

Proposal to Change Traffic Patterns in Downtown Halifax

Downtown Halifax, with narrow streets in a tight grid pattern, currently has a mix of one-way and two-way traffic flow. HRM by Design proposed changes to traffic patterns to reduce the number of vehicle travel lanes with the goal of increasing street space available for on-street parking, bike lanes, and other potential uses. The travel lanes eliminated in the plan are not heavily used and modeling

has shown that vehicle travel times will remain mostly unchanged. The plan involves a number of streets that currently have two-way flow being converted to one-ways. This helps to achieve the objective of creating new non-traffic opportunities on the street. The comparison below shows two streets with the same curb-to-curb width but much different non-traffic opportunities.



One-way Street (Prince St)
With a single traffic lane in the middle, there is sufficient room on this street for on-street parking (or other uses) on both sides.



Two-way Street (Sackville St)
With one lane of traffic in each direction, there is insufficient room on this street for anything other than traffic lanes.

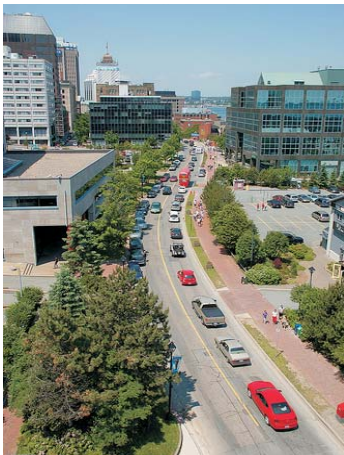
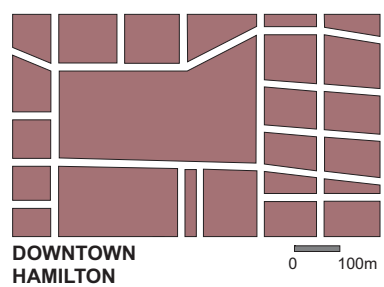


The existing pattern of street flow (top diagram) is inconsistent and patchwork. Seven streets switch from one-way to two-way flow and, in some cases, back again.

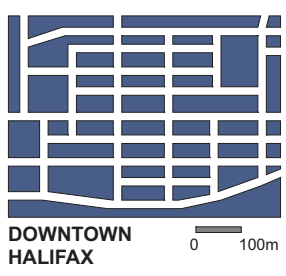
The proposed plan (bottom diagram) strives to achieve more consistency by establishing either one-way or two-way flow for the length of each street.

The key to this plan is creating two major one-way "couplets": Hollis/Lower Water Streets and Prince/Sackville Streets.

== Two-way Street
—> One-way Street



Halifax has a much tighter grid network than other downtowns. This is illustrated on the right with three diagrams of downtowns shown at the same scale. Some cities are converting their one-way streets to two-way to minimize extra travel distance and "backtracking". We believe that the closeness of our downtown streets means that extra travel on one-way streets will not be significant.








◀ Some traffic lanes, like the southbound lane on Lower Water Street are underutilized.

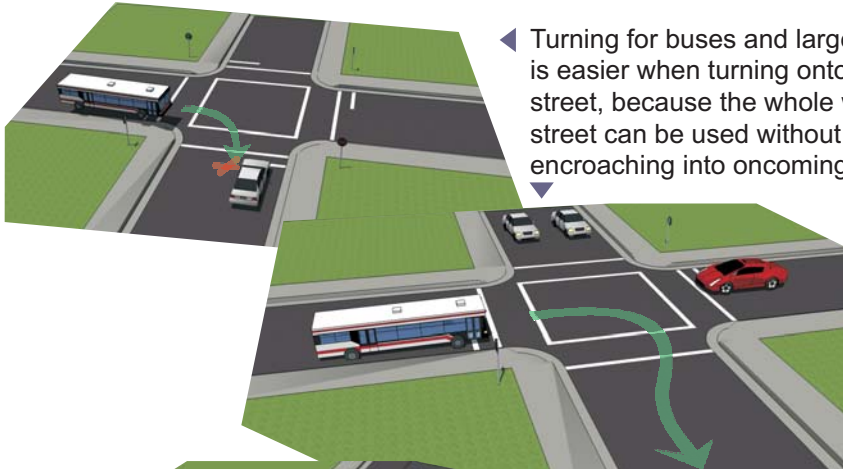
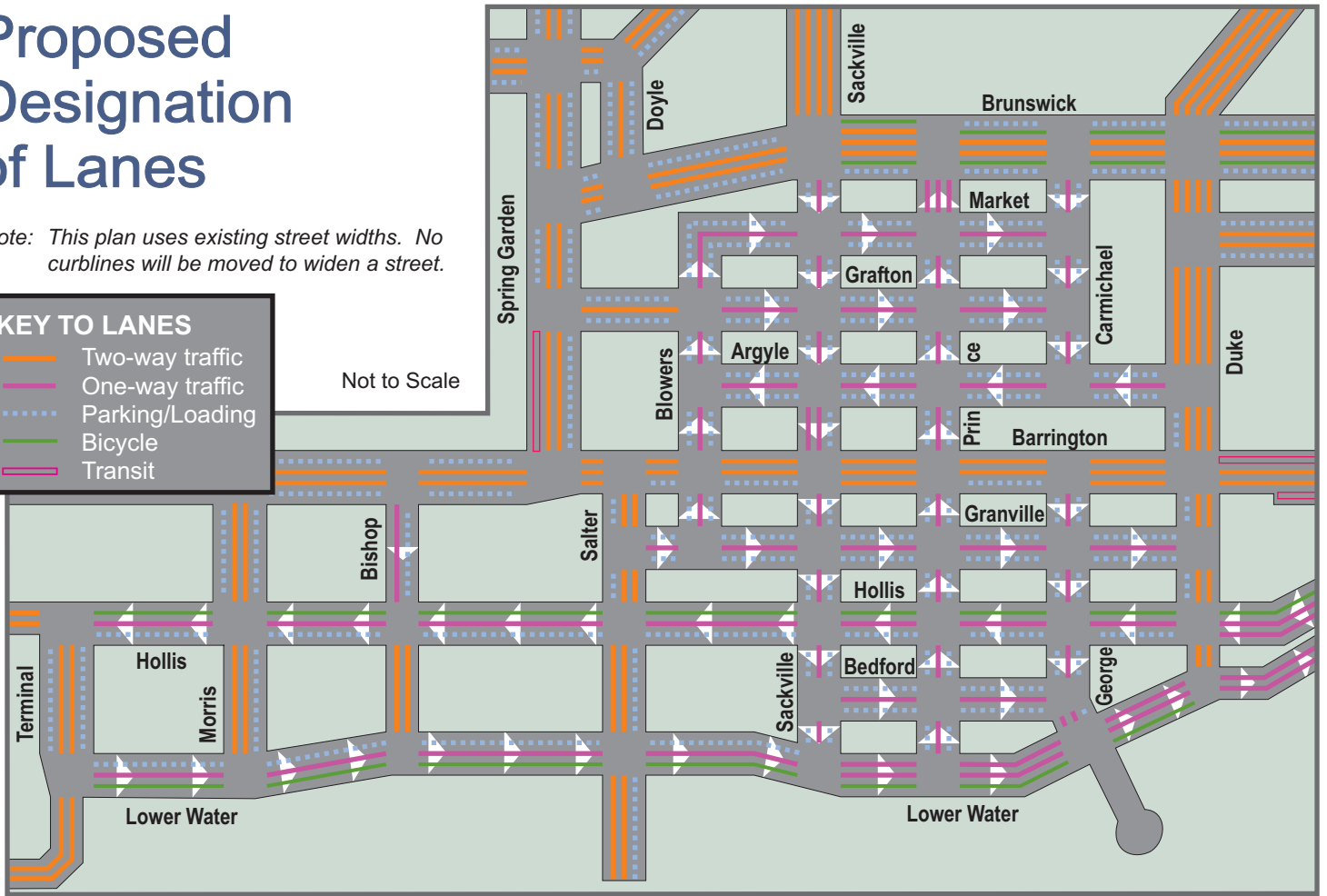
Proposed Designation of Lanes

Note: This plan uses existing street widths. No curblines will be moved to widen a street.

KEY TO LANES

-  Two-way traffic
-  One-way traffic
-  Parking/Loading
-  Bicycle
-  Transit

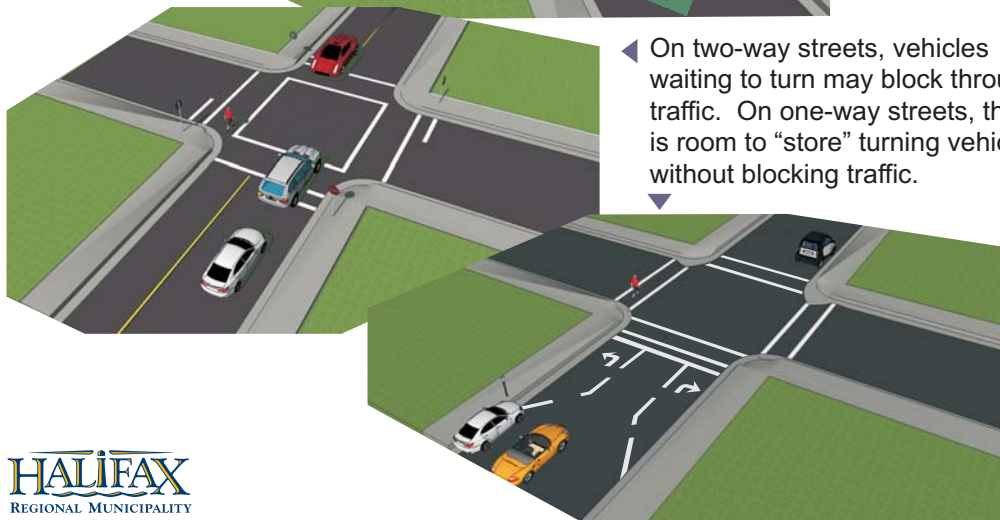
Not to Scale



Turning for buses and larger vehicles is easier when turning onto a one-way street, because the whole width of the street can be used without encroaching into oncoming traffic.



Reallocated street space can be used for on-street parking, sidewalk cafes or other uses. Overall, we expect the plan to create as many as 80 new on-street parking spaces.



On two-way streets, vehicles waiting to turn may block through traffic. On one-way streets, there is room to "store" turning vehicles without blocking traffic.

