
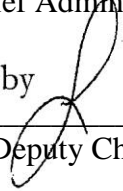


Item No. 10.1.3
Halifax Regional Council
May 3, 2011

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: Original signed by 
Richard Butts, Chief Administrative Officer

Original Signed by 
Mike Labrecque, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Operations

DATE: March 11, 2011

SUBJECT: **Case 16811: Timberlea / Lakeside / Beechville MPS and LUB
Amendments – Metro Transit Facilities**

ORIGIN

HRM-initiated application to enable Metro Transit facilities in Timberlea / Lakeside / Beechville through the rezoning process.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council:

1. Authorize staff to initiate a process to consider amending the Timberlea / Lakeside / Beechville Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law to create a new zone to regulate the development of transit facilities, and
2. Request that staff follow the public participation program approved by Council on February 25, 1997.

BACKGROUND

Focusing on rural transit, the HRM Regional Transit Plan (Park and Ride, Express and Rural Transportation Services) was approved in principle by Regional Council on April 1, 2008.

MetroX Rural Express Bus Service

Based on that plan, Metro Express (MetroX) was launched in August 2009 to provide express bus service from a Park and Ride lot at Highway 103 Exit 5 (Tantallon) direct to Scotia Square in Halifax. The non-stop trip is designed for weekday commuters, with seven inbound trips in the morning, three midday round trips, and eight outbound trips in the afternoon.

MetroX Expansion and proposed Park and Ride lot

Metro Transit proposes to expand MetroX along the Highway 103 corridor by adding another Park and Ride lot at Exit 4 to increase the number of MetroX trips per day and ridership in the rural commutershed. The Park and Ride lot will be located on a new parcel, to be subdivided and purchased by HRM from the current owners, the Canadian National Baptist Convention. The concept plan for the Park and Ride lot includes approximately 50 parking spaces, accessed from the existing church driveway (Attachment A). Buses would use a new driveway located opposite Grebe Avenue. A glass bus shelter of approximately 6 x 16 feet would be the only proposed structure.

Proposed location 3284 St. Margarets Bay Road (PID 41031386)

Zoning R-1 (Single Unit Dwelling) under the Timberlea/Lakeside/Beechville (TLB) Land Use By-law (Map 1)

Designation Urban Residential under the TLB Municipal Planning Strategy (Map 2)

The R-1 Zone does not include a parking lot as a permitted use. The only zone in the TLB Land Use By-law that does contemplate bus depots or parking lots is the C-2 (General Business) Zone; however, there is no policy support for rezoning the subject property to the C-2 Zone. Furthermore, the C-2 Zone includes such a broad range of land uses that the TLB Municipal Planning Strategy specifically prohibits the application of the C-2 Zone within the Urban Residential designation.

Policy support

Section 4.3.2.2 of the Regional Plan speaks to rural express bus service along HRM's 100-series highways as one of the transportation tools to be addressed by the Public Transit Functional Plan. More specifically, the Transit section of the TLB Municipal Planning Strategy recognizes the reliance of Timberlea, Lakeside and Beechville on the urban core for employment and other services, and the related need for expanded public transit service for the local population. Policy TR-16 states that "it shall be the intention of Council to support and encourage the continued provision of public transit services for Timberlea / Lakeside / Beechville".

DISCUSSION

MetroX represents a new level of service for these outlying communities. While transit is supported by the Regional Plan and the TLB Municipal Planning Strategy, this policy support was never directly implemented in the Land Use By-law regulations.

This planning application suggests amendments to the TLB planning documents to allow for Metro Transit facilities as the main land use on a property. One possible solution is the creation of a new zone within the Land Use By-law, as well as policy in the Municipal Planning Strategy that would allow Council to consider future rezonings for transit facilities.

The zone requirements and policy criteria would include requirements for setbacks, buffering and landscaping (or other items which may arise during public consultation), which would allow for detailed consideration of potential rezonings for transit facilities.

Staff suggest that Regional Council create a new zone and apply it simultaneously to the subject property for the Park and Ride lot, if deemed appropriate. Future rezoning applications for any other transit facilities would be considered under the new policy by Western Region Community Council.

Conclusion

Amendments to a Municipal Planning Strategy are not considered routine, but staff believe there is merit to considering the proposed Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law amendments since the Regional Plan and the existing Municipal Planning Strategy policies recognize the importance of transit and show the Municipality's intention to investigate a variety of transit options in this area (Attachment B). At the time the TLB planning documents were originally adopted, the extent of Metro Transit's current operations could not have been contemplated. Therefore, staff recommend that Council initiate the process to consider amending the Timberlea / Lakeside / Beechville Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law to create a new zone that specifically addresses transit facilities.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

The costs to process this planning application can be accommodated within the proposed 2011/12 operating budget for C310 Planning & Applications.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES/BUSINESS PLAN

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the proposed 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

Amendments to a Municipal Planning Strategy involve community engagement consistent with the intent of the HRM Community Engagement Strategy, the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*, and the Public Participation Program approved by Council on February 25, 1997.

The proposed level of community engagement is consultation, achieved through public meetings held as part of the MPS amendment process, as well as a public hearing before Regional Council can consider approval of any MPS amendments or rezonings.

The proposed new zone will potentially impact the following stakeholders: local residents, property owners and other HRM business units or divisions (e.g. Metro Transit, Real Property).

ALTERNATIVES

1. Council may choose to initiate the MPS and LUB amendment process for reasons set out in this report. This is the recommended course of action.
2. Council may choose not to initiate the MPS and LUB amendment process. A decision not to amend the MPS cannot be appealed. This alternative is not recommended, as staff feel there is merit in considering the requested MPS amendment.

ATTACHMENTS

Map 1	Location and Zoning
Map 2	Designation
Attachment A	Proposed site plan
Attachment B	Excerpts from the Regional Plan and the TLB MPS

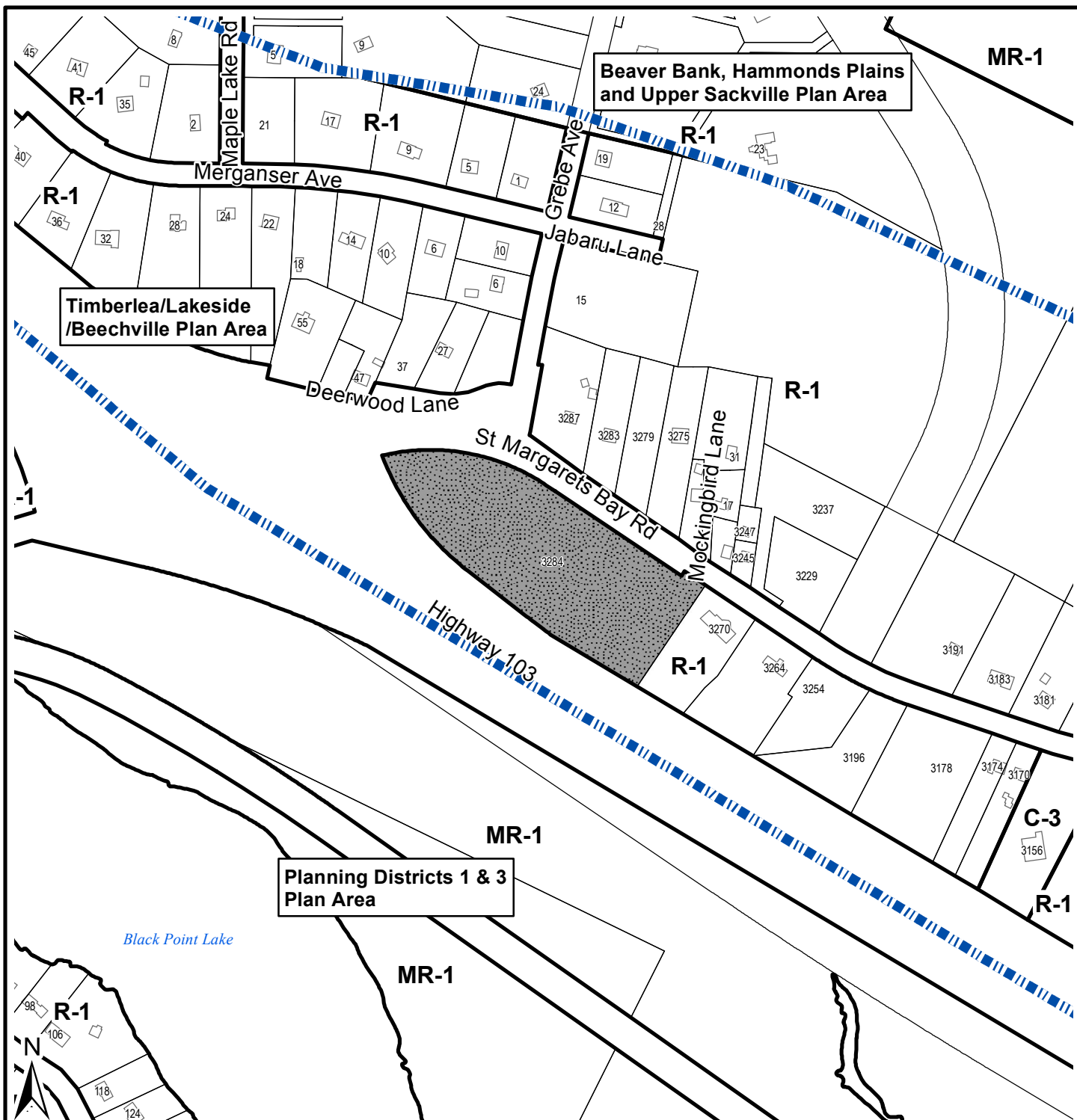
A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/agenda.html> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

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Paul Dunphy, Director of Community Development



Map 1 - Location and Zoning

3284 St Margarets Bay Road
Timberlea

 Subject area

Timberlea/Lakeside/Beechville Plan Area

Zone - Timberlea/Lakeside/Beechville

R-1 Single Unit Dwelling
C-3 Service Business


Zone - Beaver Bank, Hammonds Plains and Upper Sackville

R-1 Single Unit Dwelling
MR-1 Mixed Resource

Zone - Planning Districts 1 & 3

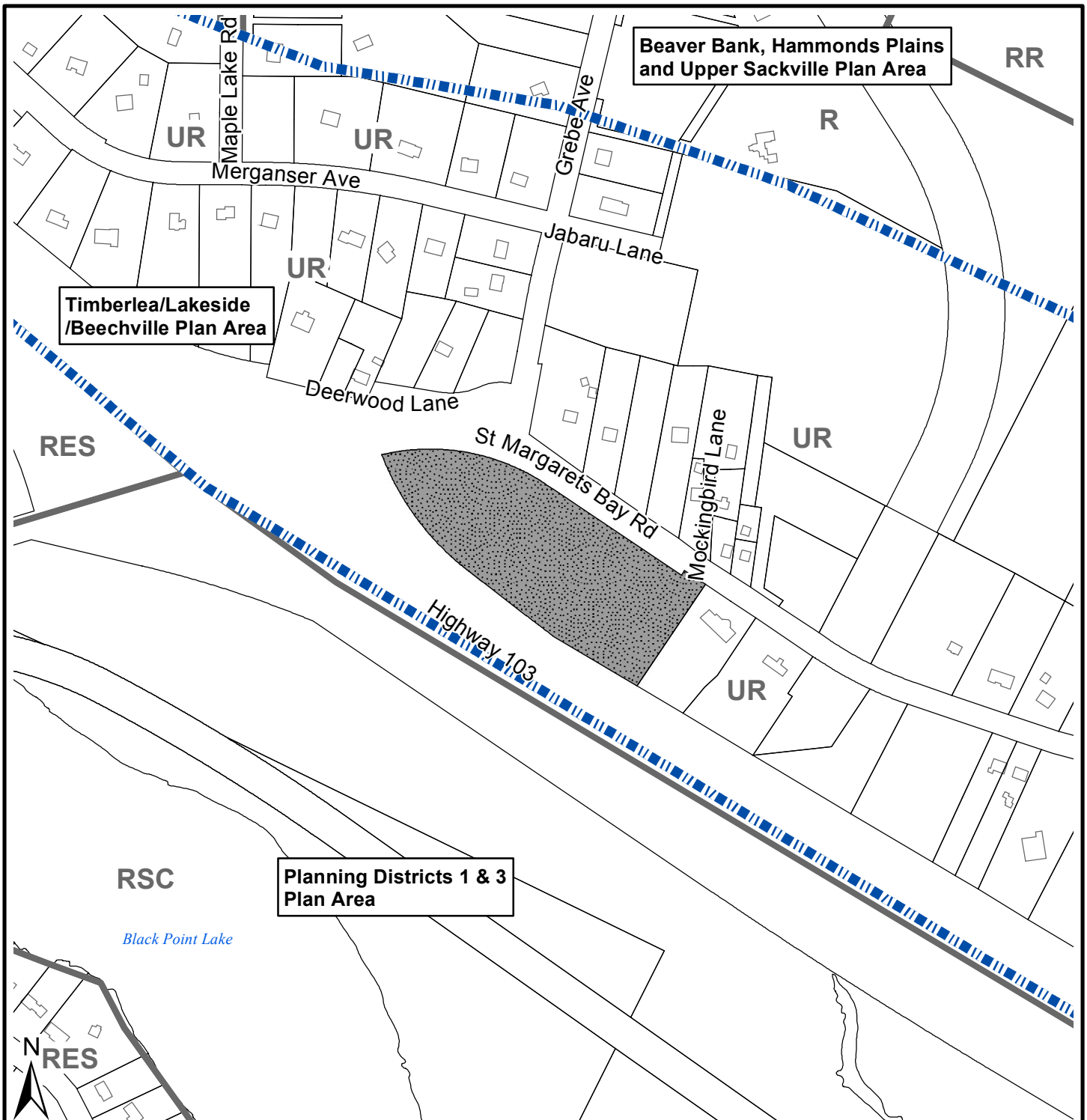
R-1 Single Unit Dwelling
MR-1 Mixed Resource 1

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This map is an unofficial reproduction of a portion of the Zoning Map for the plan areas indicated

HRM does not guarantee the accuracy of any representation on this plan.



Map 2 - Generalized Future Land Use

3284 St Margarets Bay Road
Timberlea



Subject area

Timberlea/Lakeside/Beechville Plan Area

Designation - Timberlea/Lakeside/Beechville

UR Urban Residential

Designation - Beaver Bank, Hammonds Plains and Upper Sackville

R Residential
RR Rural Resource

Designation - Planning Districts 1 & 3

RES Residential
RSC Resource

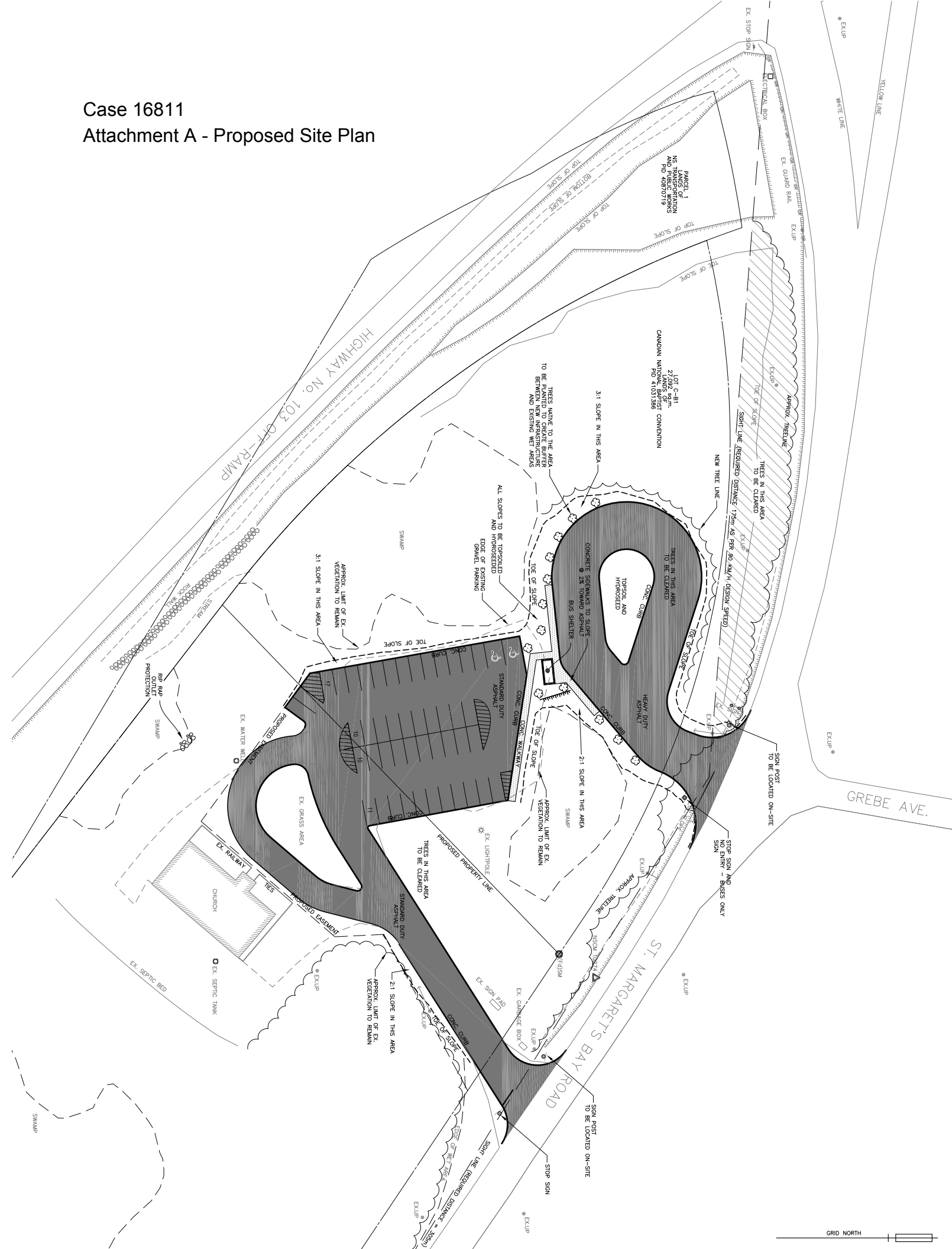
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Case 16811
Attachment A - Proposed Site Plan



Attachment B:
Excerpts from the Regional Plan and the TLB MPS

Regional Plan

4.3.2.2 Bus Rapid Transit (MetroLink)

Bus Rapid Transit (MetroLink) and Rural Express Bus services provide fast, efficient and convenient transportation with limited stops, and can be a viable alternative to the single occupant vehicle. Infrastructure to support MetroLink includes transit priority signals and queue jump lanes which will allow buses to be brought to the head of the queue to expedite travel through key intersections.

Rural Express Bus service will follow the 100 series highways and serve strategically located park and ride facilities in the rural commutershed. This service will be integrated with the conventional transit services.

TLB Municipal Planning Strategy

Transit

Timberlea / Lakeside / Beechville is a suburban area which relies heavily on the cities of Halifax and Dartmouth for employment, shopping and other goods and services. With an expanding population base, the need for improved public transit becomes more apparent and necessary. At present, the Metropolitan Authority operates one bus route in the Plan Area which serves most areas along Highway No. 3.

In 1988, the Metropolitan Authority conducted a review of its Transit Routes. From the review, the Metropolitan Authority indicated that Transit service to Timberlea / Lakeside / Beechville should improve service to the area by reducing the use of loop routes, schedule changes and to use a connector road or a bus gate to link two existing subdivisions in the Greenwood area.

TR-15 It shall be the intention of Council to encourage the Metropolitan Authority to implement all of the transit improvements proposed in the "Metro Transit - Route Review Report (1988)".

TR-16 It shall be the intention of Council to support and encourage the continued provision of public transit services for Timberlea/Lakeside/ Beechville.