

18 February 2025

HRM Budget Committee

A lot has been said about the importance of road safety yet approval of the proposed 2025-2026 capital budget will see both a reduction in funding and the illogical situation of endorsing vehicles having priority over pedestrians / cyclists along Active Transportation trails, i.e. where Multi Use Pathways (MUPs) intersect with roads.

We ask that you approve an increase in the 2025-2026 Traffic Management capital budget by the amount estimated to install marked crosswalks at 10 MUP locations¹, with a commitment to continue to do so in future years

¹ with the two noted below, both of which are in the vicinity of schools, included

It is the strategic direction of HRM to prioritize pedestrians and cyclists over those who drive. The IMP is clear in this regard.

We want to bring your attention to an issue for which we received a response late last week that we believe is exactly opposite of that direction.

In 2023 we were contacted by two concerned citizens – one on Avenue du Portage (District 6) and the other St. Margaret's Bay Road (District 13), both near schools (Ecole Carrefour and Five Bridges). After sharing the issue with Traffic Management Lucas Pitts responded

“Both those locations have already been identified by staff.

Should be this year although we are working with AT to pave the trail and landing at five bridges which could take some time.

I just want to add that there is a strong possibility that one or both will roll into the next capital year as there is infrastructure that is required around the crosswalks. 195 Avenue du Portage we are working with the HRCE to create a landing and pathway on their property. We are looking at the capital room this year but it may not be available.”

With neither having been completed and not seeing either of these locations on the proposed 2025-2026 capital budget we followed up with Roddy MacIntyre and received this response

“The exercise to determine appropriate locations for marked crosswalks where multi-use pathways intersect HRM roadways is complete. Neither of the locations you noted would be considered multi-use pathways / crossings in our hierarchy of active transportation facilities.”

We have asked for but not yet received the assessment of the hierarchy/ where it is published.

In summary we have gone from

- these two locations having been identified by staff, and
- they should be done this year (2024-2025) to
- possibly not being done until next year (2025-2026) to
- maybe sometime beyond, if at all.

A few facts

- in spite of the Traffic Calming proposed budget reducing by over \$1,000,000 it is still proposed to be \$2,070,000 for 28 locations, or \$74 k per location
- 12 new marked crosswalks with pedestrian activated beacons are proposed at a cost of \$665,000, or \$55 k per location
- of the 12 new marked crosswalks it appears none / zero are at locations where MUPs intersect roads.
- decisions are to be made based on evidence - evidence shows the overwhelming majority of pedestrian fatalities and injuries occur on arterial and major collector streets (often at intersections) while few occur on local and minor collector streets eligible for Traffic Calming
- the proposed Road Safety Improvement budget has decreased from \$5.5 million in 2024-2025 to \$4.7 million in 2025-26
- per the Nova Scotia Motor Vehicle Act when a MUP reaches and intersects with a road, unless at an intersection or in the absence of a marked crosswalk a vehicle has the right of way, not the pedestrian / cyclist.

Given it is a priority of HRM to shift modes of transportation from vehicles to transit / walking / bicycling then it must be a requirement that pedestrians be given priority to safely cross a roadway.

It is the position of the Crosswalk Safety Society of Nova Scotia that it should be Policy that where MUPs intersect with roadways a marked crosswalk be required.

We appreciate this cannot be achieved in a year or two ... but there must be a start.

Briefly, on another issue the Road Safety Strategy 2024 includes as a Priority Area **Safe Schools**. Yet the proposed budget does not appear to include any explicit funding for Active School Travel Plan initiatives. It strikes us as short-sighted to include a Priority Area in the Strategy yet not include any dedicated funding to achieve it.

Where our comments relate to capital expenditures, we are unsure at this stage of the 2025-2026 budget process how much impact our input will have. Regardless we believe until approved it is important for those you represent to have their say on issues they believe exist with the proposed budgets, presenting the reasons they believe they are inconsistent with HRM strategic direction.

Norm Collins, President

On behalf of The Crosswalk Safety Society of Nova Scotia

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