



Message from the Capital District Office

Since it was established by Halifax Regional Council in 2001, the Capital District Program has seen many successes. Working with many partners, Capital District helps make the downtown areas a better place to live, work, and visit. In fact, a recent study rated HRM as one of a handful of successful healthy downtowns of mid size cities across North America.

Capital District focuses on improving services in the downtown areas of the municipality including the downtown Halifax and Dartmouth, and the business districts of Spring Garden Road, Quinpool Road, and Gottingen Street. We've covered lots of ground over the last four years addressing standards and programs for maintenance and civic pride, streetscape and public amenities, community safety, urban design and the quality of our surroundings; as well as plans for publicly owned lands and facilities within the Capital District.

This newsletter highlights some of the key markers of success for this year. Streetscape and public space improvements are visible throughout the Capital District, with many recent projects featured in this edition of our newsletter. HRM has hired an urban designer to help grow a regionally significant urban design program across the municipality. The Draft Regional Plan reinforces in policy, the importance of a strong Capital District as the regional centre for economy and culture. New marketing initiatives saw area business commissions collaborate on joint promotions of holiday events and produce research on pedestrian counts throughout the Capital District. Also recycling and composting is made easier in the Capital District with new containers for separating refundables, paper and organics, from regular waste.

As we continue down this road, we need to be responsive to new opportunities emerging through HRM's draft Regional Plan, and strategies which address the municipality's role in both cultural and

economic development. Challenges for next year will include supporting the regional expansion of streetscape and urban design programs, and leading high profile public lands projects in the Capital District.

The Capital District program is guided by the efforts of many people including staff who work across HRM, Halifax Regional Council, external organizations, and many public and stakeholder groups who work with us on an ongoing basis. A dedicated Task Force of 29 members representing municipal staff, the five area business associations within the Capital District and the Provincial Waterfront Development Corporation meet on a monthly basis to troubleshoot and improve service to the downtown areas. A Capital Commission board of directors representing the Mayor, CAO, senior staff and six councillors from the Capital District and suburban and rural communities within HRM, help shape strategic directions. Our core staff team includes five staff who work to deliver coordinated programs.



Portland Street reconstruction

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2005 Urban Design Awards Announced

In an effort to showcase and celebrate excellence in design on April 29th HRM hosted its 2nd Annual Urban Design Awards. Four categories were identified, including building design: new construction, building design: restoration, elements and amenities, and public open space design. Twenty two submissions were submitted from across the Capital District in all categories. As well, 120 ballots were filled out to designate a "People's Choice" recipient; the one project chosen for having the most dramatic impact on the Capital District of all the submissions.

In addition, this year was the first year for a new category, the Civic Pride Award, where each Business Improvement District within the Capital District developed a process to determine which business, resident or property owner best communicates pride in maintaining the exterior of their property by way of creative landscaping and ongoing maintenance.

Both the Award of Excellence and the Honourable Mention Award in the Building Design: New Construction category were presented to Niall Savage Architecture for the Ceighton Garrish Development and the Music Room on Lady Hammond Road. The Award of Excellence for the Building Design: Restoration, was presented to Janet Morris for Waldon Square, 5415 to 5425 Portland Place with Honourable Mention going to The Henry House Restaurant & Pub.

The Old Triangle Irish Ale House was presented the Award of Excellence in the Elements & Amenities category while Honourable Mention was presented to the Clay Café. Vollick, McKee Petersmann and Associates Ltd. received the Award of Excellence for Public Open Space Design for the restoration of Public Gardens, while Honourable Mention was presented to the Waterfront Development Corporation Limited for the Dartmouth Waterfront Trail.

The votes for People's Choice identified the project team of Vollick McKee Petersmann and Associates Limited for the restoration of Public Gardens.

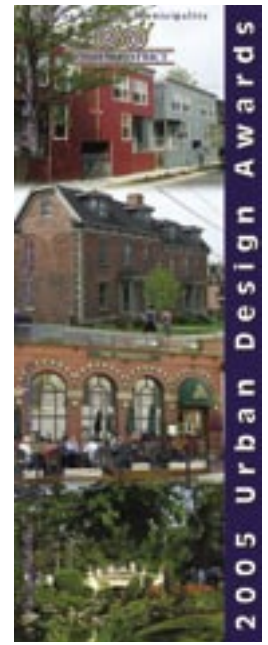
Finally, Civic Pride Awards were presented to Lisa Scott & Toby Balch for 64 Queen Street in Dartmouth; Victor Syperek for 1661-1663 Argyle Street in Halifax; and Scout Canada Nova Scotia Council, 6232 Quinpool Road. On Spring Garden Road two Civic Pride Awards were presented to Jennifer's of Nova Scotia and Mills Brothers. Congratulations to all our winners. For more information on the awards, go to www.halifax.ca/capitaldistrict

HRM Hires Urban Design Project Manager

Good Urban Design is the means by which we ensure that our communities are livable, vibrant and visually attractive places of which we can all be proud. Recognizing this, HRM's Draft Regional Plan emphasizes urban design's important role within the Capital District and throughout the entire Region. To ensure that HRM is able to provide continuing strong Urban Design leadership for development in both the private and public sectors, HRM has hired its first ever Urban Designer. Andy Fillmore, a returning Haligonian, has degrees in architecture and planning from Dalhousie University and a Master's in Urban Design from Harvard University. He has been working in the urban design field for the last thirteen years in the northeastern United States.

One of Andy's priorities will be to lead the development of a region-wide urban design program for HRM. He will also be leading an urban design plan for the regional centre, and planning projects for key public lands in the Capital District.

For more information about HRM's new Urban Design program, or to just share ideas, please contact Andy Fillmore, Urban Design Project Manager, at 490-6495 or at fillmoa@halifax.ca.



Maintenance in the Capital District

FourStream Containers in Public Spaces



As a result of its ongoing commitment to environmental sustainability, HRM has installed new four-source separation receptacles in municipal parks throughout the Capital District.

They provide residents and visitors the opportunity to properly separate organics, recyclables, mixed paper and regular refuse outside the home.

The new program is the result of a partnership between HRM Capital District, HRM Solid Waste Resources and HRM Real Property Asset Management. Financial support was provided by the Nova Scotia Resource Recovery Fund Board.

Eleven four-source separation bins were installed in select park locations throughout the urban core of HRM this spring. Some of these locations will include the Halifax and Dartmouth waterfronts, Grand Parade, Public Gardens and Point Pleasant Park.

The bins, made from 100 per cent recyclable material (plastic milk jugs), which will be emptied three times a week and will be power-washed every month. Other phases of the program later this season include installation of an additional bins in sport fields and right-of-way locations throughout the region.

Enhanced Maintenance

On a yearly basis, Capital District works with HRM departments and area business commissions to focus on improving maintenance efforts, particularly during the high tourist season. A new initiative this year saw 50 new refuse containers which have been installed along the five main commercial streets in the Capital District, including Barrington Street, Spring Garden Road, Quinpool Road, Gottingen Street and Portland Street. HRM Transportation & Public Works along with Parks & Grounds has hired additional employees to address high tourist season maintenance issues in the Capital District, helping to keep the urban core attractive for residents and visitors alike.

Capital District also partnered with HRM Community Response to present a graffiti information session to business and commercial property owners in the urban core in late March. The meeting provided the opportunity for HRM staff to provide information on the growing problem of graffiti as well as identify ways the business community can deal with it and assist in keeping it controlled. In order for clean up efforts to be successful, there must be an integrated approach and commitment to the problem.

HRM along with the five Business Improvement Districts are exploring programs to assist property and business owners eradicate graffiti. The Quinpool Road Mainstreet District Association has been running a very successful program over the past several years which can be used as a model throughout the urban core.

Help Map Soon to Be Available for Distribution

Capital District in partnership with the Business Commissions within the urban centre are developing an information map to be distributed to those on the street in need of support services. The map will be distributed by participating businesses, the business commissions staff and local service agencies. Special thanks to Community Action on Homelessness, Phoenix House, the Help Line and the Salvation Army for helping to compile the information. As the types of services highlighted on the map change frequently, the Capital District will make annual adjustments so it remains up to date. For more information, call 490-6735.

Streetscape Improvements

The streetscape plans for the Capital District are now put into motion with several public space improvements now complete or underway. For example, a pocket park beside the Oxford Theatre on Quinpool is nearing completion. The recent reconstruction of the sidewalks, planter and hard surface areas will soon be complemented with new perennial garden beds, a bus shelter, information kiosk and seating amenities.

Following on the reconstruction of Portland Street from Alderney to King Street, Capital District, is also coordinating the reconstruction of the next two blocks with Transportation and Public Works. This project will follow upon new sidewalk treatment, universal access, planters and site furnishings that were installed last year. It is anticipated that this project will begin this September, finishing by mid October.

In cooperation with HRM Transit, the Capital District is coordinating the reconstruction of the Scotia Square Transit Terminal. In anticipation of the inaugural run of the Bus Rapid Transit line in mid August, this project is currently under construction and will be complete by the end of July. Improvements include improved surface materials, a new enclosed terminal building, and new site furnishings.



The improvements to the Halifax North Memorial Library are now complete with new seating and landscaping. Following on this work, the Capital District is currently running a design competition for a three dimensional sculpture for the plaza platform that was constructed last year. This piece of public art is to be unveiled in Spring 2006.

Stay tuned for more streetscaping improvements including new bike racks installed throughout Capital District.



Around the Capital District

Downtown Halifax

The Downtown Halifax Business Commission and the Barrington Street Historic District Committee are putting the finishing touches on the plan for the designation of HRM's first Historic District. The plan calls for new standards, financial incentives, and investment in the city's traditional main street, in an effort to lead the charge toward commercial revitalization. The plan will be going to Regional Council this Fall, for adoption. For more information, visit www.bringbarringtonback.com

Spring Garden Road & Area

The entire Spring Garden Area is fascinated by the quick and efficient demolition of the Old Halifax Infirmary Hospital . Starting in the Spring, the massive structure formerly ten stories in height has now been systematically reduced to a pile of rubble while that too is now being reduced. The whole area is watching for signs of what is likely to replace the hospital on this 4.7 acre site which is so critical to the future of the Spring Garden Area in particular, but also to the whole Capital District in general . Clearly a healthy and successful Spring Garden Area acts as a draw and a stimulus to the whole Capital District. A recent report to HRM Council detailed the process that would be followed jointly by the Province and the Halifax Regional Municipality which will establish a development strategy for this site but also for a number of adjacent areas which are approaching nine acres in total , making this of huge interest to the development community as well as adjacent property and involved business owners and an ever-increasing residential population.

Downtown Dartmouth

With the recognition that a community's image is an important economic development tool, the main goal of the Urban Design Project is to enhance the physical appearance and image of Downtown Dartmouth in order to attract more local residents and visitors to partake of the services available in the area.

The first phase of this Project was implemented in 2004 on the westerly one-third of Portland Street with the addition of new sidewalks, street resurfacing, gutters, planters, street furniture, and decorative sidewalk inlays. The remaining two-thirds of the Project will be implemented over the next two years, with the next two blocks being completed in the Summer and Fall of 2005. In conjunction with the Urban Design Project, the DDBC has developed a Façade Improvement Incentive Program in consultation with ACOA, GHP, HRDA, OED, and the business community. Phase One of the F.I.I.P., which is the initial design and standards will be publicly tendered this summer. Upon approval of funding, Phase Two of F.I.I.P. is expected to commence during the Winter of 2005-2006.

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