

# switch

open street sundays

## Ideas Toward an Open Streets Policy (Road Closure Policy)



Switch: Open Street Sundays Initiative  
Transportation Standing Committee  
May 23, 2013





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## SWITCH PROJECT GOALS

- Recurring, long-term initiative
- Build a culture of community involvement
- Encourage active and healthy communities
- Support a shift to sustainable transportation modes



# SWITCH: OPEN STREET SUNDAYS 2012

Sunday, September 9th, 2012 Launch of Switch

- 2-km route closed to vehicle traffic (North & Agricola - Spring Garden & South Park)
- 3 Activity Nodes along the route
- 40 + community partners
- 3500 + participants from 9AM to 2PM





- Local community and business involvement
- Demonstrated use of street network for active transportation
- Attracted young and old participants to engage in physical activity
- Inclusive, unstructured play
- Neighbourhood and civic pride




# PROCESS BARRIERS FOR SWITCH

- Special Events Task Force was not the place to send a group with a new idea
- Approval process, onerous canvassing process, first time events and repeat events
- Required to get residents of multi-unit dwellings
- Police and Traffic only groups that appear to have final discretion
- At the 11th hour (after meeting the abutter approval requirements) we learned that EHS could have blocked approval of the road closure (Switch route did not extend to the EHS station on Agricola, but did impact their regular route down Agricola)
- Overall process was unclear and it took over 2.5 years to get approval for 2012 Switch

- Policing (\$5500)
  - 14 officers (Commander on motorcycle, 9 officers at intersections, 4 officers on bicycle to patrol route)
- Barricades and signage (HRM Sign Shop: \$3900)
  - French barricades to close vehicle access to the Switch route
  - No parking/special event signs along the route
  - Includes set-up and tear down
- Moduloc fencing on South Park St. between Sackville and Spring Garden Rd. (\$2000)
  - Half closure simplified approval process for this segment of the Switch route (HRM is the only property owner on the west side of the street)
  - Rational for requiring continuous, interlocking fencing (i.e., Moduloc) is not clear. Why not use HRM-owned french barricades or HRM owned fences instead?



A photograph of a large crowd of people walking down a tree-lined street, likely during a community event like Switch Halifax. The street is filled with people of various ages, some walking, some pushing strollers, and some on bicycles. The trees are lush and green, and the overall atmosphere is bright and sunny.

“Support events like Switch Halifax to bring people together, create more outdoor recreation experiences and encourage less use of vehicles at the same time.”

- Mayor Mike Savage's response to a question from Stepping Up  
[www.facebook.com/SteppingUpHRM](http://www.facebook.com/SteppingUpHRM) (Oct. 2012)



# HOW TO “SUPPORT” SWITCH?

- Clarify and streamline approval process:
  - Enable abutter approval through notification (with the opportunity to object) instead of sign-off from X% of abutters for community-supported repeat events
  - Identify potential open street corridors in AT Plan or Regional Plan that have less onerous requirements for road closures (Switch corridor in Halifax & Dartmouth etc)
  - Involve other groups beyond traffic and police in the decision process
- Policing
  - Based on inaugural Switch experience and practice in other cities, consider ways to reduce the policing requirement (police at key intersections)
  - Identify training required for volunteers to do some traffic control
- Policing
  - Allow for less costly option for half closures (“Run for the Cure” has no barrier?)