

Halifax Regional Council

July 16, 2002

Aug. 20, 2002

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: *Lewis M. Rogers*
Lew Rogers, Director, Tourism, Culture, Heritage

DATE: July 10, 2002

SUBJECT: Cogswell Interchange

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

The Capital District Vision was presented to Council on May 21, 2002. The redevelopment of the Cogswell Interchange was identified as the first priority for a signature capital project. Council requested a staff report outlining a process and costs for initiating the redevelopment project.

BACKGROUND

The redevelopment of the Cogswell Interchange has been discussed on and off for many years. Staff presented a briefing to Committee-of-the-Whole on March 26, 2002, outlining past efforts and current status. This presentation is attached as Appendix A.

DISCUSSION

More information is needed before a specific project start-up process and costs can be recommended. In the short term, staff will collect information that will guide next steps.

1. **High Level Objectives:**

- Remove the physical barrier between Downtown Halifax and Central Halifax; reintegrate the two communities
- Create an attractive gateway to the Capital District
- Maintain an adequate street network
- Enable ability to provide land and new facilities (public and private) in the core area
- Explore financing opportunities to optimize redevelopment costs
- Enable increased tax revenue

Staff identified some outstanding questions related to achieving the above objectives, and also dependencies on other projects. For example, we need more information concerning Regional Transportation and also the Capital District Facilities Needs Assessment before initiating an active design and redevelopment project for the Cogswell site.

2. **Information Needs:**

The following steps would address these information needs:

2.1 **Research**

There are similar projects recently completed or currently underway across North America. Staff propose to research these projects for the purpose of:

- identifying trends and opportunities that are being realized elsewhere
 - increasing our knowledge of context and potential processes (there are many potential methods to approach the redesign exercise)
 - identifying financial tools that are being used on similar projects
- Information to be complete by October 2002, led by Roger Wells. Cost - approximately \$15,000 for retaining consultant to undertake the research. Funds to be allocated by participating Business Units.*

2.2 **Acquire accurate and up-to-date land information related to the overall site, adjacent properties, treatment plant and potential street system alignments**

Information to be complete by October 2002, led by Roger Wells.

2.3 **Prepare a series of options / scenarios for site redevelopment for purposes of identifying high level, comparative benefits and costs. Identify in very general terms a break-even point (amount of land sale necessary to pay for the redevelopment costs).**

This would be for comparative and information gathering purposes only. It is too early in the process to decide to what extent, if any, the municipality should subsidize the redevelopment. Such a decision would need to be based on municipal facility needs, private sector opportunities, benefits

to be realized from the project, etc. Therefore, the scenarios would not identify specific land uses, but would entail some analysis of combinations of residential, commercial and public space.
Information to be complete by November 2002, led by Peter Stickings.

2.4 Identify potential Capital District public facility needs for the next ten to fifteen years.

This work is currently underway. While other levels of government have been invited to participate, their level of involvement has not been determined at this time.

Population, visitor and employment projections for the Capital District are needed to identify public facility needs and are being undertaken as part of the Regional Planning Capital District Case Study.
Information to be complete by April 2003, dependent on receiving the population, employment and visitor projections by September 2002. Roger Wells to lead the Facilities Needs Assessment as a component of the Capital District Public Real Property Opportunity Plan.

2.5 Identify future transportation needs related to the Cogswell site.

This work is also dependent on receiving population, employment and visitor projections for the Capital District and the Region. The Cogswell site represents an important existing transportation link. This function should be retained in future redevelopment plans, and may be enhanced through the use of a portion of the site as an inter-modal transportation node.
Information to be complete by April 2003, dependent on receiving population related information by September 2002. Erica Tiffany will lead the transportation analysis.

2.6 Public Consultation

Some consultation has taken place through the Capital District Visioning process and through the earlier feasibility work. A more detailed and inclusive process will be recommended when staff returns to Council with results of the above work and recommendations for a more detailed redevelopment process.

3. Next Steps:

When the above tasks are complete we will know:

- approximate amount of land needed for public use
- approximate amount of land available for private sector development
- approximate costs and benefits of various redevelopment scenarios
- potential redevelopment and financing methods (public, private and various combinations)
- process options which best meet HRM needs and an estimated timeline for redevelopment

Staff will return to Council with a recommended redevelopment process and estimated costs and benefits in Spring 2003. Administrative costs, for example, design, project management, consultation, etc., will be estimated in time for inclusion and debate in the 2003 budget.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

The estimated cost for completing the research phase of this project is \$15,000. These funds will be allocated from approved 2002/03 Operating budgets of participating Business Units.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN

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

ALTERNATIVES

N/A

ATTACHMENTS

1. Cogswell Presentation to Council, March 26, 2002 Committee-of-the-Whole

Additional copies of this report, and information on its status, can be obtained by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report Prepared by: Carol Macomber, Project Manager, Capital District

Halifax Regional Municipality
Capital District

March
2002

COGSWELL STREET INTERCHANGE

- Background
- Current Planning Context
- HRM Project Team
- Findings and Highlights
- Traffic Study
- Relationship to Waste Water Treatment Plant



- Next Phases for the Project
- Conclusion

Halifax Regional Municipality
Capital District

March
2002

Background

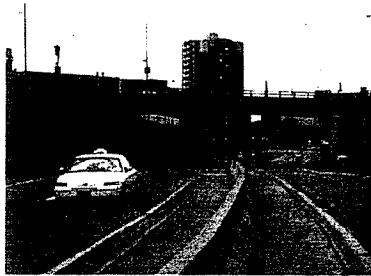
- Constructed in the mid 1970s
- Intended as a major connector to Harbour Drive, the Halifax Waterfront highway planned at that time
- Community activists stopped the highway construction enabling the historic, livable and highly successful waterfront we have today
- Redevelopment discussed since this time and used as student planning project for many years.



Halifax Regional Municipality Capital District

March
2002

Current Planning Context



HALIFAX
REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

- North American trend toward removing urban core highways and related infrastructure (i.e. Boston, Portland Oregon, New York, San Francisco, Milwaukee, Toronto's Gardiner Expressway)
- 1998 Barrington Street Strategic Plan called for removal and consideration as a public transportation hub
- Draft Halifax Waterfront Plan echoes
- Capital District draft Vision identifies redevelopment of the Cogswell Interchange to include civic facility and public transportation uses, as the number one Signature Project
- Harbour Clean-up was also a top priority

Halifax Regional Municipality Capital District

March
2002

HRM Project Team



- Capital District – Project Management
- Transportation and Public Works
- Planning & Development
- Real Property Services

HALIFAX
REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

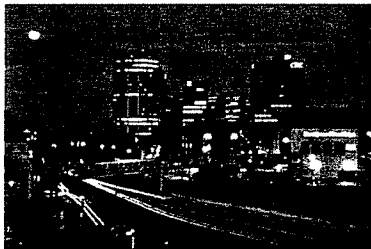
Project Champion: Dan English

Highlights & Findings



- March 1999 - Commencement of the project
- November 1999 - Project defined
- March 2000 - Findings reported to EMT
- April 2000- 3D models completed by Dalhousie University
- May 2000 - Next steps of the project confirmed (Traffic Study, etc)
- Summer 2000 - Preliminary staff investigations completed
- January 2001 - Council Information Report completed
- February 2001 - Downtown Halifax Opinion Leaders Forum
- April 2001 - At Grade Street Feasibility Study completed
- May 2001 - Project put on hold to place in context of Capital District Vision and Regional Planning

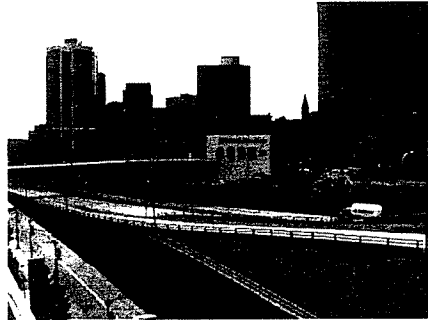
At Grade Street Feasibility Study



- Completed in April, 2001
 - Studied various street alignments for the purpose of determining if it is feasible, from a traffic perspective, to remove the interchange
 - Feasibility was determined
- Street Design needs to be studied in the context of public visions for the site and also in the context of regional transportation planning
- Street Design will be a component of an over-all design program if/when the project is restarted.

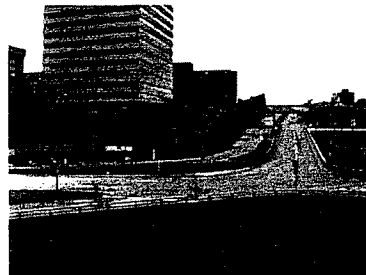
Relationship to Waste Water Treatment Plant (WTPP)

- WTPP uses approximately 2 acres (excluding streets)
- The site redevelopment exploration assumed this use



Next Phases for the Project (if/when restarted)

- Cogswell Interchange Project included with Capital District Task Force and linked with Regional Planning
 - e.g., Integration of Cogswell Traffic Study with Regional Transportation & Transit Planning
- Market impact and absorption studies; financial analysis
- High-level public visioning & consultation
- Feasibility determined (latest information to be analyzed)
- Detailed land use planning (to be scoped)
- Site Redevelopment Planning (to be scoped)



Conclusions

The Waste Water Treatment Plant can be located on this site without impacting original redevelopment assumptions.

Removal of the interchange and redevelopment of the site is considered important by the community in terms of:

- Reconnecting the Gottingen business area with the downtown and waterfront areas
- Creating 'people scaled', livable downtown spaces



Treatment Site Highlights

- A consultation process was undertaken for this site with the CLC during the RFP and review stage of the proposal for STP.
- The building design, exterior finish, was reviewed by representatives of all three CLC's before staff recommendations were made to Council. The design of the recommended proponent was well received and recommended by these representatives.
- The land area of the site is just under 2 acres excluding the streets. The site location and area has not changed since the RFP was issued.
- A staff person has been assigned to meet with the CLC and provide all the information about the proposed plant design and site. Further consultation, within parameters will occur. (i.e. Landscaping/Finishing details)
- A staff person has been assigned to work with the CLC regarding the use of Integration funds.