

Submission to Budget Committee
re 2023/2024 Multi-Year Capital Plan
as it relates to Project CT190006 - Road Safety Improvement
provided by Norm Collins January 17, 2023

I am unable to attend the January 18, 2023 Budget Committee meeting to consider the 2023/2024 Multi-Year Capital Plan. I appreciate what is under consideration is a massive document with many projects and issues, no doubt difficult to digest. It will no doubt not surprise you my input will focus on the Road Safety Improvement Budget.

Let me start with a comparison of the 2022/2023 Road Safety Improvement budget with 2023/2024.

Expense	2022/23 Actual Budget	2023/24 Proposed Budget
Traffic Calming	\$2,900,000	\$3,000,000
Traffic signal upgrade and signal improvements	400,000	480,000
New crosswalks with overhead flashing beacons or RRFBs	590,000	370,000
Crosswalk upgrades to RRFBs	450,000	350,000
Purchase / install Accessible Pedestrian Signals	200,000	200,000
Pedestrian access improvement and minor unplanned safety upgrades	50,000	130,000
Intersection realignment / improvement	150,000	
Purchase dynamic radar speed display signs	63,000	
New traffic signal installation / design		650,000
Durable pavement markings at multi-lane zebra crosswalks		50,000
Road safety data collection and analysis		270,000
	\$4,800,000	\$5,500,000

There are many aspects to this proposal that I like

- an overall increase in proposed budget, from \$4.8 to \$5.5 million
- the addition of \$ for road safety data collection and analysis
- \$ for durable pavement markings at multi-lane zebra crosswalks
- \$ for another 41 RRFB installations
- \$ for another 15 Accessible Pedestrian Signals, and
- plans for nine new marked crosswalks, all with RRFBs

I can't speak to the need for new traffic signals but trust they are warranted / necessary.

What I do not agree with is the continued investment in Traffic Calming on local and minor collector streets as allowed by the Administrative Order.

Traffic Calming

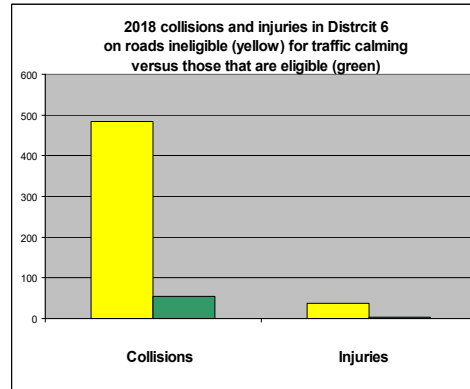
In order to assess my perception the investment in Traffic Calming is misdirected I reviewed some 2018 collision data, i.e. before the implementation of Traffic Calming, specifically District 6 (excluding highways and assuming collisions occur at the higher classification of road, e.g. a collision at the intersection of a local and major collector road is classified as Major Collector).

Results are:

Traffic Calming - District 6	
Metric	Comment
64 Traffic Calming (TC) requests	Number of requests in District 6, In addition there were a number of others that were considered ineligible, i.e. arterial or major collector roads
38 collisions on TC roads	2018 collisions on District 6 roads subsequently considered for traffic calming
3 injuries on TC roads	injuries resulting from the 38 collisions on the traffic calmed roads
484 collisions	2018 collisions on arterial, e.g. Akerley Boulevard, Main Street and major collector roads, e.g. Waverley Road, Windmill Road, Woodlawn Road in District 6
55 injuries	injuries resulting from the 484 collisions, of which 15 were on Main Street and 12 on Windmill Road (the portion within District 6)

In graphical form it is clear the number of collisions and injuries are far greater on roads (arterial and major collector – in yellow) ineligible for Traffic Calming as compared to those that are eligible (local and minor collector – in green).

In order to achieve the Goal of the Strategic Road Safety Framework it strikes me the focus is on the wrong classifications of roads.



This evidence is clear (to me at least) that investment in road safety improvement (and the goal of the Strategic Road Safety Framework) should be focused on those classification of roads where the majority of injuries occur, and not on local and minor collector roads where injuries are relatively infrequent.

To invest over 50% (\$3.0 million of \$5.5 million) of the Road Safety Improvement budget on local and minor collector Traffic Calming is, in my view misguided. I appreciate residential traffic calming is well received by many and therefore politically popular but the question leaders should be asking is whether or not there is any evidence such an investment will have much of an impact on road safety.

Rather, **I suggest a significant amount of this funding (at least 50%) be redirected** to where the majority of collisions actually occur – on major collector roads and arterial roads, especially at signalized intersections.

Infrastructure that could, and should be implemented include among others initiatives

- medians such as this one at Portland and Jersey,
- speed tables, and
- extension of the zebra markings at signalized intersections such as this one at Chebucto and Oxford



Active Transportation / New Sidewalks

The Integrated Mobility Plan (IMP) is clear pedestrians are prioritized over vehicles / cars.

Yet, in spite of the IMP and its priorities the budget are not aligned.

Expense	2022/23 actual budget	2023/24 forecasted budget	2023/24 proposed budget	Average over last three years
Street recapitalization (CR200006)	\$41,000,000	\$50,000,000	\$42,965,000	\$33,746,000
Active Transportation (CR200001), including new sidewalks	4,400,000	4,500,000	5,100,000	4,348,000

It is interesting to observe the proposed 2023/24 Street recapitalization budget is 27% greater than the average over the last three years while the Active Transportation budget is only 17% greater.

At the same time the previous direction to begin to address this issue, i.e. an increase the investment in Active Transportation / a sidewalk program was recently rescinded at the November 25, 2022 Budget Committee meeting where it was moved and passed that

“Recommend that Regional Council rescind the direction from the 2022-23 fiscal budget to include \$7 million in the 2023/24 budget to fund a sidewalk program from capital from operating;...”

I recommend at least \$2.0 million be transferred from the proposed Street recapitalization budget (or \$1.0 million from Street recapitalization and \$1.0 million from Traffic Calming) and added to the Active Transportation budget, to be specifically allocated to new sidewalks.

Not the full \$7 million but is at least a noticeable additional funding.

Thank you for your time and attention to my input.

Norm Collins, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia