


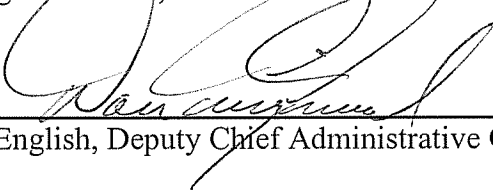
Halifax Regional Council

April 16, 2002

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:


George McLellan, Chief Administrative Officer


Dan English, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: April 10, 2002

SUBJECT: Capital District Vision

ORIGIN

The Capital District was publicly launched by the Mayor in November, 2001. The Visioning process was announced at that time.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that :

1. Council approve in principle the attached Capital District Vision report, to be discussed in late May
2. Council approve the Capital District Vision Statement:

“Together, our harbour community will ensure the sustainability of a diverse, civilized, magnetic Capital District for Halifax Regional Municipality and the Province of Nova Scotia.”

BACKGROUND

The Capital District was created to address the problem of fractured service delivery (multiple agencies and levels of government providing service in a small and critical area with no point of contact) and to enable opportunities in the Capital District for the benefit of the region. To this end, Program and Service Review endorsed the following Mission:

To establish and maintain a healthy, vibrant urban core for HRM residents and visitors, which supports the strength of the entire region, by leading an integrated approach to service delivery in the following areas:

- planning
- design
- maintenance
- transit, transportation, access planning
- community safety initiatives

The Vision tells us, from a high level, where we want to go. The Mission identifies the scope of work and method to get there.

DISCUSSION

Developing the Vision in a three phase approach, stakeholders participated in a survey, focus groups and a Visioning symposium. Methods are generally described in the attached Capital District Visioning Report.

The final report identifies three guiding and decision making tools:

1. The Vision
2. Assets to build on
3. Strategic Directions with Action Plans

The report in its entirety will be presented by stakeholders and discussed at COW in late May.

The Action Plans contain some fairly specific and in some cases strategic and complex deliverables. In addition to the late May COW discussion, staff will return to Council on an on-going basis for discussion and approval of recommended actions, as details and plans are developed.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

none

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

Reject the Vision statement

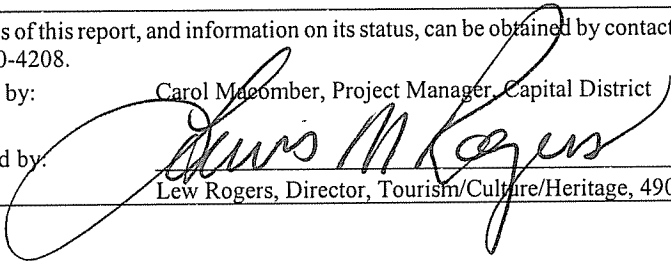
ATTACHMENTS

Capital District Vision Report

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.

Report Prepared by: Carol Macomber, Project Manager, Capital District

Report Approved by:


Lew Rogers, Director, Tourism/Culture/Heritage, 490 5978

Halifax Regional Municipality's

Capital District

Vision Report

12-Mar-02

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INTRODUCTION

The Capital District's Regional Context

The Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) is comprised of many different communities, each with its own unique objectives, needs and aspirations. The question must be answered as to what relevance the Capital District, which substantially comprises the older central areas of Halifax and Dartmouth, bears to this much greater area and why should the Capital District area be treated in a special way?

In order for the various communities of HRM to come together over time and identify as one community, the municipality must have a centre - a place with which all of the members of the community identify and in which those members have a sense of belonging and a sense of pride. The **Capital District** is the only place in HRM that serves these purposes.

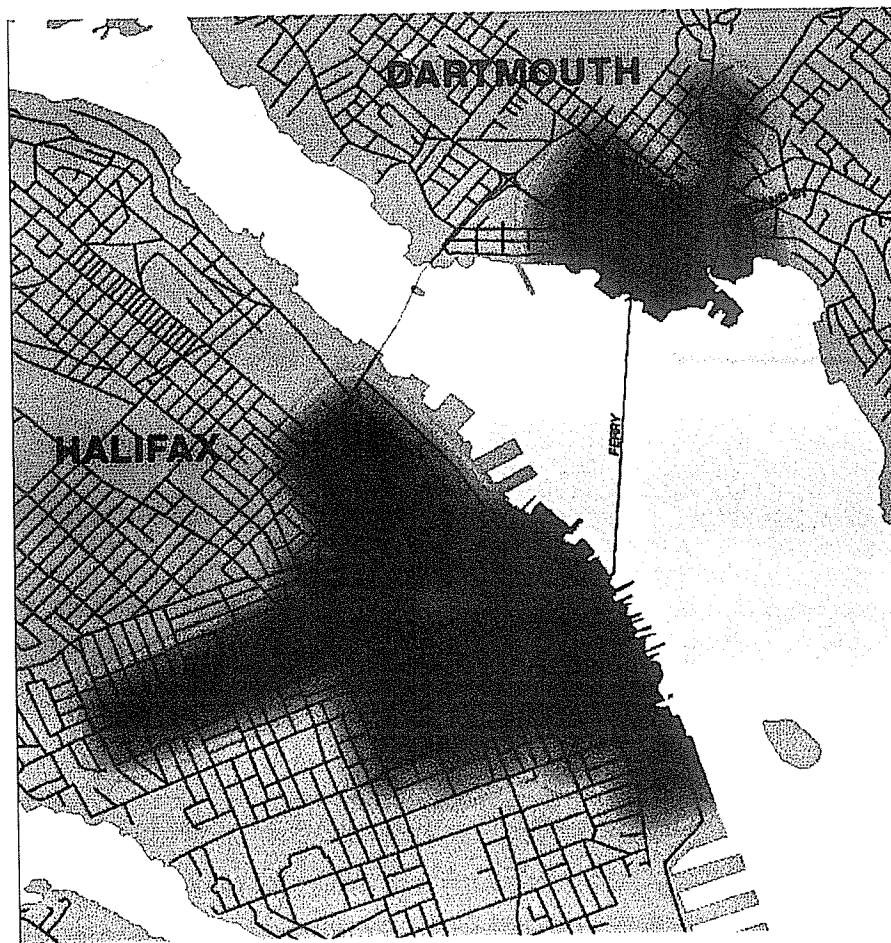
Presently the Capital District is in need of restoration. It is the site of much that is of historic value and the focus of much of the financial, commercial, tourism and convention activity which is of vital economic value to the entire municipality, the entire Province of Nova Scotia and Atlantic Canada.

This report reflects the three vital components in the development of a Vision for the Capital District. A public survey was conducted in December, 2001 which captured community input and feedback on issues and opportunities key to the continued success of HRM's Capital District. The second phase was in-depth Focus Group sessions, attaining expert and channeled feedback on key issues within the urban core and its distinct neighbourhoods. Finally, a group of motivated citizens came together to examine and recommend what should be done for the Capital District, not for their own individual benefit but for the benefit of all of the citizens of HRM and for future generations.

This is the report and recommendations of that group of citizens.

VISION

Together, our harbour community will ensure the sustainability of a diverse, civilized, magnetic Capital District for the Halifax Regional Municipality and the Province of Nova Scotia.



ASSET STATEMENTS*

Building on these Capital District assets will inform decision-making.

People and unique sense of community.

The Capital District offers a genuine, hip and authentic sense of place, strengthened by friendly, creative, well-educated and involved citizens.

Place to live and do business.

The Capital District encompasses the second largest, deep ice-free harbour in the world, strategically positioned on international trade routes and is an outstanding place to live and do business.

This means we support and/or build on the following specific assets as social and economic generators (not priority ordered):

- Regional and provincial centre for:
 - government
 - education
 - health
 - military
 - festivals and events
 - arts and culture
 - recreation and entertainment
- Strong sense of history / heritage – heritage buildings and historic sites and parks
- Open and green spaces
- Arts and culture
- Safe, clean and proud community
- Harbour focussed relationships, access and interaction
- Transportation hub – international, national, regional and local links

- *Detailed asset identification as identified by the Symposium participants can be found in the Appendices section of the report.*

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The following strategic directions will shape the action plans for both the short and long term for the Halifax Regional Municipality's Capital District:

1. Provide Capital District Leadership
 - at all levels of government
 - with stakeholder groups/representatives
2. Plan and Organize
 - develop policy based on identified Capital District assets
 - empower community involvement
3. Maximize Resources
 - financial resources
 - human resources
4. Develop Signature Projects at Two Levels:
 - specific capital projects – *see action plan for priorities on page 7.*
 - foster the sense of community and neighbourhoods within the Capital District
5. Public Transportation and Accessibility
 - promote public transportation and reduction of green house gases
 - provide a balance of bicycle, pedestrian and parking amenities
6. Communicate Excitement
 - provide marketing and communications that celebrate the Capital District
 - promote the Vision for the Capital District

ACTION PLANS

1. Provide Capital District Leadership

- Create a Capital Commission
- All levels of government to coordinate and participate in implementing the Vision
- Stakeholder groups to participate in implementing the Vision
- Representatives of all levels of government and government agencies to meet regularly to clarify roles, responsibilities and account for Vision implementation (e.g. Waterfront Development Corporation, Bridge Commission, Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Halifax Port Authority, etc.)
- Align groups with like-minded groups/individuals and empower communities to lead. Continue evolving /growing community leadership of the Capital District.
- Recognition and rewards program for Capital District promoters, advocates and investors - plan a program and deliver
- Commit to communicating the progress of Vision implementation – Annual General Meeting (AGM)
- Develop and implement programs that reflect pride in the community. (i.e. Beautification Program)

2. Plan and Organize

- Design and implement a foundation research plan incorporating Capital District statistics that include tax revenues within the urban core, assets, tourism statistics and the numbers of residents, businesses & employees; asset map of all physical, creative skills, abilities and resources
- Use identified Capital District assets to guide planning
- Create a strategic plan in coordination with HRM Business Planning
- Establish feedback mechanisms

- Review and modernize current policies and zoning related to outcome of foundation research and planning. Link to by-law development and enforcement
- Develop a beautification and streetscapes plan
- Review of Solid Waste planning to enable appropriate mix of commercial and residential levels
- Performance evaluation plans for Capital District programs. (i.e. Establish an evaluation team which include academic institutions; Report on achievements and Business Improvement District activities; Communication to and involvement of the Capital District community at large)

3. Maximize Resources

- Develop a financial and investment strategy
- Use the Capital District Vision, Assets and Mission statements as part of any decision-making process
- Maximize assets as identified in the Capital District Asset Map of all physical assets, and creative skills/abilities/resources within the urban core
- Attract new immigrants and encourage them to stay. Immigrants will add to diversity and boost the overall Capital District economy
- Research possible development lands within the Capital District. Partner on demonstration projects which reflect the Vision report
- Festival & Event development
 - Attract local/national/international events
 - Identify gaps in events schedule and fill these gaps
 - Promote cultural events

4. Develop Signature Projects*

WE recommend the **REDEVELOPMENT OF THE COGSWELL INTERCHANGE:**

- exploring the creation of a multi-purpose Arts, Culture, Convention and/or Civic Centre as a key component. This captures the Symposium participants' interest in other signature projects
- exploring the development of the Capital District's potential as a regional transportation hub to build a strong, vibrant Capital District

This signature project would connect the many communities within the urban core.

Suggested key signature development projects:

1. Cogswell Street Interchange Redevelopment
2. Harbour redevelopment (discussed and acknowledged as in progress)
3. Trail development – pedestrian, bicycle, and rail.
4. Development of a new Arts/Culture centre
5. Accessibility
6. Container Port relocation and development
7. Beautification projects
8. New signature events
9. Developed transportation links

* See APPENDICES for complete Symposium listing of Signature Projects.

- fostering the sense of community and neighborhoods within the Capital District by use of visual 'themes' identified in consultation with the community

5. Transportation and Accessibility

- Develop a transportation plan which promotes public transportation and includes bicycle, water, parking, trail and pedestrian components
- Promote reduction of green house gases
- Provide accessible infrastructure and an accessible urban core

6. Communicate Excitement

- Develop a communications and marketing plan
- Implement a media launch for the Capital District Vision
- Create a marketing group with the Capital District Task Force and the Downtown Business Commissions
- Identify community partners
- Develop a promotion package that illustrates lifestyle
- Promote the quality and beauty of the metro area (i.e. Province, HRM, BIDCs, etc) by all stakeholder groups
- Work closely with the Destination Marketing Organization
- Partner with international embassies to target immigrant groups

APPENDICES

Capital District Survey

The 2001 Capital District Public Survey was undertaken by HRM Shared Services - Marketing & Design Services, on behalf of the Capital District Task Force Committee. The survey was designed by HRM staff in consultation with the Capital District Task Force. The purpose of the survey was to capture the views of citizens of Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) on the Capital District, and how the Capital District can grow and be developed.

In discussions with the Task Force, it was decided that the study would be completed as an opinion or qualitative questionnaire, rather than a quantitative or statistically reliable survey. The survey was not conducted from a random sampling of respondents, but rather as an open-ended opportunity for the community at large to offer views and opinions about issues surrounding Capital District planning. The information collected will hopefully provide issues for discussion in the upcoming Capital District focus groups and symposium, taking place early in 2002.

The survey method involved distributing paper copies throughout the Municipality via the Capital District Task Force, the HRM Customer Service Centres, and the Halifax Regional Libraries. The survey was also available online on the HRM website. A total of 462 responses were received. The data was compiled and tabulated by Key Database Marketing of Halifax.

SURVEY FORMAT

The CAPITAL DISTRICT PUBLIC SURVEY* was divided into two parts, PART A being a series of questions based on a number of topics or issues, and PART B asked questions based on geographic segments or areas within the Capital District. Part A discussed the following sectors or themes:

- Heritage Preservation
- Tourism Impacts
- Development Impacts
- Public Comforts
- Economic Issues
- Culture and Entertainment
- Open Green Spaces

Part B of the survey asked for opinions around which characteristics respondents would most like to see developed within specific areas in the Capital District, namely:

- Quinpool Road
- Spring Garden Road
- Gottingen Street
- Downtown Dartmouth
- Downtown Halifax

** The complete CAPITAL DISTRICT SURVEY can be found in the Appendices section of the report.*

SURVEY FINDINGS

The results showed that respondents “Completely Agreed” with all the statements pertaining to *Heritage Preservation, Tourism Impacts, Culture & Entertainment, and Open Green Spaces*. Regarding *Development Impacts*, respondents tended to “Mostly Disagree” with the statement “I believe high rise buildings should be concentrated in the Capital District”. Under the section *Economic Issues*, respondents were split on the statement “The shopping/business hours in the Capital District are convenient and meet my needs”. With respect to this last point, comments concerning Sunday shopping (for and against) were prevalent throughout the survey responses.

The top five areas within the Capital District that respondents were most likely to take visitors were: *(in response to Tourism Impacts, Q5)*

(Halifax) Waterfront
Halifax Citadel
Historic Properties
Public Gardens
Maritime Museum of the Atlantic

The results for Part B indicated that “Pedestrian Oriented” is the most important characteristic to develop in every section of the Capital District *except* Quinpool Road (“Accommodates Transit and Vehicles”).

Of special note, is the amount of comments that were offered by the respondents to the survey. While a few of the highlights of the comments are outlined here, it is recommended that the reader review the comments sections in their entirety, to gather insights into opinions around particular issues.

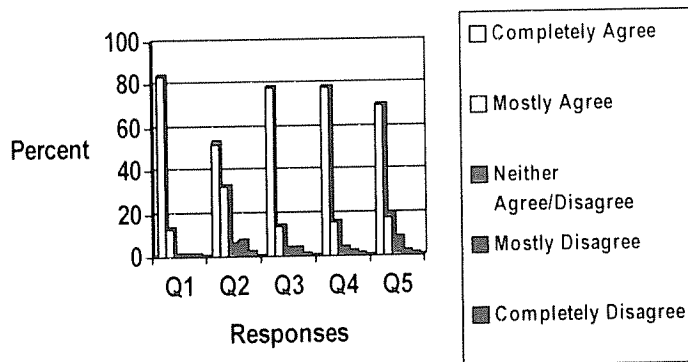
With respect to **Heritage Preservation** and **Development Impacts**, respondents do not like to see the harbour view impeded, and are concerned about “urban sprawl”. When discussing **Tourism Impacts**, respondents felt that, while it is important to attract tourists, the Capital District should first and foremost cater to local residents.

The results indicated a concern about garbage/litter and safety issues at night, particularly for women (**Public Comforts**) and felt that the Public Gardens should be open year round (**Open Green Spaces**).

Lastly, when queried about **Culture and Entertainment**, respondents indicated that they want more open air venues and better libraries, but feel that there are enough bars in the Capital District.

Part A - Results

Heritage Preservation



Q1. The quality of the historic street scapes and public places in the Capital District make an important contribution to the image of the region.

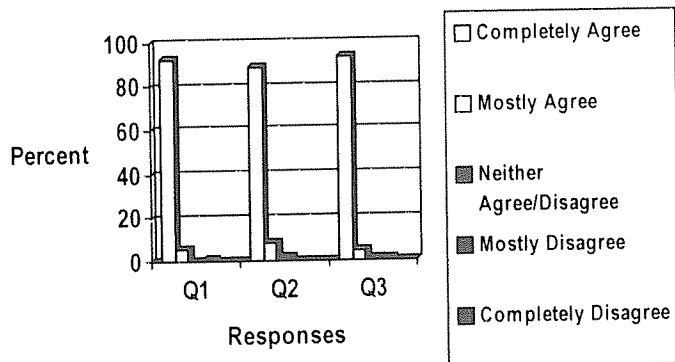
Q2. The Capital District can successfully preserve its heritage while blending in new architectural ideas.

Q3. The views between Citadel Hill and the harbour are fundamentally important in the overall look of downtown.

Q4. I believe it's important to enhance the distinctive historical aspects of the Capital District.

Q5. It is important to develop the local characteristics of each segment of the Capital District.

Open Green Spaces

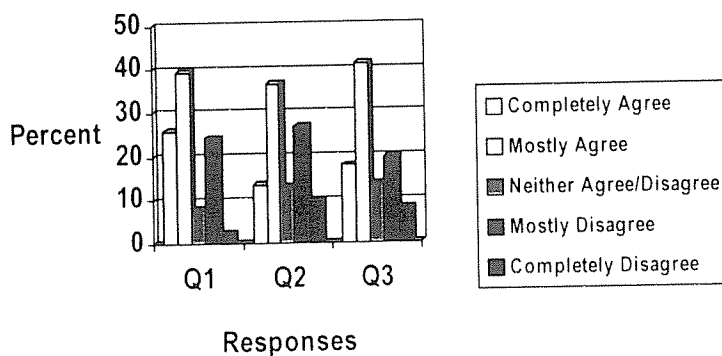


Q1. I believe it's important to protect and enhance green spaces and outdoor meeting spaces in the Capital District.

Q2. There should be a range of public spaces in the Capital District complimenting the variety and density of development.

Q3. It is important to access our open spaces (e.g. Waterfront, Grand Parade, Dartmouth Ferry Terminal Park) year round.

Public Comforts

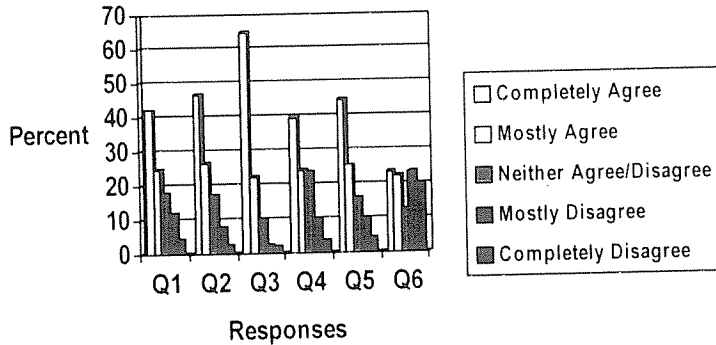


Q1. I believe there are adequate places to relax and enjoy spending time in the downtown.

Q2. The Capital District area is kept clean and clear of litter.

Q3. I feel comfortable walking about in the Capital District after dark.

Economic Issues



Q1. The Capital District should act as the major employment centre in the region.

Q2. I believe increased economic prosperity, within the Capital District, is the backbone of a successful region.

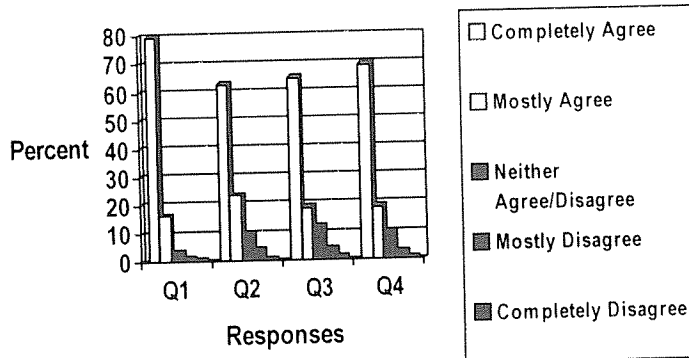
Q3. For the Capital District to remain competitive, it must build and maintain a "critical mass" of related businesses and services, specialized services, and have access to a labour force.

Q4. It is important to enhance the symbols of government (i.e. City Hall/Legislature) in the Capital District.

Q5. The Capital District should act as the centre for commercial development, in Atlantic Canada.

Q6. The shopping/business hours in the Capital District are convenient and meet my needs.

Culture and Entertainment



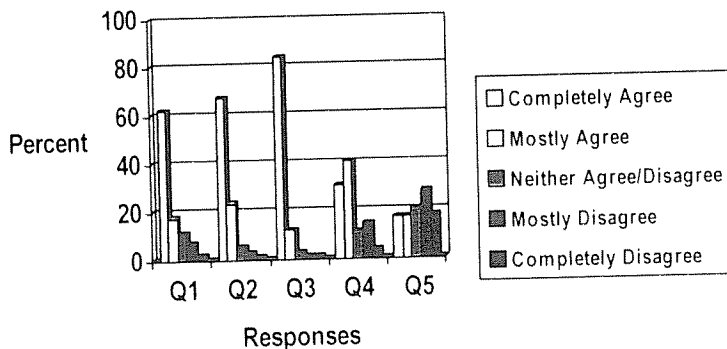
Q1. I believe it's important for the Capital District to have a vibrant nightlife (i.e. restaurants, bars).

Q2. There should be more visual and performing arts productions in the Capital District.

Q3. I believe the Capital District should be dedicated to a learning culture (i.e. libraries, Discovery Centre).

Q4. I would like to see more open air concerts and events (music, live theatre, sports events) in the Capital District.

Development Impacts



Q1. A vibrant urban core is the best defence against urban "sprawl".

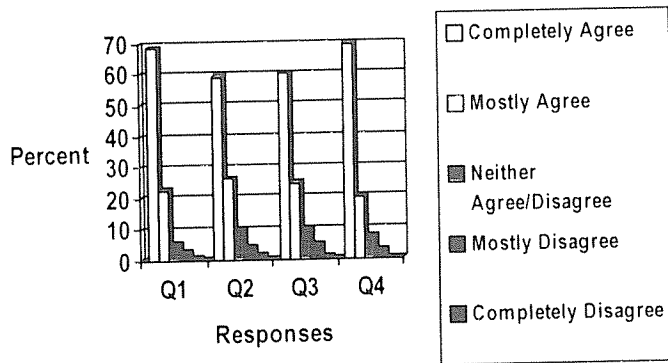
Q2. There should be a range of types of housing in the urban core.

Q3. It is important to provide a high quality architecture and street scapes design in the Capital District.

Q4. I am comfortable with the scale and character of the downtown.

Q5. I believe "high rise" buildings should be concentrated in the Capital District.

Tourism Impacts



Q1. The quality and variety of artistic and cultural activities in the Capital District should be enhanced to attract tourists.

Q2. The quality and variety of entertainment activities in the Capital District should be enhance to attract tourists.

Q3. It is important to enhance the quantity and quality of Tourism services in the Capital District.

Q4. When someone from outside the region comes to visit me, I always take them to the Capital District.

CAPITAL DISTRICT FOCUS GROUP SESSIONS

Four focus group sessions were held January 9th – 10th, 2002 with business, resident and interest and community groups located in the Capital District. The following is a summary of the themes that emerged from the 4 sessions.

FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

Broad Themes:

1. Planning & coordination – a need for coordinated planning across the individual business improvement groups and across the region to set priorities and ensure an approach that works for us all.
2. Leadership – public leadership at all levels and in all sectors is required to stimulate interest and move opportunities forward. We are all leaders - we do not need to wait for a one individual to emerge as the leader.
3. Unity & vision – those characteristics that make us unique should not be lost in the vision. Unity of vision provides great opportunities for people to take control of their city.
4. Halifax, the Atlantic capital – the potential exists for Halifax to become the Atlantic regional centre. Its unique characteristics and attributes combined with the potential offered by the offshore, present opportunities far beyond our usual scope of vision.
5. Arts, culture, & entertainment – the challenge will be to maintain a balance between many opportunities and to ensure the concentration of arts, culture and entertainment found in the capital district receives its share of funding.
6. Heritage - our heritage must be preserved. Urban sprawl and inner city development must not occur at the expense of our heritage buildings. Despite deep pride in our heritage, there is a lack of beautiful modern architecture.

Secondary Themes:

Many secondary themes were discussed across the 4 groups, including:

- Design – opportunity to lead Atlantic Canada in urban design and redesign
- Harbour & waterfront – one of our city's unique features must continue to be enhanced but must be cleaned-up
- Density & size – creates strong neighborhoods and easy access within the Capital District
- Diversity & mix – important to maintain and develop diversity in housing, arts, culture, neighbourhoods

- Identity & ownership – wise investment of funds in new development and maintenance of our assets is necessary to instill pride of ownership
- Tourism – one of our great strengths but we must not become complacent and assume it will always be here
- Environment – need to consider alternatives to mainstream thinking to protect our environment
- Pollution – adhere to standards to clean up our harbour, air emissions and other pollution
- Access & transportation – access and transportation into the Capital District needs innovation. Economy threatened by airline cutbacks
- Infrastructure & services - are at risk on many fronts. Necessary prioritizing & funding is of utmost importance
- Development – needs to be planned both inside the urban core and in the suburbs. One should not be at the expense of the other
- Parochialism – perceived as a major threat to seizing the opportunities before us
- Housing & affordability – new housing in the core must be balanced to attract both high and low income earners to maintain diversity
- Sunday shopping – a controversial subject with proponents on both sides of the argument

SIGNATURE PROJECT IDEAS

Symposium participants brainstormed a number of ideas for 'signature projects' that could be developed to enhance the Capital District.

Arts and Cultural Centre: an astounding concert hall on waterfront with public plaza; performing arts centre (rebuild Capital Theatre); performance venue; community centre/cultural venue; new main library; library/civic centre for arts and culture on Cogswell lands; arts and culture centre; cultural centre of HRM; Arts Centre at Cogswell Interchange; an architectural icon on the Harbour to reflect the region/province.

Transportation: commuter rail line from Sackville, Windsor to Halifax; commuter rail service; make access to transit free for travel within Capital District; express from South end tunnel under Northwest arm; improve public transportation throughout the Capital District; effective public transportation system; comprehensive transportation system that "links" the surrounding area and province with the Capital District.

Beautification projects: more beautification for ALL inclusive HRM areas to build on lack of community coalition (togetherness); incorporating Grand Parade, City Hall, NS Legislation; Interior/exterior; Green space/Ave; Meeting place; Focal point for HRM; re-establish a Legislature Parkland and Pedestrian Mall with foundation(s) on Granville Street, with a new Provincial government office building on the corner with Dennis Building to incorporate all political caucuses, Hansard, expanded legislative library space, meeting room, press conference room(s); Remove parking lot.; open the Public Gardens year-round; "crammed-in" development along one or more streets a la Chinatown.

Trails: bike lanes and pedestrian access around entire harbour; "walk of life": engraved paving stone, with date of birth and name of each child born in Halifax (pick a place); create pedway under Citadel Hill to bring downtown and north end access; Legacy Harbour Waterfront Trail on Dartmouth waterfront connection to significant sites in downtown; completion of the Dartmouth walking trail from North Woodside to Ferry Terminal.

Cogswell Redevelopment: achieve community-directed vision of Cogswell redevelopment; build an outstanding, multi-purpose convention/exhibit space on part of the Cogswell site; get rid of Cogswell interchange and open up lands for development; Cogswell Street redevelopment; architectural centrepiece/landmark civic building on Cogswell or waterfront.

Arts and Culture: X Boundaries Project: culture in public "unsuspected" places (i.e. banks, hotels, buses, restaurant washrooms, gyms, etc.); INFILTRATE!; amazing public art program: Corridors of Art on all CD main streets - Gottingen, Spring Garden, Portland, Quinpool, Barrington; "Sculpture Park" in rural setting; lottery to fund public art and project beautification.

Monuments: significant monument on George's Island (i.e. Statue of Liberty in NYC - will act as a symbol for Halifax); diverse monument of our founders; large statue/monument structure (perhaps historical/cultural in nature) on McNabs Island; monument at the foot of Citadel Hill.

Container port: establishment of mixed use residential/commercial development on lands freed up by relocation of container port; move Halterm to Bedford Basin.

Harbour: waterfront activities and harbour clean-up; a clean harbour.

Stadium: build a stadium; stadium.

Aquarium: achieved aims, Aquarium on a clean harbour.

Events: District Days for HRM!; one overall coordinated HRM "Birthday Party".

Accessibility: a district that is TOTALLY accessible for everyone; be a model city for the world - first city to be fully accessible (e.g. buildings, venues, streets, washrooms, roadways, paths, waterfront, etc.).

Shubie Canal: recognize and restore/develop Shubie Canal (gateway to NS/link from Capital District to the rest of the province).

Education system: leading edge, outstanding, excellent education system (including arts/phys ed for all).

Harbour islands: make George's Island a useful people destination; McNabs theme park!

A new City Hall (e.g. Toronto): all HRM departments under one roof.

Community Board: establish "community board" with ability to set and achieve goals for Capital District with diverse representation.

DETAILED ASSET IDENTIFICATION

The following assets were identified as being present in HRM. (Note that duplicate results have been eliminated in some cases).

Accessibility
Adaptable
Affordability for housing/business
Alderney Gate and Landing
Alive
Arts & Culture
Authenticity
Barrington Street (connecting Downtown Halifax)
Belonging
Bernie Smith - Ideas Man
Capital of Nova Scotia
Caring
Central
Centre of Atlantic Canada
Centre of government / Location of provincial government
Children/youth
Citadel
City Hall
Clean water
Clean
Clean environment
Colourful
Committed
Communications systems
Community Values
Contained
Container Pier
Courtesy
Cultural Diversity
Cultural activities (Natal Day, Buskers, Jazz Festival, etc.)
Diverse geography
Dockyard - technology
Downtown
Environmentally aware
Established neighbourhoods
Expertise
Ferry
Food variety
Forgiving

Future/Optimism
Genuine
George Dixon
George's Island
Grand Parade
Graveyards
Green space (Public Gardens), Pristine areas and parks, Commons
Halifax library lawn
Halifax donairs
Harbour (Waterways, ocean, ice-free)
Hip, Fun, Youthful energy, Buzzing, Busy
Historic Properties
History and Heritage
Honourable traditions
Hospitality
Hospitals - research
Humanitarian
Ideas
Internationally recognized
Involved
Jobs
Knowledge-rich
Leisure amenities
Libraries
Lifestyle
Local and provincial governments
Location (central, especially vis a vis USA and Europe, strategic)
McNab's Island
Military/naval bases
Multicultural
Music, film, theatre, NSCAD, Electropolis, Museums, Neptune
Natural and architectural beauty
Net contributor of \$\$
Old Community
Organization (physical) of fabric (understandable patterns)
Organized
Passive

Pedestrian friendly (waterfront, room to move and grow)

People (Well-educated, Friendly, Talented, Creative, Diverse)

Pier 21

Pier 22

Place of business/commerce

Positive/optimistic

Potential

Pride

Proximity to water

Rail

Recycling leaders

Relaxed atmosphere

Research facilities

Residential Proximity

Resilience

Resources (oil & gas, forestry, minerals)

Restaurants

Safety

Scenic

Sense of community (organizations)

Sense of heritage

Services

Simplistic

Size/scale

Social (reaching out)

Space

Spirit

Sullivan's Pond

Technology

Tolerance

Tourism

Transient student population

TUNS lawn

Uniqueness of construction and development

Universities and colleges

Vibe

View planes

Waterfront

Well-connected links

Well-developed social infrastructure

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In order for the various communities of HRM to come together over time and identify as one community, the municipality must have a centre - a place with which all of the members of the community identify and in which those members have a sense of belonging and a sense of pride. The **Capital District** is the only place in HRM that serves these purposes.

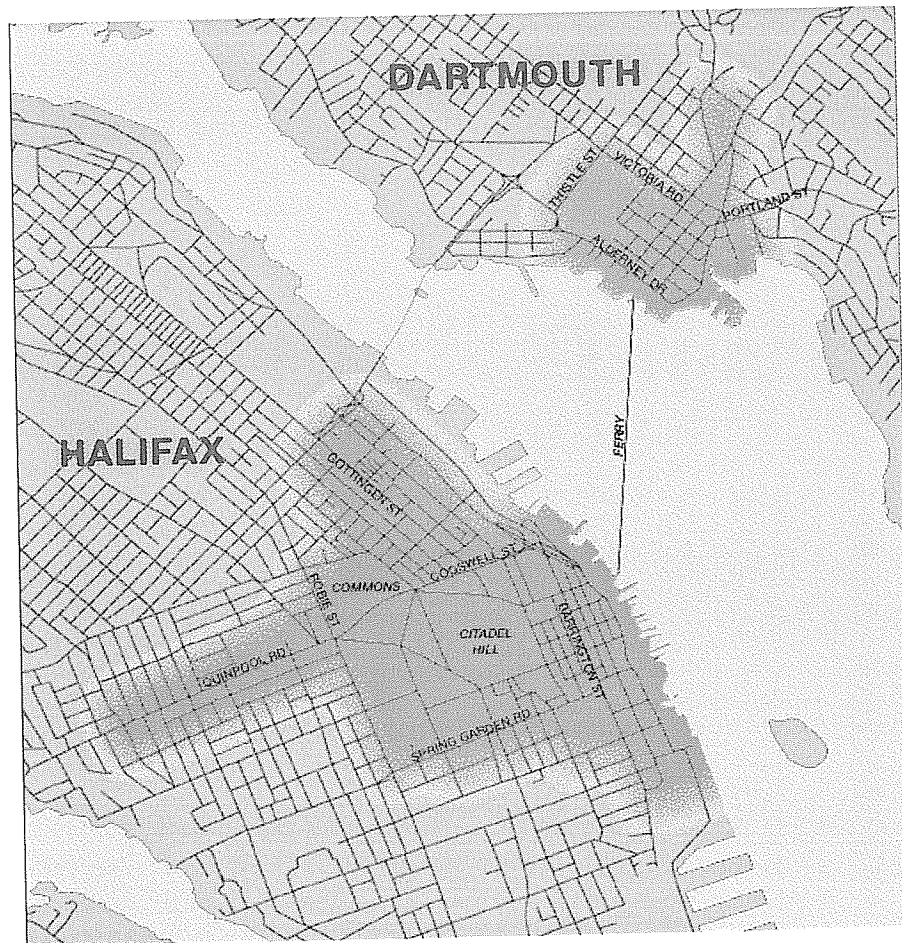
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This is the report and recommendations of that group of citizens.

VISION

Together, our harbour community will ensure the sustainability of a diverse, civilized, magnetic Capital District for the Halifax Regional Municipality and the Province of Nova Scotia.



ASSET STATEMENTS*

Building on these Capital District assets will inform decision-making.

People and unique sense of community.

The Capital District offers a genuine, hip and authentic sense of place, strengthened by friendly, creative, well-educated and involved citizens.

Place to live and do business.

The Capital District encompasses the second largest, deep ice-free harbour in the world, strategically positioned on international trade routes and is an outstanding place to live and do business.

This means we support and/or build on the following specific assets as social and economic generators (not priority ordered):

- Regional and provincial centre for:
 - government
 - education
 - health
 - military
 - festivals and events
 - arts and culture
 - recreation and entertainment
- Strong sense of history / heritage – heritage buildings and historic sites and parks
- Open and green spaces
- Arts and culture
- Safe, clean and proud community
- Harbour focussed relationships, access and interaction
- Transportation hub – international, national, regional and local links

- *Detailed asset identification as identified by the Symposium participants can be found in the Appendices section of the report.*

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The following strategic directions will shape the action plans for both the short and long term for the Halifax Regional Municipality's Capital District:

1. Provide Capital District Leadership
 - at all levels of government
 - with stakeholder groups/representatives
2. Plan and Organize
 - develop policy based on identified Capital District assets
 - empower community involvement
3. Maximize Resources
 - financial resources
 - human resources
4. Develop Signature Projects at Two Levels:
 - specific capital projects – *see action plan for priorities on page 7.*
 - foster the sense of community and neighbourhoods within the Capital District
5. Public Transportation and Accessibility
 - promote public transportation and reduction of green house gases
 - provide a balance of bicycle, pedestrian and parking amenities
6. Communicate Excitement
 - provide marketing and communications that celebrate the Capital District
 - promote the Vision for the Capital District

ACTION PLANS

1. Provide Capital District Leadership

- Create a Capital Commission
- All levels of government to coordinate and participate in implementing the Vision
- Stakeholder groups to participate in implementing the Vision
- Representatives of all levels of government and government agencies to meet regularly to clarify roles, responsibilities and account for Vision implementation (e.g. Waterfront Development Corporation, Bridge Commission, Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Halifax Port Authority, etc.)
- Align groups with like-minded groups/individuals and empower communities to lead. Continue evolving /growing community leadership of the Capital District.
- Recognition and rewards program for Capital District promoters, advocates and investors - plan a program and deliver
- Commit to communicating the progress of Vision implementation – Annual General Meeting (AGM)
- Develop and implement programs that reflect pride in the community. (i.e. Beautification Program)

2. Plan and Organize

- Design and implement a foundation research plan incorporating Capital District statistics that include tax revenues within the urban core, assets, tourism statistics and the numbers of residents, businesses & employees; asset map of all physical, creative skills, abilities and resources
- Use identified Capital District assets to guide planning
- Create a strategic plan in coordination with HRM Business Planning
- Establish feedback mechanisms

- Review and modernize current policies and zoning related to outcome of foundation research and planning. Link to by-law development and enforcement
- Develop a beautification and streetscapes plan
- Review of Solid Waste planning to enable appropriate mix of commercial and residential levels
- Performance evaluation plans for Capital District programs. (i.e. Establish an evaluation team which include academic institutions; Report on achievements and Business Improvement District activities; Communication to and involvement of the Capital District community at large)

3. Maximize Resources

- Develop a financial and investment strategy
- Use the Capital District Vision, Assets and Mission statements as part of any decision-making process
- Maximize assets as identified in the Capital District Asset Map of all physical assets, and creative skills/abilities/resources within the urban core
- Attract new immigrants and encourage them to stay. Immigrants will add to diversity and boost the overall Capital District economy
- Research possible development lands within the Capital District. Partner on demonstration projects which reflect the Vision report
- Festival & Event development
 - Attract local/national/international events
 - Identify gaps in events schedule and fill these gaps
 - Promote cultural events

4. Develop Signature Projects*

WE recommend the **REDEVELOPMENT OF THE COGSWELL INTERCHANGE:**

- exploring the creation of a multi-purpose Arts, Culture, Convention and/or Civic Centre as a key component. This captures the Symposium participants' interest in other signature projects
- exploring the development of the Capital District's potential as a regional transportation hub to build a strong, vibrant Capital District

This signature project would connect the many communities within the urban core.

Suggested key signature development projects:

1. Cogswell Street Interchange Redevelopment
2. Harbour redevelopment (discussed and acknowledged as in progress)
3. Trail development – pedestrian, bicycle, and rail.
4. Development of a new Arts/Culture centre
5. Accessibility
6. Container Port relocation and development
7. Beautification projects
8. New signature events
9. Developed transportation links

* See APPENDICES for complete Symposium listing of Signature Projects.

- fostering the sense of community and neighborhoods within the Capital District by use of visual 'themes' identified in consultation with the community

5. Transportation and Accessibility

- Develop a transportation plan which promotes public transportation and includes bicycle, water, parking, trail and pedestrian components
- Promote reduction of green house gases
- Provide accessible infrastructure and an accessible urban core

6. Communicate Excitement

- Develop a communications and marketing plan
- Implement a media launch for the Capital District Vision
- Create a marketing group with the Capital District Task Force and the Downtown Business Commissions
- Identify community partners
- Develop a promotion package that illustrates lifestyle
- Promote the quality and beauty of the metro area (i.e. Province, HRM, BIDCs, etc) by all stakeholder groups
- Work closely with the Destination Marketing Organization
- Partner with international embassies to target immigrant groups

APPENDICES

Capital District Survey

The 2001 Capital District Public Survey was undertaken by HRM Shared Services - Marketing & Design Services, on behalf of the Capital District Task Force Committee. The survey was designed by HRM staff in consultation with the Capital District Task Force. The purpose of the survey was to capture the views of citizens of Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) on the Capital District, and how the Capital District can grow and be developed.

In discussions with the Task Force, it was decided that the study would be completed as an opinion or qualitative questionnaire, rather than a quantitative or statistically reliable survey. The survey was not conducted from a random sampling of respondents, but rather as an open-ended opportunity for the community at large to offer views and opinions about issues surrounding Capital District planning. The information collected will hopefully provide issues for discussion in the upcoming Capital District focus groups and symposium, taking place early in 2002.

The survey method involved distributing paper copies throughout the Municipality via the Capital District Task Force, the HRM Customer Service Centres, and the Halifax Regional Libraries. The survey was also available online on the HRM website. A total of 462 responses were received. The data was compiled and tabulated by Key Database Marketing of Halifax.

SURVEY FORMAT

The CAPITAL DISTRICT PUBLIC SURVEY* was divided into two parts, PART A being a series of questions based on a number of topics or issues, and PART B asked questions based on geographic segments or areas within the Capital District. Part A discussed the following sectors or themes:

- Heritage Preservation
- Tourism Impacts
- Development Impacts
- Public Comforts
- Economic Issues
- Culture and Entertainment
- Open Green Spaces

Part B of the survey asked for opinions around which characteristics respondents would most like to see developed within specific areas in the Capital District, namely:

- Quinpool Road
- Spring Garden Road
- Gottingen Street
- Downtown Dartmouth
- Downtown Halifax

** The complete CAPITAL DISTRICT SURVEY can be found in the Appendices section of the report.*

SURVEY FINDINGS

The results showed that respondents “Completely Agreed” with all the statements pertaining to *Heritage Preservation, Tourism Impacts, Culture & Entertainment, and Open Green Spaces*. Regarding *Development Impacts*, respondents tended to “Mostly Disagree” with the statement “I believe high rise buildings should be concentrated in the Capital District”. Under the section *Economic Issues*, respondents were split on the statement “The shopping/business hours in the Capital District are convenient and meet my needs”. With respect to this last point, comments concerning Sunday shopping (for and against) were prevalent throughout the survey responses.

The top five areas within the Capital District that respondents were most likely to take visitors were: *(in response to Tourism Impacts, Q5)*

(Halifax) Waterfront
Halifax Citadel
Historic Properties
Public Gardens
Maritime Museum of the Atlantic

The results for Part B indicated that “Pedestrian Oriented” is the most important characteristic to develop in every section of the Capital District *except* Quinpool Road (“Accommodates Transit and Vehicles”).

Of special note, is the amount of comments that were offered by the respondents to the survey. While a few of the highlights of the comments are outlined here, it is recommended that the reader review the comments sections in their entirety, to gather insights into opinions around particular issues.

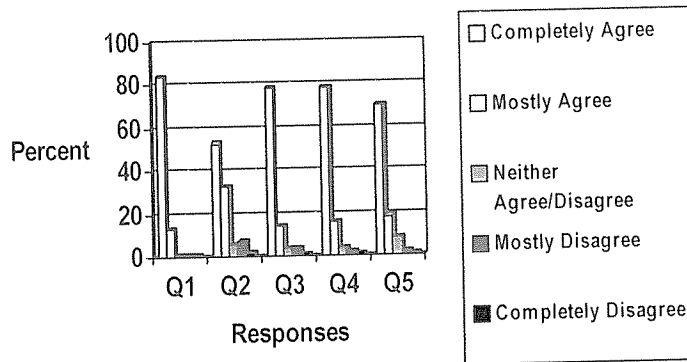
With respect to **Heritage Preservation** and **Development Impacts**, respondents do not like to see the harbour view impeded, and are concerned about “urban sprawl”. When discussing **Tourism Impacts**, respondents felt that, while it is important to attract tourists, the Capital District should first and foremost cater to local residents.

The results indicated a concern about garbage/litter and safety issues at night, particularly for women (**Public Comforts**) and felt that the Public Gardens should be open year round (**Open Green Spaces**).

Lastly, when queried about **Culture and Entertainment**, respondents indicated that they want more open air venues and better libraries, but feel that there are enough bars in the Capital District.

Part A - Results

Heritage Preservation



Q1. The quality of the historic street scapes and public places in the Capital District make an important contribution to the image of the region.

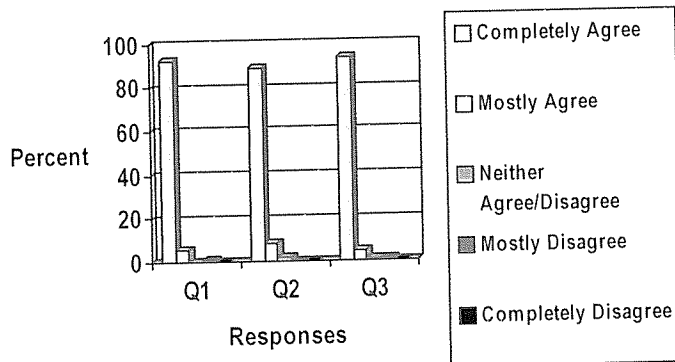
Q2. The Capital District can successfully preserve its heritage while blending in new architectural ideas.

Q3. The views between Citadel Hill and the harbour are fundamentally important in the overall look of downtown.

Q4. I believe it's important to enhance the distinctive historical aspects of the Capital District.

Q5. It is important to develop the local characteristics of each segment of the Capital District.

Open Green Spaces

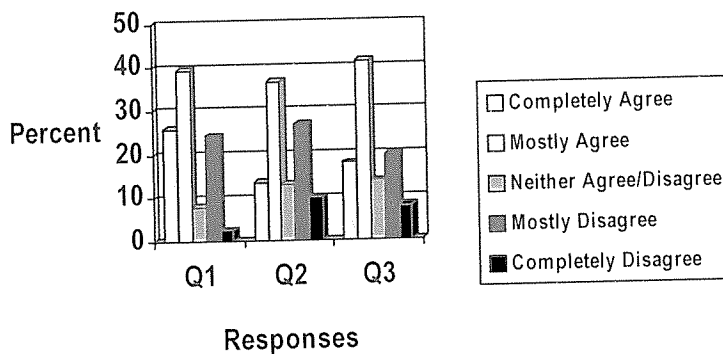


Q1. I believe it's important to protect and enhance green spaces and outdoor meeting spaces in the Capital District.

Q2. There should be a range of public spaces in the Capital District complimenting the variety and density of development.

Q3. It is important to access our open spaces (e.g. Waterfront, Grand Parade, Dartmouth Ferry Terminal Park) year round.

Public Comforts

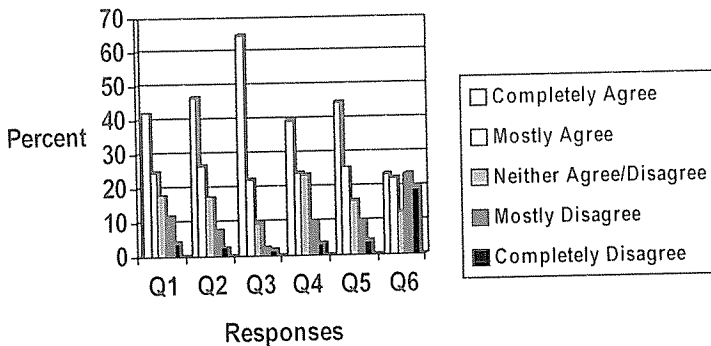


Q1. I believe there are adequate places to relax and enjoy spending time in the downtown.

Q2. The Capital District area is kept clean and clear of litter.

Q3. I feel comfortable walking about in the Capital District after dark.

Economic Issues



Q1. The Capital District should act as the major employment centre in the region.

Q2. I believe increased economic prosperity, within the Capital District, is the backbone of a successful region.

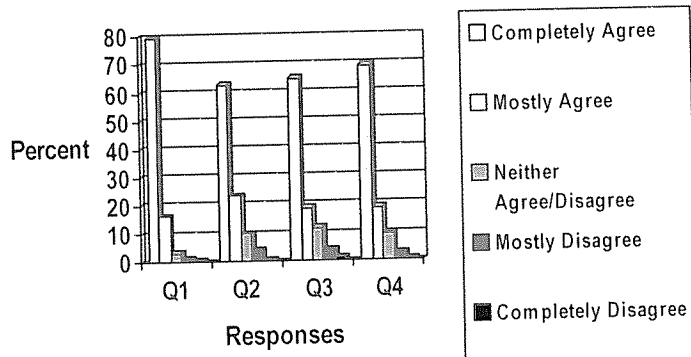
Q3. For the Capital District to remain competitive, it must build and maintain a "critical mass" of related businesses and services, specialized services, and have access to a labour force.

Q4. It is important to enhance the symbols of government (i.e. City Hall/Legislature) in the Capital District.

Q5. The Capital District should act as the centre for commercial development, in Atlantic Canada.

Q6. The shopping/business hours in the Capital District are convenient and meet my needs.

Culture and Entertainment



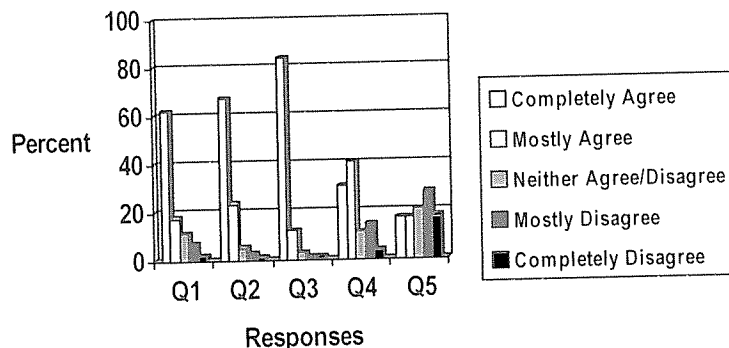
Q1. I believe it's important for the Capital District to have a vibrant nightlife (i.e. restaurants, bars).

Q2. There should be more visual and performing arts productions in the Capital District.

Q3. I believe the Capital District should be dedicated to a learning culture (i.e. libraries, Discovery Centre).

Q4. I would like to see more open air concerts and events (music, live theatre, sports events) in the Capital District.

Development Impacts



Q1. A vibrant urban core is the best defence against urban "sprawl".

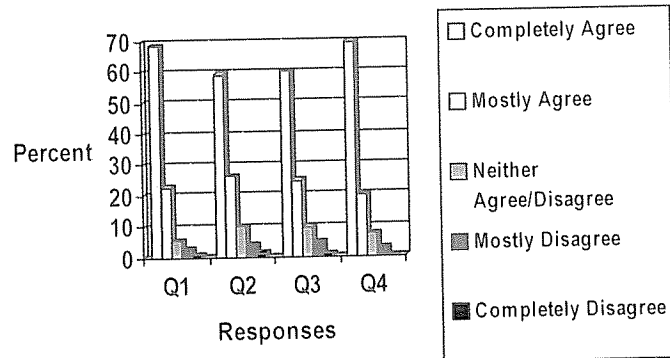
Q2. There should be a range of types of housing in the urban core.

Q3. It is important to provide a high quality architecture and street scapes design in the Capital District.

Q4. I am comfortable with the scale and character of the downtown.

Q5. I believe "high rise" buildings should be concentrated in the Capital District.

Tourism Impacts



Q1. The quality and variety of artistic and cultural activities in the Capital District should be enhanced to attract tourists.

Q2. The quality and variety of entertainment activities in the Capital District should be enhance to attract tourists.

Q3. It is important to enhance the quantity and quality of Tourism services in the Capital District.

Q4. When someone from outside the region comes to visit me, I always take them to the Capital District.

CAPITAL DISTRICT FOCUS GROUP SESSIONS

Four focus group sessions were held January 9th – 10th, 2002 with business, resident and interest and community groups located in the Capital District. The following is a summary of the themes that emerged from the 4 sessions.

FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

Broad Themes:

1. Planning & coordination – a need for coordinated planning across the individual business improvement groups and across the region to set priorities and ensure an approach that works for us all.
2. Leadership – public leadership at all levels and in all sectors is required to stimulate interest and move opportunities forward. We are all leaders - we do not need to wait for a one individual to emerge as the leader.
3. Unity & vision – those characteristics that make us unique should not be lost in the vision. Unity of vision provides great opportunities for people to take control of their city.
4. Halifax, the Atlantic capital – the potential exists for Halifax to become the Atlantic regional centre. Its unique characteristics and attributes combined with the potential offered by the offshore, present opportunities far beyond our usual scope of vision.
5. Arts, culture, & entertainment – the challenge will be to maintain a balance between many opportunities and to ensure the concentration of arts, culture and entertainment found in the capital district receives its share of funding.
6. Heritage - our heritage must be preserved. Urban sprawl and inner city development must not occur at the expense of our heritage buildings. Despite deep pride in our heritage, there is a lack of beautiful modern architecture.

Secondary Themes:

Many secondary themes were discussed across the 4 groups, including:

- Design – opportunity to lead Atlantic Canada in urban design and redesign
- Harbour & waterfront – one of our city's unique features must continue to be enhanced but must be cleaned-up
- Density & size – creates strong neighborhoods and easy access within the Capital District
- Diversity & mix – important to maintain and develop diversity in housing, arts, culture, neighbourhoods

- Identity & ownership – wise investment of funds in new development and maintenance of our assets is necessary to instill pride of ownership
- Tourism – one of our great strengths but we must not become complacent and assume it will always be here
- Environment – need to consider alternatives to mainstream thinking to protect our environment
- Pollution – adhere to standards to clean up our harbour, air emissions and other pollution
- Access & transportation – access and transportation into the Capital District needs innovation. Economy threatened by airline cutbacks
- Infrastructure & services - are at risk on many fronts. Necessary prioritizing & funding is of utmost importance
- Development – needs to be planned both inside the urban core and in the suburbs. One should not be at the expense of the other
- Parochialism – perceived as a major threat to seizing the opportunities before us
- Housing & affordability -- new housing in the core must be balanced to attract both high and low income earners to maintain diversity
- Sunday shopping – a controversial subject with proponents on both sides of the argument

SIGNATURE PROJECT IDEAS

Symposium participants brainstormed a number of ideas for 'signature projects' that could be developed to enhance the Capital District.

Arts and Cultural Centre: an astounding concert hall on waterfront with public plaza; performing arts centre (rebuild Capital Theatre); performance venue; community centre/cultural venue; new main library; library/civic centre for arts and culture on Cogswell lands; arts and culture centre; cultural centre of HRM; Arts Centre at Cogswell Interchange; an architectural icon on the Harbour to reflect the region/province.

Transportation: commuter rail line from Sackville, Windsor to Halifax; commuter rail service; make access to transit free for travel within Capital District; express from South end tunnel under Northwest arm; improve public transportation throughout the Capital District; effective public transportation system; comprehensive transportation system that "links" the surrounding area and province with the Capital District.

Beautification projects: more beautification for ALL inclusive HRM areas to build on lack of community coalition (togetherness); incorporating Grand Parade, City Hall, NS Legislation; Interior/exterior; Green space/Ave; Meeting place; Focal point for HRM; re-establish a Legislature Parkland and Pedestrian Mall with foundation(s) on Granville Street, with a new Provincial government office building on the corner with Dennis Building to incorporate all political caucuses, Hansard, expanded legislative library space, meeting room, press conference room(s); Remove parking lot.; open the Public Gardens year-round; "crammed-in" development along one or more streets a la Chinatown.

Trails: bike lanes and pedestrian access around entire harbour; "walk of life": engraved paving stone, with date of birth and name of each child born in Halifax (pick a place); create pedway under Citadel Hill to bring downtown and north end access; Legacy Harbour Waterfront Trail on Dartmouth waterfront connection to significant sites in downtown; completion of the Dartmouth walking trail from North Woodside to Ferry Terminal.

Cogswell Redevelopment: achieve community-directed vision of Cogswell redevelopment; build an outstanding, multi-purpose convention/exhibit space on part of the Cogswell site; get rid of Cogswell interchange and open up lands for development; Cogswell Street redevelopment; architectural centrepiece/landmark civic building on Cogswell or waterfront.

Arts and Culture: X Boundaries Project: culture in public "unsuspected" places (i.e. banks, hotels, buses, restaurant washrooms, gyms, etc.); INFILTRATE!; amazing public art program: Corridors of Art on all CD main streets - Gottingen, Spring Garden, Portland, Quinpool, Barrington; "Sculpture Park" in rural setting; lottery to fund public art and project beautification.

Monuments: significant monument on George's Island (i.e. Statue of Liberty in NYC - will act as a symbol for Halifax); diverse monument of our founders; large statue/monument structure (perhaps historical/cultural in nature) on McNabs Island; monument at the foot of Citadel Hill.

Container port: establishment of mixed use residential/commercial development on lands freed up by relocation of container port; move Halterm to Bedford Basin.

Harbour: waterfront activities and harbour clean-up; a clean harbour.

Stadium: build a stadium; stadium.

Aquarium: achieved aims, Aquarium on a clean harbour.

Events: District Days for HRM!; one overall coordinated HRM "Birthday Party".

Accessibility: a district that is TOTALLY accessible for everyone; be a model city for the world - first city to be fully accessible (e.g. buildings, venues, streets, washrooms, roadways, paths, waterfront, etc.).

Shubie Canal: recognize and restore/develop Shubie Canal (gateway to NS/link from Capital District to the rest of the province).

Education system: leading edge, outstanding, excellent education system (including arts/phys ed for all).

Harbour islands: make George's Island a useful people destination; McNabs theme park!

A new City Hall (e.g. Toronto): all HRM departments under one roof.

Community Board: establish "community board" with ability to set and achieve goals for Capital District with diverse representation.

DETAILED ASSET IDENTIFICATION

The following assets were identified as being present in HRM. (Note that duplicate results have been eliminated in some cases).

Accessibility
Adaptable
Affordability for housing/business
Alderney Gate and Landing
Alive
Arts & Culture
Authenticity
Barrington Street (connecting Downtown Halifax)
Belonging
Bernie Smith - Ideas Man
Capital of Nova Scotia
Caring
Central
Centre of Atlantic Canada
Centre of government / Location of provincial government
Children/youth
Citadel
City Hall
Clean water
Clean
Clean environment
Colourful
Committed
Communications systems
Community Values
Contained
Container Pier
Courtesy
Cultural Diversity
Cultural activities (Natal Day, Buskers, Jazz Festival, etc.)
Diverse geography
Dockyard - technology
Downtown
Environmentally aware
Established neighbourhoods
Expertise
Ferry
Food variety
Forgiving

Future/Optimism
Genuine
George Dixon
George's Island
Grand Parade
Graveyards
Green space (Public Gardens), Pristine areas and parks, Commons
Halifax library lawn
Halifax donairs
Harbour (Waterways, ocean, ice-free)
Hip, Fun, Youthful energy, Buzzing, Busy
Historic Properties
History and Heritage
Honourable traditions
Hospitality
Hospitals - research
Humanitarian
Ideas
Internationally recognized
Involved
Jobs
Knowledge-rich
Leisure amenities
Libraries
Lifestyle
Local and provincial governments
Location (central, especially vis a vis USA and Europe, strategic)
McNab's Island
Military/naval bases
Multicultural
Music, film, theatre, NSCAD, Electropolis, Museums, Neptune
Natural and architectural beauty
Net contributor of \$\$
Old Community
Organization (physical) of fabric (understandable patterns)
Organized
Passive

Pedestrian friendly (waterfront, room to move and grow)
People (Well-educated, Friendly, Talented, Creative, Diverse)
Pier 21
Pier 22
Place of business/commerce
Positive/optimistic
Potential
Pride
Proximity to water
Rail
Recycling leaders
Relaxed atmosphere
Research facilities
Residential Proximity
Resilience
Resources (oil & gas, forestry, minerals)
Restaurants
Safety
Scenic
Sense of community (organizations)
Sense of heritage
Services
Simplistic

Size/scale
Social (reaching out)
Space
Spirit
Sullivan's Pond
Technology
Tolerance
Tourism
Transient student population
TUNS lawn
Uniqueness of construction and development
Universities and colleges
Vibe
View planes
Waterfront
Well-connected links
Well-developed social infrastructure