

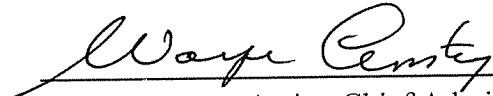
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Halifax Regional Council
August 8, 2006

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: 
Wayne Anstey, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: June 28, 2006

SUBJECT: Bayview Road and Area, Flamingo Drive and Area Short-Cutting Study

ORIGIN

A Neighbourhood Short-Cutting Study has been under way in the Bayview Road area and the Flamingo Drive area since 1996. Trial short-cutting measures were installed in 2004. A survey-vote to make permanent was held earlier this year. This report is to inform Regional Council of the results of the trial.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

1. The intersection of Gateway Road and Bayview Road be rebuilt in a permanent manner by removing the right turn lane and reconstructing the traffic island following normal HRM specifications.
2. It is recommended that the speed humps on Skylark Street be endorsed by HRM Council to be kept permanently in place.

BACKGROUND

As a trial, all-way stop signs were installed in September 2004 at two intersections on Bayview Road, two intersections on Flamingo Drive, and one intersection on Meadowlark Crescent. Three speed humps were installed on Skylark Street. Two median islands were installed on Gateway Road near Scarlet Road and the right turn slip lane on Gateway Road at Bayview Road was closed off.

DISCUSSION

A trial scheme to reduce the volume and speed of traffic on Bayview Road and Gateway Road was put in place in September 2004. The trial consisted of two sets of all-way stop signs on Bayview Road (at Woodbank Terrace and at Trillium Terrace), two median islands on Gateway Road on either side of Scarlet Road, and a change at the intersection of Gateway Road and Bayview Road (the right-turn ramp with yield was cut off and all drivers had to stop on Gateway before turning onto Bayview). At the same time, a trial scheme was also installed in the Flamingo Drive area. This consisted of all-way stop signs on Flamingo Drive at Meadowlark Crescent, Flamingo Drive at Dipper Crescent, and Meadowlark Crescent at Eagle Crescent. Three speed humps were also installed on Skylark Street.

Traffic speeds and volumes were monitored during the trial, and normal police enforcement of the all-way stop signs was done. As the trial progressed the results showed the median islands on Gateway Road had no significant effect on drivers' speed. The islands were removed and an all-way stop was installed at the intersection of Gateway Road and Scarlet Road.

All-way stop signs are installed on HRM roadways only under two sets of circumstances: The more common circumstance is that the intersection meets a set of criteria for installation of all-way stop signs due to the relative volumes of traffic on the two roads concerned. This is what is called meeting the warrants.

The second circumstance is that all-way stop signs which are not warranted may be installed only on a street as part of a study under the Neighbourhood Short-Cutting Policy **and** only if that street is a fire and emergency services response route **and** only if there are no other possible solutions feasible such as road closures or turn restrictions. Such is the case for Bayview Road, Gateway Road, Meadowlark Crescent, and Flamingo Drive. Other typical short-cutting or traffic-calming measures such as speed humps or chicanes have been shown to be unacceptable to fire and emergency services because of the potential for damage to emergency vehicles or injury to vehicle occupants unless the emergency vehicles slow down quite a bit. All-way stops do not require as much increase in travel time, nor will they cause harm to the emergency vehicles or occupants. In a balanced approach to the problems of neighbourhoods due to short-cutting traffic and the need for the quickest emergency response time all-way stops may be used on emergency response routes (which otherwise would have no tool to reduce speeds and volumes) while other measures (but not unwarranted all-way stops) may be used on streets which are not emergency response routes.

The results of traffic speed and volume monitoring show that there are generally positive results.

Traffic on Bayview Road (between Trillium and Look Off Lane) declined from a count of 12,200 vehicles per day (vpd) in July 2004 to about 10,000 vpd in October 2005. (Volumes are adjusted for the time-of-year.) At the same location the speeds on Bayview Road changed from an average speed of 49 kilometres per hour (kph) to 32 kph (moving toward Lacewood) and from 46 kph to 38 kph moving toward Bedford Highway.

Traffic on Gateway Road between Laurentide Drive and Scarlet Road changed from 1,900 vpd to 2,350 vpd, while average speeds fell from 44 kph to 41 kph traveling toward Bayview Road and increased slightly from 40 kph to 43 kph traveling toward Lacewood.

Traffic on Flamingo Drive between Meadowlark Crescent and Dove Street declined from a count of 7,600 vpd in November 2004 to about 7,200 vpd in October 2005. At the same location the speeds on Flamingo Drive changed from an average speed of 29 kph to 41 kph (moving toward Dove) and from 35 kph to 33 kph moving toward Meadowlark.¹

On Meadowlark Crescent between Eagle and Lincoln Cross traffic volumes changed from 3,150 vpd to 3,250 vpd. Average speeds changed from 45 kph to 32 kph (moving toward Eagle) and from 43 kph to 35 kph (moving toward Lincoln Cross). Traffic on Skylark Street increased at first but then remained about the same between November 2004 and October 2005 but speeds are now lower.

The HRM Neighbourhood Short-Cutting Policy requires a survey of residents' opinion on the trial be sufficiently in favour for the short-cutting measures to be made permanent. If the survey/vote is not in favour they will be removed. Making permanent the right turn lane on Gateway Road at Bayview Road and the speed humps on Skylark Street is under the jurisdiction of Halifax Regional Council. Under provincial law, all-way stop signs on HRM streets are only placed or made permanent by the HRM Traffic Authority, Mr. Ken Reashor.

The Neighborhood Short-Cutting Policy requires traffic volumes in the neighborhood to be monitored to determine if traffic from the project street is significantly diverted to nearby local streets. Appendix C of the Policy identifies the allowable limit of traffic diversion to roadways adjacent to the project street. There is evidence of what may be a diversion of traffic from the Flamingo Drive and Meadowlark Crescent neighbourhood to Lincoln Cross between Lacewood and Dunbrack, so similar all-way stop signs are proposed to be installed there if the other measures that have been on trial are approved to be made permanent.

If the measures are made permanent all-way stop signs will also be added at the intersections of Flamingo Drive and Oriole Street, Lincoln Cross and Chartwell Lane (the north intersection, closer to Meadowlark Crescent), at Lincoln Cross and Meadowlark Crescent and at Gateway Road and Laurel Lane. The traffic island at the intersection of Gateway Road and Bayview Road will be

¹The measured increase from 29 kph to 41 kph was checked and confirmed, however overall speeds appear to have fallen. Perhaps, the 29 kph was unusually low. It is lower than any other location. The measurement cannot be repeated.

reconstructed to remove the now-unused right-turn lane and to install concrete curb and gutter and landscaping (grass). Sight visibility limitations require an all-way stop sign not be installed at the intersections of Flamingo Drive and Dove Street, Flamingo Drive and Swallow Street, and Gateway Road and Laurentide Drive.

The voting area is defined in section 6.5 of the Policy as: households and businesses on the project street and on adjacent local streets up to 60 metres from the project street. Therefore, the survey ballot was circulated (one per household or place of business) to addresses on Flamingo Drive, Meadowlark Crescent, Skylark Street, Melody Drive (between Skylark Street and Bedford Highway) and to residences and businesses on local streets with lots within 60 metres of those streets (measured along the front property lines) and similarly to addresses on Bayview Road, Gateway Road, and to residences on local streets with lots within 60 metres of those streets (measured along the front property lines). The survey votes in the two areas were counted separately from each other.

The Policy requires that at least 50 percent of ballots be returned for the vote to be sufficiently representative and to be counted. If not enough ballots are returned to be counted, the Policy requires a second vote be done to see if a better return can be achieved. This second vote also requires that at least 50 percent of ballots be returned before the vote is valid and the ballots can be counted. Of valid returned ballots a simple majority is required for approval by residents.

In the Bayview Road area there were 151 survey ballots and in the Flamingo Drive area there were 399 survey ballots mailed out on April 26, 2006. The survey ballots were to be returned by business reply mail or other method by May 24, 2006.

In the Bayview Road area of the 151 survey ballots mailed out, 83, or 55% were received back by the deadline. Of these, there were 73 in favour and 10 opposed, or 88% in favour.

There have been problems in previous votes in the Flamingo Drive area (and in other areas in other short-cutting studies) in getting a minimum 50 percent return rate where there are large apartment buildings. It would seem not fair that a poor return from residents who do not live in ground-oriented dwellings and who may not care one way or another would frustrate a process that is favoured by many other residents who do live in ground-oriented dwellings. There are two large apartment buildings in the Flamingo Drive area. One, at 8 Flamingo Drive has 76 units. The other, at 55 Meadowlark Crescent, has 73 units. Therefore, for the Flamingo Drive area, it was decided that the minimum 50 percent return rate would be calculated excluding the returned or unreturned ballots from those two apartment buildings. If the minimum return was achieved, all ballots, whether from apartment dwellers or others, would be counted the same.

In the Flamingo area there were 14 survey ballots returned by Canada Post as undeliverable. (These were vacant houses or apartments.) Excluding returned ballots from the apartment buildings there were 248 survey ballots sent out to homes in the area of which 130, or 52%, were returned. Including apartment-dwellers' responses there were 158 survey ballots returned by the deadline of which there were 132 in favour and 26 opposed, or 85% in favour.

Therefore, staff recommend that the short-cutting measures be made permanent. Mr. Reashor has determined that given the favourable results of the trial and with the survey/vote in agreement the all-way stop signs shall remain permanently, with the additions noted above.

Halifax Regional Municipality Fire and Emergency Services have agreed with making permanent the all-way stop signs in these study areas.

HRM staff will continue to work on the short-cutting volumes on Skylark Street which increased during the trial.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

The all-way stop signs with all necessary warning signs and markings were installed using funds from Capital Account No. CTR00423, Traffic Calming. The trial all-way installations are to the same standards as permanent installations. No additional funds are needed from any capital account. Normal maintenance costs from year to year are small and already have been handled in the operating budget. The speed humps on Skylark Street are also already installed to the same standards as a permanent speed hump. Reconstruction of the intersection of Gateway Road a Bayview Road is estimated to cost about \$20,000. Four additional all-way stop signs are estimated to cost about \$2,200. The necessary funds are in the account mentioned above, Capital Account No. CTR00423, Traffic Calming.

Budget Summary: Account No. CTR00423 Traffic Calming

Cumulative Unspent Budget	\$ 144,122
Less: Estimated spending	<u>\$ 22,200</u>
	<u>\$ 121,922</u>

The budget availability has been confirmed by Financial Services.

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

Council could turn down the recommendation to reconstruct the intersection of Gateway Road at Bayview Road. This is not recommended because it would go against the principles of the Short-Cutting Policy and the opinion of many residents that the change is desirable.

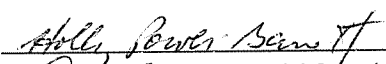
Bayview Rd and Area, Flamingo Dr. and Area Short-Cutting Study
Council Report

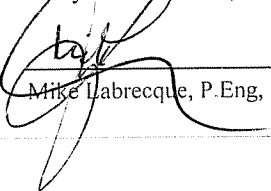
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August 8, 2006

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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