



Cogswell Transformed

A Plan for the Redevelopment of the Cogswell Interchange

Synthesis Report

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 **EKISTICS** PLANNING & DESIGN

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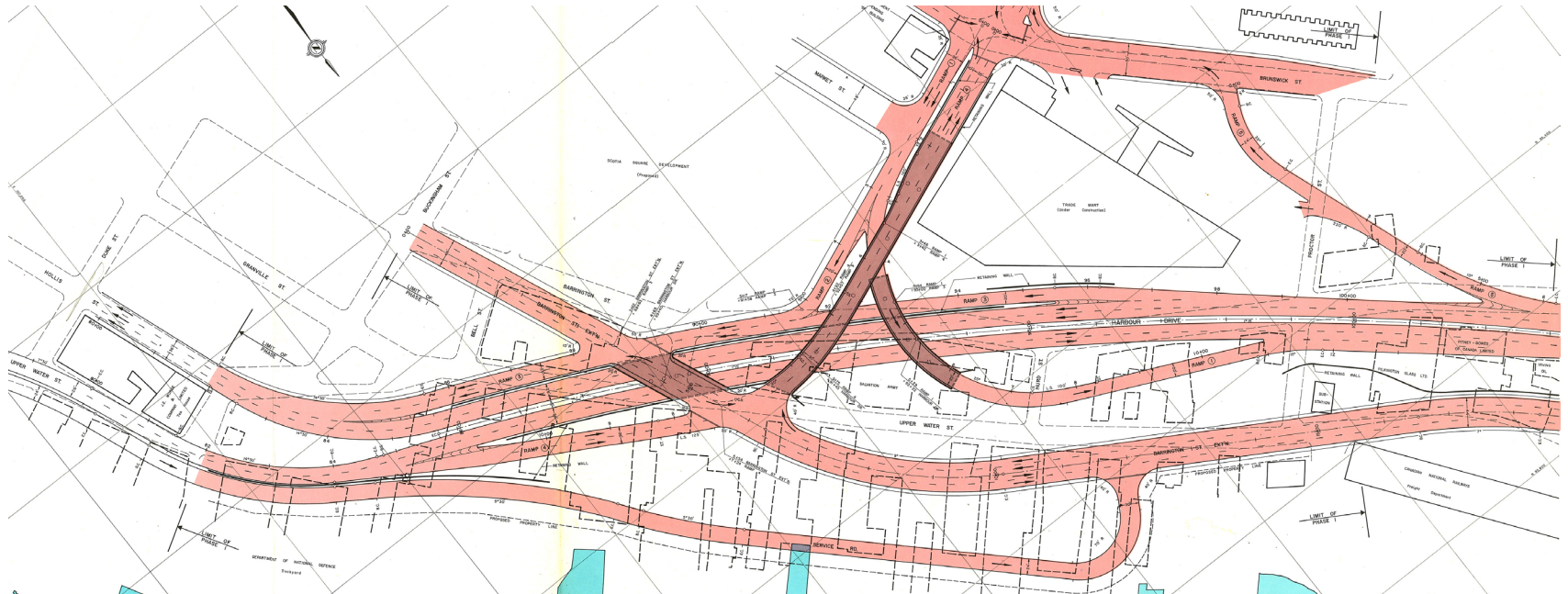
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Fig 1.1
July 1967
Schematic Plan
for the Cogswell
Interchange.
AD Margison
& Associates
Ltd. Note the
old streets and
removed buildings
shown dashed



1. Overview

The Cogswell Interchange is sixteen acres of highway infrastructure in a downtown where there is no highway. It was built as part of a North American wide movement of Urban Renewal in the 60s and 70s. In Halifax, that renewal was aimed at changing an old somewhat “derelict” downtown, with a mix of housing, industry, retail, office and shipping to one of offices, retail and tourism. In the renewal scheme, jobs were to be increased downtown and new housing, including social housing, would be created and redistributed outside the downtown area and into the suburbs. The South Port and

Fairview Cove removed the need for the old working waterfront and Burnside became the preferred location for industrial uses. What remained was the need to get people from the suburbs and Dartmouth to downtown Halifax to work, make purchases and be entertained.

Harbour Drive was part of the planned transportation solution to that problem. It was to be a high speed/high volume roadway connecting to a network serving Fairview, the communities along the Bedford Basin and the two Dartmouth Bridges. Harbour Drive was to channel vehicles along the waterfront to the proposed south end bridge and over the Northwest Arm to Spryfield. From there

North West Arm Drive would connect to the Bi-Centennial Highway, creating a ring road. Similar plans were being executed all over North America. Portions of the overall transportation scheme were executed in one form or another including the Fairview Overpass, MacKay Bridge, Northwest Arm Drive and the Windsor Exchange. However, citizen objections around the impact of Harbour Drive on the downtown grew to be substantial. The City abandoned its Harbourfront Drive plan in favour of retaining a finer grained, historic, human scale city with improved access to a public waterfront. However, it did so only after completing the Cogswell Interchange component. Since

then, the interchange has done its part to accommodate 90,000 vehicle trips every day in and out of the north portion of downtown Halifax. However, it has also served as a “no-man’s land” creating an obstacle separating the northern parts of peninsular Halifax from downtown.

Today the focus of downtown is once again shifting. Fifty years of outward growth has resulted in 70% of persons in HRM living outside the Regional Centre. The industrial job centre of Burnside has been extremely successful. Large amounts of retail have moved to big box formats closer to new suburban communities. According to a recent Colliers Market Assessment for Halifax, new and traditional downtown businesses are also choosing to locate closer to employee and customer communities outside the Regional Centre, where travel times are shorter and new office space and parking is cheaper. While business is responding to the long, slow growth outside the city centre, a segment of new residents, younger workers, and some retirees are showing renewed interest in urban living. They are accepting smaller accommodations located where the concentration of services, entertainment, employment and culture offers a convenient and appealing lifestyle. According to Statistics Canada, the population of the Peninsula has grown rather than shrunk for the first time in 45 years. The

construction of multi-family development (apartments and condos) is increasing and the rate of single family housing is declining. The HRM Economic Strategy and HRM Downtown Halifax Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy (DHSMPs) advocate a strong downtown as vital to the overall health and wellbeing of all of HRM. They identify a primary goal of increasing the number of people living downtown in support of sustaining and growing an intensity of retail, employment, institutions and cultural and public amenities that are the hallmarks of a successful municipality. Coupled with the idea that properly built, denser cities are more sustainable than their spread-wide counterparts, one can understand HRM Council’s objective to intensify the Regional Centre and downtown.

The Cogswell Interchange, as an underutilized, single purpose, orphaned bit of transportation infrastructure offers municipally controlled, brown field land, available to contribute to the objectives set by Council in its Regional Plan and in its Downtown Halifax Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy (DHSMPs) and Economic Strategy.

Fig 1.2
Cogswell Today



2. The Cogswell Interchange

The Cogswell Interchange consists of a series of overpasses, underpasses, retaining walls and earthen ramps set into what were once the slopes of the old city. The three overpass bridges and ramps serve to eliminate intersections and funnel traffic in and out of the north end of downtown hindered only by the reduced capacity of the fine grained downtown street network to the south and the Macdonald Bridge to the north. The key traffic linkages are north/south from downtown to the Harbour Bridges and the Bedford Highway. East/west connections are less accommodated with fewer connections due to the steep slopes and missing streets, eliminated in the 1970's.

The eastern portion of the Interchange, adjacent office towers and the casino, are located on harbour infill land created in 1971

from the excavation for Scotia Square and Trade Mart Building. Surrounding Cogswell are an assortment of uses including Class A and B office, retail, hotel, a sewage treatment plant, a university, a military base and residential living in a variety of forms including low rise, high rise and single family. The built fabric includes industrial buildings, modern towers, historic structures, family homes and significant open space such as the Halifax Waterfront, Citadel Hill and Halifax Common. Cogswell sits in the middle. This is an advantage for redevelopment.

A good deal of discussion has occurred over the last fifteen years around how the Interchange might be redeveloped. It is a complex question, involving traffic, engineering, public spaces, private development, impact on surrounding areas, economics and finances. Owing to the complexity, much of the discussion was either visionary or addressed singular enabling elements such as traffic or costs. However,

that work did advance people's thinking. Under the process and adoption of the 2006 Regional Plan, HRM by Design Downtown Plan in 2009 and 2010 HRM Economic Strategy, the direction for downtown was set as a strong and vital mixed use centre for employment, commerce, culture and residential living. The redevelopment of the Cogswell Interchange was identified as a resource for realizing part of that strategy.

In 2009, Regional Council asked staff to prepare an integrated, feasible plan for the demolition and redevelopment of the Cogswell Lands. It was to be based on the objectives of the Regional Plan, Downtown Municipal Planning Strategy and Economic Strategy as well as the public input and study that had led to this point. The Plan was to be returned to Regional Council for their consideration. Other priorities did not allow that work to advance until 2013; however, HRM staff now has a redevelopment approach for Council's deliberation.

3. Process

Advancing the re-development of the Cogswell Interchange for Council's consideration required several key examinations. They are as follows;

Lands Plan

An integrated examination of re-development options with the further development of a favoured plan which balances Urban Design, Engineering and Economic objectives; The focus is on the lands currently occupied and immediately adjacent to the Cogswell Interchange. This work was carried out by Ekistics Planning and Design, Colliers International, SNC Lavalin Engineering, OCL Services and Davis MacIntyre & Associates

Market Assessment

An examination of real estate market conditions affecting HRM and the downtown and the timing and capacity of the market to absorb the proposed Cogswell Lands Plan in accordance with infill development objectives in the DHSMPs. The Cogswell Market Assessment was conducted by Colliers International.

Infrastructure Condition

A review of the current and near future state of good repair of the existing interchange. Repair requirements, timing and costs for the existing structure will allow Council to understand the timeframes which are available to act upon the re-development of the Interchange. The existing condition work was carried out as part of the regular program for infrastructure monitoring by HRM Design and Construction, PNS Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal with the aid of CBCL Engineering Consultants. It relies on the 2009 Cogswell Interchange Conditions Assessment and subsequent updates, the most recent being in 2013.

Public Objectives Assessment

The Cogswell Shakeup provided public evaluation opportunity of the proposed Cogswell Lands Plan against municipal and public objectives falling from the Downtown Halifax MPS and Economic Strategy. The Strategic Urban Partnership carried out the event involving private citizens and other volunteer organizations. HRM staff analysed the Cogswell Lands Plan against the Shakeup results and approved HRM policy objectives.

An HRM Staff Steering Committee was involved to guide the overall process. A staff member from NS Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal also sat on that team.

Fig 3.1
The Cogswell
Shakeup event



4. Cogswell Lands Plan

The following key objectives of the Cogswell Lands Plan are derived from HRM policy and public discussions. They are grouped into Engineering, Urban Design and Economic objectives: Engineering includes the hard functional service requirements necessary for the lands to function as part of the downtown; Urban Design is the balance of land use, building massing, connectivity and public spaces necessary for a successful redevelopment; Economic objectives include strategic impact areas which affect the success and sustainability of the redevelopment and the downtown as a whole.

Engineering Objectives

- Accommodate today's 8500 cars AM peak and 9500 vehicles PM peak through the Cogswell Interchange
- Create an "at grade street system" and eliminate the grade separated road network currently in place
- Address the steep grades on east west streets on the Cogswell Lands
- Provide servicing to the area
- Accommodate the substantial sewage treatment infrastructure which sits on and under the Cogswell Lands
- Accommodate parking requirements
- Accommodate a possible District Energy system for the area

- Create active transportation linkages to existing and planned pedestrian and bicycle routes
- Provide for existing and expanding transit system requirements
- Create a conceptual phasing plan for the demolition and re-construction of the interchange lands

Urban Design Objectives

- Develop a new north gateway into the downtown
- Create an attractive, walkable, mixed use neighbourhood in the downtown
- Reconnect the downtown to the old North Suburbs (Gottingen Street Area).
- Capitalize on the opportunity for population density and downtown intensity which Cogswell currently presents
- Create new public open space
- Connect to the Halifax Waterfront
- Re-connect Barrington Street as the primary downtown north/south street
- Adhere to building massing regulations in the Downtown Halifax Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy
- Create new developments that support adjacent precincts, neighbourhoods and existing uses as appropriate

- Ensure access to existing properties
- Create streets that are attractive, active and useable public spaces
- Maintain visual connections to the Harbour
- Test the general capability of Cogswell to accommodate a large format municipal facility such as stadium or 20,000 seat arena, in order to satisfy that long standing discussion

Economic Objectives

- Add people living, working and playing to the downtown
- Add to the social, environmental and financial sustainability of downtown
- Create viable lots for private redevelopment
- Bring a level of affordability to living in the downtown
- Support the existing downtown precincts and surrounding neighbourhoods through re-development
- Create a catalyst for further development of adjacent underutilized areas
- Explore the ability to offset municipal infrastructure demolition and redevelopment costs through the sale of Cogswell lands for private development

5. Plan Options

As a first step four approaches to redevelopment were examined by Ekistics Planning and Design and team. The approaches largely resulted from previous work, including HRM by Design, which had surfaced different ideas around traffic, building and lot scale and integration with surrounding areas. The four redevelopment approaches were refined by the HRM Steering Team. The approaches were sufficiently different so as to enable high level analysis of the options. The best option would then be subject to further examination and conceptual development. The four options examined were;

Option #1

Accommodation of a larger format public building such as a stadium or 20,000 seat arena:

The exercise proved that most of Cogswell lands would be required for a large format building with few of the municipal policy objectives being achieved. The lands are just too long and narrow. The size of the facility and parking requirements served to create little improvement on problems presented by the existing Interchange.

Option #2

A fine grained extension of the historic city grid:

While creating a surprising amount of viable redevelopment, the block form and street layout proved to provide the best integration with surrounding neighbourhoods, grades, and overall transportation connections. This scheme served to be the most walkable, compact and intensive.

Option #3

A mid-grain approach with larger development blocks aimed at maximizing the scale of development:

Larger blocks for larger buildings actually reduced the amount of developable lands and left most of Hollis and Barrington Streets with developable lots on only one side of the street. This results from a need to squeeze large blocks and the required amount of street into such a narrow area between existing buildings. The street network continues to act as a funnel delivering vehicles to the same locations in the downtown which the interchange currently serves. Barrington was required to be maintained as a highway type road to Scotia Square.

Option # 4

A course-grained approach which creates opportunities for widely spaced large buildings set in a campus of open space:

This option creates a simple traffic network but is dependent on a central intersection at the bottom of Cogswell to channel traffic. While there is a good amount of private and public open space it is not well connected with itself or the rest of the city. Transit is reliant only on Barrington Street as a transit street rather than having the option of a hub as in Option #2. The street grid connection to the north and west neighbourhoods are not as available as in Option #2 and it is not as walkable owing to large spaces between buildings.

Fig 5.1
Design
Options

Option #1



Option #2



Option #3



Option #4



Fig 5.2 Cogswell Lands Plan - Analysis of Options

Objective	Option #1	Option #2	Option #3	Option #4	Contribution	Weight
Creates Integrated Street Network	⊗	●	○	○	Directly Contributes	●
Accommodates Traffic Flow	⊗	●	●	◐	Partially Contributes	◐
Integrates Active Transportation	⊗	●	●	●	Neutral	○
Integrates Transit	⊗	◐	◐	◐	Negatively Contributes	⊗
Walkable	⊗	●	○	⊗		
Increases Intensity of Use	⊗	●	◐	⊗		
Creates Compact Downtown Form	⊗	●	◐	⊗		
Creates Developable Lots	◐	●	○	●		
Provides People for Downtown	○	●	◐	◐		
Creates Waterfront Connections	○	●	◐	◐		
Creates Connections to Existing Neighbourhoods	×	●	○	⊗		
Creates a North Gateway to Downtown	○	●	⊗	○		
Provides High Quality Well Located Public Spaces	○	●	●	○		
Advances LEED ND Sustainability Principles	⊗	◐	◐	⊗		
Congruence with Adjacent Precincts	⊗	●	◐	○		
Accommodates STP Infrastructure	○	●	◐	◐		
Creates Neighbourhood	⊗	●	◐	⊗		

6. Preferred Option

A review found that Option #2, Fine Grained Extension of the Historic City Grid, offers the most balanced solution for re-development of the Cogswell Lands. The key to the plan is reducing the number of streets that are required in the lower part of the scheme by redistributing traffic early as vehicles approach downtown. This option allows the fine grained block to the south to be extended into the Cogswell Lands while creating a good number of economically feasible lots for development. Shifting the alignment of Barrington towards the harbour allows Cornwallis Street to be re-graded to be a more approachable slope and a better connection to Gottingen Street. Increased and improved east-west connections mean greater distribution of traffic between the three north/south corridors (Water/ Hollis, Barrington, and Brunswick Street). Re-connecting Barrington Street north to Barrington Street south establishes it as the primary street in the downtown. This was the favoured option which the consultants and HRM Steering Team agreed would be taken forward for more detailed examination owing to its overall congruence with sound urban design principles of walkability, intensity and compact form. An evaluation matrix for all four options can be found on the previous page (Fig 5.2.).

Fig 6.1
Proposed Plan



BARRINGTON - CORNWALLIS
ROUNDAABOUT

SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT
DISTRICT ENERGY AND
GREENHOUSE RETROFIT

URBAN GREENWAY AND
COMMUNITY GARDENS

BARRINGTON - HOLLIS
ROUNDAABOUT & GATEWAY

CASINO

PURDY'S
WHARF

TRANSIT HUB

MID-BLOCK CONNECTION

NEW GRANVILLE PARK

GRANVILLE MALL

FERRY
TERMINAL

HISTORIC
PROPERTIES

SCOTIA
SQUARE

CITY HALL

GRAND
PARADE

METRO
CENTRE

CITADEL HILL

RAINNIE GREENWAY

7. Master Plan

The preferred option (#2 Fine Grained Extension of Historic City Grid) was further developed by the Ekistics team to produce a feasible plan which addressed as many objectives of the Municipality as possible and could then be tested through a Market Analysis.

Following is an analysis of the preferred option, after it was developed further (See Fig 7.1)

Engineering

- Grades - 90% of new streets meet red book standards. This is better than many other sloped areas of the downtown.
- Street Layout - A mix of arterial, local commercial and residential streets. Barrington is strengthened as the primary downtown street but is realigned. The street layout works with the Hollis and Water Streets' one way system. Better integration with Gottingen Street Area. Cogswell Street becomes the primary East/West corridor linking to Brunswick, North Park and the intersection at Robie & Quinpool. Rainnie Drive may no longer be required and offers options to be explored in the future. The plan is congruent with the North

Park Street Roundabout Project.

- Transportation - Accommodates traffic and transportation requirements but under downtown urban conditions (i.e. lower speeds, more frequent stopping, accommodation of pedestrians and cyclists) by dispersing the current Cogswell traffic funnel. This design creates new downtown traffic options along Barrington/ Cornwallis/ Upper Water/Cogswell/Bell/Duke to aid in dispersal. Increased opportunity to use Brunswick encourages traffic flows across the upper town to access lower portions of downtown or directly penetrate to Spring Garden/Hospitals/Universities. Bridge back-up during PM peak traffic will still impact through the Cogswell Lands. This will require additional detailed consideration and coordination at the Halifax Bridgehead, North/Robie Street, and proposed Cornwallis/Barrington roundabout.
- Transit - Creates a "transit block" to accommodate existing transit system using Barrington for through bus routes and possibly Hollis for deadheaded MetroX and Metro Link routes. Opportunity for passenger and driver comforts to be associated with Granville Square park. Current use of Albemarle continues to be an

option. Connection to existing ferry service is nearby (250m). Ferry Boat Lane Bus Terminal remains in place. Better connections to the waterfront present options for future thinking around changes to the ferry service and potential new ferry terminal location.

- Bike Routes and Active Transportation - Bike routes into the downtown along Barrington are accommodated through the continuation of the Barrington Greenway and a two way separated bike system. Dedicated lanes along the less steep Cogswell corridor are provided, connecting to Brunswick Street and the Halifax Commons. The bike and pedestrian system intersects with transit at Granville Square as a hub for alternative transportation where users may change to transit or continue on pedestrian and bike routes in the downtown.
- Utilities - Accommodates required Halifax STP expansion and major existing underground infrastructure. Changes to local storm and sewer pipes are required at Cogswell. Need to move current electrical substation and underground wires. Integration of sewage treatment plant through creation of a public park to the west and use of the STP roof.
- Opportunities for District Energy-

using heat from the STP and heating and cooling from the Harbour have been identified (approximate requirements of 30mW to supply new construction).

- Demolition and Construction - Owing to the need for continuity of transportation services and utilities, a three phased pattern of Demolition/Reconstruction is required. The three general phases take place over 4.5 years. There are indications that there are ways to shorten this duration if there is a willingness to absorb greater disruption during demolition and construction and/or shape the project differently.
- Accommodation will be required for potential archeological finds and contamination from the demolition of former buildings (hydrocarbons) and pyritic slate possibly used to create bridge ramps in the 1970's.
- Class D (Probability of Costs) Estimates for demolition and reconstruction of required municipal infrastructure and public realm have been prepared.

Urban Design

- Urban Form- Extends the existing downtown fine grain block size north to Proctor Street and creates a new downtown gateway at the roundabout

at Barrington and Upper Water Street. Creates 6 acres of developable lots and 6 acres of roadway and 4 acres of public open space

- Building Massing - Primary sites accommodate 14-21 story buildings including 3-4 story street wall podiums with wider setbacks than are found in other precincts in the Downtown MPS to create café and sidewalk retail space. Building height is driven by a reasonable market approach to parking accommodation. A recommendation to alter the podium requirement to allow a portion of a tower to come right to ground level while respecting the required tower setback is also recommended. This would create architectural interest and allow wider public spaces periodically at sidewalk level. This change might be extended to other portions of the downtown, however further detail on the approach is required. Building massing heights are lower further from the downtown centre as they transition into surrounding residential neighbourhoods in the Halifax North Plan Area.
- Right of Ways - Roadways are sized to accommodate AM/PM peak flows but allow for on-street parking in the curbside lanes during non-peak times to support commercial and residential life in the precinct. Wider than required right-of-ways and building setback allow greater solar access to street level than is normally achieved with the street grid orientation in this area. However, instead of being filled with traffic lanes the wider right-of-ways are filled with generous sidewalks, and spaces for streetscape amenities, cafes, active transportation and retail.
- Walkability - Understanding that walkability is a key objective of the DHSMPs, and that the surrounding downtown area scores extremely well in terms of walkability, the Plan proposes to meet the same standard through adherence to the DHSMPs. Predominant fine grained ground floor retail uses, replication of the small block pattern, wide sidewalks and mid-block connections to destinations and public spaces are some of the primary ways that the plan achieves this goal.
- Public Realm - Three new public parks are used to transition new development to historic districts and create shared spaces to help form social connections between new and existing neighbourhoods. Granville Square extends Granville Mall and is the hub of the new development linking the historic town with new town, waterfront, Scotia Square and Purdy's Wharf. Granville Square and

its associated AT/transit hub are seen as being supportive of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design and Granville Mall businesses by giving them increased pedestrian exposure and address. STP Park creates common space between the new Cogswell neighbourhood and the Brunswick Street neighbourhood. Here active recreation, the Barrington Greenway AT route and possible community gardens will serve to bring people together. Final program requirements will have to be determined prior to developing detailed design for public spaces.

- Improved access and address for existing office towers, hotel and the casino on Upper Water Street. There is a requirement for consolidation of entrances and exits into the Purdy's and Casino complexes to meet with the new street grid.
- Density of 190 persons per acre adjacent to the downtown reducing to 80 persons per acre as the development moves north. This represents some of the highest densities in HRM. Reducing density and height to transition into the existing residential neighbourhoods to the north is seen as important. Examples of surrounding densities include 60 persons per acre (Gottingen area) and 100 person

per acre at Bishops Landing and 140 persons per acre on Brunswick Street at Cogswell.

- Parking - The Downtown MPS does not require parking as part of a development. In the Cogswell Plan each building provides for its own parking on-site and indoors in keeping with regulations for adjacent downtown precincts. The number of building units and height is driven by a calculation of .7 parking stalls per unit and 1 to 1.25 stalls per 1000 sq. feet of commercial. This represents a reasonable urban market approach to parking numbers. Additional height or more developments being condominium will increase the parking requirements. This could be accommodated by going deeper with parking levels or allowing parking on podium levels, as other cities have done. New on street parking provides 350 spaces and indoor parking provides 1,588 spaces.

Economics

- Created lots are generally sized to meet requirements for viable building footprints.
- Mixed use, ground floor retail, podium level commercial with multi-family unit development above is the building market which will fuel the re-

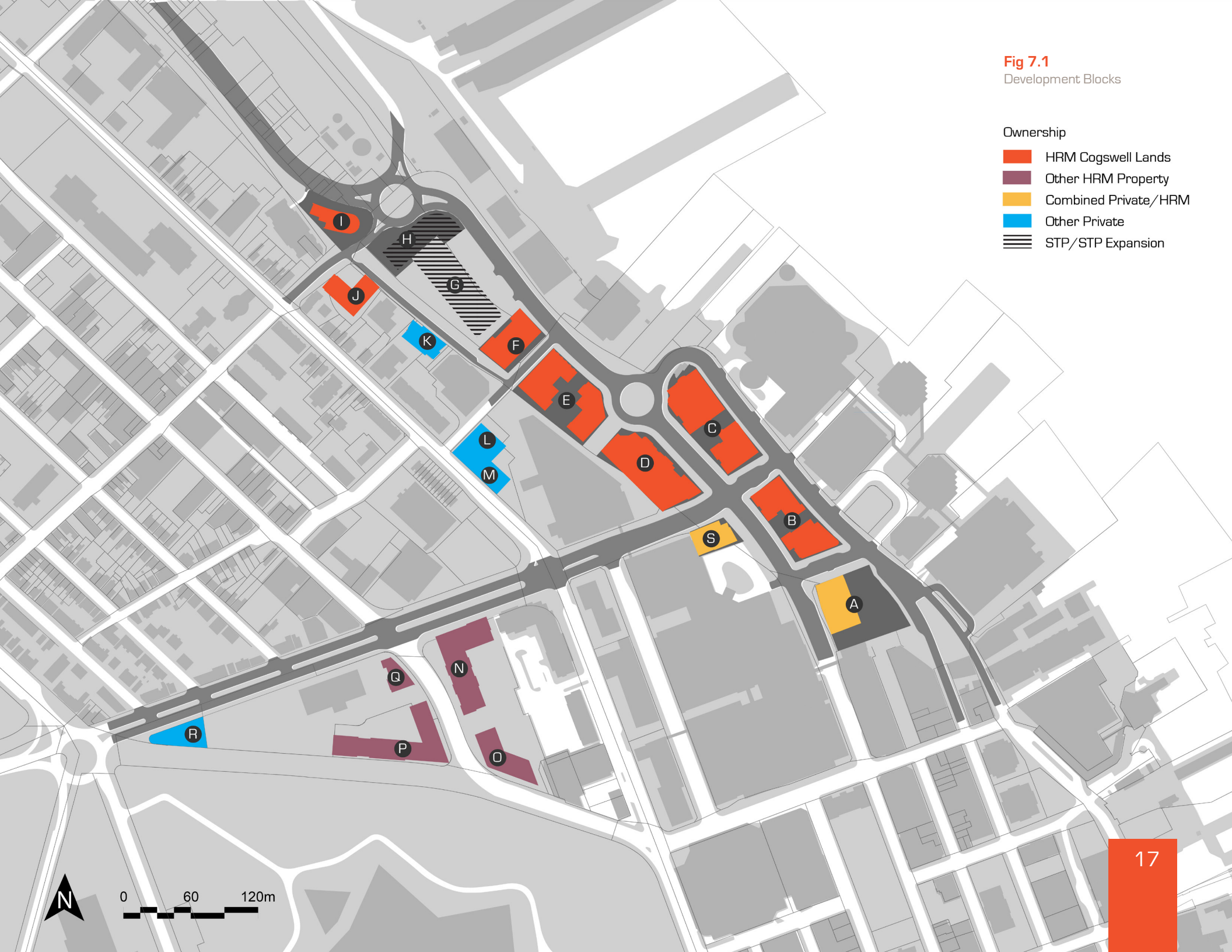
development of Cogswell.

- High quality buildings and public spaces in proximity to a concentration of entertainment, employment, daily needs and mobility options creates an attractive advantage and helps make smaller, more affordable units in new developments desirable.
- The plan will create 2.5 million square feet of new construction with 573,275 feet of potential commercial and 1,975,080 sq. ft. of residential on newly created lots. Ground floor retail would amount to 55,000 sq. ft. Cogswell can act as a potential catalyst for future development of a further 6 acres of underdeveloped property on lands immediately surrounding the Interchange.
- 1644 to 2000 residential units with up to 2,500 residents
- Residential development on Cogswell is "people supply" for the existing downtown.
- Estimated proceeds from surplus lands exceed the estimated costs of demolition and re-construction of municipal infrastructure (based on "Class D Probable Cost and Revenues" estimate).

Fig 7.1
Development Blocks

Ownership

- HRM Cogswell Lands
- Other HRM Property
- Combined Private/HRM
- Other Private
- STP/STP Expansion



8. Market Assessment Results

An assessment of the preferred plan was carried out to determine how it fit into the regional and downtown market. Following is a general synopsis of that assessment.

- There is a market for mixed use development on the Cogswell lands. The assessment confirmed that multi family unit residential will drive the re-development with 70 to 80% of the new floor area for residential and 20 to 30% commercial. Of the residential units, it is projected that 80 to 90% will be rental and 10 to 20% condominium. This is owing to the unique nature of the Halifax market.
- Market absorption rates indicate an 8 to 13 year build out at a rate of 150 to 200 residential units per year on Cogswell. This represents 25 to 35% of the total annual number of units predicted for the Peninsula. That number recognizes that other developments will be occurring in the downtown and Peninsula during that timeframe and that it is desirable for both Cogswell and other developable lands on the Peninsula to play a role in meeting Council's growth targets for the urban centre.
- A portion of the multi-family unit development market is shifting from outside areas to the Regional Centre. This will likely create a stronger market for smaller, more affordable units (65-75% one bedroom) made more attractive by quality builds, proximity to work, mobility options and easy access to public amenities and personal needs. This results in a desirable lifestyle for a growing segment of the population. This trend is expected to continue and strengthen in the next few years.
- Cogswell is well positioned to receive its share of development, but must do so through the creation of a desirable, quality neighbourhood.
- There is limited office expansion potential for Cogswell owing to the trend towards outward migration of business, as employers take advantage of opportunities to be closer to workers, cheaper rents and parking and the creation of new class A and B commercial space in other parts of the city. This makes it especially important that Cogswell is not simply seen as an alternative for existing office in the downtown. Simply shifting existing tenants slightly north would damage HRM's intentions for Downtown Precinct 4, which needs to continue as the "hub of the downtown". Any dramatic change in the office market associated with oil discovery or other economic boom would likely be absorbed on vacant sites within the downtown's centre or possibly at the south end of the Cogswell Lands.
- There is room in the market for new hotel however; at least three are known to be in a state of nearing completion, under construction or close to announcement within the downtown centre. The Cogswell Lands already have four hotels along its southern edge. Smaller format boutique hotels might appear within mixed use developments on the southern portion of the Cogswell lands but a large hotel development on a dedicated Cogswell lot is not anticipated.
- The 1644 households foreseen in the Cogswell Plan should be able to support the ground floor retail component of the developable lands (roughly 55,000 sq. ft. ground floor retail)
- The Cogswell Lands redevelopment is sensitive to upward changes in interest rates which must be monitored as the project proceeds.

- Parking –There is a very good supply of parking around the Cogswell Interchange. However, there is a perception that there is a lack of available parking in the downtown. This has shown to be a problem that is hurting downtown business and will also affect Cogswell. Parking must be

managed more collectively to ensure a good, visible supply of easy to find/ easy to use hourly and monthly public parking for the area. Existing parking must be brought to a higher utility rate. Some developers have indicated that they are interested in a least 1 car per unit on the Cogswell lands

and even 2 cars for condominiums. This could increase the parking issue as private monthly parking replaces limited hourly public parking opportunities.



Fig 8.1
Aerial looking west
with Cogswell
- Lower Water
Street intersection
in the foreground

9. Current Infrastructure Condition

Completed in 1971, the Cogswell Interchange consists of three bridges, four major retaining walls and five earthen ramps. The Province and HRM share responsibility for the three bridges and HRM carries sole responsibility for the road surfaces and retaining walls. In 2009 a comprehensive examination of the structure was undertaken. The result was \$1.6 m worth of repairs undertaken by HRM and the Province.

Most recently inspections were carried out by HRM with the result being that some non-structural items require attention. The Province and HRM continues to monitor the bridge condition based on its inspection in 2009.

HRM Owned Roads, Infrastructure and Retaining Walls

In 2013, on site visual inspections were used to update the 2009 conditions assessments. Requirements for immediate repairs were only found on one of the three bridges and consisted of replacement of corroded light bases, guardrails, electrical wiring. Some minor shifting has been noted on one retaining wall and is regularly being monitored. A few expansion joints, concrete

sidewalks and a few cracks will require repair in the next 1-5 years to prevent further deterioration. Largely the structure is relatively sound given it more than 40 year age. The road surface is subject to issues similar to other HRM roads. Some requirement for pothole repair has been identified both on the spans and on roadways. Overall continued monitoring is required in accordance with best practices for similar infrastructure for so long as the structure is to remain operational.

Summary

At this point the infrastructure condition is not the primary reason to move forward with the redevelopment of the Cogswell Interchange. It should, however, figure in Council's long term infrastructure strategy owing to the predicted 2019 requirement for possible life cycle capital infusion (based on 2009 Interchange Condition Study). Even if Council determines to move ahead with the next steps for the redevelopment of the Cogswell Lands, the program of inspection and repair would continue to the point where demolition actually begins. At that time the program can be appropriately altered to become part of the phased demolition process.



Fig 9.1
Existing
Conditions vs.
Proposed
Plan

10. Public Objectives

Objectives for the Cogswell Interchange have been formulated from a series of public consultations, studies and Council deliberations. They are primarily found in the approved HRM Regional Plan, Downtown Halifax Secondary MPS and HRM Economic Strategy. The Cogswell Shakeup confirmed many of these high level objectives, provided detail and refinement as well as new and updated ideas.

Most of what the Cogswell Lands Plan provides is currently called for and permitted under the DHSMPs, LUB and associated DH1 and ICO zones for the area.

The solution presented under the Cogswell Lands Plan and associated studies represent a balanced approach to the complexities of city building. It recognizes the hard engineering requirements necessary to ensure an operational municipality but does not lose sight of the reasons we are building a city and strives to put people first. The Plan intentionally stayed away from dependence of a large public project such as a future performance arts centre or aquarium, even though these come up regularly in public discussions. While some of these facility types could fit they have very special requirements and would have to be carefully considered as to their impact on HRM's primary objectives

for Cogswell as outlined in policy. Instead, the Plan focuses on giving Council what can be best achieved to meet stated objectives in a timely manner. The Plan focuses on providing for the complexity of robust everyday requirements. A scan of sites and locations in the other areas of downtown indicates that there are opportunities for special facilities outside of Cogswell and are not, therefore, dependent on the Cogswell Lands.

11. Next Steps

The HRM staff recommends that HRM take the next step and move the Cogswell Lands Project forward into detailed design. A three phase 30/60/90 percent approach is recommended. It is expected that 18-20 months would be required to work through this step. The three phase approach allows Council logical assessment and decision points where, owing to unforeseen circumstances or changing priorities, Council could redirect the project. Council should not proceed fully to this next stage if they feel that the redevelopment of Cogswell does not figure into the municipal priorities within the next three to five years. Beyond five years too many factors are fluid for the City to be tied to a final detailed design. However, the three phased approach is also designed to allow the plan elements to be advanced to a stage where issues and design can be developed without completing the final drawings (i.e. 30% or 60%). This could be used to reduce required lead times to execute the project if and when timing is seen to be better.



Fig 11.1
Cogswell
Transformed

Phase 1: Design Development (30%)

The Design Development Phase is where the Cogswell Lands Plan conceptual work is refined to a detailed level. Choices are made where options currently exist, and HRM is able to consider approaches on matters surfaced in the Plan which are currently without adequate policy or direction. Generally, it presents the opportunity for uncertainties to be resolved. All elements of the plan and all affected service providers will be involved early in this phase. This allows requirements of the redevelopment to be advanced in concert to ensure that transportation, utilities, open space, real estate, development and financing remain integrated and balanced as they are intended by the Cogswell Lands Plan. This phase is where all planning compliance and land issues are also considered. The completion of this phase provides the information which allows real estate negotiations, and any planning regulation amendment processes to commence. A 30% review ensures that issues are identified and moved towards resolution early in the process, prior to the point where modifications would be disruptive later in the process. A Design Development Report is produced for Council's review.

Phase 2: Technical Design (60%)

This is where technical engineering is undertaken. All municipal infrastructure requirements are laid down in detail and dependable cost and construction estimates are undertaken (Class B estimates). This phase allows a detailed financial plan to be created. Combined with a Market Update, Council would have the necessary information to make a "go/no go" decision to move forward to the next phase which results in final construction documents followed by tendering and award. The 60% decision by Council to proceed would also trigger the requirement for closing on final purchases of any necessary properties and commencing the necessary planning regulation changes to see the project proceed beyond construction of municipal infrastructure into private development of lots.

Phase 3: Specifications (90%)

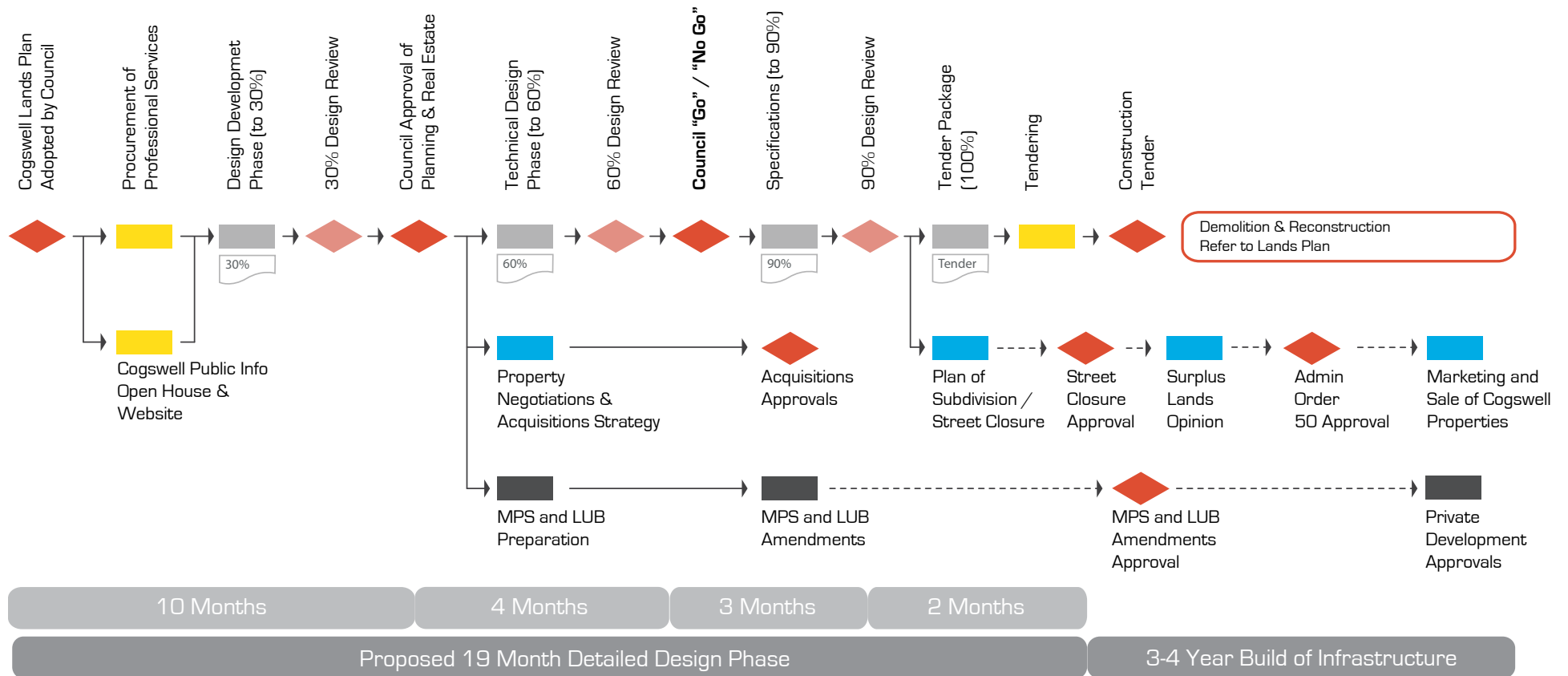
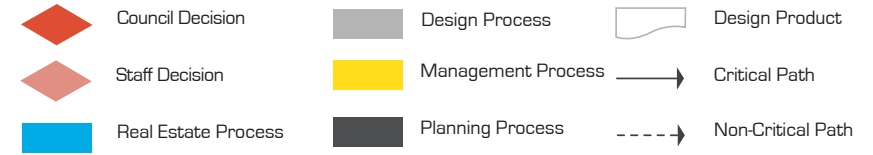
This is where the final drawings and associated specification for construction are prepared and given a 90% review. Following the final review the tender documents are prepared and the tender let to the market for bidding. Prior to this point all necessary lands for construction of municipal infrastructure would have been secured and regulatory changes would be made to allow the construction to begin.

Requirements to undertake street closures, subdivide lands, declare lands surplus and market lands for development would proceed after the construction was underway. Changes to the DHSMPs and LUB would be required prior to marketing and sale of building lots slated for development.

Fig 11.2

Detail Design
Process

LEGEND



12. Planning Regulation Changes

The Plan contemplates necessary changes to the DHSMPs and LUB regulations. As there was no Cogswell Lands Plan at the time of creating the DHSMPs and LUB, they do not try and pre-suppose the specifics of what the development would be beyond the higher level principles covering the entire downtown. As the Cogswell Lands Plan was largely able to stay within these principles and integrate with the visions for the adjacent precincts it is not anticipated that the amendments to the DHSMPs and LUB will be dramatic. Instead they will consist of extending specifics such as the downtown road network classification over the new road network, adoption of a refined Precinct 8 Vision and fixing those public and private amenities in place which are key to the future success of the new neighbourhood. Some changes, such as alterations to podium and tower setback requirements to allow better sunlight penetration and ground level public space as well as appropriate height limitations will be explored as part of the Design Development Phase (30%) of Detailed Design. A Five Year Review of the DHMPS is slated to commence this year (2014). It may be possible, but not a requirement, for the Cogswell changes to be part of that review. This would be dependent upon how quickly the Detailed Design

proceeds through to the 30% phase.

The Plan does recommend changes to the DHSMPs boundaries in order to capture a small but pertinent area of District 7 under the Halifax North Plan Area which was part of the study. This may require legislative changes but is not absolutely necessary. The best means to proceed with amendments involving the Halifax North Plan Area should be contemplated at the 30% Design Development Phase.

Fig 12.1

Barrington Street with proposed public amenities



13. Public Consultation and Council Deliberation

The Cogswell Lands Plan is a direct result of years of public consultation and Council deliberation. If Council decides to move forward with the Plan, that consultation and deliberation will continue. Regulatory Plan amendments, in themselves, will trigger public consultation processes and public hearings. Design of public spaces is an area where traditionally HRM has conducted public consultation to receive ideas and direction and tailor the product to specific user requirements. Consultation with surrounding land owners will also be required for

integration of the new networks (i.e. street, servicing, shared amenities) with existing development. Continuity of service and access will be especially important during phased demolition and construction and will require a good deal of communication and feedback.

Council will be involved in the process at a number of junctions and decision points. Detailed Design phasing (Fig 11.1) indicates council oversight and decision making at each of the three phases. Budget approvals, financial plans, land acquisitions, planning regulations changes, tender awards all require the approval of Council. As the process continues, Council's public debate and HRM's web presence and information sessions will provide the public, development community

and stakeholders details so that they may participate as appropriate and incorporate Cogswell into their own planning and business cycles.

Staff recognizes the importance of informing the public of the direction that the Plan has taken to date, especially owing to the Cogswell Shake-up process and preceding public input. This can be achieved through a public information session and through the HRM website. As the Strategic Urban Partnership was the key provider of the Cogswell Shakeup, HRM staff should work with this organization to provide the follow-up public information session.

14. Matters Impacting the Next Steps - Cogswell Detailed Designm

Several municipal matters have been raised which have the potential to impact the Cogswell redevelopment.

Housing Affordability

The DHSMPs and public consultations indicate an expectation that Cogswell will play a role in the provision of affordable housing in the Regional Centre. It does not, however, articulate what exactly that role will be. There is a wide spectrum of approaches possible ranging from a free market supply approach to public subsidies. The solution depends on what Council wishes to impact. Currently, HRM has no policy or a program to enforce affordable housing on Cogswell other than through voluntary measures by developers. The HRM and the Province is engaged in developing an affordable housing program approach but that discussion is just beginning. HRM and the Province will have to advance their efforts on Affordable Housing if Cogswell is to play a prescribed role in the affordability issue.

Transit

Transit is a key element of both the success of Cogswell and of the downtown. At the time of development of the Cogswell Lands Plan the existing transit system along with an allocation for increased frequency was accommodated into the creation of a transit hub. Since that time Council and Metro Transit have initiated an effort to develop a new transit strategy and network. The extent of change and the ensuing requirements which will be placed on the Cogswell lands are not known at this time. While options exist in the Cogswell Plan for a new Transit Strategy, direction is required for input into detailed design in a relatively short period. Transit is a substantial municipal service and could carry considerable costs and/or land requirements depending on HRM's ambitions. Either new transit requirements will have to be articulated during the Design Development Phase or the capacity of the Cogswell Plan to accommodate new transit requirements will have to be fed into the Transit Strategy process similarly to other existing parameters for the downtown.

Traffic

A traffic study was carried out as part of the Cogswell Lands Plan. It demonstrated the ability of the proposed street configuration to accommodate and distribute traffic throughout the downtown. The modeling demonstrated

the use of roundabouts for the Barrington and Cornwallis intersection and for the Upper Water/ Barrington Street as the best solution for the flow of traffic. At present, there is an issue with the PM (outbound) peak north bound traffic on Barrington backing up to Cornwallis Street and beyond owing to the MacDonald Bridge. If solutions for long standing issues at the Halifax bridgehead remain there is concern that the use of a roundabout at Cornwallis would create a traffic blockage when bridge traffic backs up beyond 1 kilometer. An examination of how to make traffic flow better at the Halifax bridgehead along with needed solutions for bicycle and bus bridge access is being considered. The timing of this work should be advanced to a point where a decision for the Cornwallis/Barrington intersection can be made during Detailed Design. Failing a solution for the Halifax bridgehead it is likely that a conventional intersection will be chosen as the preferred option for the Cornwallis / Barrington intersection or additional traffic controls incorporated.

Parking

There is a wide spectrum of opinion on the need for parking and/parking solutions in the downtown. Adjacent to Cogswell there is already a good deal of commercial office

parking available including Purdy's, which is underutilized at night, and hourly public parking at Scotia Square. Additional on-street and private commercial parking to meet the incremental needs of the development is part of the Cogswell Lands Plan. At this point there is no intention to provide a dedicated municipal public parking facility within Cogswell to aid downtown parking issues. Additionally, the eastern portion of the site is proximate to the Harbour water table. The cost of excavation and sealing against water affects construction costs, so underground parking solutions can be expensive and limited to just a few floors. It is important to know if Cogswell is to play any role in an overall downtown parking solution. To that end an HRM team is working on implementing the HRM Parking Strategy including higher utility of existing parking resources. The Cogswell Lands Plan needs to be incorporated into the overall Downtown Parking Strategy.

Density Bonusing

As an undeveloped municipal brownfield site, the Cogswell Lands Plan takes the simple approach of articulating the value of land sales for private development against the construction cost of required municipal infrastructure, including open space and streetscapeing. It does not contemplate density bonusing as the means to achieve these basic objectives. The Plan articulates building height based on a number of factors including reasonable parking, surrounding use and location. The HRM by Design practice of

determining maximum height and reducing it by 30% to create incentive for developers to provide discretionary public amenities through density bonusing is not the best tool to achieve required streets, parks and other public amenities on lands where HRM is both the vendor of developable lands and the developer of new public infrastructure. Instead, direct revenues from the sale of land are seen as the appropriate means to those ends. However, developers may be wishing to build higher than is articulated in the Cogswell Plan and HRM may be willing to allow greater height on particular properties owing to minimal Citadel View Plane restrictions. Work will be required under the next steps to determine the appropriate use of density bonusing and as of right height allowances for the Cogswell Lands with an eye to market absorption, build out period and the best means to achieve public benefits.

Infrastructure Phasing

The plan outlines a three phase, 4.5 year approach to dismantling and re-constructing the municipal infrastructure on the Cogswell Lands. This is not unexpected as it took a similar approach to build the Cogswell Interchange owing to the need to maintain access and continuity of service to the downtown. Discussions with others who have undertaken similar projects indicate that there may be ways to reduce that time frame. The next steps in the Cogswell project will place focus on the means and mechanisms to reduce the impact and duration of the

demolition and construction period. It may also look at how the sequence of sale of surplus lands might be utilized to provide laydown space for the construction of private developments after the municipal work is complete.

Market Absorption

Given the significance of the municipal infrastructure program and multi-year construction schedule, it is difficult to precisely predict the lot sale and development program that follows. The market conditions will need to be continuously monitored and assumptions and revenue forecasts adjusted as required.

Conclusion

None of the matters articulated above are reason not to move forward with the next step of the Cogswell project. They simply need to be advanced or considered as the project moves forward.

15. Final Result

The Cogswell Lands Plan provides a feasible direction, meeting the highest balance of municipal objectives set by Council and the public for the Cogswell Interchange Lands. Indications are that the redevelopment of these public lands will have a positive impact on the region while being financially feasible. A highly concentrated mix of streets, public spaces, residential and commercial activity will serve to knit the downtown, North End, CFB Halifax Dockyard, and the waterfront together. The addition of 2,500 persons in a desirable, compact, and walkable new neighbourhood is one of several initiatives contributing to Council's goal of sustaining and growing the regional centre. The release of six acres of underutilized public lands to the market will serve to attract more development to the downtown and impact an additional six acres in the direct vicinity. An anticipated 8-13 year build-out for redevelopment reflects a realistic approach to market absorption and market shifts.

Council has already set the direction and a good number of parameters for its demolition and redevelopment. Therefore, it is not anticipated that MPS and LUB changes will be dramatic if we choose to stick to the direction Council has set.

There must be a public understanding that the Municipality is embarking on a long term project to seek long term benefits. This is

not unlike other strategic opportunities that are brought before Council. However, like all development, the final details of cost and impact will only be known at the end of the project. Therefore, Council must make its decisions based on the best information that it has available now and as the project advances.

The Cogswell project is a city-scale urban redevelopment initiative designed to change the focus of the area from the car to people, trucks to transit and active transportation, concrete to art, abandoned patches of grass to beautiful open spaces, barriers to connectivity, and ramps and overpasses to new places to work and live. These new features better reflect our community's current priorities while anticipating our priorities for future generations.

