

Community Engagement Summary

Case 23120: R-2 Zoned Lands, Mainland South

On April 8, 2021 HRM staff formally invited the public to provide feedback on Case 23120. The application webpage on halifax.ca was updated to notify the public to submit feedback to the Planner assigned to the application. The webpage linked to a narrated presentation about the proposal and planning application process on Shape Your City. Letters were mailed to 3,574 addresses of property owners and tenants who own or live on R-2 Zoned lands or who own land or live next to R-2 Zoned lands. The letter provided the recipient an overview of the proposal, asked them to share their thoughts on the application, and directed them to where they could find more information and who to contact with feedback and/or questions. The formal public engagement period was open until May 6, 2021. We heard from 167 households/individuals. A summary of the feedback follows.

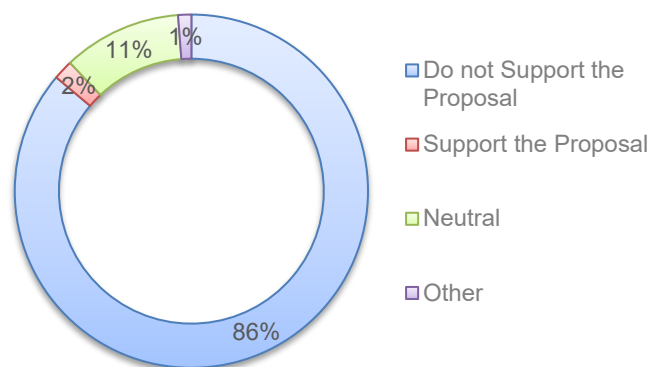
Overview of the Proposal

Armco Capital Inc. is requesting to amend the side yard setback and separation distance requirements for semi-detached dwellings in the R-2 (Two-Family Dwelling) Zone of the Halifax Mainland Land Use By-law for lands within the Mainland South Secondary Plan Area. Semi-detached dwellings in the R-2 Zone currently must be setback at least eight (8) feet from side lot lines and twelve (12) feet from any other building. The applicant has asked to reduce the side yard setback to four (4) feet and the minimum separation distance to eight (8) feet.

What we heard

Of the 167 unique emails and calls we received, 143 people expressed they do not support the proposal, four (4) were in support, and six (6) were neutral. Twelve (12) people had questions but did not share their thoughts on the proposal. Two people who provided opinions were not included in the for or against category because their feedback was not related to the proposal.

Figure 1: Type of Comments



See Figure 1 for a breakdown of the feedback. A summary of what respondents like and do not like about this application follows.

What was liked?

Four respondents expressed their support for Armco's proposal. Between them there were three reasons why they support the proposal:

- Side yards have a lot of value;
- Support the idea of making housing affordable; and
- This will allow homes to be built more quickly.

In the applicant's planning rationale, they indicated there is demand for wider units. To respond to this demand under the current regulations, the lots would have to be wider than the minimum requirement. The applicant states building on larger lots impacts the affordability of units. They say if they are able to build wider units on lots that meet the existing minimum lot size requirements, they'll be able to maintain the affordability of the units.

What are the concerns?

We heard a range of concerns and reasons why residents do not support the proposal. These have been grouped and listed below. They are listed in the order of the most cited reason to least cited reason.

Rank	Concern / Reason Why They Don't Support the Proposal
1	Fire/safety hazard
2	A way for the developer to make more money
3	Negatively affect quality of life/livability of area
4	Negatively affect the existing character of established neighbourhood/area
5	Too large of an area being affected / scope of ask too significant for this process
5	Loss of privacy
6	Existing regulations allow dwellings to be close enough/too close
7	More vehicles on the road (parked and moving)
8	Create a feeling of over crowdedness
8	Loss of vegetation and greenspace
9	Affects people's ability to use/enjoy their yard
10	Reduce property values
10	Strain existing infrastructure (e.g., roads, schools, etc.)

10	Increase density
10	Insufficient space to access rear yard (e.g., landscaping equipment, emergency services) and keep physically distanced six feet from neighbours
11	Housing this close together is not aesthetically pleasing
12	Insufficient space to maintain side of house (e.g., put up a ladder)
12	Noise pollution
12	More shaded side yards and reduced air flow into houses
13	Wider houses should be built on wider lots
13	Takes away space for installation and/or maintenance of infrastructure and services for house (e.g., heat pump, garbage containers)
13	Don't want people to be able to build closer to their property
14	Once this change is made, we can't go back / it will set a precedent
14	Negative environmental impact
15	Existing regulations are in place for a reason and serve a purpose
15	Takes away space to put snow
15	Doesn't leave enough room for parking
15	Less space for wildlife to travel
16	Could create issues with stormwater runoff
16	Will not create affordable housing
17	Will affect view from houses
18	Will result in windowless walls to meet Building Code

It is important to note some of the concerns specifically relate to the Clifton Heights development. Clifton Heights is a new subdivision Armco Capital Inc. is proposing to build off Mansion Avenue, Green Acres Road and a portion of the 500 block of Herring Cove Road in Spryfield. The development of Clifton Heights is separate from this application and not subject to a public feedback process. Some respondents are concerned the R-2 Zone amendments will enable additional population density in Mainland South, which is not the case. Armco is not asking for changes to the minimum required lot size. Further, this proposal will not enable larger dwellings or more of a lot to be covered by buildings. Some respondents said they would not be opposed to the proposal if the scope was limited to the Clifton Heights subdivision.

Conclusion

Between April 8, 2021 and May 6, 2021, we invited the public to provide feedback on a proposal to amend the R-2 Zone of the Halifax Mainland Land Use By-law. Eighty-six (86) percent of respondents are against the proposal and two (2) percent support it. The remaining twelve (12) percent did not cite an opinion about the application. The reasons people oppose the application are varied, but most are concerned about the increased risk of fire. Some people who are against the proposal said they could support it if the changes were limited to the Clifton Heights subdivision.