

Information Meeting - Armdale Roundabout Project

St. James Anglican Church, 2668 Joseph Howe Drive (at the Rotary)
Thursday, February 15th, 2007, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.
Doors Open at 6:30 p.m. to view design and plans

This meeting is open to all members of the public. HRM staff will be on hand to describe the physical conversion from a rotary to a roundabout. Other topics include a left turning lane on the St. Margaret's Bay Road and the planned reversing lane project on Chebucto Road.

Armdale Rotary Conversion

The Armdale Rotary has seen a number of changes over the past year. On October 1, 2005 the Province amended the Nova Scotia Motor Vehicle Act to change how motorists drive through a rotary or roundabout. However, the public were unaware of the impacts of this change until the Province confirmed in late June 2006 that the Armdale Rotary is affected by the new legislation.

Although geometrically and physically the Armdale Rotary is unchanged and is still technically a rotary, it must function as a "roundabout". The new legislation eliminates the traditional practice of "one on one" merging and now gives the right of way to traffic within the circle. Therefore, all traffic approaching the rotary must now yield to traffic within the circle and may only enter the circle when there is an adequate gap in traffic to safely do so.

In order to comply with the new legislation and ensure the Rotary operated properly, a number of changes occurred:

- "Yield" and "Yield Ahead" signs were posted on both the Herring Cove Road and Chebucto Road approaches as there were no controls on these legs of the circle to indicate a yield condition at all times.
- Traffic signals continue to be in effect on the St. Margaret's Bay Road, Joseph Howe Drive, and Quinpool Road approaches. Once a red light is displayed, traffic must remain stopped until the red light/green arrow is displayed on the traffic signal. The new legislation did not change the rules with respect to the traffic signals. Once permitted to proceed on a red light with a green arrow, drivers must then still yield to the traffic within the circle.
- The previous stop control conditions that existed prior to June 2006 had to be modified to improve traffic flow through the Armdale Rotary during peak times. The stop condition now only occurs on St. Margaret's Bay Road in the morning peak hour and Quinpool Road in the afternoon peak hour.
- Joseph Howe Drive remains on a red light with a green arrow for the yield condition at all times. The other signals function in the peak hours only to help traffic move around the circle and prevent one leg of the rotary from monopolizing access to the circle.

- To further emphasize the new legislation all five approaches have since been equipped with warning "Yield to Traffic in the Circle" signs.
- The afternoon peak restriction within the circle adjacent to the Quinpool Road exit and the Commissionaire that enforced it was also removed to allow complete movement around the entire circle to any exit at all times of the day. This also provided further gap opportunities for other entering traffic on specific legs.
- The traffic signals have also been equipped with new LED lights which provide both a higher intensity for visibility and reduced energy costs.

As a supplement to the installation of regulatory and warning traffic control signs and other changes that occurred, a joint HRM and Provincial public education campaign occurred over this past summer. The campaign included radio ads, newspaper articles and public service announcements. Police education and enforcement also occurred to help motorists understand the changes.

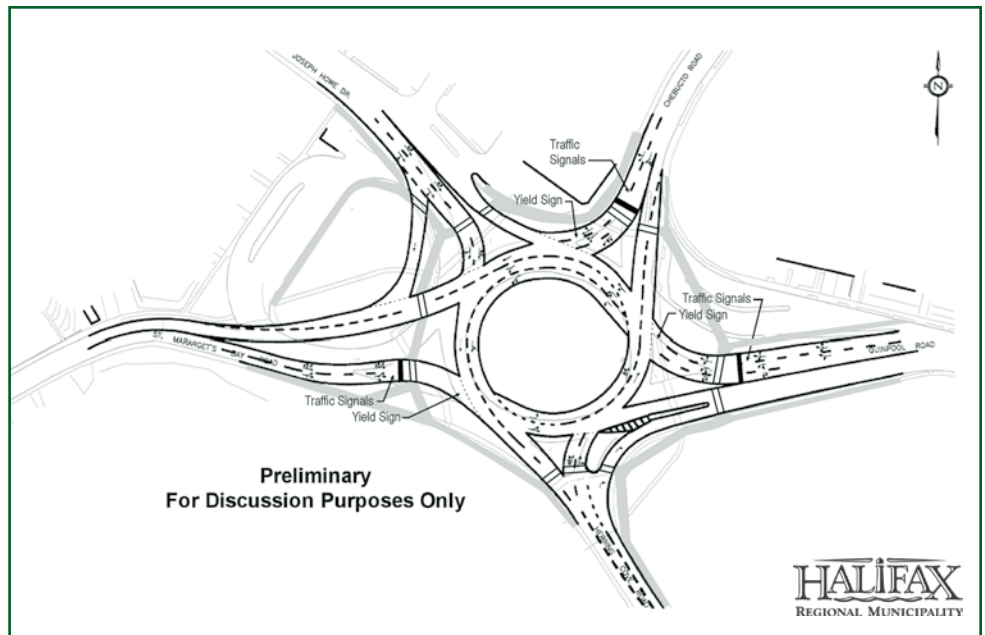
The Armdale Rotary has been operating relatively successfully under the operating rules of a roundabout given the absence of any physical changes to the geometry. Reconstruction is planned to convert it to a true roundabout and a consultant was hired several months ago to develop a concept plan.

The plan below is a preliminary working drawing that is still undergoing design review. A Request For Proposals (RFP) was issued the first week of January 2007. The intent is to finalize an appropriate design and tender the project for construction this summer. Construction is subject to the successful completion of a feasible and cost effective design and the final approval of the budget by City Council.

It is important to remember that this design is still undergoing a review. However, the design does show some key elements that will be put in place to improve traffic flow, which are:

- entry angles will be more consistent and enforce slower entry speeds
- lane markings and supporting signage will clarify how to navigate the circle and which lanes will exit

- pedestrian movements will be accommodated and the crosswalks will be set back from the circle; this will move pedestrians away from locations where drivers are concentrating more on entering or exiting the circle, than they are on people crossing
- traffic signals will manage entry flows the way they do now, but will be set back from the entry points so that proceeding on a green signal and yielding to enter the circle are two clearly separated processes
- cyclists can choose to travel in the circle or utilize the multi use pathway system around the outside of the circle along with pedestrians.



Addressing the Need For Greater Capacity - Chebucto Road Reversing Lane Project

HRM's Regional Plan carefully examined the need to get more trips onto and off of the peninsula as the region grows over the next 25 years. Although the plan relies on building a more effective transit service and on locating future settlements more strategically, the need to build additional road capacity was also recognized. The conversion of the Armdale Rotary to a roundabout will allow for a moderate increase in traffic capacity onto the peninsula, but only if that additional traffic can be absorbed by the roadways on the peninsula side.

The Chebucto Road reversing lane project is one way to achieve this needed capacity without having to widen an entire road corridor. The Chebucto Road project requires some street widening through the Mumford intersection, but for the remainder uses the existing three-lane street width. This is done by creating a reversing centre lane in the same way that the section of Herring Cove Road at the Rotary works today, with overhead green arrows and red X's to indicate the direction of travel in each lane. This project recently received an independent peer review by a consultant which confirmed its appropriateness in the context of the HRM's overall transportation management planning. The information contained in this report will be presented at the meeting on February 15th and show what changes this has had on the proposed project.

St. Margaret's Bay Road - Addition of Outbound Left Turning Lane and Sidewalks

Although St. Margaret's Bay Road is an arterial roadway and a designated truck route, it has existing capacity and safety issues which will be further impacted by improvements to the Armdale Rotary. There is also a safety concern for pedestrians because of asphalt or concrete sidewalks on only one side west of Keating Road. To complement the Rotary conversion and improve pedestrian safety, it is proposed to widen St. Margaret's Bay Road to provide concrete sidewalks on both sides and an outbound left turn lane. The project will also incorporate wider curb lanes to accommodate bicyclists. A pedestrian crosswalk will be located in the area near the Needs store and will include overhead pedestrian activated flashers due to the increased number of lanes.

The cost to do the improvements is significant given the right of way limitations, and therefore the project will need to be staged. The section from Keating Road to Douglas Drive will be the first phase of the project and others will follow depending on available budgets. This section is also the area with the most left turn delays given the existing and future users such as the renovated hotel. The intent is not to increase traffic capacity but to move existing traffic away from the Rotary more effectively to ensure other users on the circle are able to have free flow. There will continue to be only one inbound and outbound lane to and from J. Albert Walker Connector. The project will also address pedestrian safety concerns.

Detailed plans for St. Margaret's Bay Road are underway only for the section from the Rotary to immediately beyond Douglas Drive to ensure the alignment is feasible. Subject to Council approval of the budget it is anticipated that each of the above projects will commence this summer.