected to attract traffic loading away from Mumford, Chebucto, Quinpool, Bayview and other local streets where shortcutting is evident. Implies/requires commitment to down traffic enhancements on the peninsula.
2	Bayers Road Capacity Increase - Connaught to Windsor	Intended to deal with existing congestion and to provide capacity for growth in traffic entering from Hwy 102 and 103. Additional capacity on Bayers Road is expected to attract traffic loading away from Mumford, Chebucto, Quinpool, Bayview and other local streets where shortcutting is evident. Implications for neighbourhood quality, air quality and downstream traffic flow.
3	Robie Street Capacity Increase - Almon to Cunard	Intended to deal with existing congestion and to strengthen the Bayers-Robie corridor as a the main traffic-bearing corridor through the peninsula. This is expected to reduce traffic loading elsewhere. Implications for neighbourhood quality, air quality and downstream traffic flow.
4	Armdale Rotary Capacity Improvement	Intended to provide additional capacity accessing the peninsula from Herring Cove Road and St. Margaret's Bay Road. Study required as to nature, cost and implications of all possible alternatives for improvement.
5	North Street Reversible Lane - Gottingen to Robie	A third reversible lane will strengthen the connection between Robie Street and the Macdonald Bridge. Implications for neighbourhood quality, air quality and downstream traffic flow needs to be examined.
6	Herring Cove Road Widening - Old Sambro Road to Rotary (2 or 3 lanes to 4 lanes)	Intended to deal with existing congestion and to provide capacity for new growth. Consideration in conjunction with rotary improvements or other projects to relieve congestion at the arm.
7	Ferry Services Feasibility Study - Northwest Arm and Bedford/Halifax	To determine options, feasibility, capacity and costing for new ferry services to serve growth areas.
8	Phase 2 Feasibility Study - Commuter Rail Service	To provide feasibility study, capacity requirements and costing for a commuter rail service and stations to serve a growth corridor in the Western and Central Regions.
9	Freight Access Study	To determine and assess freight access issues within HRM.