



2004/2005 Year in Review

This Report addresses the major accomplishments of the Capital District Task Force during 2004 & 2005. In its fourth year, the Capital District continued working toward carrying forward the vision developed through public consultation in 2002, as well as providing leadership in coordinating service delivery in key areas such as maintenance, streetscaping, and urban design. Other highlights include partnerships with Capital District business commissions and collaboration with the Regional Planning Project .

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

Through regular meetings of the Capital District Task Force, HRM business units and external service providers in the Capital District worked together over the past year to gain awareness and develop capacity to solve issues and identify opportunities within the downtown areas.

Major Accomplishments:

Communications

- **Web site, email, & Newsletters**

www.halifax.ca/capitaldistrict.

This past year, the Task Force has continued to build awareness of Capital District through regular newsletters, website and email, which continue to be an effective vehicle for communications for residents and businesses of HRM.

- **Capital District Open House**

Last June, 2004 Staff were able to report back to stakeholders and community members at a public open house on the progress to date and successes in addressing the vision for the Capital District.

- **Joint Consultations with Regional Planning**

Over the past year Capital District has focused on joint communications and consultations with Regional Planning to reach out and build better awareness throughout the region.

Marketing & Promotions

- **Cooperative promotions with area Business Commissions.**

Capital District continued to partner with the four area business commissions (Downtown Dartmouth, Downtown Halifax, Spring Garden Road, & Quinpool Road) to identify common issues and opportunities to share resources. The goal was to identify projects that can be addressed more effectively with a cooperative approach. The Capital District Holiday Brochure, the centre spread in the Metro Visitor's Guide and a Pedestrian study are successful examples of this initiative.

- **Outreach support for BIDs**

Capital District continues to provide assistance to fledgling business commissions based on existing BID best practices with reference to by-laws, levy formulas, staffing and communication. In addition, Capital District staff coordinate all management agreements, budgets, activity plans

and audited financial statements on behalf of HRM.

- **Capital Commission**
In 2002 Council approved the creation of a “Not For Profit” Society to enable HRM Capital District to access funding opportunities available through other levels of government and private foundations. Over the past year this group has played a key role in providing strategic input into the Capital District program with three meetings held over the past year.

Urban Design

- **Phase 1 Urban Design Project Complete.**
A key milestone is the endorsement by Council in May of 2004 key aspects of the Capital District Urban Design Project. Phase I provides important direction on how to promote good design for streetscapes and public spaces and includes streetscape guidelines and plans for the five commercial districts, new wayfinding and identity signage, and tools for encouraging design in buildings and sites. It will provide a foundation for guiding future investment and programming in the Capital District and a template for other communities across the region.
- **Streetscape Improvements Completed or Underway**
The streetscape plans have been put in motion with the completion of key projects including the first phase new sidewalks and universal design improvements along Portland Street between Alderney Drive and King Street, a new public space at the Halifax North Memorial Library, restoration of the Public Gardens, and the installation of historic Lions Statues in partnership with NSCAD University as a gateway to Granville Mall. Works is also underway to select a public sculpture for the new public space at the Halifax Library. Watch for improvements to Scotia Square Transit Terminal and a new pocket park near the Oxford Theatre which will begin construction over the summer months.
- **2nd Annual Capital District Urban Design Awards Program**
The Awards program was held on April 28th this year in an effort to showcase and celebrate excellence in design. Four categories were identified including buildings (restoration), buildings (new construction), amenities, and

open space. A new “civic pride” category was created celebrating the efforts business and property owners are making to improve their properties. Twenty two submissions were received from across the urban core and two awards were given in the various categories; including Award of Excellence and Honorable Mention. In addition, 120 votes were cast to designate a “People’s Choice” recipient. Another new feature this year saw a partnership with NSCAD to select one of its student to design this year’s award.

- **Phase II Urban Design Plan**
Capital District is moving to phase II of the Urban Design Project to provide tools such as design guidelines to foster excellence in development within the urban core. Over the past year a terms of reference and project plan have been developed with assistance from Dalhousie University, which will be brought forward to Council in the coming month.

HRM has reached another major milestone with the recruitment of an Urban Designer, Andy Fillmore, who will lead this project and help develop a community design program for HRM as envisaged under the Regional Plan.

Maintenance

- **Enhanced Seasonal Maintenance Plan**
Through Real Property and Asset Management (RPAM), a coordinated Maintenance Plan was delivered for the fourth year for the Capital District to enable enhanced maintenance during the high tourist season. This past year Council approved resources to extend seasonal maintenance through to mid December. In addition, Capital District coordinated the installation of new four stream source separation containers for 11 parks in the downtown. Phase 2 will see more containers purchased for outdoor sport facilities through HRM. We will also be focusing more resources on garbage pick-up within the street right-of-way with 50 new cans to be installed this summer.
- **Maintenance Reserve**
The Business Improvement Associations (BIAs) located within the HRM Capital District are contributing towards an annual maintenance reserve to support long term maintenance of streetscape amenities being funded by HRM. Other sources of funding will be explored to build up this reserve over time.

Public Lands/Facilities Planning

- With a significant proportion of lands within the urban core publicly owned, the Task Force has been working with other levels of government on joint planning for publicly owned lands. Last May, 2004 saw the completion of research on future publicly facility needs. This report will aid decision making as HRM moves forward with plans for municipal lands. It will also enable collaboration with other levels of government to foster development that is consistent with the vision for the Capital District.
- Over the past year Capital District has been working with other levels of government on several priority projects identified in the Public Facility Study. These include a study on the feasibility of a new 2000 seat performing arts facility for HRM, and discussions with the Province on joint planning projects for publicly owned lands in the Spring Garden area and for Grand Parade and Province House. Work is also underway to redesign Sackville Landing public space on the Halifax Waterfront.

Other Joint Projects

- **Regional Planning**
Capital District continues to be an important part of the Regional Plan reinforcing the vision as the economic and cultural heart of HRM and the Province. Over the past year Capital District has been involved in the development of the draft Regional Plan. The Task Force will continue to play a role in the coming year as the Regional Plan moves into the final stage.
- **Central Halifax Mayor's Task Force**
Capital District is participating on an interdepartmental staff team led by RCH, to deliver proactive integrated services that support HRM and central Halifax community. Capital District will support the efforts of the Task Force by implementing various improvement projects within the community.
- **Barrington Heritage District**
Capital District continues to support Planning and Development in the process to create legislation to establish a heritage conservation district on Barrington Street. Capital District is

coordinating streetscape improvements along Barrington Street to accompany the proposed heritage legislation.

- **Economic Impact Assessment of Arts & Culture Sector**
As an input into the Culture Plan, Capital District is conducting research on the economic contribution of the arts and culture to the larger economy. This study should be completed in the coming weeks.

Ongoing

- **Coordination**
Through the Capital District Task Force, staff will continue to show leadership in the coordination of service delivery within the downtown areas.
- **Capacity Building**
Building and improving capacity of staff to respond to specialized needs and services of the Capital District will continue to be a priority. We will also be exploring opportunities to transition to more of a regional approach extending programming started in the Capital District to other communities in the region.

Capital District Staff Team:

Jacqueline Hamilton

Manager, Capital District

490-5685 hamiltj@halifax.ca

Donna Honeywell

Administrative Assistant

490-5330 honeywd@halifax.ca

Jeff Bray

Streetscape Coordinator

490-4408 brayj@halifax.ca

Marion Currie

Project Coordinator

490-6735 curriem@halifax.ca

Andy Fillmore

Project Manager, Urban Design

490-6495

fillmorea@halifax.ca

