

June 20, 2018

Jennifer Chapman
Urban Enabled Applications
Planning & Development
Halifax Regional Municipality
40 Alderney Drive
Dartmouth, NS, B2Y 2N5

**Subject: Revised Development Agreement Application Submission (Case 20871):
Midtown North Mixed-Use Development.**

Dear Ms. Chapman,

On behalf of our client Westwood Construction Ltd. (Westwood), WSP Canada Inc. (WSP) and Architecture49 (A49) are pleased to submit a revised Development Agreement Application for the above referenced project.

To assist with this revised application submission, the following supporting materials are enclosed:

- Attachment A: Site Plan
- Attachment B: Development Breakdown
- Attachment C: Building Drawings
- Attachment D: Neighbourhood Analysis
- Attachment E: Public Consultation Summary
- Attachment F: Servicing Schematic
- Attachment G: Traffic Impact Study

1.0 Introduction

The Midtown North proposal is an exciting new development opportunity located on approximately 4 acres of land in the North End of Halifax Peninsula, near the intersection of Robie Street and Almon Street. Westwood has been working with WSP and A49 to create a development program that intends to revitalize this underutilized site. The proposed development includes a mix of residential and commercial land uses along with a variety of open spaces. The proposed development intends to enhance the existing street network, promote walkability and improve overall movement and circulation of pedestrians, cyclists and motorists in and around the site. The proposal was informed by a detailed neighbourhood analysis, as well as two developer led public consultation meetings where input was received.

2.0 Project History

Early in 2016, WSP and A49 were hired by Westwood as a design team mandated to prepare as submit a development agreement application at the subject site. The project team began their work by conducting a thorough neighbourhood analysis to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the context of the site and its surrounding area.

A public consultation event was held for the project on February 16, 2016. For this first consultation event, the project team presented the subject site as a blank slate. Maps, images and background information compiled from our neighbourhood analysis were presented at the meeting and attendees were encouraged to provide comments and ideas to help inform the preliminary design (Please refer to Attachment E for more details on this event).

Following the first consultation event, the project team prepared a preliminary design that was informed by both the background research and the input received through public consultation.

On June 22, 2016, the project team held a second public consultation event. The purpose of this event was to reveal the preliminary design to the public and receive comment. This was an open house event where community members could drop-in at any time for discussion, there was no presentation (Please refer to Attachment E for more details on this event).

Following the second consultation event. The project team refined the development proposal based on comments received. The team then submitted a complete Development Agreement application to Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) Planning & Development department in October 2016. Case number 20871 was subsequently assigned to the application.

In the months following the application submission and case number assignment, property ownership dynamics and other factors led to a change to the overall site boundary proposed for the development. The original site boundary included properties at the intersection of Robie Street and Almon Street, as well as properties along Robie Street, creating a total site area of approximately 5 acres. The revised site boundary excludes properties at the intersection of Robie Street and Almon Street and along Robie Street, creating a total site area of approximately 4 acres. With a revised site boundary, the project team used the information and knowledge gathered from the previous design iteration to come up with a revised development proposal, which is outlined within Attachments A & B.

3.0 Revised Development Proposal

Please refer to Attachment B for a detailed breakdown of the proposed development.

The revised development proposal includes six primary buildings:

1. Building A, which is located in the centre of the site, includes a two-storey podium containing commercial uses (retail and/or office). The building contains a residential tower located above the podium. The tower is oriented towards Almon Street and reaches an overall height of 291 ft. / 88.7 m.
2. Building B, which is also located in the centre of the site, includes a two-storey podium containing commercial uses (retail and office). The building includes a residential tower located above the podium. The tower is oriented towards St. Albans Street and reaches an overall height of 120 ft. / 36.6 m.

Building B is connected to Building A by an enclosed pedway at the second level of the podium. Please refer to Attachments A, B and C for more details.

3. Building C is a commercial building reaching a total height of 94 ft. / 28.7m. Commercial retail uses are proposed at ground level and office uses are proposed within the storeys above grade.
4. Building D is intended to front on Almon Street and wrap around the property corner and run parallel to the western boundary of the site. It is intended to be primarily

residential building with townhouse style units at ground level along the extension of Clifton Street. Commercial/retail uses are to be located at the ground level along Almon Street. The building would reach a total of 120 ft. / 36.6 m at the intersection of Almon Street and the proposed extension of Clifton Street. The building height then steps down towards the west and south to a 7 storey form. At this stage specific plans have not been prepared for the building and we are requesting that those be enabled through a non-substantive amendment to the development agreement at a later date.

5. Building E is located near the intersection of Clifton Street and St. Albans Street. This building is intended to be for commercial and/or community use. At this stage specific plans have not been prepared for the building and we are requesting that it be enabled through a non-substantive amendment to the development agreement at a later date.
6. Building F is a commercial building fronting on Almon Street at the northeastern portion of the site. This building is intended to have a footprint of approximately 2,250 ft.² and a maximum height of 35 ft. (11 m). At this stage specific plans have not been prepared for the building and we are requesting that it be enabled through a non-substantive amendment to the development agreement at a later date.

The six buildings sit on top of a common underground parking structure that contains approximately 500 parking spaces, loading areas, mechanical spaces etc.

4.0 Existing Planning Designation and Zoning

The subject properties are designated Regional Centre (Urban Core) under the HRM Regional Plan, and Major Commercial under the Peninsula North Planning Area (Area 2) of the MPS. High density residential and commercial uses are permitted and encouraged in the Major Commercial designation as-of-right under the current General Business (C-2) Zone. However, for Council to consider promoting investment in commercial and residential redevelopment at greater densities, these properties require a Development Agreement (DA). A DA is enabled on the properties due to their 'Schedule Q' designation outlined within Map ZM-2 of the Halifax Peninsula Land Use By-law.

5.0 Addressing Policy

It is our understanding that 'Schedule Q' was established to address challenges with introducing new residential uses into existing commercial and industrial areas on a site-by-site basis. In our opinion, the proposed development will create an appealing and desirable living environment for future residents within proximity to commercial uses and amenities along Robie Street, Almon Street and the adjacent Gladstone Development.

To address Policies 2.3.1, 2.3.2 and 2.3.3 of the MPS, we note the following:

Policy 2.3.1: In order to promote investment in commercial and residential redevelopment and to prevent conflict between new and existing uses the city may, through the land use by-law, identify areas that provide an opportunity for and will benefit from comprehensive site planning.

According to Halifax Land Use By-law Map ZM-2, Schedule Q has already been applied to the subject site. Schedule Q enables council to consider a development agreement application for the subject property.

Policy 2.3.2: In those areas identified in the land use by-law pursuant to Policy 2.3.1 all residential and mixed residential-commercial development over four units shall be by agreement.

The proposed development will be enabled through a development agreement and is consistent with this policy.

2.3.3 In considering agreements pursuant to Policy 2.3.2, Council shall consider the following:

(i) the relationship of new development to adjacent properties and uses; and, the mitigation of impacts on the amenity, convenience and development potential of adjacent properties through effective urban design and landscape treatment;

The proposed development is aligned with this policy. In addition to the lower level design and streetscape design outlined below (section iv), the proposed development includes the following design elements that intend to mitigate the impacts on adjacent properties and uses:

- Tall residential buildings are set back from the street and sit on top of a podium to maintain a sense of human scale for pedestrians at street level. Their design will assist in mitigating potential wind impacts.
- The tallest residential buildings are strategically located towards the northern portions of the subject site to minimize the impact of shadows on existing residential uses located to the south and west of the site. The proposed location of these buildings will also allow a maximum amount of sunlight to enter the subject site.
- The commercial frontages proposed along Almon Street and within the subject site are consistent with the existing scale and pattern of uses on properties located adjacent to the site.

(ii) the appropriate integration of the development into the traditional grid street system of the Peninsula.

The proposed development enhances the existing grid system of the Peninsula by extending King Street and Clifton Street through the subject and connecting them to Almon Street. The proposed development also intends to maximize its potential street frontage adding vitality to the street level environment.

(iii) the design and layout of the development should encourage vehicular traffic to use Principal Streets and discourage traffic from infiltrating through existing neighbourhoods;

Our original application submission included a Traffic Impact Study (see Attachment G) that concluded site generated trips from the proposed development are not expected to have a significant impact to levels of performance on adjacent intersections or to the regional road network. The revised proposal includes a similar amount of units and commercial square footage, as well as the similar street extensions and access points to underground parking areas, therefore it will also not have a significant impact to levels of performance on adjacent intersections or to the regional road network.

(iv) the creation of high quality design detail at street level through attention to such matters as landscaping, signs, building entrances, and vehicle layby areas;

As both the building drawings and site plan indicate, strong architectural detailing is proposed for the first 1-2 storeys throughout the development. Combined with new landscaping and open

spaces, these architectural details will significantly improve the existing streetscape and public realm. Proposed details include:

- Contemporary brick detailing on the first two floors throughout the development which alludes to the industrial heritage of the area;
- Commercial uses fronting on Almon Street and internal King Street extension. These frontages include glazing to break up the mass and avoid the presence of blank walls;
- Setback of 3.7m and 8.7 m along Almon Street and 7m along St. Albans street, to enable wider sidewalks and landscaping that improve the pedestrian experience;
- Landscaping elements, such as planters and trees located within the proposed internal open spaces;
- New street trees along the proposed extensions of Clifton Street and King Street.

The proposed residential and commercial frontages should bring more “eyes on the street” during all hours of the day. Signage will be sensitively handled and respect the detailing shown in the elevations. The parking entrances (shown on Attachment A) will consider visibility and encourage safety for users and pedestrians.

(v) the provision of high quality open space and leisure areas of a size and type adequate for the resident population

The proposed Midtown North development includes multiple open spaces and leisure areas that are not only immediately accessible for residents living within the development, but also for members of the surrounding community.

The proposal includes an outdoor open space between the Clifton Street extension and buildings A & B. This can become a multifunctional open space capable of hosting a variety of community/neighbourhood events. They can also simply act as an outdoor leisure space that include a variety of seating and landscaping.

The extension of King Street through the site aims to create pedestrian, active transportation and vehicular connection with active street frontages that includes landscaping elements. Cafes and retail shops can spill out into this new street connection, creating an appealing pedestrian experience.

Lastly, the residential portions of the proposed development include a variety of indoor amenity spaces. Some of these spaces will be private in the form of individual balconies for units; others will be commonly accessible spaces for all residents living within the development (e.g. gym, movie theatre, common room, etc.) The proposal also intends to utilize the rooftops of podiums for outdoor amenity spaces.

(vi) residential and commercial densities consistent with municipal services

Our original application submission included a preliminary servicing schematic (see Attachment F) that demonstrated the proposed development can be supported by existing municipal services in the area. The revised proposal includes similar amount of units and commercial square footage therefore can also be supported by existing municipal services

(vii) encouraging high quality exterior construction materials such as masonry

A49 has prepared the architectural plans for this development agreement application (see Attachment C). As per the enclosed exterior elevation plans, quality materials are proposed throughout the development. These materials are intended to reflect the industrial heritage of the area while incorporating modern design elements.

(viii) other relevant land use considerations which are based on the policy guidance of this Section.

The proposed development is sensitive to the transformation taking place in the North End. The community surrounding the subject site is unique and the applicant proposes to offer a mixed-use development that can not only become part of this dynamic and vibrant area, but can become a major destination within it.

6.0 Conclusion

The Midtown North development proposal presents an exciting new opportunity to revitalize an area on the Halifax Peninsula that is currently being underutilized. The proposal includes a variety of commercial and residential land uses that will welcome new residents and businesses to the community. The layout intends to promote walkability by integrating public and open spaces throughout the development. The proposed street connections intend to improve the overall movement and circulation of pedestrians, cyclists and motorists in and around the site. The design of the buildings incorporates an industrial aesthetic with modern detailing. Where pedestrians interact with the buildings, the brick facades and modern details are reminiscent of an industrial past but at a scale that provides a main street pedestrian feel. Overall the proposal intends to create a new destination within the community that provides opportunity for residents to live, work, shop and interact.

WSP and A49 trust that this report and its attachments satisfy the application requirements, and we look forward to working with Staff and Council throughout the remainder of the application process. Should you have any questions, comments or concerns with regards to this revised application, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Yours sincerely,

Original Signed

Connor Wallace, MCIP, LPP
Urban Planner

Original Signed

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