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DATE: January 17, 2020

**SUBJECT: Response to Community Feedback on Proposed Traffic Changes:  
Bayers Road Transit / Active Transportation Improvements**

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To Whom It May Concern,

The Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) will be making changes to Bayers Road that will add dedicated bus lanes in both directions between Romans Avenue and Windsor Street. An active transportation multi-use pathway will also be added between Romans Avenue and George Dauphinee Avenue. The proposed changes to Bayers Road, which will have an impact to the way residents and visitors access the adjacent neighbourhoods, include restricting right turns from Bayers Road to George Dauphinee Avenue and Micmac Street to reduce the potential for vehicle conflicts and increase the continuity and quality of the bus priority lanes. More information on the project can be found at the following link: <https://www.halifax.ca/bayersroad>.

HRM Staff held a community meeting on the evening of Thursday, December 12<sup>th</sup> at the Anglican Church of Apostles to discuss the proposed changes and solicit feedback from residents on how they would be impacted. Invitations for the meeting were sent by mail to residents of the Westmount subdivision and of Micmac Street and the adjacent streets. Approximately 100 residents attended the meeting, which ran from 6:30PM until 9:45PM and included a summary presentation followed by a question and answer period.

Community feedback was provided before, during, and after the December 12<sup>th</sup> community meeting via email responses, phone calls, in-person questionnaires, and general comments. Staff have reviewed the community feedback, summarized the issues identified, and prepared a response to clarify frequently asked questions and concerns.

**Summary of Community Feedback:**

The following are the most prevalent concerns identified in feedback received from residents:

- Neighbourhood Access (Westmount):
  - Traffic re-routing resulting from the changes will be inconvenient and result in increased traffic on other neighborhood streets including Almon Street and William Hunt Avenue.
  - Restricting right turns from Bayers Road to George Dauphinee Avenue will further limit access to the Westmount community, which already has limited access
  - Access to Westmount via Almon Street and Chebucto Road are considered inconvenient and unsafe
  - Concern about emergency and maintenance vehicle access
  - Interest in the potential to limit the right turn restrictions to peak hours only
  - Mixed feedback related to whether shortcutting on George Dauphinee Avenue is (or has been) a concern
  
- Neighbourhood Access (Micmac Street):
  - Traffic re-routing resulting from the changes will be inconvenient
  - Access to Micmac Street via Edgewood Avenue is considered inconvenient and unsafe
  - Concern that Micmac Street is used as a traffic shortcut and the congestion caused by vehicles attempting to turn onto Bayers Road during peak periods impedes local traffic. The turn restriction will not help resolve existing shortcutting concerns

- Active Transportation Improvements:
  - Concern that the proposed bikeway on George Dauphinee Avenue is unnecessary due to currently limited amount of people traveling by bike
  - Concern that the proposed bikeway on George Dauphinee Avenue will impact existing street features such as on-street parking
  - Interest in exploring alternative active transportation connections that avoid George Dauphinee Avenue and Bayers Road
- Transit Improvements:
  - Transit benefits resulting from the turn restrictions are not clear
  - Confusion about why right turns continue to be permitted at other Bayers Road intersections (particularly at Halifax Shopping Centre) but not at George Dauphinee Avenue and Micmac Street

### **Responses to Common Concerns and Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **Q1. Why restrict right turns from Bayers Road to George Dauphinee Avenue?**

**A1.** Turn restrictions are being proposed to reduce conflict between through moving buses in the curb lane and right turning general purpose traffic on Bayers Road. Due to the limited distance between the Halifax Shopping Centre east driveway and George Dauphinee Avenue, as well as the multiple conflicting traffic movements, there is concern about the ability of drivers to safely merge to the curb lane and make the right turn to George Dauphinee Avenue.

The right turn restriction will also improve the transition between the proposed multi-use pathway on Bayers Road and the proposed Local Street Bikeway on George Dauphinee Avenue, and increase the amount of curb space on Bayers Road between Halifax Shopping Centre and George Dauphinee Avenue (potentially beneficial as a future transit stop).

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#### **Q2. Why restrict right turns from Bayers Road to Micmac Street?**

**A2.** Turn restrictions are being proposed to remove the conflict between through moving buses exiting the new bus bypass lane opposite the Halifax Shopping Centre driveway intersection and right turning general purpose traffic accessing Micmac Street. Due to geometrical constraints, the bus bypass lane terminates just east of Micmac Street. Right turns are not advised from a safety perspective, as they would require vehicles to cut across the bus lane over a short section that is subject to conflicts with free flow bus traffic.

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#### **Q3. Why will right turns continue to be permitted at other nearby intersections?**

**A3.** In general, bus lanes located in the curb lane of a street typically permit general purpose traffic to enter the lane on the approach to an intersection or driveway to make a right turn. This configuration usually includes a traffic sign showing “*Right Turn Only (Except Buses)*”, indicating that all vehicles other than buses are required to turn right. Since right turns generally have limited delay, bus priority is not significantly impacted in most cases.

To allow vehicles to safely turn right onto George Dauphinee Avenue from Bayers Road as part of new configuration, vehicles at the preceding intersection (Halifax Shopping Centre east driveway) would need to be permitted to proceed through the intersection in the curb lane. As a result, any vehicle destined to Halifax Shopping Centre, George Dauphinee Avenue, or Connaught Avenue would be permitted to enter and use the curb lane. This would reduce transit priority and increase delay for buses and is not consistent with project objectives as approved by Regional Council.

**Q4.** *Access to the Westmount community is already limited. Why restrict it more?*

**A4.** Vehicular access to the Westmount community is limited to the intersections at Bayers Road, Connaught Avenue, and Chebucto Road. It is also recognized that current turn restrictions (Almon Street, Bayers Road) and peak period traffic conditions (Chebucto Road) effectively further limit access to the community during peak periods. While vehicular access is relatively limited, it does meet municipal access requirements and functions within acceptable limits for traffic operations.

It is recognized that the proposed turn restriction to George Dauphinee Avenue will further restrict access to an already limited access community, and that the additional access restriction will require residents and visitors to the community currently turning right to George Dauphinee Avenue from Bayers Road to consider alternate options. These access impacts are a design trade-off that is required to achieve key project objectives of optimizing transit priority on Bayers Road and facilitating a safe and convenient active transportation connection between Bayers Road and George Dauphinee Avenue.

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**Q5.** *Will emergency access and municipal services be impacted by these changes?*

**A5.** The proposed turn restrictions will not apply to emergency vehicles. The design team have consulted with HRM Fire Services and other emergency responders and are working to ensure that the design will enable fire trucks and other emergency vehicles to continue to safely and efficiently make the right turn movements from Bayers Road to George Dauphinee Avenue and Micmac Street.

Municipal services such as winter maintenance and garbage collection may require adjustments to current routing, but services will not be impacted.

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**Q6.** *Why is a bikeway being planned for George Dauphinee Avenue?*

**A6.** HRM's Regional Council approved *Active Transportation Priorities Plan (2014)* and *Integrated Mobility Plan (2017)* propose the designation of George Dauphinee Avenue as a 'Local Street Bikeway'. Local Street Bikeways are bicycle facilities placed on streets with relatively low traffic volumes and speeds, where vehicles and bicycles proceed single file in a shared roadway. There is no requirement for designated lanes for bicycles. Local Street Bikeways often include design treatments that increase awareness of cyclists (e.g. signage, pavement markings) and calm traffic (e.g. curb extensions, speed humps). Since bicycles and vehicles share the street, impacts to curb access (on-street parking and loading) are minimal.

George Dauphinee Avenue is considered a strategic cycling connection as it provides a direct route between (i) the planned multi-use pathway on Bayers Road connecting out to the Chain of Lakes Trail, and (ii) the planned east-west bicycle connections on the peninsula via Liverpool Street and Almon Street. These connections are part of a plan to build a connected network of safe, comfortable, and convenient bicycle routes in the Regional Centre that are suitable for people of all ages and abilities. Recent experience in communities across Canada and North America indicates that providing safe, convenient places to cycle is a significant factor in increasing the number of people choosing to travel by bicycle. HRM's vision – as is outlined in the Regional Council approved *Integrated Mobility Plan (2017)* – is to provide healthy, sustainable transportation options like walking and cycling that reduce our reliance on single occupancy vehicles and contribute to vibrant, liveable city.

Staff engaged neighbourhood residents in October 2018 and November 2019 to gather feedback on what this local street bikeway connection on George Dauphinee could look like. Of the 200+ community members we spoke to last year, at least 76% were supportive of the proposed design features that primarily involve traffic calming. For more information on the West End 'All Ages and Abilities' Bikeway project, please go to [www.shapeyourcityhalifax.ca/NWbikewayconnections](http://www.shapeyourcityhalifax.ca/NWbikewayconnections).

**Q7.** *Can the turn restriction at George Dauphinee Avenue be limited to peak periods only?*

**A7.** The design, which includes a reduced turning radius corner at George Dauphinee Avenue to reinforce the turn restriction and increase driver compliance (Note: emergency vehicles will continue to be accommodated), does not allow the flexibility to vary the turn restriction by time of day. Additionally, the necessity of the turn restriction for the active transportation transition is not limited to peak periods.

**Community Consultation Session: January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

The municipality will be hosting an open house for the general public in January to present details of the Bayers Road transit priority project, as well as the expected implementation approach and timeframe. The open house session will take place on **Wednesday, January 29, 2020 from 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.)** in Maritime Hall at the Halifax Forum, located at 2901 Windsor Street. We encourage residents to drop-in to this session to learn more about the project and provide feedback to municipal staff.

Please visit the website below for further information on this project. If you are unable to attend the information sessions but would still like to provide feedback, please contact Mike Connors, Transportation Engineer with HRM Strategic Transportation Planning, at [connorm@halifax.ca](mailto:connorm@halifax.ca).

<https://www.halifax.ca/bayersroad>