

September 10, 2025

Planning and Development  
Halifax Regional Municipality

RE: Proposal for Mixed-Use development – 620 Portland Street

**Note: In anticipation of the adoption of the Regional Plan update, zzap prepared an application for a Development Agreement (DA) utilizing proposed Policy IM-25. This policy enabled DA applications for suburban sites within the 800-metre walkshed of a planned Bus Rapid Transit route. The rejection of the Regional Plan by the province eliminated this important and effective housing policy option. While we understand that this application is not enabled through policy, we are moving forward with this submission as is. We hope that this serves to highlight the missed opportunity to support housing on underutilized suburban sites that resulted from the province's rejection of the draft Regional Plan. Without an enabling policy, this site will remain vacant as, we understand, the only option to move forward is a lengthy and costly Municipal Planning Strategy amendment.**

zzap Consulting Inc. on behalf of our client, Jeff Kielbratowski, is pleased to submit this request to the municipality to review and consider a mixed-use development at 620 Portland Street (PID: 40740060). The subject site is within the urban service boundary, has an area of 72,420 sq. ft, and approximately 81 meters of frontage on Portland Street (see attached site plan).



Figure 1: Site Location

## 1.0 Site Context

The subject site is located within the Dartmouth Plan Area and is surrounded by larger-scale commercial buildings. On the opposite side of Portland Street is a neighbourhood comprised mainly of single unit dwellings. The site is accessed via 2-way private driveway that is shared with abutting businesses. The site is located within a high-activity commercial area that offers car-oriented retail amenities.

### 1.1 Planning Context

Land Use on the site is regulated by the Dartmouth Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) and Dartmouth Land Use Bylaw (LUB). It is designated Commercial (C) on the Dartmouth Generalized Future Land Use Map and zoned General Business (C-3.)

The Regional Plan and the proposed land use structure within HRM's Suburban areas are directing higher density mixed use development around proposed rapid transit routes and stations. The Rapid Transit Strategy (RTS) is proposing four bus rapid transit lines, including the Red Line along Portland Street. Regional Plan policies identify lands around the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) lines as areas where higher density residential development ought to occur. The subject site is within the 800m walkshed of the Red BRT Line of the Regional Plan. Land within these walksheds is identified for Transit-Oriented Development within the recently updated Regional Plan. Residential development around BRT lines and stations will provide the necessary population to support an efficient and reliable public transit system.

## 2.0 Development Request

This proposal includes a mixed-use development fronting onto Portland Street. The proposal includes:

- a 9-storey building
- ground floor commercial units (total of 1,080 sm)
- one level of underground parking
- two levels of concealed parking in the building's podium
- 215 residential units

## 3.0 Planning Rationale

This proposal is supported by Policies IM-25 – IM-27 and IM-9 of the Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy but also by our region-wide demand for housing.

**Policy IM-25: Notwithstanding Policy IM-3 but subject to Policy IM-26, Policy IM-27 and Policy IM-9, prior to the adoption of the Suburban Plan, development proposals that align with Section 3.3.2.1 including Policy HC-3 of this Plan for residential or mixed-use buildings that provide primarily residential uses within the Suburban Area as identified on Map 2 and in the Urban Service Boundary, may be considered by development agreement or an amendment to an existing development agreement, provided they meet the following criteria:**

Policy Criteria	Response
A) the proposed development site is located within the Suburban Area as identified on Map 2 but outside the Suburban Housing Accelerator Secondary Municipal Plan Area;	We confirm that the site is located within the Suburban Area as identified on Map 2 of the Regional Plan while remaining outside of the Suburban Housing Accelerator Secondary Municipal Plan Area.
B) the proposed development site is located within an 800 metre walkshed of a Planned Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) route or the Mill Cove Ferry Terminal as identified on Map 3;	The proposed development site is situated on Portland Street, which lies within an 800-metre walkshed of a planned Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridor, serviced by the Red Line.
C) the proposed development site is no more than 2 hectares in total area;	The proposed development site has an area of 72,420 square feet (0.67 ha).
D) the proposed development must not result in the demolition of an existing building containing three dwelling units or more; and	We confirm that no existing dwelling units will be demolished. The site contains a vacant commercial building.
E) a complete application for a development agreement must be on file with the Municipality on or before the first notice of the intention of Council to adopt the Suburban Plan.	We will ensure that a complete application for development agreement will be on file with the Municipality before the first notice of the intention of Council to adopt the Suburban Plan.

**Policy IM-26: In considering an application for a development agreement or an amendment to a development agreement under Policy IM-25, the Municipality shall consider:**

A) that the development's permitted density and built form on the site considers walking distance to transit, local context and transitions in height and massing to low-rise residential neighbourhoods;	<p>The proposed development aligns with the transit and pedestrian-oriented, principles established in the Regional Plan and Suburban Housing accelerator Plan by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• siting the building closer to the street,</li><li>• providing ground-oriented commercial units</li><li>• concealed parking</li><li>• a three-storey streetwall</li><li>• proposing a maximum height of 9 storeys (tall mid-rise)</li></ul> <p>The abutting lands are exclusively commercial. This building will establish the first mixed use residential development on this section of Portland Street which will help to transition away the car-oriented development pattern of the area.</p>
B) the development's site design supports necessary infrastructure upgrades;	We do not anticipate that significant infrastructure upgrades will be necessary on this site. However, any upgrades will likely be identified as part of the DA review process.
C) whether to vary the built form and land use requirements in the Housing Accelerator Zone and applicable section of the Suburban Housing Accelerator Land Use By-Law;	Our client is requesting two LUB variances: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Subsection 148(1)(b) Maximum Building depth from 64.0 m to 67.0 m</li><li>• Subsection 146(1)(a) Minimum Side stepbacks from 2.5m to 0.0m</li></ul>

D) on-site and off-site improvements necessary to integrate the development in the surrounding area, including street and active transportation that support Bus Rapid Transit Corridors;	We anticipate that improvements will be identified during the Development Agreement review process.
E) whether ground floor commercial or institutional space is included to support local services and employment uses;	The proposed development features small-scale ground-floor commercial space aimed at supporting local services and creating employment opportunities.
F) provisions for incentive or bonus zoning consistent with requirements set out policies in Section 5.5.3 of this Plan and applicable land use by-laws;	Acknowledged.
G) the project commencement date shall not exceed 18 months with one opportunity for a one-time extension not exceeding 6 months; and	Our client will ensure that the commencement of this development will stay within the required time frame.
H) the project completion date shall not exceed three years from the date of commencement.	Our client will ensure that the completion of this development will stay within the required time frame.
<b>Policy IM-27: A Development Agreement or an amendment to development agreement under Policy IM-25 and IM-26 shall:</b>	
A) for a development that is located:	
i. in a low-density residential area that is not near bus rapid routes or the Mill Cove Terminal, not exceed the built form for a low-rise building as set out in the Suburban	This proposed development site is situated along a commercial corridor, rather than within a low-density residential neighborhood.

<p>Housing Accelerator Land Use By-Law;</p>		
ii.	<p>near bus rapid transit routes or the Mill Cove Ferry Terminal and abuts a low-density residential area, not exceed the mid-rise built form as set out in the Suburban Housing Accelerator Land Use By-Law; and</p>	<p>This proposed development site does not abut any low-density residential areas.</p>
iii.	<p>near bus rapid transit routes or the Mill Cove Ferry Terminal and not abutting low-density residential areas, not exceed the tall mid-rise built form as set out in the Suburban Housing Accelerator Land Use By-Law; and</p>	<p>The built form of this proposed development will not a tall mid-rise structure as defined in the Suburban Housing Accelerator Land Use By-Law.</p>
B)	<p>unless otherwise varied by the development agreement, require the applicable provisions of the Suburban Housing Accelerator Land Use By-Law to apply.</p>	<p>Two variances from the HA zone are requested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subsection 148(1)(b) Maximum Building depth from 64.0 m to 67.0 m</li> <li>• Subsection 146(1)(a) Minimum Side stepbacks from 2.5m to 0.0m</li> </ul>
<p><b>Policy IM-9: (1) In considering a development agreement, amendments to a development agreement, or any amendments to a land use by-law pursuant to the provisions of this plan or any secondary municipal planning strategy, the Municipality shall consider:</b></p>		
A)	<p>whether the proposal is reasonably consistent with the intent of the policies of this Plan and the applicable secondary municipal planning strategy;</p>	<p>The site has been recognized as part of the potential future growth area within the suburban plan area, therefore policies within the Halifax Regional Plan along with the Suburban Housing</p>

	<p>Accelerator Secondary Plan are applicable to the proposal.</p> <p><b>Policy US-7</b> of the Suburban Housing Accelerator Secondary Plan supports the provision of commercial uses in mixed-use buildings for lands zoned HA.</p> <p><b>Policy M-1</b> of the Suburban Housing Accelerator Secondary Plan supports the direction of growth around both planned and current transportation priority corridors.</p> <p><b>Policy HC-9</b> of the Halifax Regional Plan supports the provision of infrastructure in the Suburban Area that supports pedestrians and transit by directing growth to high-frequency transit corridors.</p> <p><b>Policy HC-10(c)</b> of the Halifax Regional Plan supports the development of communities that support diverse housing opportunities as well as places of employment and services.</p>
B) that priority be given to increasing the supply of safe, sustainable and affordable housing;	This proposal prioritizes safe, secure housing by introducing ground-oriented commercial uses to promote passive surveillance on the street. The design supports sustainability and affordability through higher-density, cost-efficient housing compared to traditional single-family homes.
C) where applicable, the environmental features or areas which may not be suitable for development, including:	

i.	land subject to flooding or subsidence;	The HRM flood map indicates that the northwest corner of the site may be impacted by a 1 in 20 year pluvial/fluvial flood event.
ii.	steep slopes	The site is flat. There are no steep slopes that would preclude development.
iii.	low-lying, marshy or unstable land, including watercourses and wetlands of all types;	No known wetlands or watercourses are present on the site.
iv.	tree cover; and	There is no existing tree cover.
v.	habitat for species-at-risk;	According to Provincial species-at-risk mapping, this site is not within a habitat for any species that are at risk.
D)	for the features and areas identified in IM-9 (c), how the development may be directed away from or managed within these areas and the opportunities to enhance or restore degraded environmental features as part of the development proposal, where possible;	This site does not contain any environmental or natural features identified above. The site contains a vacant building and parking lot.
E)	the provisions of CH-30, where applicable;	This site does not abut any registered heritage properties.
F)	whether the proposal is appropriate and not premature, with consideration given to:	
i.	the financial capacity of the Municipality to absorb any costs relating to the development;	It is not anticipated that the municipality will need to absorb any costs associated with the proposed development.
ii.	municipal or private wastewater, stormwater, and water infrastructure provision;	This site is located within the urban service boundary with access to municipal services. If requested a

	<p>servicing plan will be provided to demonstrate capacity.</p>
iii. emergency services to support the proposed development;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The nearest Halifax Police facility is within 3km (6 minute drive) of the site.</li><li>• The nearest fire service to the site is the Halifax regional Fire &amp; Emergency Fire Station 14 which is approximately within 3km (5 minute drive) of the site.</li></ul>
iv. schools, parks, and community facilities;	<p>This proposal is in range of schools of all levels and community facilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Brookhouse Elementary(5 minute drive, 8 minute bike ride, 24 minute walk.)</li><li>• Ellenvale Junior High(5 minute drive, 8 minute bike ride, 24 minute walk.)</li><li>• Woodlawn High (4 minute drive, 8 minute bike ride, 24 minute walk.)</li><li>• Landrace/Clifford Park(3 minute drive, 5 minute bike ride, 13 minute walk.)</li><li>• Russel Lake</li><li>• The Woodlawn Public Library is the nearest community facility to the site (2 minute drive, 2 minute bike ride, 12 minute walk.)</li></ul>
v. road networks leading or next to, or within the development;	<p>The proposed development site is accessed via an existing right of way extending from Portland Street. This driveway supports two-way traffic flow while Portland Street is a four-lane arterial road with a left turn lane and a posted speed limit of 50 km/h.</p>

vi. transportation infrastructure for walking/rolling, cycling, transit, and vehicles for travel to and within the development;	<p>By locating residential parking underground, the development minimizes surface-level space dedicated to vehicles.</p> <p>The development will include bicycle parking for both residents and visitors, making cycling to and from the site more convenient.</p> <p>Integrating the development into the existing sidewalk network along Portland Street further promote active transportation within the area, including walking, rolling, and cycling. We believe the street-level pedestrian experience will be enhanced for pedestrians through this development proposal.</p>
vii. whether 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; and	<p>There are no known issues associated with the site's soil conditions or geological features on this relatively flat previously developed site.</p> <p>No portion of this development is within known watercourses or wetlands.</p>
G) whether development regulations in the proposed rezoning or development agreement will mitigate the potential conflicts between the proposed development and nearby land uses, by reason of:	
i. the type of use(s);	<p>The neighboring properties contain commercial uses. We do not anticipate that the introduction of higher density residential uses will result in land use conflicts with these commercial uses.</p>

	<p>This development is intended to provide more opportunities for smaller-scale commercial space as well as increasing housing units in the area to promote more pedestrian activity.</p>
<p>ii. the built form of any proposed building(s);</p>	<p>The proposed development's built form is intended to bring a new building typology to Portland Street – a pedestrian and transit-oriented form that is a significant departure from the auto-oriented development pattern that exists today. The plan policies support a tall mid-rise form with a three-storey streetwall. The streetwall will establish a human-scale feature and support a streetscape more appropriate and comfortable for non-vehicular traffic.</p>
<p>iii. impacts on adjacent uses, including compatibility with adjacent residential neighbourhoods, parks, community facilities, and railway operations;</p>	<p>This development proposal is not incompatible with uses directly abutting the site, (mainly commercial). In fact, we believe that the surrounding residential neighbourhood will benefit from the development because it will incorporate more small-scale commercial space into the streetscape, in contrast to the auto-oriented streetscape that exists today. Future residents will have access to the existing amenities surrounding the site (parks, trails, library).</p> <p>There are no railway operations near the site.</p>
<p>iv. traffic generation, safe access to and egress from the site, and parking;</p>	<p>The attached Qualitative Traffic Impact Statement concludes that the traffic generated by this development will be minor and “only marginally impact the traffic flow and operations in the Portland Street corridor.” This conclusion</p>

	<p>is based on the assumption that HRM will implement the planned BRT service along Portland Street. Please see the attached traffic impact statement.</p> <p>There are two ingress and egress options – Portland Street and Norm Newmann Drive. Parking will be contained in one level of underground and within the building's podium. Nine surface commercial parking spaces are proposed for the rear of the property.</p>
v. open storage and signage,	<p>There will be no open storage for this development.</p> <p>The developer may require site signage in the form of wayfinding or entrance signs as well as signs for advertising the ground floor commercial space. We anticipate that this can be addressed in the Development Agreement.</p>
vi. maintenance	All maintenance will be privately managed.
vii. impacts of lighting, noise, fumes, and other emissions; and	We do not believe there will be any noise, fumes or emissions from the development once it is completed. The development agreement can include a clause that regulates the site's lighting.
viii. any other relevant matter of planning concern	None.
<b>Policy IM-9: (2) Notwithstanding any policy of the applicable secondary municipal planning strategy or this Plan, for multi-unit residential buildings that begin construction on or before April 1, 2027, there shall be no requirement:</b>	
A) related to the unit mix of the proposed buildings; and	Acknowledged.
B) for more than 20% ground floor commercial space.	Acknowledged.



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#### **4.0 Closing**

Our client's proposal includes a mixed-use residential building containing approximately 215 residential units and 11,635 sf of commercial space. The increased density at this location is supported by Policy IM-25 of the Regional Plan. Policy IM-25 enables development within 800m walkshed of planned BRT routes where increased transit service can be supported through higher density, transit-oriented development.

We ask that this proposal be considered under enabling Policy IM-25. Should you have any questions, clarifications, or comments regarding this submission, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



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