



Subject: *FH Development Group Inc Application: Master Planned Community*
To: CAO for Planning Advisory Committee, June 20, 2023
Date Prepared: June 14, 2023
Related Motions: PAC22(91) and C22(346)
Prepared by: Debbie Uloth, Project Planner
Approved by: John Woodford, Director of Planning and Development

Summary

The Municipality has received an application from FH Development Group Inc. to amend the Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use Bylaw and to enter into a development agreement for a mixed use master planned neighbourhood, including a mixture of low, medium and high density residential development, commercial lands, and open space. Approximately 1,500 residential units are proposed on lands located in the northern portion of the South Corridor and Commercial Growth Management Area. The property is identified as PID 45089802, Highway 2, Milford.

An open house and public information meeting (PIM) were held on May 2, 2023. Notes from the meeting have been attached as Appendix C.

Financial Impact Statement

A fiscal impact analysis will be completed and included in the final staff report.

Recommendation

That Planning Advisory Committee recommends that Council give first reading to the MPS and LUB mapping amendments and initial consideration of the development agreement and authorize staff to schedule a public hearing.

Recommended Motion

Planning Advisory Committee recommends that Council:

- *give first reading to an application from FH Development Group Inc. to amend the MPS and LUB by changing the land use designation and zone of PID 45089802 to Walkable Comprehensive Development District (WCDD) and give initial consideration to entering into a development agreement to permit a mixed use master planned development.*

Background

Planning staff received an initial application from FH Development Group Inc. in August 2021 and an updated application in September 2022. The application proposes to change the Generalized Future Land Use Designation of lands identified as PID 45089802 from Established Residential Neighbourhood (ER) Designation to the Walkable Comprehensive Development District (WCDD) Designation and to rezone the same from Two Dwelling Unit Residential (R2) Zone to the Walkable Comprehensive Development District (WCDD) Zone. The WCDD Zone would enable Municipal Council to consider entering into a development agreement to allow for a mixed use master planned neighbourhood including residential, commercial, and open space land uses. Approximately, 1500 residential units are proposed.

Discussion

SUBJECT PROPERTY

The subject property is shown on the map to the right and is identified as PID 45089802 Highway 2, Milford. The total area of the subject property is approximately 111 ha (275 acres).

The property is zoned Two Dwelling Unit Residential (R2) Zone. Adjacent property uses and zones include the Armco Capital Inc. lands to the west which are zoned Walkable Comprehensive Development District (WCDD) Zone, these lands also have an existing development agreement registered on them for a master planned community. To the east and south are lands zoned Rural Use (RU), which are undeveloped and are not located in the South Corridor and Commercial Growth Management Area. To the north is Highway 102. The subject property is located at the northern end of the boundary in which Municipal services are available.

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

The purpose of this application is to amend the Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use Bylaw and to enter into a development agreement for a mixed use master planned neighbourhood, including residential development; open space; and commercial uses. Approximately, 1,500 residential units are proposed. An updated concept plan has been attached as Appendix A.



The concept plan shows a mixture of residential uses including 365 single dwelling units (yellows), 164 semi-detached (darker blue), 236 townhouse units (medium blue), and approximately 690 multiple unit dwellings. Other land uses include parks and trails (darker green), conservation lands (lighter green), and stormwater management ponds. Changes to the concept plan may occur as the application continues to be reviewed. As part of the single unit residential portion of the plan, the applicant is requesting that Council considered reduced frontages of 10.4 and 12.2 m for single unit dwellings. Under the LUB the minimum frontage requirement is 16 m. Approved development agreements for other WCDD lands included similar reduced frontages.

FH Development Group Inc. has provided concept renderings of the higher density and commercial development sites, shown in the presentation. The renderings are only concepts as they do not show items such as amenity space, setbacks, street design, refuse storage, or other design elements. Multiplexes proposed as

part of the development are proposed to be a maximum of 6-storeys, which is the maximum height permitted by the development agreements for the other two WCDD sites in Lantz.

Commercial uses such as a gas station and drive-thru restaurant are proposed for the corner lot fronting on Highway 2 and the new road connecting the development with Highway 2. Other commercial uses and residential multiplexes are also proposed for lands fronting Highway 2.

Walkability and connections to adjoining lands are one of the most important aspects for Council to contemplate when considering the application. Sidewalks are proposed on all streets and are proposed to connect with the adjoining Armco Capital Inc. lands. In addition, the active transportation route proposed for the adjacent lands will continue into the subject property and will be incorporated into Phases 1 and 2 of the development. In Phase 3 the Barney's Brook trail is proposed to continue along Barney's Brook into the subject property and will stop at the northern property line. Extension of the Barney's Brook trail into the subject property will create a trail that is approximately 2.6 km in length from the start of the trail in the future Armco Capital Inc. development, to where it stops in the current development proposal.

WCDD policies indicate that Council should take into consideration the distribution and function of the open spaces. Three parks are proposed, one in each phase of the development. The park in Phase 1 is proposed to service approximately 2,160 residents in 864 dwelling units. The Park in Phase 2 is proposed to service approximately 303 dwelling units and approximately 750 residents in the second phase of the development. The park in the third phase is proposed to be the smallest park but it will connect with the Barney's Brook trail and will service 288 dwelling units and approximately 720 residents.

In general, the parks in the proposal are there to service their surrounding neighbourhood and not the wider community. As part of the Armco Capital Inc. approved development plan a 4-hectare park is required. This park will be within walking distance of the subject lands and will service the wider community, and will be considered a Community Park, as per the Parks, Open Space and Active Transportation Master Plan.

POLICY ANALYSIS

The planning application has two parts, the mapping amendments and the development agreement, both parts of the application will be processed simultaneously; however, the development agreement will be contingent on the MPS and LUB mapping amendments being approved. The following policies allow Council to consider the FH Development Group Inc. application:

Council's Policy Goal of the Walkable Comprehensive Development District is to *“establish an avenue for the consideration of relatively large scale mixed use and phased development proposals using the Comprehensive Development District tool. These developments should create a development conducive to active transportation through human-scaled developments designed to create visual interest at street level. Developments are also permitted and encouraged to use creativity through alternative roadway standards and new urbanism development principles.”*

Policy IM10 - Permits Council to consider private applications to amend the MPS where the proposed amendments are in the best interest of the Municipality.

Policy IM12 - Permits Council to consider map amendments to the MPS as a request for a comprehensive development district that is not already designated as such; and the intent of the MPS could be met through the proposal.

The aforementioned policies support the request by FH Development Group Inc. to change the Generalized Future Land Use Designation of the subject site from Established Residential Neighbourhood (ER) Designation to the Walkable Comprehensive Development District (WCDD) and to rezone the same from Two Dwelling Unit Residential (R2) Zone to the Walkable Comprehensive Development District (WCDD) Zone. Planning staff feel

that changing the subject site to the WCDD would be the best planning tool to use to achieve the most desirable overall design and use of the subject property.

REVIEWING AGENCIES

Staff have requested comments from internal departments and external agencies. A Traffic Impact Study has been completed for the proposed development, and a copy of the study has been provided to Nova Scotia Public Works for their review. The Study concludes that the new road connecting the proposed development to Highway 2 should be located as close to the south property line as possible. A northbound left turn auxiliary lane from Highway 2 into the development is required. The study also recommends lowering the Highway 2 speed limit by shifting the existing speed transition zone from Robert Scott Drive, northward, to beyond the South Corridor and Commercial Growth Management Area. This would lower the speed limit to 60 km/h in the study area. In addition, the Study also recommends that Nova Scotia Public Works begins long-term transportation planning for the Corridor.

The RCMP has concerns with traffic in general in the Corridor from the continued growth of the community. These concerns have been forwarded to Nova Scotia Public Works for their consideration.

The Director of Operational Services for the Chignecto Regional Centre for Education has indicated that the proposed development does have the potential to impact schools in the area and while there is capacity currently in the schools, this potential development, along with the current growth will increase the schools towards capacity, and will require additional supporting elements (staff, space and resources). He further states that the Chignecto Regional Centre for Education will consider this information to supplement their planning tools as they evaluate the capacity/utilization during their planning process. Planning staff have offered to meet with the Centre for Education to discuss expected population growth.

The Municipal Department of Infrastructure and Operations has reviewed the application. In addition to the standard comments regarding servicing, I&O have indicated that traffic calming measures will be required throughout the development. No more than 300 dwelling units will be permitted before a second public road to service the development will be required. Water and sewer servicing will be subject to available capacity at the time of tentative subdivision approval.

The Municipal Parks, Recreation and Culture Department has reviewed the application and has provided FH Development Group Inc. with their comments. As a result, the concept plan for the application will be updated. The walkways in between blocks are not part of the open space calculations, they are an infrastructure requirement under the Subdivision Bylaw. PRC has also requested that the size of the park in phase 1 be increased from 4000 m² to 4950 m², to provide park space to the approximately 2,300 residents (936 dwelling units x 2.5 people per unit) who could potentially live in Phase 1 of the proposed development.

Economic and Development staff have provided feedback to the consultant regarding the proposed commercial development.

Nova Scotia Environment and Climate Change have not provided comments on the application to date.

As the application progresses, staff will continue to review the WCDD policies that allow Council to consider entering into a development agreement to permit the proposed development.

CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

Planning staff will comply with the Citizen Engagement Policies of the Municipal Planning Strategy when processing this application. An advertisement outlining the application and indicating that it had been received and was under review by staff was placed in the *Chronicle Herald* in the fall of 2021. An open house and public information meeting for the application was held on May 2, 2023. Notes from the meeting have been attached as Appendix B.

If Council gives first reading to the mapping amendments and initial consideration to entering into a development agreement, the next step in the process will be to mail questionnaires to property owners within 300 m of the subject property. Questionnaire results will be included in the final staff report.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

The 2021-2024 East Hants Strategic Plan identifies ‘Strong Community’ as one of the four areas of strategic focus. The proposed development provides for a mix of housing types, open space areas, and an active transportation network, which helps to support a strong community. The mix of housing types also encourages ‘Economic Prosperity’ which is also one of the four areas of strategic focus.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The legislative authority is set out in the Municipal Government Act, Part VIII. This part of the MGA sets out the process for MPS and LUB amendments to be considered and for consideration of a development agreement.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Discussion of the financial impacts resulting from the development of this site is a complex issue as it involves costs for the municipality in terms of long term infrastructure maintenance but there are also revenue considerations from property taxes. Staff will comment further in the final report.

Alternatives

Planning Advisory Committee may recommend the refusal of the proposal.

Attachments

Appendix A - Concept Plan

Appendix B - Public Information Meeting Notes

Conclusion

Planning staff will continue to review the application by FH Development Group Inc. for a master planned community in Milford. This report recommends first reading of the MPS and LUB amendments and initial consideration of the development agreement to enable continued consultation with the public, including the mail out of questionnaires. Changes to the concept plan may be required as the application proceeds.

Appendix A - Concept Plan

Appendix B - Public Information Meeting Notes



Public Information Meeting Notes

For PLN21-009 - FH Development Group Inc.

Proposed MPS and LUB Amendments and Development Agreement Application
from FH Development Groups Inc.

Meeting Held May 3, 2023

Staff in attendance:

John Woodford, Director of Planning and Development
Debbie Uloth, Project Planner
Abby Reynolds, Administrative Assistant

Applicant:

Ahsan Khan, FH Development Group Inc.

Public In attendance:

Approximately 11 people including Councilors' Tom Isenor and Norval Mitchell.

Questions and Comments:

- Opinion brought up about use of “human scale” wording in reference to development, public member attending did not like this.
- Concern brought up about the height of the buildings close to Highway 2 creating a shadow and darkness in that area.
- Question asked regarding size of proposed parks in each phase. Debbie responded with explanation of PRC team completing studies on the development, also mention neighboring developments that will also have green/park space. Public member responded that he believes the park size proposed are inadequate.
- Concern brought forward regarding impact on waste water and water system with increase of population.
- John explained the subdivision bylaw and how they would not be able to proceed with the project even if the development agreement went through if the water & waste water could not adequately support.
- Question if burn or any other method would be put in place to prevent atv's from traveling through area neighboring woodlands.
- Question brought forward regarding what the land is currently being used for or if there is any active use. Concern about the hay growing out of control on the land as it is no longer being cut.

- Question about if there were core samples done of the ground and if it is stable enough to support the proposed large-scale building.
- Explained by panel geotechnical reports would be done (and are required) prior to the start of construction.
- Discussion had between panel and public members regarding wetland alteration and how the wetlands are protected by storm water management design in place.
- Panel brought up traffic impact study as no questions were brought forward.
- Question asked if there would be a sidewalk expansion done from new developments to existing properties in the area.
- Question asked about new streetlights in place along wooded section in that area. Panel had no answer or knowledge of this. Unrelated to current proposed development.
- Question about CCRCE and if the schools are prepared for this influx in population. John responded that the municipality is in conversation with CCRCE and keeping them up to date so if they need to make changes they can to support new residents.
- Question asked about the water source and where it would come from and what it would be like.
- Comment made by public member about expansion of the gold bond quarry and if the developers were aware of this and if that would impact the traffic study.
- Question asked about “15 minute cities” and if this was in relation to the history of King Henry the 8th in the 1500’s and using these close communities as a way to restrict residents freedom and movement and force control over residents.
- Concern expressed that this is the governments way of taking away the last freedoms for many by restriction their freedom of rights, movement and transportation.
- Question asked about 300 meter parameter for sending out development information and questionnaires. Can this be made broader?