

Community Planning & Economic Development Standing Committee
February 9, 2012

TO: Chair and Members of the Community Planning & Economic
Development Standing Committee

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed
Phillip Townsend, Director, Planning & Infrastructure

DATE: January 12, 2012

SUBJECT: Mainland Halifax North – Bedford Corridor Transportation and
Wastewater Servicing Strategy

ORIGIN

- May 5, 2011, motion of North West Community Council in response to a plan amendment application for the Paper Mill Lake Commercial Comprehensive Development District lands in Bedford;
- Design studies, prepared for the Municipality and Halifax Waterfront Development Corporation Ltd., for mixed use communities on the Bedford Waterfront at Mill Cove and at Birch Cove;
- Development proposals to allow for higher density developments in Mainland Halifax North;
- Road Network Functional Plan – Highway 102/Bayers Road Widening Project; and
- Commuter Rail Study - Pending.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that this Committee recommend to Regional Council:

1. That a servicing strategy be initiated for the Bedford - Mainland Halifax North Corridor to estimate transportation and wastewater services upgrades needed to service future growth with associated costs and suggested means of finance; and
2. Further public consultation on all development proposals referenced in this report, which require plan amendments, be deferred until the servicing study has been completed.

BACKGROUND

The Municipality has initiated two studies and has received several requests to allow for intensification of development along the Halifax Mainland North-Bedford Corridor. The locations are illustrated on Map 1 with a summary description and status of each provided as follows:

1. Municipal Studies

(a) Mill Cove, Bedford Waterfront:

The *Bedford Waterfront Design Study* (Ekistics and Associates, June 2010) was prepared for the Municipality and Halifax Waterfront Development Corporation Ltd. (HWDCL) in response to a recommendation of the *Bedford Waterfront Vision and Strategic Action Plan*, endorsed by Regional Council in 2007.

The study provided design guidance for the future development of lands around Mill Cove, including water lots currently being infilled by HWDCL to the south of the cove, the Esquire and Travellers Hotel properties on the Bedford Highway, the Sobeys Mall and a former boat yard at the south end of Shore Drive. Approximately 3,600 housing units and 634,500 square feet of commercial and institutional space are proposed.

A study steering committee, comprised of property owners and community representatives, and the North West Community Planning Advisory Committee, have recommended that Council initiate amendments to the Bedford MPS to implement the study recommendations with minor amendments. Both committees also recommended that transportation studies be undertaken to ensure that transportation infrastructure and services are able to accommodate the increased demand generated by further development.

(b) Birch Cove Waterfront, Kearney Lake Road/Bedford Highway Area:

Concurrent with the initiation of the Bedford Waterfront Study, the Municipality and HWDCL retained Ekistics and Associates to prepare the *Birch Cove Waterfront Plan* (March 2010) to provide design guidelines for the future redevelopment of lands adjacent to Birch Cove, in the vicinity of Kearney Lake Road and the Bedford Highway.

The consultants proposed approximately 440 new dwelling units and 106,000 square feet of commercial space. A study steering committee has recommended that the consultant's recommendations be approved with certain design amendments and that a community plan amendment process to be initiated.

2. Other Requests

(a) Paper Mill Lake, Bedford:

United Gulf has proposed a mixed use community over 23 acres of undeveloped land at the southeast intersection of Highway 102 and Hammonds Plains Road, near Paper Mill Lake. These lands have been designated and zoned as a commercial comprehensive development district for nearly 20 years but have yet to be developed.

United Gulf has requested a site specific plan amendment to the Bedford Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) to enable a new set of design policies based on urban design principles. The existing policy does not set a maximum density for the area but staff recommended a maximum of 70 persons per acre, which was supported by the North West Planning Advisory Committee subject to minor clarification.

At the May 5, 2011, meeting of North West Community Council, the following motion was approved in response to the proposal:

- (i) Refer Case 01311 back to staff and request a report outlining options and a process for a traffic and public transportation study for the Bedford Highway and Hammonds Plain Road, prior to this project, or any other proposed plan policy changes related to this development, moving forward;
- (ii) That staff include in the report suggested policy guidelines and a process in order for HRM to implement a Capital Cost Charge policy for all future development in this area of Bedford; with the CCCs being designed to assist with all infrastructure charges, including the cost of providing the facilities and infrastructure required to improve public transit and road infrastructure in this area; and
- (iii) Further, that staff go back to the community to consult with Bedford residents on the changes implemented in regard to density and permitted land uses for this development since the previous public meeting, as well as to seek input on traffic, public transportation and the proposed CCCs model for this and future development projects within Bedford.

(b) The Sister of Charity “Motherhouse” Property:

According to a recent news release, Southwest Properties has entered into an agreement to purchase a 63 acre property where the congregation’s Motherhouse once stood, adjacent to Mount St. Vincent University. The company is proposing to develop as many as 1,600 dwelling units, comprised of single units, townhouses and multi-unit dwellings of up to eight stories with space for supporting commercial services.

This property is designated “institutional-university” under the Halifax MPS, with no provisions to allow for the development contemplated and therefore a plan amendment would have to be initiated and approved by Regional Council.

(c) The Former Radio Transmitter Lands, Dunbrack Street:

W.M. Fares has made application to develop 55 acres of land owned by Sobeys Land Holding Ltd., formerly used as a transmitter site, on the east side of Dunbrack Street, across from the Farnham Gate Rd. intersection. The proposal includes 982 dwelling units (69 single unit, 124 townhouses, and 789 multi-units with ground floor commercial) and three commercial buildings with frontage on Dunbrack Street.

Supporting documents have been submitted to Planning Servicing to initiate a development agreement application. Staff will proceed to process this application, as requested by the proponent, but a recommendation of approval will be contingent upon servicing issues be satisfactorily resolved through the terms of an agreement or by other means.

(d) Bedford Highway Properties and Other Interests:

Development agreement applications have been received for several smaller mixed use or residential developments along the Bedford Corridor and preliminary discussions have been held with other developers interested in pursuing increased density opportunities within the Mainland North/Bedford Corridor area.

DISCUSSION

These projects have a common characteristic of increasing the density of development within infill areas within the existing service boundary established under the Regional Plan. They could potentially further principles and opportunities identified by the Regional Plan to:

- Support development patterns that promote a vigorous regional economy;
- Manage development to make the most effective use of land, energy, infrastructure, public services and facilities and consider healthy lifestyles;
- Develop integrated transportation systems that improve transit use and reduce costs through improved use of the existing transportation network and integration of settlement pattern and transportation planning;
- Promote walkable, mixed use communities where people can be more active;
- Reduce servicing costs by encouraging the right density in proposed developments and reducing the dispersion and distance between communities; and
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and leave more land in a natural state as less land is needed for development.

Council is aware that staff is now embarking on the first 5-year Review of the Regional Plan. According to the approved scope of the Plan Review, efforts will be concentrated on the Regional Centre and opportunities to enhance the level of development and community design elements within the suburban areas.

From a preliminary perspective, staffs sees much merit in intensifying development within both the Regional Centre and the suburbs, rather than encouraging further development to occur outside our serviced areas. Thus it makes sense to look at the Mainland North-Bedford Highway Corridor area in this light.

However, to be successful, enabling increased densities for opportunity sites in this area must take into account the infrastructure requirements necessary to accommodate this development – specifically, sewer and water services and transportation services. In other words:

- (a) can our piped infrastructure handle the additional sewerage flows generated by the increased development, and if not, what upgrades are required, at what cost, and who pays; and
- (b) how is the increased population to be moved effectively and efficiently from Mainland Halifax/Bedford to the Regional Centre (automobile, transit, active transportation).

To assist Council, the development industry and the public in answering these questions, staff propose to initiate a servicing study to determine cumulative transportation and wastewater servicing requirements. The matters to be addressed in each component are summarized as follows:

Transportation:

The transportation analysis has substantial overlap with the analysis that must be undertaken for the 5-year review of the Regional Plan. The capacities of the Halifax Peninsula screen line, the Bayers Road/Highway 102 corridor and the Bedford Highway/Fairview Interchange corridor are common to this servicing analysis. The analysis will also coordinate with the work to be undertaken through the commuter rail study, which Council recently authorized.

The study would:

- Estimate impacts on existing road transportation network, transit operations and active transportation (AT) network; and
- Identify upgrades to the road transportation system, transit operations and AT networks so as to maintain a satisfactory level of service on the transportation system under low, medium and high scenarios of transit usage, with associated lifecycle costs for each scenario.

Wastewater:

Under the Regional Plan, Halifax Water has engaged a consulting team to prepare a Wastewater Management Functional Plan for the Municipality's wastewater systems. Flows through the systems are currently being monitored and modeled to determine the existing conditions and impacts of future flows and upgrades to the systems that will be needed for environmental regulatory compliance and growth capacity.

At this point, there are known overflows within the wastewater collection system served by the Halifax Wastewater treatment facility and the system served by the Mill Cove Wastewater treatment facility. Future wastewater discharge guidelines, anticipated to be in regulation by the

province, may require Halifax Water to have remedial plans approved for reduction or elimination of overflows, as a condition for allowing any new developments to connect to the system. The developments described in this report may be affected by this requirement.

Halifax Water has advised that, as a utility, it will assume costs needed to bring its existing customer base into regulatory compliance but developers will be responsible for all new growth related costs.

This study, therefore, will:

- Use the modeling from the wastewater functional study to estimate the impact of these developments on system capacity and overflows; and
- Determine a fair and equitable means of apportioning costs among benefitting property owners in accordance with the policies established by Halifax¹.

These studies are anticipated to be completed over twelve to fifteen months.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Halifax Water has advised that it will pay for the costs of the wastewater component of the study. The transportation component is estimated to cost \$150,000, which would be split equally between accounts CTU00884 (Functional Transportation Plans) and CDG01283 (Regional Plan 5-Year Review).

Project No. CDG01283 – Regional Plan 5-Year Review

Cumulative Unspent Budget	\$430,057.50
Less:	<u>\$ 75,000.00</u>
Uncommitted Budget	\$355,057.50

Project No. CTU00884 – Functional Transportation Plans

Cumulative Unspent Budget	\$128,690.47
Less:	<u>\$ 75,000.00</u>
Uncommitted Budget	\$ 53,690.47

¹ Any cost allocation to Halifax Water would be subject to approval of the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Project and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Project and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A public meeting was held for the Paper Mill Lake plan amendment request and a series of three public meetings were held for each of the Bedford Waterfront and Birch Cove Waterfront design studies. Further information regarding the Paper Mill Lake proposal, meeting minutes and public comments received can be made available upon request. Further information regarding the Bedford Waterfront and Birch Cove Waterfront design studies can be found at:

<http://www.halifax.ca/VisionHRM/BedfordWaterfront/index.html> and
<http://www.halifax.ca/regionalplanning/WesternShoreBedfordBasin.html>

ALTERNATIVES

This Committee could recommend that Regional Council:

1. Initiate a servicing strategy for the Bedford - Mainland Halifax North Corridor to estimate transportation and wastewater services upgrades needed to service future growth with associated costs and suggested means of finance, and defer further public consultation on all development proposals referenced in this report, which require plan amendments, until the servicing study has been completed.

This option, recommended by staff, would allow outstanding development agreements to proceed in accordance with policy provisions currently in effect under community planning strategies and the servicing standards of the Mainland Halifax Servicing Strategy. A staff recommendation of approval would only be forthcoming if servicing issues could be satisfactorily resolved under the terms of a development agreement or by other means. The final decision would rest with the appropriate community council or the Utility and Review Board in the event of an appeal.

In the event that further plan amendment requests are received in the study area prior to the servicing strategy being completed, a staff recommendation to proceed would be considered on a case by case basis with one of the considerations being potential traffic impacts.

2. Proceed with public consultation on all outstanding plan amendments and development agreement applications but do not bring forward any plan amendments until the servicing study has been completed.

This option would allow for timelier processing of plan amendments but would not allow the public to be informed of any proposed solutions to servicing issues. Based on public responses received to the Bedford Waterfront and Birch Cove development proposals, solutions to servicing issues may be important in receiving public support.

3. Defer further processing of all development agreement applications and plan amendments until the servicing study has been completed. While Regional Council has no obligation to entertain plan amendments, unless so instructed by the Province, the legislation contemplates that applications for development agreements are to be entertained where municipal policies have been adopted to allow for their consideration. A refusal to do so may therefore be subject to challenge.

Staff therefore recommends proceeding to process development agreement applications, if requested by the proponent. A staff recommendation of approval would be contingent upon satisfactory resolution of servicing issues.

4. Not undertake the servicing study recommended by staff. This option would not allow for a determination of deficiencies in the regional transportation and wastewater systems prior to approvals of development proposals, which may prove frustrating in public consultations and more costly for the Municipality and Halifax Water to resolve.

ATTACHMENTS

Map 1: Mainland Halifax North - Bedford Corridor Servicing

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/commcoun/cc.html> then choose the appropriate Community Council and meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report Prepared by: Paul Morgan, Planner, Planning & Infrastructure, 490-4482

Original signed

Report Approved by: Austin French, Manager, Planning Services, Planning & Infrastructure, 490-6717

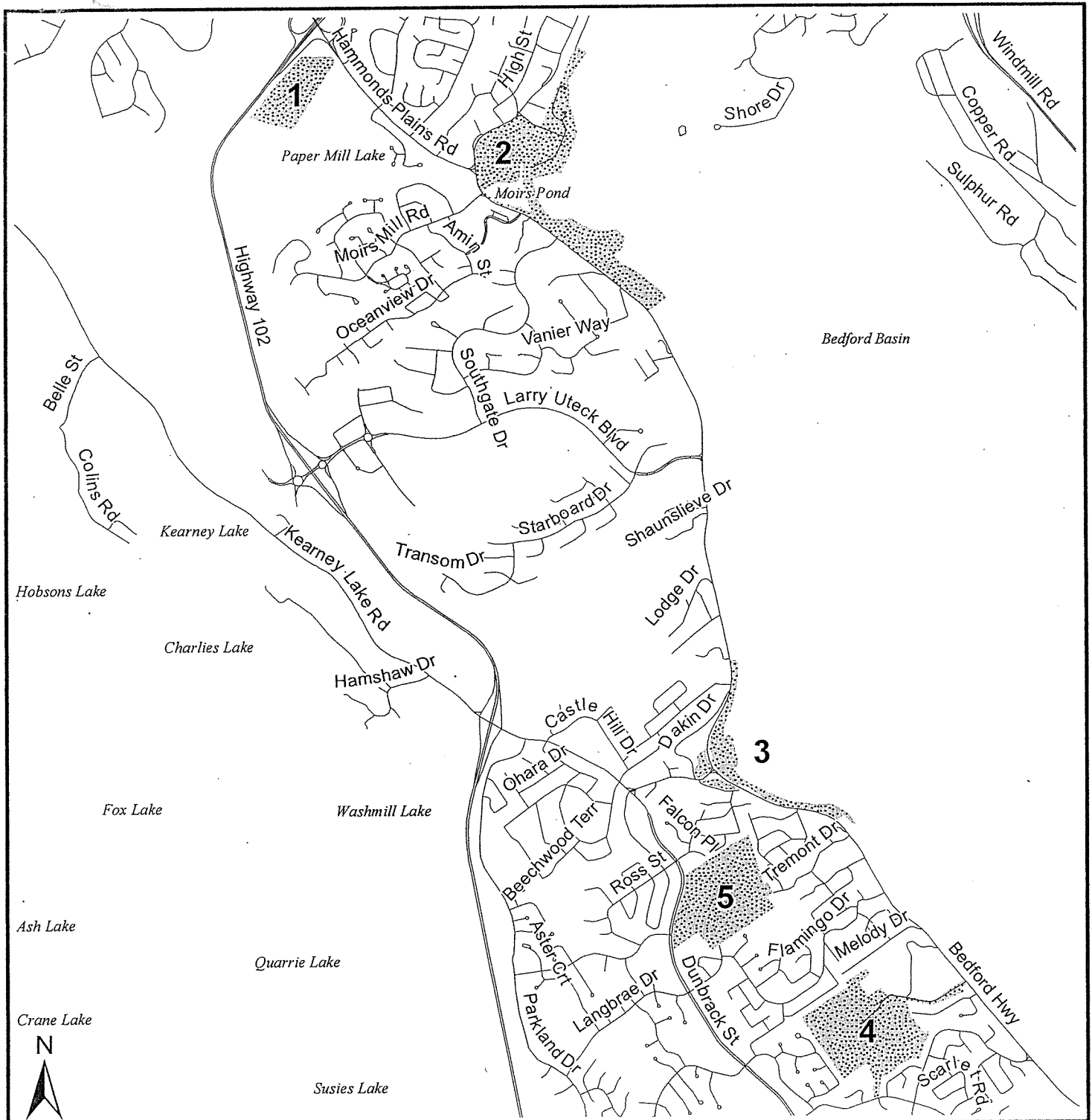
Original Signed

Report Approved by: Peter Duncan, Manager, Infrastructure Planning, Planning & Infrastructure, 490-6717

Original signed

Report Approved by: Jamie Hannam, Director, Engineering and Information Services, Halifax Water, 490-1584

Financial Approval by: Greg Keefe, A/ Director of Finance/CFO, 490-6308

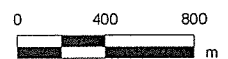


Map 1: Mainland Halifax North - Bedford Corridor Servicing

 Subject Properties

- 1: Paper Mill Lake
- 2: Mill Cove
- 3: Birch Cove Waterfront
- 4: The Site of Charity "Motherhouse" Property
- 5: The Former Transmitter Lands

HALIFAX
 REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
 REGIONAL AND COMMUNITY
 PLANNING SERVICES



Bedford and Halifax
 Plan Areas

HRM does not guarantee the accuracy of any representation on this plan. Date of map is not indicative of the date of data creation.