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**Item No. 6**  
**Halifax Regional Council**  
**September 15, 2009**

**TO:** Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

**SUBMITTED BY:**   
Mike Labreque, P.Eng., Director of Transportation and Public Works

**DATE:** August 27, 2009

**SUBJECT:** Petition - South Ridge Circle, Dartmouth

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### INFORMATION REPORT

#### ORIGIN

Item 9.2.1 raised at the June 16, 2009 meeting of Halifax Regional Council.

#### BACKGROUND

Councillor Smith submitted a petition with 39 signatures from residents of South Ridge Circle, Dartmouth, requesting that strategies be implemented to reduce speed on their cul-de-sac such as: Caution - Children Playing signs, speed bumps or speed grumble tracks to slow traffic.

**DISCUSSION**

South Ridge Circle is a dead end street with 40 single family homes. The standard speed limit is 50 kph, which is the lowest permitted by the Provincial Motor Vehicle Act. It is unlikely actual travel speeds driven by most drivers reach this speed due to the short length of the street and the curves in the street.

Traffic counts taken in September 2008 at the intersection of South Ridge Circle with Argus Drive and Fury Drive showed that from 7 a.m. to 8 a.m. there were 42 vehicles using South Ridge Circle. Between 8 and 9 a.m. there were 37 vehicles. Between 4 p.m. and 5 p.m. there were 33 and between 5:00 p.m. and 6 p.m. there were 38 vehicles. This includes some traffic using Promise Grove. The volumes of traffic counted show that on South Ridge Circle there is less than 500 vehicles per day of motor vehicle traffic. This is a low volume of traffic and is consistent with 40 houses on South Ridge plus the connection to Promise Grove.

Previous reports from residents included the thought that some of the reported speeding drivers were drivers who did not realize South Ridge Circle was a cul-de-sac and who then would quickly exit the street because of their annoyance. At the time the petition was gathered there was already a “No Exit” sign posted near the intersection of South Ridge Circle and Promise Grove. Traffic and Right of Way Services has moved that sign to be closer to the intersection in an effort to make it even less likely that a driver unfamiliar with the area would be surprised to find South Ridge Circle is a cul-de-sac.

The petition suggests several ideas to change driver behavior. One idea is a sign: “Caution: Children Playing.” Children live on nearly every residential street and this should be an expectation of all drivers. Experience has shown that attempts to warn motorists of obvious conditions have little benefit. Warning signs are most effective when used sparingly to advise motorists of unusual or unexpected conditions ahead. National standards do not support the use of these signs because they suggest that it is okay for children to play on or near the street. This is not something Traffic and Right of Way Services wants to encourage parents and children to believe.

An alternative that may come to mind is the “Playground Area” sign (the boy chasing a ball). The Playground Area sign is a warning device that may be used to indicate sections of roads adjoining public playgrounds, where the presence of children on, or near the road, would represent an unexpected hazard to the driver. It is important that the signs are used only in advance of public playgrounds that abut the roadway. These signs are not intended to be used in residential areas simply because children may, on a regular basis, play on or near a street even though there isn't a designated playground area. This is a common element on most residential streets and one that doesn't require advisory signage. There is no playground or schoolyard adjacent to South Ridge Circle.

Speed bumps were suggested. Speed bumps are commonly seen in commercial parking lots. HRM will use somewhat different “speed humps” as part of a short-cutting reduction strategy under the HRM Neighbourhood Short-Cutting Policy. A speed hump has a longer dimension along the length of the road, typically 2.5 metres (12 feet) or so and is 80 mm high. It will slow drivers down to about 35 kph. In HRM they are only used as part of the Neighbourhood Short-Cutting Policy. The Policy cannot apply to a dead end street because of course there is no short-cutting.

“Speed grumble strips” were suggested. Rumble strips are mainly used on highways. Rumble strips are an effective countermeasure for preventing roadway departure crashes. The noise and vibration produced by rumble strips alert drivers when they leave the traveled way. They are usually placed on the edge of the travelled way and/or at the centre-line. Road agencies also use rumble strips in the travel lanes to warn motorists of any upcoming change that may require them to act — for example, the need to slow down for a toll plaza ahead, change lanes for a work zone around the curve, or stop at an intersection. Rumble strips also have their drawbacks, including complaints about noise levels, bicyclists’ concerns about safety, and maintenance issues faced by road crews.

The noise made by the rumble strips is always there for residents, for every vehicle that passes, at low or “high” speed, and would be annoying to most people. A rumble strip might get a driver unfamiliar with the location to slow down while he or she determines why the rumble strip is there, but once a driver learns there is no particular hazard to the driver or the vehicle the effect would disappear.

### **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

There are no budget implications.

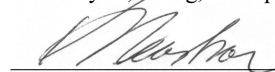
### **FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES/BUSINESS PLAN**

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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