

# Land Use Policy Analysis

# Development Agreement

**P**roperty located at **6421 Cork Street & Young Street, Halifax**

**PID 00122358, Lot 124-B; PLANAPP-2025-00797**

Prepared for: **HRM Planning & Development**, on behalf of **Vedanta Ashram Society**

Date: August 13, 2025 (Revised)



*Image 1: Hindu Temple, 6421 Cork St., Vedanta Ashram Society*

**Introduction:**

This report outlines the planning rationale and policy considerations for a proposed development agreement (DA) at 6421 Cork Street, Halifax, PID #00122358 (*Images 1 & 2*). The owners of 6421 Cork Street, the Vedanta Ashram Society, would like to build a 2-storey addition (approx. 28 ft. wide x 64.7 ft. length) to the rear of their existing temple, which would be constructed on columns above the existing parking area off Young Street, for a total of 3 storeys high. This submission includes plans showing the proposed addition. This application for development agreement is submitted pursuant to the HRM Regional Centre MPS Policies IM-19, IM-21, IM-7 & E-5. The analysis includes:

- Research/ review of the existing Regional Centre MPS objectives and policies pertaining to a proposed DA on the site (*Table 1* below), and a review and comments regarding the HRM requirements for the DA submission; and
- Analysis and comments related to how the proposal complies with the Regional Centre MPS objectives and policies, for the purposes of the proposed DA submission (*Table 2*).

**Site Description:**

- PID 00122358, Civic 6421 Cork Street, Lot area: approx. 8,541 sq.ft./793 sq.m.;
- Subject parcel is a 'through lot', with frontage on both Cork St. and Young St.;
- Lot Consolidation (Lot 124-B): approved Apr. 13, 2011; registered July 6, 2011;



***Image 2: Hindu Temple site, 6421 Cork St.***

**Proposal Details:**

The owners of 6421 Cork Street, the Vedanta Ashram Society, would like to build a 2-storey addition to the rear of their existing temple. The property extends through and has street frontage on Young Street. The temple has existed in this location in the community for over 40 years. The society needs more space for the growing Hindu population and would like to remain in their current location in the community.

The development proposal is to construct an addition, measuring approximately 28 ft. wide x 64.7 ft. long, to the rear of the existing temple. Details include:

- 2-storey addition proposed to be constructed on columns above the existing parking area to the rear, reaching 3 storeys high above Young Street, in order to maintain the existing parking area (room for 8 spaces), with the potential for some landscaping abutting the Young Street sidewalk;
- Existing basement area includes offices, washrooms and meeting area (no expansion);
- Main level to include expansion of kitchen, dining areas, coatrooms and storage rooms;
- Upper level to include expanded prayer hall and relocation of the shrine further towards Young Street;

**\*Note:** The temple is a non-conforming use, since a 'religious institution' is not a permitted use in the ER-3 zone (see *Table 1* below). The non-conformity began upon the adoption of the Regional Centre MPS and LUB. The temple dates back to the late 1970s. The two former lots fronting Cork and Young streets were consolidated in 2011 to form Lot 124-B, following which it is understood that a former dwelling on Young Street was demolished, a small rear addition to the temple was built, and rear parking was introduced. The consolidation (survey) plan is included with the submission documents.

Bicycle parking will be provided, as per the LUB requirements.

**Documents and Process Matters:**

It is requested that the following matters related to the documents submitted for evaluation and steps in the planning process be determined by staff through the evaluation of the application:

- It is our understanding that there has been a further postponement by the Province of involvement of advisory committees in the planning application process until November 25, 2026, as the Financial Measures (2025) Act received Royal Assent and a commencement date of March 26, 2025;



- It is suggested that for this proposal, the form of community engagement be via the mailing of notices to area residents, instead of an in-person public information meeting;
- The client has not undertaken a Traffic Impact Statement at this point, since there are two existing driveways, one off Cork Street for one vehicle, and one off Young Street, including a small parking area off Young Street, all of which are not proposed to change as a result of the proposal, as noted below. As the main prayer services and meals are held on Sundays and there is less usage of the temple during the week (mainly evenings), it is suggested that a TIS may not be necessary, as on-street parking, transit and active transportation are utilized by most attendees and there will be minimal traffic impacts; and
- The technical documents submitted include a site plan, floor plans, 3D renderings of the proposal, survey plan, legal description of the land, and site photos. Building elevation drawings have also been included as part of this revised submission.

**Other Matters:**

As a result of recent concerns raised in the community regarding on-street parking issues in the area surrounding the temple, the society has been attempting to address this issue in the following ways:

- the Society has mentioned the issue to members of the congregation;
- the society placed updated information, including a parking advisory, on their website to better educate the congregation on HRM parking regulations and the importance of following the rules regarding on-street parking;
- the society has hired a security guard to patrol the street at busier times, directing people where to park appropriately pursuant to HRM parking regulations; and
- the society will cooperate with and encourage HRM parking enforcement to ticket or tow offenders when necessary.

It should be noted that some of the parking issues are related to the temple, and the society is addressing those. However, the issues of parking and traffic are also partly related to the growing city and new developments in the immediate area, including those on Bayers Road, Oxford Street and Young Street, including both residential developments and commercial establishments.

# Planning Analysis

The following *Table 1* lists the most relevant HRM Regional Centre MPS/ LUB (local) planning policies and land use designations, and the Regional MPS policies which are most applicable to the site, and associated details.

**Table 1 - Regional Centre MPS/LUB Designations & Regional MPS Policies**

Regional Centre MPS Policy/ Designation	Comments
Generalized Future Land Use Designation (Map 1)	Established Residential designation (ER)
Zoning (LUB Schedule 2)	ER-3 (Established Residential 3)
Maximum Height Precinct (Map 4 & Schedule 15)	11 metres (building height)
Minimum front/ flanking yard setbacks (LUB Schedule 18)	3.5m /11.5 ft
Maximum lot coverage in the ER-3 zone (LUB section 231(1)(b)(i))	50% coverage *(proposed coverage of 54.5% via DA process)
Maximum building dimensions (LUB 233(1)(a & b))	Max. width of 20m, max depth of 30m *(proposed depth of 52 metres via DA process)
<b>Regional MPS Land Use Designation</b>	
Generalized Future Land Use Designation (Map 2)	Urban Settlement (US)

The following *Table 2* reviews the most relevant Regional Centre MPS policies which apply to the development agreement application, and associated comments on how the proposal meets the intent of the MPS policies.

**Table 2 - Review of Development Agreement Policies**

Regional Centre MPS Policies	Comments
<p><b>Policy IM-19</b> Council may, by development agreement, allow non-residential non-conforming uses located on a lot that existing on the coming into force of this Plan to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) expand the structure containing the non-conforming use; or</li> <li>b) change to another less intensive non-conforming use.</li> </ul>	<p>The proposal represents an expansion to the structure as noted in IM-19 a). As noted above, the temple is non-residential and is a non-conforming use, as a 'religious institution' is not a permitted use in the ER-3 zone (see LUB Table 1B). The non-conformity began upon the adoption of the Regional Centre MPS and LUB. The temple dates back to the late 1970s. The former LUB for Halifax Peninsula permitted religious institutions ('church') as-of-right in residential zones. There was an expansion to the lot and building in 2011, as two former lots fronting Cork and Young streets were consolidated (to form Lot 124-B), following which a former dwelling on Young Street was demolished, a small rear addition to the temple was built, and rear parking was introduced. Population growth has resulted in the need for a further expansion, which is the preferred option by the society over a complete relocation.</p>
<p><b>Policy IM-21</b> In considering a development agreement under Policy IM-19 and IM-20, Council shall consider the following:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) that controls are placed on the development to reduce conflict with and impacts on adjacent residential and other land uses;</li> </ul>	<p>There are no anticipated conflicts. The society/ temple has existed in this location for over 40 years and are part of the community. As with other religious institutions, the hours of activities are typically limited to daytime and evening hours. With regard to on-street parking, the society has taken steps to improve the situation and will work with HRM Parking Enforcement to address concerns.</p>

<p>b) the adequacy of the siting, height, bulk and scale of the development with respect to its compatibility with the existing neighbourhood;</p>	<p>The siting, height and bulk/ scale are compatible with the surrounding neighbourhood. The site abuts a 7-storey building under construction on Oxford St. in the COR zone to the NE and is located across Young Street from a 3-4 storey apartment building in the HR-1 zone which is approximately 70 metres wide. There is also an existing non-conforming commercial/ industrial building to the south of the site, with frontage on both Cork and Young streets which has a width and depth of approximately 50 metres. While the subject site is a through lot and the proposed finished building will have a depth of 52 metres, which is greater than most houses to the immediate SW, it will be similar in height to those adjacent houses, have a width of only 8.5m (28 ft.) and act as a transition between the 7-storey building and nearby houses.</p> <p>The building height, shown on the updated drawings as 35.5 ft above Cork St and almost 39 ft above Young St, is not expected to exceed the 11m height limit (precinct) above 'average finished grade', since the rooftop architectural cupola is exempted pursuant to LUB Table 8 and the sloped roof appears to be exempted by Section 104(1.3). It is requested that staff confirm this through the DA process and that rooftop height exemptions be included in the DA text for clarification purposes.</p> <p>The building addition has been reduced in depth by 1m and is now proposed to be sited 3.5m (11.5 ft.) from the Young St line, which meets the minimum setback required in the LUB (Schedule 18).</p> <p>The maximum lot coverage in the ER-3 zone is 50% (section 231(1)(b)(i)). A small variation is requested to enable a lot coverage of 54.5% via the DA process, which is minor in nature. The only way to meet a 50% lot coverage (instead of 54.5%) would be to reduce the footprint by 475 square feet, which means a <u>17 foot</u> reduction to the building depth (x 28 ft wide) and a <u>25 foot</u> setback from the property line. This would not be in keeping with the intent of the Young St streetscape, as the setback would be out of place. As proposed, the building will provide street presence on Young St. instead of being set back such a great distance and will provide a transition between the 7-storey building to the NE and the houses to the SW.</p>
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<p>c) facilities for parking, loading, vehicular access, outdoor display and outdoor storage are designed to avoid significant adverse effects on adjacent properties;</p>	<p>There are two existing driveways, one off Cork Street for one vehicle, and one off Young Street, including a small parking area off Young Street for up to 8 vehicles.</p> <p>Loading utilizes either of these driveway locations as well as occasional on-street loading. The only outdoor storage would be green bins which are stored off Cork Street, behind the driveway and elevator 'bump out' in the east side yard, and are hidden from view of the street.</p> <p>A TIS has not been prepared at this point. As the existing driveways and parking area are not proposed to change, and main activities (prayer services and meals) are held on Sundays, there is less usage of the temple during weekday evenings, it is suggested that a TIS may not be necessary. On-street parking, transit and active transportation are utilized on Sundays by most attendees and there will be minimal traffic impacts.</p>
<p>d) the layout and number of parking spaces and loading areas;</p>	<p>As noted above, loading is conducted from the existing driveways &amp; parking spaces, and the occasional on-street loading. With regard to parking, it is not considered feasible to provide underground parking on such a small site. There are many other religious institutions in the Regional Centre that either do not have on-site parking or have very minimal parking. This is quite common in urban areas. In this case, there are adequate transportation options available. Bayers Road (one block away) is a major road, AT corridor, transit and BRT route.</p> <p>An email in early 2024 from HRM Parking Services staff (S.Gillis) provided an opinion that parking for the proposed addition and use should not be required. Despite this, as noted above (on page 4), the Society is addressing concerns with on-street parking in the area and will continue to do so.</p>
<p>e) the location of the use on the site;</p>	<p>The existing 'through lot' with frontage on two streets allows for possible expansion of the building in a way which provides street presence and building facades along both street frontages, and to utilize the space above the existing parking area. As noted above, the proposed setback of the addition from Young Street has been altered in order to meet the LUB requirement.</p>



f) the surface treatment and storm drainage;	The proposal will be required to meet specific HRM & Halifax Water requirements and by-laws regarding storm drainage, including the Grade Alteration By-law and Municipal Design Guidelines. The society will begin to investigate these matters and can provide preliminary plans following community engagement. Detailed drawings will be provided at the permitting stage. There are no anticipated issues with regard to site drainage and grading.
g) that adequate landscaping, screening and buffering is required to reduce impacts on adjacent residential uses;	The existing front yard off Cork Street and side yards are landscaped. Storage (green) bins are hidden from Cork Street along the NE side property line. Additional landscaping could be provided along the Young Street sidewalk and side yards if desired.
h) the controls on signage;	There is one existing sign on the building on the Cork Street facade. A clause may be included in the DA to allow for one additional sign on the Young Street facade, in the event that the society wishes to include one.
i) the hours of operation; and	The main, organized religious services and meals take place on Sundays, between the hours of 11am - 2:30pm. On other days, there are individual or self-directed prayers/ worship time during evenings (6:30-8pm), as well as midday on Saturdays, and occasional use of the temple for meetings and other events and gatherings. As such, it is suggested that there is no need to specify hours of use in the DA, which will be similar to those of other religious institutions.
j) the general development agreement criteria set out in Policy IM-7 in Part 9 of this Plan.	See below.
<b>Policy IM-7</b> In considering proposals to amend the Land Use By-law, amend the zoning boundaries, or enter into development agreements, Council shall consider that:	
a) the proposal is consistent with the Vision, Core Concepts, Urban Design Goals, and all applicable objectives and policies set out in the Regional Plan and this Plan;	The proposal is consistent with all objectives and policies.
b) the proposal is appropriate and not premature by reason of:	

i) the financial capacity of the Municipality to absorb any costs relating to the development,	There are no anticipated municipal costs. All costs will be borne by the property owner.
ii) the adequacy of municipal wastewater facilities, stormwater systems or water distribution systems,	Proposal will meet all requirements of HRM and Halifax Water, including the Grade Alteration By-law and Municipal Design Guidelines. Preliminary grading and stormwater plans can be provided, if necessary, during DA negotiations. Detailed drawings will be provided at the permitting stage.
iii) the proximity of the proposed development to schools, parks, and community facilities, and the capability of these services to absorb any additional demands,	As this is a religious institutional use (as opposed to residential use), there are no additional demands on schools, parks and community facilities.
iv) the adequacy of transportation infrastructure for pedestrians, cyclists, public transit and vehicles for travel to and within the development, and	There are adequate transportation options available. Bayers Road (one block away) is a major road, partial AT corridor, transit and BRT route. The bicycle network in the west end includes Liverpool, Connolly, Almon and Windsor Streets, which have either bike lanes or are local street bikeways identified in the AT Priorities Plan.
v) the impact on registered heritage buildings, heritage streetscapes, and heritage conservation districts;	N/A
c) the subject lands are suitable for development in terms of the steepness of grades, soil and geological conditions, locations of watercourses, wetlands, and susceptibility to flooding;	The site slopes gently downward from Cork Street to Young Street. As an urban infill site, there are no concerns related to the site's suitability for development. The society will undertake initial grading and drainage investigations and provide detailed engineering drawings at the permit stage.
d) that development regulations in the proposed rezoning or development agreement will adequately mitigate potential conflict between the proposed development and nearby land uses, by reason of:	As noted above, there is minimal to no potential conflict with nearby land uses.
i) type of use(s),	The temple use has existed for over 40 years and it's expansion will not conflict with surrounding uses.
ii) built form of the proposed building(s)	The proposed addition (and existing building) is in keeping with the height and scale of low-density residential uses in the area and is smaller in scale than the abutting 7-storey apartment building on Oxford Street and adjacent apartment building on Young Street. The building will act as a transition between the 7-storey and the house(s) to the SW.

iii) impacts on adjacent uses, including compatibility with adjacent residential neighbourhoods, parks, community facilities, and railway operations,	As noted above, the proposal is compatible with its surroundings. The society is working on improving on-street parking compliance among the temple's worshippers.
iv) traffic generation, safe access to and egress from the site, and parking,	The 2 existing driveways have been in place for many years and are safe. No traffic issues are anticipated. However, if staff indicate that a TIS is required, the owner will undertake a study prepared by a professional engineer.
v) open storage and signage, and	There is no proposed open storage. Any additional (future) signage can be enabled via a clause in the DA.
vi) impacts of lighting, noise, fumes and other emissions.	There will be no impacts of lighting, noise, fumes, or emissions.
<b>Policy E-5</b> Council may consider proposals to develop neighbourhood-scale commercial and institutional uses within the Established Residential Designation by development agreement, such as, but not limited to, restaurants, retail uses, personal service uses, daycare uses, medical clinics, and cultural uses. In considering development agreement proposals, Council shall consider:	This policy allows Council to consider new institutional uses within areas designated 'Established Residential'. In this case, the original temple was introduced over 40 years ago and has become part of the community. The proposed addition is designed to alleviate current overcrowding and the need for more space while maintaining a neighbourhood scale. The society has taken steps to address issues related to on-street parking, even though the temple is not the only source of this issue, which can also be attributed to the increase in residential development in the area and the success of neighbourhood restaurants which attract customers from within and outside the area.
a) the number of existing local commercial or institutional uses in the area, as the intention of the designation is to remain primarily residential in nature;	There is not an over-abundance of commercial and institutional uses within the ER designation, as many of those are located within the COR and INS designations. As noted, there is an existing commercial warehouse style building to the SW, but the surrounding ER designation is primarily residential in nature.
b) if the development comprises a local commercial use, that the use is limited to 200 square metres or less;	N/A
c) that controls on the hours of operation for the proposed land use are established where needed to mitigate potential land use conflicts with surrounding residential uses;	Refer to policy IM-21 i).
d) the general development agreement criteria set out in Policy IM-7 in Part 9 of this Plan.	See IM-7 policies above.

Conclusion:

The proposal by the Vedanta Ashram Society to construct a 2-storey addition to the rear of their existing temple at 6421 Cork Street, Halifax meets the objectives and policies and carries out the intent of the Regional Centre MPS. Please let me know if you require anything further regarding this submission.

Sincerely,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Paul Sampson.

Paul Sampson, LPP, MCIP  
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