



PO Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

Halifax Regional Council
October 24, 2006

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:

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

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

DATE: October 3, 2006

SUBJECT: Traffic Control Measures - Bedford Highway

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

Item 11.2 raised at the May 2, 2006 meeting of Halifax Regional Council.

BACKGROUND

Councillor Hum referred to increased traffic accidents on the Bedford Highway and indicated that she would like a staff report.

MOVED by Councillor Hum, seconded by Deputy Mayor Walker that, given the increased number of accidents occurring on the Bedford Highway, staff provide a report regarding:

1. the possibility of installing additional left hand turn lanes to access neighbourhoods abutting the Bedford Highway, and installing no left turn restrictions where appropriate;
2. a review of the traffic lights at Flamingo and the practice of one-on-one traffic at the intersection of Sherbrooke Drive and the Bedford Highway with a view to reducing the back up of traffic in those locations; and,
3. a reduction in the speed limit(s) from 70 and 60 kilometers per hour to 50 kilometers per hour at various locations along the Bedford Highway and particularly in the area of Larry Uteck Boulevard.

DISCUSSION

The Bedford Highway between Fairview Overpass and Kearney Lake Road was widened to its current configuration in stages during the early and mid 1990's. Its width provides four travel lanes between the Overpass and Sherbrooke Drive and three travel lanes between Sherbrooke Drive and Kearney Lake Road. This overall design was a function of available land as dictated by Canadian National, Mount Saint Vincent University, the commercial area of Rockingham, and the topography of the area.

Left turns in the outbound direction are mandatory at Flamingo Drive and at Kearney Lake Road. Drivers have the option of turning left or proceeding straight from the outbound centre lane at all other intersections and driveways. This centre outbound lane also affords opportunities for vehicles to pass slower moving traffic in the curb lane, thus increasing the vehicle capacity of the roadway. There is neither physical room, nor is there sufficient left turn demand to warrant the creation of exclusive left turn lanes at intersections and driveways. Also, due to the lack of interconnecting roadways between neighbourhoods adjacent to the Bedford Highway, it is recommended that left turns continue to be permitted as per the current design. If left turns were restricted at selected locations, more traffic would be forced onto other roadways which is already a problem in some areas.

Traffic volume data indicates that the outbound centre lane is not being used by through traffic, to any great degree as a passing lane. That is, the outbound centre lane is being used primarily by drivers who ultimately turn left. Similarly, traffic in the outbound curb lane seems destined to travel straight beyond the Kearney Lake Road.

The review of posted maximum speed limits recommends two changes to the limits now in effect. Specifically, the posted maximum limit of 50 km/h, which was in effect between the Seton Academic Centre driveway and Tremont Drive, has already been extended southward to Sherbrooke Drive. This change now reduces the maximum limit along the entire frontage of the University as well as placing both RA-5 crosswalks within a maximum 50 km/h. This change was completed in early September in time for the commencement of the fall term at the University. Similarly, the posted maximum speed limit between Tremont Drive to Moir's Pond is 70 km/h; and, it will be reduced to 60 km/h from Tremont Drive to beyond Larry Uteck Boulevard.

Collision analysis of data provided by the Province indicates that a total of 41 collisions were reported on the Bedford Highway between the Fairview Overpass and Kearney Lake Road in the past five years. Of these, only four were identified as being related to driveway access; and, 21 were rear ends, the majority of which occurred at Kearney Lake Road. There was no clear pattern noted for the remaining collisions.

We have reviewed the traffic signal timings at Flamingo Drive to see if any changes are possible to alleviate delays on this entry to Bedford Highway during the a.m. peak period. Given the heavy volume of traffic inbound on the Bedford Highway in the morning peak, the queue of traffic often extends to Kearney Lake Road. Therefore, additional green time added to Flamingo Drive would not provide easier access to the Bedford Highway. Since there is no room on the Bedford Highway to receive these vehicles.

As an aside, observations are that inbound motorists who are in a bumper to bumper delay situation at Flamingo Drive will not allow drivers to enter the Bedford Highway by a right turn on red from Flamingo Drive. However, these same drivers will allow one on one entry at both Melody Drive and at Sherbrooke Drive. This practice does not really interfere with the flow of traffic on the Bedford Highway; but, it does encourage traffic to short cut through the Skylark Street / Melody Drive corridor.

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.

ALTERNATIVES

There are no alternatives.

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.

Report Prepared by: Kevin McEachern, Traffic Analyst, 490-6133

Report Approved by:  Ken Reashor, P.Eng., Manager, Traffic & Right of Way, 490-6637