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Item No. Info. Item 2
Transportation Standing Committee
January 27, 2022

TO: Chair and Members of Transportation Standing Committee

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: December 9, 2021

SUBJECT: Pedestrian Crossing – Governors Lake Drive / St Margarets Bay Road

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

Item 11.4.3 of the June 8, 2021 special meeting of Halifax Regional Council:

MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Councillor Blackburn, THAT Halifax Regional Council request a staff report to analyze the potential of adding a pedestrian crossing at the intersection of Governors Lake Drive and St. Margarets Bay Road.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Motor Vehicle Act, R.S.N.S. 1989, c.293, subsection 90 (1) provides:

90(1) The traffic authority may establish and designate and may maintain, or cause to be maintained, by appropriate devices, marks or lines upon the surface of the highways, crosswalks at intersections where, in his opinion, there is particular danger to pedestrians crossing the highway, and at such other places as he may deem necessary.

BACKGROUND

At the May 11, 2021 special meeting of Halifax and West Community Council, a staff recommendation report dated February 17, 2021 was received in relation to rezoning and a development agreement for lands off Elm Grove Avenue and Myra Road in Timberlea. Following the public hearing, there was a discussion around the traffic volumes on St. Margarets Bay Road. As a result, a motion was moved by Councillor Stoddard and seconded by Councillor Cleary to request a staff report to analyze the potential of adding a pedestrian crossing at the intersection of Governors Lake Drive and St. Margarets Bay Road.

As defined by the *Nova Scotia Motor Vehicle Act*, a crosswalk exists at every intersection whether marked or unmarked and vehicles are required by law to stop for a pedestrian at both marked and unmarked crosswalks.

Because of the numerous requests to add marked crosswalks it has been necessary to establish criteria which provide an objective basis for evaluation as to where marked crosswalks are installed on HRM roadways. Most jurisdictions in Canada use some form of evaluation criteria to determine which crosswalks will be marked and which will not. Both HRM and the Province of NS have adopted the nationally recognized Transportation Association of Canada (TAC) warrants as a starting point for marked crosswalk installations. The TAC Pedestrian Crossing Control Guide was developed to promote uniformity across Canada for pedestrian crossings. This guide considers a number of criteria for a given location, including vehicular volumes and speeds; pedestrian volumes, types, and delays; collision experience; visibility conditions; proximity of adjacent traffic controls; road alignment and geometry; and the availability of an adequate adjacent sidewalk or walkway system.

DISCUSSION

A development agreement for the Lands off Elm Grove Avenue and Myra Road, Timberlea, was approved by council which enables the construction of a multi-lot residential subdivision consisting of 71 low-density residential units. As noted in the background section of this report, concerns were raised during the public hearing regarding the existing high traffic volumes on St. Margarets Bay Road and the need for a marked pedestrian crossing in the area.

St Margarets Bay Road in the area near Governors Lake Drive is a two-lane arterial roadway with a posted speed limit of 50 km/h and carries approximately 9200 vehicles per day. There is existing concrete curb and sidewalk on the east side and gravel shoulder on the west side. Governors Lake Drive is a typical two lane, two-way local residential street with no existing pedestrian facilities.

Staff gathered data at the proposed crosswalk location, and although there was pedestrian crossing activity, the volume was below the threshold that would typically indicate the need for a marked crosswalk. Although the pedestrian crossing threshold was not met, the volume was not insignificant, so staff also considered other factors as part of the assessment such as nearby facilities (services, schools, transit, etc.), proximity to other nearby crossing opportunities and the potential for additional crossing demand related to the approved development.

Facilities in the immediate area include Willowbrae Academy daycare on the west side of St Margarets Bay Road, a short distance to the north of Governors Lake Drive, which has an access that meets St Margarets Bay Road a short distance to the south. There are also transit stops just south of Governors Lake Drive. The nearest marked crosswalks to Governors Lake Drive are 450 m to the north (near the Guardian Drug store) and 1 km to the south (near the Lakeside Community Centre).

As noted above, there is an approved development agreement for a residential development on the lands off Elm Avenue and Myra Road that includes a proposed pathway connection from the development to St. Margarets Bay Road opposite Governors Lake Drive. The additional residential development and potential connection at the proposed crosswalk location has the potential to create additional demand for a marked crosswalk. From a system connectivity and latent demand perspectives, this location could be considered for installation of a marked crosswalk. The location has appropriate sight distance as well as existing street lighting, which further supports a marked crossing.

The challenges associated with this location include the current vehicle speed and volume, as well as the lack of existing pedestrian infrastructure / connections on the west side of St Margarets Bay Road. In order to provide an appropriate marked crossing, rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFB) would need to be included as part of the installation. Proper pedestrian infrastructure would also need to be provided on the west side of St Margarets Bay Road, which would require filling in a portion of the existing ditch so that a sidewalk connection could be built at least to the existing access to Willowbrae Academy south of Governors Lake Drive, or to the location of the proposed pathway associated with the approved residential development.

Plans for the proposed development indicate changes to the configuration of the secondary Willowbrae access might occur to accommodate the proposed pedestrian access. Coordination of the crosswalk installation with the development plans would ensure a logical sidewalk connection is made on the west side of St. Margarets Bay Road.

The cost associated with the RRFB crosswalk installation, including the construction of pedestrian infrastructure on the west side of St. Margarets Bay Road, would need to be programmed into a future capital budget. Because the scope of work related to the pedestrian crossing is dependant on the development plans for the lands off Elm Grove and Myra Road, the timing of installation should correspond with construction of the development. There may be also be opportunity to negotiate some of the cost associated with this pedestrian crossing with the developer. The development is currently in the Subdivision Application stage.

The cost of the RRFB equipment installation at this location is in the range of \$6,500. The anticipated cost of constructing pedestrian infrastructure on the west side of St. Margarets Bay Road is \$3,000 per linear metre, considering piping of the existing ditch and possible widening of the road shoulder. The total estimated cost to make the connection to the proposed walkway would be approximately \$20,000 which does not factor any potential developer contributions.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications at this time.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

No community engagement was required.

ATTACHMENTS

No attachments.

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

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