

May 1, 2014

Mitch Dickey, Planner
Community & Recreation Services
40 Alderney Drive
Dartmouth, Nova Scotia
B2Y 2N5

**Re: Municipal Planning Strategy & Land Use By-law Amendment and Development Agreement
Application Hines Road Property, Eastern Passage (PIDs 40103806, 40103780, 40103772, 40103798,
00370429)**

Dear Mr. Dickey,

Please accept this letter as Armco Capital Inc.'s request to amend the Eastern Passage/Cow Bay Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) and Land Use By-law (LUB) to incorporate site specific policy and by-law provision allowing for the development of a comprehensively planned residential community including single family, semi-detached, townhome and multi-family buildings in excess of 12 units by development agreement. Further, that HRM enter into a development agreement to allow for a mixed-use residential community. In order to move forward with our proposed development, it is our understanding the following planning processes will have to take place:

1. Re-designation of the subject property from Industrial to Urban Residential;
2. A site specific amendment to the MPS/LUB to allow for multiple unit dwellings exceeding twelve units on the subject property through development agreement;
3. A development agreement between HRM and Armco Capital to allow for the development of a mixed use residential community.

1. Proposed MPS/LUB Amendment

Background

Armco Capital owns 82.51 acres of land in Eastern Passage, off of Hines Road. We propose to develop a residential community on approximately 8 acres over PIDs 40103806, 40103780, 40103772, 40103798 and 00370429. In order for this development to take place, amendments are required to the Eastern Passage/Cow Bay MPS and LUB.

In 2009, Armco applied for a MPS/LUB amendment to enable subsequent application for the development of the site by DA. The proposed amendments that went before council were:

- Two site specific amendments: one to have the lands designated Urban Residential; another to allow multi-unit and townhouse developments through the DA process;
- And a general amendment to allow the development of multi-unit buildings with more than 12 units within the plan area.

While HRM staff wrote a favourable report, Council voted against the amendments in April of 2011.

Community Engagement

In light of Council's decision in April of 2011, Armco Capital has committed to undertake a community engagement process, in cooperation with HRM Staff, prior to finalizing a conceptual design for the development. It is Armco's intention to incorporate comment from the community into the development with respect to building form, site planning, setbacks from existing development, open space, etc. We believe that this level of community engagement with help to create a residential development that incorporates the needs of the existing community and addresses Council's original concerns.

Site Characteristics

The properties Armco proposes to develop are located within the Eastern Passage/Cow Bay Plan area. They are designated Industrial and zoned R-1 (Single Unit Dwelling Zone), EC (Environmental Conservation) and I-1 (Light Industry Zone). Only the lands zoned R-1 will be developed. The properties are designated Urban Settlement under the Regional MPS. The lands are located entirely within the municipal service boundary.

Application Support

In our opinion, an amendment to the MPS and LUB a development agreement permitting this mixed use residential development would be appropriate for the subject property, and would more effectively meet the goals of the Regional Plan and the Eastern Passage/Cow Bay Municipal Planning Strategy. The existing Industrial designation was applied to the Hines Road lands in 1982. This assumption that the area would be developed for large scale industrial uses is no longer valid. Currently there is an abundance of underutilized Industrial designated land in the area. Given this, and that the Hines Road lands abut a well-established residential community in the vicinity of Hines Road, Vivian Lane & Howard Avenue, the lands would be much better suited for residential development. We would like to set forth the following points in support of this position:

- 1. The proposal reflects the general intent and vision of the RMPS.** The Regional Plan designates this property as Urban Settlement. It is the primary intention of this designation to identify where urban forms of development will occur throughout the next 25 years. Armco's proposal for a mixed use residential community is consistent with the urban form of development as outline in policy S-1 of the Regional Plan: *"HRM shall establish the Urban Settlement Designation, shown on the Generalized Future Land Use Map (Map 2), as the area where central wastewater and water distribution services are intended to be provided to facilitate an urban form of development over the next 25 years. Any development boundary established under the existing secondary planning strategies shall be replaced by the Urban Settlement Designation. The designation is intended to provide for a diverse, vibrant and liveable urban environment..."*

2. **Environment.** Environmental protection is a significant component of the RMPS. More specifically it states that: *“taking a balanced approach toward environmental protection and development is key to an environmentally and economically sustainable future... this plan aims to protect the natural environment by establishing development practices that are sensitive to water, land and air. It also aims to foster the development of an integrated system of natural areas, parks, trails and corridors to maintain ecosystem health and preserve HRMs quality of life.” (RMPS: p19).* With this in mind, this proposal clusters development on a small portion of the site near existing residential properties and active transportation corridor, allowing the remainder of the property, including Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA), to be protected in perpetuity.

3. **Natural Networks/Recreation.** The proposed development has been situated in a way that direct access to the Trans Canada Trail is possible. The proposed site plan incorporates open space for passive & active recreation and amenity space that will allow access to the Trans Canada Trail. This trail will provide an excellent opportunity for outdoor active recreation for the residents of this development.

4. **Housing Diversity and Affordability.** According to the Regional Plan, *“HRM Planning policy aims to support housing affordability and social inclusion by ensuring that municipal policies, regulations and process encourage efficient development and open up opportunities for diverse, innovative and well designed housing” (RMPS: p56).* Likewise, one of the key goals of the Municipal Planning Strategy is to *“establish an appropriate housing mix within the Plan Area while providing standards for the development of a variety of housing forms which meet the needs of the community’s residents” (MPS: p11).*

Despite these goals, Eastern Passage continues to offer limited housing choice, with existing housing largely limited to single family and semi-detached dwellings. The amount of new housing stock added in this area has also been limited in comparison to other regions of HRM, further limiting choice as well as overall housing quality.

In our opinion, this proposed development would offer much needed high quality yet affordable housing choice to this region of the HRM. It will help to achieve the goals of affordability, social inclusion, and greater choice of housing types envisioned by the RMPS.

Yours Truly,

ARMCO CAPITAL INC.

Original signed 

Emma McCully
Planning Coordinator