Strum Consulting News

Exciting Growth for Bedford West Development!

West Bedford Holdings Ltd., a partnership between Clayton Developments and Cresco, is well underway with a massive project in Bedford, NS. The project is expected to cost 1.5 billion dollars or more, providing homes, businesses, and an upscale lifestyle to 20,000 people over the next 10 to 15 years. The recently opened housing communities of Cascades Park and Waterberry Park, are just a part of this overall project. Cascades Park is a mix of townhouses and single family homes, with lots averaging between 2,000 and 2,400 square feet. Waterberry Park has larger lots, with detached and attached bungalows catering to seniors, as well as upscale homes.

Each community is closely tied to the others with commercial centers, interconnected access roads, trails, attractive green space and tree lined streets. Stringent covenants have been designed to ensure that the architectural features of these homes and commercial spaces meet a high standard regarding visual appearance, craftsmanship, and aesthetic.

Engineers and technical staff at Strum Consulting are hard at work providing West Bedford Holdings with engineering expertise on this exciting project. Aside from the design of roads, lots, grading, and stormwater control, Strum designs such services as water and sewer, the basic necessities of any development which, after construction, are typically never seen again.

Canso Causeway Upgrades

The Canso Causeway is undergoing significant upgrades to improve service and efficiency for transportation at the causeway. The upgrades, being completed by AllSteel Coatings Ltd. of Port Hastings, Nova Scotia will include a range of structural, mechanical, and electrical repairs. The work also includes the construction of a new operators' building to serve the swing bridge. Surveyors from Strum's Antigonish office have been involved in the initial project phases staking out the temporary road detour. Future work will involve supervision regarding the placement of the proposed new building, assistance in aligning structures, and staking lay out and staging areas. Work is expected to be completed in spring 2017.

Lake Major Dam Replacement EA

Halifax Water is planning the replacement of the Lake Major Water Supply dam structure. This dam, which stores water for the supply of a large area in HRM including Dartmouth and Cole Harbour, has come to the end of its functional lifespan. Accordingly, Strum is undertaking a Provincial Environmental Assessment (EA) for HRM.

The construction of the Project is expected to last approximately six months and will include the installation of a temporary cofferdam, the construction of a new dam structure, the removal of the old dam, and the construction of a new fish ladder to assist with fish migration into Lake Major. As part of the EA, Strum will evaluate potential impacts to aquatic life, birds, and other wildlife that use this area.

Strum will also assess other environmental features including any archaeological resources that may be encountered during this Project. Socioeconomic factors associated with the project will be examined as well as cumulative effects.

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Fish Passage Culverts, More Than Meets the Eye!

Common to all of the roads that criss-cross Atlantic Canada are the thousands of culverts that safely convey surface drainage downslope into lakes, streams, and eventually, the ocean.

Constructed decades ago, these culverts are old, likely undersized, and in many cases in dire need of repair or replacement. In February of 2015, Fisheries and Oceans rewrote the bible on the design and construction of these culverts, to exacting standards.

The objective of these recent Guidelines is to ensure that the design of new culverts and maintenance of existing culverts provides for safe and unfettered fish passage. Any culvert conveying water in a fish bearing watercourse must meet specifications for water velocity, vertical barriers and depth, and must be designed by a qualified engineer. An approval is required through NS Environment and Fisheries and Oceans where the design is carefully vetted with post construction inspections conducted. Fines for failure to design culverts for fish passage or to maintain the culverts can range up to two million dollars and/or three years in prison!

Compensating for Impacted Wetland Habitat

The civil design and environmental teams at Strum provide support to our residential and commercial land development clientele across Nova Scotia. These projects include design and construction of buildings and developments including site roads and the formation of commercial and residential lots. Some of these projects may encounter wetland habitat areas during the development process that may require alteration. Any modification to wetland habitat requires a Wetland Alteration Permit from NS Environment. In order to comply with Nova Scotia's policy of no net loss of wetland habitat, any alterations of wetland habitat require an in-kind replacement of wetland habitats at a ratio of 2:1 or 3:1.

To streamline this process, the Strum Wetlands Group undertakes the required studies and prepares the applications for these Permits for our clients. Strum also completes the wetland compensation projects by restoring historically impacted wetlands at several sites across Nova Scotia. Strum has been approved by NS Environment to complete these compensation projects. As such, our clients can enter into a Letter of Understanding (LOU) with Strum, as required by Nova Scotia Environment, to fulfill the wetlands compensation requirements for their projects as specified by the Regulations. By having Strum complete their compensation requirements on their behalf, they can move forward with their development projects without costly delays.

Pt. Aconi Substation Project, Changing the Balance of Power

Strum has been busy assisting EmeraNL and its world class team of contractors with construction of two substation facilities this fall in Cape Breton. Working with EmeraNL, ABB (an international Electrical Contractor), and Island Dynamics (Site Contractor), Strum is providing construction staking at both Woodbine Substation and Pt. Aconi HVDC Transition Station sites.

These sites enable electricity, travelling in cables underwater between Newfoundland and Cape Breton, to be changed from DC (Direct Current) to AC (Alternating Current) before continuing their travels through power distribution lines across Nova Scotia to New Brunswick and on to the States. Substations fulfill several important electrical functions. First, they can balance power supply by stepping down voltage from the generating source when electricity approaches distribution lines. Also, substation transformers create voltage increases when electricity enters transmission lines to reduce overall line losses. Strum's exciting role in the construction of these substations is on-going through the fall.

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