

June 15, 2022

Halifax Regional Municipality
Planning & Development
Via email: planningapps@halifax.ca

Re: Application for Municipal Planning Strategy Amendment, 44B-48 Main Avenue (PIDs: 00180109, 00180091, and 00180083)

On behalf of our client, Noye Holdings Inc., zzap Consulting Inc. (zzap) is pleased to submit a site-specific Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) amendment application for a residential infill development located within the Halifax Mainland Plan Area at 44B, 46, and 48 Main Avenue (PIDs: 00180109, 00180091, and 00180083). To support this application submission, the following materials are included as appendices:

- Completed Planning Application Form
- Appendix A: Conceptual Building Drawings and Site Plan

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

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.

Kind Regards,

Original Signed

Connor Wallace MCIP, LPP
Principal
ZZap Consulting

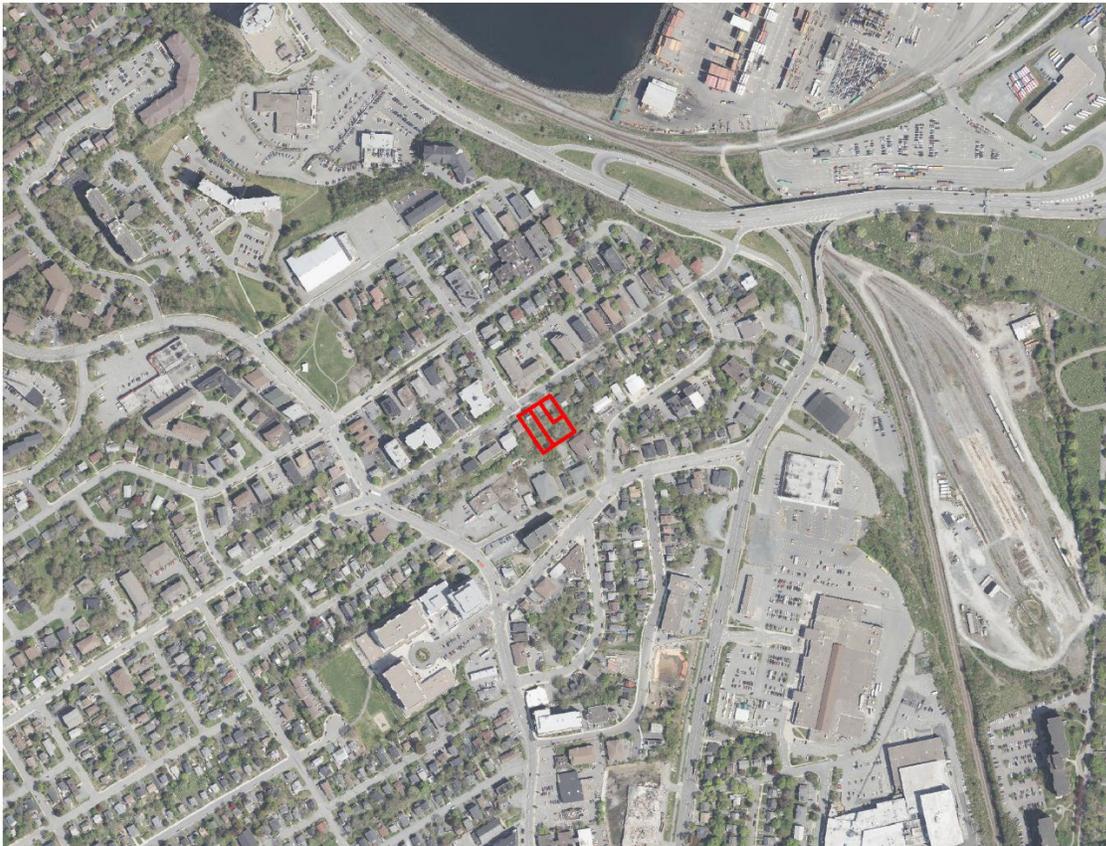
Plan Amendment Rationale

1.0 Site Description and Location

The subject site (Figure 1) is comprised of three properties with direct frontage on Main Avenue. When consolidated, the total area would be approximately 2471 m² (26, 600ft²).

The site is designated 'Medium Density Residential' and lies within the Fairview Plan Area Boundary of the Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) and is zoned R-2P (General Residential) within the Halifax Mainland Land Use By-law (LUB). This zone allows for a maximum of four units per lot subject to lot area and frontage restrictions.

Figure 1 Subject Site



1.1 Site Context

The site is within walking distance of a suite of amenities located along Dutch Village Road as well as two elementary schools (Duc D'Anville and Burton Ettinger), Clayton Park Junior High School, and Titus Smith Memorial Park. A bus stop is located directly in front of the site and a proposed Bus Rapid Transit Route is planned for Dutch Village Road that will connect the site to a broad range of shops, services, employment areas and the downtown core.

The eclectic mix of housing currently found in this community establishes a diverse built environment as there is no single dominant housing typology. Instead, there is a broad range of housing types and densities. Interspersed within single dwelling units are older four to six storey residential buildings and multi-unit conversions. It is not uncommon to see older multi-unit residential and multi-storey buildings abut single unit dwellings without any significant transition or buffer to mitigate the impact of differing densities. The street pattern creates a relatively well-connected grid pattern making non-vehicular trips more viable (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Surrounding Area and Site Context



2.0 Summary of Development Proposal

Noye Holdings Inc. is seeking to develop a new six storey residential building (including one level of underground parking) by consolidating three existing parcels to create one 26, 600ft² (2471m²) lot. The applicant also wishes to incorporate an affordable housing component into the development with a potential partnership with a local non-profit organization. In conjunction with this partnership, the applicant is proposing a community office space be provided within the building to support both residents of the development and the broader surrounding neighbourhood. In order to achieve this, the applicant is proposing a site specific Municipal Planning Strategy amendment and Development Agreement to accommodate both the building form and the community use.

It is Noye Holding's desire to efficiently maximize the potential of the site through carefully planned urban infill. Appendix A illustrates a potential development scenario that, in our opinion, effectively meets the goals of the Halifax MPS using modernized development controls based on urban design principles. The proposal provides for a total of approximately seventy-five new residential apartment units and includes driveway access off Main Avenue. The building would be carefully designed to integrate into the area's existing development by incorporating appropriate massing and siting by:

- Working with the site's grade change to mask the lower two storeys from the building's front (street) view;
- providing a maximum streetwall height of three storeys (approximately 33 ft [10 m]);
- Stepping back the upper four storeys by 22 ft (6.7 m);
- Siting the building a minimum of 29 ft (8.8 m) from the eastern side lot line and 22 ft (6.7m) from the rear lot line; and,
- Enclosing the parking within the building, with access located on the western portion of the proposed lot.

The applicant recognizes that HRM staff are mid-way through a Regional Municipal Planning Strategy Review process and changes to future land use designations and zoning may be proposed for this area. However, given the uncertain timeline of the completion of the next phase of Municipal Plan review, Noye Holdings Inc. requests that Regional Council consider changes to the Halifax MPS to allow the property owner to develop the property using modernized development and land use controls. This includes:

1. Site-specific massing and building form regulations;
2. Reduction of parking requirements; and,
3. A mix of residential and community facility uses.

3.0 Planning Background

The Halifax MPS is more than four decades old. The newly adopted Regional Centre Land Use Bylaw updated regulations for HRM's Regional Centre to better reflect modern planning approaches and the desires of the current residents of the area. However, this site was not included in the Regional Centre area. In 2016 Council adopted the Dutch Village Road Plan to guide commercial and residential development along this quickly redeveloping corridor. However, the plan boundary lies just south of the subject site and, therefore, does not include these lands. The Fairview Area Plan was adopted in 1985 and, as stated above, the existing MPS and LUB designate the subject properties as Medium Density Residential. Any future development on this site would be guided by the LUB from a time when less acute housing and development pressures existed, and land use paradigms favoured lower density development patterns.

The applicant, in consultation with zzap planning staff, have reviewed various plan amendment scenarios (i.e. rezoning to C-2C Dutch Village Road Mixed Use Zone or R4-A Dutch Village Road Multi-Unit Zone) to allow for a higher density residential use and concluded that compliance with these zones, particularly the associated parking requirements, results in an inability to yield a viable housing product with an affordable unit component. Secondly, building size requirements are incompatible with the development envisioned for this site as the maximum building depth and height are not feasible.

4.0 Rationale for Application Request

4.1 Population Growth Targets

The Regional Plan (RMPS) chapter on settlement and housing includes objectives that focus new growth in centres where supporting services and infrastructure are already available. The objectives also aim to design communities that support complete neighbourhoods (mixed-use, diverse, affordable, accessible). The subject site is located between two growth centres: West End Mall Regional District Growth Centre and Clayton Park West Urban Local Growth Centre (Figure 2). The planning principles that pertain to directing growth to these centres is relevant to this amendment application because these same principles are applicable. Existing

supporting services and infrastructure such as municipal services, commercial amenities, schools, parks, and transit are available. Furthermore, these two growth centres are linked by the high level of transit service available on Main Avenue and Dutch Village Road.

Figure 2: Regional Plan Growth Centres



HRM is one now one of the fastest growing municipalities in Canada and the resulting demand for new housing is considerable. The RMPS directs growth by maximizing development around existing services. The Regional Plan targets state that seventy-five percent of new growth should be directed to both the “regional centre” and “suburban” geographies (25% and 50% respectively). However, more recent planning suggests that these targets may be insufficient to meet HRM growth trajectories. Centre Plan targets increased the share of population growth to forty percent for the Regional Centre and growth scenarios that emerged from the Integrated Mobility Plan (IMP) contemplate targets nearer ninety percent (see Transportation Modelling,

Page 20 of the IMP). Therefore, strong evidence exists that more of region's population growth will be directed to these two geographies compared to the targets set in the RMPS when it was adopted in 2006 and subsequently updated in 2014.

The proposed amendments to the MPS would enable a development scenario that recognizes the need to increase the percentage of population growth within HRM's "suburban communities".

4.2 Residential Development and Housing Affordability

There is a housing affordability crisis in many Canadian municipalities. All three levels of government have recognized this urgency and responded with specific policy actions. Examples of these actions include:

- National Housing Strategy (Federal, announced 2017),
- Special Planning Areas (Provincial, announced 2022)
- Affordable Housing Work Plan (Municipal, adopted 2018)

At the municipal plan level there are several key policies that work to address housing affordability. A high-level objective of the MPS is to provide diverse and high-quality housing at prices which residents can afford. More specific policy action appears in the newly adopted Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy through tools such as the density bonus program. The need for action is growing increasingly acute; data from CMHC Housing Market Assessment (December 2020) show that "housing prices in the region are moving beyond what is considered affordable for current residents." While it is true that there is a diverse range of housing types in the Fairview community, it may not be affordable. City-wide, rental prices for one and two bedroom units have increased 17.4% and 16.4% respectively¹ where the average price of a one bedroom unit is now \$1,473/month. According to 2016 Census Data, residents of Fairview had an average household income of \$54,800 (compared to an HRM average of \$86,800). When analyzing these data a clear picture emerges: there is a demand for affordable housing in general and in Fairview in particular.

4.3 Land Use and Transportation

There are several plans, policies and actions that apply to the subject site and provide a strong rationale for increased densities at this location. First, as part of the

¹ Rentals.ca/national-rent-report, April 2022

Regional Plan review process a Themes and Directions “What We Heard” report was presented to Regional Council on January 25th, 2022. In that report, staff recommended that a separate study be conducted to direct growth toward mixed-use, transit-oriented communities that can be served by transit, walking, wheeling and cycling. At that meeting, Regional Council approved a motion to direct the CAO to prepare a staff report outlining the process to initiate updated secondary plans for the areas identified as Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Walksheds and consider prioritizing BRT corridors for rezonings that support transit oriented complete communities. This proposal aligns with Council’s motion and would direct growth to these specific areas.

Second, Dutch Village Road is identified in the Rapid Transit Strategy (May 2020) as a proposed Bus Rapid Transit route. The Rapid Transit Strategy states that the highest mixed-use densities should be directed to areas within 400 metres of Rapid Transit stations, with moderate densities up to 800 metres (Bus Rapid Transit Plan pg. 41). The subject site lies within the 800 metre walkshed of this proposed BRT route.

Main Avenue is identified within the Integrated Mobility Plan as a Potential Transit Priority Corridor where transit-oriented development should be prioritized (IMP, 2.2.5 Action 17). Currently, Main Avenue is serviced by a total of six transit routes that provide access to key destinations on the peninsula and in Dartmouth resulting in a high level of transit service for the subject property. Adopting a transit-oriented development approach to this site supports the goals of the IMP. The Moving Forward Together Plan designates routes by service type; the subject site is served by three “Corridor Routes” (defined by a sustained ridership demand throughout the day) and three Express Routes as follows:

- Route 2 to from Lacewood Terminal to Downtown Halifax
- Route 3 to from Lacewood Terminal to Dartmouth
- Route 4 to Dalhousie and Saint Mary’s Universities
- Express Routes 135 to Scotia Square, Dalhousie and Saint Mary’s Universities
- Express Route 136 to Scotia Square, Dalhousie and Saint Mary’s Universities
- Express Route 138 to From Dunbrack Street to Scotia Square, Dalhousie and Saint Mary’s Universities via Lacewood Terminal

Transit-oriented development not only includes higher densities near transit but also reduced parking ratios. The parking requirements for residential uses within the Dutch Village Road Plan area are no longer consistent with Council’s direction to shift away from single-occupancy vehicle use and towards trips made via active transportation and public transit. For example, fifty-two spaces would need to be provided if this site were developed using the Dutch Village Road Mixed Use

Zone. Given the site's high level of transit service and its access to amenities, that level of parking supply makes little sense from a land use and affordability standpoint.

Lastly, from a geographic perspective, Fairview, while considered 'suburban' in the Regional Plan, is relatively central and is close to destination shopping at both the Halifax Shopping Centre and Bayer's Lake, the Bedford Highway, and the commercial node on Joseph Howe Drive. Given this high level of accessibility to both city-wide and local amenities, higher densities on this site align well with the goals and objectives of the Integrated Mobility Plan (IMP) which links transportation goals to land use.

5.0 Impact on Local Community and the Broader Region

As discussed, Fairview's existing built form is extremely diverse and the addition of a medium density building would not be out of character for the area. In fact, there is an opportunity to design the building and the site to integrate well into area by incorporating best practices and design concepts found in Regional Centre LUB. Using setbacks and setbacks to reduce the building massing will provide a gentle transition to adjacent properties; to promote pedestrian-oriented and human scale design, ground floor units will be accessed from the street and all parking will be enclosed.

Not only will the amendments have a minimal impact on the local community but we believe that the development will enhance the community through both a high level of attention to building design and its positive impact on the social support networks available to neighbourhood residents.

6.0 Conclusion

Based on the current land use planning context, demand for new housing, and intended Regional Plan review direction, the amendments requested for this property are keeping in line with land use planning best practices as well as the policy guidance provided by Halifax Regional Council to HRM staff. Approving the proposed amendments would assist in carrying out the will of Regional Council, the Regional Plan, and the Regional Plan's supporting functional plans.