
HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL
July 2, 2002

PLEASE RETAIN FOR PUBLIC MEETING

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: 
John Sheppard, P.Eng., A/Director, Public Works & Transportation

DATE: June 24, 2002

SUBJECT: NEIGHBOURHOOD SHORT-CUTTING - ROMANS AVENUE

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

Neighbourhood Short-Cutting Policy.

BACKGROUND

A project under the Neighbourhood Short-Cutting Policy was initiated for the Romans Avenue corridor in 1999. A trial installation of two sets of traffic chicanes (traffic islands) that narrowed the usable width of Romans Avenue was installed in early December of 2001.

DISCUSSION

The next step in the process, as stated in the Neighbourhood Short-Cutting Policy, is to hold a public meeting of Council to receive input from the general public. This meeting will be part of the agenda of the July 8 Peninsula Community Council meeting. Although all comments from the meeting will be recorded and summarized for the final report to Regional Council, all Council members are encouraged to attend.

A trial installation of two sets of traffic chicanes (traffic islands) that narrowed the usable width of Romans Avenue were installed in early December of 2001. One set was located between Vaughan Avenue and Ward Avenue and the other set between Cook Avenue and Archibald Avenue. The set of islands between Vaughan and Ward was recently removed to allow for replacement of the sidewalk and curb and gutter in this area of Romans Avenue. HRM staff is of the opinion that enough of a trial has been done to show fairly the effects of the chicanes. Traffic counts taken before the chicanes were installed and repeated recently have shown an approximate 20 to 40 percent reduction in traffic volume. Speeds are also decreased. The trial has succeeded according to the criteria in the Halifax Regional Municipality Neighbourhood Short-Cutting Policy.

A "Permanent Installation Vote of Residents and Businesses on the Problem Streets" as required under Section 6.7 of the Neighbourhood Short-Cutting Policy was held recently. The results were counted on May 27, 2002. There are 68 addresses eligible to receive ballots. A minimum return of 50 percent or 34 ballots is needed for the vote to be valid. 48 ballots were returned by the deadline of May 27, 2002. Of the 48 ballots received, 34 were in favour of making the chicanes permanent and 14 were opposed. This is more than 50 percent plus one vote, therefore HRM staff must consider whether to recommend proceeding.

HRM staff recommends that both sets of chicanes be made permanent, subject to a minor change from the test. During the test some problems for pedestrians were noted at the intersection of Romans Avenue and Cook Avenue. One of the sets of trial chicanes was located just south of this intersection. It is proposed that the permanent chicane be instead located between Cook and Ward, not as close to the intersection of two roads as the trial installation. A sketch of the proposed permanent locations is part of this report as Attachment One.

Following is a table showing traffic counts, and a discussion of the results seen to date:

Trial of Traffic Chicanes - 2001-2002
Weekday 24 Hour Traffic Count Results

location (street block)	average traffic volume before test began	traffic volume during test period	change in daily traffic volume during test period	OK?
Romans southbound just south of Vaughan Avenue	2653	2086	-567 (-21%)	yes
Romans southbound between Cook and Ward	3319	1961	-1358 (-41%)	yes
Romans northbound between Cook and Ward	3281	2559	-722 (-22%)	yes

Romans southbound just south of Vaughan Avenue These counts were taken by a traffic loop (part of the traffic signal control system) located just south of Vaughan Avenue. The counts show a decrease of 21 percent of the before-test volume. These counts were taken on October 4, 2001 to October 19, 2001, and March 8, 2002 to March 22, 2002. The results show the chicanes have successfully reduced Romans Avenue traffic.

Romans southbound between Cook and Ward These counts were taken by an automatic traffic counter (with hoses across the road) on November 8, 9, 12, 13, 15 and 16 and again on June 11, 2002. Southbound traffic on this block fell by about 41 percent of the before-test volume.

Romans northbound between Cook and Ward These counts were taken with an automatic traffic counter on November 15 and 16, 2001 and again on June 11, 2002. Northbound traffic on this block fell by about 22 percent during the test period.

Summary: The results of this analysis show an appreciable decrease in traffic on Romans Avenue during the period of the test.

Public Comments: While the trial has been under way there has been some comment received from members of the general public. Some complained the chicanes were unsafe but no collisions related or near to the chicanes were reported during the trial period. We have on file seven written submissions. Of these, three support the chicanes and four are opposed. Two of those opposed mentioned their opposition was based on difficulty crossing Romans Avenue on foot at the intersection of Cook and Romans. This concern is intended to be addressed by moving the chicanes to mid-block between Cook and Ward, more remote from any intersections. This feedback should be considered in the context of the vote of residents which resulted in 34 votes in favour and 14 opposed to the measures.

No Motor Vehicle Collisions: No motor vehicle collisions were reported on Romans Avenue during the five months December 2001 through April 2002. Collision reports for May have not been checked but HRM staff is not aware of any collisions having occurred.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

The cost to make the measures permanent is estimated to be between \$5,000 and \$10,000, depending on the standard of appearance chosen and the results of any tender process. Funds are available in the Neighbourhood Short-Cutting program budget.

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

Option "A" - terminate the current trial and attempt to find another solution.

Option "B" - terminate the current trial and do not proceed with anti-short-cutting measures.

Neither of these alternatives is recommended by staff.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Sketch Showing Proposed Chicanes Locations

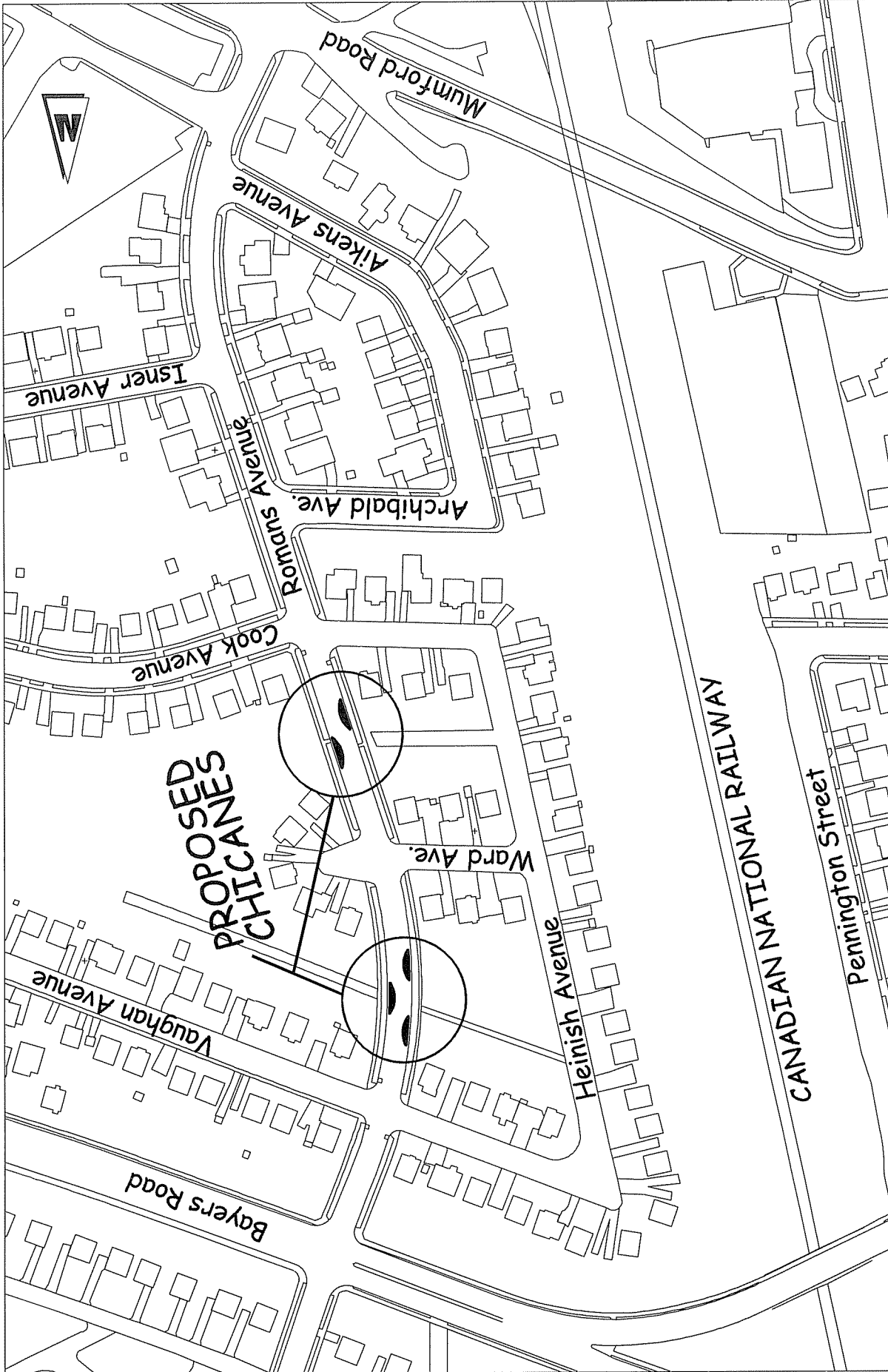
Additional copies of this report and information on its status can be obtained by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report prepared by: Alan Taylor, P.Eng., Transportation Planner, 490-6680.

Report approved by: David McCusker, P.Eng., Manager, Traffic & Transportation Services. *DMC*

ADT/bmh

Attachment One



Neighbourhood Short-Cutting Study
Romans Avenue between Bayers and Mumford
PROPOSED PERMANENT CHICANES

DATE: JUNE 2002

SCALE = 1:2000