



PO Box 1749  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
B3J 3A5 Canada

DATE: March 16, 2020

**SUBJECT: Project Update: Bayers Road Transit / Active Transportation Improvements  
Access Changes at George Dauphinee Avenue and Micmac Street**

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Dear Resident,

Following recent correspondence and public engagement sessions for the upcoming transit and active transportation (AT) improvements on Bayers Road, Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) would like to provide a project update on the proposed changes that impact access to adjacent neighbourhoods.

#### **Background**

HRM will be making changes to Bayers Road that will add dedicated bus lanes in both directions between Romans Avenue and Windsor Street. A multi-use pathway (MUP) for pedestrians and cyclists will also be added between Romans Avenue and George Dauphinee Avenue. These changes to improve transit service reliability and AT safety and comfort are part of the ongoing implementation of HRM's *Integrated Mobility Plan* (2017) and Halifax Transit's *Moving Forward Together Plan* (2016). The Bayers Road project was approved by Halifax Regional Council in March 2018; more information can be found at the following link: <https://www.halifax.ca/bayersroad>.

#### **Access Restrictions**

The proposed changes to Bayers Road will include restriction of right turns from Bayers Road to George Dauphinee Avenue and Micmac Street. These restrictions, which are needed to reduce the potential for vehicle conflicts, improve the continuity and quality of the bus priority lanes, and allow for a safe and convenient connection for people walking and cycling, will require motorists looking to turn right onto George Dauphinee Avenue and Micmac Street from Bayers Road to consider another route. The proposed turn restrictions will not apply to emergency vehicles.

#### **Community Engagement**

HRM staff met with the community on Thursday, December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2019 to discuss the proposed turn restrictions and receive feedback from residents on how they would be impacted. Staff provided a summary of the feedback that was received from the community in a letter that was mailed to residents on January 17, 2020. An open house for the general public was held on Wednesday, January 29, 2020.

HRM received a considerable amount of feedback on the proposed turn restrictions from residents of the Westmount subdivision and Micmac Street (and surrounding neighbourhood). While community feedback on these changes has varied, most residents that have contacted HRM staff have indicated that they are not supportive of the changes due to their impact on community access. In addition to many emails, phone calls, and letters, a petition<sup>1</sup> with 123 signatures requesting that HRM not permanently restrict right turns from Bayers Road to George Dauphinee Avenue was presented to Regional Council on January 14, 2020.

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<sup>1</sup> Petition: *Stop HRM from permanently restricting right hand turns onto George Dauphinee Avenue* (Jody MacCormack, December 2019)

### **Consideration of Design Changes**

Several members of the community have suggested design changes that would reduce or remove the impact of the proposed changes on local residents. A very common suggestion was that the right turn restrictions should be in effect only during peak traffic periods, allowing vehicles to turn right onto George Dauphinee Avenue when traffic volumes are lower and the need for transit priority is less critical. Based on this feedback, staff worked with the design consultant for the project, WSP Canada Inc., to assess the potential to make these design changes.

A review of the traffic volumes throughout the day was completed to determine time periods when the turn restriction should be implemented. Traffic count data indicate that more than 30 vehicles per hour turn right onto George Dauphinee Avenue from Bayers Road for most of the day from 7AM until after 8PM. With this number of vehicles making the right turn, there are likely to be times when a bus will be driving through the Halifax Shopping Centre intersection at the same time that a vehicle wants to turn right onto George Dauphinee Avenue, which will create conflict. Based on the number of right turning vehicles, the need for the turn restriction is not limited to peak periods – the restriction would be required throughout the day and into the evening hours to reduce the risk of sudden and unexpected lane changes. Therefore, allowing the right turn movement on a time-of-day basis is not recommended.

### **Benefits and Trade-Offs**

The benefits of the proposed upgrades to Bayers Road are clear – buses will have the ability to bypass traffic during congested periods, and there will be upgrades for people walking and cycling in the area. These benefits have been reviewed as part of the functional, preliminary, and detailed design process that has been ongoing since 2017, and are well understood.

The Bayers Road project requires a number of trade-offs. Most of the corridor requires right-of-way widening to a varying degree, and some areas will be impacted by reductions in traffic lane capacity and on-street parking. The right turn restrictions at George Dauphinee Avenue and Micmac Street are another design trade-off. During the detailed design process, traffic analysis<sup>2</sup> was done to review the effect of the proposed turn restrictions on traffic flow in the area.

- Restricting right turns from Bayers Road to George Dauphinee Avenue will require traffic going to the north and west portions of the Westmount neighborhood (including Westmount Elementary) to enter the neighbourhood from Almon Street (from Connaught Avenue). Those most impacted by the change include residents at the northern end of George Dauphinee Avenue, Edward Arab Avenue, and those going to Westmount Elementary, whose inbound trip length will increase by up to 950m.
- The right turn restriction from Bayers Road to Micmac Street will require traffic going to Micmac Street and side streets to use Edgewood Avenue from Connaught Avenue. Residents at the south end of Micmac Street will be most impacted by the change, with inbound trip length increasing by up to 400m.

Staff understand that these changes will be inconvenient for some residents; however, other options to access the neighbourhoods are available. In the case of the turn restriction at George Dauphinee Avenue, even though the Westmount subdivision does have relatively limited access, municipal access requirements for the area will continue to be met.

### **Next Steps**

Having engaged with the community and reviewed alternate design options, staff are moving ahead with a design that includes the full-time right turn restrictions from Bayers Road to George Dauphinee Avenue and Micmac Street. With detailed design complete, construction tendering will take place during late winter / early spring 2020. The first phase of construction, including the section of Bayers Road between Romans Avenue and Connaught Avenue, is expected to commence in late spring 2020.

Staff have begun reviewing potential design solutions at the Connaught Avenue – Almon Street intersection that would allow left turn movements to be permitted throughout the day. Timelines on potential intersection upgrades remain uncertain at this time.

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<sup>2</sup> *Traffic Assessment – Proposed Access Restrictions: George Dauphinee Avenue / Micmac Street* (November 2019 Memorandum)