



P.O. Box 1749
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Item No. 11.1.2
Halifax Regional Council
October 7, 2014

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: September 28, 2014

SUBJECT: **Case 19514: Amendments to the Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy and Mainland Halifax Land Use By-law – the former Motherhouse Lands, Bedford Highway, Halifax**

ORIGIN

Application from Southwest Properties Limited

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter (HRM Charter), Part VIII, Planning & Development

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council direct staff to initiate the process to consider amending the Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy and Mainland Halifax Land Use By-law:

1. For a mixed use development pursuant to an application from Southwest Properties, for 47 acres of the former Motherhouse lands in Halifax, as identified on Map 1;
2. For the Shannex lands and the Mount Saint Vincent University lands, as identified on Map 1, to enable a comprehensive and integrated development approach for the whole of the Motherhouse lands; and
3. Direct staff to follow the public participation program for municipal planning strategy amendments that was adopted by Regional Council on February 27, 1997.

BACKGROUND

Southwest Properties proposes to develop a mixed-use subdivision in Mainland North, Halifax (Map 1), on 47 acres of a 73 acre site that is commonly referred to as the “Motherhouse Lands.” These are lands that have traditionally been owned by the Sisters of Charity, a religious order that acquired them in 1873. The Sisters of Charity are now working with developers to realize the development of the lands. The Southwest proposal cannot be considered under the existing policies and zoning of the Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) and Halifax Mainland Land Use By-law (LUB). As such, Southwest Properties is seeking amendments to these documents to enable its proposal.

Site Description and Surrounding Land Uses

The subject site has the following characteristics:

- It is comprised of 47 acres that stretches from the Bedford Highway to Lacewood Drive.
- It has a topography which includes a significant elevation change that extends from 5 metres (above sea-level) at the Bedford Highway to 90 metres at its highest point.
- The central and western portions of the lands are relatively flat, excepting that there is a significant drop in grade toward Lacewood Drive.
- Access is gained through Seton Road, a private driveway that extends from the Bedford Highway and currently ends at the central area of the site. The driveway provides several entrances to Mount Saint Vincent University and to the remainder of the Motherhouse Lands.
- There are a number of easements over the lands that are in the favour of adjoining properties.

The surrounding land uses include the following:

- The remaining Motherhouse Lands are to the north of the site and are comprised of a 26 acre parcel that is owned by Shannex SC Limited. Upon this site there is a 5 storey assisted care facility, the Caritas Residence, which is the residence of the Sisters of Charity.
- Mount Saint Vincent University lies to the north-east of the site and is largely characterized by low-rise buildings, with the exception of an 11 storey residence (Assisi Hall).
- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is situated alongside Lacewood Drive, adjacent to the site.
- The remainder of the surrounding lands is made up of single detached dwellings.

Designation and Zoning

Halifax Plan

The majority of the Motherhouse Lands are within the Bedford Highway Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy plan area. They are designated Institutional-University and are within the Park and Institutional (P) Zone (Maps 2 and 3). This designation and zoning allows for institutional uses with few regulations. There are for example, no maximum height requirements and limited conditions over building setbacks. However, the residential and commercial uses that are envisioned by Southwest Properties are not permitted.

A small area of the Motherhouse lands, extending from Lacewood Drive, is within the Residential Designation and zoned Single Family Dwelling (R-1).

Regional Plan

The Southwest lands are outside the Regional Centre, within the Urban Settlement designation. They are not in a “Growth Centre”, which are areas that have been identified as being concentrations of mixed use development with normally higher densities than their surroundings. However, the Regional Plan does not

preclude relatively higher intensity development outside of an identified Growth Centre and there is policy context in the Plan that supports compact and efficient development.

Proposal

An overview of the Southwest Properties' proposal is found in Attachments A, B, and C. Key features of the development are highlighted as follows:

- Seton Road is to be converted to a public street and extended to Lacewood Drive, with new intersecting local streets.
- The development is to include:
 - 111 single detached dwellings;
 - 9 townhouse dwellings;
 - 9 apartment buildings, containing 743 dwelling units; and
 - 6 mixed use commercial-residential buildings, containing 830 dwelling units and 5,201 square metres of commercial space.
- The multi-unit residential and mixed-use commercial and residential buildings are concentrated at the centre of the site and include 3 buildings that are 3 storeys in height and 12 buildings that are between 12 and 14 storeys in height.
- The single detached dwellings are to be located at the periphery of the site.
- A 1,130 square metre community centre is included as part of the proposal, within one of the mixed commercial-residential buildings. Its ownership and responsibility with regard to programming has yet to be determined.
- The proposal includes several areas of parks and open space, with the most substantial park being near to the centre of the site where there is a relatively significant grade and ponds. To address the slope and water features, Southwest intends to construct terraces with retaining walls and incorporate storm water management features.

Staff estimate that the development of the 47 acres may result in approximately 3,700 new residents.

Southwest has undertaken a series of local public consultation sessions in order to present and obtain feedback on its development proposal. The company indicates that the development has evolved as a result of this engagement.

History and Context

The Sisters of Charity acquired the Motherhouse Lands in 1873 and have had a presence on them ever since. In the 1950's, the "Motherhouse", a 350,000 square foot residence, was constructed at the centre of the site. However, over approximately the last decade, with a reduction in the number of its members and less of a need for the residence, the Sisters of Charity sought to sell the lands for redevelopment while retaining a residential presence. The events associated with this form a context for the current application:

- In the mid-2000s, a development plan from United Gulf Developments was selected by the Sisters of Charity. The plan included the demolition of the 1950s Motherhouse and a replacement residence. However, the arrangement with United Gulf came to an end during the time when the demolition was underway.
- In 2008, the Sisters of Charity engaged Shannex to construct the Caritas Residence. To enable this, the 26 acre lot upon which the residence was being built was subdivided and transferred to Shannex. This lot does not have public street frontage.¹ A further arrangement between the Sisters of Charity and Shannex allows Shannex to retain up to 10 of the 26 acres and specifies that these

¹ The HRM Charter and the Municipal Government Act contain provisions that allow for lots that are a minimum of 25 acres in size to be created without municipal approval.

- lands are ultimately to be provided with street frontage.
- The Sisters of Charity began a new call for proposals to develop the lands and in 2011, a plan from Southwest Properties was selected. The plan was for the complete development of 63 of the 73 acres of the Motherhouse Lands, to reflect the 10 acres to be retained by Shannex.
 - In 2012 and 2013, Southwest was unable to advance a planning application as HRM was undertaking a traffic and sewer capacity studies to consider the cumulative impact of development proposals along what has been identified as the Bedford-Halifax Mainland North Corridor.
 - In late 2013, Regional Council received a favourable staff report² on the capacities of the Corridor. The report included a recommendation that amendments be initiated to allow for the detailed consideration of the Southwest Properties proposal. However, Shannex objected to the inclusion of any of its 26 acres and consequently, the recommendation for the 63 acres was not considered. Based on this, Southwest has modified its plan so it is limited to 47 acres, which is the subject of this application. At a later time, it intends to submit a subsequent request for the remaining 16 acres.

The adjoining Shannex lands are an important consideration as the current property boundary between Southwest's 47 acres and their property is not based on any physical attributes of the land or any future development alignment. Shannex plans to develop additional institutional uses on its 10 acres in the form of what it describes as a "seniors living lifestyle community" that will have over 500 residents and 250 staff. Although Southwest's proposal is at an early stage of review, Shannex has highlighted a significant number of issues concerning their overall plan to staff, which include observations that the proposal does not integrate well with surrounding lands and objections regarding the form and design of the development.

DISCUSSION

MPS Amendment Process

Amendments to an MPS are generally not considered unless it can be shown that circumstances have changed since the document was adopted to the extent that the original land use policy is no longer appropriate. Site specific MPS amendments, in particular, require significant justification to be considered. The Sisters of Charity's diminished use of the lands provides such a justification. Further to this, with specific regard to its development plan, Southwest notes that:

- The proposal is, "a unique land use land use plan for the site that strives to create an unparalleled community adhering to smart growth principles and serving as an exemplary project that reflects the sustainable growth objectives of HRM's Regional Plan."
- Care has been taken to provide an appropriate transition to the surrounding low density residential area.
- The project has evolved with the participation of local residents through community engagement.

Additional information is found in Southwest's application submissions that are attached to this report (Attachments A, B, and C)

Evaluation of Development Proposal

There is considerable merit in establishing communities that are compact, walkable, and complete as is being envisioned by Southwest. However, staff has identified challenges with this project on a number of broad fronts:

1. The application submitted by Southwest is solely for their 47 acres, whereas there would be obvious benefits to considering the entire Motherhouse Lands through one comprehensive plan

² See report at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/documents/131210ca1131.pdf>

approach. On this basis, it is recommended that the scope of the amendments also include the Shannex lands and the campus of Mount Saint Vincent University, inasmuch as it interfaces with the Motherhouse lands.

2. While supportive of the overall idea of compact development, staff has concerns with the density and design of the development. The key issues that need to be addressed are as follows:

Parks and Open Space

The topography of the lands is challenging with respect to grades, but the placement of the main park on one of the steepest parts of the site has not been viewed favourably by HRM staff. The usability of this parkland with its terraced areas and integrated storm water management systems, needs to be fully reviewed. Such parkland is not of a size and configuration to allow the variety of recreation options that are called for in HRM's standards. This is important on the basis of the size of the development and the anticipated introduction of approximately 3,700 people. There are other more level areas of the lands that may be more suitable for parkland and that warrant further review.

Building Massing and Layout

The placement of buildings next to Seton Road and the introduction of ground floor commercial uses will help create a pedestrian-oriented environment and a more complete community. However, the size of the buildings, their height and mass, and their relationship to one another and the street need to be more fully considered to ensure that the desired environment is achieved.

Transportation: Traffic Generation and Road Layout

With the development that is being proposed there is a considerable amount of traffic generation. Staff are awaiting the submission of a full traffic study in order to fully consider the necessary sizing and design of Seton Road and the impacts of the anticipated traffic on the surrounding area. The proposed design of Seton Road may be a challenging issue on the basis of its steepness of the grade toward Bedford Highway and Lacewood and the limited width of the site in these areas. With regard to traffic generation, the modelling needs to examine the full build-out of the Motherhouse Lands, the traffic that will be created, and the modes of transportation that will be expected, to determine the impact upon the local street system. It is expected that there will be transit implications as well that will need to be fully considered.

The internal road layout of the development also needs further review with regard to matters such as looping streets and the accesses to the adjoining lands.

Infrastructure Operating Cost

As noted with regard to the discussion about the parkland and its retaining walls, there may be considerable capital improvements that will be necessary to construct the development as it is envisioned. While this would be the responsibility of the developer, HRM needs to be mindful of the possible lifecycle costs with respect to such infrastructure and needs to fully consider this as the proposal is reviewed in greater detail.

Based upon staff's analysis, it is anticipated that there will need to be changes to Southwest's preliminary proposal. The degree of such changes will need to be determined through a more thorough review of the project, the consideration of updated studies that will need to be prepared, and consultations with adjoining property owners and the general public.

HRM could defer initiating the application until the many of the highlighted challenges are more fully addressed. However, there is a strong desire on the part of Southwest and the Sisters of Charity for

Regional Council to initiate the municipal planning strategy amendment process, which will allow further work to be undertaken through a formal review of the application. Staff support this, but with the understanding that if there are fundamental issues that cannot be resolved, staff may need to return to Regional Council, with or without any draft amendments, to seek further direction on advancing the request.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The HRM costs associated with processing this planning application can be accommodated within the approved 2014/2015 operating budget for C310 Planning & Applications.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Should Council choose to initiate the MPS amendment process as outlined in this report, the *HRM Charter* requires that Council approve a public participation program when considering any amendment to an MPS. In February of 1997, Regional Council approved a public participation resolution which outlines the process to be undertaken for proposed MPS amendments, which are considered to be local in nature. This requires a public meeting be held, at a minimum, and any other measures deemed necessary to obtain public opinion. The proposed level of community engagement would be consultation, achieved through public meetings and/or public workshops early in the review process, as well as a public hearing before Regional Council could consider approval of any amendments.

Amendments to the MPS and LUB would potentially impact the following stakeholders: local residents, property owners, community or neighbourhood organizations, business owners, other HRM business units, and other levels of government.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are environmental implications to the development of the lands that will be more fully considered as the application is considered.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Regional Council could initiate amendments solely for Southwest's 47 acres. This is not recommended for the reasons that are outlined in this report.
2. Regional Council could direct staff to initiate amendments that are different from those that are presented within this report. This may necessitate a further review by staff and possibly the preparation of a supplementary report.
3. Regional Council could refuse to initiate amendments until there is a comprehensive proposal for the whole of the Motherhouse Lands. Although this is not the staff recommendation, there is merit to having the various land owners that have a direct stake in the development of the lands develop a comprehensive plan in advance of the initiation of any planning amendments. A decision not to amend the MPS is not appealable to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board as per Section 262 of the *HRM Charter*.

ATTACHMENTS

- Map 1 Context
- Map 2 Generalized Future Land Use Map

Map 3 Zoning Map

Attachment A Application Letter
Attachment B Preliminary Site Statistics and Site Plan, Southwest 47 Acres
Attachment C Motherhouse Land Development Primer

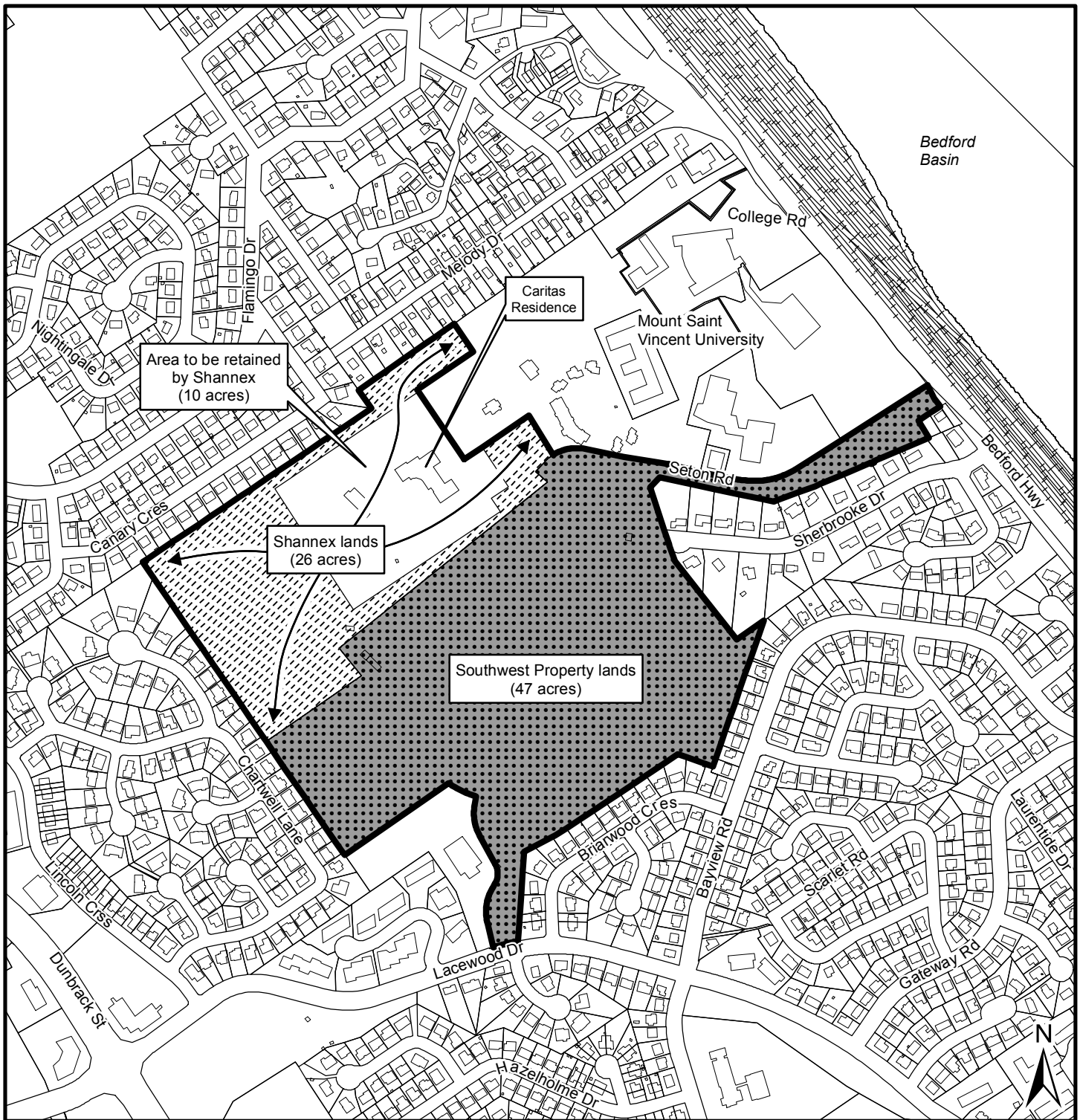
A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.php> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902-490-4210, or Fax 902-490-4208.

Report Prepared by: Richard Harvey, Major Projects Planner, 902-490-6495

Report Approved by: _____
Kelly Denty, Manager, Development Approvals, 902-490-4800

Report Approved by: _____
Bob Bjerke, Chief Planner, 902-490-1627

Report Approved by: _____
Brad Anguish, Director, Community and Recreation Services, 902-490-4933



Map 1 - Context

Lands off Seton Road
Halifax

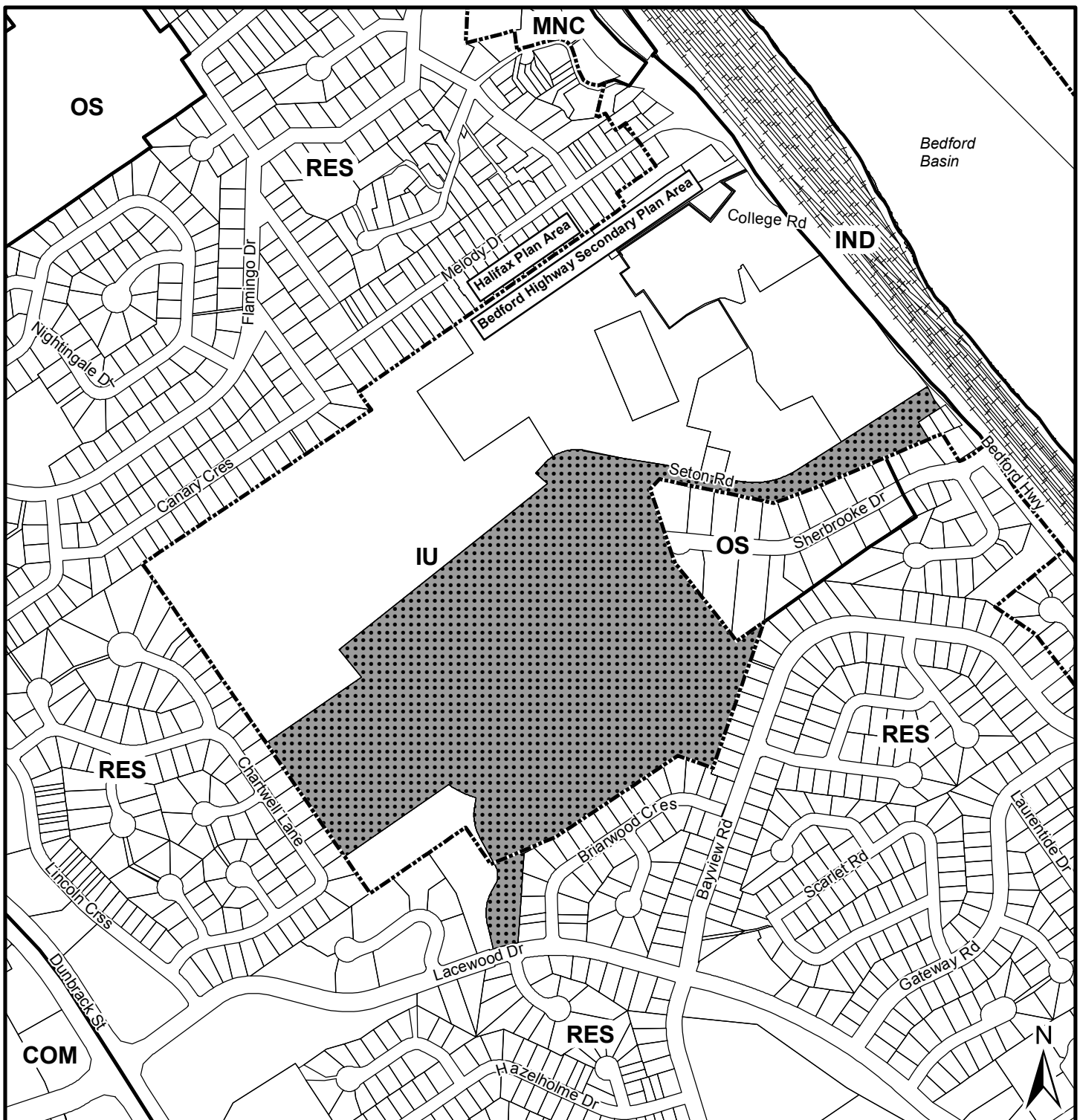
-  Motherhouse lands
-  Area (approx. 16 acres) to be transferred to Sisters of Charity

Halifax Plan Area
Bedford Highway Secondary Plan Area

HALIFAX

0 100 200 m

The accuracy of any representation on this plan is not guaranteed.



Map 2 - Generalized Future Land Use

Lands off Seton Road
Halifax

 Southwest Property lands

Halifax Plan Area
Bedford Highway Secondary Plan Area

Designation - Bedford Highway

MNC Minor Commercial
IND Industrial
IU Institutional - University

Designation - Halifax

RES Residential Environments
COM Commercial
OS Major Community Open Spaces

HALIFAX

0 100 200 m

This map is an unofficial reproduction of a portion of the Generalized Future Land Use Map for the plan area indicated.

The accuracy of any representation on this plan is not guaranteed.



Map 3 - Zoning

Lands off Seton Road
Halifax

 Southwest Property lands

Halifax Mainland
Land Use By-Law Area

Zone

- R-1 Single Family Dwelling
- R-2 Two Family Dwelling
- R-4 Multiple Dwelling
- C-2A Minor Commercial
- C-2 General Business
- I-1 General Industrial
- P Park and Institutional
- U-2 High Density University
- K Schedule K

HALIFAX

0 100 200 m

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

The accuracy of any representation on this plan is not guaranteed.

Case 19514: Attachment A - Application Letter

August 1, 2014

Richard Harvey
Senior Planner
Halifax Regional Municipality
P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, NS
B3J 3A5

Dear Richard:

Re: Former Motherhouse Lands Application for MPS and LUB Amendments and Development Agreement – PID #00137802

Southwest Properties Limited, on behalf of the registered property owners, the Sisters of Charity, is seeking approval of a Rezoning and Development Agreement to establish a mixed-use development on the former Motherhouse Lands. This property, illustrated in Attachment A, encompasses 50 acres adjacent to the Mount Saint Vincent University campus.

As you are aware, we have developed a unique land use plan for the site that strives to create an unparalleled community adhering to smart growth principles and serving as an exemplary project that reflects the sustainable growth objectives of HRM's *Regional Plan*.

We approached this project in a very intentional way to ensure that we create a community of the highest quality. Through four public consultation sessions held over two years, we have worked with the public to revise and improve the development plan.

Attached to this request are two design briefs. The first brief, prepared by Ekistics Plan + Design, summarizes how our proposed concept responds directly to LEED ND objectives and requirements, and achieves HRM *Regional Plan* objectives and goals. The second brief was prepared by Page+Steele/IBI Architects and articulates our approach regarding urban form and the public realm in the preparation of our development concept.

These documents outline many of the proposed development's unique features, but I would like to highlight several others that are emblematic of the intent behind the proposed concept. Outside of any regulatory requirement to do so, Southwest has committed to place 5% of the multi-residential housing stock within an affordable housing program to ensure diversity of access to the community. We also propose meeting HRM's objective to design the primary and secondary electrical services grids below grade. Furthermore, we have committed to work with Halifax Transit to maximize transit service to the site. Finally, we are proposing innovative storm water management provisions to respond to the objectives of HRWC.

Case 19514: Attachment A - Application Letter

Many of the supporting documents included with our application reflect discussions we have commenced with various departments and agencies with the municipal government. We remain open to further revisions and improvements to the development plan as we move forward with more a detailed design in a collaborative manner with you and your colleagues.

The same commitment remains regarding servicing requirements for the interior parcel owned by Shannex. You provided us with preliminary direction that our proposed road network and connection to the site meets the technical requirements of the *Subdivision By-Law*; however, we remain open to requests for reasonable adjustments to these servicing requirements should they be feasible to incorporate.

In recognition of the thorough public consultation process we have undertaken and significant delays in the process resulting from HRM's servicing and transit studies, we request that HRM planning staff move forward with the initiation report and application process in an expeditious manner. We respectfully request that you provide us with an anticipated schedule for the plan amendment and development agreement process.

Please advise if you require any further information at this time in order to prepare the initiation report for this project.

Best Regards,

Eric Burchill
Vice President - Planning and Development
Southwest Properties Ltd.

Case 19514: Attachment B - Preliminary Site Stats and Site Plan, Southwest 47 Acres

PRELIMINARY SITE STATISTICS

MOTHERHOUSE MASTERPLAN - 47.15 ACRES PROPERTY

PROPERTY AREA INCLUDING SETON ROAD TO BEDFORD HIGHWAY		m ² 190,799	Hectares 19.08	Acres 47.15		
BUILDING TYPE	NO OF UNITS***	GCA ABOVE GRADE		PARKING REQUIRED	LOT SIZE	
		m ²	ft ²		m ²	ft ²
42' WIDE SINGLE FAMILY*	38	9,120	98,167	76	12,538	134,958
50' WIDE SINGLE FAMILY*	58	13,920	149,834	116	28,145	302,950
60' WIDE SINGLE FAMILY*	15	3,600	38,750	30	12,020	129,382
TOWNHOUSE (3 storey)**	9	1,755	18,891	18	4,678	50,354
LIVE-WORK (2 storey)**	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL LOW-RISE	120	28,395	305,641	240	57,381	617,644
MULTI-STORY CONDO						
C1-A	112	13,000	139,931		2,140	513,600
C2-A	112	13,000	139,931		2,750	29,601
D-A	147	17,045	183,471		2,780	29,924
E-A	92	10,655	114,689		2,360	25,403
F-A	94	10,965	118,026		2,296	24,714
G-A	98	11,335	122,009		2,225	23,950
L1-A	130	15,097	162,499		2,360	25,403
L2-A	143	16,606	178,749		3,140	33,799
P-A	19	2,240	24,111		1,590	17,115
TOTAL CONDO	947	109,943	1,183,416	724	21,641	232,942
MULTI-STORY RENTAL						
A-B	112	13,000	139,931		2,830	30,462
B-B	112	13,000	139,931		2,796	30,096
K1-B	165	19,120	205,806		3,445	37,082
K2-B	136	15,766	169,704		4,815	51,828
M-B	32	3,680	39,611		2,440	26,264
N-B	32	3,680	39,611		3,874	929,760
TOTAL RENTAL	588	64,566	694,983	450	20,200	217,431
SUB-TOTAL MULTI-STORY	1,534	174,509	1,878,398	1,174	41,841	450,373
TOTAL RESIDENTIAL	1,654	202,904	2,184,039	1,414	99,222	1,068,017
COMMUNITY CENTER (ON L2 LOT)						
RETAIL A	1	209	2,251			
RETAIL E	1	210	2,256			
RETAIL K2	2	2,770	29,816			
RETAIL K1	5	1,414	15,220			
RETAIL L1	4	771	8,294			
RETAIL L2	4	785	8,450			
TOTAL RETAIL	17	6,158	66,288	62		
TOTAL GCA AREA ABOVE GRADE		210,192	2,262,490	1,475		
A-CONDO B-RENTAL						
* Single family house area is calculated based on 240 m ² /2,600 ft ² average house area						
** Townhouse area is calculated						

* Single family house area is calculated based on 240 m²/2,600 ft² average house area

** Townhouse area is calculated based on 195 m²/2,100 ft² average townhouse area

*** Number of units in multi-storey residential buildings is estimated based on 1,250 ft² of GCA per unit.

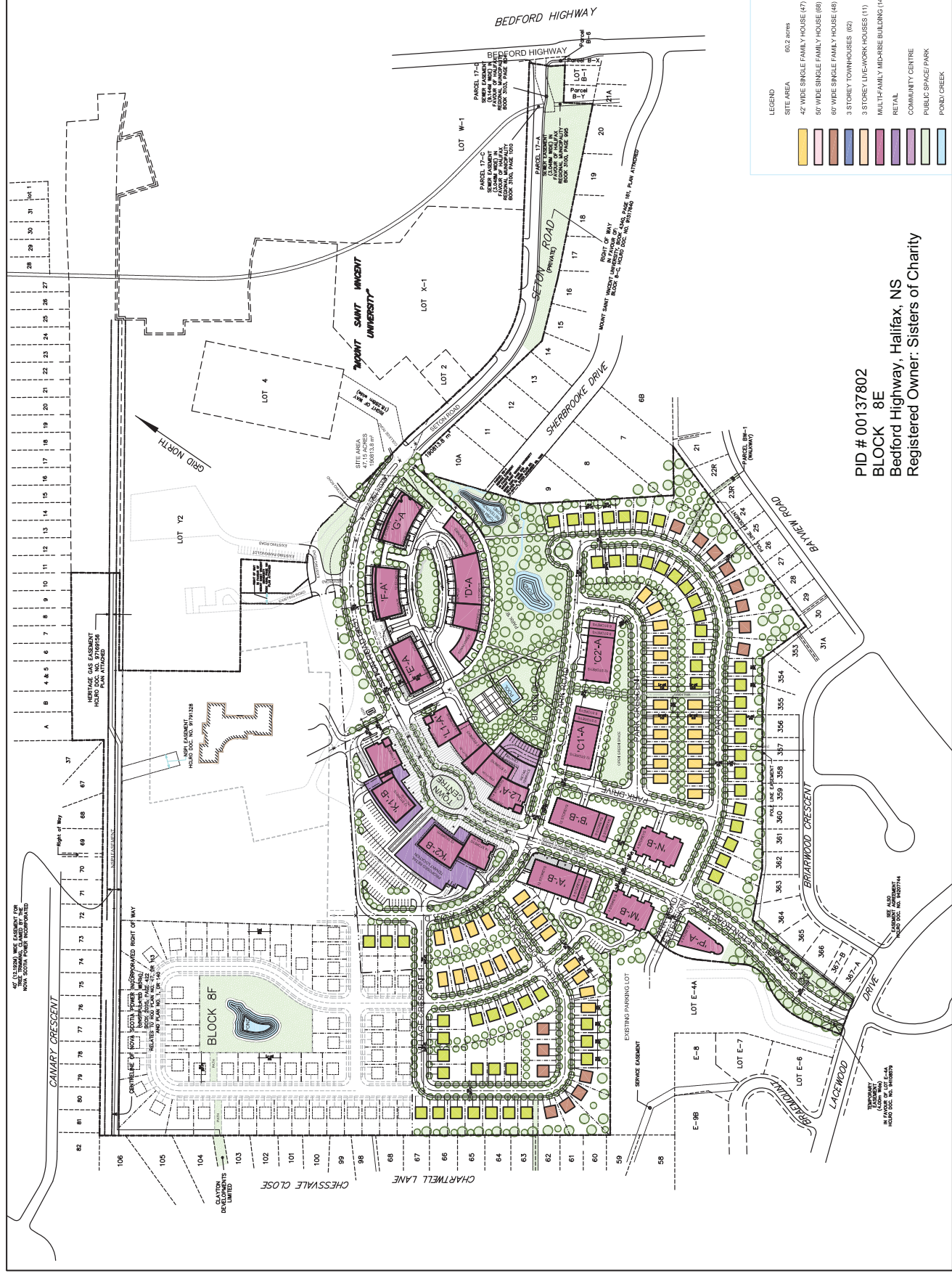
*Seton road to Bedford highway area is not included in usable area

A-CONDO
B-RENTAL



LEGEND	SITE AREA	60.2 acres
	42' WIDE SINGLE FAMILY HOUSE (47)	
	50' WIDE SINGLE FAMILY HOUSE (89)	
	60' WIDE SINGLE FAMILY HOUSE (46)	
	3 STOREY TOWNHOUSES (62)	
	3 STOREY LITE-WORK HOUSES (11)	
	MULTI-FAMILY MID-RISE BUILDING (14)	
	RETAIL	
	COMMUNITY CENTRE	
	PUBLIC SPACE/PARK	
	POND/CREEK	

PID # 00137802
BLOCK 8E
Bedford Highway
Registered Owner





Motherhouse Lands Development Primer

September 2014

Prepared by:

Ekistics Planning & Design
for Southwest Properties Ltd.

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Background

In 2011 Southwest Properties and the Sisters of Charity entered an agreement for the sale of 63.6 acres of land associated with the former Motherhouse in Rockingham overlooking the Bedford Basin (see opposite). Southwest was the successful respondent to a Request for Proposals issued by the Sisters of Charity. The Southwest proposal was cited for exceptional integration of the existing and new neighbourhoods and environmental sustainability throughout the plan. The vision of a vibrant neighbourhood for the Sisters living in the new Caritas facility, for the new residents, and for the current residents of Rockingham, Clayton Park and Sherwood Heights fits well with the principles espoused in our Regional Plan and with the desires of the community.

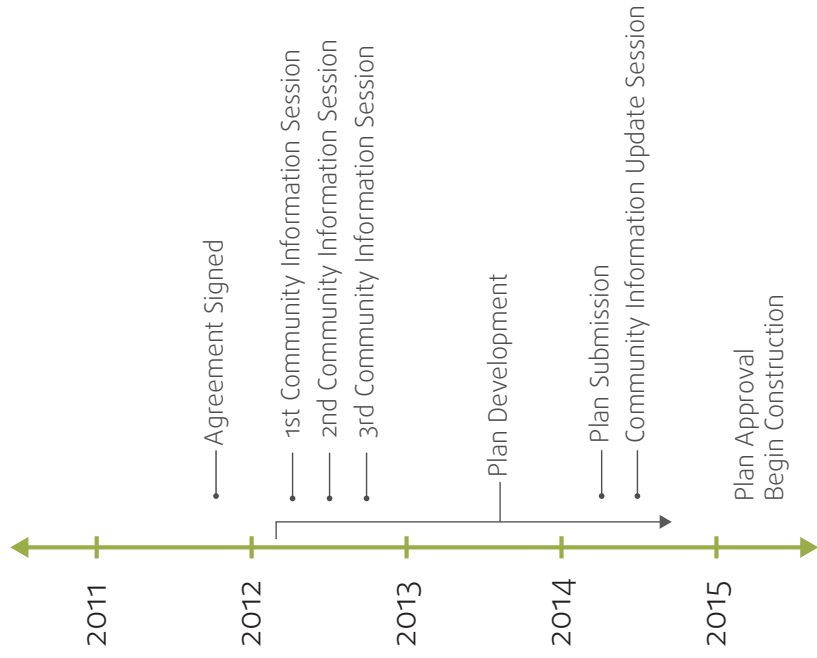
Southwest properties is committed to working with existing residents in developing these lands, having held four public consultations to date and revising the plan with the feedback received.

History

Since the successful development of the Clayton Park, Rockingham, and Sherwood Park neighbourhoods through the 1970s and 1980s, the 63.6-acre Motherhouse property has stood as an opportunity to complete connections and provide amenities for these areas and the Halifax Mainland. The creation of a community that will grow with the Sisters of Charity while respecting the history of the site and connections to the past is the goal of the plan.

Timeline

Southwest Properties and their partners have worked diligently to understand the desires of the community and to understand current best practice in residential infill communities. As the process unfolds we will continue to engage with professionals and the public to achieve the founding vision of the project.



Aerial Image of the Infill Potential with Bedford Basin



What to Expect in This Report

In working with the public the design process has benefited from a high level of buy in from the very outset. There has been a high level of interest in the project and the team has taken advantage of this energy to create a development plan that we believe will achieve many significant milestones in new residential development within HRM.

This report will take the reader through the design process to date and introduce the design and planning concepts that are being advanced through the planning application.

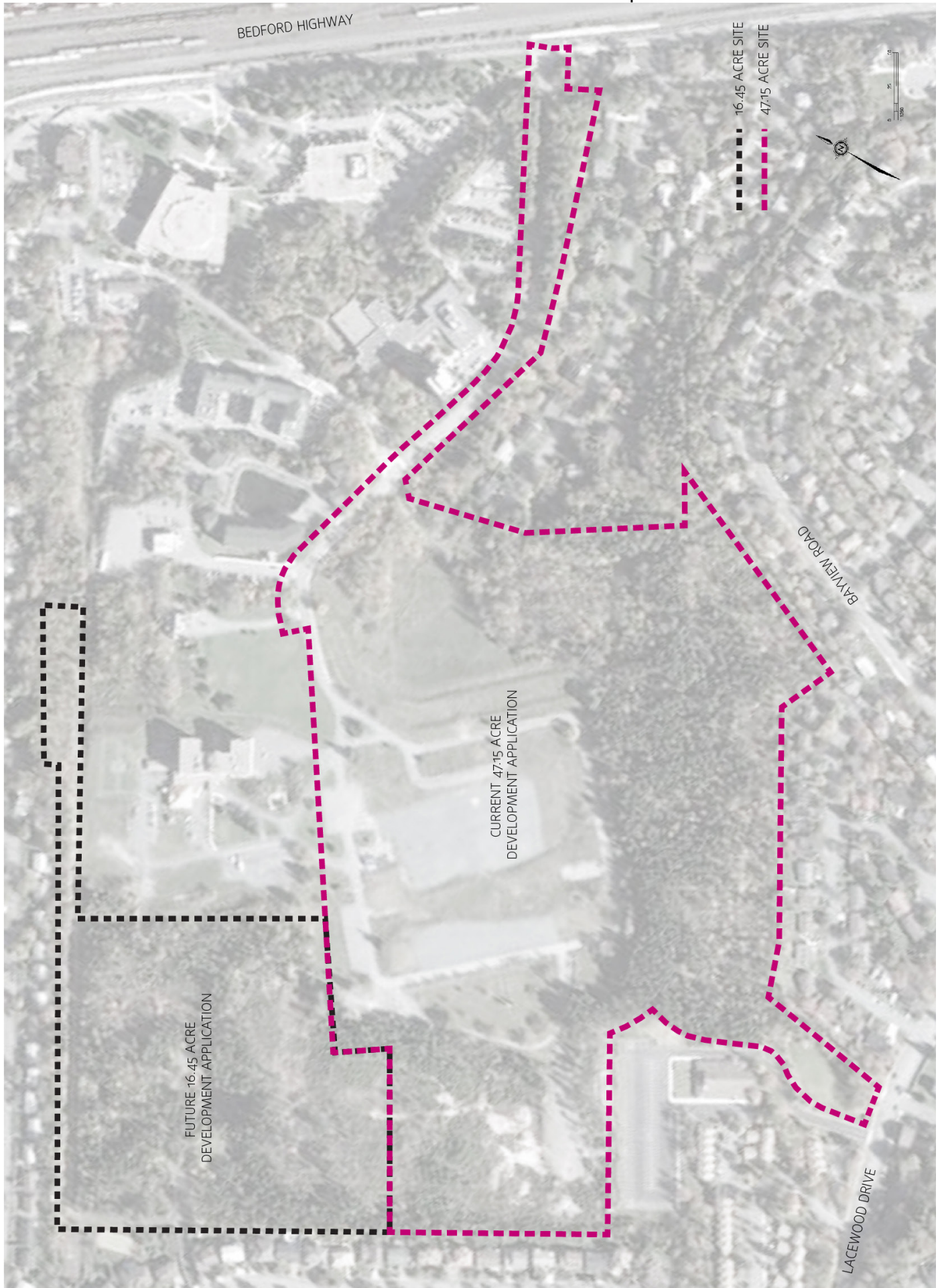
Site

The Motherhouse Lands comprise a 63.6-acre site situated on the sloping face of Rockingham near the South-Western edge of the Bedford Basin. The 63.6-acre site is being transferred to Southwest Properties from the Sisters of Charity in two separate transactions, starting with a 47.15-acre portion and following with the remaining 16.45 acres at a later date. Due to the staging of the transfer, a Planning Application for a 63.6-acre portion of the site is being pursued currently, with a second application for the additional 16.45-acre portion to follow when the land transfer is complete. Both proposals are discussed in this report.

The figure on the opposite page shows the differences between the two proposed development areas. The proposals share major infrastructure components, planning rationale, and development approach.

The comprehensive 63.6-acre plan has been developed with integration with the surrounding uses as a top priority. This integration begins in the 47.15-acre application with connections to the Caritas facilities, Mount Saint Vincent University, and Bayview Road.

The Motherhouse Lands



Approach & Design Intent

To achieve the goal of effectively developing the site with an eye to integration, the design team began the process by assessing the neighbouring communities and stakeholder strengths and opportunities for improvement. This work led to the creation of Planning Principles that will set the project as a unique example of inclusive suburban development in HRM.

Approach

The project team has learned from examples across Canada. To consider new design alternatives in the local context we have used the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design for Neighbourhood Development (LEED ND) rating system to feed the decision making process on infrastructure, site selection, and open space design. A major benefit of this system is the backing of the Canada Green Building Council (CaGBC) and the knowledge base that the organization and LEED professionals bring to the table.

By checking in regularly with the CaGBC network, and more importantly the community, we are ensuring that the Plan for the Motherhouse Lands is able to fully achieve the vision of an integrated new neighbourhood within the existing community.

Development Planning Principles

The development planning principles outlined on the opposite page will help create a place with a strong sense of community and which is pedestrian-focused. They will be used as a framework to help shape all aspects of the development of the Motherhouse Lands.

These principles mesh well with the Principles contained with the HRM Regional Plan, and are supported by best practice in environmentally sensitive design.

Details around the overlaps between existing policy and the Motherhouse Plan are provided in later chapters.

Illustrated Planning Principles



1 Interconnected Streets
An interconnected street pattern is a traditional urban design technique that reduces congestion, encourages travel choice, and supports mixed use development.



2 Compact Development
The scale of the development approximates the scale of the pedestrian. The extent of these neighbourhoods is based on a comfortable walking distance from edge to center (approximately 400 to 800 metres in radius).



3 Mixed Land Uses
A mix of diverse and complementary land uses in a compact pattern allows residents and workers to walk to work or to shop rather than driving for all daily needs.



4 Walkability
Pedestrian-friendly environments allow walking to be a pleasant, safe, and efficient alternative to (or extension of) the automobile.



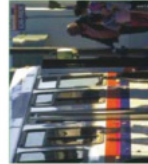
5 Natural Open Space
A variety of public open spaces contributes to a sense of place, healthy communities, and allows for less private open space for each household or workplace.



6 Public Realm
Public and semi-public spaces provide the neighbourhood infrastructure to build community bonds, social interaction, and community participation.



7 Commercial Centre
Retail streets provide the goods and services of daily life, activate the street, reduce auto-reliance, and increase ownership and safety of the pedestrian realm.



8 Transit Stop
A Transit stop is at the heart of the community will help connect the Motherhouse Lands with the surrounding neighbourhoods.



9 Streetscape Design
A highly connected street pattern with design elements coordinated to provide visual interest, pedestrian amenity, and sense of place improve the desirability of walking and shortens perception of distance.



10 Mixed Use Buildings
Vertical and horizontal integration of uses encourages more people to live in the development, ensuring evening and weekend use of buildings and providing valuable 'eyes on the street'.



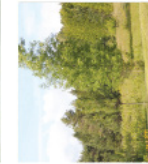
11 Architectural Variety
Promoting an architectural style that is pedestrian-friendly, contains visual variation and, with improved economics of higher density, higher quality building materials.



12 Narrow & Calmed Streets
Reduced street widths in combination with an interconnected street grid, will accommodate auto traffic in a manner that is safe, efficient, and compatible with increased pedestrian traffic.



13 Street Facing Buildings
Buildings should be placed near streets, not behind parking areas, to better define the street. Street-front retail or grade related residential units should be provided to humanize the building wall and activate the sidewalk.



14 Natural Environment
Maintain existing trees on the perimeter and provide new tree areas to maintain a sense of the natural environment.



15 Bicycle Friendly Streets
Bicycle friendly streets with dedicated bike lanes will promote a sustainable environment.

The development of the Motherhouse Lands represents a unique opportunity to create a new community within Mainland Halifax that will help define the future of the area that includes the site's immediate neighbours at MSVU and the Caritas Residence for Retirement Living as well as the other residential communities surrounding the site. The Motherhouse Lands Conceptual Plan proposes new infrastructure, a commercial core, innovative parks and facilities, and new residential stock in the heart of an existing suburban community in close proximity to the core of HRM.

The decision to engage the LEED for Neighbourhood Development (ND) rating system early in the design process has impacted the physical form of the site by encourage a well connected community. Prerequisites for inclusion in the LEED ND program require intelligent site selection, intersection density minimums, continuous sidewalk networks, and minimizing of hard and impervious surfaces throughout the development.

Centering on Seton Road, the development places a priority on creating a street that can handle the traffic capacity while acting as the core of the new community. Building forms address the right of way with street walls that are appropriate for the width of the street before stepping back to higher residential towers. The attention to the street continues through the delineation of the right of way to include ample sidewalks on both sides of all streets and on street parking to support active storefronts along the Seton Road axis.

Complementing the mixed used community core along Seton Road is a thoughtful implementation of a single-family residential community. This area links well to the core of this development, allows for internal flow, and connects to the surrounding uses through a well considered street and active transportation network.

In total the development contains over 1,700 residential units divided between the multi unit dwellings and single-family dwellings in the 47.15-acre plan. Added to this residential offering is approximately 56,000 square feet of commercial space and 12,000 square feet of community space.

The proposed development exemplifies best practices in contemporary community design and engagement.

Development Features

Landscaped Public Space

- » Invites pedestrian activity with engaging design

Street Trees

- » Add to comfort
- » Reduce Urban Heat Island

Street Level Live/Work Units

- » Diversifies street level activity

Podium Step-Back

- » Creates pedestrian scaled streetscape
- » Reduces wind effects

Buried Utilities

- » Efficient and durable against weather events
- » Supports attractive streets

Sub-grade and Off-street Parking

- » Balances presence of all modes of travel
- » Reduces land demand



Parkland Allocation

The Conceptual Plan allocates 6.57 acres of the 47.15 acre development for parkland and open space for public use. At 14 percent, this allocation is a substantial contribution toward the subdivision Parkland requirement and contributes greatly to the development's ability to meet many LEED ND requirements. The spaces that have been designed provide the best response to the objectives of the Regional Plan and the Municipal Planning Strategy, as well as to the site in general. The challenge of meeting all aspects of the Parkland designation within the current Subdivision Bylaw while satisfying these other objectives is significant.

An additional unique challenge in this process is achieving acceptable Parkland allocation within the 47.15-acre parcel without the benefit of a significant reserve area allocated in the 16.45-acres that will accompany the eventual full 63.6-acre plan.

Generally the sloping conditions of the site provide the largest obstacle in locating the parkland components. The few flat areas for development within the Motherhouse Lands are subject to other significant restraints (in one case, located on the periphery of the site, and in the other directly in the line of the best collector routing for Seton Road). As such the selection of optimal park locations leads to some consideration of what parks can be asked to do for a community in a progressive suburban infill community.

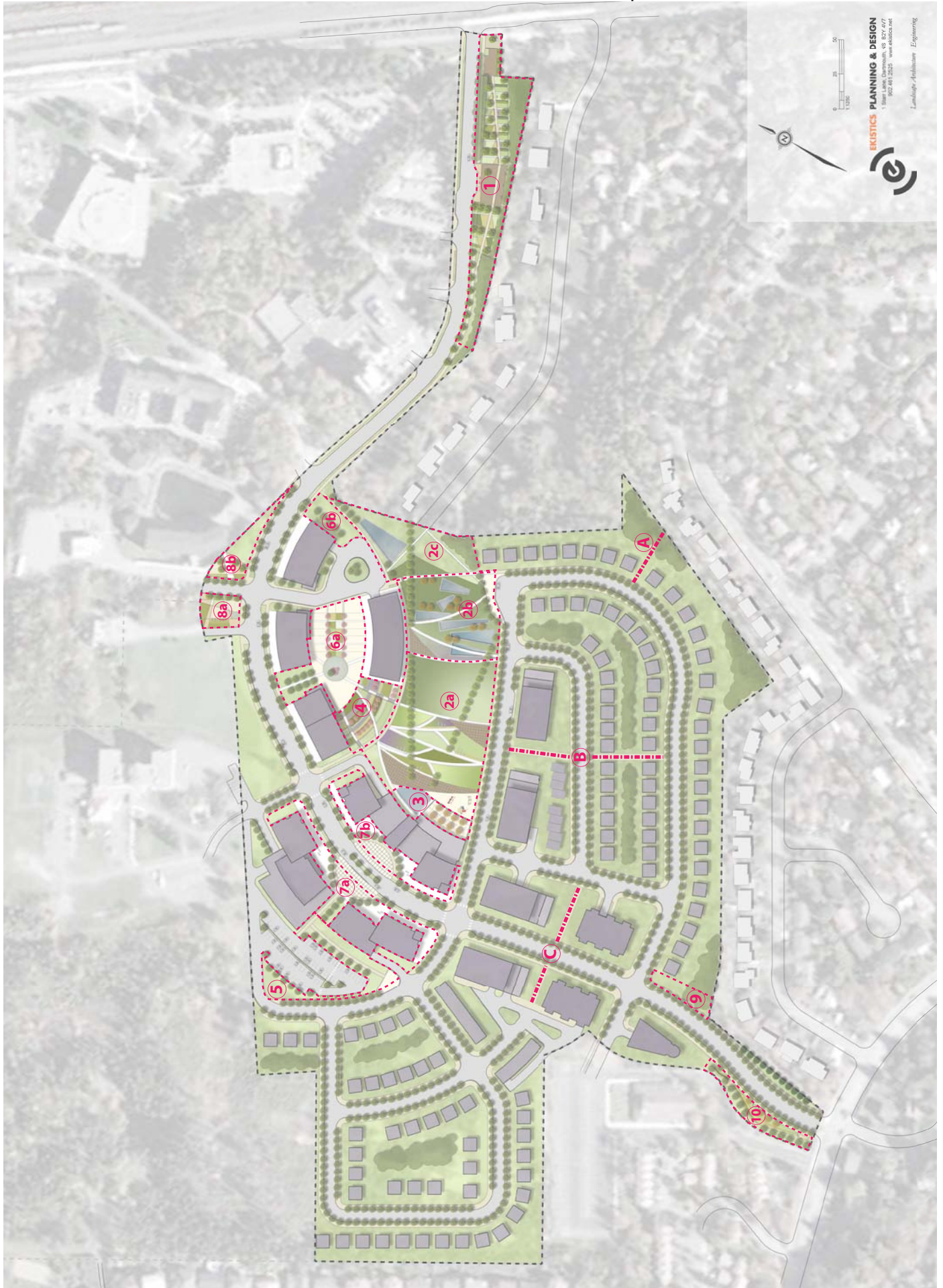
The role of the park within the proposed development is that of meeting place, recreation hub, opportunity for experiencing natural settings, and engagement with the history and beauty of the site.

Though development of a contiguous (5-acre) park is not possible on the site, the plan does allow for a 30,000 square foot, level recreational space at the core of the park. This size of area allows flexibility in use, with the opportunity for traditional pitch & catch, or kick-about, to be well accommodated and so to are the community gatherings (festivals) that are more traditionally found in public spaces within the Core of our Region.

The remaining spaces that make up the over 6-acres of proposed public parkland within the development include ample opportunities for playgrounds, interpretation, trail head uses, and other classic park use. Some spaces, both private and public, have been designed with year round use for the public in mind. Wind breaks and sun exposure will allow for comfortable use even in the shoulder seasons.

Above all else the Central Park provides opportunities for quiet contemplation and interpretation that have been common activities on this site since the commissioning of the original Motherhouse.

The Parklands and public spaces within the plan will be a defining feature of the site well into the future.



LEED ND

A significant driver of the current design at the Motherhouse Lands is to achieve Atlantic Canada's first LEED ND residential community. The guidelines provided by the LEED standard have helped the design team find the best solutions for the site, and – not coincidentally – led to the strong alignment with the Planning Policies of and reported recommendations to the Halifax Regional Municipality.

Specific clauses from the LEED ND rating system that have helped inform the built form of the development include:

- » Smart Location
- » Design with Nature
- » Connected Neighbourhoods
- » Public Transit
- » Neighbourhoods that Use Land Efficiently
- » Diverse and Convenient Neighbourhoods
- » Walkable Streets
- » Reduced Parking and Transportation Demand
- » Bicycle-Friendly Design
- » Mixed Uses and Community Spaces

LEED ND is unique in its ability to shape neighbourhoods in the design phase to link with current policy principles and objectives as well as best practice in development. By instituting ground rules for layout and site it is somewhat

simpler to ensure the creation of positives experiences for citizens as the project moves through the development stages to final buildout.

The best example of the ripple effect that LEED ND has provided within this planning context is the Neighbourhood Pattern and Design. Through these simple rules about how streets intersect, how pedestrians and vehicles engage with the network, and how building address the road right of way (both large and small) the design team is compelled to layout lots, streets, and parks in such a way that the utility by the eventual residents is maximized through proximity location and dense street networks.

LEGEND

NUMBER OF INTERSECTIONS
(STREETS & SIDEWALKS)



LEED 2009 FOR NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT
NEIGHBORHOOD PATTERN & DESIGN

NPD PREREQUISITE 3:
CONNECTED & OPEN COMMUNITY

CATEGORY - 140 Intersections of streets
OR 4 Intersections of streets

REQUIREMENT - 140 Intersections of streets
OR 4 Intersections of streets

OPTION 1: Projects w/ Internal Streets

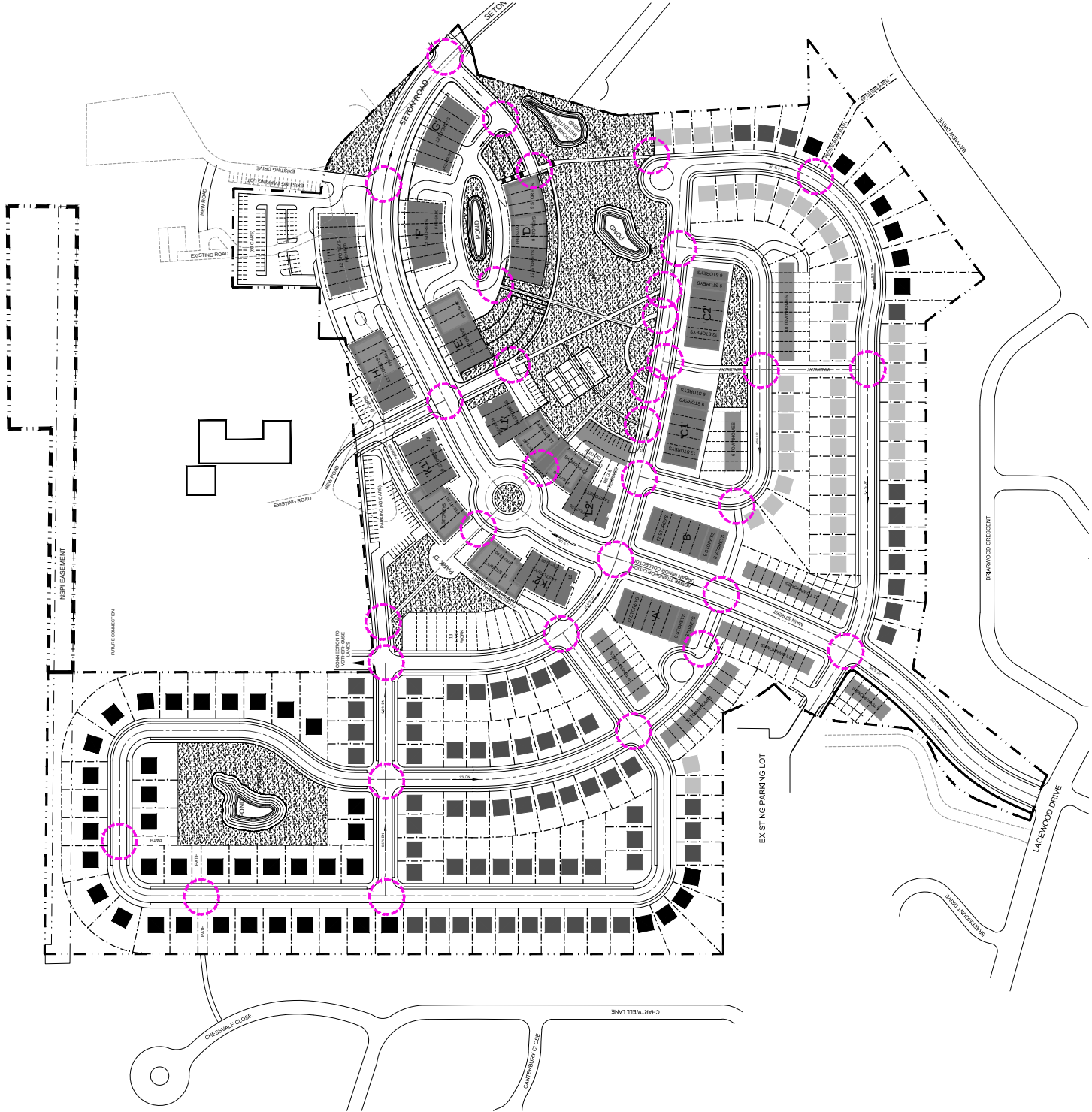
Total Site 63 Acres
Intersections Required: 139
Intersections Provided: 33

- Design and build the project so that at least one through street is provided. This requirement is met by the extension of Sutton Road from its existing location to Lacewood Drive.

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SEPT 26, 2013





Policy Alignment

Regional Plan Principles

The Principles included in the HRM Regional Plan are referenced here with specific insight into how the proposed plan for the Motherhouse Lands supports and responds to these principles.

1. The Regional Plan Manages development to make the most effective use of land, energy, infrastructure, public services and facilities, and fosters healthy lifestyles.

» The proposed plan is supportive of a diversity of recreational opportunities, including but not limited to active recreation. The street design, urban form, parks, and open spaces within the Conceptual Plan all provide access for citizens in all phases of life.

» By including dense forms at the core of the development a critical mass of activity is supported throughout the day and in the evening that helps commercial ventures in the area. A dense form will also reduce car trips per day which is a major goal of the project.

» The Motherhouse Lands development is an infill project that will provide residential and commercial opportunities that help offset the need for a similar development in green field lands throughout the HRM.

» The proposed development, including multiple unit dwellings and single family residential offerings that have been designed to fit within the area of the Motherhouse Lands, would take up much more land in a traditional greenfield suburban development.

2. Ensure opportunities for the protection of open space, wilderness, a natural beauty and sensitive environmental areas

» Progressive stormwater management and park planning will allow for the on-site retention of water and its integration within the open spaces. This will help reduce infrastructure costs and allow for a diverse offering of public spaces for a variety of users.

» Through the siting of park spaces on the slopes and the siting of taller development along Seton Road, vistas to the natural beauty of the Bedford Basin are preserved all major park areas.

3. Develops an integrated transportation system in conjunction with stated principles.

» Through the density proposed, a stronger transit route can be supported on Seton Road that will feed to major arterials (Bedford Highway & Dunbrack Street).

Rendering of Central Square



- » AT networks will be carried through the site connecting existing residential communities on Chessvale Close, Flamingo Drive, and Bayview Drive.
- » LEED ND standards for street design have influenced the proposed setbacks and street fronts, adding to the quality of the pedestrian experience over the complete sidewalk network.
- 4. Support an promote sustainability of cultural, historical and natural assets
 - » Connection to the historic Motherhouse is promoted through open space development and a relationship with Mount Saint Vincent University. The opportunity to connect to this history of the site is recognized and supported through the Conceptual Plan.
 - » The Open Space plan includes the provision of stormwater retention at the lower end of the site. By making this a feature of the park space there is an opportunity for HRM and Halifax Water to begin communicating with citizens in this space about how they promote sustainable natural assets by reducing hard infrastructure and taking advantage of the natural abilities of the land to mitigate environmental concerns.
- 5. Support the Regional Centre as the focus for economic, cultural and residential activities
 - » The Motherhouse Lands are located at the edge of the Regional Centre, only 1km down the Bedford Highway from the Fairview Overpass.
 - » The close proximity and opportunity to contribute to a substantial transit node on the Bedford Highway supports the centre by ensuring best use of the land immediately surrounding it.

Ultimately the Conceptual Plan will create a community that will act as an essential link to MSVU, the residents of the neighbourhoods in and around the site, and the current and future residential development of the Caritas facilities. Inherent in these stakeholders is a true multigenerational demographic. The proposed design reflects this in the diversity of housing options, local & walkable services, and open spaces designed with the full breadth of the population in mind.

Regional Plan Objectives

As has been demonstrated, there is great alignment between the Regional Plan Principles and the starting Principles that the design team has used to arrive at the current proposed plan. Additionally the conceptual plan if realized will help HRM achieve many objectives stated within the Regional Plan.

Walkable Residential Streets



Environmental Objectives:

1. Foster a land management and community design approach which integrates preservation of lands of ecological, cultural and environmental significance;
 - » By building in an area that is already contained within a significant suburban development cluster (Clayton Park), the Motherhouse Lands proposal naturally protects much of the significant wilderness areas at the edge of developed land in Halifax Mainland.
2. Adopt development practices that sustain air, land, water and groundwater resources and respond to climate change;
 - » The Motherhouse Lands proposal is forward thinking in its approach to managing groundwater resources through stormwater retention in natural park features.
 - » The reduction in surface parking and roads throughout the development sustain the natural ability of the land to capture and retain stormwater runoff with a large reduction in the required piping and delivery of storm water.
 - » The site, being uphill and elevated is naturally protected from climate change impacts on sea level in the Bedford Basin.

Settlement and Housing Objectives

1. Direct growth so as to balance property rights and lifestyle opportunities with responsible fiscal and environmental management;
 - » It is well known that there is desire for new single family homes in HRM. The Motherhouse Lands proposal includes single family homes, and does so in closer proximity to the Regional Centre than any other plan would be capable of doing. By following the LEED ND standard, it will also provide them in a form that is completely in agreement with sound environmental management in new developments.
2. Focus new growth in centres where supporting services and infrastructure are already available;
 - » The proposed development is completely surrounded by established neighbourhoods. While the new development will benefit from existing services and infrastructure, Clayton Park and other adjacent residential neighbourhoods will benefit from the introduction of new services, activity, and increased population.
 - » The significant activity node at Mount Saint Vincent University will benefit from the multi-use land use pattern of the proposed Motherhouse Lands development. The opportunity will be created for the University population to find housing and services closer to their place of work and/or education.

Regional Context

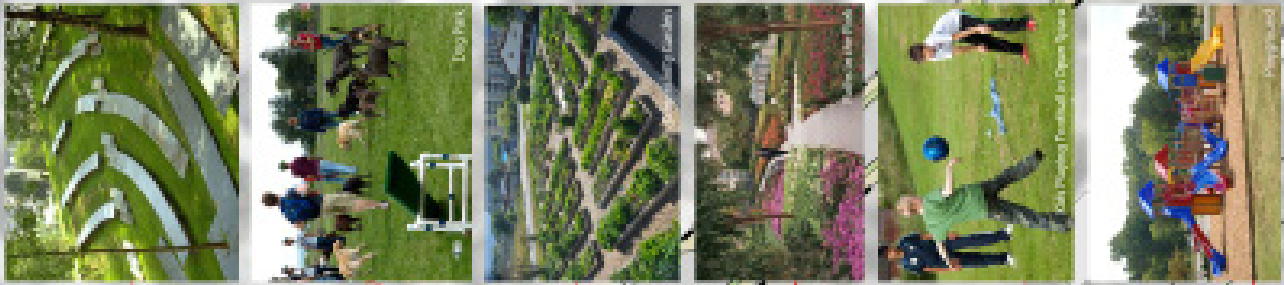


3. Design communities that: are attractive, healthy places to live and have access to the goods, services and facilities needed by residents and support complete neighbourhoods as described in 6.2.2 (v) of the Plan;
 - a. are accessible to all mobility needs and are well connected with other communities;
 - b. protect neighbourhood stability and support neighbourhood revitalization;
 - c. preserve significant environmental and cultural features;
 - d. promote community food security;
 - e. provide housing opportunities for a range of social and economic needs and promote aging in place;
- » The Motherhouse Lands proposal addresses all of these general provisions outlined in Settlement Objectives. Most notably, the Open Space Plan addresses environmental & cultural features, community food security, and access.

Economy and Finance Objectives

1. Prepare financial plans and strategies that support and encourage the outcomes of this Plan, including environmental conservation, housing affordability, economic competitiveness, revitalization of the Regional Centre, and neighbourhood stability.
 - » By developing the Motherhouse Lands, the existing Clayton Park neighbourhood will be put on stable footing. The significant population centre will support the regional commercial centres on Dunbrack and will add local destinations within the Halifax Mainland for commerce and entertainment.

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Municipal Water Services, Utilities and Solid Waste Objectives

1. Coordinate municipal initiatives with the Halifax Regional Water Commission (Halifax Water) to (i) provide water, wastewater and stormwater services in a cost-effective manner; (ii) recoup growth related costs from benefiting property owners; and (iii) reduce degradation to the natural environment.

» The Motherhouse Lands project represents an opportunity for Planning staff at the Municipality to work with Halifax Water to set new standards in relation to the LEED ND (and other best practice) standards.

2. Manage growth to make the best use of existing water, wastewater and storm infrastructure and avoid unnecessary or premature expenditures;

» The Motherhouse Lands project represents an opportunity for the Municipality to invest in water, wastewater, and storm infrastructure on the Seton Road access. Specifically, the design is being directed to progressive, modern infrastructure that will have a lower cost of servicing over its lifetime.

3. Support environmentally sustainable practices for developments serviced with on-site water and wastewater services;

» The project's Open Space Plan considers and advocates for the unique integration of Municipal parks and on-site water and wastewater services.

Collectively, the development proposal (both multi-family and single family homes, as well as commercial development) help to achieve the overarching goals of the Regional Plan. This includes:

- » increasing transportation choice and efficiency
- » energy efficient land use planning and neighbourhood site planning
- » educate and engage residents and businesses through progressive open space and stormwater planning.

RP+5

Understanding that Plans should change as new realities emerge over time, the 2006 Regional Plan for HRM was written as a living document intended to be responsive to emerging challenges and opportunities in the Region. Contained within the Regional Plan is a mechanism requiring that it be formally reviewed and updated every five years.

The first such review has taken place over the past 3 years and has resulted in some changes to the focus and direction of Regional Planning in HRM.

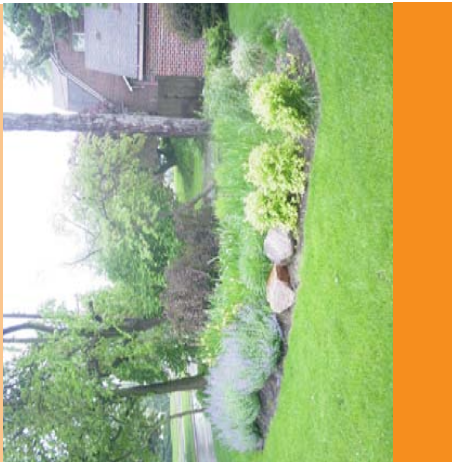
Regional Council approved the revised Regional Plan following a public hearing on June 24, 2014. As it has not gone to the Province for review, the Plan is not yet in force. Nonetheless, it is highly likely that the proposed revisions, even in their current form, will have an impact on HRM staff's assessment of many features of the Motherhouse Lands Conceptual Plan.

The RP+5 process has strengthened the position of the Regional Plan with regards to alternative models to greenfield development. This includes the concept of green-beltting which will be explored further through the Municipality's commitment to undertake a green-beltting and Public Open Space Priorities Plan.

Stormwater Features

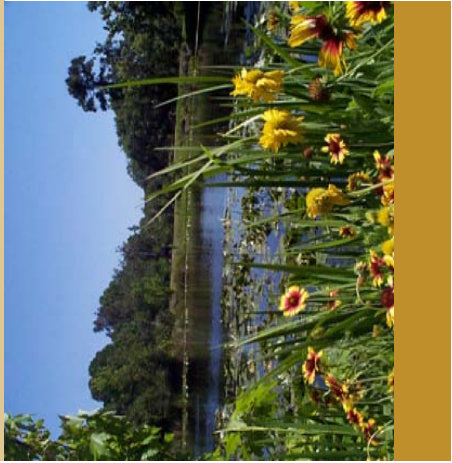
RAIN GARDENS

By harvesting and channelling the above-average rainfalls which Halifax experiences, we can create beautiful and inviting gardens throughout the community which foster a variety of native flora and fauna. These gardens are low-maintenance and help keep local streets and properties from flooding during high rainfall events.



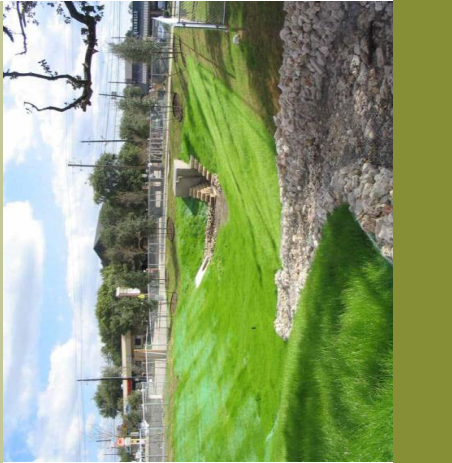
RETENTION PONDS

On-site retention ponds can be used to capture and hold storm water in aesthetically pleasing, nature-enhancing ways. Ponds can be integrated with the landscape, vegetated, and used as site amenity features as well as the basis for new and thriving water-based ecosystems.



DETENTION PONDS

Detention basins can be used as unique recreation areas designed to periodically flood during wet seasons. When dry, they may serve as play fields, dog runs, or gathering spots. When wet, they decrease the off-site drainage, and allow water to slowly percolate and recharge the existing aquifers.



VEGETATED SWALE

Rather than immediately piping water off of the streets, rainwater runoff can be directed to long vegetated swales between street curb and sidewalk. These swales can channel water, allowing it to infiltrate the soil, cleanse it before entering the groundwaters, and create roadside ecosystems, making each neighbourhood a unique experience.



The Motherhouse Lands development can be used as a best practice example of how to make suburban infill work for an entire community. By working with the developer to advance this project the Municipality will help show support the reduction of new greenfield development.

Also present in the RP+5 revisions are the introduction of policy considerations for food security, mobility needs, supporting aging in place. Each of these considerations are manifested within the open space, street network, and urban form in the Motherhouse Lands Conceptual Plan.

Finally, a significant change in the approach to stormwater management is included in section 8.4 of the revised Regional Plan. These changes will allow for many of the LEED ND requirements for stormwater management to be included in the Motherhouse Lands projects as it advances.

Bedford Hwy Corridor Traffic Study

Significant to the consideration of the Motherhouse Lands Proposal are the outcomes and recommendations from the Traffic Study Report prepared by MMM Group in 2013. Most applicable are the following findings with respect to managing future demand on the Bedford Highway:

1. Regardless of development density and transit improvements Regional Plan road improvements are needed to maintain acceptable service;
2. Higher density mixed use neighbourhoods that are walkable tend to reduce auto-dependency and encourage transit use, they also make transit provision more viable in development areas;
3. Findings are consistent with stated principles and opportunities in Regional Plan, especially to manage development and make efficient use of land, infrastructure, energy and to reduce development on greenfields requiring all new infrastructure for servicing;
4. The number of destinations within a specific area or neighbourhood tends to increase with population and employment density, reducing travel distances and the need for car travel;



5. Increased density and variety of development form tend to increase the number of transportation options available due to economies of scale;

6. Increased density tends to reduce traffic speeds, increase traffic congestion and reduce parking supply.

At a meeting held on November 4th, 2013, the Community Planning & Economic Development Standing Committee also reviewed this study and recommended to Council an MPS amendment process to support the proposed Motherhouse Lands Plan based on similar rationale.



Summary

This report shows inputs and rationale for many of the design decisions that have been made to date. This process, as much as the design,

The Motherhouse Lands project is an opportunity for Southwest and HRM to guide the development of a high quality, vibrant, mixed use, community that will house over 1,700 new homes near the core of our Region. The design is sensitive to existing neighbours and ensures that future neighbours will have the ability to integrate with a well-designed, vibrant, accessible, urban neighbourhood at the intersection of fascinating institutional and residential uses in the Mainland North area.

By employing the LEED ND rating system we have brought many contemporary urban design standards that improve walkability, connectivity - both internally and with other neighbourhoods, and strategies that mitigate issues such as heat island effect, stormwater management, and traffic capacity. As outlined in earlier chapters, the strategies are in line with the Regional Plan Principles and Objectives and provide a strong basis for an updated Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy for the area.