

Item No. 3

Halifax Regional Council
November 27, 2007

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:



Mike Labrecque, P.Eng., Director, Transportation and Public Works

DATE: November 9, 2007

SUBJECT: Speeding on Main Street, Dartmouth

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

Item 13.6 raised at the August 7, 2007 meeting of Halifax Regional Council.

MOVED by Councillor Karsten, seconded by Councillor Younger, that Regional Council request a staff report with regard to speeding on Main Street in Dartmouth, with the following considerations:

1. Request staff review of lighting on Main Street from Brigadoon to Ridgecrest to determine if additional lighting may be a benefit;
2. Request staff review the potential of a speed reduction from 70km/h to 60km/h;
3. Request staff to utilize the Cole Harbour RCMP computerized mobile radar trailer to educate motorists of the posted speed limit;
4. Request staff review other creative means to alter the environmental design of this section of Main Street, similar to initiating a C.P.T.E.D. for crime prevention related issues;
5. Request Chief Frank Beazley to inquire on the status of Provincial legislation for Traffic/Speed cameras with Honorable Murray Scott, Minister for the Department of Justice;
6. Request the Province of Nova Scotia to initiate a Province wide Speeding Education Campaign;
7. Request staff to provide a brief report to Council with regard to why municipalities do not get involved in municipally owned drag strip or race track operations;
8. Request HRP/RCMP integrated traffic division to step up enforcement beyond the present level.

BACKGROUND

This section of Main Street (Hwy #7) is a four-lane undivided, controlled access, major arterial roadway, approximately 1.5 km in length, with an annual average daily traffic volume of approximately 30,000 vehicles per day. The posted speed for eastbound is 50 km/h, increasing to 70km/h on the far side of the last commercial driveway, reducing to 60km/h on the nearside of the traffic signals at Ridgecrest Drive. Westbound the speed limit is posted at 60km/h, increases to 70km on the far side of Ridgecrest and reduces to 50km/h as you enter the more populated area prior to Brigadoon Avenue.

Speeding has been a concern for a number of years and lengthy reviews in 1997 and 2002 resulted in lengthening the 50km zone, and reducing the speed in the subject section from 80km/h to 70km/h, respectively.

DISCUSSION

For clarity, this discussion addresses each item in the order raised.

1. A staff review of street lighting on Main Street from Brigadoon to Ridgecrest found that a number of street light lamps required maintenance. This was reported to Nova Scotia Power and maintenance has since been completed. There is street lighting on every pole in this section which exceeds the HRM standard for arterial roadways.

2. The 85th percentile speed is the determining factor used when reviewing requests for changes to speed zones. It represents the speed the majority of drivers will comfortably drive at or below. If the speed is properly set, enforcement can then focus on the 15% of drivers who disobey the posted speed. Recent spot speed counts conducted between 10-11 a.m. and 2-3 p.m. indicates the 85th percentile speed at 73km/h and 74km/h respectively. This shows there are general compliance with the existing posted speed of 70km/h.

Arbitrarily lowering a speed limit will not necessarily lower speeds. Drivers will be frustrated at having to drive unreasonably slow which may lead to unsafe passing manoeuvres and lead to violation by otherwise responsible drivers.

A review of the collision history over the past five years indicates the majority of the collisions for this section of Main Street occur at the signalized intersections at Brigadoon and Ridgecrest, where there are more conflicting movements. Those collisions that occurred where access is limited were few in number and could be attributed for the most part, to driver error or was weather related.

3. Limitations were encountered with regard to use of the mobile radar trailers during the enforcement campaign due to mechanical issues. We will arrange to monitor speeds using the trailers when they become available.

4. Main Street is designated a four-lane arterial roadway and as such, is designed to HRM standards for this road classification and modifications to alter the design of the roadway are not required. Lighting is appropriate, access is limited, standard pavement markings and regulatory signage are in place. Recently, bicycle lanes were installed for both directions of travel. There are no alignment or visibility issues.

5. Chief Beazley has met twice with Honorable Murray Scott, Minister of the Nova Scotia Department of Justice regarding the issue of photo radar and they are continuing to explore the possibility of its approved use in the province.

6. The Halifax Regional Police representative on the Provincial Traffic Committee has brought forward a motion to initiate a province-wide speeding/education campaign.

7. The concept of municipally owned drag strips or racetrack operations would fall under the responsibility of Planning Services and they have advised that HRM would not have the expertise to operate such a venue, considering the liability issues. Further research would be required as to the feasibility of such a venture.

8. In response to the request to increase speed enforcement Halifax Regional Police/RCMP developed a traffic plan which focussed on areas deemed as popular drag strips within HRM. This included Main Street between Ridgcrest Drive and Brigadoon Avenue. Officers were assigned to operate radar/lidar in the identified areas and evening checks were conducted. All officers on shifts and within the traffic section participated during the period of August 16th-September 30th.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

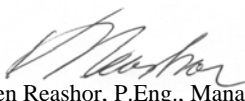
There are no budget implications.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN

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

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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