

OVERVIEW

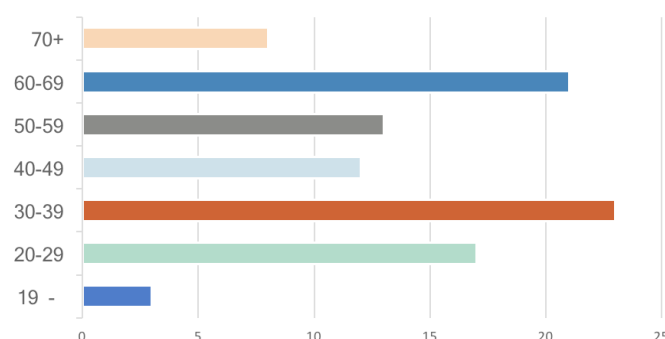
What We Heard at the Halifax Common Public Engagement Launch Event

The first of five public engagement meetings for the Halifax Common master plan was held on December 11, 2017 from 7:00-9:00, at the Atlantica Hotel. This document describes the meeting and the major themes that emerged.

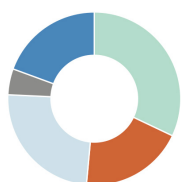
Who Was There

Approximately 200 people attended and were asked to self-identify their postal code and age range. The vast majority of attendees live on the Halifax peninsula. People in their 30s and 60s represented 24% and 23% of attendees, respectively, which is approximately twice the representation of those cohorts in the overall population.

Age of Participants



Home Neighbourhood of Participants



- North End
- West End
- South End
- Downtown
- Elsewhere in the HRM

What Happened

The meeting began with introductory presentations from the Halifax Regional Municipality staff and project consulting team, providing high-level background. Most of the engagement was spent in small-group discussions, structured as two rounds of conversation and recording, framed with guiding questions. Participants were asked to deliberate about shared priorities, and write these down on post-it notes.



BIG THEMES

What We Heard at the Halifax Common Public Engagement Launch Event

What do we need to talk about now, as we begin this planning process?

- Green and Open Space
- Natural Landscaping
- People Places
- Equitable Access
- The Whole Common
- Integration with Context
- Pedestrian and Bike Experiences
- Indoor Spaces and Shelter
- Limiting Imposing Structures
- Inclusive Process
- Good Process
- Action on Implementation

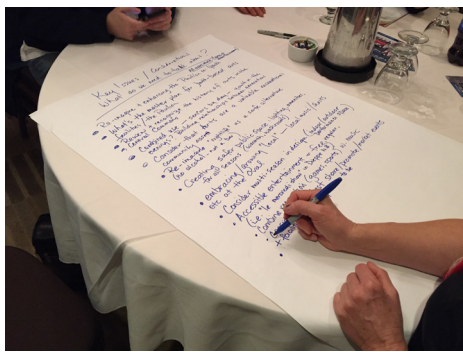
How might the Common best serve your needs and the needs of our growing city?

- Animated Public Space
- Recreation Infrastructure & Activities
- Sense of Connection
- Minimize Development
- Diversity and Inclusivity
- Multigenerational and Family Focus
- Naturalization
- Grow Food
- Food and Vending
- Safety
- Water Features
- Arts and Events



PHOTOGRAPHS

What We Heard at the Halifax Common Public Engagement Launch Event



Appendix One: Raw Input from Small Group Conversation

The input from small group conversations was created through dialogue among public meeting participants. Each statement represents a priority that were shared by small groups of people, and written on a Post-it. These statements have been transcribed directly and organized by theme.

ROUND ONE QUESTION

“What do we need to talk about now, as we begin this planning process?”

Green and Open Space

Built infrastructure vs open space - how much is built? - how much is open? Can land be reclaimed?
Can private institutions adopt similar institutional plan?
Is there any part of the Common not open for development?
No more loss of land to anything
No net loss of green space
No more walls on perimeter of common (high rises)
Aesthetically pleasing, welcoming, safe
Protect what we love about the commons → open, vast expanse of space
What is open space vs green space? Define

Natural Landscaping

Naturalization of landscape including more trees and daylighting the brook
More trees (North Common)
Natural Environment. Beautification and Naturalization
Eco-landscaping
Plant trees for the shade and eliminate noise on North Side of Common

People Places

What is public space? Specific uses, open to interpretation, accommodates diverse interests
Outdoor open space with benches
For passive enjoyment benches looking inward/ not at the traffic
Outdoor open space with benches
More flexible space with less defined boundaries and greater open space
Reserving/reclaiming open flexible space

Equitable Access

Maximizing diversity of users attracted
Making sure it remains inclusive and accessible 4 public
Accessibility - Who? Everyone - When? - open green space - prioritize walking and cycling
Public space to “chill out” for teens = safe space = breaking down barriers e.g central library as inspiration

Encourage intergenerational interaction / promote inclusivity / accessibility for all ages, abilities, background
Space for indigenous communities
Multi use accessibility for all
Integrated accessible facilities

The Whole Common

Need to talk about entire Common (to South Street)
Access more common land - reclamation - reduce restricted access areas
How do we preserve + protect the open space that we have now, and how do we plan to reclaim build upon common land and revert it back to open space?
Take back the urban garden and CBC building
Cohesive

Integration with Context

Adjacent land use. Consider use of institutions nearby as well as their plans
The Common as a whole (cohesiveness) - it's place in the city. What's our relationship to this space? How does it enhance city life?
Connectivity between the various parts of the Common and adjoining parks is important
Connectivity among parts of the Common
Connectivity to other open/green space in the city

Pedestrian and Bike Experiences

Look at the desire lines and sort out the pedestrian and bike path network. Organize the public space around this network
Connectivity as a pedestrian Linkage
Develop and Improve integrated multi-modal transportation
Colour connectivity solar powered walk ways

Indoor Spaces and Shelter

Protection from the elements
Building with an amphitheatre
Indoor/ outdoor performance spaces with natural and multi-season design (e.g. The Pavilion music venue) + workshop space (ARTS)

Limiting Imposing Structures

No tall buildings which would restrict views and sun
Look at impact of buildings around the Common / along streetscapes
Keep shadows of high building off all public open spaces. Protect sky view!

Inclusive Process

Jane Jacobs "Build for everybody" Who must be/will be consulted with to ensure this (what groups?)
How do we include the most amount of people in this process? From diverse areas and groups (e.g. Uniacke, Friendship Centre). Users vs non Users
Recognizing Indigenous history and land. Involving in every decision. Incorporating throughout
Inclusion / Access: Make process inclusive with representation from all
How is consultation inclusive and who's involved
Connotation of the word "master" in master planning. Sexist and colonialist.

Good Process

What is our role as the public input? Do we have input in all aspects and stages? Why the pool?
What do we value? - non negotiable current features - how much can we add
What can we take for the 1994 Plan?
Examine what is working and what isn't
Data gathering - understanding microclimate - current use / formal and informal use
Best practices and examples from other cities

Action on Implementation

How will the plan be implemented and how will we "police" the plan once agreed?
How will the plan be integrated into current city plans. What did we learn from the '94 plan?
Relationship between 1994 plan and a future plan
Implementable, measurable, trust, openness to change
Accountability, longevity, doesn't go the way of the 1994 plan
Works with the Common vision for the city and diversifies the draw / appeal

Outliers

Respect and maintain current use and value of cemetery while improving its amenities
Pool - bigger, deeper and wading pool
Canada game diamond renovation and upkeep
Consider that arts are a valuable recreational community asset for diverse community
Community fundraising on site instead of private enterprise eg. selling hot chocolate
Provision of significant and affordable housing in exciting and new buildings
No to pop up stadium

ROUND TWO QUESTION

"How might the Common best serve your needs and the needs of our growing city?"

Animated Public Space

Victoria Park as a focal gathering place
Animate Space: refuge, animated street, enjoy time outside, 10 things to do
Encourages people to be active and social
Bring some features of Victoria Park and Public Gardens
Animate Street
Commons Calendar website/app to inform the public of activities and events on the common
Interactive features!
More things to do
Public amenities like washroom/seating/drinking fountains

Recreation Infrastructure & Activities

Variety, activities for all seasons, topography - add more variety/levels of interest
Get more people using it and encourage more physical activity
Outdoor exercise (wooden stations)
Structure for unstructured play (hopscotch, 4-square, basketball, backgammon, seating, pizza oven or covered BBQ space)
Multiple opportunities for fitness (sport/recreation)
Expand open spaces for families, picnics, sports, walking, benches, bathroom

Sense of Connection

Thresholds/entrance connections

Incorporate the natural pedestrian paths

Getting from A to B in an enjoyable environment, ie. articulated paths

Footpath, signage, wayfinding, linkages

Expand the common link connections to all common areas

Quality hardscaping a place to be proud of

Upholding quality of life, connectivity among paths of common

Minimize Development

No more buildings

Clarify how commons plan will develop alongside with local and adjacent construction and development (ex. High rises and major streets)

Don't overdevelop - enhance existing structures, promote natural growth/features

Maintain and enhance aesthetic beauty in city centre and activity that is essentially communal and welcoming

Protecting and expanding the common and adjacent streets

Open space, preservation of lawn (green space without trees) - should reflect the history of the common

Minimizing infrastructure, coordinating programs

Diversity and Inclusivity

Accessibility for all - keep activities free and inclusive

Ongoing + inclusive consultation w/ low income folks, Indigenous folks, African Nova Scotian folks

Destination for diverse users

Direct the plan towards the youth and help make recreation available, ie. low income access to recreation

Keep use flexible and accessible, serving needs today and in the future given changing demographics

Design that takes into account multicultural influences, is. Mi'kmaq, Acadian, African NS and feels welcoming to youth

Keep accessible - no financial barriers

Multigenerational and Family Focus

Family friendly - having children around changes people's behaviour, creates vibrant, safe spaces

Multifunctional, multigenerational spaces

Considerations for different age groups

Flexibility and multigenerational use

Opportunities for recreation and learning across generations

Foster intergenerational relations through ongoing shared artistic experiences, ie. workshops that encourage individuality

Naturalize

Refuge

Place to enjoy time outside

Shaded natural space

Natural environment: experimental naturalization, tree/plant species selection, Max natural services, reduce gas, cutting emission

Establish Acadian forest arboretum at Museum of Natural History

Maximize outdoor experiences - get people outdoors

Value in recognizing current water paths and developing plans for natural water drainage and irrigation

Create an oasis - complete contrast to hard, noisy, busy "city life. Ex. Wood chip pathways
Bring back nature

Grow Food

Permanent Common Agricultural Site

Continue to support urban farming on the common

Maintain the urban farm, Common Roots

Food and Vending

Encourages places to eat and lounge (coffee shops, ice cream kiosks, etc.)

Add small businesses to activate (kiosks, food vendors, markets, fairs, etc.)

Safety

Safety for passage and use. Are you comfortable here? Lighting, activity

Better, safe bathrooms

Change it to be the safest places in the city (lighting, security) for the youth

Safety feeling - not feeling of security guards/police, less fences more lights, bathroom attendants?

Open space, paths

Water Features

Access to water in a variety of ways - free the fountain!

More water features, ie. fountains

Arts and Events

Spaces/uses/public art that are an expression of the different communities who use the commons

Space for special events, ex. Multicultural events, concerts, street hockey - all free!

Active arts incubator spaces that encourage entrepreneurial spirit and development of the creative economy

Outliers

Snow removal

Retain the horse stable

Indicators and targets - users per day, diversity of uses, time spent, # people who linger

That the plan is actually implemented

Canada Games Diamond renovation and upkeep. Halifax Minor Baseball Use

Experimenting with uses of space

Appendix Two: Raw Input on the Aquatic Area

The pavilion, wading pool, and outdoor swimming pool are being renewed, and participants were asked what they would like to see as a part of the new outdoor aquatic area. The aquatic area input (Section 2) was generated from short written questionnaire responses and open-format polling on display boards.

AQUATIC AREA QUESTIONS

**What would you like to be able to do at the new aquatic area?
Are there any specific features you would like to see?**

Lap Swimming

Swim laps
Swim training (laps)
Swim laps + recreationally
Adult swim - open swim or in lanes on a hot summer day. I live in the neighbourhood.
Lane swimming
Lap swimming
Lanes

Children Swim & Play

Take kids to play
Safe play for kids
Take small children to play in water
For the children
Build in a water course feature that kids can play in and manipulate (ie. redirect the water, dam the water, etc.)

Multigenerational

Take small grandchildren and participate with them OR supervise without getting wet
Spray play with picnic area for families nearby. Areas for young kids, toddlers and adult use.
Share the space with different ages
Going swimming

Wading Pool

Wading pool should remain and be maintained
Keep the wading pool but maintain it, it was once very popular and well used, but staff have just forgotten about it
Wading pool for hot days
Relax, wander through water, enjoy getting wet in a natural environment
Keep the wading pool and great family facility (spray, etc.) No elaborate equipment - keep it simple
Maintain and take care of wading pool
Wading pool is important

Cool off without “going swimming”
Maintained as it once was
Fix the wading pool

Swimming Lessons

Swimming lessons for all ages
Host lifeguard / CPR courses
Affordable lessons
Competition

Various Depths

Different levels/areas
8 lanes
25 meter
Gradual grade
More depth

Bath and Change Rooms

Change rooms
Clean
Bathrooms
Self-cleaning bathrooms accessible year round, 24/7
Open, accessible washrooms, safety!

Wait for Master Plan

I would like any decisions about the pool or the pavillion until after the full master plan process complete
Wait for a plan, no more building!
This should go next to Centennial Pool and expand the Common. This should not be determined as a priority until the public consultation complete
Nothing until there is a plan. Put this in stage 2
Why are we talking about a pool's amenities when we've not decided to have a big pool?

Confusion around Centennial Pool

Do not replace Centennial Pool
Keep is as a wading pool, don't duplicate the centennial pool, maintain what we have
Coordinate swimming with centennial pool and “hop in the harbour” at Bishop's Landing
Maintain the wading pool! Where did the idea of a swimming pool come from? Use Centennial

All Ages Music Venue

Live music venue
Educational programs
Music venue outdoor/indoor
Keep the music venue/arts venue alive
Youth engagement is not just sports

Outliers

Relax

Keep it!

Free, bathing suits available similar to skates available at the oval

See more natural water on common

Natural

Flexible outdoor space that has seating options, outdoor grill

Get rid of the parking lot and landscape it with picnic tables and drinking fountain

Expand green space to include Cogswell and put outdoor ____ over there

Trees shade and sun

Cross country ski trails in the winter

Low/no cost

Preferred aquatic area design characteristics:

Sloped beach entry at shallow end

Naturalized swimming pool

Sense of connection between wet and dry areas

Waterplay with spray from below

Amenities like lockers and water fountains located outdoors

Preferred words to describe how the aquatic area should be:

Multi-functional

All ages

Youth focused

Safe

Flexible

Multi season

Natural material

Beautiful

Barrier free

Energy efficient

Integrated

Relaxing

Playful

Colourful