

**Halifax Regional Council**  
**January 17, 2006**

**TO:** Mayor Peter Kelly and Members of Regional Council

**SUBMITTED BY:**



Peter Stickings, Acting Director, Real Property & Asset Management

**DATE:** January 06, 2006

**SUBJECT:** **Proposed Review - Halifax Common Plan**

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## **INFORMATION REPORT**

### **ORIGIN**

Regional Council referred the potential of establishing a terms of reference and the feasibility of enabling a task force to oversee the Halifax Common in light of potential changes to land uses that are foreseeable in the near future.

### **BACKGROUND**

The Halifax Common was originally granted in 1763 for use by the citizens of Halifax. Originally the predominant uses were as a military ground, for public grazing, and as public open space. As the city's development continued throughout the next two and a half centuries, public institutions were added to the common as these were seen as appropriate public uses by the administrators of the public lands. The existing array of uses includes hospitals, a museum, portions of Dalhousie University, schools, CBC television studios, open space, sport fields, a public garden, a cemetery, a church, and roadways. Councils of the past have given-up control over certain portions of the Halifax Common by divesting of certain parcels for use by other levels of government or private interests in exchange for other considerations in the public interest.

Today HRM's control over land-uses on the Halifax Common is often limited to lands it directly owns or, in the case of lands which the municipality has divested itself, through land use regulations.

The City of Halifax Council approved the Halifax Common Master Plan in 1994 in order to set objectives and corresponding restrictions to Halifax Common uses.

Within the past few years, several allowable developments had taken place or are in progress around and on the Halifax Common. These would include:

- a condominium development on property owned by All Saints Cathedral;
- Garden Crest Condominiums at Summer and Spring Garden Streets
- parking structures to support the QEII and IWK Hospitals;
- a new high school on the site of the Nova Scotia Community College, Bell Road;
- renewal of the Public Gardens;
- improvements to the Wanderers' Grounds as a premier, Class A sport field; and
- some small-scale open space improvements (e.g., new washroom structure on North Common).

Furthermore, other potential developments and land-uses on or adjacent the Halifax Common are anticipated in the coming years, namely:

- the future of Queen Elizabeth High School;
- the future of the CBC TV studios;
- potential traffic improvements around the new high school;
- the impending relocation of the Bengal Lancers Riding paddock to between their existing stables and the NS Museum;
- improvements to the Willow Tree intersection;
- the impending demolition of the old field house on the Wanderers' Grounds; and
- the potential construction of a new medical research and development facility on the existing surface parking lot bounded by University, Summer, and College Streets.

## **DISCUSSION**

Halifax Regional Council has inherited the charter responsibility granted by the King to the original directors for the stewardship of the Halifax Common. The question of the establishment of a task force to oversee the Halifax Common must be understood in that context.

This report also serves to inform Council that staff intend, as per next fiscal year's (2006/07) proposed Business Plan, to consider:

- the future of Queen Elizabeth High School site;
- the future of the CBC TV studios; and,
- potential traffic improvements around the new high school.

That effort will require:

- an understanding and respect for the 1994 Halifax Common Plan;
- public consultation following principles of inclusiveness;
- co-operation and dialogue with the Provincial and Federal levels of government; and
- close co-operation of involved HRM departments.

At that time and within the context of the above mentioned issues, staff will consider recommending, for Council's approval, the creation of a task force to oversee either aspects of the Halifax Common or its stewardship in its entirety.

**BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

There are no budget implications identified at this time.

**FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN:**

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

**ALTERNATIVES**

Not Applicable

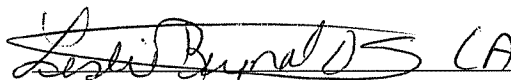
**ATTACHMENTS**

1. Map 1 - Halifax Common - Boundary

Additional copies of this report, and information on its status, can be obtained by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

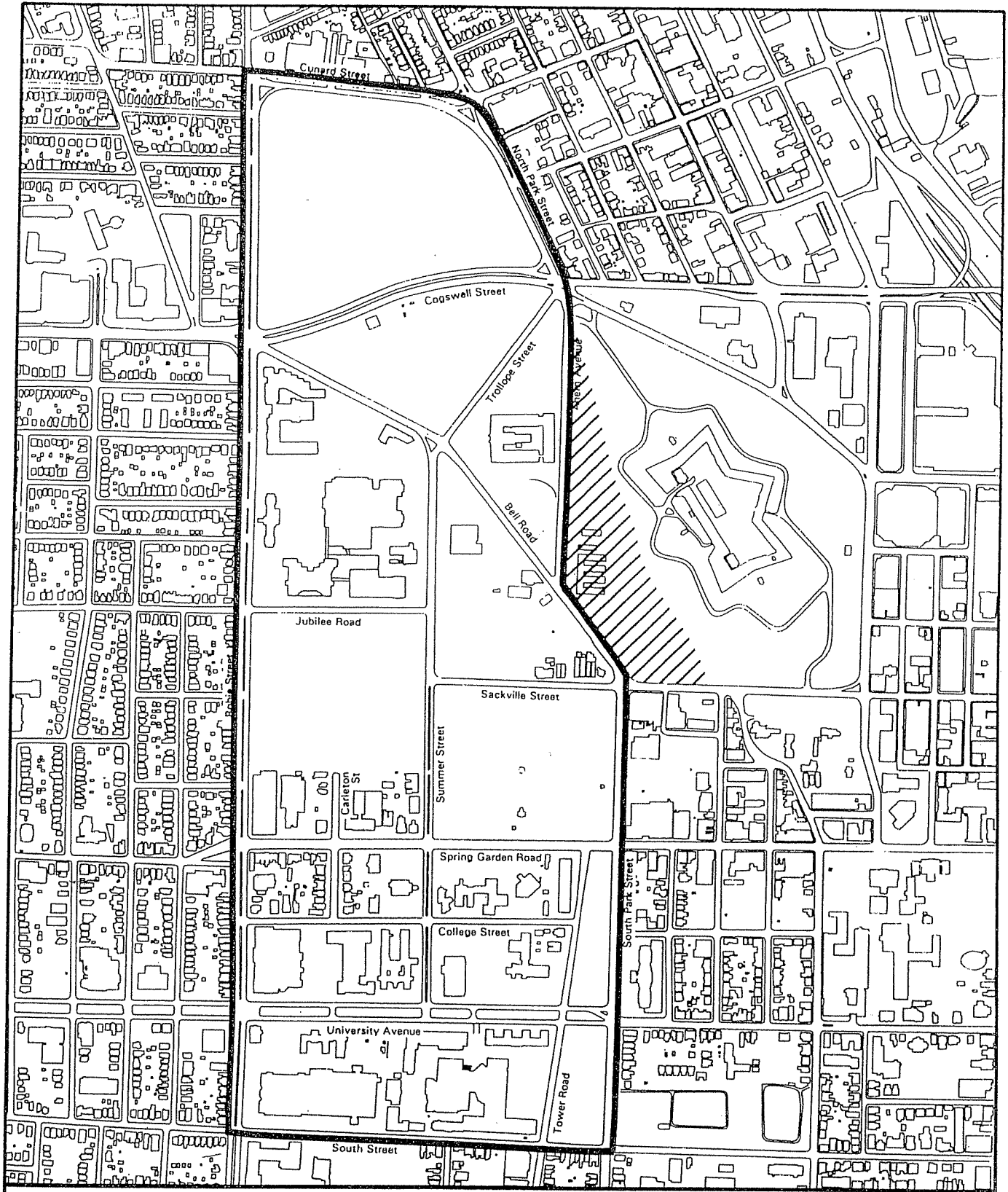
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Financial Review by:

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Leslie Reynolds, Financial Consultant, RPAM

# Map 1: Halifax Common



 Halifax Common  
 Associated Area

6 June, 1994



1:9000 KLW