



Regional Centre Urban Design Study: Introduction & Background to the Neighborhood Greenprint

Halifax Harbour

HRM DESIGN
Regional Centre Urban Design Study

HALIFAX
REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

 **officeforurbanism**

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In association with :

The **Planning** Partnership



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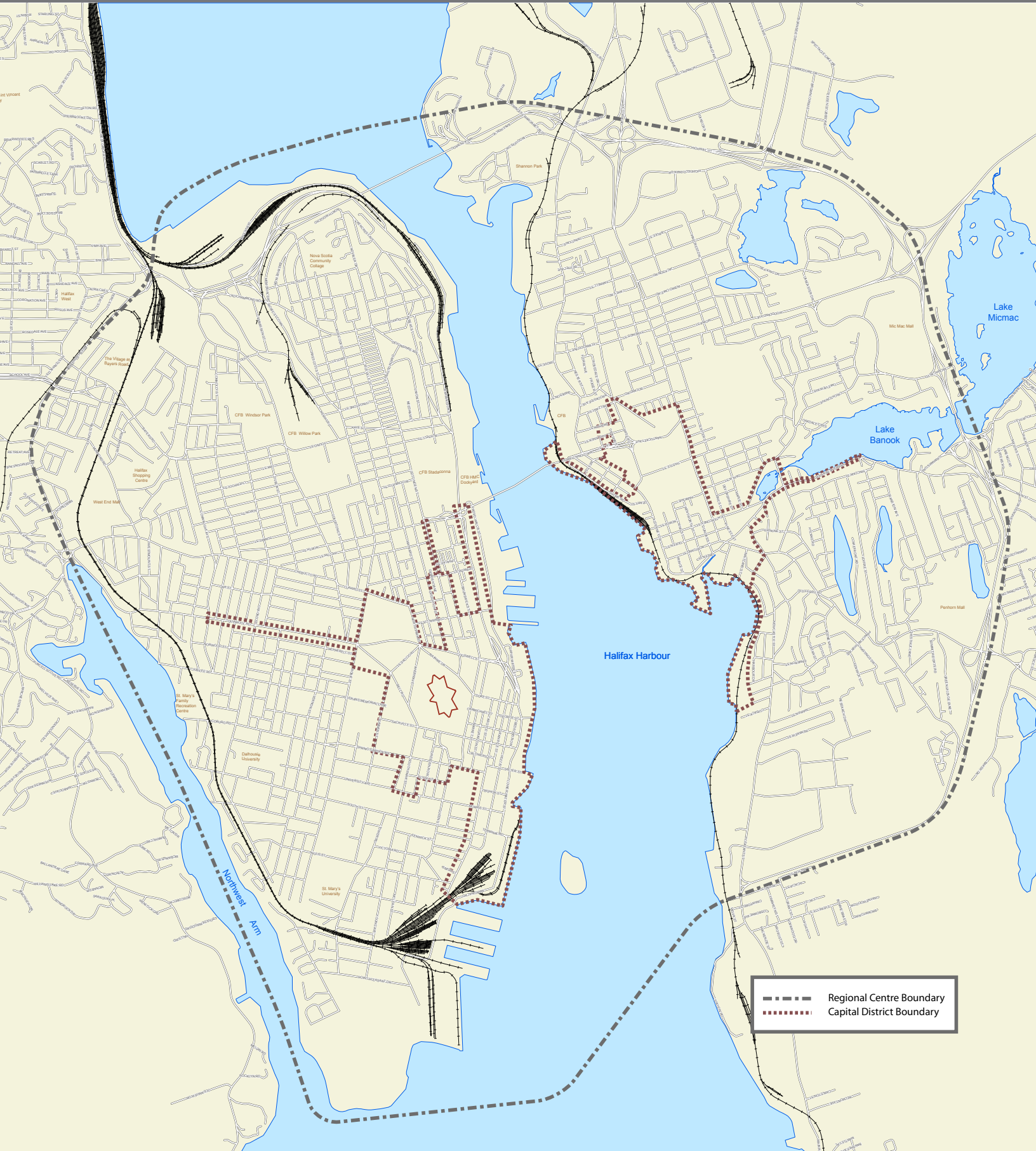


Introduction & Background

Halifax Regional Municipality

introduction

the regional centre



1.1. The Regional Centre

The Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) is the largest municipality in Atlantic Canada with approximately 395,000 residents. HRM is projected to grow by 100,000 people by 2030 within a projected 57,000 new households. It is also the economic, cultural and social hub of Atlantic Canada.

The Regional Centre is the 8,000 acre urban core of HRM comprised of the Halifax Peninsula and the portion of Dartmouth falling within the arc of the Circumferential Highway. Central to the Regional Centre is the Capital District, which includes downtown Halifax and downtown Dartmouth. This urbanized area is home to more than half of HRM's jobs and more than one third of its households, and is proximate to six major academic institutions, established shopping areas, cultural amenities, and popular parks like Point Pleasant Park, Public Gardens, the Halifax Commons, Citadel Hill, the Dartmouth Commons, and Sullivan Pond to name but a few.

The Regional Centre is the historic, functional and symbolic core of the HRM. It is also HRM's most challenging and complex urban environment. The Regional Centre is currently comprised of a variety of distinct areas of varying urban conditions and characteristics: there are areas that are established and stable; areas that are dynamic and in transition; and areas that are underutilized and in need of revitalization.

The Regional Municipal Planning Strategy (*The Regional Plan*) identifies the Regional Centre as an area for intensification and focused development that will accommodate a quarter of the HRM's anticipated growth. Most of this infill and/or redevelopment is anticipated for the waterfront, District Centres, and on underutilized lands; many of which have been identified in the RMPS as "Opportunity Sites". At a minimum, these lands can accommodate 21,000 additional people and 15,000 new housing units over the next 25 years.

1.2 The Regional Centre Urban Design Study (*HRMbyDesign*)

The Regional Centre Urban Design Study (now known as *HRMbyDesign*) was mandated in the *Regional Plan* and further supported by the *Capital District Urban Design Best Practice Project* (2004), the *HRM Economic Development Strategy* (2006), and the *HRM Cultural Plan* (2006).

The objective of *HRMbyDesign* is to provide an enduring vision for the HRM's Regional Centre by addressing the nature, intensity and quality of development in the public and private realms. This has resulted in an urban design strategy, built form guidelines, and an implementation framework to direct development to be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the Regional Plan. The study also addresses issues such as open space, streetscapes, residential infill, architectural design and the development approvals processes.

The *HRMbyDesign* process was driven by a comprehensive public engagement strategy that included public open houses, workshops, charrettes, newsletters, media events, stakeholder interviews, and the establishment of the Urban Design Task Force, a body of volunteer members of the public and three HRM councillors who advised on the study outcomes and process as it evolved. Each event in the public engagement strategy provided an open opportunity for people to contribute to the conversation and learning experience of shaping the 'look and feel' of the Regional Centre.

HRMbyDesign is comprised of two major components: The *Downtown Halifax Plan*, which was completed and adopted in 2009, and; the *Neighbourhood Greenprint* which is being completed in 2010 and which is the focus of this document. The *Neighbourhood Greenprint* is a guiding framework for future detailed neighbourhood planning initiatives that will result in sustainable neighbourhoods with appropriately scaled and designed development.

purpose and scope

1.3. Purpose and Scope of the Study

The Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) was formed by a 1996 Provincial amalgamation of all municipalities contained within the former Halifax County, and includes rural, suburban, and urban settlements. Today, residents still refer to their residential location with the names of old municipalities, such as Bedford, Dartmouth, and Halifax.

Out of organizational, administrative, and strategic necessity, HRM engaged in a five year process of developing a new Regional Municipal Planning Strategy (*"The Regional Plan"*) from 2001 to 2006. It was necessary for the new Regional Plan to address new growth trends, streamline terminology and administrative procedures, and create a new holistic strategic direction for HRM. It identified

Air photo of the Regional Centre



the ‘Regional Centre’, in which special attention would be paid to investing in economic and cultural development (including better connecting Dartmouth to Halifax) and an improvement of infrastructure through various ‘Functional Plans’.

HRMbyDesign (the Regional Centre Urban Design Study) was initiated in response to a specific Regional Plan policy:

“Policy EC-3: HRM shall prepare a Regional Centre Urban Design Study which shall focus on the Capital District and the main transportation corridors within the Regional Centre and help define character areas, precincts, and other components of urban design. The study shall clearly set out the design objectives for overall urban form with regard to character, continuity, enclosure, quality of the public realm, ease of movement, legibility, diversity and adaptability.”

Thus, implicit in the direction of the Regional Plan, the purpose of this study was to articulate a clear and coherent physical vision that is community driven and supported which would inform the development of an urban design strategy and implementation framework that is in keeping with the spirit and intent of the Regional Plan. Accordingly, this study addressed issues such as neighbourhood identity, fit and compatibility with heritage, the character of open spaces and streetscapes, the siting and massing of new buildings, architectural design and quality, and the development incentive and approvals processes.

The objectives of the study were to:

- Define a coherent structure and order to the city to ensure that change and growth over the long-term occurs in the right places and in the right forms.
- Protect and enhance the uniqueness of each

place and community as defined by established identities, heritage and cultural resources, and distinct built characteristics.

- Ensure that necessary public infrastructure and amenities are provided and designed to reinforce and facilitate the city’s intended urban structure and coherence, while enhancing its livability and visual appeal.
- Address the shortcoming of current planning and design regulations and provide consistent and clear guidance, benchmarks and standards to developers, land owners and the general public on the appropriate development parameters and the corresponding civic obligations and conditions that come with any development permissions.
- Provide guidance to decision-makers and City staff in assessing, prioritizing and directing private development and public investment in capital projects.
- Present highly graphic and understandable documents, plans and concepts for implementing urban design guidance and initiatives, demonstrating intended outcomes and setting benchmarks for excellence.

1.4 Introduction & Background

1.4 The Components of HRMbyDesign

1.4.1 Urban Design Vision Statement

The Urban Design Vision Statement provides a broad mission for the function, look and feel of the Regional Centre. It builds on the area's inherent assets and potential strengths to set the overarching intent and objective for urban design. It is an important direction setting tool that is the basis for all subsequent urban design initiatives.

1.4.2 Five Campaigns for A Great City

The Vision Statement is further refined through five key “*Campaigns for a Great City*” including A Sustainable City; A City of Livable & Complete Neighbourhoods; A Distinct & Unique City; A City of Vibrant & Exciting Places; and A Beautiful City. These Campaigns are the broad objectives for shaping future Regional Centre growth in the desired manner.

1.4.3 Guiding Principles for Urban Design

The eight Guiding Principles for Urban Design establish the function and the “look” and “feel” of the Regional Centre. These principles will guide decision-making according to their respective themes. They

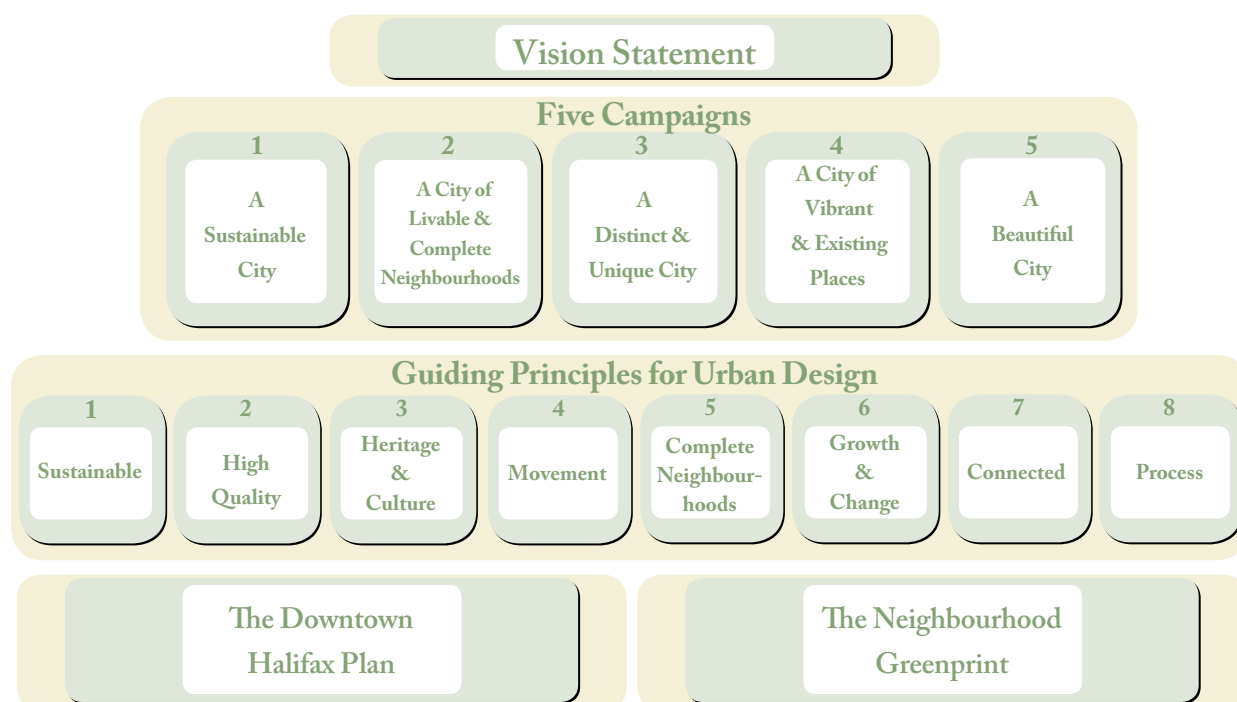
reinforce the Vision Statement and are the ‘backbone’ to the Campaigns for a Great City. Although these principles apply broadly across the Regional Centre, they can be further articulated and tailored to local area conditions and objectives when Neighbourhood or District Urban Design Guidelines are prepared.

1.4.4 The Downtown Halifax Plan

Acknowledging the unique and urgent pressures in downtown Halifax with regard to the development approval process, the balance of heritage preservation with change and growth, and the quality of architecture and public space design, the Downtown Halifax Plan was completed and adopted in 2009 and now governs all development within the downtown area.

1.4.5 The Neighbourhood Greenprint

The Greenprint provides design-based guidance for the protection and evolution of existing neighbourhoods and districts within the Regional Centre. The structure of the Greenprint is summarized at the end of this chapter, and is the focus of the remaining chapter of this document.



urban design vision

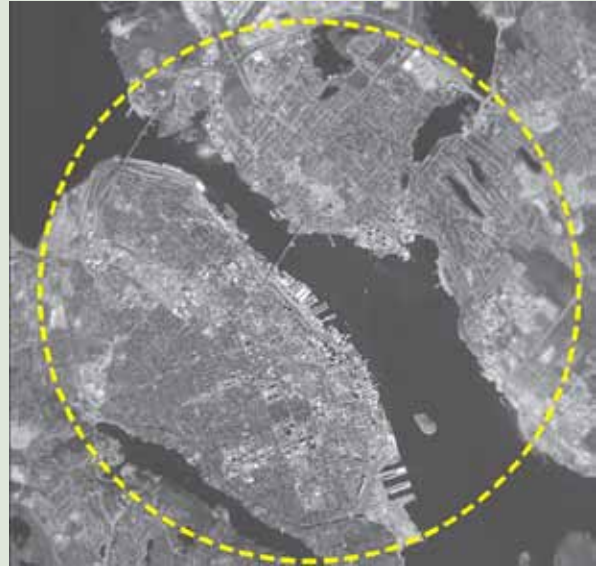
Vision Statement



1.5 Introduction & Background

1.5 Urban Design Vision Statement

The Urban Design Vision Statement provides a broad mission for the function, look and feel of the Regional Centre. It builds on the area's inherent assets and potential strengths to set the overarching intent and objective for urban design. It is an important direction setting tool that is the basis for all components that comprise HRMbyDesign and subsequent urban design initiatives.



The Regional Centre is the symbolic, historic and functional heart of the Halifax Regional Municipality. It is distinguished by its rich past as is evident in its historic architecture, traditional neighbourhoods and national landmarks; its natural features as shaped by its grand parks, harbour, lakes, waterways and rolling hills; and its regional importance as an economic hub, capital district, educational centre, health complex and cultural heart.

The Regional Centre will reinforce and build on its distinctions and assets to nurture an urban context that enhances quality of life, enriches urban living and becomes a global destination.

The Regional Centre will strive for a legible and ordered urban structure that will reinforce the best qualities and characteristics of its unique neighbourhoods and districts.

The Regional Centre's cultural vitality is rooted in its diverse population and accordingly it will continue to be an open, safe, affordable, accessible and welcoming place to people of all walks of life.

The Regional Centre's vibrancy, animation and economic health will be strengthened through the cultivation of a compact, civic-inspired and human-scaled urban fabric of streets, blocks and buildings.

1.6 Five Campaigns for a Great City

The urban design approach for bringing the Vision Statement to fruition is organized around five key “Campaigns for a Great City”:

1. A Sustainable City
2. A City of Livable & Complete Neighbourhoods
3. A Distinct & Unique City
4. A City of Vibrant & Exciting Places
5. A Beautiful City

These Campaigns serve as the broad yet tangible objectives for shaping future growth in a manner and character that is desired for the Region Centre. These Campaigns are themes that emerge in the Guiding Principles and take form in the Downtown Halifax Plan and the Neighbourhood Greenprint.

As the historic, cultural and economic heart of the Halifax Regional Municipality, the urban quality and character of the Regional Centre touches the lives of most residents and makes the greatest lasting impression on the image of this city to visitors. Hence, in many ways, these Campaigns are not just about the Regional Centre, they are also relevant and meaningful to the entire urban area and the communities that comprise the Halifax Regional Municipality – a potential next Great City.

1.6 Introduction & Background

1 1.6.1. A Sustainable City

“We thrive and survive on planet earth as a single human family. And one of our main responsibilities is to leave to successor generations a sustainable future.”

–Former UN Secretary-General, Kofi A. Annan

Sustainability acknowledges the interrelationship of the economic, social and environmental aspects of the human and non-human environments, and seeks to ensure the best outcomes for human and natural environments into the indefinite future. Sustainable development is about configuring urban areas and human activity in a way that citizens and economies are best able to meet their needs and achieve their greatest potential in the present-day, without compromising that ability of future generations to also meet their own needs and realize their full potential.

The Regional Municipal Planning Strategy seeks to guide urban growth in the Halifax Regional Municipality in a manner that achieves sustainable objectives. By directing growth to existing urban areas, the Plan sets in motion a strategy to make more efficient use of existing infrastructure and public services; encourage active transportation choices including transit; strengthen the viability of existing commercial centres; and, discourage the encroachment of urban sprawl into surrounding natural and rural areas.

Fundamental to the success of intensified growth in the Regional Centre is an urban design strategy that provides a coherent framework to guide development in a manner that reinforces the Region’s sustainable planning objectives. Sustained economic, social and environmental health should be an inherent outcome of a comprehensively considered urban design strategy where all the fundamental building blocks of the city - neighbourhoods, streets, open spaces and buildings - are coordinated, configured and designed to reinforce sustainable land use, transportation and built relationships and patterns.

These sustainable relationships and patterns operate

at all scales of urban design, whether in the design of healthy neighbourhoods that offer the stability, housing choices, services and amenities to support cohesive and walkable communities; or in the design of intensified mixed-use centres that will enable the expansion of a viable and well used transit network; or in the design of inviting streets that encourage a pedestrian culture and strengthen the vitality of existing retail areas; or in the design of buildings that are constructed for permanence, adaptability and energy efficiency. These and many more urban design strategies should work in concert to ensure a sustainable city with enduring benefits.



2 1.6.2. A City of Livable & Complete Neighbourhoods

“In a neighborhood, everything that is needed is there and everything that is there is needed.”

-Lewis Mumford

Ensuring a high quality of life for existing and future residents is about creating identifiable neighbourhoods that are walkable, appealing and provide the necessary services and amenities to support a sense of community. Complete neighbourhoods accommodate a diverse population, offer places to gather, and ensure schools and transit are within waking distance.

An urban design strategy should seek to maintain and enhance existing healthy and stable neighbourhoods. Growth and development in these areas should fit harmoniously by reinforcing the prevailing scale and built character of the neighbourhood.

Many neighbourhoods in the Regional Centre have experienced a significant decline in population and quality of life over the last fifty years. Well-designed residential intensification affords the only likely opportunity to revitalize these areas. Repopulating and intensifying the Regional Centre will provide the critical density necessary for the vitality of all neighbourhoods, whereby retail streets, transit, schools and other essential amenities and services remain viable.



1.6 Introduction & Background

3 1.6.3. A Distinct & Unique City

“We make our buildings and afterwards they make us. They regulate the course of our lives.”

–Winston Churchill

The Regional Centre has an exceptional existing urban context that is distinct and unique in its own right. The defining natural assets include the topography, the harbour, and the lakes. This informs the unique morphological characteristics of the Regional Centre and is evident in the historic road, block and building patterns.

This underlay is a cultural urban tapestry that is accentuated by the Citadel, both Commons, Point Pleasant Park, the commercial and military port and one of Canada’s most outstanding assemblages of heritage buildings and structures. It is further enriched by the sometimes less evident but significant history of the countless people and events that have shaped this place, including the Halifax Explosion and Africville.

An urban design strategy for the Regional Centre should not only pay homage to these distinctions, it must enhance and build on them, evolving the city to become a contemporary urban centre and capital district with a continued unique sense of place. The success of both are intrinsically linked.

In doing so, seemingly incompatible values can coexist harmoniously with good urban design. Heritage will be protected because of its inherent value to new development. New buildings will be designed with intentions of becoming future heritage. The functioning port will become a source for thriving districts and provide the opportunity for universities and institutions to revitalize neighbourhoods and retail streets.



4 1.6.4. A City of Vibrant & Exciting Places

“A good city is like a good party. People don’t want to leave early.”

–Jan Gehl

Being a great city is as much about culture, arts, night life, and a diverse social demographic, as it is about nice neighbourhoods and a healthy economy. Not only must a city accommodate these aspects, it must provide an infrastructure to nurture and cultivate them. These characteristics enhance a city’s distinction; assist in retaining a young, creative and talented workforce; and are the basis of tourism and economic development.

An urban design strategy for the Regional Centre should reinforce the vitality of both downtowns by continuing to direct concentrations of civic and cultural attractions to these areas; by improving the quality of the civic infrastructure; and most importantly, through a targeted strategy of residential intensification. The best and most enduring urban destinations are living and breathing communities that are dense with activity and people at all hours and seasons – a community that theme parks, museums, stadiums and casinos alone cannot build.

There are many existing areas and potential opportunities to create vibrant and exciting places at the community or neighbourhood wide level. More traditional retail streets such as Spring Garden Road, or neighbourhood centres such as that in Hydrostone, are examples of existing urban “focal areas” where there is a vibrant mix of uses, public amenities and places for people to meet - be it a cafe or civic open space.

The urban design strategy should seek to identify and reinforce vibrant areas across the Regional Centre. This strategy can begin to cultivate the transformation of unimaginable places such as Wyse Road and all the shopping malls along the periphery into areas that can become as vibrant and exciting as Spring Garden Road.



1.6 Introduction & Background

5 1.6.5. A Beautiful City

“When I’m working on a problem, I never think about beauty. I think only how to solve the problem. But when I am finished, if the solution is not beautiful, I know it is wrong.”

-Buckminster Fuller

An enviable natural setting, great historic architecture and protected unobstructed views alone do not make for a beautiful city. Attractive and appealing spaces and buildings that are enjoyed by all citizens that live and work in this city are fundamental to good urban design.

A city designed with splendid civic spaces, great streets and inspiring architecture can lift spirits, generate civic pride, create economic value and resonate with visitors. Although there are parts of the Regional Centre that are beautiful places, there are many others that leave much to be desired. As buildings and spaces of previous eras clearly demonstrate, this city has a proud history of civic-inspired design. The public and private sector and all citizens have a role and civic obligation to work towards creating a beautiful city.

Striving for a beautiful city requires recognizing streets as significant public open spaces and the primary way in which we experience and formulate our impression of urban places. Correspondingly, an urban design strategy for the Regional Centre should focus on the quality of streetscapes and the manner in which buildings frame and interact with these public spaces.

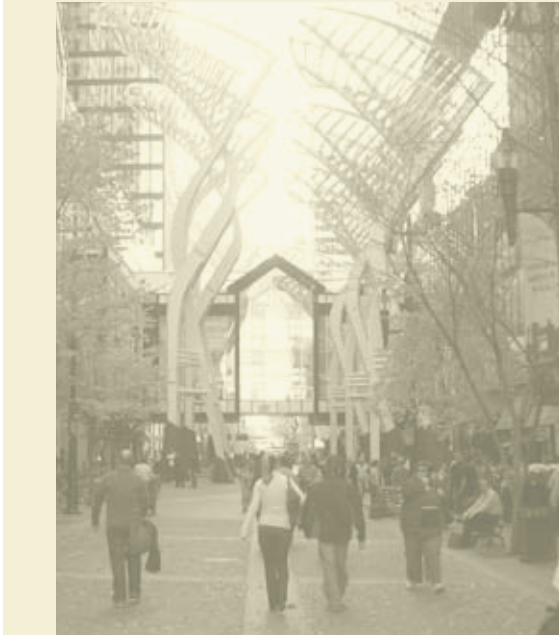
Streetscapes should provide a coherent and cohesive experience that balances all modes of movement, reinforces retail streets, ensures sun penetration, and reinforces visual and physical connections to important civic destinations.

Alongside great streets are tremendous opportunities to enhance the environmental quality and attractiveness of the Regional Centre. The urban design strategy should also be about identifying visually prominent sites and gateways for public art and landmark architecture; reinforcing continuity by filling in ‘gaps’

in the urban fabric; and, creating new public spaces at a variety of scales and for all interests.

Buildings, like streets, have civic obligations to contribute to the quality of the public realm which they frame. The urban design strategy should ensure new buildings are appropriately designed and well ‘mannered’ with respect to their context; their relationship to heritage and adjacent properties; and their impact on the pedestrian environment. These strategies, among others, work in concert to create a liveable and beautiful city.

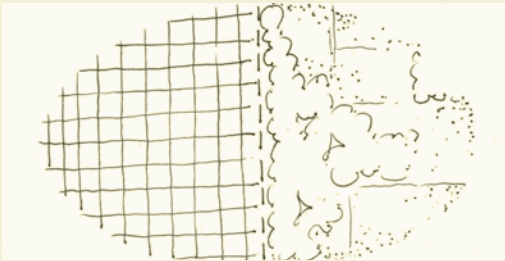




1.7 Guiding Principles

The Guiding Principles for Urban Design give direction to the broad cross-section of components that are the building blocks of the city and that work in concert to establish the function and the “look” and “feel” of the Regional Centre.

These principles will guide decision-making according to their respective themes. They reinforce the Vision Statement and are the “backbone” to the Campaigns for a Great City. Although these principles apply broadly across the Regional Centre, they can be further articulated and tailored to local area conditions and objectives when Neighbourhood or District Urban Design Guidelines are prepared.



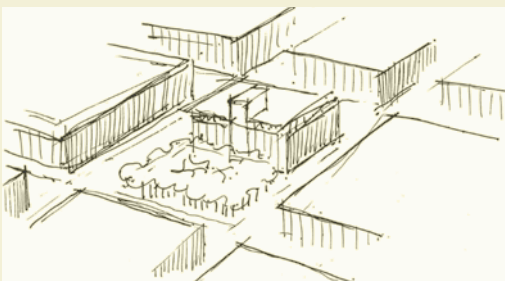
1. Sustainable

- Design, plan and build with respect for economic, environmental, social and cultural sustainability.
- Create resilient communities that adapt to evolving opportunities and needs.



2. High Quality

- New development should be of high quality and compatible with other high quality developments.
- Promote high quality architecture and urban design that respects great heritage resources, including neighbourhoods.



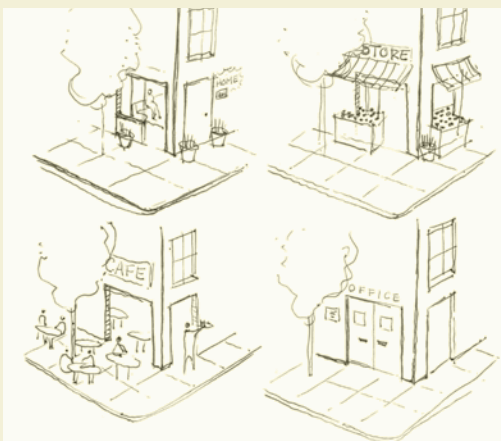
3. Heritage and Culture

- Heritage resources, including heritage districts, buildings, landscapes and cultural heritage, should be recognized, used, protected and enhanced.
- Ensure lasting legacies (buildings, open spaces and streets) are maintained, and new ones are created.



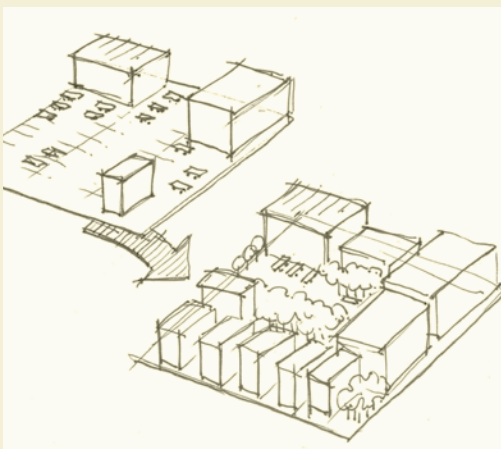
4. Movement

- Integrate land use planning with transportation planning in such a way that alternatives to driving become an easy choice. Transportation options should be efficient, pleasant and readily available.
- All streets should present an inviting walking environment that considers the comfort, convenience, safety and visual interest of pedestrians.
- The Regional Centre, in all ways, should be conducive to, and supportive of, active transportation movement. It should provide people with choices that are viable alternatives to driving.



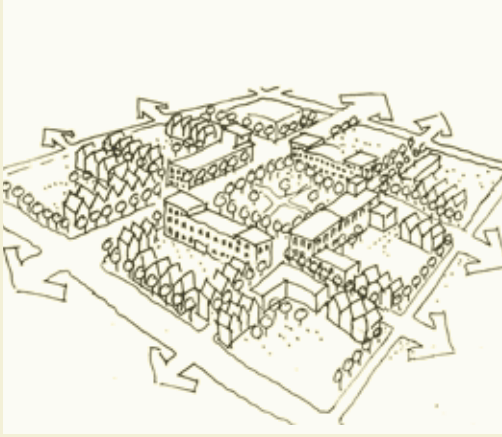
5. Complete Neighbourhoods

- Support safe, mixed-use and diverse neighbourhoods, including:
 - Affordable housing and a variety of tenures;
 - Residential, commercial, employment uses; and
 - Visually and physically accessible amenity space, including schools and parks, within walking distance.
- Ensure the necessary public services and amenities to support quality of life, cohesive communities and creative places.



6. Growth and Change

- Ensure that new developments respond to the natural, cultural, historical, and urban character of their context.
- Direct change and intensification to areas that will benefit from growth.
- Every new building should contribute to the betterment of the public realm.
- Design should support accessibility, active transportation and transit (i.e. streets, land uses, neighbourhoods, open spaces, circulation systems).



7. Connected

- Visually: Prominent views to prominent natural and built features should be recognized, protected and enhanced.
- Physically: Enhance safe and appealing connections within the Regional Centre including to and from the waterfront, open spaces and neighbourhoods.



8. Process

- Foster a culture of support for the building/construction of quality urban design.
- Recognize and reward design excellence.
- Involve neighbourhood communities in local planning matters.
- Maintain opportunities for public participation in the implementation of HRM by Design.
- Foster predictable and timely outcomes that are achievable and fair.

1.4 Components of the Neighbourhood Greenprint

Chapter 1. Background and Vision

Chapter 2. Reurbanization Strategies & Urban Design Guidelines

Chapter 3. Design Guidelines for the Model Building Typologies

Chapter 4. Implementation Strategies

1.4.1 Background and Vision

This document establishes the scope and intent of the Neighbourhood Greenprint and sets out the overarching vision for growth within the Regional Centre over the next 50 years. The Vision is supported by the Five Campaigns for a Great City, which are in turn supported by the Guiding Principles for Urban Design.

1.4.2 Regional Centre Reurbanization Strategies and Urban Design Guidelines

The Reurbanization Strategies build on the Background and Vision to define and guide new development to ensure that it is compatible and in a form that is appropriate to its local context. This approach to new development also affords

exciting new prospects for engaging in a process of much needed ‘urban repair’, which is about ‘filling in the gaps’ in the urban environment and improving areas that have fallen into decline over the years. Reurbanization is about beginning to define a renewed, distinctive, contemporary and invigorating urbanism for HRM. This document outlines in detail the nature of change that should be directed to the following urban categories: General Neighbourhoods, Corridors and Centres; Urban Neighbourhoods, Corridors and Centres; Urban Corridors; and Urban Centres.

1.4.3 Design Guidelines for the Model Building Typologies

The Model Building Typology Design Guidelines provide design guidance for the building typologies set out in the Regional Centre Reurbanization Strategies and Urban Design Guidelines section of the Greenprint document. For office buildings, a mid rise and high rise typology is defined. For residential buildings, typologies are defined based on massing and organization of units within them, including: house forms; continuous and stacked house forms; low rise; mid rise; and, high rise. The guidelines provide a general description, density targets, and design objectives for massing, articulation, parking and servicing.

1.4.4 Implementation Strategies

Under Development.

The Implementation Strategies provide a recommended roadmap for translating the HRMbyDesign Neighbourhood Greenprint into action.

A large, stylized letter 'A' in a dark green color, centered on the page. The letter is composed of two main vertical strokes and a horizontal crossbar, with a triangular cutout in the center. The word 'Appendix' is written in white, bold, sans-serif font across the bottom of the 'A' graphic.

Appendix

forum 1 outcomes



A.1 Forum 1 Outcomes

Forum 1 was all about visioning and coming up with an overall picture of how HRM residents wanted their Regional Centre to look and feel. First, urban design objectives were set and principles defined. This led to the development of an overall guiding framework. The results of this work directly informed the final vision as set out in the Regional Centre Urban Design Framework (sections 2 and 3).

Other workshops during Forum 1 focused on identifying treasured assets, in several theme areas, including heritage and civic infrastructure, street character and open spaces, and views and prominent sites. It also asked what improvements needed to be made.

Point Pleasant Park, the downtown Dartmouth waterfront, and both commons were among those identified as favorite open spaces. An open space seen as in need of improvement is the broader waterfront, with better access and connectivity are needed. Hydrostone, Quinpool, Spring Garden, Highview and Austenville were among the favourite neighbourhoods. Kempt Road and Wyse Road were seen as in need of improvement.

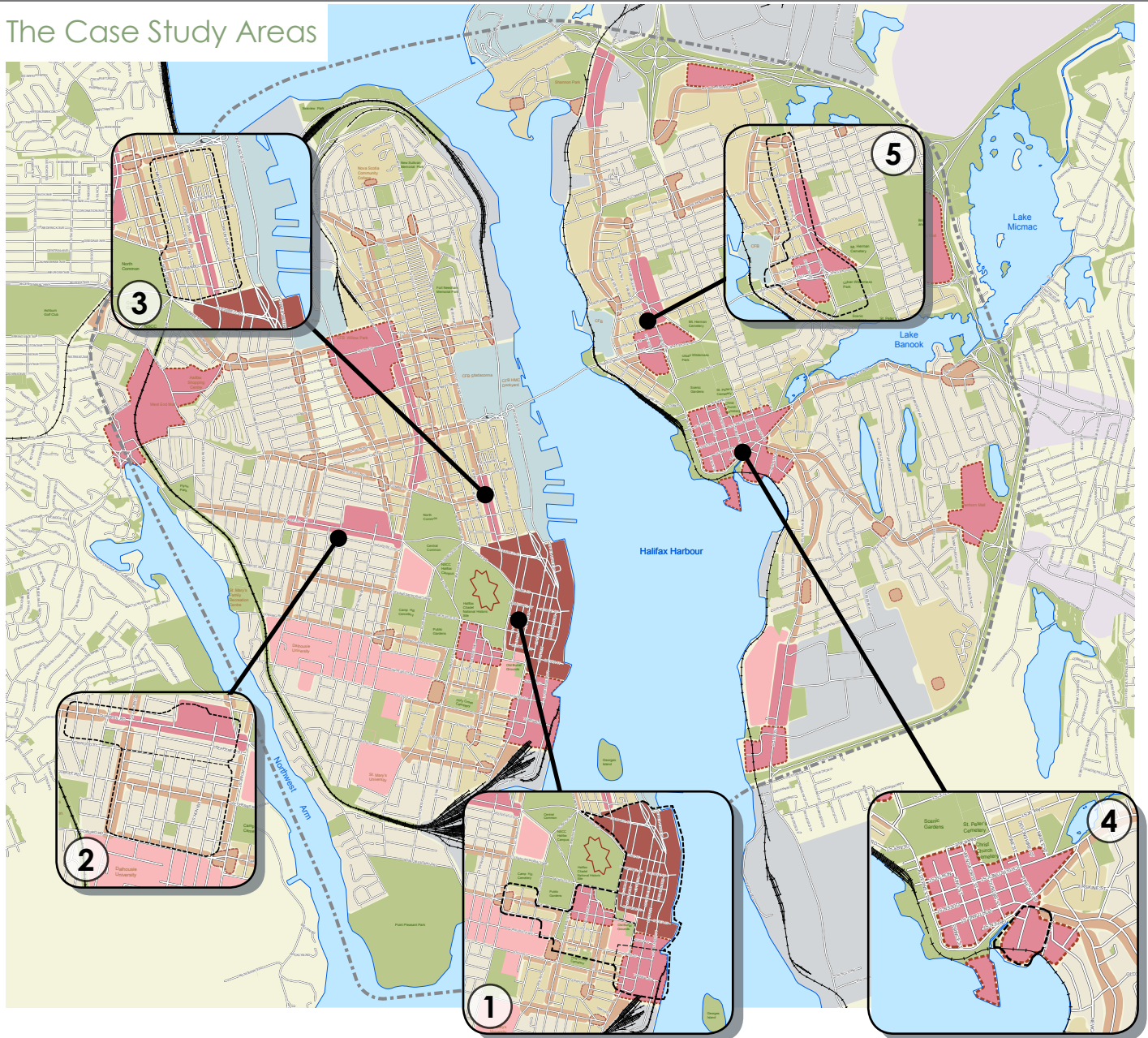


Areas with a distinct character were identified, including corridors and districts. This included identifying the edges or boundaries between areas of different character, and the defining characteristics that make each place unique, including primary uses, street and block character, building types and character, and the urban environment. This was useful also in identifying areas without a distinct character or boundary – areas that can be strengthened in future. The results of these workshops were integrated into the Neighbourhoods and Districts Framework.



forum 2 outcomes

The Case Study Areas



1. Downtown Halifax

The Downtown Halifax District generally follows the HRM Capital District boundaries. For the purposes of the intensification workshops, the Cornwallis Park Neighbourhood and the Spring Garden Road District were also included within this Case Study Area. The Cornwallis Park Neighbourhood is generally bounded by Barrington Street to the west, Cornwallis Park to the south, Marginal Road/Lower Water Street to the east and Bishop Street to the north. The Spring Garden Road District is generally bounded by Sackville Street to the north, Robie Street to the west, Harvey Street to the south and Barrington Street to the east.

2. Vernon/Jubilee and Quinpool Road

The Vernon - Jubilee - Quinpool Road Case Study Area is generally bounded by Robie Street to the east, Quinpool Road to the north, Oxford Street to the west and Coburg Road to the south.

4. Downtown Dartmouth and Dartmouth Cove

Downtown Dartmouth and the Cove Neighbourhood were examined as one case study in the workshops. The case study area is generally bounded by Park Avenue to the north, Alderney Drive to the west, Albert Street to the south and Portland Street to the east.

3. Gottingen

The Gottingen Neighbourhood is generally bounded by Brunswick Street to the northeast, North Street to the northwest, Maynard/North Park Street to the southwest and Cogswell Street to the southeast.

5. Wyse Road

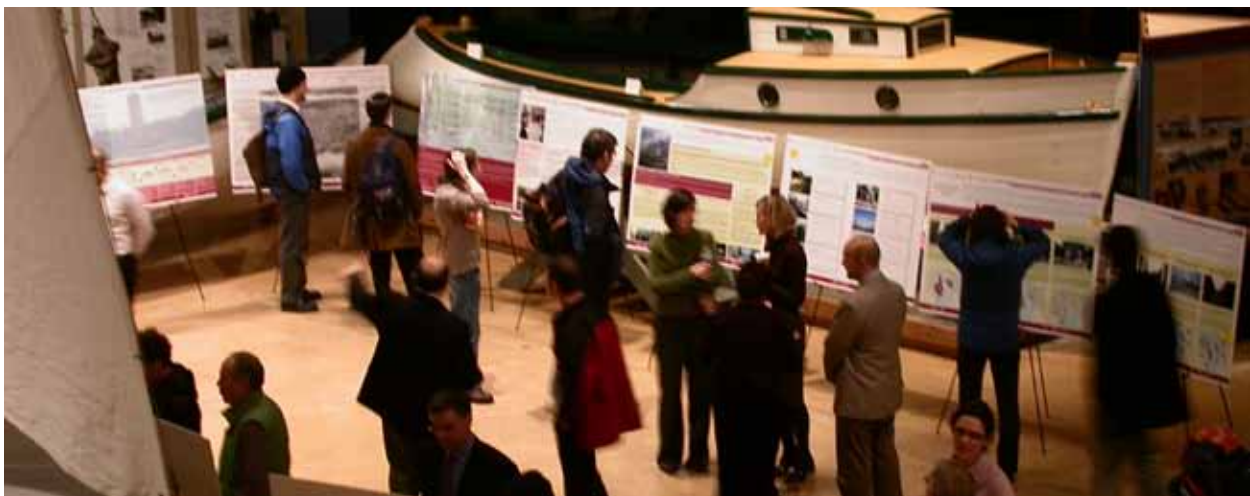
The Wyse Road District is generally bounded by Thistle Street/Scenic Gardens to the south, Windmill Road to the west, Albro Lake Road to the north and Richmond Street to the east.

A.2 Forum 2 Outcomes

The objectives of Forum 2 included developing draft strategies and guidelines for intensification in the HRM Regional Centre. A variety of neighbourhoods and districts were chosen to assist in identifying the key urban design approaches that will inform model urban design guidelines applicable across the Regional Centre.

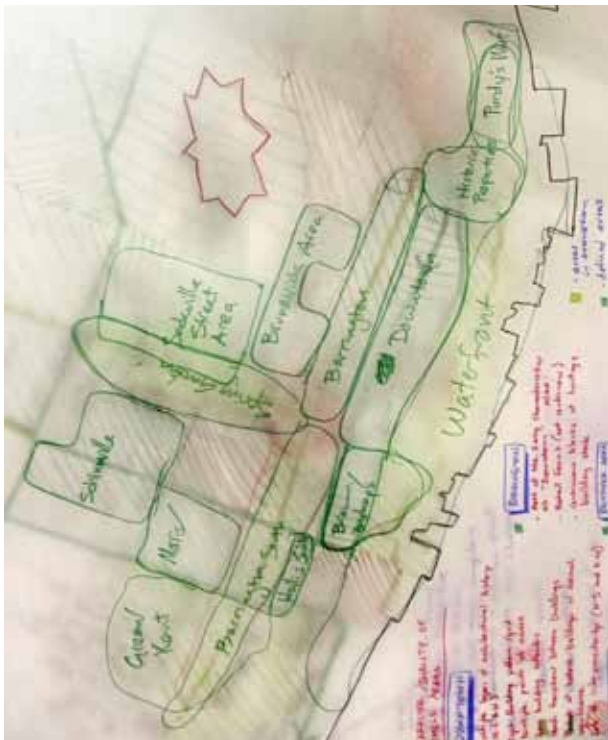
The following five Neighbourhoods and Districts were chosen as Case Study Areas for the intensification workshops:

1. Downtown Halifax/Cornwallis Park/Spring Garden Road
2. Vernon/Jubilee/Quinpool Road
3. Gottingen
4. Downtown Dartmouth/Dartmouth Cove
5. The Wyse Road Area





One of the drawings produced for Downtown Halifax during the course of the two day workshop.



Precinct Plan showing the different areas that make up the Downtown.

1 A.2.1 Downtown Halifax/Cornwallis Park/ Spring Garden Road

Character areas were identified throughout the Downtown and were then further separated into three categories: Areas in need of an identity; areas in transition; and, areas with a clear identity.

Areas with a clear identity:

- Barrington
- Brown/Bishops
- Brunswick Area
- Downtown
- Green/Kent
- Historic Properties
- Hollis South
- Purdy's Wharf
- Sackville Street
- Schmidville

Areas in Transition:

- Waterfront

Areas in Need of an Identity:

- Cogswell Interchange
- Brunswick/Rainee

There was a discussion on current height controls within Downtown Halifax which included the views to/from the Citadel and the Grand Parade; existing view plane by-laws; and the proximity to heritage, with consensus that the term “proximity” requires more clarity.

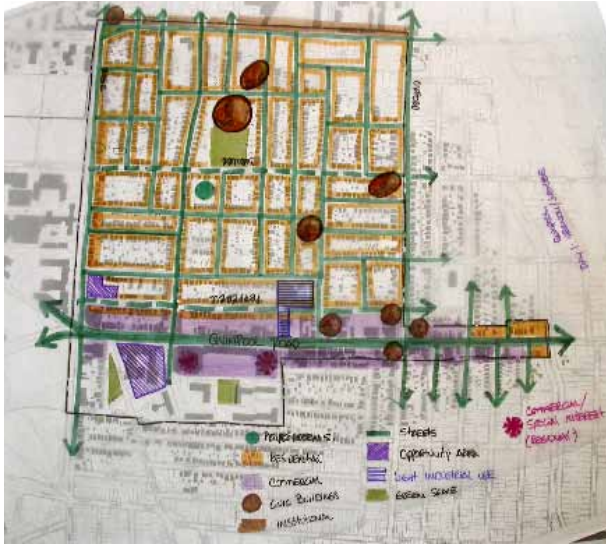
The discussion was followed by proposing criteria for the evaluation of height, including:

- Views of the Skyline, from the water;
- Proximity to Heritage;
- Transition – from low to high density areas;
- Wind and Shadow impacts;
- Skyview – how much of the sky is visible from street level;

- Integration with urban context and form;
- Quality – including both design quality and material quality;
- Whether the building has a positive or negative contribution to the public realm; and
- Street level presence – how the building meets the street.

Lastly, the group generated some ideas on the form of the buildings; if additional height was to be accommodated in certain areas. The group felt that there should be a policy for buildings to scale down towards the waterfront; that in the downtown area, significant density can be achieved through the traditional mid-rise building type built out to the property line side by side; stepbacks are a useful tool to deal with height, but may need to be evaluated on a case by case basis; and, 3D modelling should be used to show the building in its context including showing the as-of-right condition and providing different massing options.

2 A.2.2 Vernon/Jubilee/Quinpool Road



Concept Plan created during the workshops for the Vernon/Jubilee/Quinpool Road Area.



Public and Private Realm Improvement Plan created during the workshops.

This case study area is characterized by the low-rise commercial along Quinpool Road with stable residential areas to the South. It was generally agreed by the group that the low-rise commercial along Quinpool Rd. makes the street feel more suburban, despite being within an urban context. There was consensus that more residential uses should be introduced to ensure more people are able to live closer to where they work.

The group tackled a number of issues around built form with consensus reached that drive-thru's should be restricted along Quinpool Rd. It was also agreed that appropriate transitions will need to be accommodated such as the back lanes between Pepperell and Quinpool to ensure minimal impact to the stable residential areas to the south.

Principles for the Vernon/Jubilee/Quinpool Road Area:

- Intensification may be accommodated as long as adjacent low-rise residential neighbourhoods are respected.
- Respect for low-rise neighbourhoods includes consideration of:
 - Minimizing traffic impacts
 - Ensuring no/limited wind and shadow impacts
 - Ensuring development on Quinpool does not adversely impact on the quality of side streets (i.e. Pepperell St)
- Drive throughs restricted as incompatible with pedestrian-oriented street.
- In order for Quinpool to become a thriving pedestrian neighbourhood and regional centre, appropriate transitions need to be created (i.e. back lanes).
- Intensification in Quinpool may be defined in a preliminary way as being 3-5 storeys.

- Quinpool needs to be shaped by a defining feature, or characteristic, that shapes its personality into the future. This must draw from the character of the residential neighbourhoods to the north and south.
- Traffic infiltration into residential neighbourhoods will be restricted.
- Ensure pedestrians can cross Quinpool Road with ease at regular intervals.
- Improvements to the road network must provide high quality pedestrian and bicycle environment and must accommodate increased transit service over the long term.
- Utilities along Quinpool Rd. should be placed underground, and the previous locations of utility poles should be planted with trees.
- Explore the possibility of extending the Chebucto lane south of Quinpool Rd.
- New development should ensure a continuous street wall (no set back) as per the existing dominant character on Quinpool.
- The St. Patrick school site, and the Quinpool Centre, was identified as a significant redevelopment site that offers the opportunity to accommodate a significant residential population. It was agreed that more height could be accommodated on these sites, particularly given the precedents to the north and south. Any new development should have commercial uses at grade on Quinpool Road, and should provide for a strong pedestrian environment.
- Amenity green/open space must be provided for new developments.
- Parking for Quinpool will be accommodated through municipal lots, shared parking, and on-street parking. In addition there should be no parking fronting on Quinpool (i.e. surface/structured lots). Reducing the parking requirements should be explored.



Street Cross Section for Quinpool Road showing possible height scenarios.



Draft Concept Plan for the Gottingen Area showing re-opened street connections

3 A.2.3 Gottingen

The Gottingen Area is one of Halifax's most ethnic and culturally diverse neighbourhoods, with a significant stock of historic housing, but also many opportunities for development. There was consensus amongst the group that this area will not re-emerge as a Main Commercial District, but should be a focus area for transformation.

Potential for the Gottingen Area:

- Potential to be a very exciting/eclectic place.
- Link Agricola Street to Gottingen (by Cunard) through new development to create a more natural flow of uses and built form. This will enhance the commercial uses that currently exist along both streets.
- Gottingen should emerge as a mixed use district due to its proximity to downtown.
- Existing floor plates for ground floor retail are too large, preventing small businesses from locating along Gottingen due to the high rents charged. Future developments should retain retail at grade to ensure a pedestrian oriented environment, but floor plates should be reduced to provide for a greater diversity of services and retail stores.
- Street level greenspaces should be maintained and enhanced, while opportunities exist to provide for greenspaces on rooftops for existing and future developments.
- Enhance the historic significance of the area.
- The possibility of creating a new public square on the former Sobey's site exists.
- Some blocks are too long along Gottingen and opportunities exist for mid-block connections.
- Creation of a heritage district along Brunswick Street should be considered.

Character Statement for the Gottingen Area:

- There is significant heritage stock that has potential and is currently underutilized.

- Vacant sites present large intensification opportunities, providing proximity to Downtown Halifax and existing services/amenities that has the potential of changing negative perceptions and provides an opportunity for significant change.
- Uniacke Square can look to new urban design solutions with the strength of the community giving it coherence.
- The area is an important transition between Downtown and the North End and this should be reflected in the built form, with the uses capitalizing on the high traffic in the area.
- One of the possible options for existing vacant sites should be the possibility of including transitional housing.
- Maintain the walkability of the area and the fine grained network of streets and built form.

Principles for the Gottingen Area:

- Balance the need to intensify the area with the need to protect the stable neighbourhoods that exist in the area. Create stronger connections with downtown by addressing the barrier caused by the Cogswell Interchange.
- Re-introduce essential amenities to the Gottingen area (banks, grocery stores, greenspaces, etc).
- Increases in density will animate Gottingen.
- Heritage (both Cultural and Built) should be protected.
- Repair the street wall by filling in the 'broken teeth' (vacant sites).
- Celebrate the socio-economic and cultural diversity of the Gottingen Area.
- Re-connect closed-off streets to create a permeable environment for pedestrians.

Urban Design Strategies for the Gottingen Area:

- Zero setbacks will ensure a strong pedestrian environment.
- Restrict drive-through restaurants in the area.
- Ensure that new residential development is integrated with the larger community, avoiding development that is isolated such as gated communities or developments oriented inwards.
- Additional density needs to be carefully regulated.
- Careful consideration needs to be given to rear lots along Maitland around the school.
- Ensure new development is built with permanence with an emphasis on the design and quality of materials.
- Maintain the shallow setbacks which currently exist along Maynard to ensure development is compatible with its surroundings.
- Complete the street wall around the Common.



Draft Concept Plan for Downtown Dartmouth and Dartmouth Cove showing potential building frontages and open spaces.

4 A.2.4 Downtown Dartmouth/ Dartmouth Cove

Downtown Dartmouth/Dartmouth Cove is an area steeped in history, including a significant stock of existing built heritage resources. The visual and physical proximity to Downtown Halifax can be anticipated to be a primary influence on the role, function and growth of the area moving forward. Downtown Dartmouth has a 'village' feel, characterized by its small block and street pattern, compact built form, intimate scale, clearly defined edges and numerous churches.

Character Statement for Downtown Dartmouth/ Dartmouth Cove

- Protecting and enhancing the area's heritage, which is of significance to the entire region
- The mixed-use character, including the marine industrial functions, are defining characteristics
- The topography, including the shoreline and south-facing slope provide exceptional views to the harbour mouth and afford sun penetration
- The area should continue to function as a major centre for surrounding neighbourhoods
- Reinforce the 'village' character, while remaining a regional draw.

Opportunities for Downtown Dartmouth/ Dartmouth Cove:

- Design at-grade levels for adaptive reuse into retail
- Appropriate heights and visually pleasing buildings
- Need to define approach for taller buildings
- Small town character
- Promote entertainment uses
- Portland Street as a cultural and entertainment corridor
- Improve shoreline and create intimate spaces
- Continuation of trail to enhance opportunities for pedestrian connection to downtown

- Create a 'Promenade' along the trail
- Celebrate the canal by ensuring new buildings front onto it
- North park neighbourhood properties have an impressive character
- Marina opportunities at the foot of Ochterloney St. and the Dartmouth Cove
- Extending the pier to break wave impacts
- Tourist attractions needed
- Only public uses and parks on the waterfront side of Alderney Drive
- Keep Dartmouth Cove as a 'cove'

Additions to the Regional Centre Urban Design Framework:

- Five Corners an opportunity for secondary gateway
- The bridgehead a primary gateway
- Civic Landmark Streets: Ochterloney, Queen and Prince Albert (scenic route)
- Views – Ochterloney, King and Portland are key 'window' views to the water; Wyse Rd and Alderney Drive provide panoramic views; and, the 'curve' of Alderney provides a tremendous panoramic view opportunity
- Open Space – several shoreline opportunities
- Trails – missing link between the bridge and Ochterloney

Urban Design Strategies for Downtown Dartmouth/ Dartmouth Cove:

General Approach to Built Form

- Landmark buildings to accommodate density
- Taller buildings with slender floor plates
- Reinforcing human-scaled street walls
- Stepped development to the shoreline to secure harbour views
- Strategic sites to be used for institutional and recreational uses
- 'Pavilion' buildings along the waterfront that do

not obscure harbour views

- Promote roof gardens overlooking the water
- Higher densities and taller buildings should buffer existing low-rise residential with compatible forms and transitions in scale

North Street

- Remain predominantly residential in character

Ochterloney Street

- A variety of setbacks
- Heritage character
- High number of churches

Alderney Drive

- Traffic needs to slow down
- On-street parking should be permitted off peak traffic hours
- Commercial and mixed uses
- Signalized pedestrian crossings

Queen Street

- Institutional and service uses such as the Alderney Centre and post office
- Concentration of residences to the opposite end to the harbour
- Portland Street
- Buildings close to the street continuous with animated frontages
- Entertainment uses
- Reinforcing and defining the uses

Cove Area

- Mixed uses
- Marine industrial uses and the rail line to be respected and integrated
- Contemporary style and an eclectic style

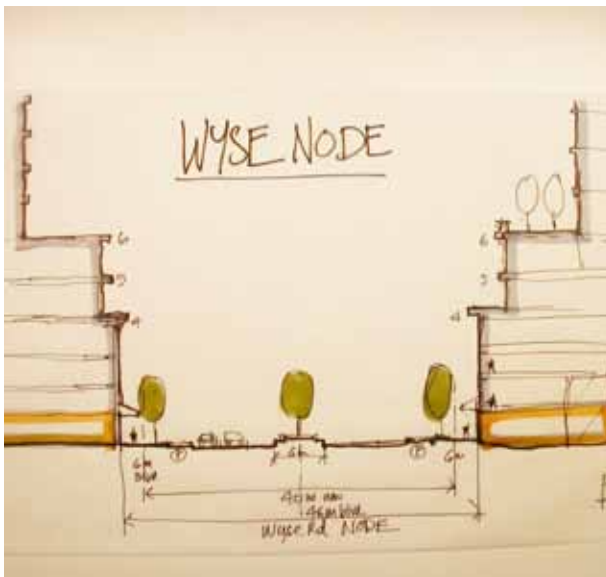
Canal

- Day lighting the buried canal
- Create public spaces fronting on to the canal
- Engage and animate canal frontage

5 A.2.5 The Wyse Road Area



Draft Concept Plan for Wyse Road showing the gateway feature at Nantucket Ave. and Wyse Road and the relocation of the transit terminal to the north-east.



Street Cross Sections showing potential height scenarios

The Wyse Road area will emerge as the primary gateway to/from Halifax/Dartmouth that will provide both regional and neighbourhood amenities and services. The group was only able to identify one heritage building (the Old Brick Brewery) which will set the foundation for the character of the commercial area.

Potential for Wyse Road:

- Potential for the district to become a Regional Hub for transit through the relocation of the Dartmouth Bus Terminal to a more accessible location at the north east corner of Nantucket and Wyse Rd where it will be more easily accessible to riders and reduce the disruption of traffic along Wyse Rd.
- Expanding Boland Road could provide additional capacity to help ease congestion in the area and improve traffic flow.
- Potential for a new road connecting Victoria and Wyse Rd. to feed more traffic onto Wyse Rd. and off of the residential streets in the area, this will also help support the existing businesses along Wyse Rd. by providing greater visibility.
- Creation of a green corridor to connect the various greenspaces, potentially expanding to the waterfront.

Urban Design Strategies for Wyse Road:

- The importance of enhancing pedestrian connections at the Wyse Rd. and Nantucket Ave. intersection to create an environment which is more pedestrian oriented.
- Explore programming options for commuting across bridges such as the creation of a frequent commuter bus that connects to Downtown Halifax, alleviating some of the congestion on the MacDonald Bridge.
- Extension of the street grid which exists in the surrounding neighbourhoods to the large blocks along Wyse Rd.
- The creation of three districts within the Wyse

Road Area, which are as follows:

- District 1 Gateway Node – Potential for higher buildings and greater density.
- District 2 Mid Wyse – Encourage local retail.
- District 3 North Wyse – Predominantly residential character.
- in the area should be enhanced, with buildings that are more pedestrian oriented extending out to the street edge with parking located behind.
- Extensive use of greenery and trees to create a boulevard effect to soften this portion of Wyse Road, reflecting its primarily residential character.

District 1 – Gateway to/from Halifax

- Creating something monumental at the intersection of Nantucket Ave and Wyse Rd to mark entry to/from Halifax and to/from Dartmouth.
- More intensification of residential and office uses can be accommodated in this district including taller buildings.
- This district will also be the transportation hub of Dartmouth and the existing bus terminal should be relocated to where adequate parking can be integrated into the redevelopment.
- Enhance the area with more landscaping and streetscaping including the possibility of incorporating a significant sculpture or relocating the one that exists at the southwest corner of Nantucket Ave and Wyse Rd.

District 2 – Community Retail/Commercial Area

- This district should be completely redeveloped along Wyse Road with more pedestrian oriented building, as opposed to the suburban strip mall type forms which currently exist.
- This district will contain a variety of services and shops to serve a diverse population. Development will include retail at grade with residential units above to increase the population and create a more pedestrian oriented environment.
- A focus for the community such as a park/plaza should be created to serve the surrounding neighbourhoods.
- The existing industrial uses should be removed and or converted to residential uses.
- District 3 – Neighbourhood Convenience
- This portion of Wyse Road will see little change, ensuring that the stable residential areas that exist are protected.
- The existing neighbourhood convenience retail

forum 3 outcomes



A.3 Forum 3 Outcomes

Urban Design Forum 3 was about developing strategies for infill on selected Opportunity Sites, providing a chance to test out the Urban Design Vision, Principles and Structure Plan developed during Urban Design Forums 1 and 2. This Forum provided an opportunity for people to see how the strategies developed thus far will translate for new developments.





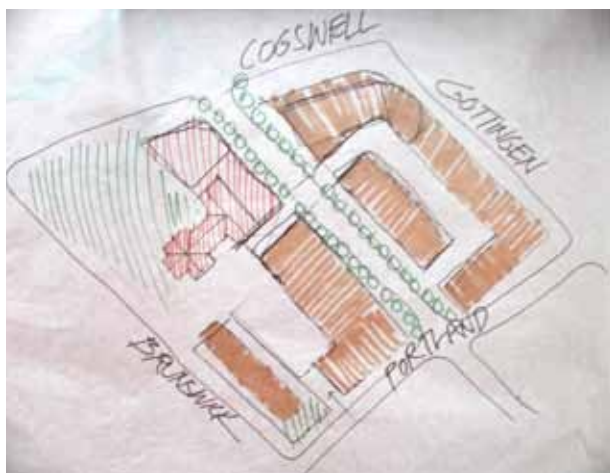
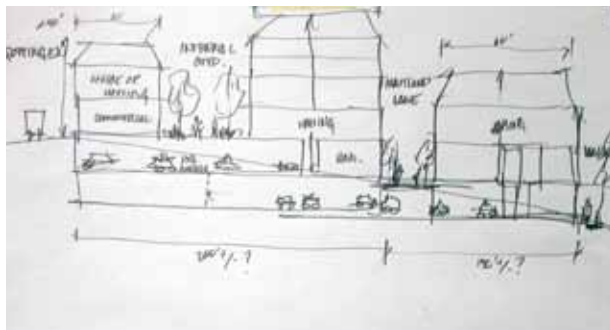
A.3.1 Opportunity Site Areas

A.2.1.1 Brewery/Staples Gottingen Street

Bounded by Cogswell St, Gottingen St, Portland St, and Brunswick St.

Highlights

- Possibility of normalizing Cogswell St. width and intersection down from six lanes. New features might include:
 - New sidewalks
 - Bike lanes/bus lanes
 - Wide sidewalk on north side which has best southern exposure
- Cogswell should have pedestrian priority
- Cogswell: More animated mixed use scale in relation to downtown
- Trinity: It is the symbolic value of the site that has to be integrated, not necessarily the church
- Possible connecting streets with other uses/buildings/heritage via Maitland extension and internal courtyards
- Integrate pedestrian linkages
- View planes: 7 Storeys currently allowed
- View of church spires in area
- Portland: More residential scale
- Working within 125 people/acre

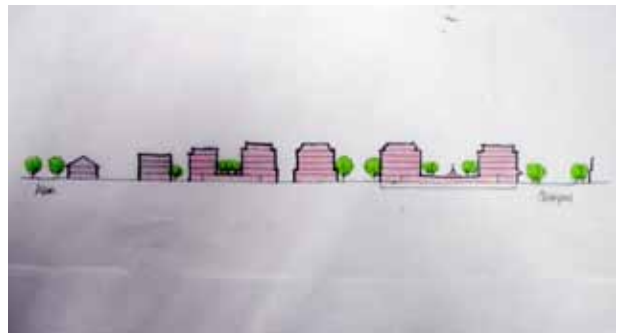
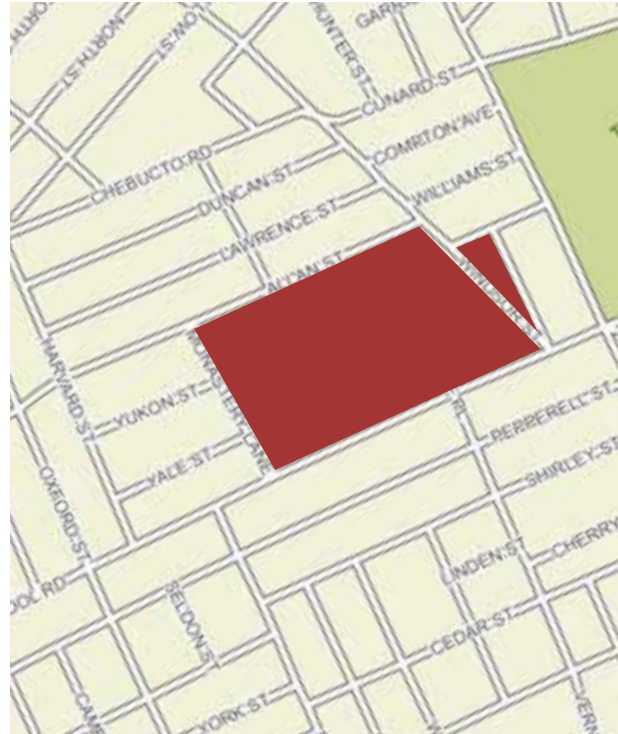


A.3.1.2 Quinpool Centre

Bounded by Quinpool Rd, Monastery Lane, Allan St, and Windsor St.

Highlights

- Generally 6 storeys maximum
- Green roofs and solar panels
- Model community for sustainable development
- Rooftops also as courtyards
- Gateway character/whole site
- No reflective glass
- No blank façades: prominent frontages need a “face” with access points and transparency (Refer to drawing)
- As much as possible, it is desirable to have multiple access points on Quinpool
- “Keystone” larger format retail should be accommodated behind smaller scale retail fronting on Quinpool.
- Zero setback throughout the site (retail, residential, etc)
- Extend the on-street parking eastwards on the north side of the street in front of the site
- The emphasis has been on transit-oriented development (less parking, emphasis on pedestrian/bike connections)





A.3.1.3 Dartmouth Cove

Bounded by Alderney Dr, Portland St, Maitland St, and Halifax Harbour.

Highlights

- Option 1: Alderney Drive ‘rerouting’ with daylighting of canal as the primary organizing feature
- Option 2: A central linear park linking the historic church on Portland with the waterfront as the primary organizing feature
- Marine uses/ ‘Granville Island’ uses on water-side of rail line, including: special paved area, piers, concession stands and a market
- Second access bridge to prevent fly-over to marine slips
- Daylighting Canal (including bridges)
- Sustainable Community design, including: Solar aquatic waste treatment, SWM facilities, Roof Gardens
- Building Heights: Transition to 4-5 storeys at the waters edge and residential neighbourhoods along Portland; Taller, up to 15 storeys towards the centre and along Canal St.



A.3.1.4 Dartmouth Shopping Centre

*Bounded by Wyse Rd, Green Rd, and Nantucket Ave/
Angus L. MacDonald Bridge.*

Highlights

- Extension of the street grid and potential new circulation opportunities.
- Relocation of the bus terminal to behind the potentially redeveloped Shopping Centre.
- Not integrating a bus/transit terminal on the site, but relocating it onto another site.
- Creation of a pedestrian greenway to link Wyse Rd. to the Dartmouth Commons.
- Grade-related commercial, retail and office uses along Wyse Rd. built up to the streetline.
- Creation of two nodes (anchors) to draw activity to either end of the site.
- Re-connecting all the surrounding neighbourhoods through improved links and more compatible uses.
- Residential uses: Injecting more residents into the area.
- Introducing a bus loop that goes underneath the bridge.



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- Nova Scotia Association of Architects
- Nova Scotia Association of Professional Planners
- Dalhousie University
- Nova Scotia College of Art and Design
- Department of National Defence
- Province of Nova Scotia, numerous departments
- Waterfront Development Corporation
- Ecology Action Centre
- Halifax/Dartmouth Bridge Commission
- Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia
- Africville Genealogical Society
- Commons North Neighbourhood Association
- Peninsula South Residents' Association
- Friends of Schmitdville
- Dartmouth Cove Residents' Association
- Central Dartmouth Neighbourhood Association
- Greater Halifax Partnership
- Halifax Chamber of Commerce
- Fusion Halifax
- HRM's Business Improvements Districts
- Nova Scotia Heart and Stroke Foundation
- Friends of the Public Gardens
- Halifax Regional School Board
- Port of Halifax
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- Frank Palermo
- Mary-Jane Adams
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