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Halifax Regional Council
September 23, 2003

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:

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

Rick Paynter, P.Eng., Director, Public Works and Transportation

DATE: September 5, 2003

SUBJECT: **Traffic Congestion at the Intersection of Highway 7 and Forest Hills Drive**

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

At the August 19, 2003 meeting, Councillor Colwell moved that "Council request a staff report on alternatives to help alleviate the traffic congestion in the Number 7 Highway/Forest Hills Drive area, such as having the two traffic lights better timed." Councillor Warshick also requested that the report include an update on the 10 year plan for the revitalization of Main Street and traffic improvements. Councillor Cooper suggested all the proposed traffic lights on Main Street should be installed. The motion was put and passed unanimously.

BACKGROUND

The Main Street Traffic Study was completed and submitted in November 1998. The report had a series of recommendations that were expected to be required over a ten year time period. There were eleven recommendations expected to be completed or commenced in the short term (1998 to 2002), six recommendations expected to be required in the medium term (2003-2007) and one in the long term (after 2008).

DISCUSSION

Traffic Signal Timing

The timing of the traffic signals at the Highway 7/Forest Hills Drive intersection and the traffic signals at Highway 7/Panavista (Sobeys) are scheduled for adjustment. The adjustments may have already been made by the time Council receives this report.

Main Street Study Recommendations

- 1. Reduce speed limits to 70 kph between Lemont Lake and Ridgecrest Drive and to 60 kph between Ridgecrest Drive and Riley Road. - This has been done to accepted standards.*
- 2. Complete the planning and reserve the right-of-way for Miller Road from Highway 207 to Highway 7. - This work has been under way for some time. An environmental screening process is almost complete. The Regional Plan effort will likely yield some information bearing on the need and timing for this road.*
- 3. Adopt and implement Access Management principles for Main Street as soon as possible. - HRM staff apply Access Management principles in all development applications. For example, the recently proposed changes at the former Beaver Lumber site included some driveway changes.*
- 4. Restrict the left turn movement from McLaughlin to Main Street due to restricted sight distance to the east. - As an alternative work was done to improve sight distance to met the required standard.*
- 5. Upgrade existing signals. - Work on this item is ongoing. The signals at Highway 7/Forest Hills have been upgraded in several phases since the report was submitted. The most recent upgrade was to increase left turn capacity. As mentioned above, improved signal progression will soon be installed with respect to the Panavista (Sobeys) intersection and the Forest Hills intersection. The performance of other signalized intersections is under on-going review with changes to be made as warranted.*

6. *Provide appropriate bus bays during design and reconstruction of Main Street.* - This has been progressing as designs are prepared.

7. *HRM encourage the Department of Transportation and Public Works to complete planning and design of the Highway 107 Bypass.* - HRM staff are of the understanding that the designs have been completed and all (or almost all) property has been acquired. The timing of construction is up to the Provincial Government. As far as HRM staff are aware, construction is not imminent while other 100 series highways projects are under way.

8a. *Add a two-way left turn lane between Ridgecrest and Forest Hills. Add a sidewalk on the south side. Widen on the south side.* - This project has been delayed for a number of months pending the outcome of a proposed development at Golf View Drive. The proponent was reluctant to sell HRM the necessary land for the widening project but has recently agreed and the process of acquiring this land is currently underway. Considering there is little time left in the current construction season, construction will likely take place when weather permits in the spring of 2004.

8b. *Protect right-of-way for the extension of Ridgecrest to the north to allow for future closure of Golf View Drive.* - HRM staff have negotiated with the owner of the needed property for some time but purchase of this property has not yet been agreed to.

8c. *Construct an eastbound right-turn lane on Main Street at Ridgecrest.* - HRM staff fear this would encourage short-cutting through the subdivision but the concept is still under review.

9. *Add a two-way left turn lane between Forest Hills and Montague. Replace asphalt sidewalks on both sides. Widen on the south side, straighten curve. Recap existing roadway.* - This phase of the Main Street upgrading work has not yet been scheduled. It is expected work will progress eastwards as funds are allocated.

10. *Monitor operation of Lake Major Road and Ross Road intersections following addition of left turn phase to signals at Lake Major Road. Add left turn lane if warranted.* - Staff considers that the operation of the signals at Lake Major Road at this time is still satisfactory without the left turn phase.

11. *Provide additional through lanes on Forest Hills Drive for both north and southbound traffic.* - As an alternative dual left turn lanes were completed in 2002.

12. *Add a two way left turn lane between Montague and Riley. Install traffic signals at McLaughlin/Broom/Highway 7 intersection. Add appropriate new sidewalks as reconstruction proceeds.* - The two way left turn lane and sidewalks would only be provided after the two way left turn lane west of Montague was installed. The traffic signal warrants for the intersection of Highway 7/McLaughlin/Broom are reviewed periodically. They will be reviewed this fall with the new signal warrants recently adopted by the Province of Nova Scotia and HRM.

13. Install left turn lanes and left turn signal phases at the trailer park entrance. - This will be scheduled once warranted.

14. Construct Miller Road between Highway 207 (Cole Harbour Road) and Highway 7. - This will be reviewed as part of the Regional Plan. Timing for this road may be adjusted. HRM staff are continuing to work to protect the potential right of way.

15. Construct left turn lane at Cherry Brook Road. Consider connecting Neilson to Cherrybrook and removing its connection to Highway 7. - This will be scheduled once warranted.

16. Complete remaining portions of curb and sidewalk past Riley Road to Lake Major Road (north side) and Lorne Road (south side). - This is not likely to be scheduled for some time, as reconstruction progresses eastward.

17. Complete Highway 107 By-Pass. - The timing for this roadway is in the hands of the Province. Provincial priorities now seem to be focused on Highway 101, Highway 103 and Highway 104.

18. Construct Miller Road north of Main Street to provide a limited access collector to serve lands between Main Street and Highway 107. - This also is a matter to be considered as part of the Regional Plan, or a potential Master Plan. Construction, if it went forward, would not proceed for some time.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

N/A

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 suggested alternatives.

ATTACHMENTS

None.

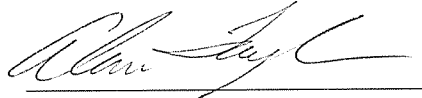
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Additional copies of this report, and information on its status, can be obtained by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report Prepared by:



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