



## Capital District Overview

The Capital District belongs to every resident of HRM, and is the regional and provincial centre for government, finance, culture, entertainment and business. It encompasses Downtown Halifax, Downtown Dartmouth, the Spring Garden Road, Quinpool Road and Gottingen Street areas. The Capital District Task Force coordinates HRM's services in this area including maintenance, public works and planning. This group is made up of HRM staff and external agencies, including the business commissions and the Waterfront Development Corporation.

During the past year, the task force focused on carrying forward the Capital District vision, developed by the public in 2002. The Capital District has also provided leadership in key areas such as maintenance, capital project coordination, and urban design.

This year the task force will focus on:

- implementing the vision for the Capital District
- streetscape improvements
- planning for public lands in the Capital District

The Capital District is also an important part of the Regional Planning project, recognizing that a healthy downtown core contributes to the well being of the region.

## Capital District Identity

The Capital District Urban Design Study is close to completion after 11 months of extensive research and public consultation. The study provides guidelines for improving public spaces and detailed streetscape plans for the main commercial streets in the Capital District, including Portland Street, Alderney Drive, Barrington Street, Spring Garden Road, Gottingen Street and Quinpool Road. The study also contains important research on how other cities have approached urban design, including how to foster good design in public spaces and buildings.

When the study is complete, the Capital District will have a plan for improved public amenities such as benches, litter baskets, bike racks and transit shelters, as well as new directional signage in the Capital District. Look for improvements beginning this fall!

## Capital Projects

The Capital District is implementing a \$1.7 million capital budget for the downtown areas. Priorities will be guided by the results of the Urban Design Study and include: sidewalk improvements in key areas, accessibility/universal design improvements, streetscape furniture (benches & litter baskets), landscaping, planting, public art and mural projects.

The Capital District will coordinate and manage capital improvements within the area. Citizens will notice a number of smaller projects being implemented this fall, such as public art projects in Downtown Halifax and Downtown Dartmouth, improvements along the Dartmouth waterfront and around Victoria Park. The larger capital projects will be planned over the fall and winter, with construction to begin in the spring.



## Capital District and Business Commissions Continue to Partner

The Joint Initiative Strategy, which provides an opportunity for the business commissions within the Capital District to work together, is off to a great start. The strategy identifies areas of common interest where the business commissions can benefit from working together. Many new marketing, promotions and rejuvenation initiatives are in the works for the fall. They are projects that can be addressed more powerfully and effectively with a united approach.

## Contacts

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## Wipe Off Graffiti ... Wipe Out Crime

Halifax Regional Municipality's Community Response Team has been busy with its anti-graffiti campaign. The team is commissioning artists to mural power boxes in an attempt to rid the community of graffiti.

To date, two power boxes have been painted with murals by artist Ken Head. Both murals depict local scenes. One of the murals can be seen on the Fairview Overpass and the other is located in Bedford, near Fish Hatchery Park.

In another anti-graffiti initiative, the Community Response Team has developed a Graffiti video which is being used to educate the public on the social impact of graffiti crimes. Gary Martin, Manager, Community Response Initiative, presented the video during the Capital District Task Force meeting in July. The video had also been presented at an Atlantic Canada Crime Prevention Conference, recently held in Truro. For more information contact Gary at 490-4070.

The team has also been on the road cleaning graffiti from numerous locations. Travelling in their highly visible and colourful Community Response Mobile Unit, they have cleaned 30,000 square feet of surface so far!



## Keeping the Capital District Safe

The Safe Streets Initiative was implemented by a partnership of the business commissions in the Capital District and HRM. These groups decided to work together to identify safety issues and needs within the Capital District, build networks and communicate information. To achieve these goals, they created a proposal for the Federal Department of Justice's Community Mobilization Program. The proposal provided the Capital District with funding for the Safe Streets Initiative. The Safe Streets Initiative has increased understanding of safety issues and raised public awareness of the project.



## Keeping the Capital District Clean

For the second year, the Capital District is delivering the maintenance plan for the downtown areas together, with HRM's Real Property and Asset Management and Public Works. By sharing resources with area business commissions, HRM is able to deliver an enhanced maintenance program during the high tourist season. The plan will build on last year's success by expanding the service area to include Quinpool Road. New sidewalk cleaning equipment purchased last year will be used to enhance service.



## Capital District's Artistic Side



Delivering small scale public art projects in the downtown will continue to be a priority of the Capital District. Key signature art projects have been identified

through the Urban Design study and will be implemented under this year's capital program. Upcoming projects include sculptures in Granville Mall, a metal silhouette sculpture in Dartmouth, and mural projects in Downtown Halifax, Downtown Dartmouth, Gottingen Street and Quinpool Road.

## A Plan for Public Lands in the Capital District

The Capital District is leading a plan to identify publicly owned lands held by Municipal, Provincial and Federal governments. The plan will establish priorities and opportunities for future use of these lands to foster development that meets our needs and is consistent with the Capital District vision. Phase One of the plan, which will inventory Municipal lands, is complete.

## Redevelopment of the Cogswell Interchange

During the public vision process for the Capital District, participants identified redeveloping the Cogswell Interchange as a high priority. The Cogswell Interchange is a section of highway at the entrance to Downtown Halifax that was built in the 1960's as part of a water-front freeway. The rest of the project was never built because of public opposition. The removal of the interchange has been under discussion ever since, as a way to better connect the north end community to Downtown Halifax. The Capital District is conducting research on how other cities have redeveloped similar projects, and will be reporting back to HRM Council on the feasibility of redeveloping the Cogswell interchange.

## What's New?

### Brick Replacement Program

The replacement of brick sidewalks in areas of Downtown Halifax and Downtown Dartmouth is identified as an important capital project for HRM's Capital District. Recent Urban Design research

and public consultation has determined that the use of bricks on Downtown sidewalks can be unsafe for pedestrians, is expensive to maintain, and is not appropriate for more heavily travelled urban sidewalks.

This fall, beginning with Lower Water and George Streets and portions of Alderney Landing, bricks will be replaced with a combination of broom-finished concrete and concrete pavers. This project is part of an exciting new urban design initiative in HRM's Capital District that will see a variety of streetscape and public amenity improvements over the next few years.

### HRM Capital Commission Society

Last summer Regional Council approved the creation of the HRM Capital Commission Society to enable HRM's Capital District to access funding opportunities available through other levels of government and private foundations. Through the Society the Capital District will explore options of partnering with the Province and other levels of government to focus resources within the downtown area.

### Barrington Heritage District

In June 2003, HRM's Regional Council initiated the process to create a heritage conservation district on Barrington Street. The Capital District will assist in the development of incentive programs and streetscape improvements to accompany the proposed heritage legislation.



## Safe Streets Conference

The four business commissions within the Capital District along with the HRM Community Response Team and Halifax

Regional Police, hosted a Maritime Province Safe Streets Conference in June at Halifax City Hall. Business commissions and police departments from across the Maritime provinces were invited to attend a two day session on safe street initiatives within downtown communities.

The Capital District business commissions also funded a presentation by Officer Heinz Kuck from the Toronto Police Department on graffiti culture and its negative effect on communities. It was a great networking opportunity and allowed a positive forum for the exchange of ideas.



## Around the Capital District ...

### Downtown Halifax

The Capital District has developed a partnership with the Nova Scotia College of Art & Design (NSCAD) to enable a series of sculpture displays in the Granville Mall area. The project will create a stronger presence for NSCAD by installing platforms for sculpture exhibits that will be changed periodically. Look for the installment of the first phase of this project early in September.

One of the greatest concerns along Barrington Street is the shell of the former National Film Board building. Until this area is redeveloped, the Downtown Halifax Business Commission, in conjunction with HRM, will remove existing graffiti and install 14 murals in the windows. These murals will be painted by NSCAD artist Scott Tobin and will honour the building's past as a movie theatre.



### Spring Garden Road Area

The Victoria Park Revitalization Project undertaken this year, in the Spring Garden area, is about to celebrate its first anniversary with the grand re-opening of this unique historic park. On October 1st, 2003, the Spring Garden Road Business Association will be hosting a celebration event co-presented by The Atlantic Federation of Musicians, in honour of the Park's re-opening and International Music Day 2003. Enjoy the music and buy a personalized brick in Victoria Park to help support the Legacy Fund and The Metro Food Bank!



### Gottingen Street Area

New planters and site furnishings are being added to the Gottingen Street area. The Sunday Market was a huge success and will be back next summer. The Gottingen Street Merchants hope to see you again next year!



### Quinpool Road Area

The Quinpool Road Mainstreet District Association is eagerly awaiting the construction of a small new park beside the Oxford Theatre on Quinpool Road. It will feature a new bike rack, benches, planters, a poster kiosk and new pavement. The park will be installed this fall.



### Downtown Dartmouth

HRM funded two art projects in Downtown Dartmouth this spring. The first is a bronze sculpture located on the Alderney Plaza by Dawn McNutt and the second is an indoor mural for the Dartmouth Ferry Terminal Building, painted by Laura McNutt.

Examples of new side walk pavers, which will be used to replace the brick on Portland Street, can be seen on Alderney Drive in front of the Plaza.

Many new projects are in the planning stages for both Portland Street and Alderney Drive. A copy of the streetscape plan will be available for review at the office of the Capital District East Business Commission.

## Did you know ...?

- HRM's Capital District generates \$80 million in taxes and \$613 million in tourism revenue
- There are an estimated 182,000 jobs in HRM. Over half of these are in the urban core, including 70,000 in or adjacent to the Capital District
- The Regional Planning process needs your input! For information on how you can participate, contact 490-5857, [regplan@halifax.ca](mailto:regplan@halifax.ca) or visit the Regional Planning website at [www.halifax.ca/regionalplanning](http://www.halifax.ca/regionalplanning)

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