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Active Transportation Advisory Committee
June 17, 2010

TO: Chair and Members of Active Transportation Advisory Committee

SUBMITTED BY:

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

Ken Reashor, P.Eng., A/Director, Transportation and Public Works

DATE: June 9, 2010

SUBJECT: Proposed Bicycle Lanes on Herring Cove Road

ORIGIN

Motion of the May 20, 2010 meeting of the Active Transportation Advisory Committee requesting a staff report outlining issues raised with regard to the proposed Herring Cove bike lane including the width of the bike lane and the issues of congestion raised by the Spryfield Business Commission.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Active Transportation Advisory Committee recommend that Regional Council:

1. Award the tender for the resurfacing of Herring Cove Road from Old Sambro Road to Hartlen Avenue with the proposed pavement marking scheme which includes a change in vehicle lanes from four through lanes to two through lanes, plus two bicycle lanes, as well as a centre turn lane alternating with planted median islands.

BACKGROUND

Approximately 900 metres of Herring Cove Road, between Old Sambro Road and Hartlen Avenue, is scheduled for pavement resurfacing in 2010. Herring Cove Road is identified in HRM's Active Transportation (AT) Plan as an "on-road candidate route". Roads identified as such are considered for the development of on-road AT infrastructure (sidewalks and bicycle lanes) when any form of reconstruction is planned. This road already has sidewalks, but specific infrastructure for bicycles is lacking. Traffic modeling of the corridor revealed that dropping a vehicle travel lane in each direction had no significant impact on current traffic and still maintained reserve capacity to handle traffic growth, resulting in an opportunity to stripe bicycle lanes. In addition to bike lanes, a centre turn lane and planted median islands are proposed.

The plan was provided to Councillor Adams who brought it to a meeting of the Spryfield and District Business Commission on April 15, 2010. Because of concerns expressed by some abutting business owners, staff attended another meeting of the Spryfield and District Business Commission Executive on April 22, 2010 to address questions stemming from the proposed changes. Many present at the second meeting expressed concerns related to the loss of a vehicle travel lane and questioned the validity of installing bicycle lanes. A member of the Spryfield and District Business Commission expressed these concerns at the May 20, 2010 meeting of the Active Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC).

The project has gone out for tender and is anticipated to go to Council for award in the near future. Because of the issues raised, this report is intended to provide more details to the ATAC so they can provide guidance to Regional Council on the matter when it comes time for Council to award the project for construction.

DISCUSSION

- This paving project creates an opportunity to create bicycle infrastructure and expand the bicycle network at no additional cost by simply adjusting pavement markings and reallocating existing road space. If this opportunity is not taken, the next opportunity will not arise until this section of road requires additional resurfacing work which would be in the range of 10 - 15 years.
- Traffic modeling for the vehicle lane reduction revealed no significant impact on capacity or delay through the project area while still maintaining reserve capacity to accommodate traffic growth. Capacity of this corridor is governed by the two-lane width closer to the Armdale Roundabout where volumes are highest. The capacity of the existing four-lane section will never be fully utilized until the width of the corridor is expanded all the way to the Roundabout.
- The four lane section of Herring Cove Road was built in phases about 30 years ago as part of larger vision of arterial roadway expansion. The four lane section was left sandwiched between two other sections which are currently two/three lane cross-sections. The ultimate capacity of the current four lane section is limited by the narrower cross-section between Old

Sambro Road and the Armdale Roundabout where volumes are higher.

- The HRM Regional Plan identified the future need for four lanes of capacity on Herring Cove Road between the Armdale Roundabout and the old Halifax City Limits. At this point, project timelines see the widening of the section between the Armdale Roundabout and Purcell's Cove Road to begin in five years (2015), with the remaining 2.2 km to Old Sambro Road to be completed in subsequent phases. It is expected that by the time widening of the corridor reaches the existing four-lane section (+/- 2025) resurfacing would again be required, providing the opportunity to reinstate the four lane cross-section if, as projected, traffic volume required it.
- HRM roadway design standards require inclusion of bike lanes on a road of this type and so any expansion of Herring Cove Road would include accommodation of bicycles.
- Bus stops and right turning vehicles will not affect traffic any differently than they do now. Buses will still use existing lay-bys which are not being changed, and right turning vehicles will still have space to move to the right, into the bike lane, when making a turn leaving room for other vehicles to pass.
- A centre left-turn lane will be added and any exclusive left-turn lanes will be maintained. This means there will be no change in the effect of left turning vehicles on through traffic and actually represents an improvement to current conditions.
- There is virtually no cost difference between the two options since the only change is where the lines are painted.
- As shown in Attachment "A", the proposed project does not involve any modification at all to the overall roadway width. The existing space is simply being reallocated meaning that conversion back to a four lane cross-section, if necessary, could be achieved by carrying out an asphalt resurfacing and restriping, i.e., no actual road width is being taken away. The width of the cross section is 17 metres and it is currently allocated to four vehicle lanes with left turn lanes at intersections. The proposed cross section would have a 2m wide bicycle lane and a 4m wide vehicle lane in each direction. The remaining width (5m) would be for the centre turn lane which will alternate with the planted median islands.
- The current road cross section is not bicycle friendly because there is not adequate space for cyclists in the current configuration and the excessive road width encourages higher vehicle speeds, which are intimidating to cyclists.
- This is a good place to install bicycle lanes because this section of road contains and connects many origins and destinations, and active transportation infrastructure is most successful when it makes connections. Origins include all the residential feeder streets connecting to this section of Herring Cove Road, and destinations include Shopping Centres (Sobey's, South Centre Mall, many smaller retailers); schools (Central School and J.L. Ilsley); and recreation facilities (Captain William Spry Centre).

- Bike lanes on Herring Cove Road would connect with Williams Lake Road, which is already partially striped for bicycle lanes, with more planned, and would result in a continuous connection with the existing bicycle lanes on Purcell's Cove Road. There is also a section of Old Sambro Road (McIntosh Run to Sussex Street) that currently has bike lanes. It is critical to make these connections in order to achieve the goals for a bicycle network as set out in the Active Transportation Plan and to make the network a real alternative for people in terms of travel. Spryfield has a great opportunity to become a very bicycle friendly community if all these connections can be made.
- If this project is approved with the recommended cross section there are plans to coordinate with planned future paving projects in the area to extend these bicycle lanes to McIntosh Run, further increasing the utility of the route from an AT perspective.
- The Herring Cove Road Community Development and Streetscape Planning Project (Ekistics, 2005) recommended that the five lane section of Herring Cove Road between Old Sambro Road and Greystone Drive could be converted to three lanes without limiting road capacity, while providing room for tree planting in the median as well as bicycle travel in the curb lane. The community's main objectives for this section of the road, as stated in the Ekistics report, was to "slow traffic along the road and improve the appearance of the street". The proposed cross-section will achieve this.
- Council recently approved the Spryfield Vision and Action Plan which calls for many strategic actions, including to:
 - 1/ Implement the vision embodied in the Herring Cove Road Streetscape Study;
 - 2/ Extend existing and create new bikeways;
 - 3/ Connect Spryfield to neighbouring communities and greater Halifax using alternative modes of transportation.

This project would help to achieve these goals.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There are no budget implications.

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

Extensive community engagement was carried out through the development of the Herring Cove Road Community Development and Streetscape Planning Project (2005); the Active Transportation Plan (2006), and most recently the Spryfield Vision and Action Plan (2010). All of these plans support the proposed road cross section which is the subject of this report.

ALTERNATIVES

Council may choose to award the tender for the resurfacing of the Herring Cove Road from Old Sambro Road to Hartlen Avenue with the existing pavement markings and four lane configuration reinstated. This alternative is not recommended as staff is satisfied that the project as tendered, satisfies the policies and intent of the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy, the Active Transportation Plan, and helps achieve the goals of the Spryfield Vision and Action Plan.

Therefore ATAC has two alternatives to the staff recommendation:

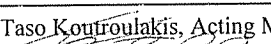
1. ATAC could recommend against awarding the tender with the bike lanes and instead endorse a version that reinstates the existing lane markings. This alternative is not recommended.
2. ATAC could choose to be silent on the matter and not recommend either version.

ATTACHMENTS

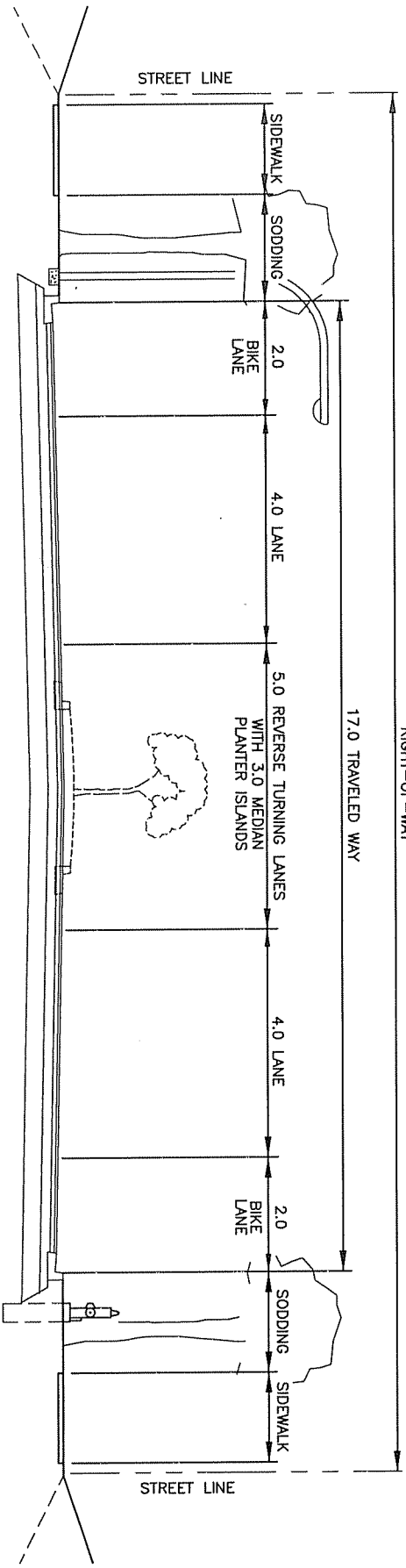
Attachment "A" Herring Cove Road - Proposed Lane Changes to Include Bike Lanes
Attachment "B" Herring Cove Road - Traffic Volumes
Attachment "C" Existing / Proposed Bicycle Lanes

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/commcoun/cc.html> then choose the appropriate Community Council and meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

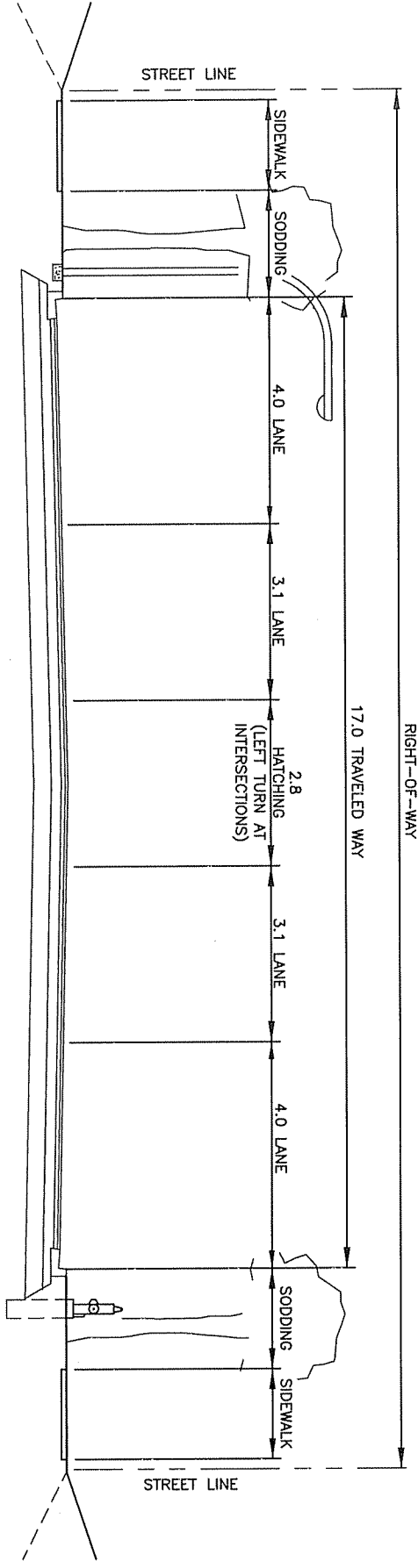
Report Prepared by: Hanita Koblents, TDM Co-ordinator, 490-8474

Report Approved by:  Taso Koutoulakis, Acting Manager, Traffic and Right of Way, 490-4816

PROPOSED TYPICAL CROSS SECTION

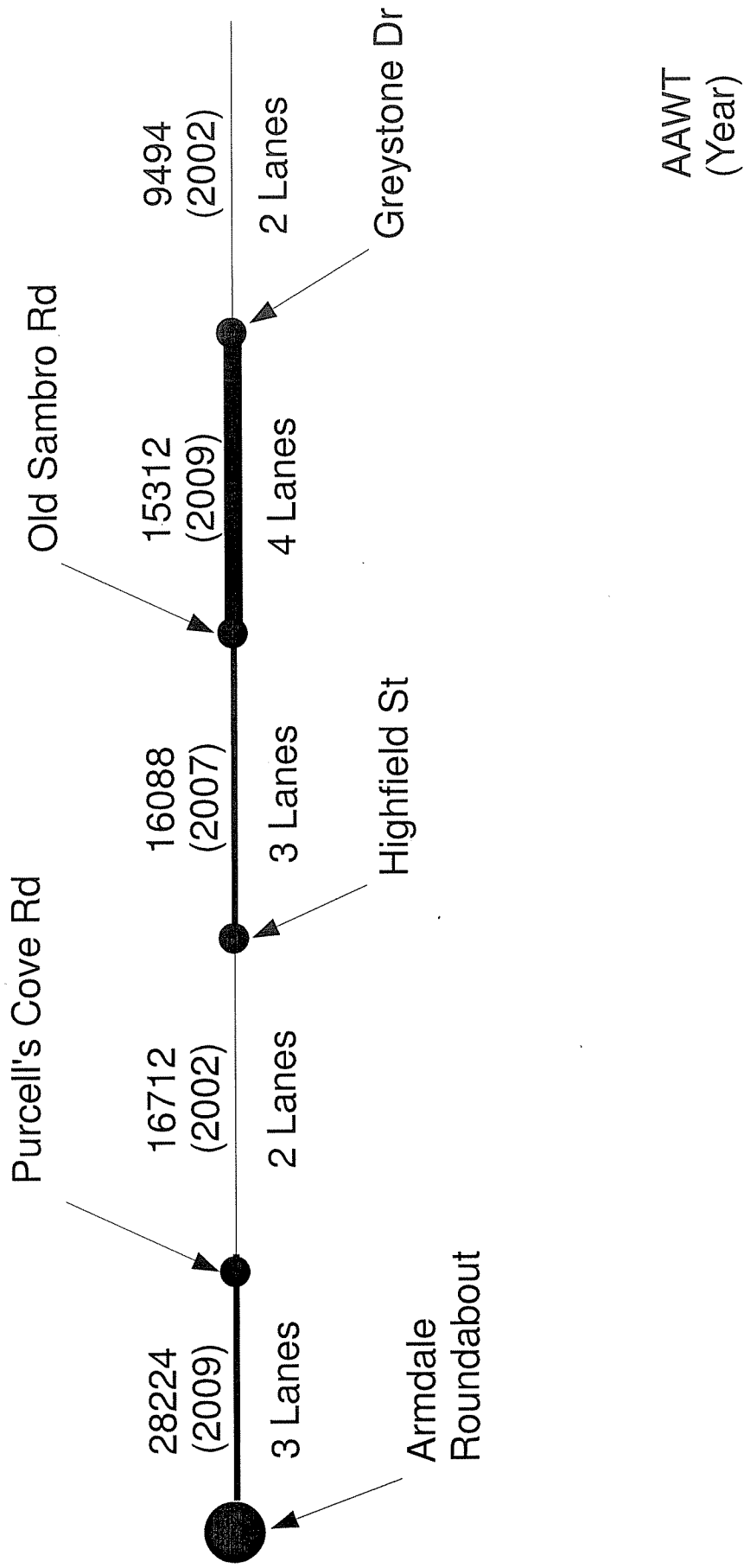


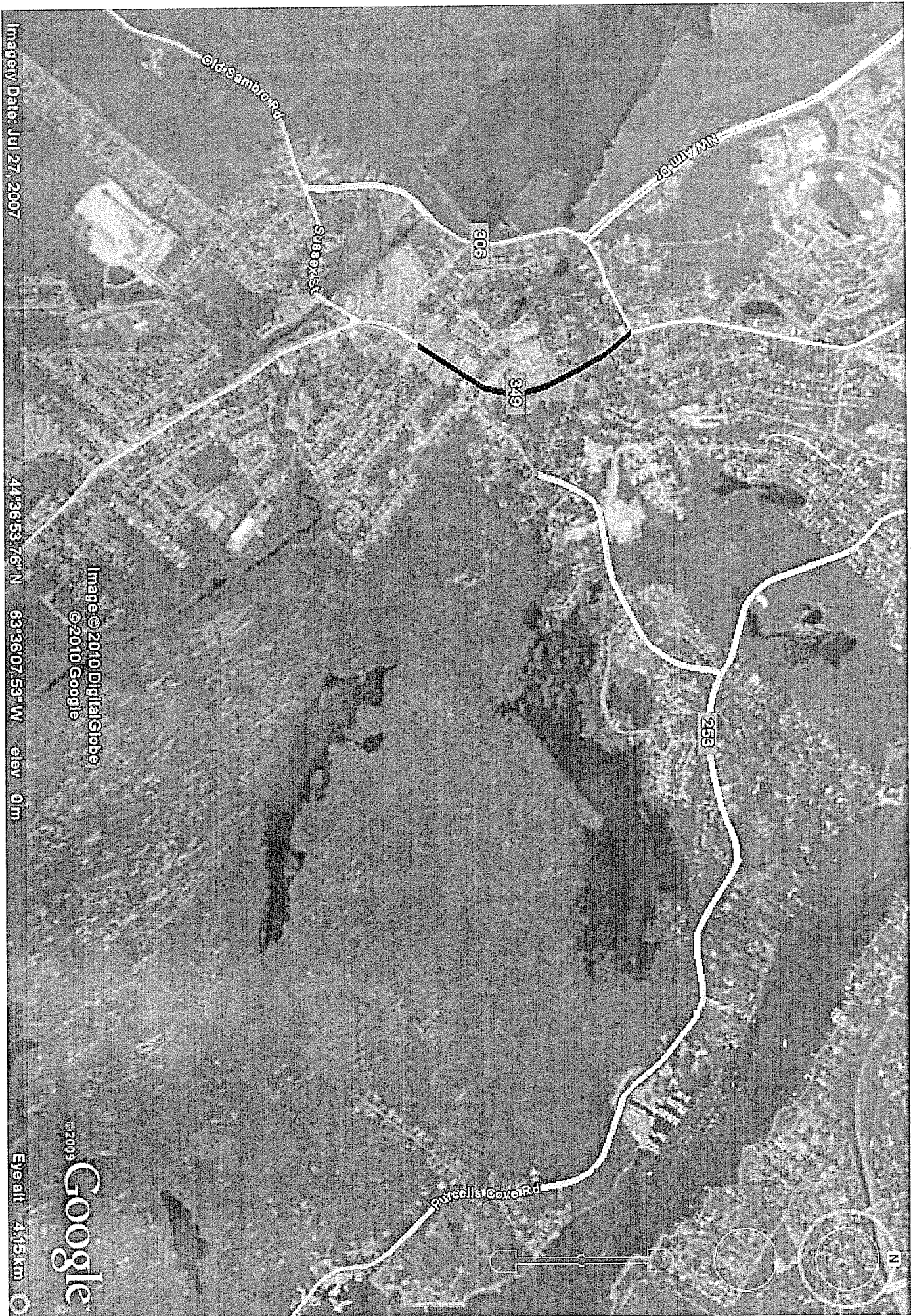
EXISTING TYPICAL CROSS SECTION



**HERRING COVE ROAD
(OLD SAMBRO RD TO HARTLEN AVE)
PROPOSED LANE CHANGES
TO INCLUDE BIKE LANES**

Herring Cove Road Traffic Volumes





Imagery Date: Jul 27, 2007

44°38'53.76" N 63°36'07.53" W elev 0m

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Eye alt 415 km

