

**Transportation Standing Committee**  
**May 24, 2012**

**TO:** Chair and Members of Transportation Standing Committee

**SUBMITTED BY:**



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Peter Stickings, Acting Director, Planning & Infrastructure



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Ken Reashor, Director, Transportation & Public Works

**DATE:** April 20, 2012

**SUBJECT:** **Hammonds Plains Road Improvements**

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### **INFORMATION REPORT**

#### **ORIGIN**

Councillor Lund presented a petition at the August 9, 2011, meeting of Halifax Regional Council requesting a multi-year strategy for safety improvements on Hammonds Plains Road.

#### **BACKGROUND**

The petition states:

We, the undersigned, ask that our Municipality develop a multi-year strategy to finance the necessary improvements to this very heavily traveled roadway. At present, there are very few safe places along the Hammonds Plains Road for residents to walk, bike or jog. Residents and their children are forced to use the dangerous, narrow, often rutted gravel shoulders to visit their neighbours, schools, daycares and local merchants. The narrow roadway prevents motorists from being able to maintain the one metre clearance from cyclists as required by law.

Paving the shoulder would help provide a safe alternative transportation method for work & recreation and make the Hammonds Plains Road safer for all who use it, whether they be motorists, pedestrians or cyclists. The narrow roadway often forces trucks to encroach on the shoulders contributing to the continuous expense of having to repair the edges of the road and the shoulders. By paving the shoulders, much of that on-going expense could be eliminated.

The petition was signed by approximately 2400 people.

**DISCUSSION**

Hammonds Plains Road is approximately 15 km in length, running from the Bedford Highway in Bedford to Highway 103 in Upper Tantallon. All but a small portion between Highway 103 and Westwood Boulevard is owned by HRM. The 4 km section between Highway 102 and Kingswood Drive has been, and continues to be, upgraded in connection with Bedford West Capital Cost Charges and regional intersection improvements program. The 11 km section from Kingswood Drive to Westwood Boulevard is more rural in nature and is the subject of this report.

This section of Hammonds Plains Road is designated rural arterial. HRM Municipal Service Systems (Red Book) specifies the characteristics appropriate for a roadway of this type. Hammonds Plains Road does not fully meet these criteria in five areas:

- (1) Travel lanes are too narrow
- (2) Paved shoulder is too narrow
- (3) Gravel shoulder is too narrow
- (4) Ditch slopes are too steep
- (5) Vertical curves are too short (blind crests)

Attachment One shows the existing road cross-section and three alternative road cross-sections improvements for comparison. The table below shows whether the criteria above are met for each cross-section and the cost.

	Cost (per m)	Criteria				
		Travel Lanes	Paved shoulder	Gravel Shoulder	Ditch Slope	Vertical Curves
Repave Existing	\$300	○	○	●	○	○
Intermediate	\$385	◐	●	◐	○	○
Intermediate w/Multi-use Trail	\$1075	◐	◐	◐	○	○
Red Book	\$700*	●	●	●	●	○
Red Book w/Profile Change	\$900*	●	●	●	●	●

\*does not include cost of land acquisition

These options achieve a wider asphalt surface and, where possible, should be included as part of a road rehabilitation project.

The Multi-purpose Trail cross-section relies on a swale and catchbasins for stormwater drainage. This can be problematic and will add to road maintenance costs. Further discussion with Halifax Water will be needed before implementation of this cross-section could be pursued further.

It is our intention to design to the Intermediate cross-section, when surface rehabilitation is undertaken on Hammonds Plains Road in the future. This design creates wider travel lanes and

sufficient shoulder width to mark as a bicycle lane. We believe that designing to the Red Book cross-section in a road rehabilitation project, or replacing a ditch with piping to create a multi-purpose trail, is too expensive for the benefit it provides and, in many locations, would result in costly and disruptive property acquisition. This same Intermediate cross-section will be considered for design of other rural collector and arterial roadways requiring rehabilitation throughout the region.

Application of the Intermediate cross-section to Hammonds Plains Road will begin this year with a 1.2 kilometre section (Northwood to Rockcliffe). With the additional road safety benefit that this additional width can provide, further consideration will be given to implementation in advance of a critical need for rehabilitation.

Attachment Two shows the existing condition of various sections of Hammonds Plains Road and the cost of retro-fitting the Intermediate and Multi-purpose Trail cross-section to it.

### **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

Designing to the Intermediate cross-section will add approximately 25% to the cost of resurfacing a road. The direct implication of this added cost to individual projects will be approved through the normal project budgeting process.

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

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

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Several engagement sessions on the issue of safety on the Hammonds Plains Road have been held by residents' associations and have been attended by HRM staff.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment One: Existing & Alternative Cross-sections

Attachment Two: Current Condition and Cost of Retro-fitting new Cross-Sections

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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