

Bedford Waterfront Phase II – The 6 Big Moves and Next Steps

1.0 Introduction

This year Waterfront Development has been re-engaging the Bedford community about the future of the Bedford waterfront. This re-engagement has been happening in a variety of ways: individual conversations, phone calls and letters, meetings with stakeholder groups and property-owners, web-based feedback forms, and most recently, four days of community consultation held at the Sunnyside Mall. We heard and recorded a multitude of voices, and we wish to thank everyone who participated for sharing their thoughts and giving their time.



On June 5, 2014 Waterfront Development shared an online document titled “*Bedford Waterfront Community Re-Engagement Summary: Major Theme Areas.*” That document is a look back at all that we heard, summarized under the following ten major theme areas:

- Public Access to the Basin
- High Quality Public Spaces
- Education and Learning
- Natural Environment
- Vibrant and Year-Round Waterfront
- Alternative and Active Transportation
- Healthy Lifestyles
- Infill
- Leadership in Development
- Views to the Basin

Today we are happy to share the next stage of our work, which is a look ahead to what the future could hold for the Bedford Waterfront. Based on the community’s voice as expressed in the Major Themes document, we have crafted a forward-looking set of guiding principles for development that we are calling “*The 6 Big Moves for the Bedford Waterfront.*” The 6 Big Moves embody widely held ideas expressed by the community and will guide future refinements to the draft development concept plan.

A summary of next steps can also be found at the end of this document.



2.0 The 6 Big Moves

1. Enhance public access and connections to Bedford Basin

Uninterrupted public access along the Bedford Basin and new opportunities to connect with the water are fundamental to creating an accessible and vibrant new community on the Bedford waterfront. Providing new wharves, boardwalks and naturalized trails along the Basin's edge will more than double the current amount of public access to the Basin available in Bedford, and will expand the existing public trail network. This variety of shoreline conditions will enable activities such as fishing, boating, swimming, and exploration and discovery in the intertidal zone. Visual access to the Basin will also be enhanced by placing taller buildings toward the Bedford Highway with height tapering down as it approaches the water's edge.



2. Create a variety of connected public spaces that anchor the development

The creation of a new community on the Bedford waterfront is an opportunity to increase the amount and variety of public spaces available for all of Bedford. The concept plan will prioritize the creation of high-quality public spaces that invite a variety of activities and social exchange. The public spaces will be designed to support year-round community gathering, recreation, and informal and formal learning opportunities, as well as encourage exploration, play and healthy lifestyles. A large continuous park connected to smaller plazas, parkettes, natural areas and civic or cultural facilities will create an integrated network of public spaces throughout the development.



3. Integrate and enhance natural features

The new community will be integrated with existing natural features on the Bedford waterfront in a variety of ways. Preserving and enhancing safe public access to the Ledges will enable more community members to experience the natural environment. Opportunities for learning and discovery will increase awareness of local eco-systems and foster environmental stewardship. The concept plan will strive to restrict development to the existing fill footprint, with new horizontal fill considered only when necessary to regularize the edges in some areas, to create a safe environment, to meet necessary engineering standards, and to harden the fill edge against coastal action. The concept plan will seek to reinstate Crosby Island as an island by removing or relocating some fill material, provided this does not create unexpected new environmental impacts.



4. Create a waterfront that is well-connected and supports mobility

Enhanced roadway and transit connections to the new waterfront community will meet the Regional Plan's goals for the Mill Cove area, and will benefit the larger community of Bedford. The concept plan will enlarge and enhance the existing active transportation network, provide a site for an inter-modal transit hub, and create a second vehicular access point to the waterfront from the Bedford Highway. Well-designed streets, paths and interconnected public spaces will support a culture of walking and cycling. The new community will strive to be a catalyst for higher order transit in Bedford, such as bus rapid transit or commuter rail, and by incorporating transit-supportive residential densities.



5. Incorporate a mix of uses to animate public spaces and create economic activity

Incorporating a variety of uses in the new waterfront community will animate and enhance public spaces while creating opportunities for social and commercial exchange. High-quality development will frame public spaces with ground-floor commercial uses such as sidewalk cafes, restaurants, retail and specialty shops, and community uses. Providing opportunities for people to live on the waterfront will help activate public spaces at all times of day in all seasons.



6. Lead by example with world-class standards for development

Best practices in architecture, urban design, sustainability, and social responsibility will guide all aspects of the development of the new community on the Bedford waterfront. The project will aspire to be an international leader in waterfront planning and development. Green technologies such as district energy systems, LEED standards, alternative stormwater management, living green roofs and a variety of housing options will be incorporated into the concept plan. Recognizing the importance of adapting to the impacts of climate change and sea level rise, the site elevation will exceed minimum required vertical coastal elevation standards.



3.0 Next Steps

The City of Halifax is in the process of undertaking studies regarding infrastructure capacity and the transportation implications of future development along the Bedford Highway, including the Bedford Waterfront Phase II project.

Waterfront Development recognizes the importance and value of these studies and will work to refine a concept plan within the two-year window that the studies are anticipated to be complete within.

During this two-year window, Waterfront Development will:

- Record and review comments on The 6 Big Moves and incorporate them into the evolving concept plan.
- Work to secure a second access to the waterfront, which is required to enable any future development on the Bedford waterfront.
- Work with the City of Halifax to facilitate their creation of new development and transit and transportation policy to enable the project to proceed. Halifax's policy writing work will include additional public engagement opportunities.
- Engage consultants in the areas of alternative energy, green technology, transportation and geo-technical engineering to pursue initiatives outlined in The 6 Big Moves and support concept refinement.
- Regularly update the community on project progress via our website.

