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Case: 20226

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RE: Lovett Lake Village UPDATE – Application to Amend the Timberlea/Lakeside/Beechville Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) and Existing Development Agreement to add Additional Lands

Introduction

On behalf of our client, Armco Capital Inc., please consider this letter an application to amend the MPS to create new policies for Lovett Lake Village and amend the development agreement. The lands currently under development agreement are PIDs: 40049694, 40049884, 40160582, and 40049728.

The goal is to create a high quality, mixed-use, healthy community featuring affordable housing options for the residents of Beechville/Lakeside/Timberlea (BLT). The community will feature high quality urban design and streetscapes, a dedicated village green, and local retail amenities; not only for residents of the community but for BLT as a whole. The community will be fully walkable with several connections to the COLTA greenway and several options for open space and neighborhood parks.

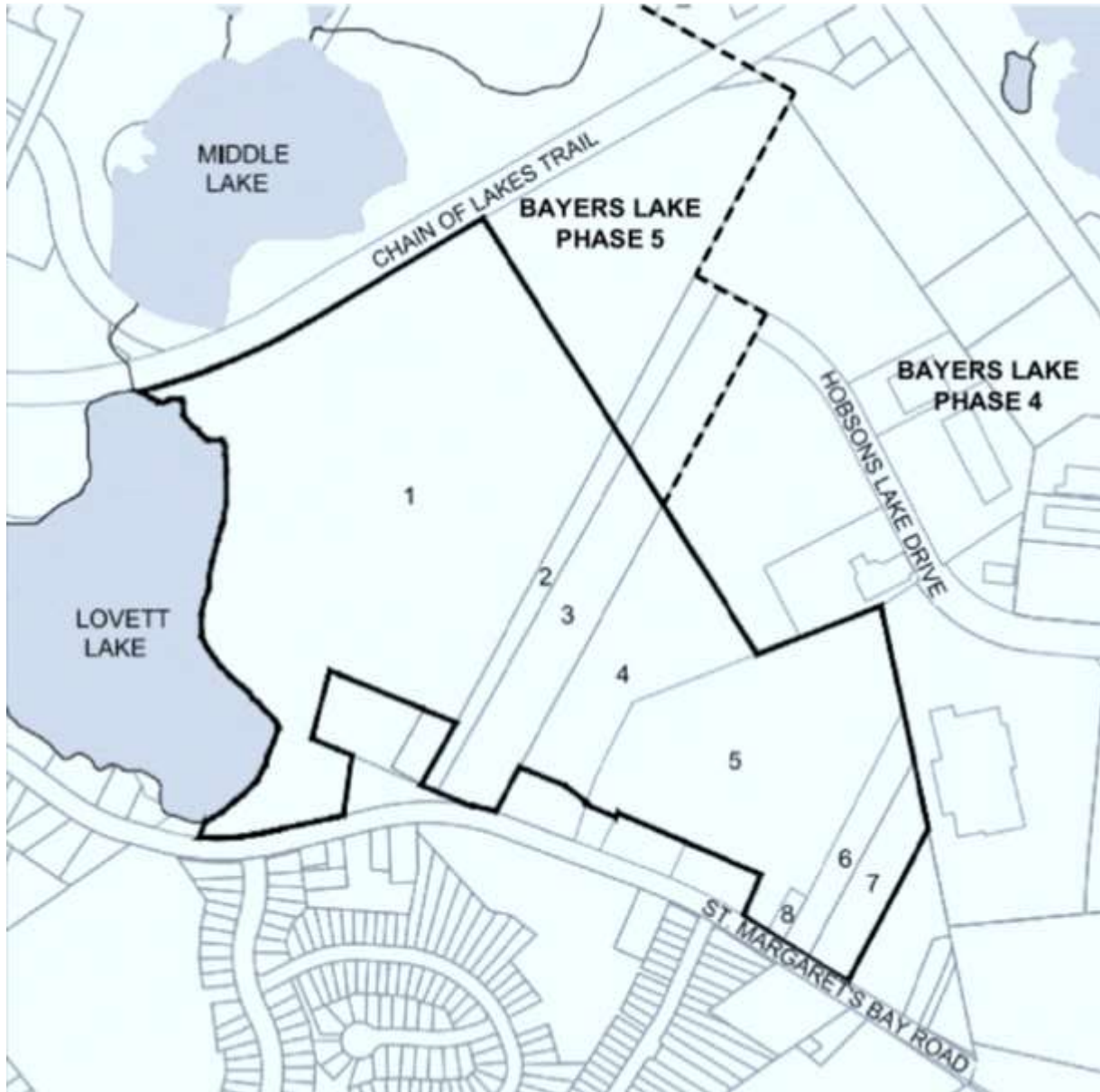
Our proposal is to add all or portions of PIDs 40049579, 40049777, 40160590, and 40049702 to the development agreement. This would increase the developable area from 43.1 acres to 58.8 acres. Additionally, we are proposing an increase in the allowable density and unit mix for the area. We believe that the Lovett Lake area warrants new updated MPS policies that would recognize the changes that have occurred over the past few years. Our team working on this project includes planning staff at Armco, Ekistics, and engineering staff at DesignPoint.

We are representing Armco Capital Inc. and more specifically, the Lovett Lake lands shown in the following table.

ID	PID	OWNER	Area (acres)	Percent
1	40049694	Armco Capital Inc.	31.7	53.9%
2	40049884	Armco Capital Inc.	1.7	2.9%
3	40049728	Armco Capital Inc.	4.6	7.8%
4	40160582	Armco Capital Inc.	5.5	9.4%
5	40049777	Twin Brooks Development*	11.6	19.7%
6	40160590	Armco Capital Inc.	1.6	2.7%
7	40049702	Armco Capital Inc.	1.9	3.2%
8	40049579	Armco Capital Inc.	0.2	0.3%
TOTAL			58.8	100.0%

* amalgamated with Armco Capital Inc. 1 January 2017.

The total area of the lands included in parcels 1 through 8 is approximately 58.8 acres. The lands are located just east of Lovett Lake, between St. Margarets Bay Road and the Chain of Lakes Trail (COLTA). The area is mostly undeveloped and is in a prime location well suited for development. The landowner is requesting that the Timberlea/Lakeside/Beechville Planning Strategy (MPS) be amended, as required under current policies, to allow the existing DA to be amended to allow for the proposed development. The subject parcels are shown below:



The Armco Bayers Lake Phase 5 lands to the east of the subject lands are approximately 28 acres.

Surrounding Land Uses

The surrounding land uses vary. The area to the south, along St. Margarets Bay Road is primarily residential (Beechville Estates). Immediately adjacent to the east, is existing commercial/office and retail uses including the recently approved commercial development on the Armco Bayers Lake Phase 5 lands. To the north of the site is the Chain of Lakes Trail and beyond that is the Banc Developments Bayers Lake Northwest Corner Project.

Concept Plan

The conceptual layout plan below illustrates the proposed land uses and layout of the project (larger plan enclosed).

The plan shows a connection between Hobson Lake Drive and St. Margarets Bay Road, along with an active transportation trail connecting St. Margarets Bay Road to the COLTA Trail to the north of the site.



The proposed concept provides two access points to the development: one via St. Margarets Bay Road and the second to the future Hobson Lake Drive in Armco’s Bayers Lake Phase 5.

The proposed uses for this development include mixed use (residential/commercial), multi-unit residential, single family/semi-detached/townhouse residential, and commercial uses. These proposed uses will provide a greater diversity of residential styles to better suit the community, who may be

interested in options other than single family dwellings. The range of choices will allow people to stay in their current community and live close to amenities.

The proposed mix of uses is as follows:

Use	Units	Unit Density	Population
Multi-Unit*	1104	2.25	2484
Townhouse	65	3.35	218
Semi-Detached	40	3.35	137
Single Family	83	3.35	278
TOTALS	1292		3117
Commercial	70,600 sf		

*Multi Units includes units within stand-alone residential buildings as well as Multi Use Buildings (Residential/Commercial).

The multi-unit building heights range from 4 to 10 storeys. The majority of the multi-unit buildings are 4-6 storeys. Some taller buildings will be located around the village green, with one landmark building of 10 storeys providing a focal point.

The above population results in a proposed density of 53 people per acre. We are open to changing the density and unit mix through the planning process, as required, to create a high-quality, livable community.

Green Space

A significant parkland parcel along Lovett Lake will include a pedestrian trail from St. Margarets Bay Road to the COLTA trail and a trailhead at St. Margarets Bay Road. This will provide the community with improved access to the greater trail network.

A parkland common area (village green) is located among the higher density uses. This green space will provide an accessible central meeting and recreation area for residents. Neighbourhood commercial uses on the ground floor of adjacent residential buildings will help create the feel of a village green, and encourage a more walkable community. Amenities can include an accessible playground, walkways and benches, and a splash pad. (see attachment for examples of similar designs)

A neighbourhood park is located on the main road, where the development transitions to less dense housing forms. Its central location, on a corner, makes it a highly visible and easily accessible park.

The street layout, pedestrian lakefront trail, connection to Bayers Lake and access to the existing bus network, will create a livable, walkable community.

The proposed parkland dedication is in excess of the required 10%.

Environmental Conditions

The existing terrain of the subject area consists primarily of cleared areas of exposed bedrock and rock ridges. Watercourse buffers are preserved and remain treed.

A preliminary desktop review of the wetland and watercourses was completed for the site. Information available from provincial mapping (1:10,000) has been included on the conceptual layout plan. A field

investigation by a qualified professional has been completed on some of the properties. It is anticipated that wetland alteration permits may be required on some of the parcels. Additional field investigation will be required to confirm the presence of wetlands and watercourses on each property. It is suggested that this work be completed after the MPS amendment is completed. Most notably the project area is adjacent to Lovett Lake and the conceptual plan has provided a significant buffer from the lake to the area to be developed.

Water, Wastewater, and Stormwater Services

Based on previous work in the area, we understand that the water distribution system in this area has sufficient capacity to service a development of this size. The connection from St. Margarets Bay Road to Hobson Lake Drive will provide a valuable watermain loop to the existing Bayers Lake system.

A preliminary review of the wastewater servicing has been completed and with the recently installed Lakeside Pumping Station Diversion wastewater infrastructure along the COLTA Trail, there is adequate servicing capacity for this project.

Stormwater will be handled using onsite storage in accordance with the Nova Scotia Department of Environment and Halifax Water regulations.

Traffic System

The site is located near the 102 and 103 Highways, allowing for easy access. We understand that there may be limitations on St. Margarets Bay Road, however we are prepared to conduct a traffic study and address any issues after initiation.

Planning Rationale for MPS Amendment

Amendments to an MPS are generally not considered unless it can be shown that circumstances have changed since the document was adopted to the extent that the original land use policy is no longer appropriate. Site specific MPS amendments, in particular, require significant justification to be considered.

The original Armco Lovett Lake lands (43 acres) went through a development agreement (DA) process and a DA was approved in 2014.

At the time of the DA Process, a few of the limiting factors were:

1. Limited sewer capacity in the Beechville/Lakeside area due to NSE restrictions on the BLT wastewater treatment facility, this ultimately limited the density permitted on the development.
2. Adjacent industrial land on Hobson Lake Drive and the northwest corner of Bayers Lake retail area, made it difficult to connect the Lovett lake development to the Bayers Lake development.
3. The total land mass was only 43 acres, not substantial enough to consider a master plan area and did not have a second entrance to the development via either Hobsons Lake Drive or St Margarets Bay Road.

Today, all of these above factors that shaped the existing Lovett Lake DA are now substantially different and the opportunity to create a more desirable and regionally integrated community exists. The changes are as follows:

1. The new trunk sewer to the Halifax Harbour Solutions Wastewater Treatment Plant has resolved the sewer capacity limitation in the area.

2. Armco has firm plans for the Hobsons Lake Drive lands, as office and retail. Industrial uses are not proposed. Armco is prepared to rezone this land to eliminate industrial uses if required. Armco and Banc Developments have agreed to cooperate on the sewage pumping station and active transportation routes from the Hobson Lake Drive lands to the Bayer's Lake Northwest Corner lands.
3. The total land area has increased from 43 acres to 58.8 and when we include the Armco Phase 5 Bayers Lake area where the rezoning is proposed, the total area is 86.8 acres. Transportation connections can be made to Hobsons Lake Drive and to alternate locations on St Margarets Bay Road.
4. The area has been identified as a growth centre in the updated RMPS.

The MPS identifies the need for a greater range of commercial development services. The following is taken from page 9 of the MPS General Issues, Commercial Development.

"As is the case in most suburban communities, there is a need for a greater range of commercial development and services in order to meet the demands of a growing population. Providing for a greater range of goods and services may be accomplished without increasing strip development along Highway 3 by creating a major commercial focus as well as providing for the development of minor commercial areas to conveniently meet the needs of local residents in the three distinct communities."

In proceeding with a plan amendment we would propose to address the above community needs as follows:

1. The proposed development would be a mixed use project with residential, office, and retail, also the development would include a connection to the existing Bayers Lake retail area.
2. The plan would include full construction of an active transportation connection from St. Margarets Bay Road to the existing COLTA Trail, along with a trailhead (parking and picnic area) along St. Margarets Bay Road. This will provide a valuable connection to the trail for the Beechville residents.
3. The proposed concept will include a range of housing types from single family dwelling, semidetached, townhouses, and multi-unit residential buildings (condo and/or apartments).

The proposed density is consistent with other master plan areas and it is this increase in density that enables the developer to provide the amenities above and beyond those that would be available under the approved DA structure. This area has also been identified as a growth centre under the RMPS.

In the opinion of the team working on the project (Armco, Ekistics, and DesignPoint), an amendment to the MPS permitting an alternate unit mix (UR-11, (d)), additional local commercial uses (p. 54), and increased density in the development (p.13) would be appropriate for the subject property, and would more effectively meet the goals of the Regional Plan.

The new Regional Plan promotes growth and density in the region. Several recent higher density development proposals in the Fairview, Clayton Park and Bedford areas have received positive feedback due to their proximity to commercial nodes, access to parks and adequate capacity in existing infrastructure with respect to traffic and sanitary services. Like these proposals, the Lovett Lake lands are located outside the Urban Centre, but within the Suburban Centre of the Halifax region where more modest densities have historically been considered.

The Lovett Lake lands are very well suited for a higher density form of development due to its proximity to Bayers Lake commercial nodes, access to two major highways and its connection to the Chain of

Lakes trail system. The subject property is 15 minutes outside of Halifax's downtown core and located on two major transit routes with direct service to the downtown area. Multiple unit developments along the Bayers Lake border provide an ideal transition from the commercial/industrial lands in Bayers Lake to the lower density residential development on the remainder of the Lovett Lake lands. The proposed amendments also provide a second public street access to the development from St. Margarets Bay Road. Further, the connection to the Chain of Lakes trail system affords residents the opportunity for passive and active recreation uses. An increase in density would serve to benefit the existing residents of the Beechville, Lakeside, and Timberlea area by attracting new business and private investment to the area creating a livable and vibrant community.

The Timberlea, Lakeside, Beechville MPS identifies a population density of 17 persons per acre (ppa) as follows:

"Full municipal water and sewer services were available in the communities during the summer of 1983. Excluding the area of the Industrial Park, central municipal services can accommodate a population density of 17 persons per acre (ppa). This 17 ppa remains a modest population density for suburban residential development." (Timberlea/Lakeside/Beechville MPS – page 13).

The target density is based on water and sewer capacity in 1983. Since the adoption of this plan, the Lakeside Pump Station Diversion project has been completed.

The MPS also identifies a ratio of low density (single unit) housing to higher density housing of 70:30 as a general target for an overall housing mix in the Plan Area (Timberlea/Lakeside/Beechville MPS – page 48). This general target is decreased in Comprehensive Development districts to a proportion of fifty percent low density (single family) housing (Timberlea/Lakeside/Beechville MPS – page 54). Because the proposed development site is adjacent to existing commercial and industrial uses, it is appropriate to allow for a further decreased ratio of low density housing. Multiple unit development is an appropriate form to transition from commercial/industrial uses to low density residential. The general housing mix targets identified in the MPS are also not official MPS policy. Adjustments to these targets are enabled through a development agreement.

Multiple unit dwellings are identified in the MPS and can only be considered as part of a comprehensive development district. The MPS notes that construction of apartment buildings in the past have given rise to concerns by the community relative to increased traffic on the St. Margarets Bay Road (Timberlea/Lakeside/Beechville MPS – page 51). HRM and NSTIR have finalized a traffic study of the existing infrastructure based on increased residential and commercial density in Bayers Lake and surrounding areas, including the proposal for the subject property. Recommendations from this study and our traffic study will address the infrastructure requirements to support the anticipated build out.

The proposed development also allows for the inclusion of access to Lovett Lake with developed trails and with the increase in density, additional amenities along the lake can be developed. See MPS page 40:

"Through the municipal planning process specific recreation priorities, including potential sites for parks and other recreation facilities have been identified. Local residents have expressed their desire to see provision made for community access to water frontage, particularly on Fraser, Governor and Lovett Lakes. Similarly, the west end of Governor Lake and the northern end of Otter Lake have been identified as potential areas for a community park where outdoor recreation facilities could be developed. (RC-Jul 4/00; E-Aug 5/00)."


Closing

The Lovett Lake lands are in an excellent location for residential growth. Because of its location on an arterial road, near a highway interchange, and being adjacent to the very popular COLTA/BLT trail, the Lovett Lake lands are very appropriate for higher density development and could positively add to the community fabric of Timberlea, Lakeside, and Beechville. Higher density in this location will serve to benefit the broader community by attracting new business and community amenities. These factors as well as its close proximity to office space, retail, and residential make it significantly different from the other areas of Timberlea/Lakeside/Beechville, and as such, establishing an appropriate density and land use mix is key in making the lands viable for development.

We look forward to working with you on this interesting project. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require additional information.

Thank you,

DesignPoint Engineering & Surveying Ltd.

Originally Signed 

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Enclosures:
Concept Plan
Village Green examples