

MOVE sends letter to Marchand

Committee asks D.R.E.E. to consider implications
of Harbour Drive and to defer funding

Honourable Jean Marchand,
Minister,
Department of Regional and Economic Expansion
Ottawa, Ontario

" The city is currently applying to D.R.E.E. for funds for the construction and planning of future sections of "Harbour Drive". They have placed the requests at priorities 9,10, and 27. The requests total 14 million dollars."

" The city's proposal is to construct a very expensive six-lane limited access high-speed roadway from Buckingham Street to North Street, a four-lane limited access road from North Street northward to the MacKay or Narrows Bridge and 4-6 lanes from the bridge northward to Bedford."

" We object strongly to the proposal at this time. As citizens of the city of Halifax, we think that the city cannot afford all the costs we foresee growing from this scheme. We think there are many unexamined alternative solutions to the problems facing the city. We note for example that as a rule of thumb it is not good planning to put an auto collector along side a potential mass transit system, yet Harbour Drive North parallels several sets of railway tracks and parallels the harbour and Bedford Basin with ferry potential."

" We think that the proposals for Harbour Drive have not been properly made—an adjourned council meeting Sept. 1, 1971, to consider the whole question has never been resumed, and no policy statement on Harbour Drive North has ever been clearly made by the alderman of the city."

"The city will soon consider a Master Plan. We think it premature that such a major project be undertaken before full examination and discussion of the overall plan has occurred and the plan adopted as policy."

"There are many indications that planning will soon be done for the Halifax Metropolitan area, by a provincially-mandated regional planning body. The Metropolitan area Planning Committee has been functioning for two years as an advisory body for major input from Halifax politicians. Staff has offered tentative plans and studies for the areas taken as a whole. The draft transportation study of February used a computer-model to look at a variety of scenarios of traffic patterns and land development for the next twenty years. The most economical scenarios were also those schemes that were the least disruptive to existing communities. They did not call for a Harbour Drive: in fact the report called a Harbour Drive "undiscoverable". In the face of up-coming change towards a Metro planning set up Harbour Drive is, at the very least premature."

"We think the case for a Harbour Drive has not been adequately or convincingly made. The present proposals are based only on a 1965 report which was nothing more than an engineering design study. Present statements by spokesmen within the city staff that we must build Harbour Drive North within five years are based only on traffic volume studies and only on the assumption that auto traffic volumes should continue to grow. Consequences, especially social consequences, or the impact of transit have not been considered. Experiences in other cities indicate that the actual costs of highways is far greater than mere construction costs alone. The city engineers who have been promoting and executing preliminary studies for this highway are probably not suited or trained to consider those costs."

"The new housing legislation proposed last sitting of Parliament (Bill 213) takes a much broader look at the cost of development, and proposes the re-habilitation of existing housing and in fill where rehabilitation is not possible. It proposes to save existing neighbourhoods, both social/community aspects and the physical/architectural aspects. We applaud the intent of this broader and more economical thinking. We hope that D.R.E.E. would consider the same sort of thinking in relationship to the Uniacke Redevelopment area; Harbour Drive North will eliminate some 40-50 properties and buildings, and will have displaced 80-100 families and rendered sterile some 7-10 acres of land suitable for redevelopment and in some case rehabilitation."

"We think there are plausible, less socially disruptive and less costly alternatives that ought to be fully examined before allowing the city to proceed with this expensive disruptive and incredibly permanent manifestation of highway engineers' idee fixe. It is worth nothing that we know of no city that has ever purchased a "used expressway" from another city."

"The city cannot and will not proceed with the project if it is left to its own financial devices."

"May we suggest that in the upcoming negotiations with the city of Halifax that D.R.E.E. seriously consider the implications of this massive project and defer any funding until the alternatives have been examined."

Yours Truly

Alan Ruffman
Harbour Drive Committee

AR/gmw

News clippings to Oct. 13, 1971 and petition from north end residents encs.

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Roadways of a massive nature such as Harbour Drive have long been highly disruptive intrusions into the established rhythms of urban communities. In Canada, the first such roads were accepted with passive resignation. Thus, in Toronto, highway 401 cut across the North York suburbs with only a few expropriation fights and it underwent several relatively painless expansions till now it is up to sixteen lanes in places.

→ It is the Spadina Expressway fight that has become the symbol of Canadian resistance to such urban disruptions. As a result there is now severe questioning of the merits of each new expressway in all Canadian communities. In Vancouver, the third harbour crossing is under attack, in St. Johns the terminus of the Trans Canada Highway that would cut through the Black Head Road area is being questioned, in Montreal the Crosstown Expressway has been challenged and one portion is not to be built and in Halifax the concept of Harbour Drive has drawn citizen fire.

→ It is only in recent years that Halifax, by virtue of D.R.E.E. grants has found itself wealthy enough to afford such massive capital road projects. In fact, it could be argued that the possibility of "free" money from D.R.E.E. has warped our prospective spending priorities and has caused an artificial reordering of our priorities. Thus in the July 4, 1972 list of D.R.E.E. priorities items #9, 10 and 27 request fourteen million dollars to extend or plan various parts of Harbour Drive from the Cogswell Street Interchange to the city limits at Bedford. The current proposals include the construction of Phase II from the Cogswell Street complex to Gerish Street for four million dollars (a cost that does not include the cost of the land already acquired). The D.R.E.E. priorities as approved by Council put Harbour Drive Phase II and III above the schools for the Carson Street and Cowie Hill public housing projects. Harbour Drive is above a street resurfacing project (item 16) and above a transit communication system and a transit service terminal (items 18 and 19). Some eleven school and education projects are relegated to items 23 and 26. Even Harbour Drive to Bedford comes (item 27) ahead of improvements to St. Margaret's Bay road from the Rotary to the city limits and a sewer project on Craigmere Drive.

One aspect of the inner city freeway problem we should be sensitive to is the incredible justifications sometimes made to promote the projects. Halifax is not alone in this position. Do we accept the justification for Riverfront Drive in Fredericton, N.B., as quoted by openents Jerry Gleck and Jon Oliver in their presentation "An Alternative Proposal"? - "to prevent vehicle - pedestrian accidents but also to minimize the possibility of those drowning tragedies usually involving children which are all too common in communities where there is unrestricted access to the very brink of a river or a lake."

Do we accept in Paris the justification for the Left Bank Expressway made by André Herzog, the director of public works and creator of the project in referring to traffic volume studies that show a steady increase of traffic? - "The

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worst thing would be to let oneself be caught in the trap of all this sentimental balderdash - The statistics are all that count."

And do we accept in Halifax the justification made by Mayor Fitzgerald on CBC Information Morning Sept. 12, 1972? - "If we are going to make public transportation work, you know, from the suburban or the outlying districts, fringe areas, well Harbour Drive is a must" or "It puts me square for Harbour Drive. -- - If we don't get people, people, not cars, but people, into the downtown area to work and to shop, the downtown area will dry up."

Opposition to Harbour Drive in Halifax has in recent days been initiated by the Harbour Drive North Committee of MOVEMENT for Citizens Voice and Action, a coalition of citizens' groups in the Halifax-Dartmouth Metro Region. The committee has attempted to avoid a black or white, pro or con stance and recognizes that a number of improvements are necessary on Barrington Street to improve the flow of traffic. Instead the Committee has attempted to raise questions and challenge some of the implicit assumptions made by the proponents of the expressway within City Staff. These questions have been circulated to the City Council and to the Mayor.

The imposition of Harbour Drive as a "downtown dumper expressway" raises a number of serious questions most of which have never been explored. One of those is the quality of planning, involved and the piecemeal process by which the road is being financed and built, divorced and separate from any regional transportation or transit plan, from any Halifax Master Plan and from any specific downtown plan. *None of these plans are finalized*

The piecemeal decision-making process also comes into question. The Committee has suggested that no firm decision has been made by Council to build the Harbour Drive Expressway. This contention was disputed by Mr. Dan McSweeney of the in a bylined article October 19, 1972 that outlined in some detail the fifteen year history of Council's involvement with such a proposal.

There are a number of additional items that should be brought to light in this discussion that serve to illustrate the contentious history the Harbour Drive concept has had and the uneasiness it engenders in those faced with the decisions today. I suppose it becomes a matter of semantics whether the expressway way has been "officially sanctioned" when the City has been, and still is vehemently opposed to spending its own dollars on the project and is dependent on outside source such as D.R.E.E. or Provincial funds.

There is a history of indecision associated with the road. It is interesting to note that the first main report of city staff (Mr. Robert B. Grant) dated May 31, 1963 suggested that the extra land for the much wider expressway (6 lanes) between downtown and the MacDonald Bridge be taken from the west side of Barrington St. because the lands on the east side of Barrington "are limited in depth and any reduction in depth resulting from a widespread roadway might well make them unuseable for Navy or any other purpose." Now nine years later the October 2 report of Bob Chaboyer says the land must come from the east side, to make additional land available for the redevelopment area to the west of the existing Barrington Street". There is a 180 degree change of reasoning in the

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→ nine years. This in itself might indicate a progressive trend except when one realizes that the current proposals between Gerrish and North Street involve elevated ramps which require extensive land on both sides of Barrington including five-seven acres between Barrington and Brunswick Streets.

Who can forget the extensive concern that issued from the Save the Playground Committee when the November 1965 Dolew Cathor Report suggested approach ramps to the MacDonald Bridge should pass through the George Dixon Playground. This was the report that proposed an interchange "approximately 18 acres" with an improvement that "requires three additional acres" of land. This was the report that suggested the Cogswell Street interchange.

The Cogswell Interchange proposal in itself caused a great deal of discussion that centered around the Historical Buildings, Horses Tea, the Committee of Concern, and an alternate simplified proposal submitted by a local architect's firm. Most of the dispute was to no avail and the elaborate interchange (alternative B) was built consistent with a Harbour Drive through downtown but inconsistent with all planning advice. It is interesting to note that the expensive interchange that ties up as much as nine acres of land is again under consideration by the planners and the Downtown Committee. Alternative h that is presently being studied by the Committee presents a highly simplified traffic pattern that frees the highly desirable land for development and eliminates a six lane Harbour Drive feeding in from the north. Unfortunately, the Mayor refers to this alternative as "fantasy h" and apparently has made a choice before reviewing the ideas and possibilities for reclaiming valuable land.

The Redevelopment Committee minutes of August 25, 1960 record a long discussion on the acquisition of Scotia Flour and Seed at the foot of George Street for a widened Lower Water Street. On March 10, 1965 the Committee had changed its name to the Development Committee and agreed to Scotia Flour and Seed - Five years of indecision.

The minutes of the Development Committee of January 6, 1965 record the receipt of a letter from the Franklin Service Company Ltd. re their land on the north-west corner of Cornwallis and Upper Water Streets - land that was in the path of the proposed Harbour Drive North. The letter said the company was in "the unrealistic position of having to hold its land at the location and not being able to develop it as the street access has been frozen. The letter indicated that several firms have expressed interest in the company's plans for development but the company is prohibited from proceeding any further with them. As four years have elapsed since the company made an offer to acquire adjacent City-owned land, the company advised it could not allow the offer to stand and it requested an early decision on the part of the City". In 1967 the City purchased the land. The development never occurred over 6 years of indecision and the property is presently rented by the City to store lengths of pipe.

Mr. J.R. Pineo of R.B. Colwell Ltd. (N.S. Cold Storage) on the east side of Barrington Street near Artz Street has correspondence going back to 1965 which indicates that company's desire to adjust its access so as to not impede Barrington Street traffic and to almost double the size of the facility. Here again seven

years of indecision has severely retarded development and it is not unreasonable to assume that if Harbour Drive North goes through that R.B. Colwell Ltd. will move to property it owns in Dartmouth. Canada Packers down the street sold out to the City and went to Lakeside.

→ The ten years of indecision on Harbour Drive North permeates the whole neighbourhood. Landlords including the City have allowed properties to deteriorate and property values have not advanced as rapidly in this area as in other parts of the city. 5182 Gerrish St. was purchased by the Council on September 28, 1972 for \$9,000. The property had changed hands in 1969 and 1970 for \$8,900 in each case. We are forced to conclude that the east and west sides of Barrington Street have suffered a planned deterioration.

The indecision reaches even deeper into everyday lives. The Mechanical Fitters Club wishes to greatly expand its facility but lies under the threat of expropriation by the City to provide a bypass around the Brunswick Towers building that has been permitted to occupy one lane of Barrington Street. Parsons Upholstery had planned on storefront renovation last fall but the air of indecision has killed the idea. The City also wants another neighbourhood facility for the Brunswick Street Tower diversion, the Army, Navy, Air Force Veterans Association Club at 2395 Barrington. The Harbourview Tavern at 2295 Barrington and Michael Mansour's neighbourhood grocery store are under expropriation for the "temporary diversion of Barrington Street" - clearly a precursor to Harbour Drive Phase II.

*Light Industry
engagements*

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The previous council under Allan O'Brien was clearly uneasy about Harbour Drive and felt compelled to go to their electorate in a public hearing on the matter September 1, 1971. They did not feel the matter was settled and they passed a motion after the hearing closed, in a Special Council meeting, "that the matter be deferred for two months and that a meeting be then arranged at the Call of the Chair". The Mayor has never called that meeting and no resolutions with respect to Harbour Drive north or south have been passed by the new Council since that date.

On September 8, 1971, the previous Council again expressed its uneasiness with Harbour Drive during the discussion of the D.R.E.E. priorities at an adjourned Council meeting. At that meeting Harbour Drive came in for considerable discussion. Phase II of Harbour Drive North was on the Staff list of suggested priorities as #12. (The minutes report phase II as being "only four lanes of traffic" - it is in fact designed for 6 lanes). At the end of the meeting Council passed three motions approving the list of D.R.E.E. priorities the third of which was "the staff advise Council about alternative propositions to major transportation items such as widening of Robie Street, Harbour Drive, and Chebucto Road Corridor at which time Council may revise the program of priorities." That report on alternatives was never presented to the previous Council nor was it presented to the new Council elected in October 1971. It appears that staff has never suggested alternatives to Harbour Drive to the present council.

Even the present Council has been uneasy about Harbour Drive North. On February 15 and again on February 23 at Committee of the Whole Meetings Council deferred "a motion calling for the recognition by the City that the east side of Barrington Street ALL be involved in redevelopment or re-use to accommodate major traffic improvements, and that the city is therefore obliged to acquire property as and if offered at reasonable cost." The area referred to was Gerrish to North Street where the city presently owns only four - five properties and where, if the threat of Harbour Drive North as a limited access expressway in a new roadbed were removed, a new revitalization would occur led by R.B. Colwell Ltd. Also on February 15, 1972 a motion to purchase R.B. Colwell Ltd. was put and lost with Aldermen

Hogan, Meagher, Sullivan and Wentzell opposed and Aldermen Bell, McKeen and Moir in favour. Margaret Stanbury along with aldermen Connolly and Stapells were absent. No. 2373-75 Barrington was also turned down on February 15, another property needed only for Harbour Drive North.

Again on August 17, 1972 Council refused to purchase R. B. Colwell Ltd. and deferred it on a special committee of the whole meeting; a meeting which did not come about till October 2, 1972, and at that meeting Council decided to call a public meeting which was finally set for November 2nd at 8:00 p.m. in the St. Pats School Complex on Maitland Street.

Further evidence of Council's uneasiness with Harbour Drive North is seen in property acquisitions. Aldermen Stanbury, Meagher and Connolly have consistently resisted land acquisitions; Aldermen Hogan spoke strongly against acquisitions north of Gerrish and recently Aldermen MacKeen has been expressing concern over the roadway. Alderman Moir feels strongly that the City, as the only buyer must acquire properties as and when offered. His moral obligation however, would disappear if the threat of Harbour Drive North were removed and if the City made a clear statement on the nature of Barrington Street North.

There are other more recent evidences of Council's uneasiness with the Harbour Drive North concept. The properties south of Cornwallis Street were excluded from cost-sharing by C.M.H.C. when it set up the Uniacke Redevelopment Area in 1963. 2192 Barrington Street is a sound house that has been City-owned for ten years and rented as a family dwelling. Over the summer the family moved out and the City's staff moved to demolish the house. The only purpose for the demolition was for Harbour Drive North. On August 31, Metro Housing '72, a housing coalition of some ten to fifteen groups petitioned Council to stay the demolition. The Council did so in Committee of the Whole September 6, 1972.

Again on September 28, 1972 Council bought a house south of Cornwallis this time on the east side of Barrington,; no. 2191 - 93. Council verbally agreed to alderman MacKeen's suggestion that approval for purchase "be subject to the Property being used as living accommodation until money was actually available to proceed with the construction of Harbour Drive which would necessitate the use of the land." At the September 14th meeting of Council Alderman MacKeen expressed concern over demolitions farther north on Barrington Street and requested that these be deferred.

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Thus the present Council, its immediate predecessor under Mayor O'Brien and indeed all Councils back to 1960 have had to deal with the contentious issue of Harbour Drive and at no time have the decisions been easy or clear cut. The present Council has again expressed its uneasiness by going to yet another public hearing on the matter November 2. If the road is "officially sanctioned" then why have a public hearing? Clearly the final form of the Barrington Street improvements are not yet settled in Council's mind.

Clearly the advice of their own staff (September 1, 1971) is ringing in their ears. "Transportation problems cannot be solved by piecemeal experiments. What is needed is to treat the road system with transit and auto components". Clearly the Council has pondered Fehr Gyllenhammar's words who, as president and chief executive of Sweden's Volvo, a branch of which we have, said, "I don't think it

would be a bad thing to ban the private car in big cities. Cars are killing the city and strangling small towns and villages' (Time, Sept. 25, 1972). Perhaps too Council has read Jane Jacobs when she notes in The Death and Life of Great American Cities, that increased accessibility by car is always accompanied by a decline in the efficiency, and therefore patronage of public transportation. It would

appear, that Council has read and pondered the implications of Bill 213, relating to transit. Have rehabilitation is emphasized and perhaps they have read the October 10, 1972 press releases of the Ministry of State, Urban Affairs wherein the Federal Government announced plans to move railways out of the urban cores of cities (such as the area east of Barrington Street?).

Things are changing and have changed over the 27 year history of Harbour Drive. Clearly ideas and Council's response to them change over time. The time seems appropriate for a reconciliation of our intent and direction. We have a new motto on Halifax City tourist literature, "Historic Halifax: The City on the Move". With the Historic Buildings spared and with the moratorium on part of downtown to save Granville Street we seem assured of the word "Historic". The question centers around "the City on the Move". Is it to be movement of people in private cars on a Harbour Drive Expressway or is to be a conscious emphasis on public and rapid transit?

In a little known event in early 1970 this Council and all three regional municipalities, ^{which} that until there was a regional development plan they would only request D.R.E.E. funds for capital projects which:

1. "At present are clearly defined as necessary but which would in the course of events have to be delayed until financing was available;
 2. Can be undertaken in a manner which will serve regional needs.
- and
3. Are judged to be unlikely to result in irrevocable commitments to a direction of development which may not be desirable"

Yet in about April of 1970 D.R.E.E. made known that it would fund Harbour Drive North Phase 2, a project which at the time was not deemed to fit the three criteria above. The mayor and M.A.P.C. hit the roof and in the space of eight hours the whole of M.A.P.C. and the core group flew to Ottawa and laid the regions true priorities on the line. The City of Halifax won and sensibly D.R.E.E. funds were used to begin the Kline Heights rehabilitation project. rather than an expressway which the City did not want at the time.