

Re-Invigorating Main Street

Councillor Andrew Younger

Many of my childhood memories include things happening around the Main Street and Tacoma Drive business area. As a kid I was amazed by the shiny metal post boxes in the post office that used to reside next to the bowling alley near the building Shopper's now calls home. The beating of the bass drum every time someone had a birthday at the Ice Cream Factory will likely never leave my head (I still have one of the buttons they used to hand out), and at times it seemed like everyone who went to Prince Andrew High School worked at Canadian Tire's location where the ATCAN storage facility now stands.

But not everything has changed. I tried my hand at becoming a rock star in classes the Canadian Conservatory of Music just like many kids do today, and my first walkman came from Wacky Wheatley's which still holds its place right on Main Street. There remain many popular locations for eating on Main Street too. Full houses still rule the day at the Garden View Restaurant (particularly on Mother's Day and New Year's Eve), and Smitty's remains a tradition for many who stuff the restaurant (and themselves) particularly on weekends. There are many more businesses from the Barber Shop in Tacoma Plaza, to Colour Your World (now ICI Paints), to Glubes, to EP Blighs Television Repair, Westphal Music, Musicstop, and Sobeys who have remained as successful landmarks in the area.

Unquestionably the area has had ups and downs. The widening of Main Street certainly impacted the neighbourhood quality of the area that existed up to the 1980s. It's for this reason that shortly after being elected I sought the approval of council to re-energize Main Street. Council supported this request and over the past two years I have worked with residents and businesses on the Main Street Streetscape project. Many people took the time to attend meetings, fill out surveys, and be part of the action. We have consulted many property owners and held many well attended public meetings about the future redevelopment of properties in the area. Now we're ready for the final stage - to present the plan to the public.

The plan is an exciting one incorporating significant investment over the next few years. It includes many of the ideas suggested by residents and businesses, from tree planting, to traffic changes, to reinventing planning rules. Already council has changed the zoning of the area to allow multi-use redevelopment (residential combined with business) and work to establish a formal Business Improvement District is well underway. With the Regional Plan, council designated the area a district center and hub for transit. Bus service in the area has already been expanded with connections through to Burnside and Portland Estates.

I invite you to come see the plan, and offer your comments. The plan (along with any changes coming from that meeting) will then be presented to Harbour East Community Council the first week of February for endorsement. The meeting will be held on Monday January 14 at Steven's Road United Baptist Church at the intersection of Steven's Road and Tacoma Drive close to Main Street. The meeting begins with an open house at 6pm and a formal presentation of the plan will begin at 7pm. After any changes are incorporated the plan will be posted on my website at www.andrewyounger.ca

The Main Street Business District is about to make a major rebound back to the the important neighbourhood commercial district the City of Dartmouth originally intended when it first established it. Its been a bit of a wait to get the plan finished, but I hope, when you see it, you will agree its been worth the wait.