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Halifax Regional Council
May 11, 2004

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "G. L. Kaiser", written over a horizontal line.

Geri Kaiser, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: April 28, 2004

SUBJECT: Roadway Network Optimization Plan

ORIGIN

Early on in the regional planning process, Council expressed a desire for critical transportation issues to be addressed in advance of delivery of the regional plan. At the June 17, 2002 meeting of Committee of the Whole, staff presented a strategy to identify transportation projects that could be undertaken without affecting or unduly influencing the outcome of the ultimate regional transportation plan.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

Halifax Regional Council endorse the intent of the Roadway Network Optimization Plan as described in this report.

BACKGROUND

The Regional Plan and accompanying transportation plan are scheduled to be completed in March, 2005. It is intended that future investment in the expansion of the transportation network to service growth will be closely tied to future settlement patterns determined through the regional planning process. Nevertheless, a June 25, 2002 report to Committee of the Whole titled "Classification of Pressing Transportation Issues" set forth a methodology by which to identify projects that could be pursued in advance of the regional plan. Many of the projects identified in that report have since been undertaken. This report gives further definition to a strategy to continue moving forward with key roadway projects.

It is intended that future investment in transportation infrastructure comply with regional planning goals and objectives and be closely tied to future settlement patterns. As such, there will be a focus on transit investment, with strategic roadway investment to meet existing and future need. This report addresses roadway projects which can move forward now, to remove existing bottlenecks within key corridors, realizing maximum benefit from past investment. These projects are categorized as Roadway Network Optimization and are described in the discussion below.

DISCUSSION

Increasing the overall supply of roadway capacity can be broken down into three major components and subcomponents listed below:

1. Roadway Network Expansion
 - building new roads
 - widening existing roads

2. Roadway Network Optimization
 - corridor continuity projects
 - turning bays
 - bus bays
 - traffic signal control

3. Roadway Operational Efficiencies
 - parking/loading restrictions and enforcement
 - management of construction activities and special events
 - emergency incidents
 - directional signs

It is clear that component one, Roadway Network Expansion, involves significant financial investment and strategic decision-making. It is therefore best addressed through the regional planning process.

Components two and three should be viewed as making best use of the existing roadway investment. Once the roadway network is optimized to the highest degree possible, the need to undertake major roadway network expansion projects will be reduced.

Under the Roadway Operational Efficiencies component, staff from Regional Planning, Police, and Public Works and Transportation will work together on a strategy that will be included in the regional transportation plan. The strategy will strive to better relate activities such as enforcement of illegal parking, street closure due to construction, and installation of directional signs to the efficient operation of the transportation network.

The key element to the Roadway Network Optimization task is the completion of corridor continuity projects. Corridor continuity refers to situations where the municipality has already made an investment in traffic lanes along a corridor, but for short sections of that corridor the number of lanes is reduced.

The best way to visualize this is to think of an example where a 20-block long roadway corridor is two lanes wide in one direction, but only one lane wide for a single block in the middle of the corridor. This constraint results in the entire 20 block corridor acting effectively as a single lane even though an investment in two lanes has been made for the majority of its length.

Staff has spent considerable time and effort in searching the entire regional roadway network for such examples of corridor discontinuity. Five projects have been identified and are summarized below along with their current status. Two of the projects require the negotiation of land and, as such, have been presented to Regional Council at its May 11, 2004 in-camera session. Once land acquisition is completed, information on these projects will be made available to the public through information sessions.

Project	Budget or Cost	Status
1. Chebucto/North merge	\$100,000	Budget approved: 2001/02 Project completed: Oct., 2003
2. Robie Street (Cunard to Garrick)	\$240,000	Budget approved: 2001/02 Plan to tender: May, 2004
3. Bayers Road through connection to Young St. across Windsor St.	\$900,000	Budget approved: 2000/01 & 04/05 Plan to tender: May, 2004
4. Project #4	\$1,600,000 (est)	Federal co-funding being sought for 2004/05
5. Project #5	\$1,900,000 (est)	Federal co-funding being sought for 2004/05

It is important to make a distinction between these corridor continuity projects and larger scale

projects that expand the roadway network and which must be considered in the context of settlement pattern, strategic decision-making, and public consultation. Staff will take endorsement of the Roadway Network Optimization Plan as direction to proceed with the functional intent of the corridor continuity projects. As such, public information and consultation sessions will be limited to consideration of design modifications to mitigate, to the degree possible, neighbourhood impacts and concerns that are identified. Neighbourhood input on the functional scope of the project will not be solicited or considered.

Each project has been carefully designed to limit the impact of roadway widening to a short section of the corridor, while achieving maximum operational effectiveness through the remainder of it. Nevertheless, Regional Council should be aware that residents adjacent to these areas of corridor widening will likely express opposition to the projects, as they perceive roadway encroachment into their residential areas.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Projects 1, 2 and 3 in the Roadway Network Optimization plan have already been budgeted for through the capital budget approval process and have no further budget implications. For projects 4 and 5, approval of the staff recommendation constitutes conceptual project approval only and not budget approval. Accordingly, there are no budget implications until staff returns to Regional Council with a strategy for funding these 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. Regional Council may choose to delay implementation of these projects pending completion of the regional transportation plan. This is not recommended, as budget for some projects have been approved and implementation will provide noticeable improvement in traffic delay without compromising the goals and objectives of the Regional Plan.
2. Regional Council may choose to direct to staff to solicit input from the public not only on the design details of the project, but the overall scope of the roadway widening as well. This direction may be given for individual projects or for all uncompleted projects. This is not recommended as staff, while appreciating the concerns of abutting residents to roadway widening projects, believe this is exceeded by the overall value to the community of fully realizing existing corridor investment.

ATTACHMENTS

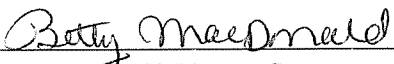
1. Corridor Continuity Projects: Conceptual Sketches
2. Functional Sketch - Chebucto/North Merge
3. Functional Sketch - Robie Street (Garrick to Cunard)
4. Functional Sketch - Bayers/Young/Windsor

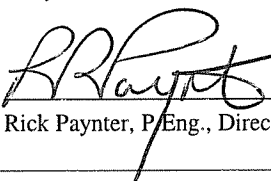
Additional copies of this report, and information on its status, can be obtained by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

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Ken Reashor, P.Eng., Acting Manager, Traffic & Transportation Services 

Report Approved by:

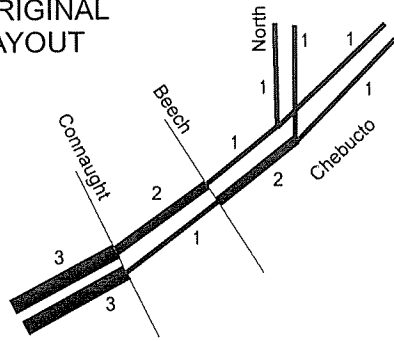

Betty Macdonald, Director, Governance and Strategic Initiatives


Rick Paynter, P.Eng., Director, Public Works and Transportation

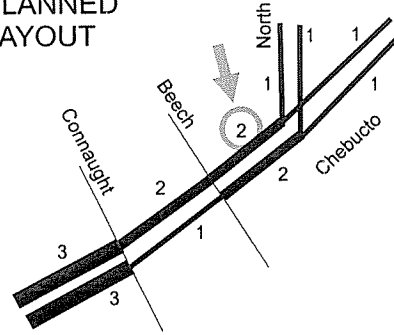
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Chebucto/
North Merge

ORIGINAL
LAYOUT



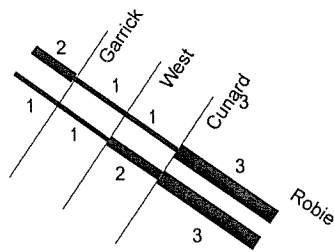
PLANNED
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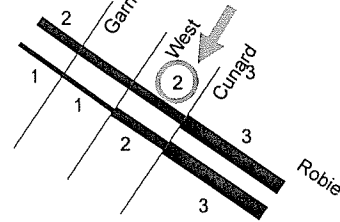
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Robie Street

ORIGINAL
LAYOUT



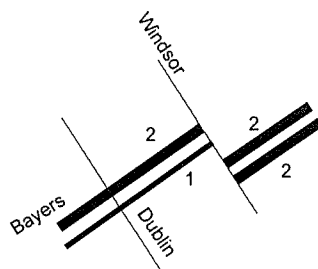
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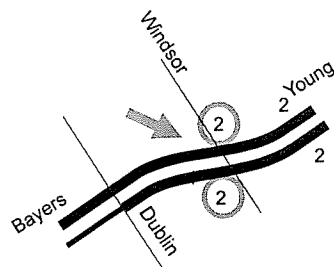
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Bayers Road

ORIGINAL
LAYOUT



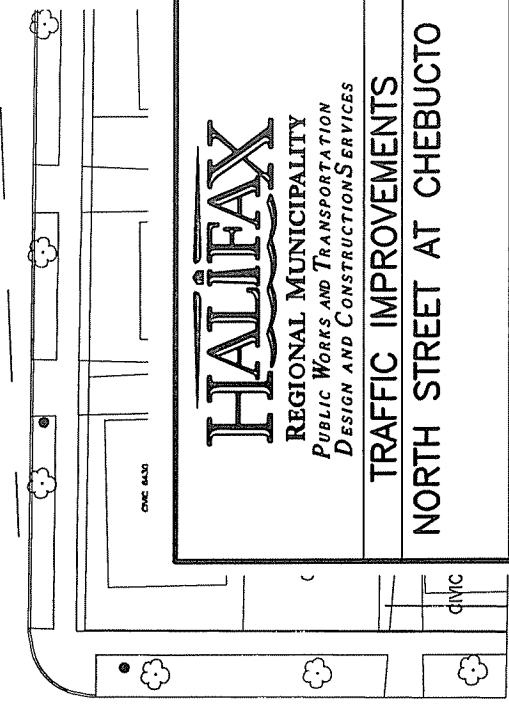
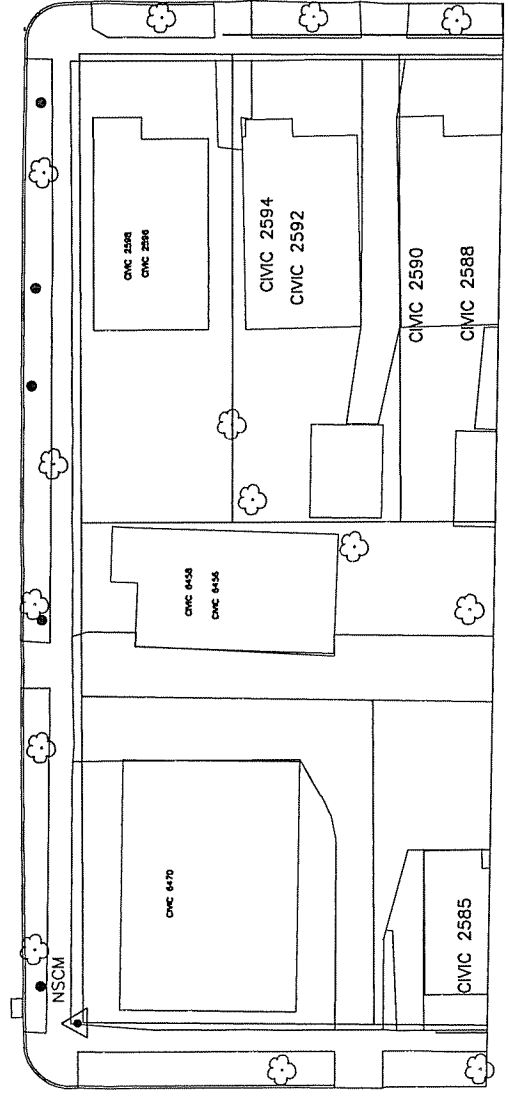
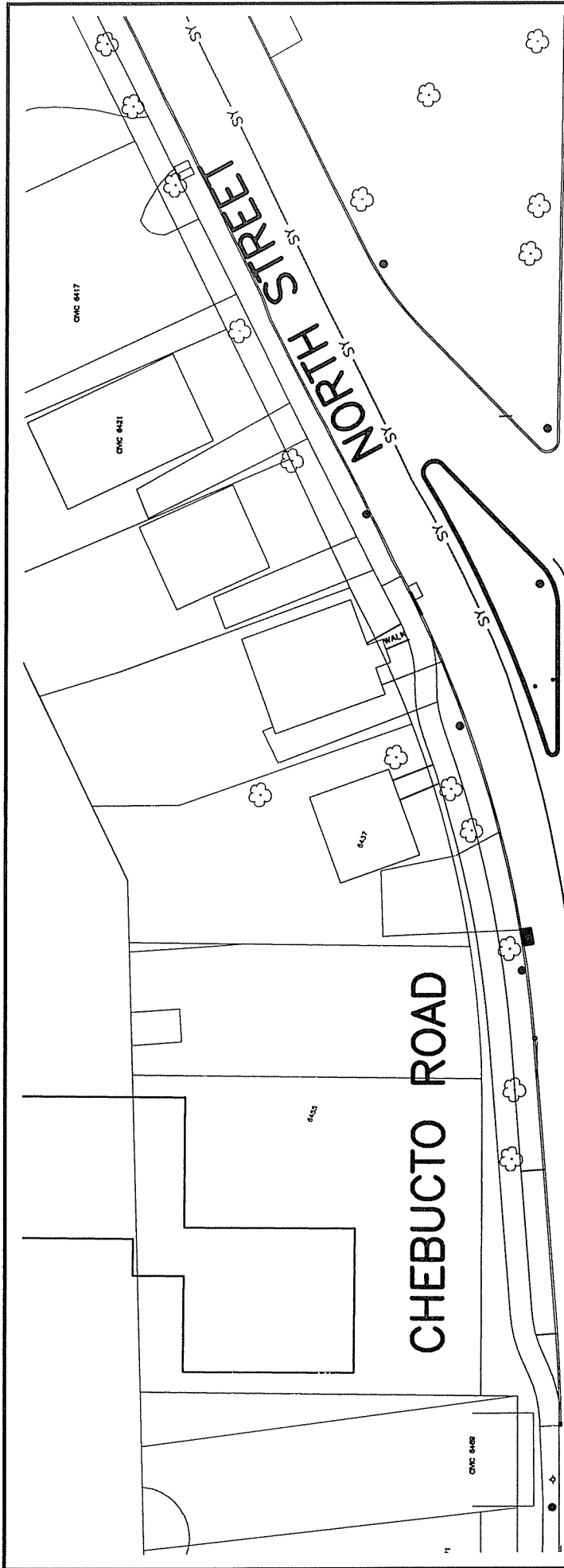
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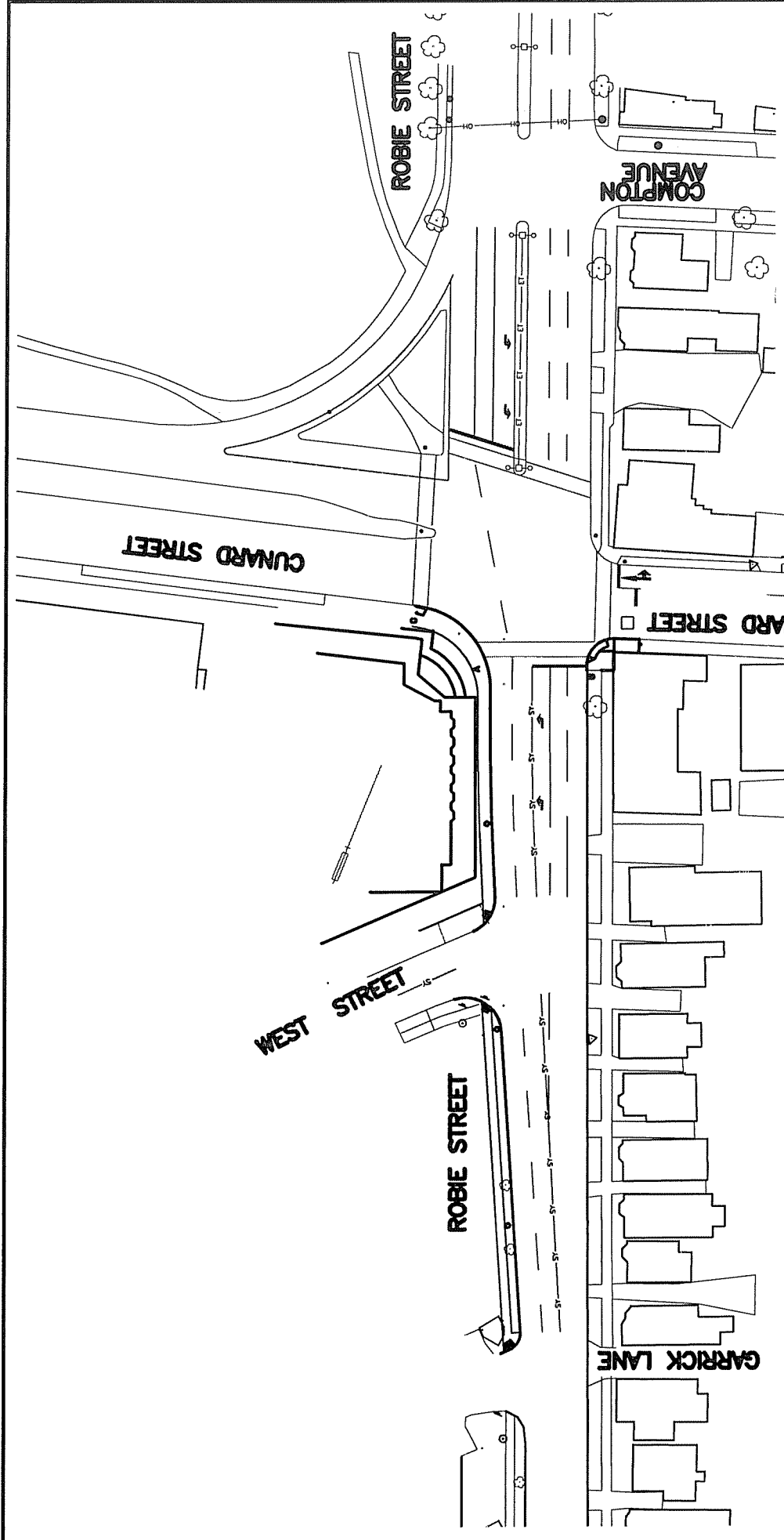
Numbers indicated street
width in traffic lanes

Conceptual Sketches
Not to Scale

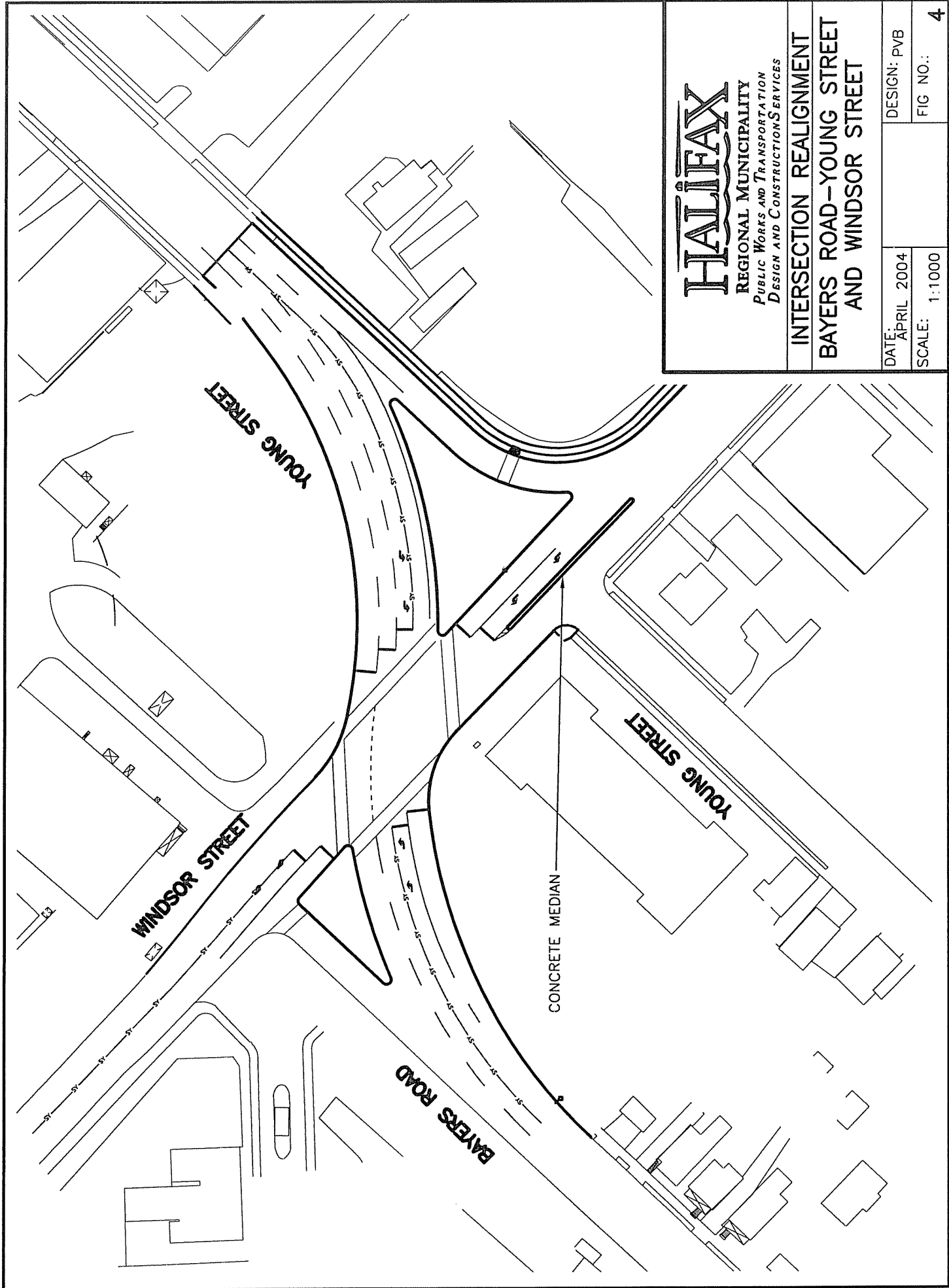
Figure 1
HRM Corridor Continuity Projects



 HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY PUBLIC WORKS AND TRANSPORTATION DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION SERVICES		DATE: APRIL 2004	DESIGN: PVB
		SCALE: 1:500	FIG NO.: 2
TRAFFIC IMPROVEMENTS NORTH STREET AT CHEBUCTO			



<h1>HALIFAX</h1> <p>REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY PUBLIC WORKS AND TRANSPORTATION DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION SERVICES</p>	
<h2>TRAFFIC IMPROVEMENTS</h2>	
<h3>ROBIE STREET CUNARD STREET TO GARRICK LANE</h3>	
DATE: APRIL 2004	DESIGN: PVB
SCALE: 1:1000	FIG NO.: 3



HALIFAX

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
PUBLIC WORKS AND TRANSPORTATION
DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION SERVICES

INTERSECTION REALIGNMENT

**BAYERS ROAD—YOUNG STREET
AND WINDSOR STREET**

DATE: APRIL 2004

DESIGN: PVB

SCALE: 1:1000

FIG NO.: 4