

SHARING THE POSSIBILITIES ON **ARGYLE STREET**

Streetscape Plan



PLANNING
& DESIGN
CENTRE

Acknowledgements

The Planning & Design Centre (PDC) would like to thank the Downtown Halifax Business Commission for re-energizing a plan for Argyle Street.

PDC would also like to thank the Argyle Entertainment District Association members and everyone who collaborated at the public design sessions.

The Marriott Residence Inn and Neptune Theatre generously offered space to host a temporary project “storefront” on Argyle Street during the design process.

September 15, 2012



Building awareness, collaboration and innovation

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Argyle Street is the heart of entertainment in Halifax and is positioned to become a showcase street in the city. Ideas for enhancing the streetscape have been discussed for many years. This plan brings the design up to date with the input of the local businesses and the community at large. It is a community driven plan.

The street is now poised to become a shared street, fully open to people while still accommodating cars. This plan proposes Argyle Street as a gathering place that works night and day, summer and winter as a daily public space and destination for special celebration.

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ARGYLE STREETSCAPE

The quality of a city's streets is integral to the vitality and quality of life enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. Streets have both typical and unique functions and qualities. Each contributes to the basic structure and network of public space in a city. Some streets stand out; they warrant special public infrastructure investment as prominent destinations, hubs of activity, greenspace, economic magnets or key corridors of movement. Argyle has become one of those special streets that is ripe for enhancement as a unique city street that serves as a banner of downtown Halifax.

As one of the most vibrant streets in downtown Halifax, Argyle Street can be viewed as a model for how people-oriented places in the downtown are designed and developed. The following report illustrates a concept for permanent infrastructure improvements that support the strong café culture and vibrant street life that makes Argyle Street the heart of entertainment in Halifax.

Why Argyle Street?

Argyle Street is largely the result of the vision, commitment and investment of local business. Argyle Street has grown become an entertainment hub and downtown destination for residents and visitors. Waves of lunch and dinner patrons fill the outdoor patios from April to October, bringing colour and energy to the street. A lively year-round dining and nightlife destination with regular music and theatre shows makes Argyle Street the centerpiece of the downtown entertainment district. The Argyle Entertainment District Association estimated that Argyle Street played host to over 2,000 annual entertainment events (live music, DJs, theatre). Patrons of Neptune Theatre alone contribute an estimated \$4.6 million to the local economy (Neptune Theatre Economic Impact Study, 2010).

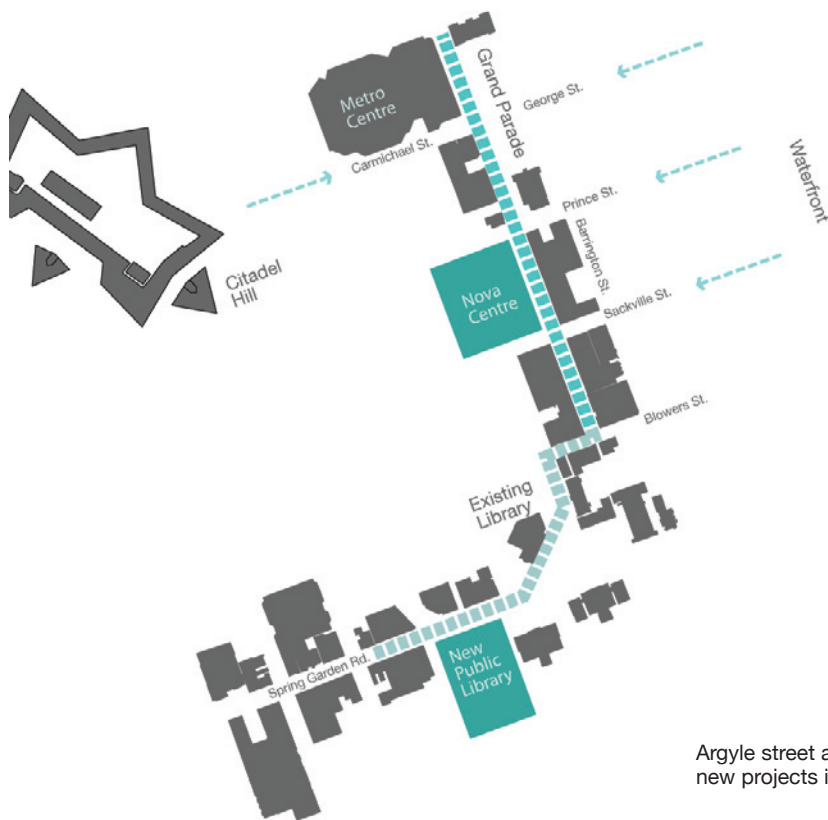
Investing in Argyle as a people-focused destination and building on the vibrancy that local establishments have created will support and benefit a thriving downtown. Currently,

merchants put substantial effort into making the streetscape more inviting to pedestrians through facade treatment and seasonal installations. Merchants build, deconstruct and store temporary patios and sidewalk extensions at their own expense. This seasonal investment amounts to as much as \$100,000 annually. Pedestrian comfort competes with a commitment to vehicular preference in lighting and right-of-way use. The benefit of the tight-knit urban fabric of the street and Argyle's impact within the downtown is obscured by a lack of commitment to its potential as a truly great city street.

Argyle is already an important connection and destination within the downtown. The existing Memorial Public Library site orientation has cemented a pedestrian flow that links Spring Garden Road with Argyle Street. This pattern links the main downtown shopping district, the entertainment district, civic landmarks of City Hall and Grand Parade, and the concentration of offices in the north end of the downtown. The east-west hill streets that cross Argyle serve as a platform that visually connect Citadel Hill to the waterfront. Argyle functions primarily as a social space and pedestrian link, but not as a vehicular traffic corridor. Only four blocks that dead end, Argyle Street has a simplicity and opportunity that other key commercial streets, such as Spring Garden Road, Barrington Street and Quinpool Road, lose to high volumes of through traffic and transit.

The qualities and prominence of Argyle Street as a route of connection and downtown destination will be reinforced by two major new institutions now under development: the Central Library and the Nova Centre. These projects further establish a pattern in the downtown that highlights Argyle as a key piece of the public environment.

The businesses on Argyle Street have responded to their context and made Argyle the central destination for dining and entertainment. After many years of interest and discussion about enhancing Argyle Street, the time has



Argyle street as a pedestrian connection and link between major new projects in the downtown.

come to recognize the critical contribution of this street and to invest in the public infrastructure to permanently support Argyle as a showcase street in the city.

As HRM moves forward with its implementation of the Greater Halifax Economic Strategy and the Downtown Plan there is an opportunity to make the vision of Argyle Street a reality. Both strategies highlight the significance of investing in the public realm as a means to generate private development. This report presents a design concept that is the result of considerable engagement to establish a vision for the street as a premier destination and the energetic centrepiece of downtown.

Project Scope

Much work regarding improvements to the street has occurred over the years. This streetscape project builds on those efforts by broadening public support and revisiting the design in a collaborative way. It builds on the years of previous work undertaken by Gordon Ratcliffe Landscape Architects, the Downtown Halifax Business Commission and Argyle Street merchants, and incorporates ideas

from more recent public design sessions and stakeholder meetings. It is a community driven plan.

The scope of work for the project includes defining and exploring the following core elements:

- Building a shared vision for Argyle Street
- Streetscape Plan proposition
- Illustrative examples of program ideas for the street

In order to accomplish the project goals, the Planning & Design Centre (PDC) created the following four-phased work plan:

- Phase 1: Project Initiation: engage merchants, HRM staff and other stakeholders
- Phase 2: Build a common vision for the street
- Phase 3: Develop Streetscape Plan for Argyle Street
- Phase 4: Refine and affirm a broadly supported Streetscape Plan for Argyle Street



The project began with a focus on the blocks between Blowers Street and Prince Street. Participants in the engagement sessions stressed the importance of considering the entire length of Argyle Street. Based on this feedback the scope of the concept development was broadened to include all the blocks (to Duke Street). Given the short length of Argyle, a unified design strategy for the entire length of the street is recommended in order to establish a cohesive feel and function of the street.

Engagement

The community-based approach used to develop this plan considers community engagement and public involvement as fundamental to understanding the current issues and developing solutions and a permanent, long-term strategy for the street. Throughout the planning process a wide range of stakeholders and groups were engaged to contribute ideas and provide feedback. Ideas gathered from community engagement sessions were refined and drawn together to develop community-based solutions that reflect the local context as well as current streetscape best practices.

The following outlines the approaches used to ensure community input in the development and refinement of ideas for the Argyle Streetscape Plan:

Meetings with Argyle Street Business Owners and Managers

The Planning + Design Centre initiated the process through individual meetings with business owners and managers along Argyle Street who had been involved in previous streetscape

work. The goal of the meetings was to understand their involvement in the previous Argyle streetscape work and to carry forward the insights, perspectives and special concerns about the street in its existing state and its potential for redevelopment.

Collaborative Public Design Sessions (April 11, 2012 & May 7, 2012)

The collaborative public design sessions brought together business owners and managers from the district, municipal and provincial elected officials, special interest stakeholders, planning and design professionals, students and members from the public at large. Each session had approximately 40 people in attendance. Participants had the opportunity to share and sketch program and design ideas in small groups and to respond to design propositions. Notes from each session are included in the Appendix.

The first design session focused on establishing broad public support for a vision and design principles to guide the development of a streetscape plan for Argyle Street. The meeting also focused on building support for implementing streetscape strategies that support Argyle as a pedestrian-oriented street in downtown Halifax.

At the second design session, the PDC presented an initial design concept for the street and allowed participants an opportunity to change, update and provide general comments about the draft concept. PDC gathered ideas from each small group and incorporated the results into the final streetscape design.



Focus Groups with HRM staff and special interest groups

PDC presented the draft concept design to the following groups and advisors:

- HRM Accessibility Advisory Committee
- HRM Operational Staff (HRM Planning Services, Traffic and Transportation, Traffic and Right-of-Way Service and Halifax Regional Police)
- HRM Transportation and Public Works

Open House (June 4, 2012)

The Open House was an opportunity to obtain agreement on the design concept and to develop a shared commitment to move forward on the design ideas, possibilities and recommendations. Notes from the Open House are included in the Appendix.

Project Storefront

In between public design sessions, PDC set up shop along Argyle during the lunch hour a few days per week. For the month of April, PDC used the Marriott Residence Inn Sales Office. Following the first public design session, PDC used the Neptune Studio Theatre lobby space. The storefront ensured that design development meetings continued to be open and accessible to members of the public. The storefront was also important to increasing general awareness about the project.

Social Media

In order to ensure ongoing and accessible opportunities for many community members to gather information and provide input to the plan, PDC created a Facebook group where meetings were advertised and draft concepts and products displayed.

Policy Connections

With policy in place for activating downtown development, and with a clear direction for economic growth that focuses on strengthening the Regional Centre, the benefit of public realm investment can no longer be overlooked. As new developments break ground downtown, the time is right to invest in public space as a cornerstone of a vibrant and prosperous city. Argyle Street is well-positioned to demonstrate the impact of public realm investment.

Regional Plan

Downtown revitalization is a key component of the policy direction HRM has taken in the Regional Plan. The Regional Plan identifies the Capital District as the principal economic, social and cultural centerpiece of the region. The plan calls for a Capital District Public Infrastructure Functional Plan to guide public-realm improvements in the effort to revitalize the downtown.

Downtown Plan

To compliment land uses and urban design the HRM by Design Downtown Plan sets out a typology of streets to distinguish their character and function. The plan designates



certain streets as corridors to accommodate the bulk of vehicular traffic, and others to cater more to pedestrians. Policy 55 states that HRM shall support Argyle as a “pedestrian-priority street”. The Downtown Plan suggests design considerations in creating pedestrian-priority streets:

- Occasional use of distinctive paving (Paving to appear as a plaza treatment without curbs while accommodating pedestrian safety considerations)
- Broadened sidewalks to enable continuous street trees
- Roadway width reduce to minimum requirements
- Unique lighting, banners and furnishing
- Fixtures that can close segments of the street off from vehicular traffic

Cultural Functional Plan

The existing Cultural Functional Plan considers strategic directions for enhancing activity in the culture and arts sector. Specifically, this plan considers enhancing access and community equity including: arts and cultural events, public art, cultural facilities and infrastructure, civic places and spaces. The plan also intends to enhance quality of life in the municipality by recognizing, promoting and developing community character through urban design and support for the arts.

Capital Ideas: Leveraging Urban Investment for Regional Prosperity

In 2010 Council received a Capital Ideas discussion paper that outlined an approach to creating regional prosperity through public investment in the urban core. The paper

intended to mobilize effort for implementing core goals of the Regional Plan and Downtown Plan. The Capital Ideas concept states that regional prosperity depends on strategic public investment in the Regional Centre. Under this approach, public investment is regarded as a catalyst for private investment and is essential to creating strong economic impacts throughout the municipality.

Greater Halifax Economic Strategy 2011-2016

The Greater Halifax Partnership completed a collaborative economic review and a 5-year economic strategy that was unanimously endorsed by council in March 2011. Key objectives of the plan are to improve the liveability and attractiveness of the Urban Core and enable a variety of cultural and creative opportunities in the Regional Centre to help attract and retain talent. Actions recommended in the plan include reinforce the approach outlined in the Capital Ideas report. Recommendations include:

- Adopt a \$50 million intergovernmental capital improvement campaign to repair and enhance the public realm in the Urban Core
- Establish an ongoing dedicated “Strategic Urban Reserve” fund for Urban Core beautification
- Invest in and activate public gathering places

All of this supports the position that the time is now to make public realm investment a priority in the effort to activate the Regional Centre. Argyle is a key location to enhance as a signature street in the city.

2 STREETScape Concept

Design Principles

The engagement process led to the following principles to guide development of the Argyle plan:

Permanent

Establish a permanent and high quality infrastructure for patios, commerce and events that support a vibrant downtown street life.

Responsive

Get the most out of the street by creating a design and attitude that encourages an intensity of street activity to attract cycles of uses at different times of the day, week and season.

Pedestrian

Make pedestrian activity a priority on Argyle Street by committing more space to the comfort, activities and pace of people.

Destination

Push Argyle to stand out as a memorable destination and centrepiece of entertainment that makes a statement about the quality of Halifax's downtown energy both day and night.

Beautiful

Make Argyle Street expressive and beautiful; it will glow and sparkle with energy, colour and light. Showcase creativity by making the everyday extraordinary.

Shared Street

These principles inspired the idea that the street needs to be both permanent and adaptable, to be a destination both day and night, summer and winter, and to be pedestrian-oriented while still accommodating vehicles. As a public space, the street needs to be comfortable with few people but capable of hosting special activities and large celebrations.

A shared street concept offers a useful framework for balancing the needs of the street. Whereas conventional streets employ a strict separation of pedestrian and vehicle space, shared streets aim to transform right-of-ways into public spaces that support and encourage more people activity while supporting a harmonious co-existence with vehicles.

Shared streets should not be mistaken for pedestrian malls. The shared street concept presents a solution for accommodating the needs of all road uses by balancing conditions for comfort and usability. Simplicity and clarity, achieved through careful design of surface treatment, gateways and traffic calming, replace the clutter of strict user separation and management. Shared street designs instill awareness, trust and common sense among road users. Streets become complete spaces that respond to their context of land use and enhance the environment for localised public realm activity.

Many cities use shared streets to improve the attractiveness, safety and usability of the public realm. The Dutch "woonerf" model is widely applied in Europe on both residential and commercial streets, and has been built into legislation in the Netherlands for several decades. North American cities also demonstrate examples of shared streets, including Stephen Avenue in Calgary.



New Road, Brighton UK: Before.
Source: Gehl Architects



New Road, Brighton UK: After.
Source: Gehl Architects

In 2007, New Road in Brighton UK was rebuilt as a shared-surface and multi-modal commercial street. Brighton boasts major successes in the project, including 62% more pedestrian traffic, a 93% reduction in vehicle traffic, and 600% more staying activity that make New Road one of the most popular destinations in the city.

Shared streets design has been applied on a variety of street types. Design elements are adapted to accommodate the needs of the particular context. Land uses influence who the street users are and what activities must be balanced. In residential zones children are common street users. On commercial and downtown streets multi-modal transportation options, entertainment and outdoor dining may be considered. Exhibition Road in London UK demonstrates shared street elements on a major thoroughfare with institutional and commercial uses.

The application of the shared street concept on Argyle Street shifts the street design from a car-dominant space to a truly public realm that emphasizes pedestrian movement, pace and activities. The design presented in this plan applies

baseline elements of shared street design determined in jurisdictions where shared streets have a formal place in policy. Main physical design elements commonly used in the design of shared streets include:

- Single grade right-of-ways to eliminate false impressions of user distinction
- Paving distinctions by colour and/or texture
- Gateway elements to clearly mark entrances and exits to the street
- Minimum carriageway width (3 metres in the Netherlands and England)
- Frequent vertical elements that create short sightlines for drivers

Argyle Street: A Responsive Shared Street

In addition to sharing physical space, applying a shared street design presents an opportunity to promote street activities at different times of the day, week and season that create a public environment with 24-hour life. What happens during the weekday is different than the weekend. New possibilities arise for summer and winter, day and night.



Exhibition Road, London UK: Before.
Source: www.dailymail.co.uk



Exhibition Road, London UK: After.

It is this quality of responding to daily cycles, to different seasons and for special occasions that makes Argyle both shared and responsive. More than a shared street that accommodates both people and vehicles, Argyle is also designed to be used creatively at different times of the day, days of the week, in summer and winter and in moments of community celebration. This adaptability provides an opportunity for many activities and invites a variety of people to the street. This variety creates the vibrancy and energy desired in the downtown. The idea of daily and seasonal cycles is built into “smart” infrastructure and the design of each element of the street. “Smart” infrastructure is multi-functional to maximise opportunities and to make creative amenities that suit changing street functions.

The Streetscape Plan does not aim to prescribe street programming. The following renderings present Argyle Street with descriptions of some of the possibilities discussed at public design sessions.



Current conditions on Argyle Street, looking north in patio season.



Current conditions on Argyle Street looking south in the off-season.



Rendering of Argyle Street in summer.

As a shared street during the summer, Argyle is envisioned as a vibrant destination where daily visitors can enjoy the outdoor patios for lunch, but also visit Argyle as a strolling street. Seasonal patio post and chain infrastructure is installed to mark the patio zone between April and November. Market carts selling flowers, artwork and food appear beneath colourful shade canopies from Thursday to Saturday.

Tourists and residents may schedule a visit to Argyle for weekly on-street theatre programming. Recurring summer festivals draw people to the street in the summer and fall for music, film and buskers. Temporary street closure each weekend (from 6pm Friday to 12pm Sunday) attracts people to a temporary pedestrian space where spontaneous entertainment, markets or scheduled activities can take over the road.



Summer evening under canopy lighting.

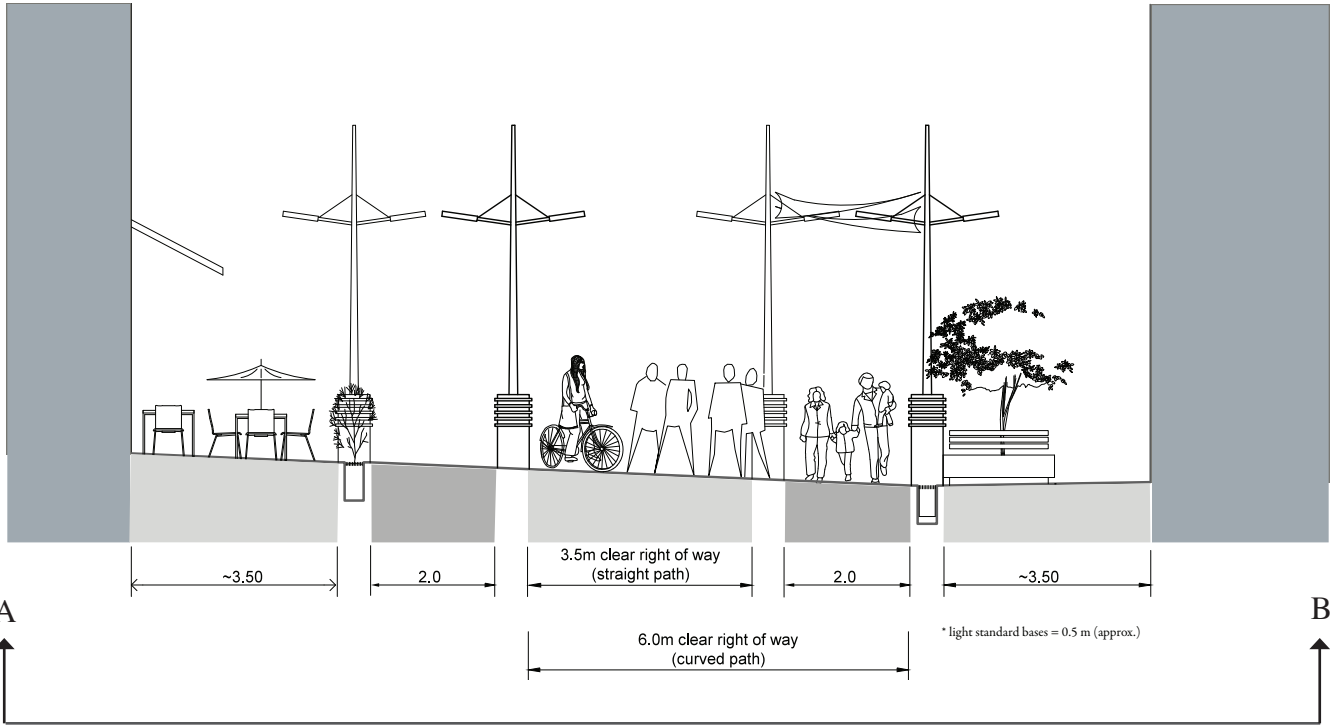
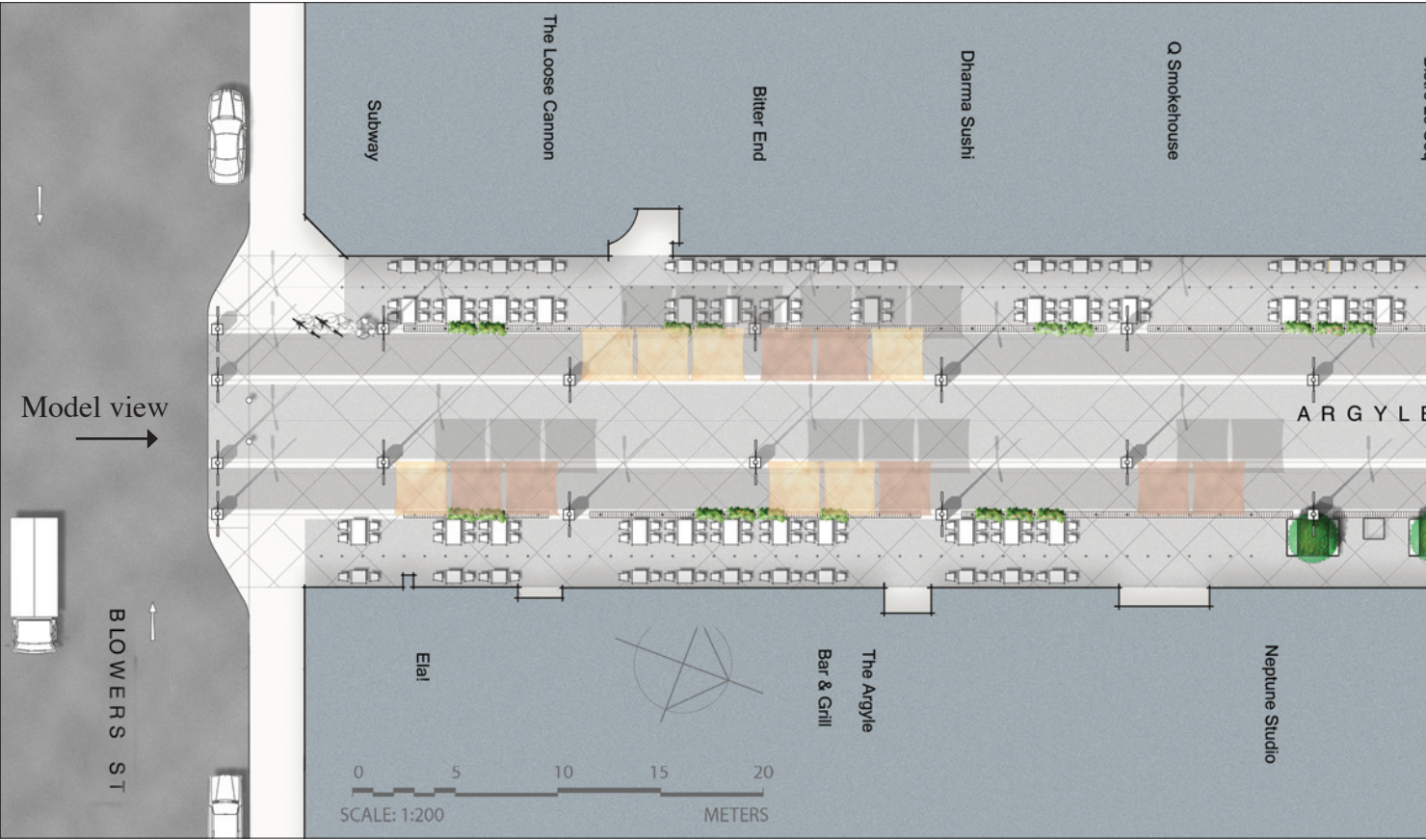
Lighting is a theme that distinguishes a redeveloped Argyle as unique and luminous street. A tiered system of lights from the ground to the sky make Argyle Street glow. The layers of lighting provide an elegant atmosphere for evening dining and improve nighttime safety. Digital projections on the Nova Centre enliven the area as the entertainment centre of the city.

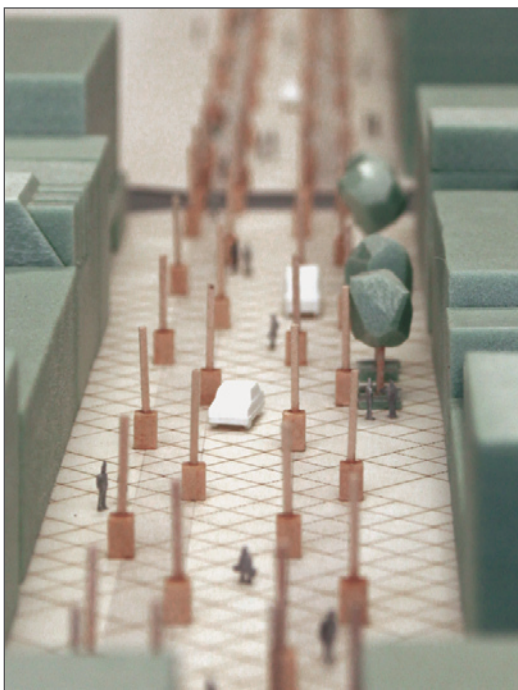
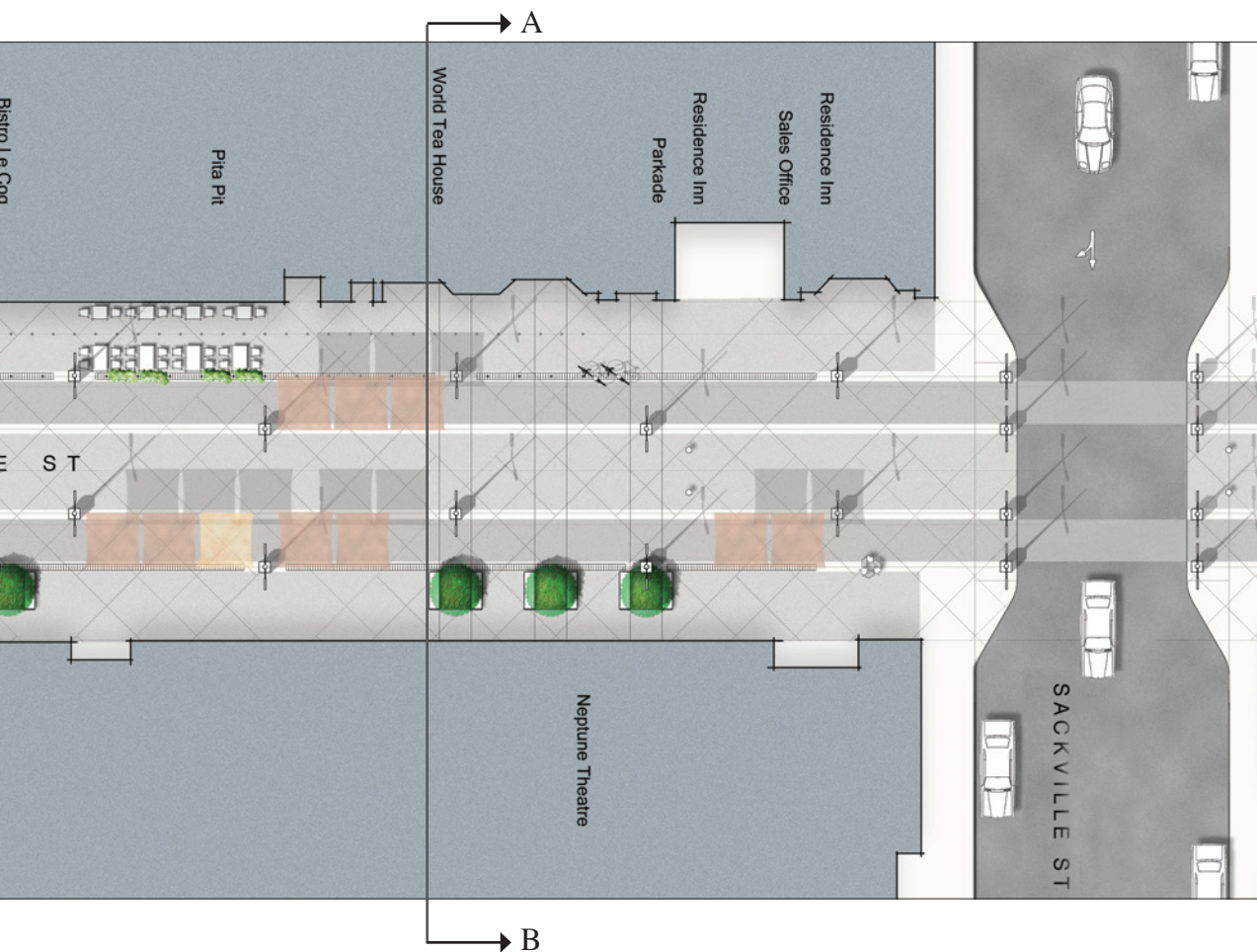


Winter scene with heated patio space.

Winter patio options provided by businesses make use of the streetfront threshold for an extended season. A Christmas market draws people for holiday shopping on the street and in Grand Parade. While music, theatre and dining continue to bring people to Argyle, the streetscape is enlivened with ice sculpture and an annual public art rotation.

Blowers Street to Sackville Street

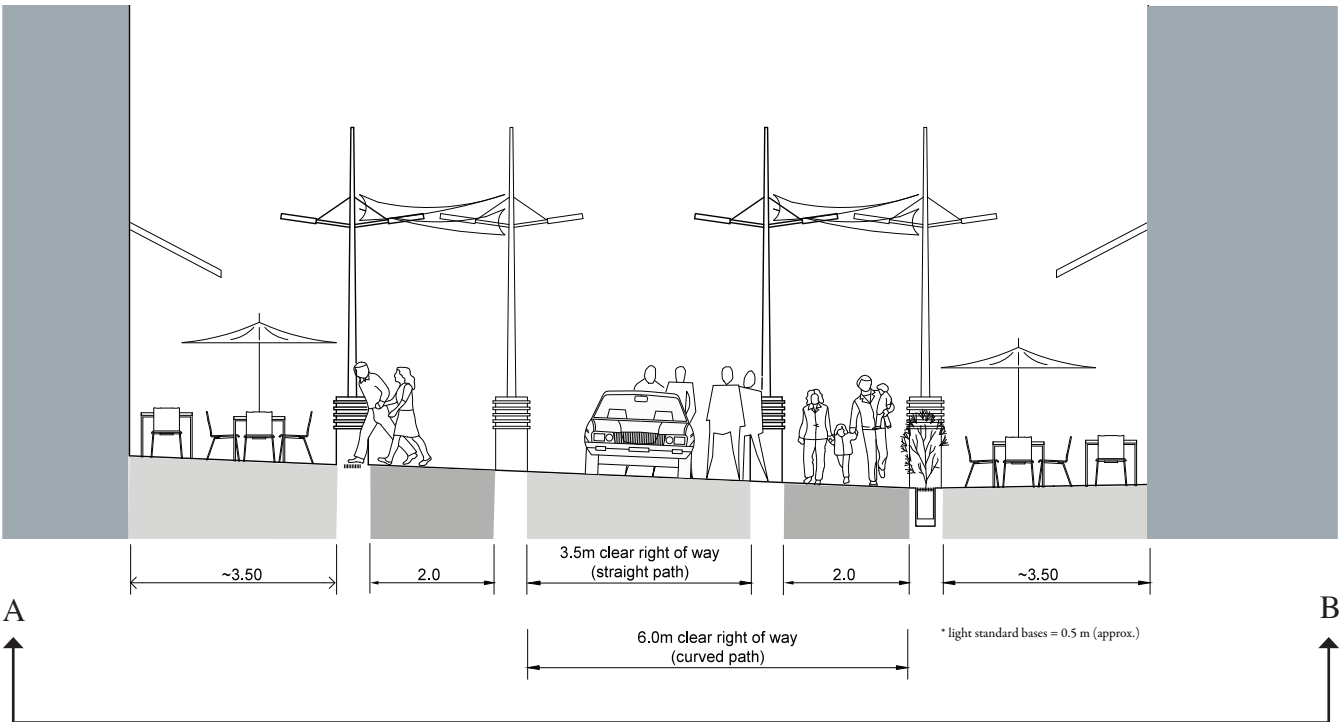
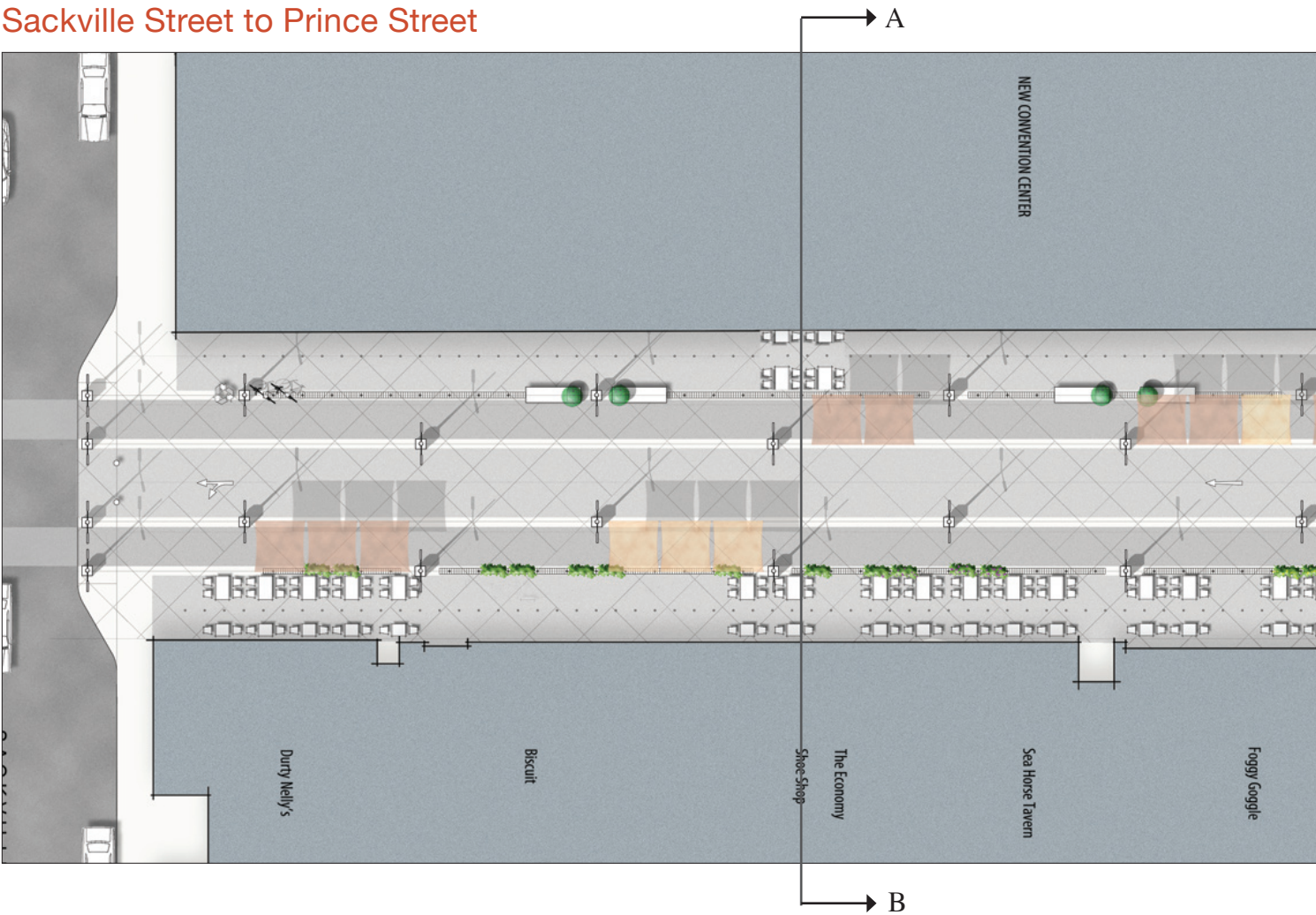




The blocks spanning Blowers Street to Prince Street share specific design elements that establish a framework for Argyle as a shared, single-surface street where pedestrians can move freely across the entire right-of-way.. Permanent patio space is accommodated adjacent to the streetwall. Infrastructure is proposed to allow for a winter patio zone where businesses could attach temporary enclosures hardware inlaid in the street surface.

Staggered light standards define the zones of the street, marking patio space, dedicated pedestrian pathways and a reduced carriageway. Any given point along the street has a six metre clearance. The light standards also function as gateways to distinguish the blocks and as armature for attaching occasional canopy lighting and shade sails. Design elements are described in more detail in the next section.

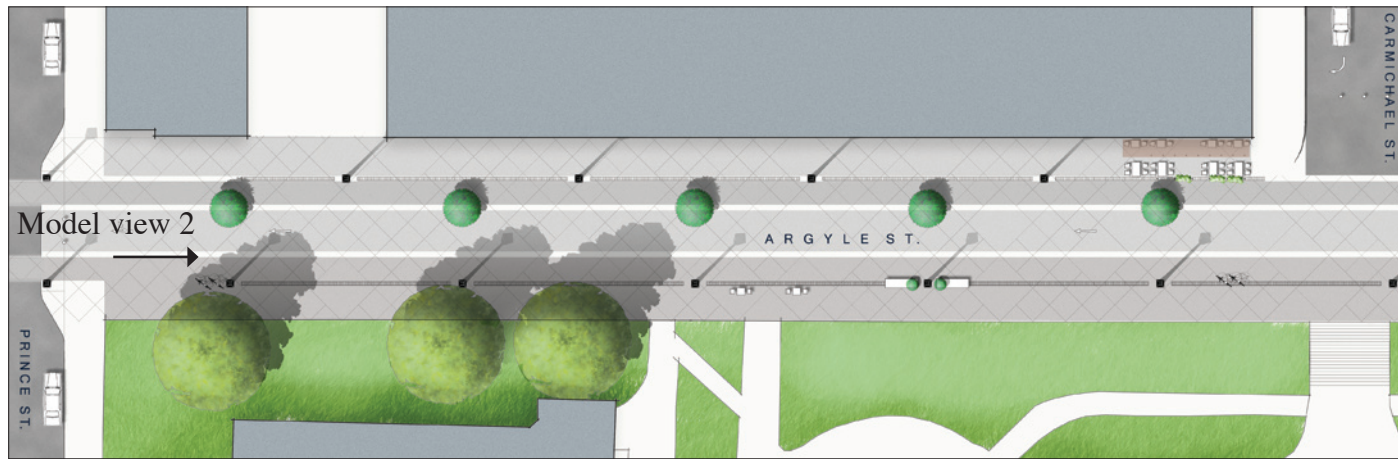
Sackville Street to Prince Street



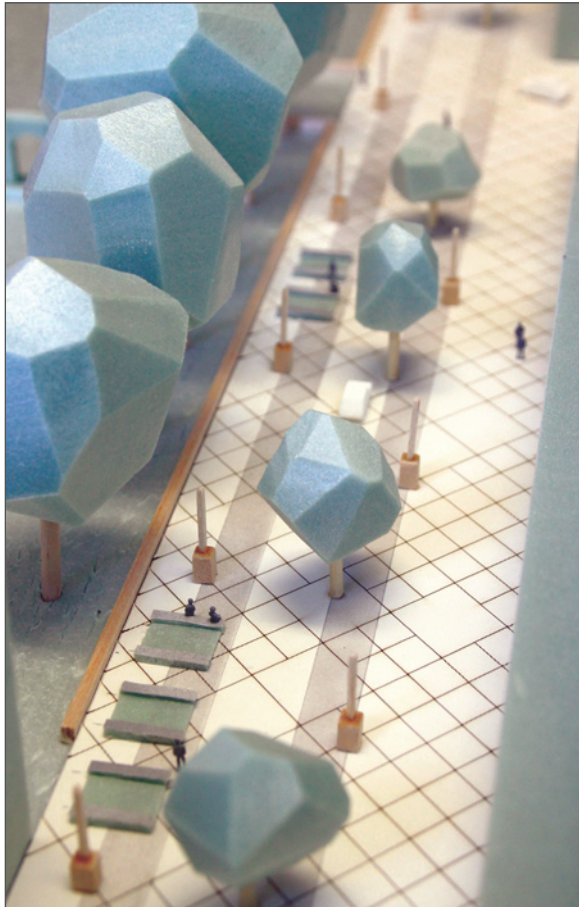


Perspective shows intersection with bollards removed and gateway light standards in place.

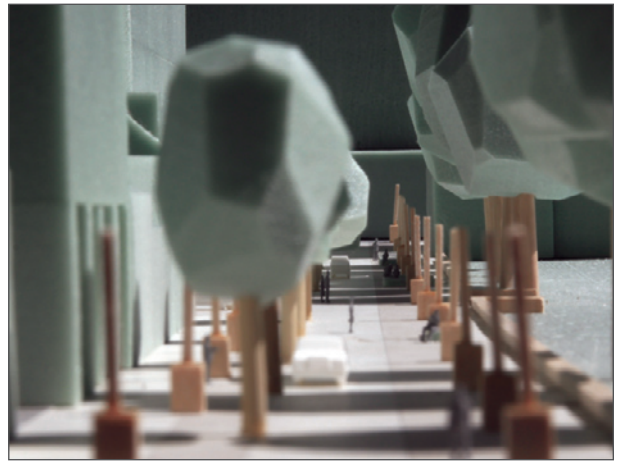
Prince Street to Duke Street



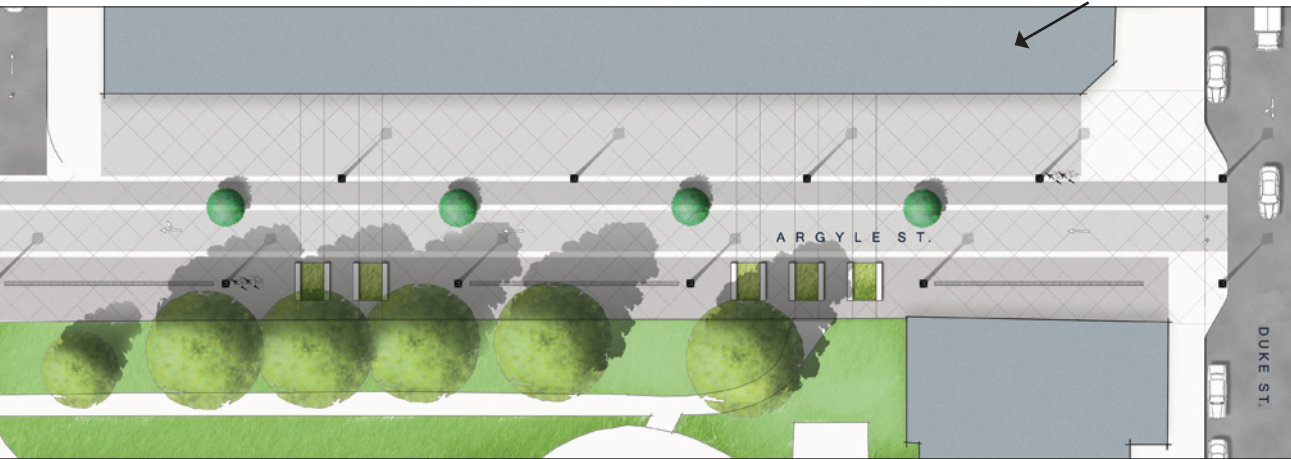
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Model view 1



The main shared street concept is continued along the Prince Street to Duke Street block. Due to different characteristics of this block several adjustments to the design are made to suit this end of Argyle Street. Existing light standards have a heritage design consistent with the district. The proposed design retains the heritage element to compliment the aesthetic of the district. However, the standards are relocated to align with the new arrangement of the other Argyle blocks.

The staggered arrangement of lighting is not continued here. New trees on the west side of the street continue the arrangement of space that is established from Blowers Street to Prince Street with lighting. The trees enhance and extend the park setting of the Grand Parade onto Argyle Street, opening up new opportunities on the street for gathering as part of this core civic space.

3 DESIGN DETAILS

This section presents a detailed look at the design elements of the proposed streetscape concept. The design details of the street base, landscaping, lighting and the logistics of daily operations demonstrate how the street will look, feel and work as a shared space that maximizes possibilities.

Base

The base, or floor, of the streetscape concept is multi-functional. As a curbless street, the base incorporates design elements and infrastructure to serve many purposes at one grade. Each element combines to create a “smart” street that makes the creativity and functionality of a shared, adaptable street possible.

Paving

Paving will be distinctive, easy to maintain and accessible. Surface treatments will delineate the main zones of use without strictly separating users. A patio zone makes the primary summer pedestrian use a permanent feature. Pedestrians will always have a dedicated walkway space on either side of a reduced carriageway.

Standard concrete combined with portions of coloured concrete and saw-cut control joints create the pattern. The high contrast tones assist the visually impaired in reading the street. The finish is trowelled smooth with enough texture for traction. Through creative use of standard details a beautiful, durable, and cost-effective surface can be created.

Base Hardware

Removable bollards that are easily installed onto in-street hardware will accommodate occasional street closures and provide quick access for emergency service vehicles. On the south side of Sackville Street the bollards are set back to ensure access to the hotel parkade.

Small steel loops, or grommets, inset into the paving provide a point of attachment for quickly assembled street canopies and winter patio enclosures. Canopies provide a unique and colourful design element as well as a functional resource for pop-up market stalls, performances and occasional weather protection (see Lighting section for illustration).

Intersections

The paving detail provides visual continuity between blocks. The surface of Argyle Street is extended at the intersections with Sackville Street and Prince Street, marking the pedestrian walkways across the intersections. The bulges and extended paving of Argyle will encourage heightened awareness and reduced speeds by indicating to approaching drivers that Argyle is a different type of street. The intersection treatment helps mark the entrances to Argyle as unique gateways.

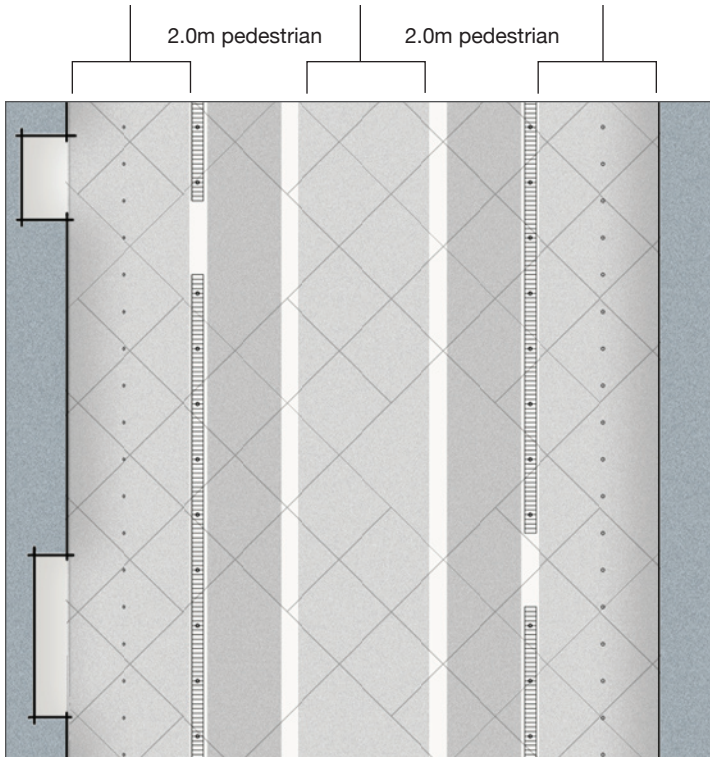
Drainage

The removal of curbs to establish a continuous single grade ground surface creates opportunities for unique drainage solutions. Trench drains along the east side of the street are used to capture surface flow. Perpendicular to the carriage way, the street gently slopes toward these drains to protect the adjacent buildings from storm water while providing an unobstructed surface for pedestrian flow.

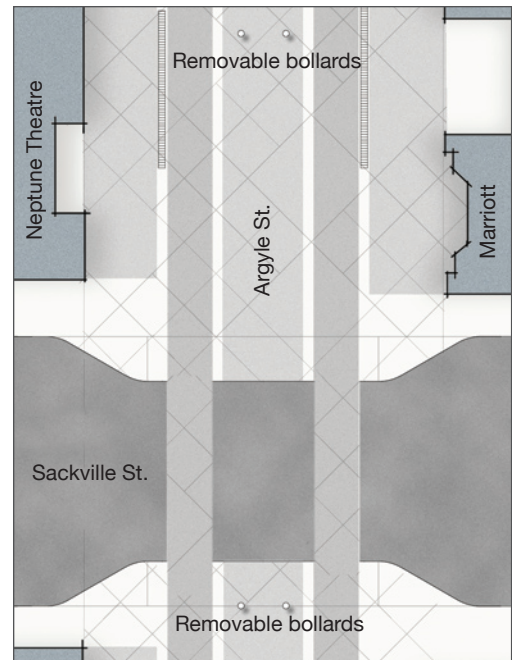
HRM will be conducting major system upgrades to separate storm and sanitary sewers in areas of the downtown where they are currently combined. These upgrades would ideally be conducted in coordination with Argyle Streetscape upgrades in order to capitalize on resources and minimize disruptions.

The trench drain presents another opportunity to create “smart” infrastructure on the street. The trench is presented here in an adaptable form so that seasonal bollards defining the patio zone are integrated with the trench design. To allow

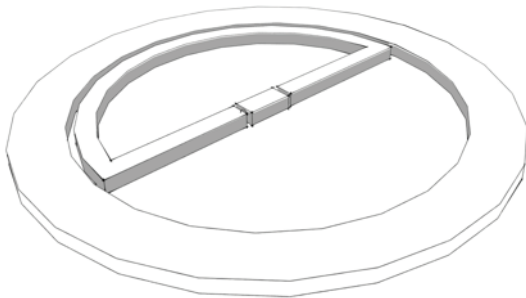
~ 3.5m patio/pedestrian 3.5m carriageway ~3.5m patio/pedestrian



Paving zones, trench drains and hardware placement along the street.



Removable bollards (set back at Marriott parkade) and intersection paving treatment.

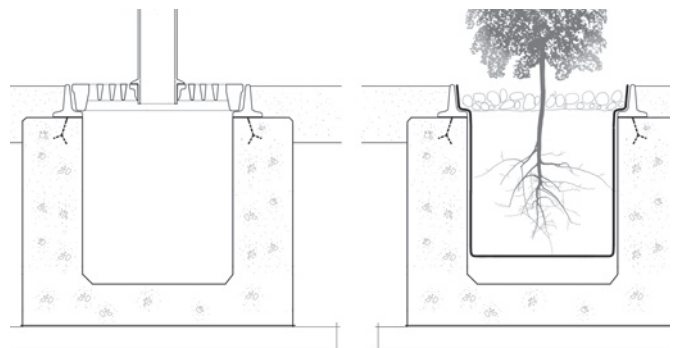


Example of "grommet" hardware used to attached winter canopies.

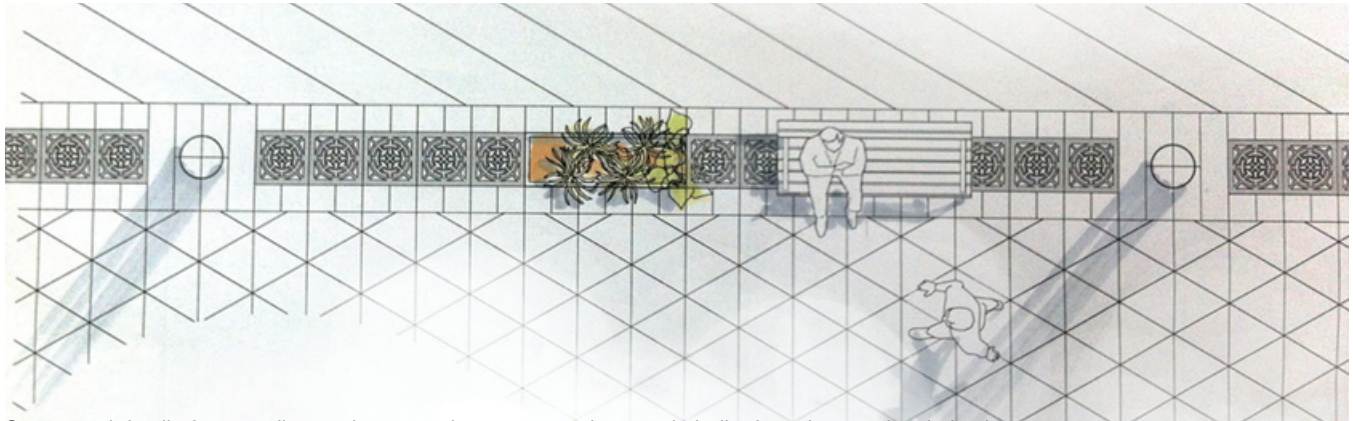


Trench drains on New Road, Brighton, UK.
Source: <http://stockley.co.uk/our-work/new-road-brighton>

businesses opportunities for individualized planting, the trench design suggests a double function as planting beds in some locations or as a consistent zone for potted plants. Making the most use of the trench system allows greater flexibility in using the street surface as well as giving greater control over verticle elements to make the pathways clear and predictable.



The trench drain system accommodates a variety of streetscape elements, while keeping pathways clear.



Conceptual detail of a versatile trench system that accommodates patio bollards and occasional plantings.



Bioinfiltration planter, South Waterfront, Portland, OR.
Source: Neveu Ngan Assoc.

Landscaping

Infrastructure and amenities on the street enhance the comfort and usability of the street for both daily and special activities. Patios, places to sit on the street, plantings and canopies add to the liveliness of Argyle at all times of day.

Plantings

Argyle Street currently hosts an eclectic mix of vegetation. There are several small street trees and merchants enliven the street with a variety of planters on patios and storefronts during the summer. With street upgrades and permanent patios there is an opportunity to create a cohesive approach to planters while providing merchants with a chance to express their individuality with plantings.

The drainage trench location on the street is an ideal threshold to incorporate greenery. The grate detail on the west side of the street, mirroring the trench drain on the east side, can be lifted in sections to provide opportunities for plantings.

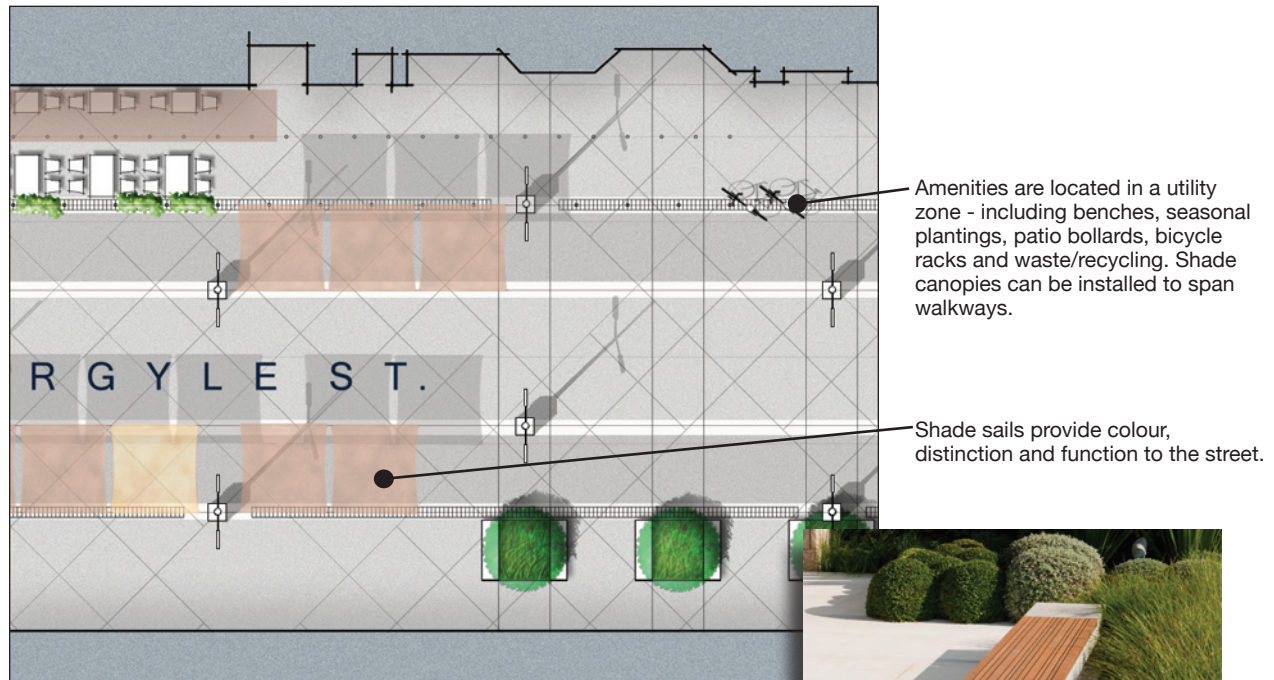
Tree plantings on Argyle Street are concentrated in the parkettes and in areas that allow unobstructed growing spaces. Street tree plantings incorporate large planting pits, structural soil and tree grates for optimum tree health.

Parkettes

Parkettes are small parks that provide seating and shade in areas of the street where merchants do not require patios, such as in front of Neptune Theatre. These parkettes consist of bioinfiltration planters which capture stormwater and allow it to slowly infiltrate, rather than burdening the storm water system. These planters also structure spaces for markets, performance and public art. Plantings should include species that tolerate both wet and dry conditions as water levels fluctuate in planters.

Seating

Argyle Street will provide a variety of options for seating. Benches are shown as precast concrete with wooden seats for comfort. Benches are integrated with plantings in both



Concrete and wood bench design.
Source: www.habitusliving.com



the parkette location and the common seating along the street. Bench placement along the street is contained at the threshold of the patio zone in a utility line. The alignment of on-street seating increases legibility of the street space and eliminates obstruction of the dedicated walkway.

Patios

Permanent patio zones were a major rationale for doing the Argyle Streetscape Plan. Existing patios lack consistency in materials and design and provide challenges for segments of the population who are mobility challenged. The HRM patio By-Law permits patios from May to October, limiting the patio season and requiring merchants to re-build and dismantle each season at a considerable cost.

The upgraded permanent patio zone edge is defined by removable steel posts and chain installed in the utility zone. As public infrastructure, the removable posts unify the aesthetic of the street. Businesses can individualize patios through plantings and shade covers. During the winter, posts can be removed to open the space for pedestrian flow

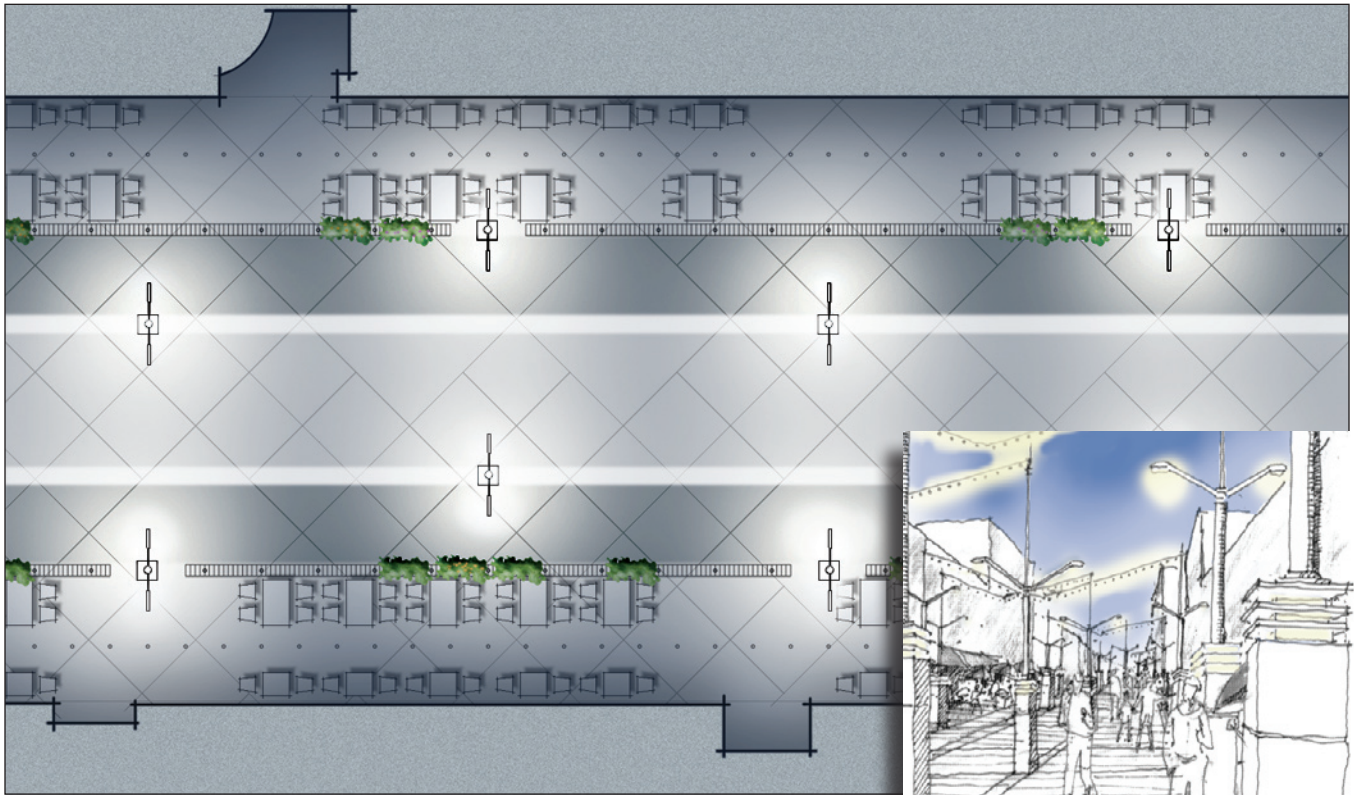
and snow clearance. Grommets recessed in concrete provide an attachment for awnings over smaller, potentially heated, winter patios.

Street amenities

Amenities include waste stations, bike parking and public art. Street waste is currently a major issue on Argyle Street that merchants deal with on a daily basis. Compact, frequent and attractive waste stations will reduce littering and provide sustainable options (e.g. composting, recycling) for dealing with waste. Bike parking stations occur along the utility zone in sections of the street where there are not permanent patios. Rack designs are attractive, in-fitting with the aesthetic of the street and functional with multiple points of attachment.

Event Infrastructure

Inset hardware accommodates a variety of possible events. Hardware includes removable bollards for street closures, street inset hardware for market tents and armature for canopy lights and shade canopies.



A staggered lighting scheme maximizes light and creates a colourful, bright and safe environment on the street, while clearly marking zones of primary use.

Lighting

Lighting will be a defining feature of Argyle Street, bringing together function and creativity to enhance the street's sense of place. Creative use of lighting will bring elegance and colour to the streetscape atmosphere, highlighting Argyle as the heart of the entertainment district.

Light standards will define the outer edges of the pedestrian zone in staggered pairs, providing illumination across the full width of the street. Pedestrian-scale light standards will be instrumental in setting the tone for the street, while creating a safe destination through appropriate illumination. Pedestrian scale lighting can be defined as lighting that is positioned over the sidewalk with fixtures that are approximately four to five metres in height. The staggered placement maximizes illumination across the right-of-way. Light fixtures are present every nine metres.

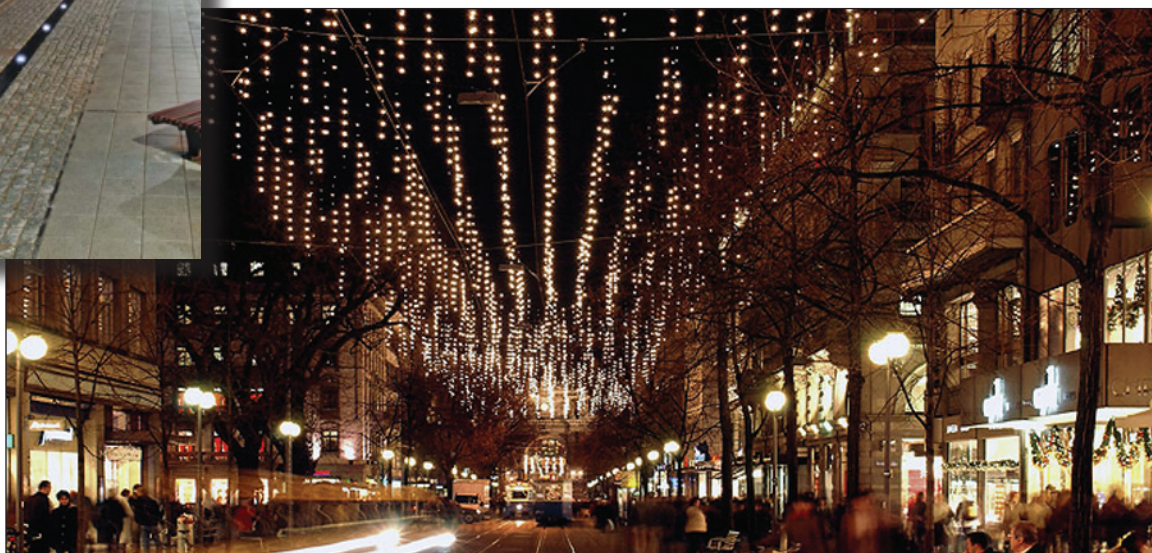
Canopy Lights

The concept light standards are specified with an extended pole above the fixtures that would serve as an armature for the canopy lights that would be hard-wired into the standards.

Canopy lighting further enhances the street for pedestrians, by creating an illuminated "ceiling" effect that builds on a metaphor of the street as a public room. The luminous evenings created by canopy lights would solidify the vision for Argyle Street as Halifax's premier entertainment destination.

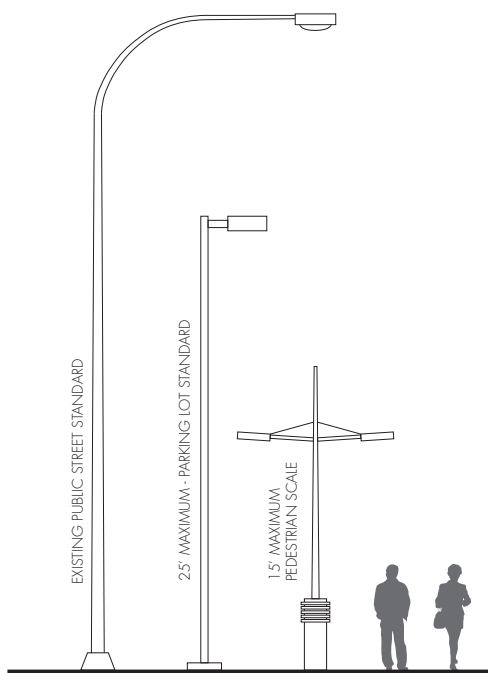
Lighting creativity is incorporated in several other ways as well. The light standards are designed with wide bases (0.5 metres approx.) with inset soft lighting at pedestrian level. Shadow lines in benches are presented with inset lighting to add visual interest and uniqueness. Finally, the trench drains will include below grade lighting. Together the lighting program provides a five-tiered system from the "floor" to the "ceiling", making Argyle Street sparkle and glow.

Source: ACO Technologies

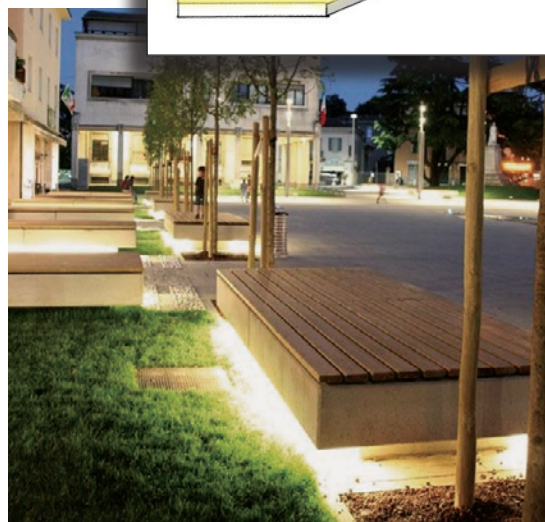
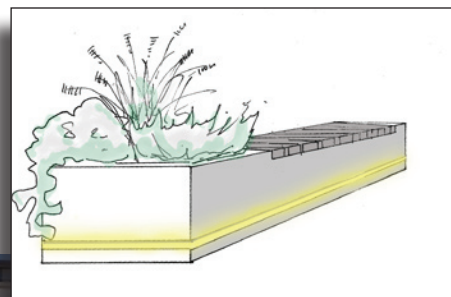


Source: listphobia.com

Creative use of lighting enhances the street experience (in ground, ceiling, bench and street lights, clockwise from top).



Pedestrian-scale lighting defines the street both practically and aesthetically as a space for people.



Example of bench aesthetic with lighting.
Source: Archiexpo.com

Function

All of the design elements work together to create a vibrant, inspiring and adaptable street. Shifting the priority of the street to pedestrians, while not prohibiting vehicles, means that the streetscape must function smoothly while balancing user needs.

Traffic-Calming

Traffic-calming is an important consideration in designing shared streets. Vehicles must know that they are using a different kind of street, where they behave more as guests. Traffic-calming along Argyle Street is achieved through several design features. The block gateways distinguish the street, indicating to drivers that Argyle is unique. They also slow drivers down when entering the street. A reduced carriage-way width reinforces the slow speed zone, forcing drivers to pay more attention to their surroundings than to their destination. Paving treatments mark zones of the street with different colours, reinforcing the designated carriageway width as the path for vehicles. Strategic arrangement of staggered light standards provide a strong vertical element that helps define the zones of the street. The pedestrian scale, frequent and paired placement shortens sight lines for drivers. Whereas conventional streets encourage drivers to place their attention in the distance (accordingly with their speed), drivers entering a redesigned Argyle are presented with clear indicators that they are entering a shared street and must adjust their behavior. A reduced speed limit of no more than 30 km/h is recommended.

Parking

Because Argyle Street is narrow (16 metre right-of-way), a shared street is best achieved by removing on-street parking. Removing parking will also reduce the traffic flow on the street. The reconfiguration of directional traffic flow downtown has increased the amount of on-street parking

substantially on surrounding blocks. The Nova Centre proposes to include a generous amount of public short-term parking as well.

Loading and Servicing

The design promotes loading and servicing predictability on the street. Neptune Theatre requires space for loading stage sets adjacent to the back stage entrance on Argyle, while bar, restaurant and office spaces have smaller scale but regular servicing needs. A dedicated loading zone is proposed at the back stage theatre entrance. This location will allow uninhibited pedestrian movement adjacent to the streetwall where there are no summer patios. All other loading is recommended from the side streets. In general, it is recommended that loading times be limited to before 10 am on weekdays.

It is also recommended that a dedicated Access-a-Bus drop off and pick up point be designated in the same location as the Neptune Theatre loading zone.

Winter maintenance will require equipment for removal of snow along the entire right-of-way to keep the street clear for vehicles and pedestrians.



Model showing delivery truck pulled over from carriageway.

4 IMPLEMENTATION

Ideas for redeveloping Argyle Street to better suit the downtown as a pedestrian priority street have been around for many years. Concept plans have illustrated possibilities for 15 years, while local businesses have revitalized and beautified the streetscape at their own expense through temporary patio construction each year. Argyle Street is a vital public space in downtown Halifax that is growing ever more prominent as an entertainment hub.

Land uses change constantly over time. The Argyle streetscape should be established as a premier public space that sets the tone for the central downtown. With the Nova Centre development approval in place, the time to take action with public investment on Argyle is now. Acknowledging the significance of the street as a pedestrian destination, and recognizing the impact of the street in the downtown, Argyle should be brought to fruition as a public space that leads the standard for downtown development as a compliment to the public realm.

The following next steps recommend that the Downtown Halifax Business Commission (DHBC) and the Regional Council move forward with implementing the Argyle Streetscape Plan.

1. Downtown Halifax Business Commission

- Continue to raise awareness of the Argyle Plan.

It is important that public awareness is sustained to build momentum and excitement for realizing the plan. Significant engagement has been done in developing the plan. The process does not need to start over. This is a community plan. Continuing to build awareness will help reaffirm the plan as an ongoing community-driven process that is ready to implement.

- Advocate for public realm improvement funds

The DHBC should continue to build support through the Strategic Urban Partnership in order to position Argyle Street for potential funding as described in the Greater Halifax Economic Development Strategy.

- Bring the plan to council for approval

Needless to say, implementation of the plan requires not only funding, but support for the plan from Council. Several councillors participated in the public design sessions or project meetings. Presenting the plan to council and gaining approval in principle strengthens the position of Argyle Street when funding becomes available.

2. Regional Council

- Approve the plan

Recognizing the opportunity and impact of redeveloping Argyle Street, Council should approve the plan as a first step in moving toward implementation.

During the concept plan process councillors, HRM staff and committees were consulted for feedback on the design. Meetings with Traffic and Right of Way and the Accessibility Advisory Committee yielded insights that influenced the practicality and safety of the overall concept. Several councillors attended the public design sessions that guided the design process.

Timely endorsement from Council is a critical step in realizing the plan.

- Commit public realm improvement funds to Argyle Street

Streetscape improvements will require capital investment. The Capital Ideas report and the Greater

Halifax Economic Strategy recognize that public realm investment attracts private investment. Investing in Argyle Street redevelopment should be regarded as an achievable goal with broad impact on the Regional Centre and the municipality as a whole.

- Prepare Terms of Reference for the development of construction drawings

This plan represents a detailed concept for the streetscape. The design elements included in the plan are not merely incidental; they reflect the outcomes of the collaborative design process and have been applied in the plan to fulfill the ultimate goal of a shared street in the Argyle context.

- Tender construction for the implementation of the streetscape improvements

It is recommended that investment in infrastructure changes begin with the two blocks between Blowers Street and Prince Street. In order to maximize public investment, it is recommended that the improvements to the block between Sackville and Prince occur in conjunction with the construction of the Nova Centre. The Nova Centre will have a major impact on the downtown, and on Argyle Street in particular. It is critical that the Nova Centre contribute to, and not detract from, the overall streetscape.

PUBLIC DESIGN SESSION #1 NOTES

SUMMARY OF ATTENDANCE

The first public meeting, held April 11, 2012, saw members of the business community, HRM Council, provincial government and the public engage in the vision and design of Argyle Street. Presented below are the notes compiled from the session centred around three key elements: upkeep + maintenance, program ideas and design ideas.

UPKEEP + MAINTENANCE

Street cleaning
Snow removal (use snow to animate street)
Monday to Friday morning deliveries
Safety + security
Standards for maintenance of buildings and patios
Pressure clean sidewalks

PROGRAM IDEAS

The general themes emerging from the program ideas for Argyle Street are: pedestrian priority, a continuous grade used along the street, removal of on-street parking, all season use of the street, making Argyle a destination, uses of the street being flexible and diverse, increased event and festival based activity and emphasizing seating and lighting to enhance the street.

- Weekend special events
- Mardi gras
- Ice festival
- All season activities
- Close street to cars during the summers (weekends)
- Extend market vendors
- Predictable street closures and events
- Outdoor dining
- Outdoor performances
- Music
- Nightlife + social destination
- Diversity of uses



- Social destination
- Flexible performance configuration
- Flexible space for closures
- Extend pedestrian realm
- Remove on-street parking
- Make Argyle a street where people want to hang out in all seasons (eat your lunch, read a book, etc)
- Improvements for daytime uses, not just night time
- Public washrooms
- Seating
- Create a destination zone
- Destination for all ages (family friendly)
- Pedestrian only - Blowers to Sackville
- Year round pedestrian street
- Permanent patios would extend the season for outdoor seating

DESIGN IDEAS

- Film festival gala
- Street markets, vendors
- Dance competitions
- Buskers
- Art market / festival
- Public chess table and seating at Neptune
- Permanent patios, use heat lamps for cold days
- Christmas market
- Activities could occur at different times and places, close street accordingly
- Public art, changing installations / competitions
- Market carts / street vendors
- Outdoor performance space in front of Neptune
- Defining pedestrian / car space by surface treatment
- A consistent cohesive look to the patios
- Existing boardwalk as a well defined pedestrian space - continue this the full length of the street
- Weather protection
- Waste receptacles (keep street clean)
- More trees, greenery
- Lighting over the street (ambience)
- No parking entrances on Argyle
- Arch / signage for Argyle District
- Unique materials, space and design
- Build convention centre so that it supports pedestrian oriented Argyle
- Permanent patios
- Animate the facades of the buildings (projections)



- Vibrant colours, reinforce in street design
- Bike parking
- Reflect the unique character of local businesses
- Design of road should be one way and the minimum width for emergency vehicles
- Wider sidewalks
- New paving types
- Flexible design
- Breakup the Convention Centre facade
- Canopy covered areas
- Frontage widths
- Unique Argyle parking meters, bike racks, garbage cans
- Identifiable street signage that fits with the character of the street (charming)
- Bike share
- Cobblestone
- Lighting
- Benches
- Trees - mature, limited sun
- Minimize impact of traffic on patios / pedestrian space, move primary vehicle access to Market Street or side streets
- Funky design, standards / guidelines for patios (creative / unique design)
- Bus access alternatives
- Use traffic lay-bys
- Adjustable traffic bollards
- Flexible / adjustable planters
- Moveable furniture
- Canopy lighting across street, lighting in trees
- Involve intersecting streets, draw people into Argyle
- Parade square as a green anchor, establish pedestrian connection
- Shared street
- Hanging flower baskets
- Barrier free access



PUBLIC DESIGN SESSION #2 NOTES

GROUP 1 IDEAS

- Wider sidewalks on the sunny side of the street
- The paving delineating space for vehicles (the 4.5m strip within the 6m clearance) could meander to add an organic feel to the space and encourage users of the street to do more than travel through the space
- The portion along the Grand Parade could be a park space – a place for people to sit, read, enjoy shade
- The street could be a space for market events during major conferences or weekends
- Trees could be spaced throughout the design, but maybe primarily confined to certain parkettes or park zones (in front of the Neptune and along the Grand Parade)
- Integrating elements of water and sound into the streetscape is important
- The Convention Centre will have a parkade facing Argyle Street. There is an opportunity to do something creative with this façade – public art that is interactive and integrates elements of water and/or sound
- There should be a continuation of some streetscape elements along Blowers and Grafton to the public library (a major pedestrian corridor).
- Bollards could be fountains (no one is going to drive through a fountain, unless crucial / emergency)
- A closed street should be implied, not forced
- Intersections could feature a column on raised paving – something to indicate a different kind of space
- There are many traditional streetscapes in Halifax – Argyle Street should be contemporary and modern.

GROUP 2 IDEAS

- Design of new Trade Centre will be important – what happens here?
- Want to see more trees
- Waste baskets must be accessible
- Consistency in café infrastructure
- Moveable features may be a concern
- Crowds can block pathways
- Surface treatment must be sustainable, durable + not slippery
- Elevated street must be accessible to wheelchairs
- Public art – lighting integrated in art
- Water feature
- Delineation of areas for bar patrons – spill over
- Use native trees that are resilient

- Presence of recycling bins
- Seasonal water fountains + features
- Park features – non-commercial space
- Visually impaired need a path, high contrast signage + tactile (not necessarily braille), features to denote area
- Plan for Access-a-bus drop off points – permanent
- Access for emergency vehicles
- Grades for wheelchairs
- Low hanging plants + lights can be an issue
- Bike rack design is important
- Can be an impairment for wheelchairs + visually impaired

GROUP 3 IDEAS

- All deliveries before 11am
- More bike racks: artistic, dispersed along the street, uncovered and others clustered together and covered
- Intersections – identify through paving, use bollards for safety, provide visual cues
- No cobblestone
- Nightlife street
- Temporary public art (NSCAD) at street corners. Change with seasons or monthly.
- Stage space in front of Neptune
- Trees – not scattered, along it all
- Small ornamental trees
- Active streets, narrow, trees not necessary
- Tie tree pots to seating – multiple functions
- Lighting
- Windy – how can this still function
- Canopy lighting
- Tie lighting into parade, draw people in
- Coloured lights (like the Market)
- More inviting in the winter
- Enclosed patios – weather protection, awning, plastic coating, heaters, blankets
- Intersections
- Safety issues, use stop signs, rumble strips. Ensure Argyle priority.
- Rooftop patios, green roofs, using the street to inform design
- Programming, multiple use
- Importance of natural life
- Argyle – narrow, use Grand Parade
- Public tables with chessboards
- No space for public seating, no dedicated street furniture – bench, art, planters
- Incorporate water in summer
- Ice sculpture in winter
- Water for dogs
- No clutter
- Counter public space – outdoor lounge
- Flexibility + movement

GROUP 4 IDEAS

- General consensus about shared street concept – some concern about traffic management (deliveries, couriers, car rental business)
- Need more frequent light standards – currently inadequate
- Banners to highlight/brand the district
- Possibility of LED illuminated banners
- Importance of energy efficient lighting
- Explore opportunities for green infrastructure – lights, storm water management etc.
- Ensure vehicular access to parkades during event street closures
- Greenery – not necessarily tree lined street, but need to soften/warm the space
- Consistency in patio decoration/greenery/maintenance standards
- Divert some of the temporary patio expense to fund for maintenance
- Acknowledge and respect presence of heritage buildings – marrying contemporary and traditional feel
- Importance of paving choices – aesthetic, clear distinction, accessibility concerns, seasonal durability
- Loss of parking – new convention centre supply adequate replacement?
- Snow removal - need to haul away to keep shared street clear
- Attract different demographics/ emphasize family friendly – not just a place to go to bars
- Clean, safe, attractive and accessible

GROUP 5 IDEAS

- Liquor laws may/will prohibit these special events on the streets – engage liquor commission in this discussion
- Maintain old feel, old culture
- Vehicle and bus entrance to the new hotel will effect the feel and design of the street. Can this move off of Argyle?
- No interlock brick. It falls apart. Explore coloured concrete. Explore paving options from Norway, Sweden.
- Greenery could be flexible and moveable
- Whimsical
- Trees sporadically along the street, with special parkettes having more + consistent trees
- What will HRM charge the businesses to use this new, improved + larger patio space?
- Include bollards along north end of each block for when the entire street is closed to events. Make sure bollards can double as barriers – to satisfy traffic + liquor commission needs
- Electrical facilities for the city are housed under St Paul's
- Benches along Grand Parade edge
- Slate wall and wrought iron fence in front of St Paul's is a disaster – must be fixed.
- Market stalls in front of Grand Parade
- Provide opportunities for local NS businesses to showcase their wares
- HRM to clean the street every night
- Businesses pay taxes yet receive no services from the city
- If we make it a nicer place, people will be proud of it and treat the street with more respect (decrease in vandalism)
- Current lights across from Grand Parade are nice

GROUP 6 IDEAS

- Consistent neutral element
- Play with street furniture
- Eclectic
- The street is the art
- North blocks: features that keep it consistent and room for individuality, WTCC needs work, pop up markets, benches, parking space parks
- Sackville intersection could be a scramble intersection
- Look to George Street, NFLD - has pedestrian only signage
- Hydraulic bollards (Quebec City)
- Vantage point for events on Grand Parade
- Trees – soften, shade, light them, quieter
- Variety of vegetation – planters, grasses
- Permanent chessboards
- Pay + Display instead of parking meters



PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE NOTES

OPEN HOUSE

On June 4th, the PDC hosted a public open house in the Neptune Studio Theatre from 5:30pm - 8:30pm to review the concept plan that was developed following the second public design session. Following the presentation of the design, the floor was opened to general comments, questions and/or concerns. There was overwhelming support for the shared street design for Argyle.

QUESTIONS + COMMENTS

- Why allow vehicles at all on Argyle? Right now Argyle is a parking lot, when you take the on-street parking away, then why allow vehicles to drive at all on Argyle?
- After the Tom Petty concert there were 11,000 people who left the Metro Centre at the same time. Argyle was jam packed with people, which made cars feel like they were imposing on the street. I could imagine what Argyle would feel like with this new streetscape design.
- Apart from the Marriott parking garage, are there other buildings along the street that need to maintain car access? Why not create a short two-way street for people to exit the Marriott garage on Argyle and then not allow cars on the rest of Argyle?
- In favour of allowing vehicles access on Argyle Street. Getting rid of the curbs should work for the city. The design is reasonable and proposes small changes to the street.
- I like the images that were presented tonight that show Argyle Street full of people engaged in outdoor living. This will discourage traffic. The design is a wise way of creating something that is about people on foot. Need to identify other streets in the area that will allow vehicle traffic to flow.
- Will there be indicators on Brunswick or Carmichael letting drivers know that they are entering or approaching a pedestrian-oriented street?
- How will snow removal be dealt with? Will there be changes in responsibilities around snow removal and street maintenance?
- Does the design create the ability for all shops along the street to become accessible?
- What is the time line for implementation? Will it really be completed next fall and winter? Likely will take longer.
- The design can adapt and change to overcome issues as we begin implementation. We should just get going with it.
- What is the new grade for the street given that it gently slopes on both sides for drainage? Is it below 5% for wheelchair accessibility?
- The speed limit needs to be decreased.
- We could build wifi into the new light standards.
- Thank you for the design and your work. If this gets off the ground, it will be like a virus. People will get excited and will want this type of street in other places, too. We have to start somewhere and this is the perfect street to start with.
- Who will be in charge of the awnings? Shop owner? HRM? In front of a shop like Biscuit, will a patio be allowed? Will an awning be placed here? Need to think about how the shops on the street will inevitably change over time. 25 years ago there was a Cleve's on the street.

