



Zwicker Zareski Architecture + Planning

1 Canal Street, Dartmouth NS B2Y 2W1 | 902 266 5481 | connor@zzap.ca

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Miles Agar  
Policy & Strategic Initiatives | Urban Plan Amendments  
Planning & Development  
Halifax Regional Municipality  
40 Alderney Drive  
Halifax, NS B3J 3A5

**Re: Application for Development Agreement Discharge and Municipal Planning Strategy Amendment, Wardour Street, Bedford, NS (PIDs: 00415422 & 40648339)**

Miles,

On behalf of our client, Bedford Holding Ltd., ZZap Consulting Inc. (ZZap) is pleased to submit a Development Agreement (DA) discharge and Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) amendment application for a mixed-use development located off Wardour Street in Bedford (PIDs: 00415422 & 40648339). To support this application submission, the following materials are included as appendices:

- Completed Planning Application Form
- Appendix A: Architectural Plans and Site Plan

**1.0 Site Description and Location**

The subject site is located within the Bedford Plan Area and has direct frontage on Wardour Street and Dartmouth Road. The site consists of two properties, PIDs: 00415422 & 40648339, and has a total area of approximately 113,395 ft.<sup>2</sup> (2.6 acres). There are two buildings that currently exist on the site, both of which are located on PID 40648339. One of the buildings (21 Dartmouth Road) contains commercial uses, the second building (17 Dartmouth Road) contains commercial uses and the Bedford Public Library. The other parcel (PID 00415422) currently contains a surface parking lot.



*Figure 1: Subject Site*

A portion of the site (PID 40648339) is currently designated 'Commercial' within the Bedford Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) and is zoned CGB (General Business District) within the Bedford Land Use By-law (LUB). The other portion of the site (PID 00415422) is currently designated 'Residential' within the Bedford MPS and zoned RSU (Single Unit Dwelling) within the Bedford LUB. A DA is also currently registered to PID 00415422 that requires surface parking to be developed on the parcel to a maximum of 70 parking spaces. This application is seeking to discharge the DA on PID: 00415422 and to enable 5 storey mixed use commercial and residential building through a site specific MPS Policy and DA process.

**2.0 Summary of Development Proposal**

Universal is seeking to develop a new 5-storey mixed-use residential and commercial building on the subject site. The design of the new building, as illustrated in Appendix A, provides for a total of 51 residential apartment units in addition to approximately 6,300 ft.<sup>2</sup> of commercial space fronting on the existing surface parking lot between the two existing commercial buildings (17 and 21 Dartmouth Road). The development proposes to add an additional driveway near the northwestern corner of the site that would provide more direct vehicular access to the proposed mixed-use building. The proposed building will also include 52 underground parking spaces and 24 surface parking spaces.

There is currently a significant grade change on the site that separates the commercial buildings and surface parking on PID 40648339 from the surface parking on PID 00415422 (See Figure 2). The proposed building intends to integrate into the slope in order to mitigate impact of the grade change and reduce the appeared massing and scale of the building from adjacent properties and public streets.



*Figure 2: Grade Change*

### **3.0 Rationale for Application Request**

The proposed site-specific MPS amendment would enable a development scenario on the subject property that is more consistent with HRM's development intent contained within recent planning frameworks created for urban growth areas within the region (i.e. draft Centre Plan, Downtown Halifax Plan, Dutch Village Road Plan and Downtown Dartmouth Plan). The proposed policy amendment would enable the contemplation of a development scenario that is more reflective of the basic needs of modern mixed-use buildings and is sensitive to its surrounding context.

#### Alignment with Regional Municipal Planning Strategy

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) and neighbourhood revitalization. The RMPS designates the area where the subject properties are located as part of the Sunnyside Urban District Growth Centre, which calls for a mix of low, medium and high density residential, commercial, institutional and recreation uses. The RMPS also encourages infill or redevelopment of large parking lots into traditional blocks with streetwalls, stepbacks and pedestrian oriented facades within Urban District Growth Centres.

The development associated with this amendment application proposes to infill an existing, underutilized surface parking lot with a mixed use commercial and residential building. The building design includes pedestrian oriented, accessible commercial frontages, stepbacks to the upper storeys and is significantly setback from adjacent residential uses. Within the setback between the proposed building and adjacent residential uses, there is an existing buffer of mature trees along the southwestern property line of the site (see Figure 3). These mature trees are proposed to be maintained, providing significant screening between the differing uses.

All these building design and siting elements aim to create a development that is sensitive to its surrounding context while also contributing to the revitalization and growth of the area.

### Alignment with Integrated Mobility Plan

The Integrated Mobility Plan (IMP) speaks to the need to support Transit-Oriented Development (TOD), that is located near 'existing or proposed high level of transit service to support the development of walkable, affordable transit-oriented communities' (IMP Policy 2.2.5b). Figure 10 of



*Figure 3: Mature Tree Buffer*

the IMP depicts existing and potential TOD communities, one of which is surrounding the Sunnyside Urban District Growth Centre in the RMPS. The plan characterizes TOD communities as places where there are opportunities for compact, mixed use, complete communities within a ten-minute walking distance of proposed or existing transit terminals. The proposed development site is located within this defined TOD radius and would contribute the plans goal of creating compact, mixed use communities in these areas where high levels of transit service exists.

The subject properties are located along Dartmouth Road, a designated Moving Forward Together Plan Corridor Route as identified on Figure 10 of the IMP. The Moving Forward Together Plan states that these routes are well positioned to support increased residential density which will, in turn, will support increases in potential ridership generated by adjacent land uses.

### Impact on local community and broader region

The proposed MPS amendment will only impact development rights on the properties contained within the subject site. The amendment will have a minimal impact on the local community and the broader region as it is minor in nature and is limited to the small geographical area of the subject site.

We believe that the proposed amendment is an appropriate tool and process to enable a context sensitive infill of an existing underutilized surface parking area that will have a positive contribution to the local community and broader region.

### Why current planning policies and regulations are not longer appropriate

The Bedford MPS and LUB several decades old. Meanwhile, other plan areas or portions of plan areas within the municipality have recently been updated or are currently being re-evaluated to adapt to current social norms and the desires of the current residents (i.e. Plan Dutch Village Road, Main Street Dartmouth, CentrePlan). The Bedford Plan area, particularly this geographic region of the plan area, remains outdated and therefore does not contemplate a development scenario that is proposed within this application. For example, the RMU (Residential Multiple Dwelling

Unit) Zone is the primary zone within the LUB that enables multiple unit dwellings. The RMU zone includes density limitations limiting the number of residential units allowed per lot to 36, as well as limiting the number of dwelling units based on lot area. The density limitations imposed on such lands are a relic leftover from a time where servicing capacity was limited in the area. Service capacity has vastly improved in this area since those regulations came into force and is no longer an issue for this site and for many other portions of the plan area. The RMU zone also doesn't contemplate or enable mixed use buildings because commercial and/or institutional uses are not a permitted use within the zone.

The Bedford Plan Area does include zoning that enables comprehensive development through a DA process through the RCDD (Residential Comprehensive Development District) and CCDD (Commercial Comprehensive Development District) zones. However, the policy criteria contained within the MPS for these zones include limitations on commercial floor area, percentage of sites used for multiple unit dwellings or commercial uses and building heights. The CDD policies and regulations seem to contemplate comprehensive development of larger tracts of lands where a variety of uses and public streets & services are being contemplated.

HRM's recent plan updates in other areas of the municipality have shifted from single use zones and density limitations to zoning that allows for a multitude of uses and includes detailed built form regulations that focus on the scale and design of a development rather than population or commercial density. We believe a site-specific policy amendment and DA is an appropriate tool and process for this project, enabling the application of a similar regulatory approach that is being applied in HRM's recent plan updates (i.e. mixed-use and built form).

Based on these factors, Universal Properties requests that Regional Council consider the proposed site-specific amendment to the Bedford Municipal Planning Strategy and direct staff to enter into a Development Agreement with the property owner, to enable the proposed development on the subject site.

#### **4.0 Closing**

We trust that the enclosed materials satisfy the application requirements, and we look forward to working with Staff, the public and Council throughout the application process. Should you have any questions, comments or concerns with regards to this application, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Sincerely,

Original Signed

Connor Wallace, MCIP, LPP  
Urban Planner  
ZZap Consulting Inc.  
connor@zzap.ca  
902-266-5481