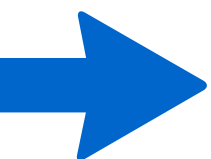


Government Response:

Traffic and Transportation Safety





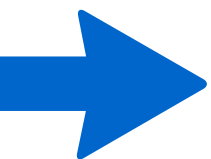
Overview

Nova Scotians living, working, or visiting Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) are experiencing prolonged traffic delays, which reduce productivity and diminish their quality of life. The growth in population, along with access and affordability issues, have all contributed to the increasing frustrations experienced by commuters. The Government has a responsibility to provide solutions that align with its mandate to enhance economic growth and the overall well-being of residents.

The Government has received the Regional Transportation Plan (Plan) prepared by Link Nova Scotia (formerly Joint Regional Transportation Agency), which provides targeted objectives for the Transportation System for the next 20 years and more, but the Government also recognizes that there is a significant need to take immediate action today.

The Plan strives to make life better, more convenient and more efficient for Nova Scotians. It was developed through an extensive consultation process and considers planning from Core Partners (NS Department of Public Works, Halifax Regional Municipality, Halifax Harbour Bridges, Halifax Port Authority, Halifax International Airport Authority, ACOA). The Plan has 39 actions to enhance the flow of people and goods, aligning with increased housing options and economic growth, and identifies 16 significant recommendations considered priority items.

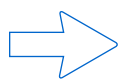
To gain credibility that long-term solutions are forthcoming, the Government will commit to common-sense changes in the short term while planning work gets underway to support larger actions. Those short-term initiatives (18-24 months) can reduce social strain, manage vehicle congestion, and foster support. The intention is to allow HRM residents and visitors to genuinely see that the movement of people and goods is improving until larger initiatives can be implemented.



Major Actions for Long-Term Transformation that Need Planning Work Now

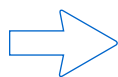
To initiate several of the priority recommendations identified in the Regional Transportation Plan (Table 5.1), Link Nova Scotia will begin to work with partners to better determine the impact, scope, timing, and costs for several major projects. Many of the priority actions represent significant, multi-year projects, policies, and programs, which are designed to enhance efficiency, reliability, and connectivity within Nova Scotia's transportation system.

While the full list of Actions can be found in the Plan, initial planning work includes the following:



Halifax Peninsula Core Street Review

The Halifax Peninsula has the highest concentration of people, employment, and services in Nova Scotia, and with only five access corridors, it is one of the most constrained and congested areas in the province. The Government, in conjunction with HRM, will initiate a detailed, network-level assessment and review of the Peninsula's core streets and access corridors to identify strategies to help manage congestion issues.



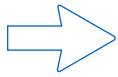
Highway 102 Capacity Enhancements and Interchange Improvements

In October 2024, the Government announced plans to upgrade and expand Highway 102 between Exit 0 and Exit 4 to increase the capacity to move people in this corridor, support rapid transit service, and improve goods movement. To date, initial planning work including surveys, traffic studies, and environmental screenings are already underway and will continue over the next 12-24 months.



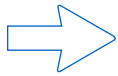
Hammonds Plains to Highway 101 Connector

The Government has identified the need for a new strategic link between Hammonds Plains Road near Sandy Lake and Exit 2 on Highway 101, and will be initiating the planning process. This will help reduce congestion on several surrounding roads, including Hammonds Plains Road, and create another way out of several neighbourhoods in an emergency. Transit routes could also be created or adapted in the area.



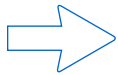
Explore Future Road Corridors

The Government will conduct early planning work to advance new multi-modal connections that support growth areas with significant developments. These new connections will help improve network connectivity and provide more transportation options for these new communities (e.g., Shearwater and Beaver Bank Connectors).



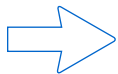
Explore Options for Harbour Crossings

Travelling in, over or around Halifax Harbour is an essential consideration in transportation planning. Harbour links present opportunities to increase the flow of goods and people. Elements of the existing MacKay Bridge are nearing the end of their lifespan, and the eventual solution presents an opportunity to increase capacity to accommodate anticipated growth. Fast ferry services from Bedford have been announced, and opportunities exist to move people more efficiently from other departure points in and around the metro area.



Inter-municipal Bus Service

The Government will explore opportunities to introduce an inter-municipal transit service that will better connect communities and provide reliable and affordable bus service to and from rural towns and villages and core destinations in HRM. To enable access, options for new Park & Rides will be assessed at key locations primarily outside of HRM and Halifax Stanfield International Airport. Recognizing this need, the Government will advance discussions for a pilot to create routes to improve community connections. For example, opportunities to connect existing service at the airport with nearby communities will be explored, as well as an inter-municipal commuter bus during peak hours.

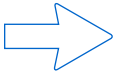


Rapid Transit

Fast, frequent, and reliable rapid transit service in densely populated areas is needed to support the province's growth and development, move more people more efficiently, reduce the cost of travel, increase access to jobs / expand the labour market, and support broader goals to reduce GHG emissions.

Preliminary design and study work related to ferry service will include three fast ferries (Mill Cove, Shannon Park, and Larry Uteck), as well as examining longer-term potential ferry routes including Purcells Cove and Eastern Passage.

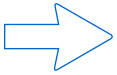
Bus Rapid Transit includes four routes covering approximately 50 km, enhanced stations, and transit priority lanes. To date, the Government has supported work related to the first route: Bayers Road/Young Street/Robie.



Passenger Rail Feasibility Study

In October 2024, the Government committed to completing a Passenger Rail Feasibility Study with initial emphasis on connections between Halifax and Bedford, Windsor and Halifax, and Lantz. This study will review options, alignment, required ridership, high-level cost estimates, and other considerations.

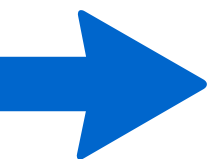
A procurement package to engage consultants to carry out the study has been prepared and is ready for release. Additionally, the Government will release the passenger rail study completed for Cape Breton and will move to the next phase, which is discussions with the owners of the rail lines.



Regional Transportation Management Centre (RTMC) and Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)

A RTMC is a facility that monitors and can manage the road network in real time. The Government will invest in expanding/connecting existing software and hardware using elements like live video feeds from across the network, adaptive and remote signal timing changes, communication via variable message signs, and variable speed limits, among other ITS applications.

These investments will allow for dynamic management of the system; assist in the recovery from disruptions such as collisions, poor weather, and special events; and give commuters real-time information to make informed decisions.



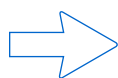
Short-Term Solutions to Provide Traffic Relief

In advance of seeing the benefits of long-term infrastructure investments, a series of short-term solutions have been identified. These are primarily operational in nature and are transitional measures to alleviate current pressure points and enhance traffic flow.

Based on feedback received from HRM, MLAs, and data used to develop the Plan, these smaller scale, highly localized initiatives are intended to maximize current infrastructure to improve the commuter experience of Nova Scotians over the next 18-24 months. While these short-term solutions are not explicitly referenced in the Plan, they align with and support proposed actions, primarily Strategy 1.1 Enhance the safety and efficiency of the regional transportation system.

Additionally, the Government realizes there are congestion issues throughout the province and is committed to new ways of completing highway operations such that drivers are better aware of expected delays. Closures of 100 series highways will be modified to reduce constrictions as much as possible, while respecting highway safety.

Some examples of the initiatives include the following:

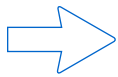


Adaptive Signal Technology

Connection to Plan:

***Enhance the safety and efficiency of the regional transportation system
(1.1.1 Create a Regional Transportation Management Centre)***

The Government will move to identify bottlenecks on key corridors where intelligent systems can be installed to detect when signals need to change. The result will be improved system management, increased vehicle flow, less congestion, and fewer emissions from idling vehicles. These are initial steps in implementing Regional Transportation Management Centre (RTMC) and Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS). Next steps include conducting an intersection inventory and, if approved, procure hardware to execute a pilot in the North Street/Macdonald Bridge/Nantucket corridor.

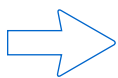


High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lanes

Connection to Plan:

*Enhance the safety and efficiency of the regional transportation system
(1.1.3 Peninsula Core Streets & Access Corridors)*

The Government will mandate Link Nova Scotia to investigate prime candidates for HOV lane placement and enact a pilot program to encourage more people to rideshare and use fewer vehicles. This could include potential conversion on Magazine Hill, as well as exploration of opportunities at Cogswell District and Barrington Street, and Bayers Road and Robie Street, in consultation with HRM and Halifax Transit.

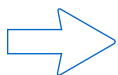


Macdonald Bridge Corridor Review (North/Oxford to Nantucket/Victoria Road)

Connection to Plan:

*Enhance the safety and efficiency of the regional transportation system
(1.1.3 Peninsula Core Streets & Access Corridors)*

In conjunction with HRM Traffic, the Government commits to conducting a rapid review of the Macdonald Bridge corridor along North Street and Nantucket Avenue to incorporate intelligent traffic signal technology that uses AI and real time data along with potential improvements to the intersections leading to the span.

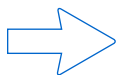


Young Street (Halifax) Corridor Review

Connection to Plan:

*Enhance the safety and efficiency of the regional transportation system
(1.1.3 Peninsula Core Streets & Access Corridors)*

In conjunction with HRM Traffic, the Government commits to identifying improvements for intersections on the corridor, as well as adjustments to access. It will include deploying intelligent signal technology that uses AI and real time data to operate the corridor efficiently during peak commuting times.



Review Active Transportation Projects to Preserve Existing Road Capacity

Connection to Plan:

*Enhance the safety and efficiency of the regional transportation system
(1.1.3 Peninsula Core Streets & Access Corridors)*

Pause potential active transportation projects that could impact the capacity of key routes and intersections and explore options to “future proof” pathways to allow for safe pedestrian and cycling commuting, separate from high volume commuter corridors.