

Dear Sir or Madam:

The Regional Council decision to proceed with the Chebucto Road reversing lane project has come under criticism lately as being short-sighted, inconsistent with the HRM Regional Plan, and a demonstration of an antiquated bias towards traffic projects over transit investment. I believe this criticism is unjustified given the broader context in which that decision was made.

A recent article in your newspaper that described a project in Ottawa which widened an eight block section of street to 6-8 lanes and compared it to the Chebucto Road project, which essentially amounts to the expansion of a single intersection, is an example of how the magnitude of the project has become exaggerated in the media. In your story, the Ottawa municipal councillor suggested that Halifax should be more like Ottawa and narrow streets instead of widening them. I found it interesting to look through Ottawa's transportation plan to find a total of 137 km of streets targeted for widening compared to slightly more than 2 km region-wide in the Halifax plan.

The Armdale Roundabout conversion and the reversing lane on Chebucto Road are not in conflict with HRM's recently adopted Regional Plan, they are a critical and integral part of it. Continued regional growth will result in a substantial increase in the number of trips coming into and going out of the regional centre. The regional plan has an aggressive strategy which develops new transit services and locates future settlement to take advantage of those services. Although this will result in a substantial shift of trip-making to transit, it can not realistically handle all of our future growth in trips. The regional plan modeling shows positive change in transportation demands resulting from the transit, ridesharing and bicycling investments that the plan proposes, resulting in elimination or deferral of a number of major roadway projects that have been recommended in previous transportation plans.

The HRM Regional Plan and the ongoing HRM by Design process work only if growth in traffic can be reduced in a meaningful way. Both recognize, however, that expansion of the roadway network cannot be avoided completely in a region that continues to grow.

The widening of the Chebucto Road corridor, which has been proposed in transportation plans dating back to the 1960's is, in fact, avoided due to the regional plan. It is replaced by a project which implements a reversing centre lane on the section between the roundabout and Mumford Road (similar to what is already in place on Herring Cove Road) thereby making optimal use of the three lanes that already exist. The reversing lane system can only work, however, if adjustments are made at the Mumford Road intersection. The intersection expansion impacts a handful of residential properties within the immediate vicinity of the intersection.

Is more MetroLink a smarter investment than widening a roadway corridor? Absolutely. That is why HRM's regional plan proposes substantial investment over the next few

years in building new transit services and bolstering the current transit routes. Over the next four years, we expect to see express transit to rural park-and-ride locations, a downtown shuttle system, more MetroLink, and high speed ferries. At the same time, the plan replaces road corridor widening with projects that optimize the use of existing lanes and improve intersection operation.

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