

Comments and Responses from April 2015 Public Engagement for the Hollis Street Bicycle Lane - Summary

Comments /Concerns from People Who Ride Bicycles

Comment/ Concern:

There should be green paint across all conflict points (intersections, laybys, etc.)

Response:

- It is not our practice currently to add special colours to our pavement markings although we may explore this option in the future.

Comment/ Concern:

Riding on the left is really unusual. How will I make a right turn from the left side bicycle lane?

Response:

- Agreed, a left side bicycle lane is atypical, but experience from other jurisdictions is showing that bicycle lanes on the left side of one way streets (and median divided streets) are actually preferred because of improved driver visibility (driver is on left/ trucks have smaller blind spot on left); and reduced bus/ bicycle conflicts. You should make a right turn just like you would make a left turn from a right side bicycle lane: shoulder check, and when clear merge to the right before making your turn. You could also use the crosswalks if you don't feel comfortable making a vehicular style turn

Comment/ Concern:

The connection to Upper Water will really improve my commute. This will make a great connection to the future route on Morris/ University.

Response:

- Unfortunately we have taken it off the table at this time for further review and to consider the entire route from Valour Way to the beginning of the bicycle lane. Staff will begin planning this connecting this fall.

Comment/ Concern:

People who ride bicycles to the Saturday market wondering if the "No-stopping 7am -9am/ 4-6pm" would be in place "Monday to Friday" or all week?

Response:

- Just Monday to Friday. The Seaport market is open 7AM -3PM on Saturdays and 9AM-3PM on Sundays. It would seem that no stopping 7-9AM and 4-6 PM would not serve the market goes on Sundays, and would be of little benefit on Saturdays. Additionally, with a reduction in loading demand and reduced traffic volumes on Hollis Street on the weekend compared to a weekday, it is less likely that a vehicle would be loading in the bicycle lane on a weekend, and if it were, the reduced traffic volume would make going around the stopped vehicle less challenging.

Comments /Concerns from PROPERTY/ BUSINESS OWNERS

Comment/ Concern:

Concern that that moving trucks serving apartments on the block between Bishop and Morris will have to load/ unload from across a busy street with a lot of truck traffic.

Response:

- While parking is never allowed in a bicycle lane, the NS Motor Vehicle Act recognizes there may be a need to stop by the curb from time to time to load passengers and/ or goods. While we would encourage movers to find alternatives to blocking the bicycle lane, if that is their only option, they should not be at risk of a ticket if they are actively involved in loading/ unloading activities.

Comment/ Concern:

The block of Hollis between Salter and Bishop will lose 5 metered parking spaces and 6 two-hour zone parking spaces on the left side of the street. Even though there is parking elsewhere, there will be a perception that it is much harder to park near small businesses on this block.

Response:

- Staff aimed to ensure that any on-street parking to be removed had been replaced on other nearby streets during the 2011 implementation of the *Downtown Street Network Plan*, and/or that there was sufficient excess capacity in the area. The original rationale for this bicycle lane and the one on Lower Water Street came from the 2011 Downtown Street Network Changes project which converted two way streets such as Lower Water and Sackville to one way and thereby created about 110 new parking spaces downtown, including 18 spaces on Lower Water on the same block. These were intended to offset all of the parking that will be lost on Hollis when the bicycle lane is painted. The Metro Park garage is at the corner of Hollis and Salter and reports average occupancies of 70% on weekdays and 30% on evenings and weekends. On this block three spaces currently signed 'no-parking' will have new meters installed on the west side of the street. Staff will also explore if additional metered spaces can be added on Salter Street between Barrington and Hollis.

Comment/ Concern:

The layby for the Hollis Hotel (former Radisson) only fits two vehicles and is not sufficient for the needs of the hotel.

Response:

- The existing controls on the street limit stopping on this side of the street from 7-9am and 4-6pm and prohibit daytime parking. These are same stopping/ parking controls that will be in place when the bicycle lane is installed, so there will be no change in curb access for this property.

Comment/ Concern:

Could the sign that says "right turn required" to the north facing traffic on Hollis Street at Terminal Road be switched to the 'no going straight ahead' sign, so that people entering the driveway that is essentially the fourth leg of this t-intersection, do not get ticketed?

Response:

- Yes, we can change this sign at the same time as all the other signs are changed for this project.

Comments /Concerns from OTHER STREET USERS

Comment/ Concern:

Is one lane adequate south of Sackville today in terms of traffic flow? Won't things get worse after the new residential buildings that are approved are built? Will the new stop sign at Terminal Road increase congestion?

Response:

Staff has analyzed the motor vehicle capacity impact of the proposed changes to Hollis Street with the addition of the bicycle lane and there is no projected change.

Some specific areas that were considered include:

- a. Hollis at Sackville: Prior to changing to the new and now existing lane configuration on Hollis Street at Sackville Street, Traffic Management staff prepared traffic modeling to assess the impacts of changing the lane use to an exclusive left turn lane and single through lane. The modeling showed little impact to changing the lane use given the high left turn volume on Hollis at Sackville Street, that there is only one southbound lane on Hollis Street south of Sackville outside of the AM peak and the observed vehicles using the left lane as loading, contrary to the signs. HRM Traffic Management staff have been out to monitor the AM peak period with the new lane use on several occasions and have not observed major delays at this intersection.

The new building being built at the intersection of Hollis at Sackville Street will have only one access to its parking garage and this access will be from Sackville Street. As any vehicles seeking access to this new building will be using Sackville Street, this will increase the volume of left turns from Hollis Street to Sackville Street, making the new lane use even more necessary. Further to this, development within downtown Halifax is well serviced by Halifax Transit, bicycle routes, sidewalks, and due to its proximity to other amenities it is anticipated that residential developments in this area will generate fewer vehicle trips than would a same-size development in another part of the Municipality.

- b. Hollis at Terminal: The current stop control at the intersection of Hollis Street and Terminal Road is confusing to all intersection users and HRM Traffic Management has received several requests from drivers and pedestrians to make this intersection an all-way stop. The concern raised by residents is when vehicles travel down Hollis Street and turn left onto Terminal Road they are not always watching for pedestrians as they otherwise have the right of way at the intersection. Traffic modelling has shown that there will be very little impact to traffic delay at this intersection when it is converted to an all-way stop.