



MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Construction Association of Nova Scotia disappointed with HRM Councillor Kathryn Morse's comments on construction site encroachment on public spaces

Dartmouth, NS – (02/11/2022) The Construction Association of Nova Scotia is disappointed in recent commentary in the media regarding encroachment on public infrastructure, such as roadways and sidewalks, and the lack of conversation with industry on such issues. HRM Councillor of District 10, Kathryn Morse, recently made a motion during a council meeting to direct staff to examine ways to better contain development projects. Since then, Councillor Morse has made assertions in the media that are off the mark and inaccurate.

“Over the last several years, industry has worked closely with HRM to put in place construction mitigation controls to minimize the potential negative impacts construction activities could have on surrounding properties and pedestrian and vehicle traffic,” says Duncan Williams, president & CEO of the Construction Association of Nova Scotia. “Inaccurate statements like those shared in the media by Councillor Morse are not helpful and are detrimental to work achieved by all parties thus far.”

In 2018, the council of HRM released the Administrative Order on Construction Site Management to minimize potential problems and ensure a safe and positive public experience with development related construction activities by setting minimum standards for work within or immediately adjacent to the public right-of-way or public facilities.

A Construction Management Plan (CMP) is required when construction activities such as, demolition, excavation, or construction of a new development will happen within 5 m of municipal property or street or will create an obstruction within the street. The CMP is submitted as a part of a permit and is required to meet the requirement set out within the Administrative Order.

“The CMP is in place for a reason and has already been agreed to by all parties – the tools are in the toolbox. Instead of directing staff to examine ways to contain development projects and spend time and people resources compiling a report, HRM should be enforcing those policies and procedures,” says Williams. “As for the already aggressive encroachment fees Councillor Morse is looking to increase, those have put millions of dollars into Halifax's coffers, which could be used to hire more staff and monitor compliance issues as they arise.”

While it is widely known that more staff are needed for enforcement, Williams says that it is ultimately up to HRM staff to do their job as outlined in the guidelines. “We've been pleading with HRM to bring all stakeholders together to understand challenges and scope of the problems and work together on solutions. We've gotten nowhere and are running in circles on the same issues that keep cropping up and exasperated in the media by ill-informed councillors.”

“As far as we know, industry has been and continues to adhere to the rules and development guidelines established through the CMP,” says Williams. “If there is a compliance issue, the

problem is solved. Compliance officers show up promptly and workers on construction sites follow the directives they are given.”

CANS and industry stakeholders work with HRM staff on a regular basis on key issues impacting construction. Williams says that councillors need to allow HRM staff to do the job they’ve been hired to do, not circumventing staff and the already approved processes in this manner. Councillors should be directing any complaint through the proper channels at an HRM staff level versus making irresponsible and generalized statements in the media. If the process is broken, work with industry to fix it.

Continues Williams, “Can HRM quantify how many complaints they’re receiving from the public on construction projects that are encroaching or taking over sidewalks and parts of roadways? Time and time again, industry and key stakeholders are left out of discussion with HRM on construction issues – noise bylaw, permitting delays, and now discussions on the construction management plan – and this is yet another example of lack of consultation or conversation with industry.”

Halifax is experiencing rapid growth and the city continues to attract an influx of people and businesses. As such, the construction boom won’t be slowing down anytime soon. Says Williams, “How is industry supposed to physically build our city if we’re not at the table and consulted, then slapped with directives that prevent us from doing just that – building a city to attract and retain future growth?”

The Construction Association of Nova Scotia (CANS) is the leading voice of the construction industry respected by members, government, industry, and the public. CANS represents more than 780 large and small companies throughout Atlantic Canada that build, renovate and restore non-residential buildings, roads, bridges and other engineering projects.

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