



Item No 11.1.12
Halifax Regional Council
July 23, 2013

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

Original signed by 

SUBMITTED BY: _____
Richard Butts, Chief Administrative Officer

Original Signed by 

Mike Labrecque, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: June 21, 2013

SUBJECT: Lacewood Transit Terminal

ORIGIN

Chebucto Community Council Motion, June 11, 2012.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The Halifax Regional Municipality Charter Part III, Powers, Section 79 (1).

RECOMMENDATION It is recommended Regional Council, by resolution, approve the siting of a new Metro Transit Lacewood Terminal on Lacewood Drive as generally shown on Attachment "A", and direct staff to proceed with the design and construction of the terminal.

BACKGROUND

The existing Lacewood Terminal, located near the corner of Lacewood Drive and Willett Street, is deficient in passenger amenities, safety, and overall capacity. The terminal does not meet the current or future needs of transit passengers. It is not possible to undertake substantial improvements on the current site, which is located primarily on private property.

Transit terminals require a relatively large parcel of land and as such can be difficult to insert into previously developed neighbourhoods. Recognizing this difficulty, Metro Transit engaged consultants Delphi-MRC to execute a site selection study for the new Lacewood Transit Terminal, which investigated four potential candidate sites: Dunbrack Street (Northcliffe Centre), Lacewood Drive (behind the Canada Games Centre), Thomas Raddall Drive, and Willett Street. The consultant's report recommended proceeding with the Willett Street site.

On November 1, 2010, Chebucto Community Council endorsed the Willett Street site in principle, subject to the appropriate environmental approvals, vegetation management, and zoning amendments. Through the required rezoning process, concerns were raised by the public about the appropriateness of the Willett Street site for a transit terminal. On June 11, 2012, Chebucto Community Council rescinded the motion of November 1, 2010, and alternatively approved in principle the Lacewood Drive site as the future site of a the new transit terminal.

As a result of this motion, staff have engaged consultants to assist in determining the feasibility of the Lacewood Drive site as a transit terminal, which has included the preparation of a traffic impact study, geotechnical analysis, civil engineering work, and a preliminary concept design to determine the spacing and amount of fill required for the site.

DISCUSSION

Metro Transit Lacewood Terminal

The site proposed for the new Lacewood Terminal is located along Lacewood Drive, between the Canada Games Centre and the Mainland North Linear Parkway Trail (Attachment "A"). This site provides opportunities for active transportation connections, as well as enhances the level of public transit available at the Mainland Common for uses such as the Keshen Goodman library, Canada Games Centre, baseball diamonds, Halifax West High School, Soccer Nova Scotia, and passive recreational opportunities. There is also significant existing and potential ridership within close proximity to the proposed terminal site.

Metro Transit is proposing a 12 bay transit terminal, with layby space for buses, a platform with exterior passenger waiting space and associated amenities, and a small building containing staff facilities, as well interior passenger space and amenities. The proposed entrance to the terminal would be on Lacewood Drive, opposite Radcliffe Drive, at a newly signalized intersection. A preliminary concept has been prepared to assist in determining the cost and impact of the terminal (Attachment "B"), but a detailed design has not been prepared. Should Regional

Council approve the siting of the terminal, staff are proposing that a public session be held to discuss design considerations with the community before tendering the project.

Recreation Parking Lot

Due to the success of a number of facilities constructed on the Mainland Common, there is insufficient parking to meet the parking demand. A new parking lot has been proposed to the east of the existing lot, along Thomas Raddall Drive (Attachment "A"). This parking lot is intended to serve residents accessing the Mainland Common for recreational purposes, including the Canada Games Centre, ball diamonds, soccer facilities, or trails. Although the parking lot is a separate project and will not be a Metro Transit facility, it may be possible to utilize the excess rock from the parking lot construction for fill at the transit terminal site. As such, the first phase of construction of the parking lot will coincide with the earthworks required to construct the Lacewood Terminal and be issued as one tender to ensure that any potential advantage of mining rock onsite for the project can be realized.

Mainland Common Master Plan

The proposed transit terminal and recreation parking lot are located within the Mainland Common and are zoned "Schedule K" under the Halifax Mainland Land Use By-law. The "Schedule K" zone typically requires a two stage development agreement approval process. However, as HRM is the owner of this property, a development agreement is not appropriate as the municipality cannot enter into an agreement with itself. As an alternative, in this situation, the approval of the Mainland Common Master Plan functions as the first stage of approval, and the resolution of Council contained in the recommendation of this report functions as the second stage of approval. As such, to proceed with the current project, the proposed uses must be consistent with the Mainland Common Master Plan and be approved by resolution of Council.

The Mainland Common Master Plan was originally adopted by Council in 1992, and was revised in 2008. It provides general guidance and direction for Council regarding the use of the Mainland Common. The Mainland Common Master Plan lists four classifications of land uses: Passive Recreation Reserves, Environmentally Sensitive Areas, Open Space Network, and Active Recreation Reserves. The proposed terminal falls within the lands designated as Active Recreation Reserve. The Active Recreation Reserve is largely made of lands that have already been disturbed, and are the lands that are most appropriate for the development of facilities.

However, the selected site for the Lacewood Transit Terminal is a natural forested ravine which drains the park to the Lacewood Stormwater pond on the Northcliffe site. The plan assumed it would be left as a natural forest area offering visual relief to the intensive development that is this section of Lacewood Drive and to act as a buffer. Park trails and pedestrian pathways linking destinations within the Mainland Common with the street network were also to utilize the area. Despite this intention, staff have determined that the proposed uses are reasonably consistent with the Mainland Common Master Plan.

Although a transit terminal was never envisioned in the Mainland Common Master Plan, the importance of public transit access to the site is recognized throughout the plan. Some of the general principles that appear in the Master Plan include the need for the site to be well-served

by public transit to improve access, the need for civic presence to create a lively social space, which includes the creation of transportation hubs, and the importance of connectivity to link to surrounding neighbourhoods. In addition, the siting of the Canada Games Centre along Lacewood Drive was in part in recognition of the importance of locating the facility where it could be well served by public transportation. The presence of a public transit terminal in the Common would further enhance these principles and contribute to creating an accessible and vibrant space.

It is the intent of the Mainland Common Master Plan to develop the Active Recreation Reserve in a campus type model, with uses linked by open space “preserves” and green parking areas. To achieve the objectives of the Master Plan related to park aesthetics, functionality and visual relief for Lacewood Drive, the Transit Terminal will require thoughtful grading, presentation and pathway and landscape design if the terminal is to be properly integrated into the overall Mainland Common.

Feasibility Analysis

Geotechnical and civic engineering studies have been completed and confirm that there are no significant obstacles to developing this site. A traffic impact study was completed by Griffin Transpiration Group in March 2013. The study found that the terminal would have an acceptable level of impact on surrounding roadways and intersections if traffic signals are installed on Lacewood Drive at the entrance to the terminal, a new exclusive westbound left turn lane is installed at Radcliffe Drive, the existing westbound turn lane at Thomas Raddall is extended, and a new exclusive eastbound right turn lane is installed at Thomas Raddall Drive.

Conclusion

Should Regional Council approve by resolution the siting of the new transit terminal as described in this report, staff will proceed with the design and construction of the facility. This involves issuing a tender for filling and grading the transit terminal site. It is anticipated that this work will begin in October 2013, and take several months. In addition, a public session will be held in the community to discuss the design elements of the transit terminal, after which time detailed design will be completed, followed by terminal construction. It is anticipated that the public session would be held in early fall 2013, with design work occurring over the winter months, and construction being completed in 2014.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Metro Transit Lacewood Terminal is estimated to cost approximately \$8.0 million dollars. Budget for the construction of the terminal was included in the 2013/14 budget, under Project Account CB000013 – Lacewood Terminal, with \$3,650,000 million approved in 2013/2014, and \$4,850,000 million proposed in 2014/2015.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community meetings were held previously as part of the siting strategy and Planning Application processes. Staff are proposing that a public meeting be held in the community to discuss the design of the transit terminal.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The construction of a new transit terminal in Clayton Park will facilitate increasing Metro Transit ridership in the area. Any reduction in the usage of personal automobiles as a result will have a positive environmental implication.

Environmental impacts of construction on this site will be mitigated where possible, as directed by the Mainland Common Master Plan.

ALTERNATIVES

Regional Council could direct staff not to proceed with constructing a new transit terminal. This is not recommended, as the construction of this terminal has been identified as a priority by Metro Transit.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment "A" – Location Map

Attachment "B" – Lacewood Transit Terminal Concept Sketch

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

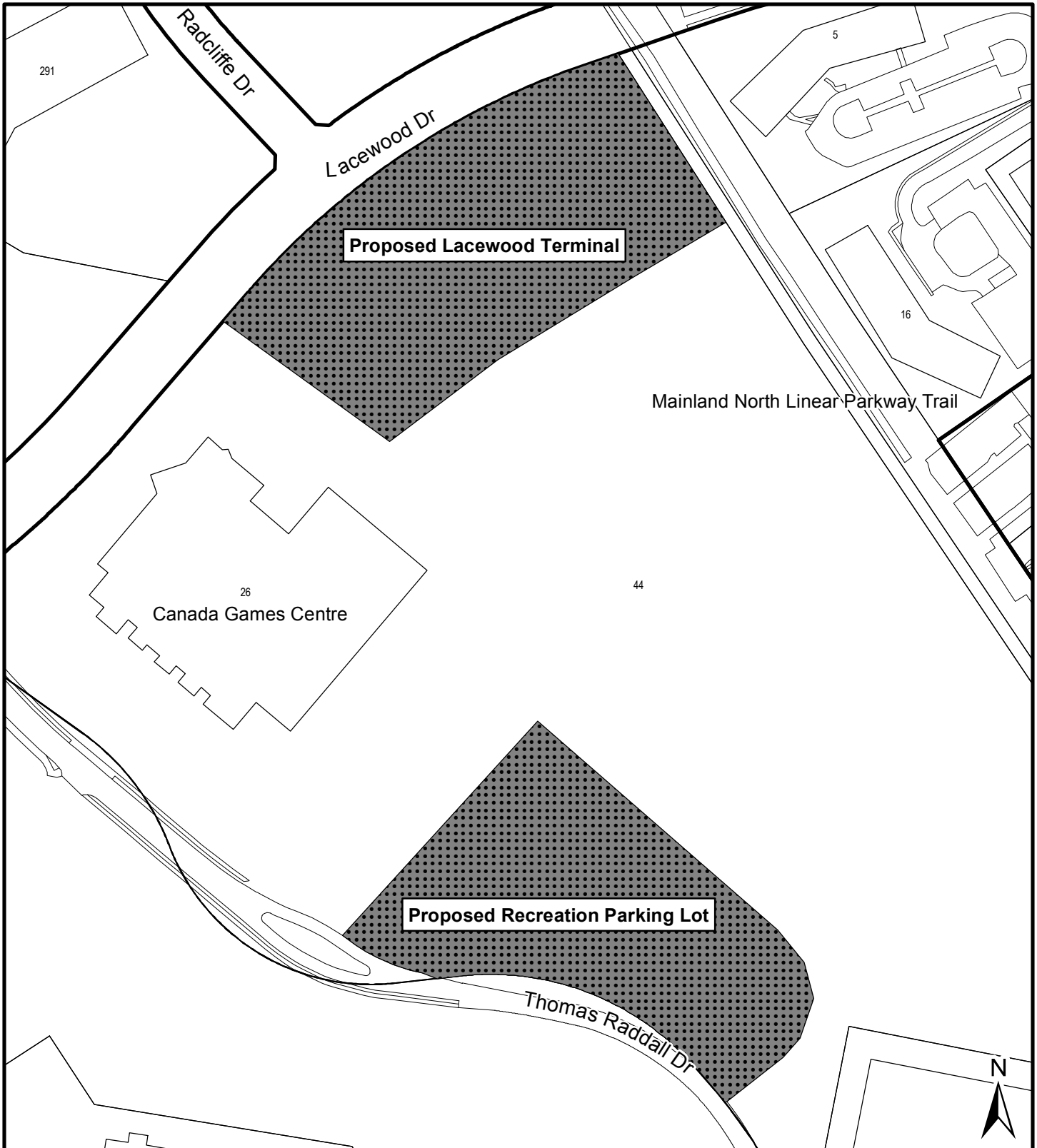
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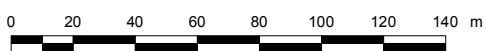
Lacewood Terminal Replacement

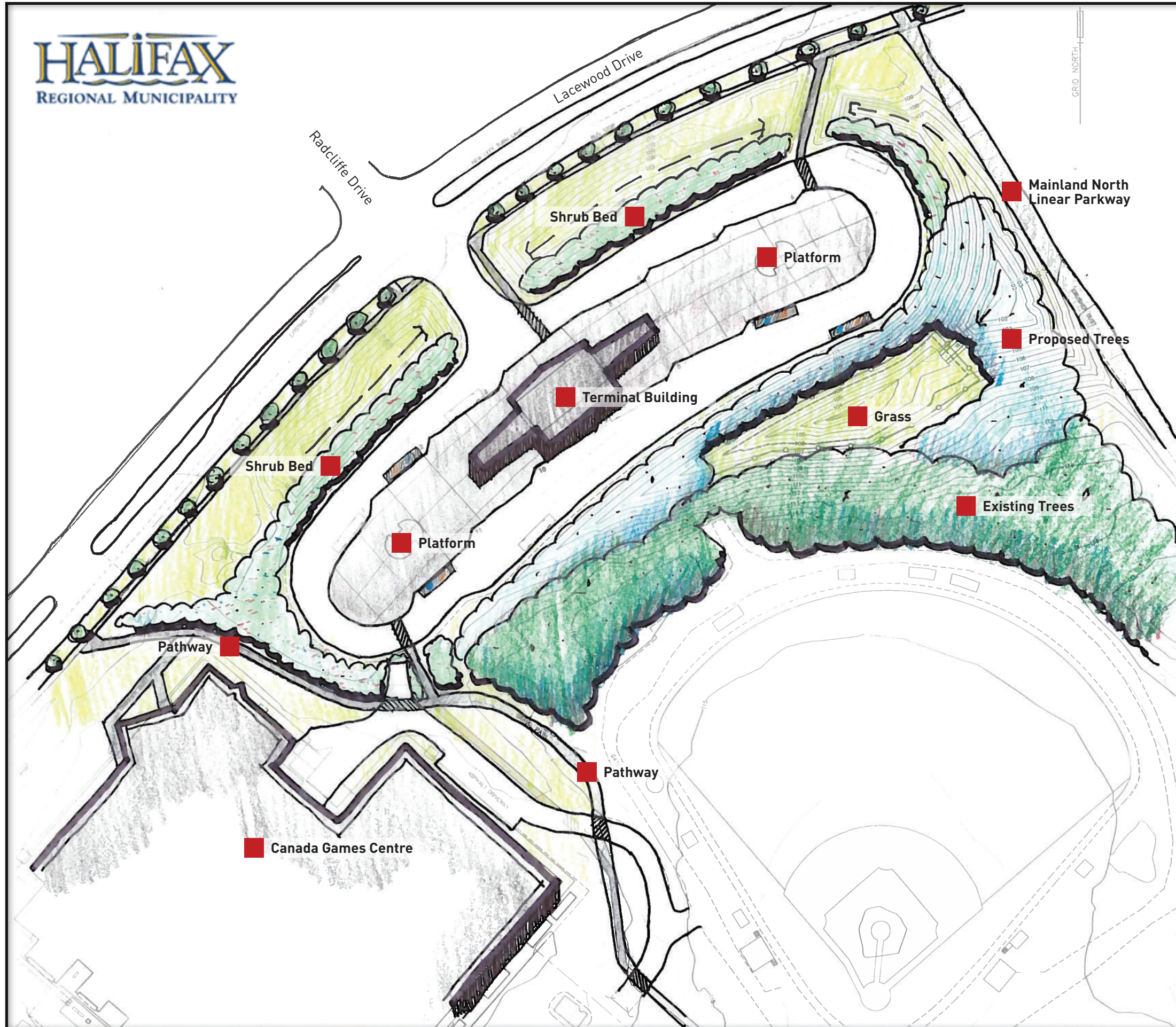
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LACEWOOD TERMINAL

