ATTACHMENT A

HALIFAX COMMON MASTER PLAN

Final Plan
August 2021

Prepared by

COLAB HTFC PLANNING + DESIGN UPLAND

Halifax Common
Master Plan

Final Plan
August 2021

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This report was prepared by
HTFC Planning & Design, UPLAND Planning & Design and CoLab, in association with RHAD Architecture, Aquatic Design & Engineering, CBCL Limited, Davis McIntyre & Associates, and Wendy Shearer Consulting.

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INDIGENOUS LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We would like to acknowledge that we are in Mi'kma'ki the ancestral and traditional lands of the Mi'kmaq people. The Halifax Regional Municipality acknowledges the Peace & Friendship Treaties signed in this Territory between the British Crown and the Mi'kmaq from 1752 to 1769 and recognizes that we are all Treaty People and have rights and responsibilities as Mi'kmaq and settlers alike.

The Halifax Common is located in the Mi'kmaq District of Sipekne'katik.

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2021 MASTER PLAN UPDATE

This master planning process commenced in late 2017, with work proceeding through 2018 and 2019. Most of the findings and recommendations are based on observations, public input, and data from that period.

Due to various factors, most notably the COVID-19 pandemic, the last round of revisions and release of the final report has been delayed for over a year. As a result, there have been new developments and changes that are worth noting.

This health crisis has also heightened for many the value of public open space, and offered a glimpse into what the Halifax Common could look like with increased opportunities for unstructured activity (see photos on following pages).

Other notable changes include:

1. Upgraded Booking System
In an effort to improve transparency and equitable access to field time, the Municipality has launched a new online system for booking playing fields and registering for recreation programs. The Municipality is also planning a review of allocation procedures through a Playing Field Strategy.

2. Washrooms and Drinking Fountains Plan
The Municipality's recently adopted Washrooms and Drinking Fountains plan provides guidance over the location and types of facilities than should be provided, including an emphasis on gender neutral and accessibility.

3. Roadway Upgrades
This includes the redesign of the intersection at Robie Street and Cunard, which improves pedestrian safety and provides more public space at that corner.

4. QEII New Generation - Master Plan
The QEII New Generation Master Plan determines what the largest health care project in Nova Scotia history will look like and where services will be delivered.

5. Museum of Natural History Parking Structure
The Province, as landowner, has tendered a new parking structure for the QEII hospital on the property north of the Museum.

6. Peninsula South Complete Streets Project
As part of the HRM Active Transportation Plan this project explores functional design and streetscape options for an AAA (All Ages and Abilities) multi-modal transportation connection between Oxford Street and Lower Water Street. The University Avenue section of the new connection traverses the Halifax Common district between South Park Street and Robie Street.

7. Camp Hill Cemetery
The cemetery is currently being considered for heritage registration under the *Heritage Property Act* of Nova Scotia. An application for heritage registration was made in the Spring of 2021.

8. Bus Rapid Transit Strategy
In May 2020, Regional Council adopted the Rapid Transit Strategy that will implement direct bus routes along Robie Street and Spring Garden Road providing fast, frequent service to destinations within the Halifax Common district.



With pandemic restrictions on structured sports uses, Haligonians found new ways to enjoy the expanses of lawn and distanced company of others on the Common. Summer, 2020.

1 INTRODUCTION



1.1 Significance of the Halifax Common

1.2 Purpose of This Plan

1.3 Planning Approach

1.4 How to Use This Document

1.5 Meaning and Relationship of Policies, Actions, and Illustrative Plans

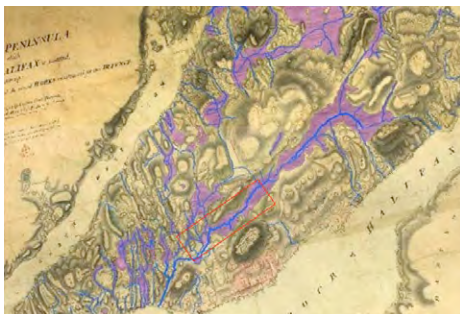
1.6 Glossary of Terms

1.1 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HALIFAX COMMON

Since its earliest inhabitation by the Mi'kmaq people, the Halifax Common has a long history that contributes to the unique identity of the region. It has been at the heart of civic life in Halifax since the establishment of defined boundaries in 1763. It is a special historic and contemporary place, recognized for its facilities and open spaces, and is highly valued by the community. The form, function and variety of activities have undergone constant evolution, to continuously be a relevant public space "for the use" of the people.

Historic British town commons were an unfenced area of grass on the edge of the community set aside for all to use, typically for grazing livestock but also at times serving as a town square or village green. Halifax's common followed this model – it was established outside the defended core of the old settlement as communal pastureland, and over time took on additional civic functions. Municipal park space appeared, offering retreats from city life and healthful recreation in the form of the Halifax Public Gardens and Wanderers Grounds amateur athletics area. Other lands were allotted to roadways, institutions and residences. The current collection of significant heritage resources includes archaeological evidence, buildings, structures and landscape features, each attesting to changing needs and philosophies of public service and the priorities of the period. The resultant diversity of uses contributes to a vibrant and richly layered city centre.

Today, the Halifax Common contains the largest contiguous non-wilderness open space in the region's urban core, a major public parkland that serves a range of functions. It holds important neighbourhood parks, where leisure time, commutes, childcare and other routines play out among nearby residents. But the Halifax Common also provides open space for the wider community, with numerous recreation amenities and features that are a part of service delivery for "the people of Halifax" in a broader sense. As densification of the urban centre continues, open space and free community amenities become progressively precious, and the Halifax Common's importance as a largely publicly owned treasure in the middle of a bustling city stands only to grow.



Wetlands (purple) and streams (blue) on Charles Blaskowitz's 1784 map, based on research and analysis by Mike Reid, 2012. The approximate location of the Common is bounded in red.



Children playing on the Egg Pond, dated to roughly 1923. Note the stone retaining wall with a north-facing opening directed towards an unidentified building.



The Common Roots Urban Farm, operating a community garden adjacent to the Halifax Infirmary, at the corner of Cogswell and Robie Streets, in 2018.

Halifax Common Boundary

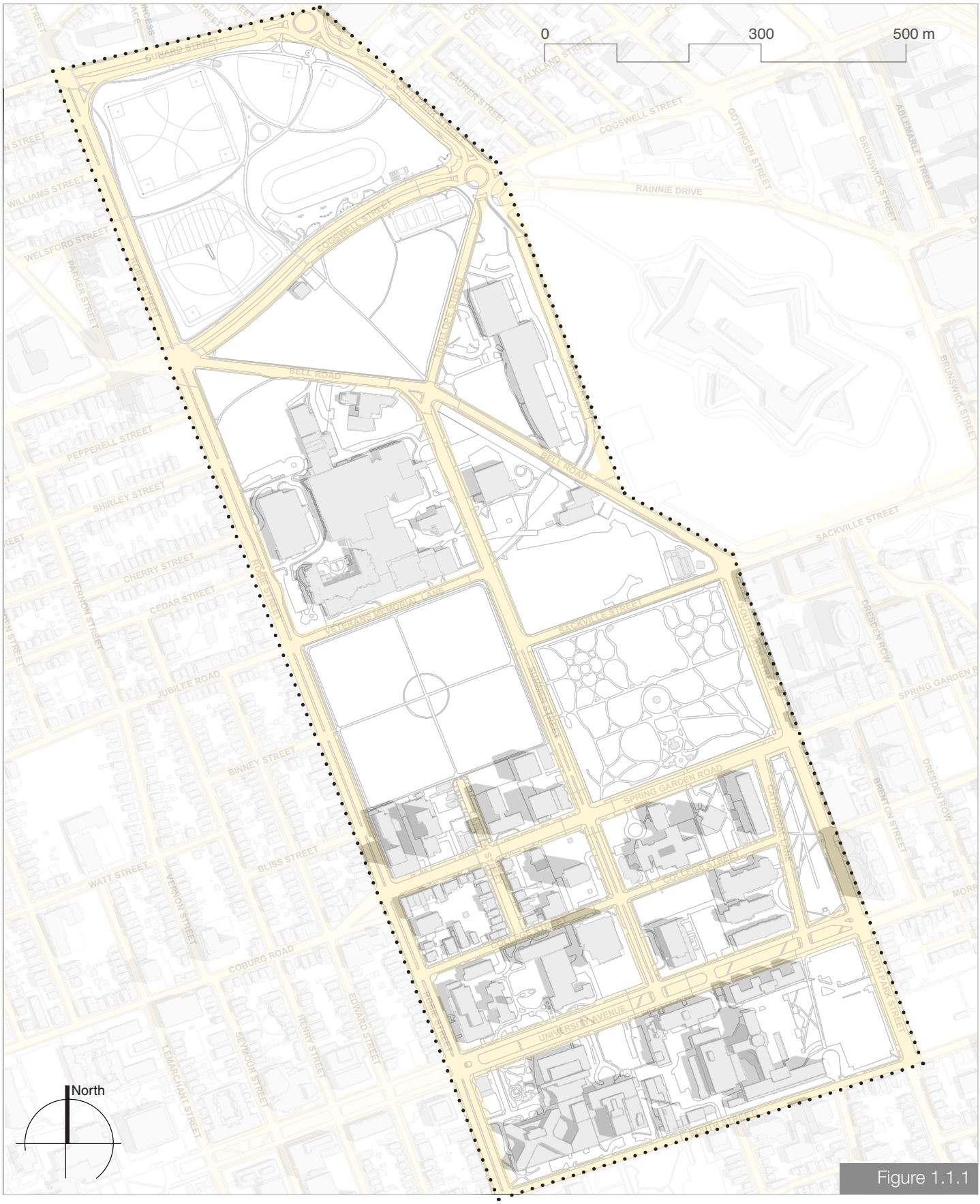


Figure 1.1.1

1.2 PURPOSE OF THIS PLAN

As pressures for use mount, the time has come, in our current contemporary context, to ask how the Halifax Common public open spaces can best serve the community. Public open spaces include all the municipal parks, the Halifax Public Gardens, Camp Hill Cemetery, the Wanderers Grounds, the streets, as well as the public spaces on institutional lands within the Halifax Common.

The Halifax Common Master Plan seeks to answer important questions about how this major public open space is used and managed:

- Are our shared values being reflected in the policies, uses and spatial design? What are those values?
- Who is the Halifax Common for?
- How do we identify, protect and celebrate significant cultural and historic elements of the Halifax Common?

The purpose of the planning and policy document is to:

- Build upon the Halifax Common's strengths and unique assets as a significant regional public open space;
- Address current and anticipated issues, needs, and opportunities for the next 20 years;
- Guide the decisions of the municipality and institutions; and,
- Identify important considerations for other planning documents such as municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws.

There are two levels of planning:

- Broad strategies for the entire Halifax Common that address high-level goals and objectives for all public open spaces, including both municipal and other publicly owned lands; and,
- Site-specific guidance for renewal and continued management of the municipal lands for the next 20 years. This includes conceptual site plans and more detailed actions and design guidance, and provides direction for future improvements while still allowing for flexibility in design and implementation.

1.3 PLANNING APPROACH

There are many ways to analyze the future of the Halifax Common, and each lens has been as important as another. The Master Plan process required attention to layers of other strategic policies and directives of the Halifax Regional Municipality, the plans of major stakeholder institutions, site opportunities and constraints, quantitative needs assessment, proven practices, inspiring or emerging innovations, and the perspectives of the public.

Additionally, the Master Plan process has involved points of view from a wide range of disciplines, such as heritage, transportation, recreation, and architecture. In order to realize the best possible outcomes these various interests and ambitions have been carefully balanced.



1.4 HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

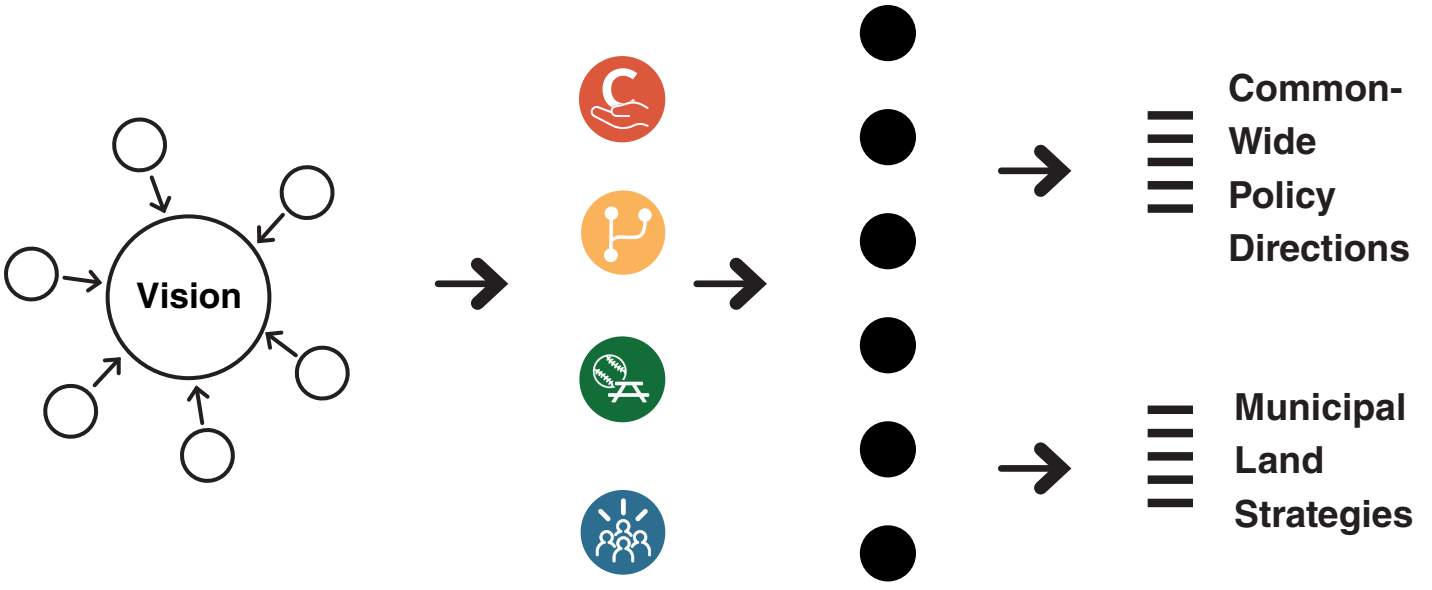
This document is structured to enable a clear understanding of how the overarching vision leads to specific policies, actions and design concepts. The plan is divided into the following Chapters:

Background
Chapter 2 outlines the location, physical and human setting, history, land use, and open space characteristics of the Halifax Common from a broad perspective. It also reviews the public consultation that was undertaken and culminates in the identification of themes and directions for the plan.

Approach
Chapter 3 is comprised of a Vision Statement, Vision Goals, and Guiding Principles, which describe the aspirations and values captured during the development of the plan. These are broad statements about the nature and intentions for the Halifax Common district. Specific goals are further outlined in the subsequent chapters of the plan.

District-Wide Policy Directions
Chapter 4 considers many of the open space characteristics, contributing factors, and key themes that are identified in the Background Chapter in greater detail. It identifies key considerations and subsequent policy directions to guide future decisions, and actions to be undertaken to protect and improve the open space areas within the Halifax Common district.

Municipal Land Strategies
Chapter 5 is specific to municipal open space areas, the parkland of the Halifax Common, and is comprised of plans that illustrate possible open space and facility improvements. Design and programming management guidance statements are also included.



1.5 MEANING AND RELATIONSHIP OF POLICIES, ACTIONS AND ILLUSTRATIVE PLANS

This plan is different from many open space master plans, which typically focus on open space improvement ideas and plans. While this plan has these attributes, much of its focus is on how to respond to possible change. Almost from its inception, the Halifax Common has been subject to constant pressures of often competing ideas and projects to change the nature of open space on the Halifax Common.

This plan establishes policies, actions, and illustrative plans, which are described as follows:

Policy Directions
The policies within this plan represent the municipality's position on open space management within the Halifax Common district. They are guiding statements that are to be considered in evaluating or undertaking projects. As they relate to municipal governance, decisions relating to open space that are within the purview of the municipality should be consistent with the policies of the plan.

Actions
Various actions are presented throughout the plan. Certain actions outline ways in which policies might be implemented, while others direct programs or projects to improve open space management or areas. It is recognized that priorities and opportunities for improvements may evolve over time. Therefore, actions are not mandatory.

Design and Program Guidance
Design and programming recommendations are presented in Chapter 5 as guidance for future capital improvements planning and programming of the Municipal Open Space Areas. They are intended as considerations for further investigations.

Illustrative Plans
The plan contains illustrative site plans and text descriptions for most to the Municipal Open Space Areas that describe prospective improvements and concepts that have been identified in the plan. They are illustrative (conceptual) in nature and subject to change.

1.6 GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Certain terms are regularly used through this plan and for the purposes of this plan have the following meanings:

Active Recreation Areas are municipal open space areas that are designed for recreation activities that require specialized parkland development or purpose-built facilities as their primary function. Examples include playing fields, sport courts and playgrounds.

Active Transportation is human-powered, personal travel chosen as an alternative to motorized travel. It includes walking, running, hiking, the use of a wheelchair, bicycling, cross-country skiing, skateboarding, canoeing, rowing, and kayaking.

Associated Area is the area of the west side of Citadel Hill that is under the management of Parks Canada, as shown on Figure 4.1.1.

Cultural Landscapes are defined by the *Heritage Property Act* of Nova Scotia to mean a distinct geographical area or property uniquely representing the combined work of nature and of people.

Halifax Common means the approximate area of the historic Halifax Common within the original 1763 grant, as now defined by streets, and including those streets, as shown on maps within this plan.

Halifax Common District refers to the recognition of the Halifax Common for planning purposes.

Institutional Open Space Areas are open space areas within the Halifax Common district that are under the ownership or control of other levels of government or institutions and that may be accessed by the public.

Municipal Heritage Property means a building, public building interior, streetscape, cultural landscape, or area registered in a municipal registry of heritage property. A Municipal Registry of Heritage Property is similar to the Provincial Registry. The main difference is that it lists properties that have heritage value on a local or community level. Properties may be on both municipal and provincial registries. Once properties are added to the list, they are protected under the *Heritage Property Act.*

Municipal Open Space Areas are parks and open spaces within the Halifax Common that are owned or under management of the municipality.

National Historic Sites (NHS) are sites that are recognized for their cultural and heritage significance at a national level. They are listed in the Canadian Register of Historic Places.

North Common and Central Common or ***North and Central Commons*** are the municipal parkland parcels commonly thought of as the "Halifax Common", which this Plan defines as the entire geographic area of the historic Halifax Common.

Passive Recreation Areas are municipal open space areas for recreation activities that do not require purpose-built facilities and emphasize the green space aspect of a park as their primary function. Examples include fitness trails and paths, open lawns, gardens and naturalized areas.

Provincial Heritage Property means a building, public-building interior, streetscape, cultural landscape, or area registered in the Provincial Registry of Heritage Property. Once properties are added to the list, they are protected under the *Heritage Property Act*.

Standards and Guidelines refers to the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada, 2nd Edition, a benchmark for heritage conservation practice in Canada that sets out conservation principles and guidelines for heritage building conservation and for conservation of cultural landscapes, including heritage districts and archaeological sites. The municipality has adopted the Standards and Guidelines for assessing proposed conservation interventions on historic properties and within Heritage Conservation Districts.

Structured Activities are play activities that are organized and characterized by the booking of space or facilities for the exclusive use of an individual or a group.

Unstructured Activities are play activities that are self-directed or loosely organized, such as pick-up games, that does not include the booking of space or facilities.

2 BACKGROUND



2.1 Overview of The Halifax Common
2.2 Recreation Needs Assessment
2.3 Physical Attributes
2.4 Public Consultation
2.5 Key Findings

2.1 OVERVIEW OF THE HALIFAX COMMON

Heritage Significance

The Halifax Common is a continually evolving cultural heritage landscape with a long and rich history evident in the many heritage resources found throughout its boundaries, but also in its original use by the Mi'kmaq people. In general, each period of activity builds on earlier activities by removing, altering or adding to earlier layers. For example, the original condition of the Halifax Common was a thin soiled, swampy, wooded area with several small watercourses crossing it. Slowly, this early character was changed with the harvesting of the trees and filling and regrading of the land.

The Halifax Common continues to be a location for institutional uses for health care and education and for recreational activities, both structured and unstructured. These varied uses support social benefits for the community. It is defined by the historic street grid, now lined with street trees, creating a unifying effect around the original survey of 95 hectares established in 1763. The Halifax Common makes a significant contribution to the identity of the neighbourhoods that surround it and to the larger region since it contains one of the largest flat, green, open spaces in the area that can accommodate temporary uses for civic celebrations and special events.

The density and visual character of the Halifax Common varies dramatically from the north to the south end with the majority of the recent large scale buildings located in the central area and the south. This pattern follows the 19th century creation of lots along Spring Garden Road that established private residential development within the boundary of the Halifax Common. The creation of the Dalhousie University campus and other health care complexes located primarily in the south end began in the 19th century and continues.

The North Common is a significant flat green space defined by the perimeter streets and used for public recreational activities, both structured and unstructured. Views across the Common land are open since vegetation is mostly limited to the perimeter street trees and small ornamental plantings at the entrances.

The Central Common is similarly a flat green space defined by a street layout lined with street trees. A concentration of active recreation areas are found in this area continuing a pattern dating to the early 20th century.

The area south of Bell Road contains most of the built heritage resources including the properties of the Halifax Junior Bengal Lancers (Halifax Lancers), 1606 Bell Road (Power House), the Museum of Natural History, the Wanderers Grounds and the designed landscapes of the Public Gardens National Historic Site, Camp Hill Cemetery, Victoria Park, and the municipally registered Carlton Street Victorian Streetscape.

The heritage values of the Halifax Common are in its long-standing use by the community and its transformation from communal pasture to maintained parkland. Its heritage resources come from various time periods and they represent past beliefs, styles and priorities.

Open Space Character

Much of the Halifax Common is characterized by an extensive variety of mature deciduous trees. They are abundant on streets boulevards, along edges of open spaces, and in large stands, creating a pleasant leafy canopy in the summer months. A variety of species and commemorative plantings are present in the Public Gardens and Camp Hill Cemetery. Many of these trees are aging, and will require continuous replacement in order to maintain tree cover throughout the Halifax Common.

Intensive horticultural plantings are concentrated in the Public Gardens. Other horticultural plantings are clustered at the roundabout gateways at the North Common, at the Oval pavilion, and Victoria Park.

Grassy, wide open space interspersed by trees, buildings and other landscape features is the primary vegetative component of the Wanderers Grounds and the North and Central Common.

The network of public green spaces of the Halifax Common creates a dense, albeit somewhat disconnected, pattern of open spaces in the heart of the Halifax peninsula. In its entirety, this open space pattern distinctly differentiates the Halifax Common from much of its surrounding densely built up residential areas.

Circulation

A network of formal and informal pedestrian routes exists throughout the whole Halifax Common. Many of the streets have wide sidewalks, there are paved multi-use pathway routes in Victoria Park, the North and Central Common, and crushed gravel pathways meander through the Public Gardens and cross Camp Hill Cemetery.

A set of informal dirt pathways traverse the North Common, representing the most direct pedestrian and cyclist routes from the northwestern corner of the Halifax Common toward downtown Halifax. A steady flow of people walking or cycling can be observed on these paths throughout the morning and afternoon weekday commutes. People also cross throughout the day for daily trips and errands. Depending on the weather conditions, the surfaces of these informal routes can be wet or icy, creating unsuitable conditions for individuals with limited mobility.

Pedestrian entrance ways are clearly delineated at the North and Central Common, at the Public Gardens, and at two sides of Camp Hill Cemetery. Informal and unresolved entry points are also being used on the North and Central Common. In the south part of the Halifax Common, institutional development has formed hard edges that limit entrance ways and serve to relegate pedestrians to linear movement along sidewalks.

Formal on-street bicycle routes intersect the Halifax Common and provide north-south connections via Bell Road and South Park Street and via Trollope/Ahern and North Park Street. Links to these routes are made from throughout the peninsula and sometimes across the multi-use pathways of the North Common, as a route to and from the downtown.

Major vehicle and transit arterials are present throughout the Halifax Common. Off-street parking on the Halifax Common is primarily associated with institutional or residential land uses. Users of the municipally-owned open spaces largely rely on on-street parking around the Halifax Common perimeter or in surrounding residential neighbourhoods.

Recreation Destinations

The Halifax Common District has a significant amount of open space, both within the scope of local parks and as a regional recreation destination with a wide variety of open space functions. Other regionally significant open spaces generally have fewer existing features and amenities as compared to the Halifax Common. Together with the Dartmouth Common, the Halifax Common is the largest contiguous, non-wilderness, open space in the region's urban core.

The Halifax Common is also a component of a distinct cluster of other important regional public destinations located in close proximity. These include Citadel Hill National Historic Site, the YMCA and the Mi'kmaq Friendship Centre—both the existing location and the proposed new location.

The Halifax Common is home to a number of regionally significant recreation amenities. The Oval plays host to participants that visit from throughout the municipality, and the Halifax Public Gardens is a keystone destination of downtown Halifax. On a temporary basis, the North Common and Central Common are venues for special events, such as festivals, tournaments, or concerts that attract attendees from throughout the region and beyond.

In comparison to the rest of the urban centre, the Halifax Common has a very high concentration of ball diamonds. The Halifax Common is also home to the only public outdoor swimming pool, and one of six splash pads in the urban centre.

Events and Bookings

The Halifax Common municipal open spaces are a premier location in the region for hosting events that draw participants and spectators reaching from the municipality to the entire province of Nova Scotia as well as beyond from all of Atlantic Canada.

While most of these events are hosted by not-for-profit organizations and civic events put on by the municipality, there have been sports events and concerts hosted by private organizers on the Halifax Common. The last large-scale concert on the North Common was for the Canada 150 celebrations, headlined by Deadmau5. This civic event, which was hosted by the municipality, was free to enter and was generally considered a success, drawing approximately 40,000 viewers to the site.

In 2017, the large multi-purpose spaces within the Halifax Common were booked for a total of 2,219 hours for small to medium size community festivals and events. Appendix B includes a detailed listing of these events by space, summarized as follows:

- Wanderers Grounds - 6 hours, 1 event
- Emera Oval - 165.5 hours, 10 events
- Central Common - 1,011 hours, 16 events
- North Common - 1,036 hours, 9 events

Active Recreation Areas

Active recreation areas are generally any open space that requires purpose-built facilities or specialized parkland development for structured individual or team activity. On the North and Central Common, this includes the purpose-built facilities of the playground, swimming pool, splash pad and skatepark, and sport facilities of the ball diamonds, sport fields, cricket pitch, tennis and basketball courts, and the skating oval. The similarities among the different forms are that they require specific types of field, playing court, equipment or other infrastructure, are often organized by teams or schedules, and usually have some associated cost.

Some forms of active recreation require considerable field area, especially when compared to space dedicated to passive recreational uses. During warmer times of the year, this is particularly true for softball, which occupies the majority of the North Common during peak evening hours. During the day and after dark, these play areas revert to passive uses.

Other major active recreation areas include the Oval, two multi-purpose sport fields and the parts of the Wanderers Grounds. Tennis courts, basketball courts and the cricket pitch are also well used.

The condition of active recreation areas and sport features varies considerably. The Oval and tennis courts are at the beginning of their life spans and are in great condition. The pool and splash pad are past the need for replacement and are in extremely poor condition. Ball diamonds vary in condition. Bleachers provide single-purpose seating but are sometimes used for casual seating and outdoor lunch seating.

Passive Recreation Areas

Passive recreation areas do not require purpose-built facilities or specialized parkland development for sports. Passive recreation areas emphasize the green space aspect of a park and usually involve unstructured recreation activities and low impact development such as fitness trails and pathways for walking, jogging, and bicycling, as well as open lawn areas for picnicking, kite-flying, and frisbee. It can also include urban forests and vegetated areas for bird watching, observing and photographing nature. Naturalized passive recreation areas place minimal stress on the environment and resources, and can provide ecosystem services such as carbon sequestering, water filtration, and micro-climate comfort.

In addition to open spaces and associated amenities, landmarks such as monuments and fountains also function as important features in passive recreation areas. These denote places, events or people of significance to the public and serve as focal points that invite gathering and quiet contemplation. Most of the existing landmarks within the Halifax Common commemorate aspects of Confederation or British leaders. More recently, however, public artwork that showcases Mi'kmaq, African Nova Scotian, and 2SLGBTQIA+ artists and culture has been introduced on the North Common.

For their size, the North and Central Common have relatively few seating areas or functioning social spaces. The windswept openness of the North Common limits the opportunity for interactions at a human scale and discourages lingering. Picnickers are relegated to small residual lawn spaces between the ballfields and pathways.

Ownership

Today, the municipality remains the largest landowner within the Halifax Common boundary. Virtually all of the municipal lands can be characterized as open space, though there are many buildings located on municipal lands such as the buildings of 1606 Bell Road and the Halifax Lancers. In addition, all roads traversing the Halifax Common are public streets.

Hospitals, schools and Dalhousie University are also interspersed with open space, albeit with varying degrees of public access: for example, the grounds surrounding Citadel High School or the Museum of Natural History are easily accessible to the general public, while the hospital and University open spaces are generally private in nature.

Recently, a number of land transactions have taken place. All of these changes in land ownership occurred between the municipality and the Province, and the affected lands have remained in public ownership. The recapturing of land by the municipality envisioned in the 1994 Halifax Common Plan did not materialize. The lands formerly occupied by the CBC at Summer Street and Bell Road were sold to the Province for a future hospital expansion. The former Community College site at Bell Road remained in Provincial ownership for the construction of Citadel High School, and the parking lot of the hospital has remained with the Province.

In 2010, the municipality and the Capital District Health Authority signed a Memorandum of Understanding, outlining mutually beneficial urban design principles that will apply to redevelopment of land under the control of the Health Authority. Please refer to Appendix F.

The lands formerly occupied by Queen Elizabeth High School were recaptured by the municipality but transferred to the Province in 2008 in a land exchange that enabled the construction of Halifax's new Central Library on Spring Garden Road. The former Queen Elizabeth High School grounds were used by the highly successful Common Roots Urban Farm until relocation in 2018 for the forthcoming hospital redevelopment and expansion.

Regulatory and Guidance Framework

This Master Plan provides the foundation for future planning and management of the Halifax Common. However, the size and importance of the Halifax Common has merited its inclusion in a number of other planning documents, among them land use plans, facilities plans, open space and forest plans, and master plans for institutional stakeholders. The following regulatory and guidance documents provide important direction for managing change on the Halifax Common, such as new buildings or encumbrances, land transactions, construction of utilities, provision of recreation and leisure amenities, and preservation of heritage assets.

- Halifax Common Land Grant, 1763
- Halifax Regional Municipality Charter
- Halifax Regional Municipal Planning Strategy (RP+5)
- Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy (Centre Plan)

- Integrated Mobility Plan
- Active Transportation Priorities Plan 2014-19
- Halifax Community Facilities Master Plan 2
- Halifax Common Plan, 1994
- Halifax Green Network Plan
- Halifax Urban Forest Master Plan
- Municipal Heritage Policy documents

- Dalhousie Campus Master Plan
- Health Authority Master Plan
- Health Authority Memorandum of Understanding, 2010
- Public Gardens Heritage Management Plan

2.2 RECREATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

INTRODUCTION

The recreational needs assessment (Appendix B) provides a comprehensive portrait of current leisure trends, policies, demographic forces, and usage and conditions related to the Halifax Common's recreational facilities. This summary highlights the major findings that influenced the Master Plan.

POLICIES AND TRENDS

The assessment references federal, provincial and municipal planning policies to establish a baseline of insight regarding recreation provision and prioritization: A Framework for Recreation in Canada (2015); Shared Strategy for Advancing Recreation in Nova Scotia (2015); and Parks & Recreation Strategic Framework Draft (2017).

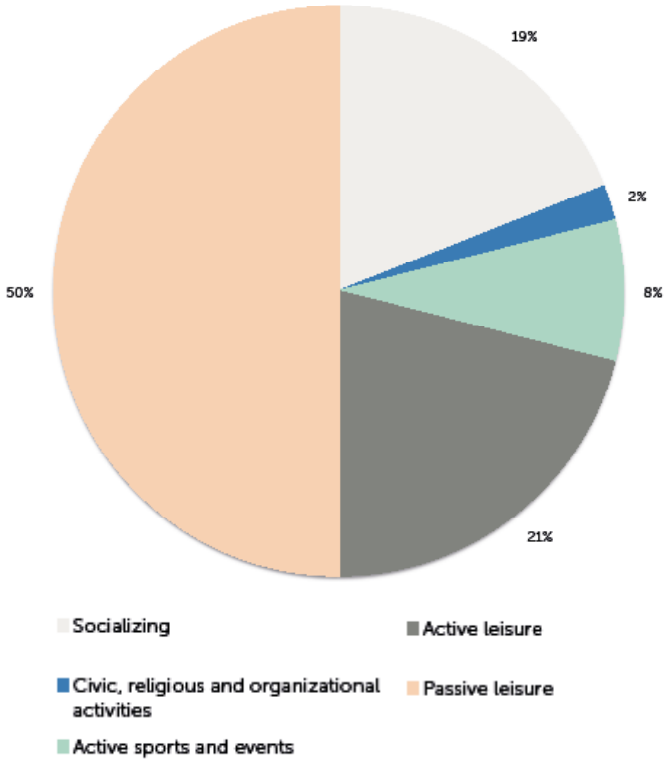
All three documents outline the need for recreation to support individual and community wellbeing—and provide high-level goals to ensure that recreation remains a public good (i.e., free and accessible to people of all cultural and socio-economic backgrounds).

Relevant common themes:

- Recreation should support active, healthy living.
- Recreation should support inclusion and access regardless of age, gender, ability, and wealth.
- Recreation should connect people with nature.
- Recreation should serve as a community development tool (e.g., places for people to gather/socialize, to participate in arts and culture).
- Recreation should consider environmental protection and sustainability.
- Recreation should be supported through innovative models: volunteerism, shared servicing agreements, and partnerships.

Recreational Activities

For individuals aged 15 years and over, the daily average time spent per day on various recreation activities are illustrated on the following chart.



Canadian Daily Average Time Spent of Leisure Time, by Recreational Activity.

Statistics Canada's analysis shows that Canadians' participation in sports (informal and organized) remained relatively the same rate from 1992 to 2005. The same respondents, during this time frame, often switched from organized to informal sports activity. Most individuals engage in Passive Leisure (50% of the population), whereas only 8% engage in Active Sports.

Activity Types

The recreational needs assessment uses data and definitions for various types of recreation developed by Statistics Canada and referenced in the federal Framework for Recreation report. These differ from the **active recreation areas and passive recreation areas** definitions included in this Master Plan's glossary, as they include some indoor activities. Refer to Appendix B for the Statistics Canada definitions and further discussion on national trends in recreation.

Social Factors Affecting Participation

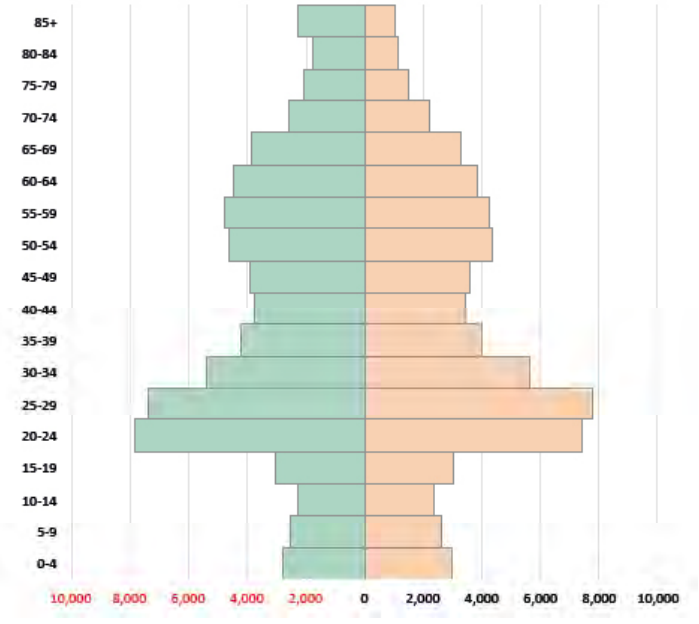
Special effort is required to encourage children from low income and new immigrant families to participate in sports and recreational activities. The adult participation rate is affected by gender, family structure, income, and education. Non-single, well-educated males from upper income levels have the highest participation rates.

To encourage equitable access to recreational activities, the Halifax Common parkland would benefit from flexible and extended hours of operation for working and single adults, free or nominal user fees, and diversified activity options that include unstructured recreation opportunities to welcome people with varied interests, abilities, and backgrounds.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Population

- A significant proportion of individuals aged 20-29 are concentrated on the Halifax peninsula. The younger demographic engages in a wide variety of recreation activities including relatively new pastimes such as geocaching and disc golf. These activities can be easily integrated into the existing site without extensive and new infrastructure.
- Many of the recreation options on the North and Central Commons currently cater to a younger demographic. Inclusion of diverse recreational options (structured and unstructured) and amenities may attract families and seniors who are seeking recreational activities elsewhere.
- Over time, there will be a significant growth of the aging population—which will shift demand for appropriate and relevant recreational programming and services.

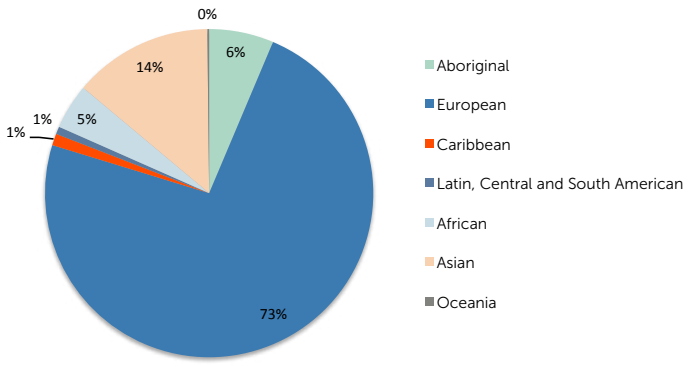


Halifax Peninsula Population Pyramid, by Sex and Five-Year Age Cohort.

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Ethnicity

- Approximately 27% of the population is non-European: Aboriginal, Caribbean, Latin, Central and South American; African; Asian; and Oceania descent. The Aboriginal and African Nova Scotian communities are the fastest growing ethnic groups.
- Diversifying ethnicity may warrant the need for broader and more culturally sensitive recreational programming and options.
- The design of ancillary spaces, such as seating, spectator areas, and picnic sites also needs to be culturally appropriate, inviting full family participation.



Halifax Peninsula Population, by Ethnicity.

Immigration

- The 2011 census indicated that 13% of the population of the Halifax peninsula and the urban fringe are immigrants. Halifax is also becoming a magnet for international students, whose numbers grew from 3,000 in 2002 to 6,000 in 2011.
- The Regional Municipal Planning Strategy forecasts an addition of approximately 73,115 persons to the municipality from 2011 to 2031. Roughly two-thirds of this growth is expected to be international immigrants, spurring the need to include recreational opportunities and services that respond to an increasingly diverse make-up of people.
- Programming tailored to new Canadians (e.g., adult learn-to-skate) may become increasingly important to keep the facilities active and well used.
- At the same time, 70% of the immigrant population is third generation or more. These deep roots mean there may be people who may be interested in volunteering or 'giving back', and recreation programming can be structured to accommodate citizen stewardship.

Family Structure

- The number of single-parent families has been steadily increasing in the Municipality. There is less time for recreation in single-parent households—the Master Plan should provide opportunities for casual uses and extending hours of recreational services.

Housing

- On the Halifax peninsula, 75% of residents are renters. A significant number of these are in apartments of five or more storeys. Centre Plan proposes to accommodate up to 40% of the municipality's new housing units in the Regional Centre, or 33,000 new residents by 2031. The Halifax Common municipal open spaces must meet the needs of the growing number of renters and condo-dwellers in the core that may have limited access to green space.

Household Income

- Halifax's population has a broad spread of income levels. National recreation trends indicate that households with an income of $60,000 or more are more likely to participate in organized recreation; however, only 43% of the population make $60,000 or more. This reinforces the need to continue offering free and open recreational opportunities and services, and including structured recreation opportunities that do not require expensive equipment, special training or membership fees.

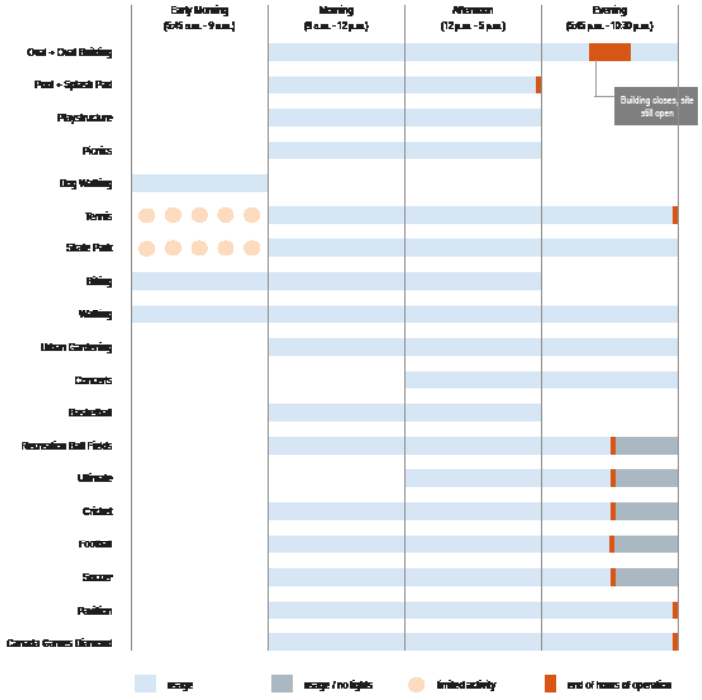
PATTERNS OF USE

Structured vs. Unstructured Activities

By area, significantly more of the North and Central Common is dedicated to "Structured" uses than land useful for "Unstructured" activities. This is at odds with the balance of activity types illustrated earlier in this chapter, which indicate that on average, 50% of individuals' leisure time is spent seeking passive forms of recreation.

While the Statistics Canada data are not exclusively local, nor are they exclusively referring to outdoor recreation, they do support the assertion made in the 1994 Halifax Common Plan and by various stakeholders throughout the completion of this Master Plan that the activities on the Halifax Common municipal open spaces are not reflective of typical recreational demands or trends, and would benefit from a shift toward additional unstructured and casual uses.

Seasonal Use Patterns



Structured and unstructured recreation activities overlap significantly on site from May to October. Sites may be over capacity during these months.

The Oval and Oval building are active year-round, but closed from mid-March to end of April and in November for maintenance transition. Skateboarding, biking, walking, and basketball are also essentially year-round, but interrupted as a result of snow closures from mid-January to mid-March.

Tennis activity is limited from May to October but the site becomes a place for other activities from November to April (e.g., ball hockey).

In general, this analysis illustrates an opportunity to bolster and diversify winter programming and activities, and the need to examine summer and fall uses, possibly shifting some programming into spring.

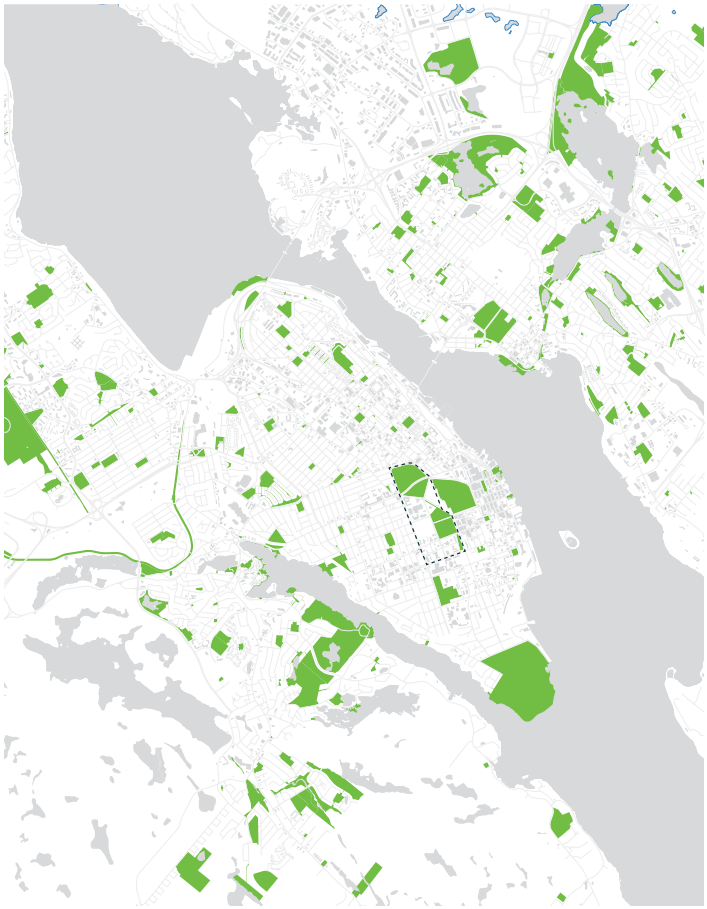
Daily Use Patterns

Activity on the North and Central Common begins as early as 5:45 a.m. in the form of biking, walking, dog walking, skateboarding and tennis. Peak uses for the sport fields is between 6:30 p.m. and 9:30 p.m., with many of the games played after the fields officially close at 8:30 p.m. Lighting is the main limiting factor for evening use of sport fields. The Oval is used from 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. and later, as there is no fencing or barriers to entry.

Most of the sport fields are fully booked during peak hours by various recreational organizations. The remaining available time slots are generally during work and school hours, when students, people working standard hours, and those without the resources to participate in structured activities can find it difficult to access these public fields. Similarly, the outdoor pool and splash pad close at 5:00 p.m., which restricts availability to many working parents.

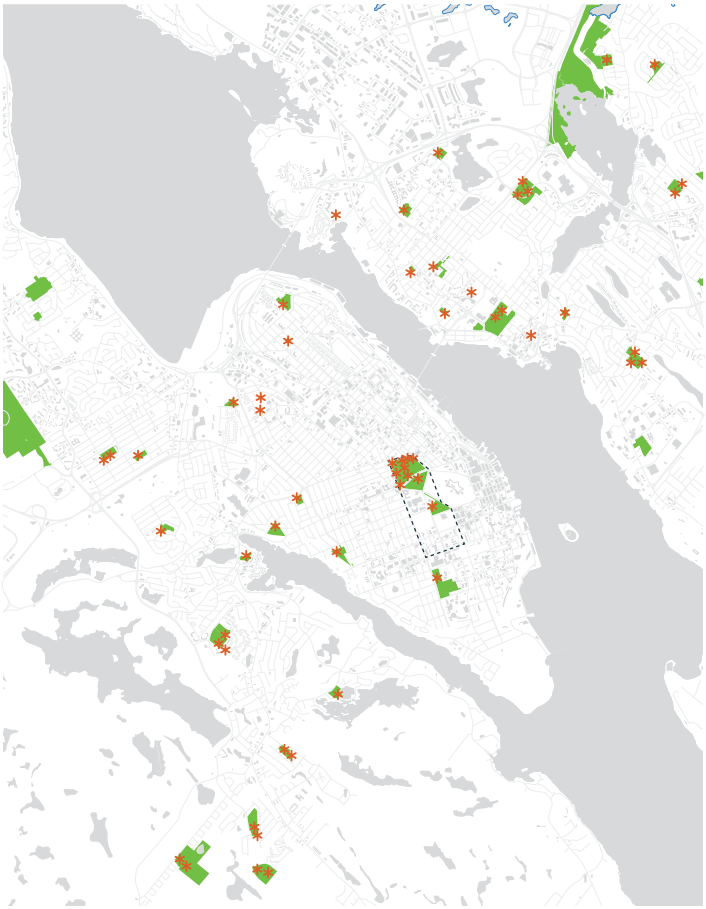
Even if the hours and booking system are changed to broaden the accessibility of the sport fields and the pool, the slump in daytime usage will still largely remain. One option to more efficiently use these amenities is to develop programs that attract seniors, who generally have more time to participate in structured and unstructured activities and are not tied to work or school schedules. Another option is to look at adding artificial lighting to extend evening field use.

Municipal Green Spaces and Ball Diamonds



Legend

- HALIFAX COMMON BOUNDARY
- MUNICIPAL GREEN SPACES



Legend

- HALIFAX COMMON BOUNDARY
- MUNICIPAL GREEN SPACES
- BASEBALL + SOFTBALL DIAMONDS

Figure 2.2.1

Halifax Common Fields



There are many single-use baseball and softball fields throughout the Halifax peninsula and surrounding neighbourhoods, as depicted in the Municipal Green Spaces and Ball Diamonds Map (Figure 2.2.1). However, only a few locations in Halifax group fields together in a manner that is favourable to tournament play.

Halifax's CFMP2 states, "Many softball diamonds throughout Halifax are currently underutilized. Users report field condition as the main barrier to increased use." If the field repairs are not onerous, this is an efficient way to ease some of the pressure on the Halifax Common ball diamonds and open them to casual play and secondary uses.

Apart from the Canada Games Diamond (#9), all playing fields on the Halifax Common lack artificial lighting. Booking records demonstrate that use is limited in the late evenings (8:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.). Artificial lighting can extend the bookable hours throughout the municipality and reduce the demand on the ball diamonds in the Halifax Common.

Many of the playing fields overlap each other or have informal paths traversing through them. These conflicting uses can have safety implications for both players and other park users.

A detailed study on ball diamond usage, conditions, and consolidation opportunities within the municipality, coupled with focused public engagement can help confirm the quantum of baseball and softball that is appropriate for the North Common and Central Common.

Multi-Use Fields

Sport fields that combine activities like soccer, ultimate, rugby, and football are more vulnerable to overuse than ball diamonds, yet are the most efficient use of space and enable greater utilization rates.

CFMP2 identifies no shortage of ball diamonds but there is a demand for additional sport fields. The plan also demonstrates how sports fields with a natural surface (e.g., grass) can double as park space for activities like picnics and dog walking when they are not in use. As evidence of this demand, the North Common and Central Common are approaching carrying capacity of recommended hours of play on the multi-use field (cricket pitch, ball diamonds 10 and 11, sports field 13 and 14). The cricket pitch is particularly valuable as the one facility of its type in Halifax. The Master Plan should investigate opportunities to overlay additional uses on single-purpose fields, being cognisant of the issues of wear.

Pool and Splash Pad

Within the municipality, there are six splash pads, five of which are on the Halifax peninsula. The pool on the Common land is the only outdoor pool on the Halifax peninsula and is uniquely positioned next to a splash pad. CFMP2 identifies this aging but popular pool as a priority for renewal.

Open Space

As indicated on the Municipal Green Spaces and Ball Diamonds Map (Figure 2.2.1), there is a limited amount of open space in Halifax—and where there is open space, features and amenities are often limited. Halifax's development pressures discussed above put an additional premium on open space.

Based on the Halifax Green Network Plan, the municipal open space of the Halifax Common is considered to be one of the largest parks. As development pressure increases on the peninsula, the Halifax Common represents an opportunity to present a diversity of landscape experiences, conserve some biodiversity and cultural heritage alongside premium recreational uses. Open spaces also support casual socializing and spectating related to sports events.

Playgrounds

The 1994 Halifax Common Plan identifies the provision of renewed playgrounds as an important priority. More recently, the CFMP2 notes that the per capita playground provision in Halifax is higher than most other municipalities of this size in Canada. However, the report adds that these playgrounds' distribution, condition, accessibility and age range is not necessarily keeping pace with demographic changes.

By any measure, having only one playground within the Halifax Common appears to under-service the existing and projected downtown population. Additionally, based on CFMP2's target to replace/renew playgrounds every 15-20 years, the 12 year-old Central Common playground is approaching the end of its lifecycle. The Halifax Common is large enough to accommodate a number of accessible, diverse, and distributed play opportunities for residents and visitors.

MAJOR THEMES

To summarize, the national policies, demographics and trends, in addition to the local trends and site usage, suggest the following major themes with regard to recreational needs for the Halifax Common:

1. Structured/Unstructured Imbalance
A more balanced diversity of structured and unstructured recreation options within the Halifax Common will better serve the recreational needs of Halifax.

2. Team/Organized Sport Dominance
The predominance of formal 'booked' uses on the playing fields can be a barrier to open and equitable access to these public spaces. The broader community would benefit from more opportunities for informal, 'drop-in' uses during peak hours.

3. Spatial Opportunities
The popularity and success of the multi-use field (cricket pitch, ball diamonds 10 and 11, sports field 13 and 14) area shows that multiple sporting activities can share space, serving a broad range of interests, and improving utilization. This pattern can be used more generally through the Halifax Common, providing the same level of service with a much smaller footprint.

Additional 'opening' of the North and Central Commons may be obtainable through improvements and consolidation of existing sports facilities outside the Halifax Common.

4. Temporal Opportunities
Analysis of annual and daily patterns of use shows a number of slow periods. These are an opportunity to re-program space and attract new users, enlivening the Halifax Common and wringing maximum value out of all facilities. Carefully tuning the hours of operation to the specific needs of the community can also help accommodate the modern lifestyles and commitments, satisfying the goal of greater inclusion.

2.3 PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES

INTRODUCTION

The physical attributes of the lands occupied by the Halifax Common have shaped its past uses and will continue to influence decisions about its future evolution. With large tracts of the Halifax Common already developed or having well-established uses (e.g. Camp Hill Cemetery or the Public Gardens), the greatest opportunities for high-impact changes are represented in repositioning the North and Central Common. These 'Common lands' hold immense potential as one of the region's most significant open spaces, but, as the Pasterns of Use analysis showed, there are discrepancies in how programming space is used. The focus of the following analysis is centred on the North and Central Common to understand how the physical qualities and location of this area can be leveraged or mitigated to reposition and reinforce the significance of the North and Central Common.

ELEVATION

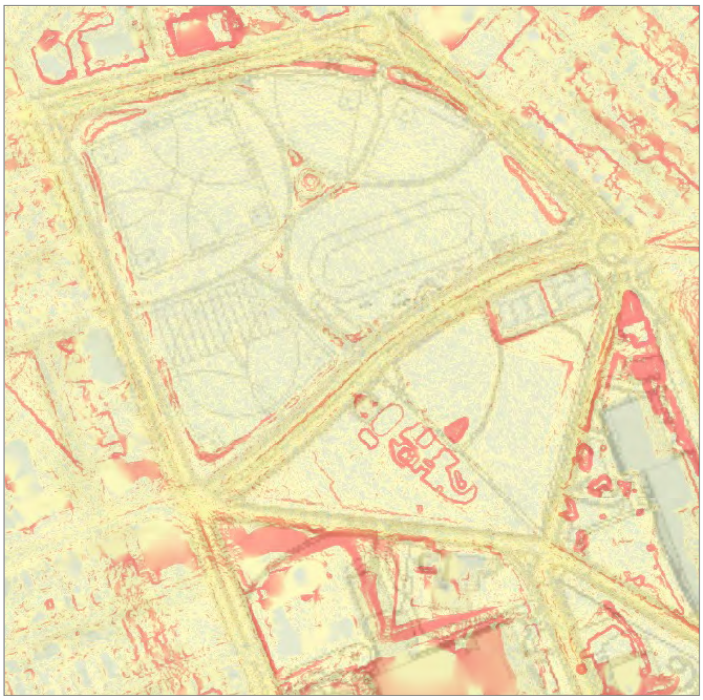
The North and Central Common sit between 40 metres and 50 metres above sea level, at a moderate to high elevation compared to the rest of the Halifax peninsula, which at its highest point is 70 metres above sea level (sloping to zero along the coast). In the context of the area immediately surrounding the Common land, it is located in somewhat of a depression, with the Halifax Citadel rising quickly to its east and the land also sloping up gently to the neighbourhoods on its north, west and south sides. The North and Central Common are shaped like a bowl (which is why it was a swamp in the early days of Halifax), with the lowest elevations in the southwest corner of the North Common. From there, the land maintains a low elevation around 45 metres across the Central Common, rising up at the hospital grounds, the roundabout at Cogswell and North Park Streets, and along the north and northeast sides of the North Common. The highest elevations are at the northeast corner of the North Common, along North Park Street, before the land begins to slope down towards the waterfront.

SLOPES

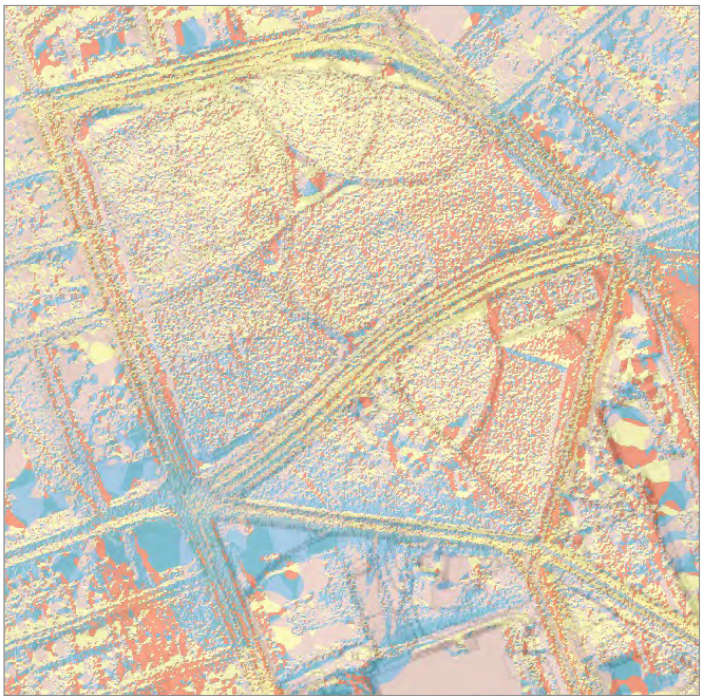
While there is a slight sloping of the land toward the centre of the Common land, the North and Central Common are relatively flat; the greatest slopes are found along the edges of the North Common where the earth is slightly bermed, and do not exceed 25% slope. The elevation data shown in the map at right predates the construction of the Oval, and there is now a larger berm in the easternmost corner of the North Common. Overall there is little significant topography on the North and Central Common aside from these berms, and other small sloped banks created during the construction of facilities such as the tennis courts and skatepark in the Central Common.

ASPECT

Due to the North Common and Central Common sloping gently inward, the north side of the area has a slightly south-facing aspect while the south side faces somewhat north, The south portion of the Central Common, where the skatepark, pool and basketball courts are located, has a slightly north-facing aspect while the area of the Central Common closer to Citadel High School, which includes the sports fields and tennis courts, has a generally west-to-south-facing aspect. The area with the most sun exposure based on topography is the northeast quarter of the North Common, framed by Cunard Street and North Park Street, which faces south and southwest and has a slightly greater slope than the rest of the area.



SLOPE



ASPECT



ELEVATION

Figure 2.3.1

MICRO-CLIMATE

Sun and shade, precipitation, and exposure to wind play an important role in determining the sense of comfort in an urban environment. The best open spaces are comfortable, or at least as comfortable as they can be in their settings. They offer warmth or sunlight when it is cool, and shade and coolness when it is hot. They offer reasonable protection from the elements without trying to avoid or negate the natural environment.

Climate

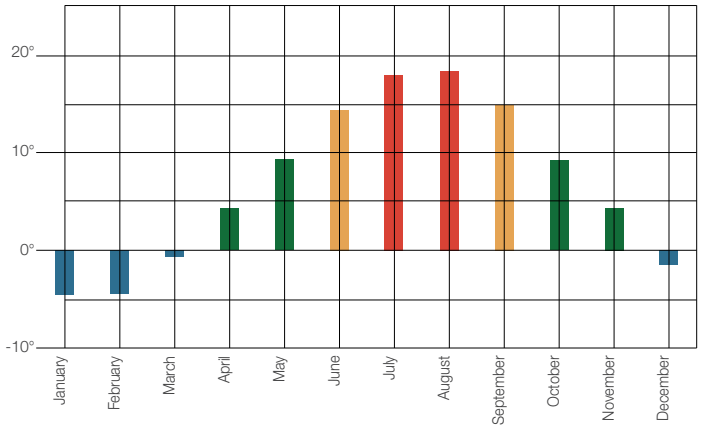
Generally, Halifax can be described as humid continental, bordering on oceanic, with warm summers and relatively mild winters. The warmest month of the year is July, with an average temperature of 19˚C. The coldest month of the year is January, with an average temperature of -6˚C. Overall, the climate is greatly influenced by the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf Stream, causing a significant seasonal lag. Halifax's moderate temperatures allow for residents to enjoy amenities year-round, especially if streets and public spaces are designed to maximize comfort.

Precipitation

Precipitation is high year-round in Halifax. Winter features a mix of rain, freezing rain, and snow with freeze-thaw cycles. Snowfall is heavy in winter, but snow cover is typically patchy due to the frequent freeze-thaw cycles which melt accumulated snow. Spring is often wet and cool, arriving later than other areas of Canada with similar latitudes, due to cooler ocean temperatures. Summers are generally mild and pleasant, with infrequent hot and humid conditions. The average monthly precipitation is highest from November to February due to intense late-fall to winter storms migrating from the Northeastern U.S., and lowest in summer, with August being the driest month on average seeing 97 millimetres of precipitation. The wettest month, December, sees 148 millimetres of precipitation. While this amount of rain is significant in comparison to cities across Canada, it is similar to other Maritime cities such as St. John's (NL) and St. John (NB). In total Halifax experiences 162 days with rain, and 44.8 days with snow per year.

Wind Exposure

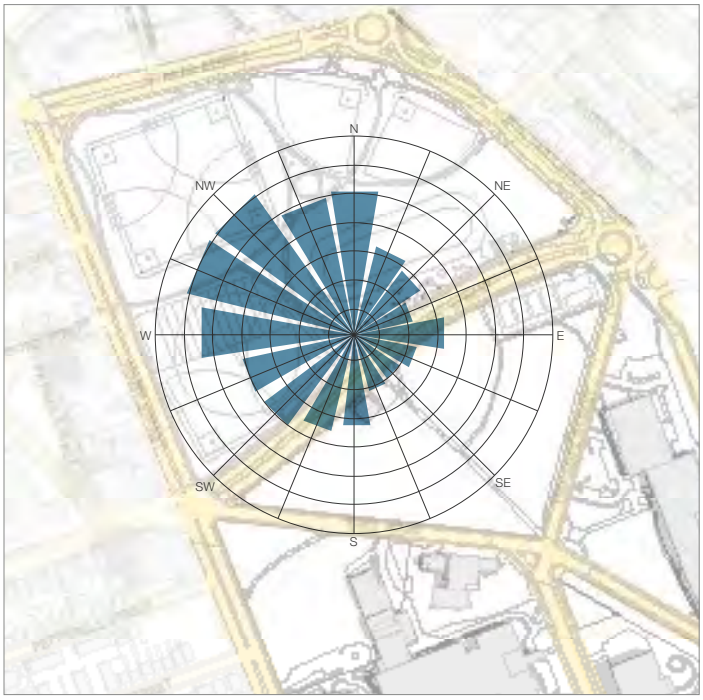
There is seasonal variation in the wind speeds and directions impacting Halifax, with the average winter wind speed at 11.3 kilometres per hour and the dominant direction coming from north-west. In the summer, the average wind speed is 8.8 kilometres per hour and the dominant direction is from the south.



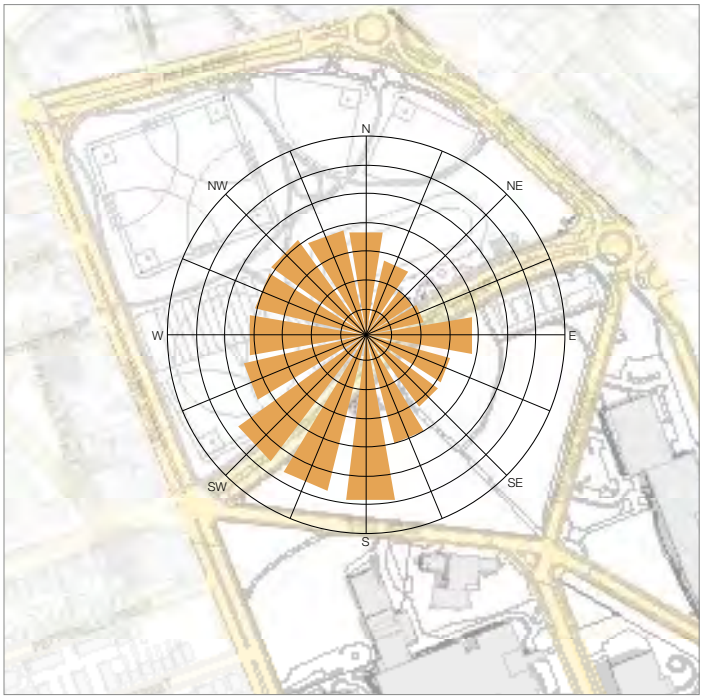
AVERAGE TEMPERATURES

Solar Exposure

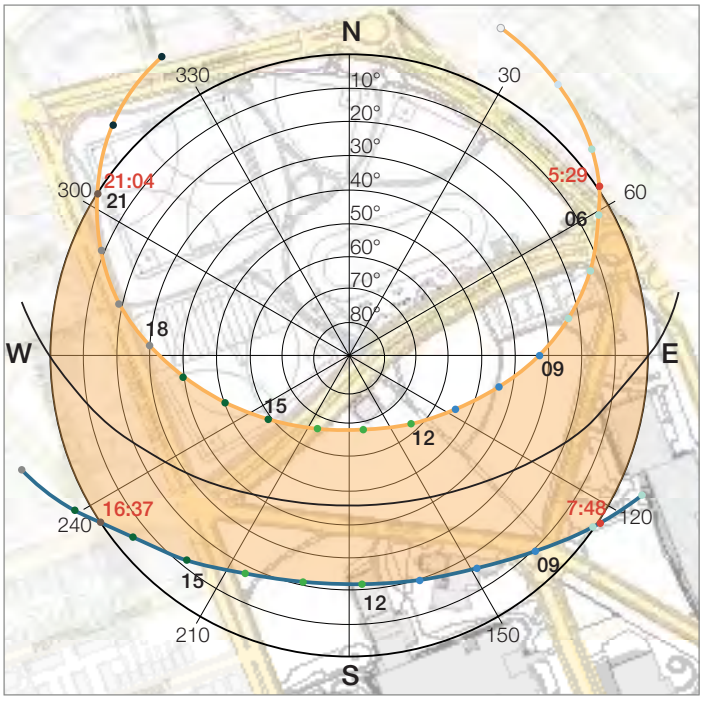
The path of the sun in relation to the orientation of the North and Central Common results in only minimal shadow casting from street trees and surrounding development. During the summer months, taller buildings along the western edge only cast shadows on the North Common in the late afternoon. The large street trees along Bell Road and Cogswell Street provide some shade beginning in the early afternoon. In the winter months, those street trees cast longer shadows starting earlier in the day, but shadows from buildings only appear shortly before sunset. By and large, most of the North and Central Common are fully exposed to the sun year-around.



WINTER WINDS (November to April)



SUMMER WINDS (May to October)



SOLAR EXPOSURE

Time

00-02	12-14
03-05	15-17
06-08	18-20
09-11	21-23

Sun Path

- June Solstice
- December Solstice
- Annual Variation

Sunrise/Sunset

- Sunrise
- Sunset

Figure 2.3.2

2.4 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Summary of Engagement

Consultation activities for the Halifax Common Master Plan involved over 3,000 people throughout the process. Described in greater detail below, the activities included:

- four public meetings;
- two online surveys;
- youth focus group; and
- stakeholder and community organization focus groups.

Formative Engagement
The first public meeting asked big questions about what needs to be considered in the planning process, and how to ensure the Halifax Common is great for everyone. It took place in December 2017 and was attended by approximately 150 people.

The first online survey was formative, and gathered data about current use of the Halifax Common, assets and challenges, preferred new activities or uses, and features in need of improvement. This survey was active from December 2017 to February 2018, and had over 1,000 responses.

The youth focus group took place at Citadel High School and Youth Art Connection in December 2017. Participants were asked how they currently use the Halifax Common, and what improvements they would like to see. Approximately 60 youth participated in the focus group.

Stakeholder and community organizations included arts, sport and recreation groups, as well as local service providers. A total of 13 organizations were engaged in January and February 2018, reaching approximately 200 people.

The second public meeting was a mapping workshop looking at what needs to be cherished and protected, and what needs to be improved or changed throughout the Halifax Common District. The second part of the meeting focused on design for the aquatic area to replace the existing pool. It took place in January 2018 and was attended by approximately 150 people.

The third public meeting was a presentation sharing some of the big directions for the plan, and participants were asked for input about specific areas and key issues. It took place in April 2018 was attended by approximately 90 people.

Draft Plan Consultation
From the feedback gathered from the previous community engagements, various draft concepts were proposed. This next phase of engagement allowed for the testing of ideas through a presentation/open house, a pop-up engagement session hosted at the Oval, an on-line survey, and several additional stakeholder meetings. The survey included feedback from over 1,200 respondents.

The engagement sessions confirmed overall support for the concept plans and draft directions. The key themes confirmed the importance of green space; openness of the Halifax Common; diverse and unstructured recreational activities; the civic role that the Halifax Common plays in people lives; the importance of preserving heritage; and, promoting inclusiveness. The plan's directions for the Central Common, including the aquatic area, had high approval along with the Public Gardens and Camp Hill Cemetery plan. Consultations also confirmed support for softening concrete and hardscape with additional trees and vegetation.

The expressed concerns of the plan focused on ensuring that there is not too much built infrastructure and over-programmed space. There were also concerns about vagueness in the plan's Vision, Vision Goals, and Guiding Principles.

Approximately 16% of the survey respondents indicated opposition to the plan's directions. These were focused in two primary areas: the removal of ball diamonds; and, the depiction of the lands occupied by the Halifax Lancers. Minor baseball was primarily concerned with the proposed loss of slow pitch diamonds on the North Common and perceived impacts on the other ball diamonds. Much of the Halifax Lancer's concerns concentrated on parking, loading areas,

and the paddock. The Halifax Lancers also expressed their desire to expand to accommodate more programming.

Skateboard facility users expressed a need to update and improve the design of the skateboard park and ensure that it can accommodate a variety of ages and activities. Users of the all-ages music venue re-emphasized their preferred use of this space within a new aquatic/pavilion building over other options. Finally, Halifax Lawn Bowling Club users shared their need for improved parking, more space for spectating, and upgrading the existing building structure.

Consultation Core Outcomes

Many pieces of information were gathered through the consultation process, both big picture ideas and small details. The results from each of the meetings are provided in a set of What We Heard Reports in Appendix A. Topic-specific results are also integrated throughout the Master Plan, and relevant findings are highlighted in each section of the Halifax Common District-Wide Directions and Municipal Lands Strategies. Throughout the various consultation activities, a few major themes emerged.

- One of the most dominant themes across engagement was a desire for more passive recreation areas. This included areas and amenities that never have bookings and are designed for informal uses, like yoga, reading, and playing casual games.

- A desire to maintain and enhance green, open space was also a dominant theme. This included minimizing built infrastructure, planting more trees where appropriate, and protecting the vast openness of lawn on the North and Central Common.

- Accessibility was also a significant theme, and much input focused on eliminating barriers to enjoyment of the Halifax Common. There is an expectation that major new amenities or features are completely physically accessible and do not require any fees to use.

- Many participants felt that the existing choice of activities within the open space areas of the Halifax Common is narrow and polarized, with sport or physical play on one end, and observing formal horticulture on the other. There is a desire for spaces and activities that will serve a wider range of interests.

- Gathering places were also a theme, with many participants expressing a desire for good areas to get together and spend time with friends and families. There is also a desire for spaces that can be shared among strangers, and create opportunities for small interactions.

- Improving the walking and cycling experiences throughout the Halifax Common District was another important takeaway, including realigning the pathway network on the North Common, adding nighttime lighting on sidewalks, and improving access through large blocks.

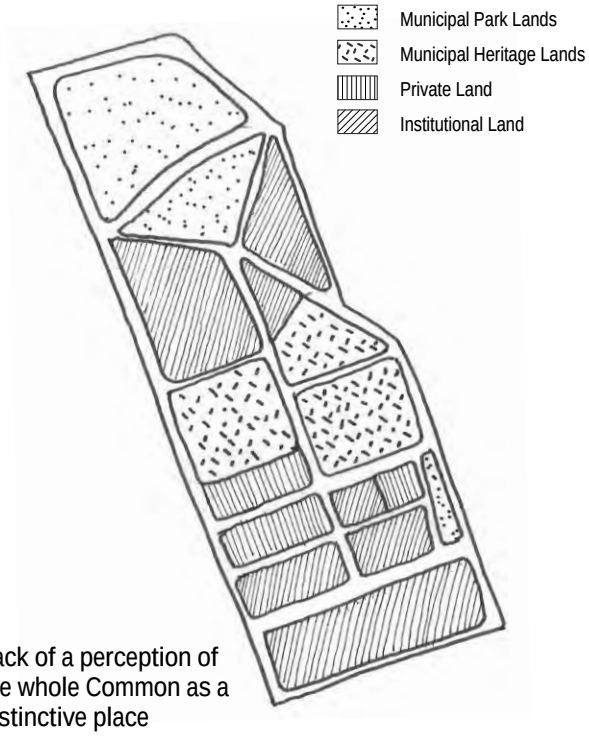
2.5 KEY FINDINGS

Cohesiveness

The Halifax Common is currently neither perceived nor functioning as an integrated whole. This is partly due to the fragmented land uses, but also relates to the balance and diversity of activities, connectivity, and the general sense of place.

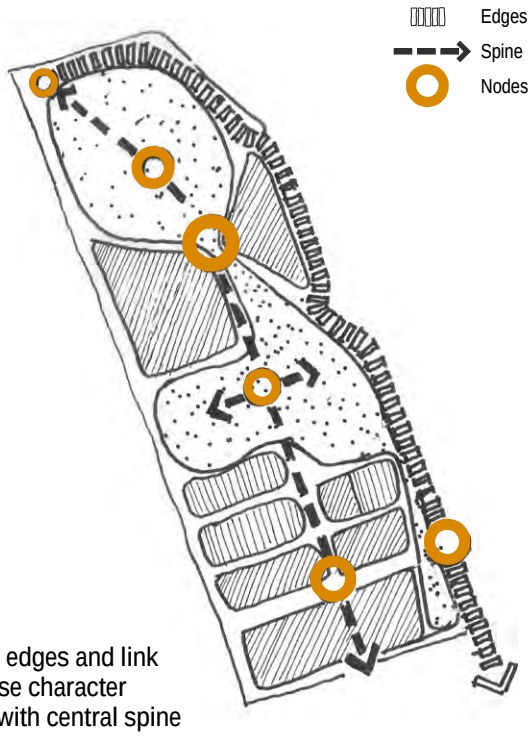
Within the municipal lands and street right-of-ways, there are opportunities to improve the cohesiveness of the Halifax Common and offer facilities and services better tuned with neighbourhood and regional needs, creating a network of public open spaces that are resilient, rich, flexible, and rooted within the Halifax Common's vital history.

Need and Opportunity



Lack of a perception of the whole Common as a distinctive place

Master Planning Implication



Define edges and link land use character areas with central spine

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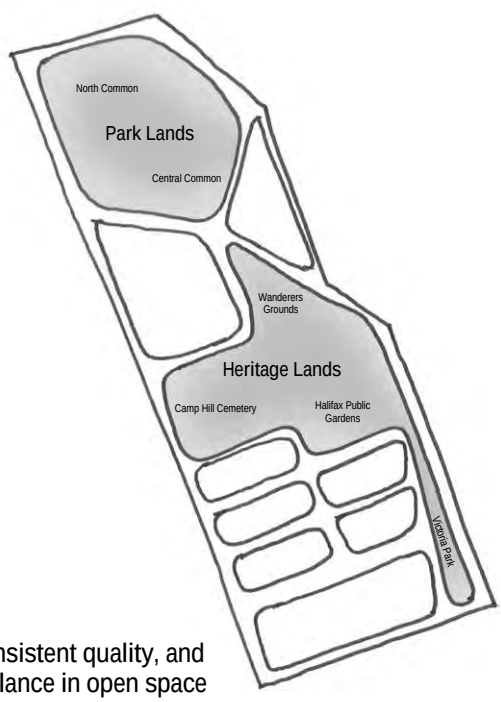
Active and Passive Recreational Areas

The current range of available uses within the Halifax Common municipal open space areas are heavily skewed towards structured activities and active recreation areas. This is especially true in the North and Central Common, which are dominated by the Oval and ball diamonds. At present, there is a lack of infrastructure for unstructured activities such as benches and shaded gathering areas.

Public consultations demonstrated a desire for a mix of infrastructure to support both structured and unstructured forms of leisure, with a slight preference for unstructured activities.

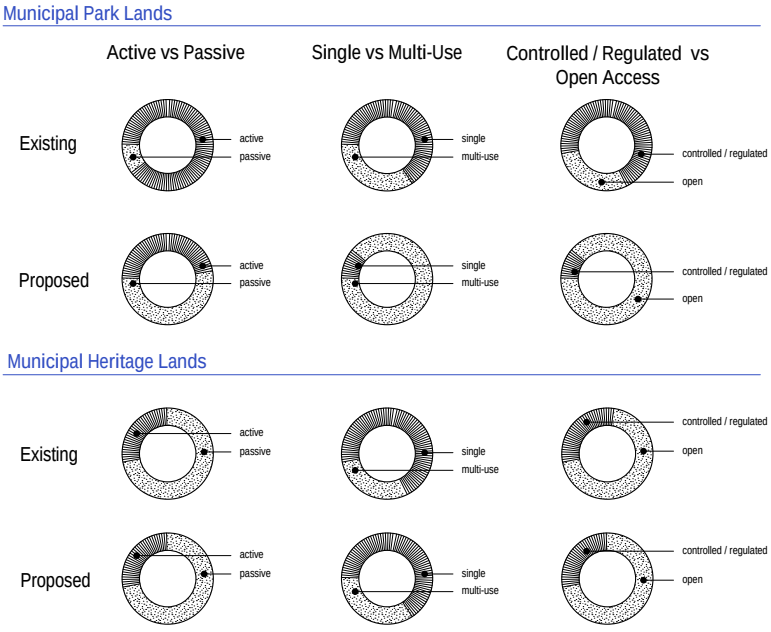
The planning implication is to re-balance the scales for active vs. passive recreation areas, single vs. multi-use and controlled vs. open access.

Need and Opportunity



Inconsistent quality, and imbalance in open space type, diversity and access

Master Planning Implication



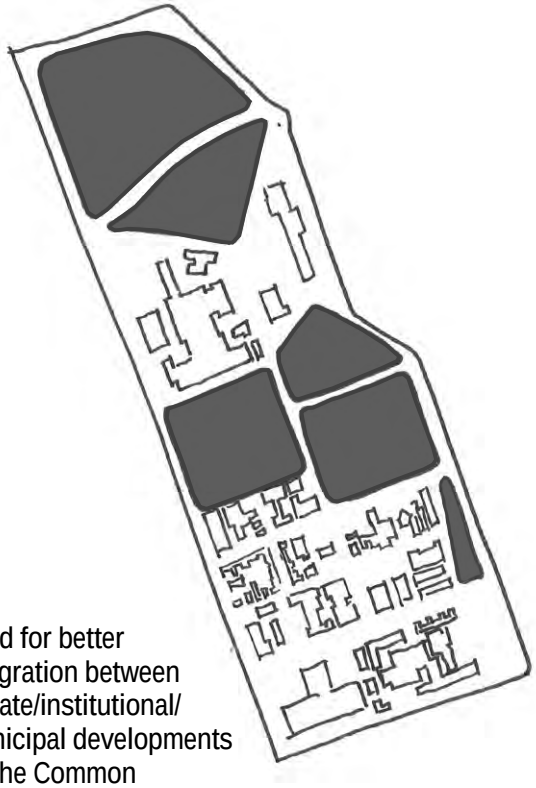
Enhance, diversify and rebalance open spaces and recreation offerings

Developed and Developing Areas

Current development is characterized by alternating bands of recreational and cultural open space with institutional and private development. This visually fractures the Halifax Common and obscures its sense of identity and unity as a distinct district. The current urban form and character of many of the institutions does not invite free flowing pedestrian access between open spaces and adjacent neighbourhoods, reinforcing the fragmented feeling of the Halifax Common.

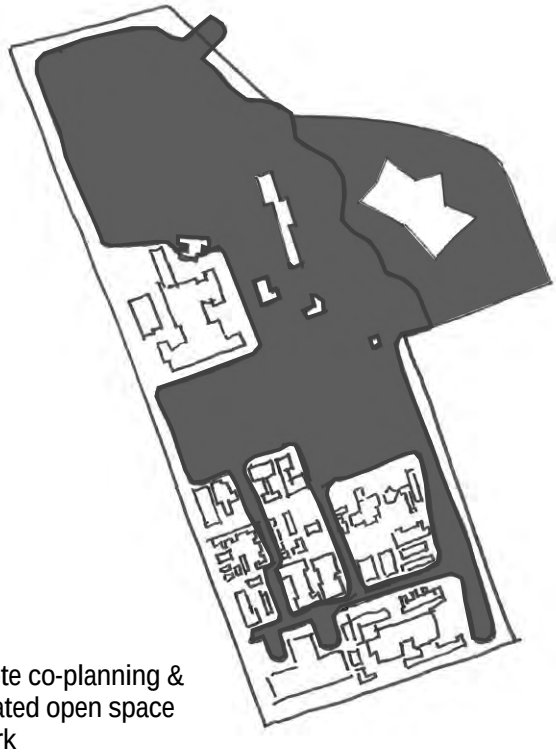
A sense of cohesion and unified order can be restored by stitching together these diverse land uses. Public consultations revealed a continued desire to preserve and reclaim land on the Halifax Common, with "public open space" ranking as a highly valued use. No matter who owns the land, the prioritization of the open space network can be achieved through mutual values and co-planning to integrate the open space network throughout developed areas.

Need and Opportunity



Need for better integration between private/institutional/ municipal developments on the Common

Master Planning Implication



Promote co-planning & integrated open space network

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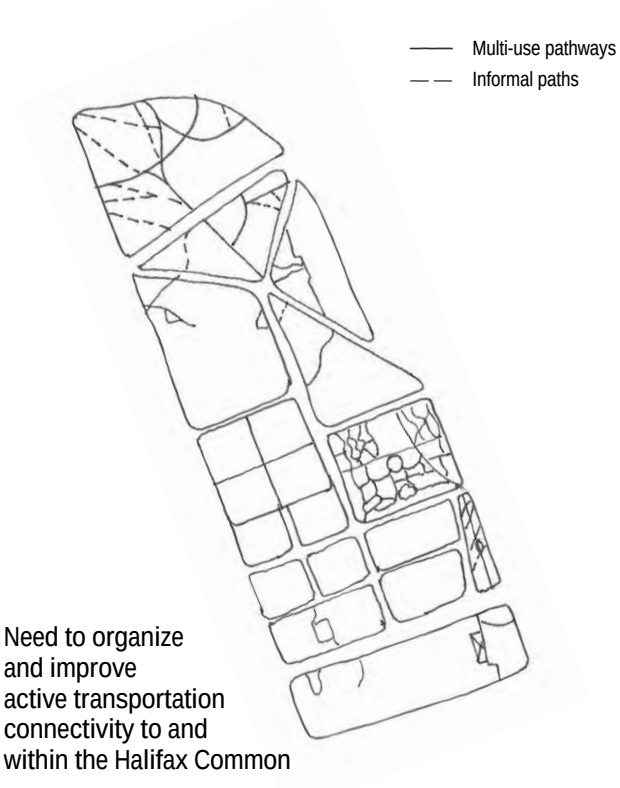
Mobility and Linkages

Navigating between destinations within the Halifax Common (e.g., between Victoria Park and the North Common) is not currently intuitive. The sheer scale and size of the Halifax Common combined with the diverse mix of uses, the branching road network, and formal and informal pathways poses a challenge to mobility and access. While there have been major improvements to intersections in recent years, there are still some crossings where pedestrian and cyclist comfort is not ideal.

The implication is that the circulation system within the Halifax Common needs to be reconsidered. Mobility needs to be assessed and designed not only in terms of meeting existing local needs, but also in anticipation of broader trends that include a shift toward more active modes like cycling, and the growing recognition of walkability as a top driver of urban revitalization. The existing asphalt paths and playing field layouts can be realigned to better suit both the recreation needs and how people move through the North and Central Common.

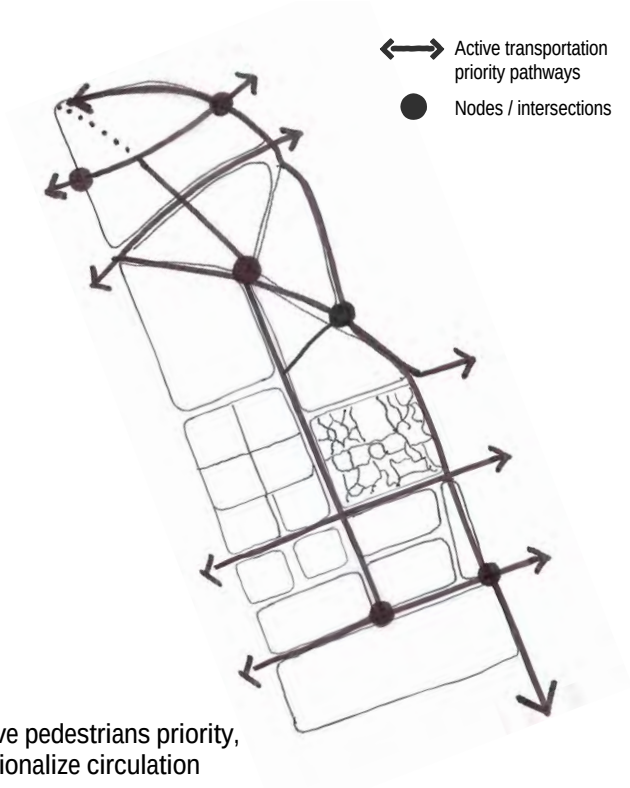
If the Halifax Common is to seize the opportunity of being part of a major commuter through-area, people need to be enticed to linger, pause and enjoy the Halifax Common, and that occurs most effectively through a focus on the quality of the park spaces, greenways, and pedestrian environments.

Need and Opportunity



Need to organize and improve active transportation connectivity to and within the Halifax Common

Master Planning Implication



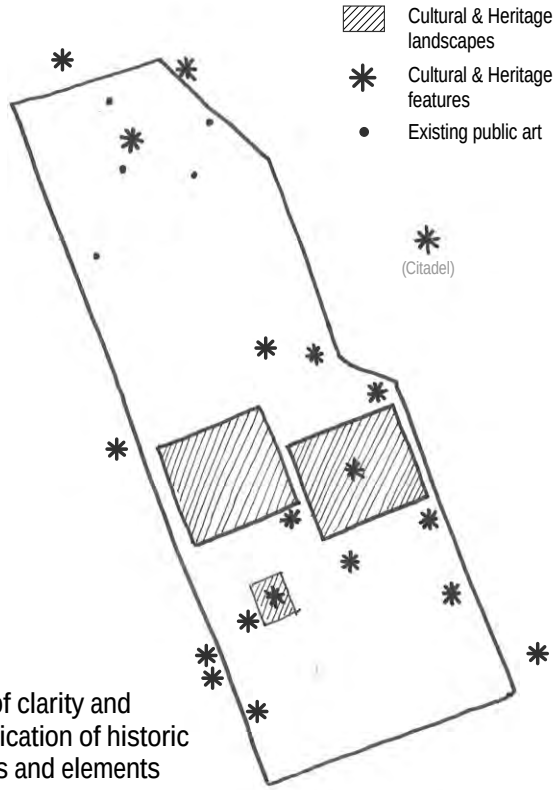
Give pedestrians priority, rationalize circulation

Culture, Heritage and Place Making

Established in 1763 on the traditional territory of the Mi'kmaq people, the Halifax Common is Canada's oldest urban civic park. Over the last 250 years, the Halifax Common has evolved and changed shape many times. There are significant areas that remain essentially intact with their early form, materials, and use generally unchanged. The many layers of the Halifax Common's natural and cultural heritage reveal the story of Halifax and its people both prior to and post 1763, but are not readily apparent to the casual visitor.

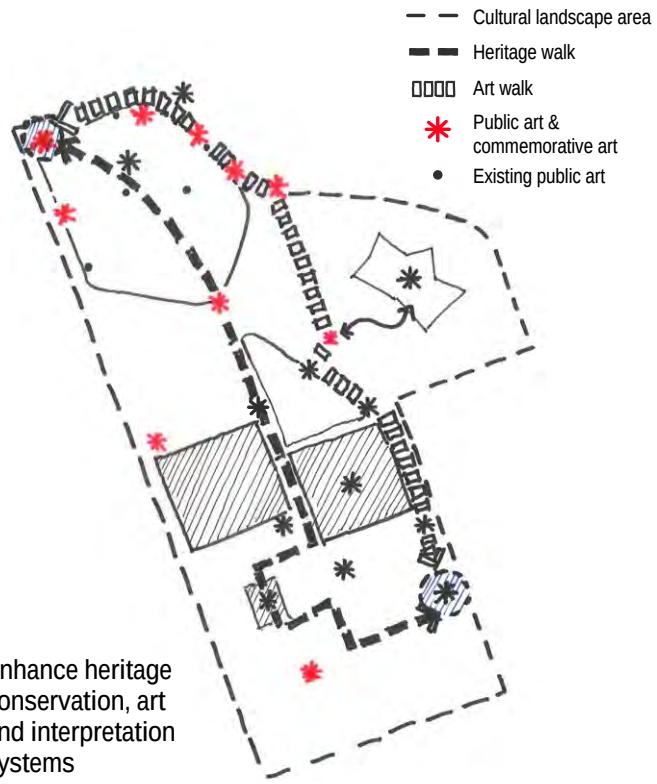
The planning implication is to reveal and celebrate its rich cultural and natural heritage, and create opportunity for enhancing the sense of place and community identity embodied in the Halifax Common.

Need and Opportunity



Lack of clarity and identification of historic spaces and elements

Master Planning Implication



Enhance heritage conservation, art and interpretation systems

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Programming

The Halifax Common plays dual functions as a local and a regional destination. Its design, programming and policies must reflect these two needs. At the same time, the Halifax Common holds a special designation that differentiates it from other parklands—one that infers a greater degree of public stewardship and a stronger sense of community ownership. Furthermore, there are many activities that add great value to public space, but are increasingly difficult to deliver solely through public administration.

The planning implication is to focus on collaborative partnerships and more effective working relationships with stakeholder groups. Through strong partnerships it will be possible to engage the community in the creation and implementation of new programs that achieve a shared vision and foster public participation in recreation and leisure.

Need and Opportunity



An increasingly valued asset to Halifax that must satisfy local and regional needs

Master Planning Implication

Neighbourhood Programming	Regional Programming
interpretive signs and routes	guided tours
places to plant	Arbor Day events
pick-up sports	tournaments, premier sports events
busking	concerts
spots to eat	group picnics
family gatherings	festivals
learn to skate	speed skating
learn to swim	multifunction aquatic centre

Offer range of scaled public programming and stewardship opportunities

3 APPROACH



3.1 Rationale

3.2 Vision Statement

3.3 Vision Goals

3.4 Guiding Principles

3.1 RATIONALE

The purpose of this section of the Master Plan is to establish meaningful and relevant statements that set the stage for action plans and implementation. It provides the basis and reasoning from which the rest of the Master Plan logically flows. The contents of this section serve as an anchor, both for the plan today and into the future. As renewal advances and opportunities arise over the next 10 to 20 years, the Vision, Vision Goals, and Guiding Principles will stand as a fixed point to return to.

The Vision for the plan defines the aspirations for the future of the Halifax Common. It represents the ultimate outcome to achieve through the strategies of the Master Plan. The Vision identifies a shared concept of the Halifax Common's future and identifies the benefits its parks and public spaces provide to the community.

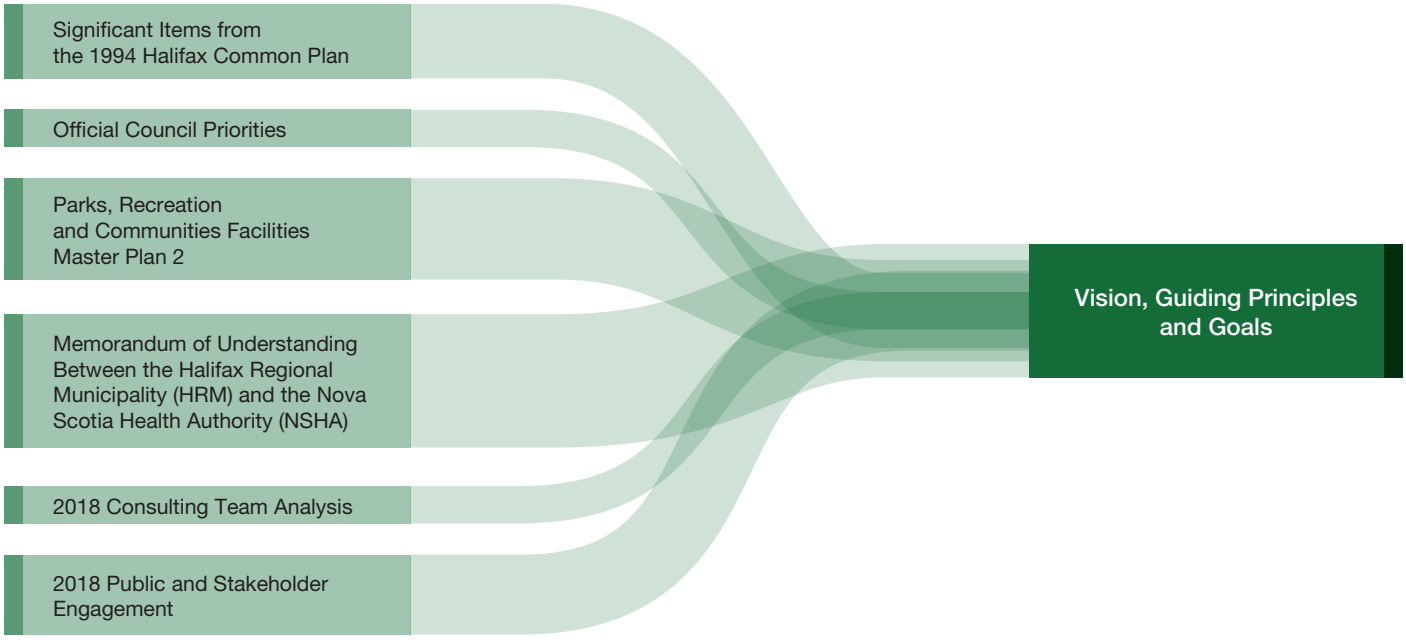
Vision Goals are broadly defined aims or intentions that articulate a series of criteria to which the plans and future actions will aspire. Vision Goals move Guiding Principles forward and communicate the relevance of subsequent strategies.

The Guiding Principles are the core foundations that characterize the essence of the Halifax Common and underlie what is held in value for achieving the Vision.

They support the Vision and guide the work of municipal staff, Council members and other stakeholders in decision making around parks and open space management, and recreation program delivery.

The Guiding Principles function as a check to ensure that policies, actions and design concepts are both comprehensive and consistent, and in keeping with the Vision.

The Vision, Vision Goals, and Guiding Principles for the Halifax Common Master Plan were created through the influences of the sources depicted in the diagram below, with strong emphasis given to the public and stakeholder consultation outcomes from workshops, interviews and survey results.



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3.2 VISION STATEMENT

The Halifax Common will be a vital public space that will strengthen Halifax's identity as a welcoming place. Its open spaces, public uses and special character are to be protected for future generations, while being flexible and adaptable to meet evolving needs.

3.3 VISION GOALS

> To strengthen the shared sense of place, protect the unique character and foster a cohesive identity throughout the Halifax Common.

> To broaden the range of leisure and recreation spaces and activities, to ensure more people can enjoy experiences on the Halifax Common.

> To improve the mobility network with accessible, comfortable and convenient connections that encourage active transportation throughout the Halifax Common.

> To enrich public life, in the way people use public spaces, and in how those spaces are planned, implemented and maintained.

> To support human health and wellbeing with an open space system that minimizes environmental impacts and improves resilience to climate change.

> To protect and celebrate significant cultural and historic elements of the Halifax Common.

3.4 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

>> Coherent

Halifax Common is understood as one distinct place by being integrated, legible and orderly.

The Halifax Common is a complex landscape functioning at a range of scales. It is defined by its open spaces, tree-lined streets, hospitals, schools, museum and other institutions. Spatially, it currently feels fragmented and its edges blur into the surrounding urban environment, lacking both legibility and a sense of wholeness. Care must be taken to ensure any changes to the Halifax Common do not further erode its clarity.

From hospital to playground, the Halifax Common should be understood as belonging to one cohesive place, within the original boundary. All the open spaces should feel connected and integrated within a rational structure that ties the Halifax Common together. Visitors should feel an inviting and clear sense of a place, available for the good of all.

>>Enduring

The heritage of the Halifax Common is safeguarded for future generations to enjoy.

In the spirit of the original grant, the Halifax Common is understood as a valuable civic resource for present and future generations. The enduring care and health of the Halifax Common is vital to providing quality experiences to the growing population of the Halifax Regional Municipality. A continuously well-managed and high-quality Halifax Common can be a cornerstone to attracting residents, workers and business to the municipality.

Celebrating the heritage of the Halifax Common is the groundwork for protecting its future, but it cannot be frozen in the past. Into the future, as conditions and circumstance change, the Halifax Common can continue to evolve as an open space, respectfully integrating new activities and functions that are appropriate for each subsequent generation.

>> Connected

The Halifax Common links people and places through active mobility choices.

The Halifax Common is both a regional destination and a part of the local transportation network on the peninsula. Its links to the surrounding Halifax region as well as its internal mobility network can connect people with their destinations in a way that creates more vibrant, livable and walkable neighbourhoods, while adding to the vitality of the Halifax Common.

The internal network should be accessible, enjoyable and efficient, realizing the recreational potential of mobility for all and maximizing the useable green spaces between routes.

>> Open

Free and accessible open space is safeguarded.

Although the form, function and activities of open spaces have undergone continual evolution, there has always been an ideal that open space areas should have unobstructed public use. As space for the recreation and leisure pursuits of a growing urban population becomes more precious, the openness of the Halifax Common is even more important, inviting healthy activities like informal socializing, exploration, unstructured play, and simple leisure.

Unencumbered open space should be safeguarded so there will always be areas that are free and accessible for anyone to enjoy, at any time, alongside those limited open spaces that have formal booking protocols.

>> Diverse

The variety of activities, character and functions reflect the diverse needs of the community.

As one of the largest public space in Halifax, there is plenty of room for a wide range of open space types and activities to coexist, ensuring they are spatially compatible but not segregated. A diversified Halifax Common means broadening the notion of recreation and leisure to include a greater range of activities, a mix of passive and active recreation areas, and a balance of structured and unstructured activities.

From the Victoria Park to the North Common, the look and feel of open spaces varies greatly, and the range of distinct types and atmospheres is a strength to be built upon.

>> Inclusive

The Halifax Common's public spaces are for the enjoyment of everyone.

Providing equitable access to public space, recreation, and leisure is key to sustaining a healthy community. Public spaces bring opportunities to interact among community, foster a sense of belonging and build understanding among people who might not otherwise interact. It is also important to recognize that for some individuals and families, public spaces like the Halifax Common are the only means they have to enjoy nature and fresh air, and participate in leisure and recreation pursuits.

Inclusion refers to the designs, policies and programs that work to eliminate barriers and build opportunities to participate. Barriers that may prevent people from participating can be financial, physical, temporal, cultural, mental or emotional.

>> Versatile

Public spaces are efficient, adaptable and multi-functional.

A flexible and adaptable public space network should reflect the diverse needs of the community and support multiple uses, to see the Halifax Common achieve its full potential, with maximum public benefit. Spaces can be capable of adjustment to different circumstances or situations. While certain recreation functions may require dedicated space, the preference is for space that can serve multiple functions.

The Halifax Common is a precious public resource that can be adaptable to winter/summer uses, day/night uses, a mix of activities, scheduled booking/ free and casual access, shared indoor community spaces, and event sites.

>> Green

Park and open spaces are supported by infrastructure that incorporates sustainable and resilient living systems and processes.

There are numerous ecological services offered by natural infrastructure, including habitat creation, aesthetics, micro-climate moderation, reducing runoff, and perhaps most important, preserving the quantity of vegetation of the Halifax Common.

While there are significant built features on the Halifax Common, such as major underground storm and sanitary pipes, there are numerous ecological opportunities that can be implemented. These “green” options for management and design should be favoured over mechanical or structural options whenever feasible, working in concert with other landscape types (horticultural gardens, playscapes, heritage sites) to form an integrated system.

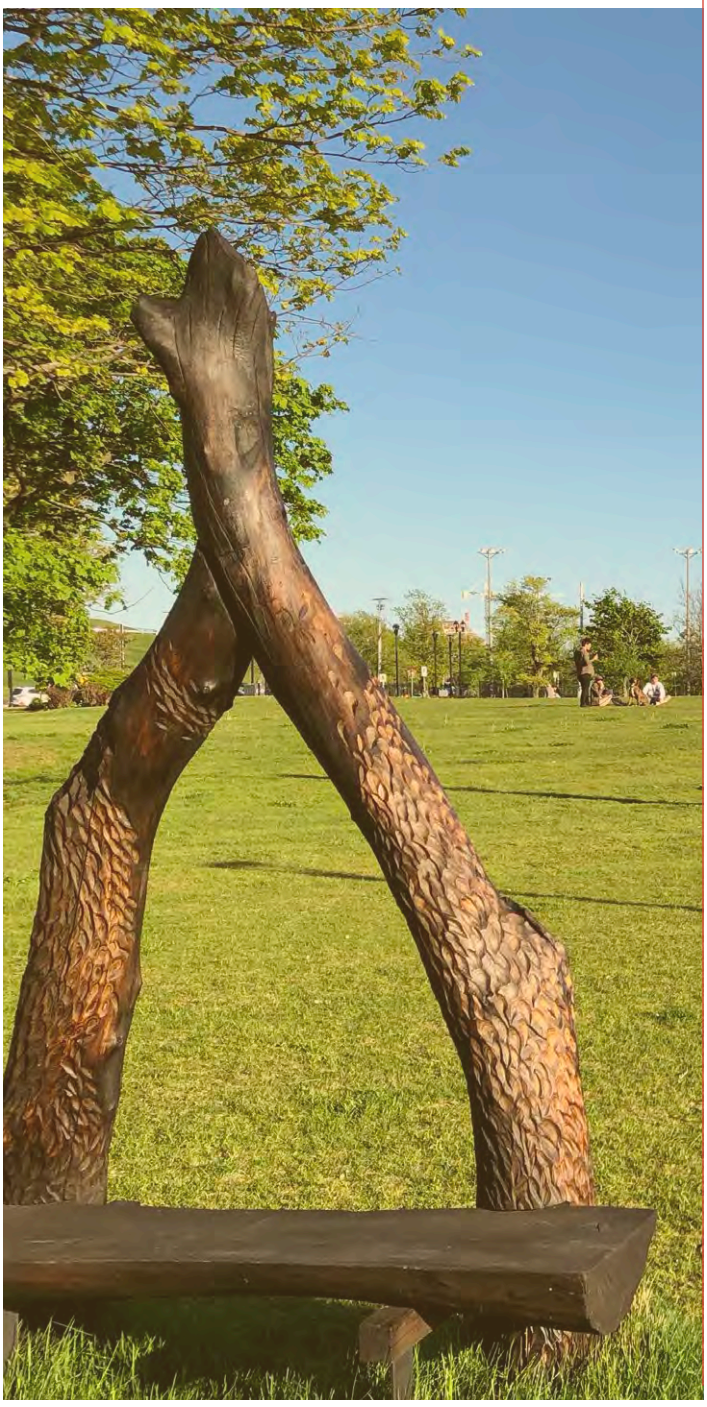
>> Participatory

The community is engaged in the planning, care and animation of the public spaces on the Halifax Common.

The Halifax Common contains more than just typical open spaces, land uses, and municipal parkland. It was established as a Common in 1763, early in the planning and layout of the city. It is revered as Canada’s first public urban green space. For many reasons, it is a vitally important place, and diverse groups have a stake in its future.

Through innovative new relationships and partnerships, stewardship groups and other citizens can play a vital role in the planning, care and animation of the open spaces on the Halifax Common.

4 DISTRICT-WIDE POLICY DIRECTIONS



4.1 The Halifax Common District and Land Use Character Areas

4.2 Identity and Integrity

4.3 Open Space Character

4.4 Cultural Heritage

4.5 Mobility and Linkages

4.6 Recreation, Programming and Events

4.7 Environmental Design

4.8 Facilities, Infrastructure, and Public Amenities

4.9 Governance and Partnerships

4.1 THE HALIFAX COMMON DISTRICT AND LAND USE CHARACTER AREAS

Goal

The Halifax Common will be planned and developed as an integrated whole, with a priority on coordinated open space management across its diverse character and land use areas.

Introduction

This plan covers the area that was originally defined at the time of the land grant in 1763 as the Halifax Common. As needs and philosophies changed over the years, the priorities of the time were expressed in the landscape of the Halifax Common. Public open space has long been a defining feature, but much of the Halifax Common was allotted as roadways and institutions. Nevertheless, the traditional Halifax Common continues to be a distinct district within the urban centre. This plan has authority over municipally-owned lands, and public open spaces are the focus. At the same time, the plan also recognizes that non-municipal lands, including public institutions and residential and commercial areas, are among the character areas that define the Halifax Common District.

Key Considerations

1. Extent and Land Use
The Halifax Common District stretches through the centre of the Halifax peninsula for approximately two kilometers. It ranges from 400-600 meters in width and occupies approximately 95 hectares. Its boundaries were clearly defined in 1859 after streets were constructed. The street boundaries today are Robie Street along the entire west side, Cunard Street to the north, North Park Street - Ahern Avenue - Bell Road - South Park Street along the east and aptly, South Street to the south. For the purposes of this Plan, the western slopes of Citadel Hill are regarded as an Associated Area.

Legend

HALIFAX CITADEL

HALIFAX COMMON

HALIFAX COMMON ASSOCIATED OPEN SPACE

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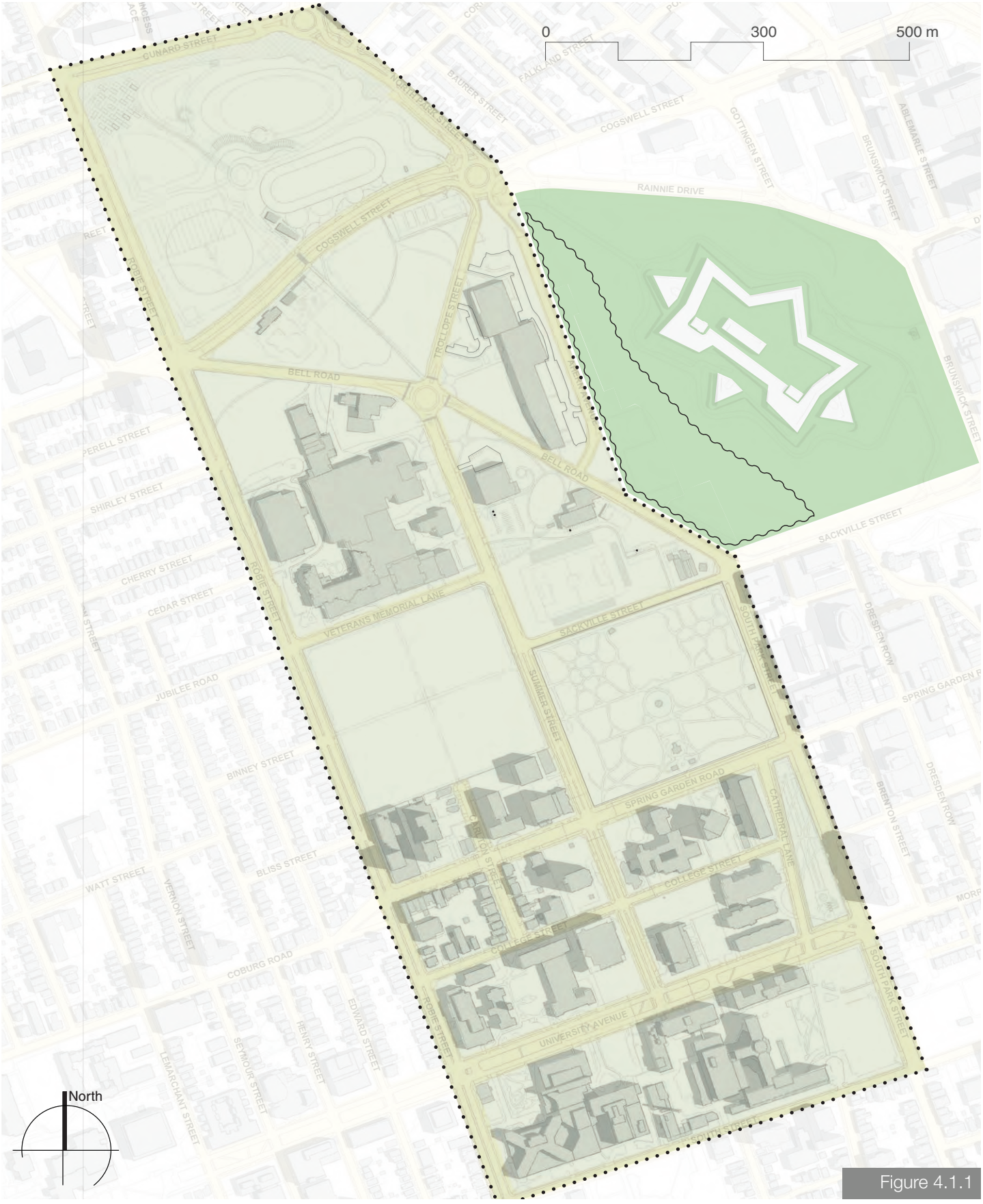

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COGSWELL STREET
TROLLOPE STREET
BELL ROAD
BELL ROAD
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PERELL STREET
SHIRLEY STREET
CHERRY STREET
CEDAR STREET
ROBIE STREET
VETERANS MEMORIAL LANE
SACKVILLE STREET
SUMMER STREET
SOUTH PARK STREET
DRESDEN ROW
SPRING GARDEN R
JUBILEE ROAD
BINNEY STREET
SPRING GARDEN ROAD
CATHEDRAL LANE
BRENTON STREET
DRESDEN ROW
BLISS STREET
COLLEGE STREET
WATT STREET
VERNON STREET
COLLEGE STREET
COBURG ROAD
UNIVERSITY AVENUE
SOUTH PARK STREET
EDWARD STREET
HENRY STREET
SEYMOUR STREET
LEMARCHANT STREET
North

Figure 4.1.1

2. Land Use Character Areas
Within the Halifax Common District, specific areas have unique character and different ownership. There is variety in the way the public uses these areas and the way that they can be managed. The Land Use Character Areas (Figure 4.1.2) provide a framework for understanding and planning the different types of places that exist throughout the Halifax Common District.

Municipal Open Space Areas: The municipally-owned lands are most in keeping with the original intent that the Halifax Common remain as undeveloped land. Uses in the 'Municipal Open Space' Character Areas include a mixture of existing recreation and leisure spaces, in addition to areas with heritage and cultural significance, such as the Public Gardens and Camp Hill Cemetery. Municipal Open Space Areas can be further categorized into 'Recreational Parkland' and 'Culture and Heritage Parkland', categories discuses further in Section 4.3.

Institutional Areas: There has been a history of placing public facilities and institutions on the Halifax Common, in the interest of the "public good". Most buildings were constructed by the provincial government including hospitals, schools, and the Museum of Natural History. Other public institutions' buildings include Sacred Heart School, All Saints Cathedral, and the University Avenue fire station (Station 2). 'Institutional' Character Areas also have a range of public and semi-public open spaces, including pathways, plazas, open lawn areas, and gardens and vegetation. On Institutional land, the planning focus is on joint strategies and collaboration with stakeholders.

Residential-Commercial Areas: There are privately owned areas along Spring Garden Road and Carleton and Summer Streets, as well as Cathedral Lane. These properties were deeded over to private development in the 1800s, during a period of rapid growth in Halifax. Today the 'Residential-Commercial' Character Areas have a similar character to the surrounding urban neighbourhoods and are subject to the applicable land use and development regulations outside of this Master Plan.

3. Preserving and Reclaiming the Halifax Common
The 1994 Halifax Common Plan directed the City of Halifax to preserve the Halifax Common and reclaim lands for public ownership wherever and whenever possible. The most recent round of public consultations revealed a continued desire to preserve and reclaim land within the Halifax Common, with “public open space” ranked as the highest valued use of the Halifax Common among participants.

Legend

- MUNICIPAL OPEN SPACE AREAS
- RECREATIONAL PARKLAND
- CULTURE AND HERITAGE PARKLAND
- INSTITUTIONAL AREAS
- RESIDENTIAL-COMMERCIAL AREAS

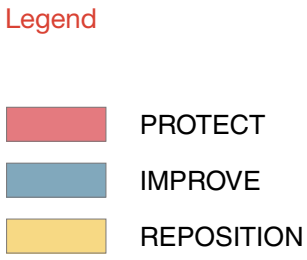
Land Use Character Areas



Figure 4.1.2

4. Municipal Open Space Management
Broadly, the level of intervention proposed for the Municipal Open Space Character Areas fits within a three-tiered scale: “Protect” for sites with sensitive historic resources, “Improve” for sites that require upgrades, and “Reposition” for sites where it has been determined bold changes are warranted (Figure 4.1.3). Retention and enhancement of open public space within the Municipal Open Space Character Areas is a key focus of this plan.

5. District-Wide Open Space Management
In practical, contemporary terms, this means striving toward a network of connected open spaces with public access throughout the Halifax Common District. This can be achieved through joint stewardship and integrated planning among institutional stakeholders. The municipality has taken steps to ensure land outside of its authority is planned to support a cohesive Halifax Common District, including the Memorandum of Understanding with the Capital District Health Authority and through land use planning regulations, policies, and design guidelines.



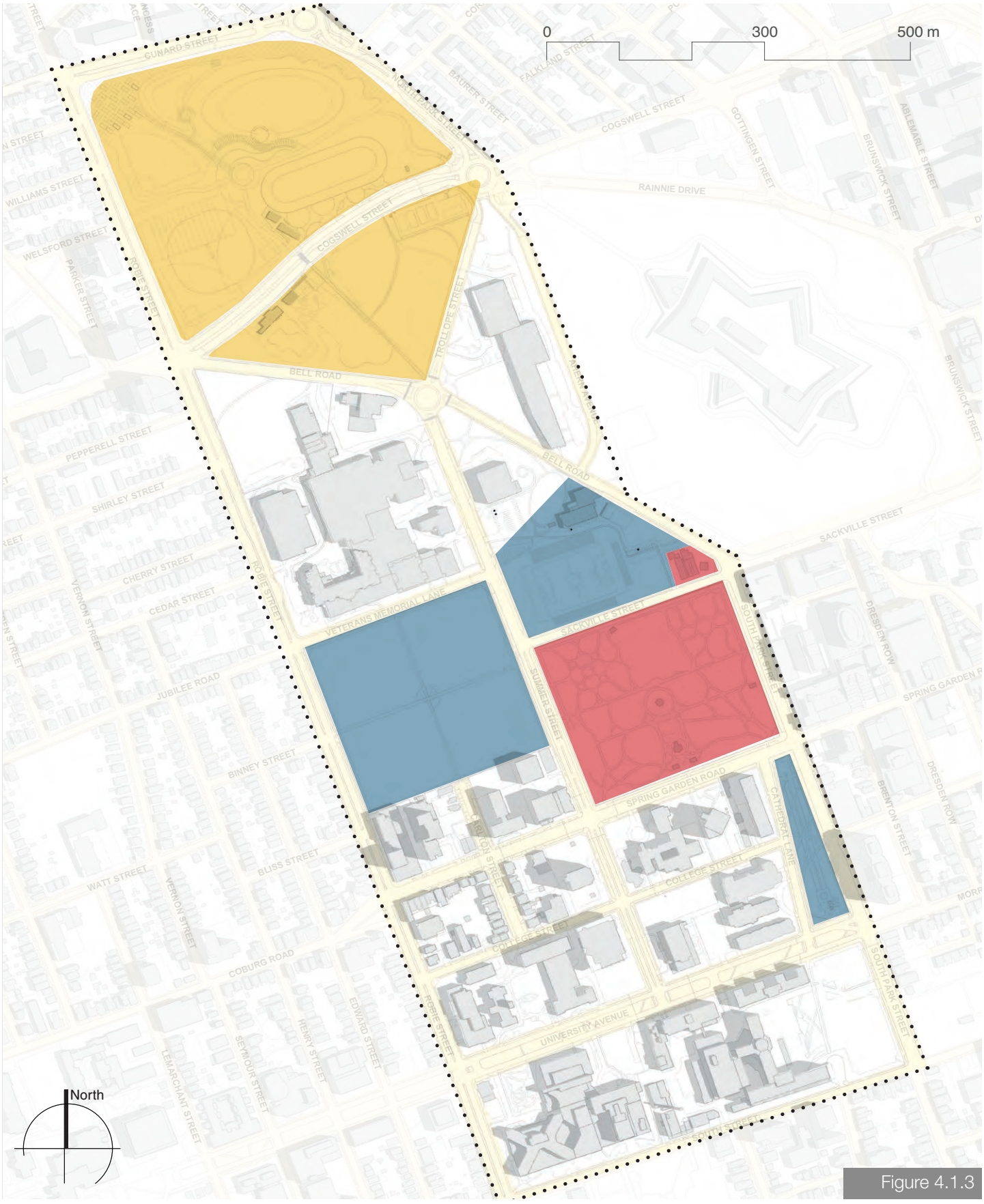

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WELSFORD STREET
PARKER STREET
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VERNON STREET
COBURG ROAD
EDWARD STREET
HENRY STREET
SEYMOUR STREET
LEMARCHANT STREET

Figure 4.1.3

Policy Directions

4.1.1 Recognize and plan the Halifax Common as a cohesive district established from the original land grant and defined by the bounding streets shown on Figure 4.1.1, Halifax Common District.

4.1.2 Identify the western side of Citadel Hill shown on Figure 4.1.2 as an important contributing area to the Halifax Common, recognized for its heritage, open space, and landscape qualities and categorize it as an "Associated Area." For the purposes of open space planning, consider this area similar to Municipal Open Space Character Areas, unless otherwise identified.

4.1.3 Recognize the Institutional, Municipal Open Space, and Residential-Commercial Character Areas identified on Figure 4.1.2, and plan accordingly for these areas so that they contribute to the overall Halifax Common.

4.1.4 Retain the Institutional Character Area lands for institutional uses, and not for other land uses that would be inconsistent with the original intent of the Halifax Common being for the public.

4.1.5 Retain the Municipal Open Space Character Areas for municipal open space, parks, and recreation uses.

4.1.6 Retain lands in the Municipal Open Space Character Areas in municipal ownership and acquire additional land for open space, park, and recreational uses as opportunities may arise.

Actions

Actions	
A4.1.1	Review the municipality's planning documents to recognize the Halifax Common as a distinct district.
A4.1.2	Review the municipality's planning documents to recognize the Institutional, Municipal Open Space, and Residential-Commercial Character Areas within the municipality's planning documents with policies and regulations that: • restrict the Institutional Areas for institutional uses; and • restrict the Municipal Open Space Character Areas for municipal open space, parks, and recreation facility uses.

4.2 IDENTITY AND INTEGRITY

Goal

The collective memory of the Halifax Common as one unified entity will be reinforced by a cohesive design language.

Introduction

To honour the significant heritage of this site, and protect it from the growing pressures of urbanization, this section addresses the integrity and cohesion of the entire Halifax Common, helping it function as a single precinct. Diverse 'character areas' unified by a common design language and improved network of connections will offer the citizens of the Halifax region outstanding spaces that support a wide range of uses and benefits including recreation, healthcare, education and culture. The sense of wholeness and order across the Halifax Common must operate at many scales, but this section focuses on integration at the highest level: the overall structure of streets and land uses, edges, built form and open space.

Key Considerations

1. Cohesive Design Across the Common
Alternating bands of recreational and cultural open space with institutional and private development visually fractures the Halifax Common and obscures its sense of identity and cohesion. The current urban form and character of many of the institutions does not invite free-flowing pedestrian access between open spaces and adjacent neighbourhoods, reinforcing the fragmented feeling of the Halifax Common. A sense of cohesion and unified order can be restored by stitching together these diverse land uses.

2. Robie Street Edge
Anticipated new development along Quinpool Road and Spring Garden Road in the vicinity of the Halifax Common, along with new dedicated bus lanes on Robie Street and new hospital buildings on the former site of the Common Roots Urban Farm will increase activity along the western edge of the Halifax Common. The resulting increase in traffic, pedestrian activity, and building height will transform the character of this edge. Consideration will need to be made to ensure access to the Halifax Common remains inviting and pedestrian scaled, with design strategies that buffer noise and optimize solar access.

3. North Park Street Edge
Important heritage resources like the Armoury, historic events like the wartime barracks, and public art installations, including several of the Halifax Explosion commemorative markers, are all concentrated along North Park Street. Roundabouts and the associated pedestrian and cycling

improvements create a streetscape that is among the most inviting and engaging edges to the Halifax Common. This can be built upon to create an even richer threshold along the east edge that welcomes and orients visitors from the Citadel, waterfront and downtown.

4. Summer Street Spine
Summer Street is a 900 metre long central roadway along which many key institutions and open spaces are lined, notably the two hospital campuses. Summer Street is included in the AT Priorities Plan as an 'Envisioned Greenway' for walking and cycling. It is an ideal route that could be significantly enhanced to serve as a unifying 'spine' that ties the Halifax Common's various character areas together. Further direction in this regard is provided in Section 5.2.

5. Wayfinding
At present, the Halifax Common provides few cues or signs to help people spatially orient themselves or discover the rich variety of offerings available. Wayfinding elements are critical to making the Halifax Common a more accessible and functional destination, and they encompass more than just signage. Subtle cues, such as markers embedded in sidewalk entry points, lighting, paving materials and vegetation can demarcate routes, thresholds and district edges. Cues can also be more explicit such as entry plazas or markers at significant intersections or entrances to the Halifax Common (Figure 4.2.1).

6. Identity vs. Branding
Streetscape character should reflect the identity of the Halifax Common. But identity is an organic attribute that takes time to cultivate. It is not the same as 'branding', which is an image that can be manufactured and applied to a public space; identity is authentic and deeply seated in the day-to-day use, history, and gamut of public impressions. For the Halifax Common, it is somewhat elusive, given the overburden of centuries of varying uses and development pressures. But all things considered, the general idea of a place with a long history, dedicated to the public good is still remarkably uncorrupted and intact. This provides a solid basis to make the identity more legible, and the streetscape character more authentic and coherent.

Policy Directions

4.2.1 Differentiate the Halifax Common through cohesive design, integrated through the open space planning and design of parkland, paths and streets.

4.2.2 Design and develop the streetscapes that form the boundaries of the Halifax Common to be distinguished from adjoining areas and consistent with its open space character.

4.2.3 Denote street intersections at the edge of the Halifax Common and major intersections within the Halifax Common as important entrances, distinguished through means such as markers or building setbacks at corners with open space plazas.

4.2.4 Plan for Summer Street as a prominent north-south spine of the Halifax Common and the Promenade as outlined in Chapter 5.2 for enhanced interpretation.

4.2.5 Consider the identity of the Halifax Common through interpretation of its culture, history and landscape rather than sponsorship or other unrelated branding, unless associated with an event or facility.

4.2.6 Consider wayfinding signage for visitors that is:

- comprehensive in nature, either as part of an overall city-wide initiative or at a Halifax Common-wide scale;
- that at a size and scale that is oriented towards pedestrians, with exceptions directional signage for hospital services and major destinations; and
- includes symbolism that is identified with the Halifax Common.

Actions

Actions	
A4.2.1	Review the municipality's planning documents, related plans, and regulations and where applicable, incorporate the policy directions of this section, including those related to: • open space design; • streetscapes; and • street intersections.
A4.2.2	Review the municipality's administrative orders, policies and procedures relative to the sponsorship and branding policies of this section.

Legend

COMMON MARKERS / PLAZAS

COMMON REMINDERS / PLAZAS

OFF-STREET PEDESTRIAN ROUTES

COLAB HTFC PLANNING & DESIGN UPLAND

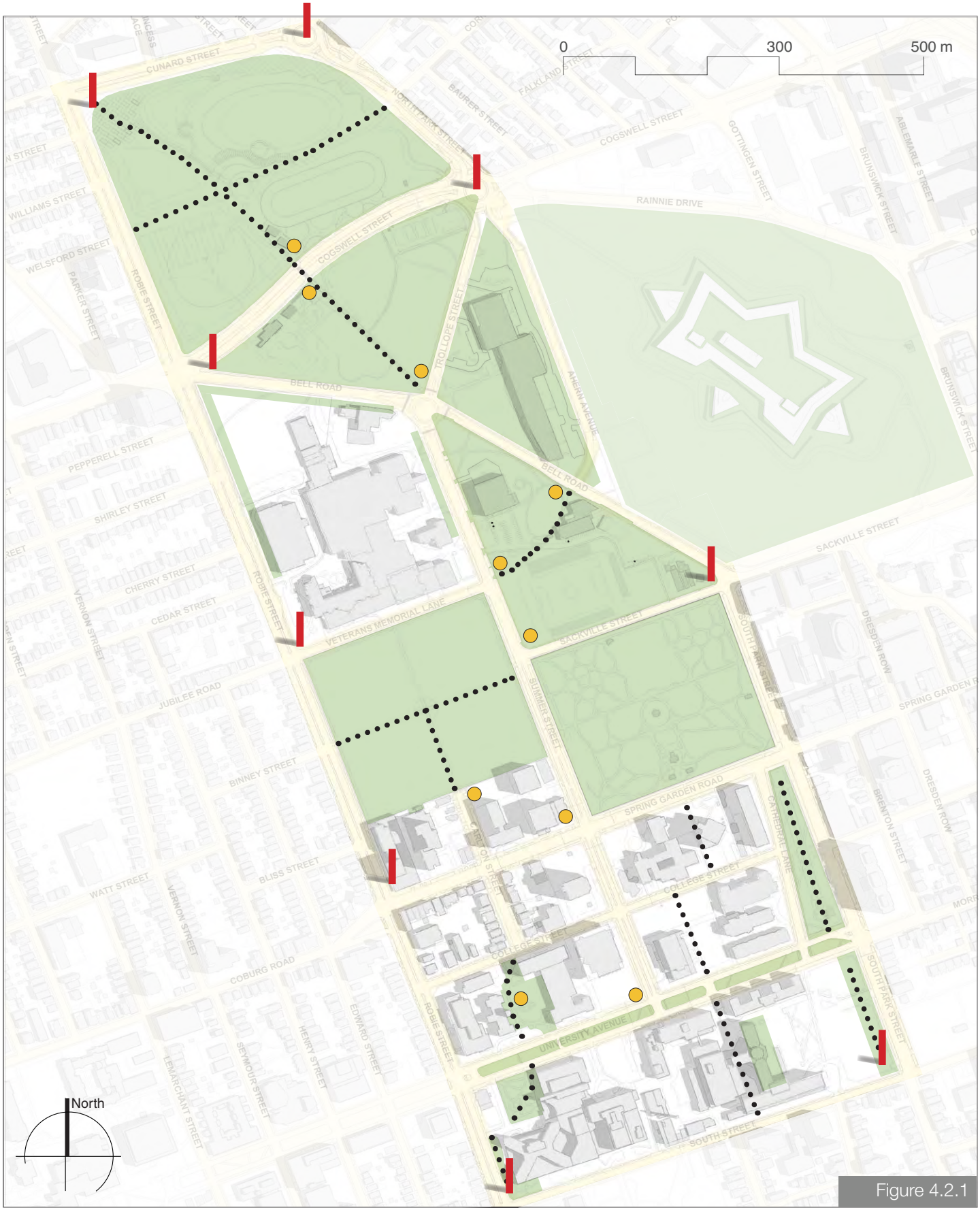

0
300
500 m
CUNARD STREET
NORTH PARK STREET
BAURER STREET
FALKLAND STREET
COGSWELL STREET
GOTTINGEN STREET
ABLEMARLE STREET
BRUNSWICK STREET
RAINNIE DRIVE
WILLIAMS STREET
WELSFORD STREET
PARKER STREET
ROBIE STREET
TROLLOPE STREET
BELL ROAD
AHERN AVENUE
PEPPERELL STREET
SHIRLEY STREET
CHERRY STREET
CEDAR STREET
VERNON STREET
VETERANS MEMORIAL LANE
SACKVILLE STREET
SUMMER STREET
SOUTH PARK STREET
DRESDEN ROW
SPRING GARDEN ROAD
JUBILEE ROAD
BINNEY STREET
BLISS STREET
WATT STREET
COBURG ROAD
CARLTON STREET
CATHEDRAL LANE
COLLEGE STREET
BRENTON STREET
UNIVERSITY AVENUE
SOUTH STREET
EDWARD STREET
HENRY STREET
SEYMOUR STREET
LEMARCHANT STREET
North

Figure 4.2.1

4.3 OPEN SPACE CHARACTER

GOAL

The Halifax Common will preserve and enhance public access to open spaces, creating a destination that serves the local and regional community with a broad range of outdoor recreation and leisure options.

INTRODUCTION

Open space and public access have been the essence of the Halifax Common since the land was first granted “for the use of the inhabitants of the town of Halifax as Common forever.” It has a long history of being embraced by the community as a space for recreation and leisure activities of various kinds. The Halifax Common serves as a vital public amenity that provides space for people to gather, connect with nature, improve their health and wellbeing, and build community.

Land in the Halifax Common is managed through a hierarchical framework that provides users different levels of access to its spaces. Municipal lands, including the recreational green spaces, cultural landscapes sites, and streets, all contribute to the character of the open space network and accommodate a spectrum of users. In addition to municipal lands, institutional lands contribute to the character of the Halifax Common's open space network through urban form and landscaping of individual sites. The Halifax Common has the potential to function with a broader range of leisure and recreation activities by striking a balance between the types of activity spaces that are available.

This section outlines policies and actions that recognize the importance of preserving and enhancing open space and access to the Halifax Common, while increasing the diversity and quality of activities and amenities available. These actions will reinforce the Halifax Common as one of the core assets in the open space and recreation destination network.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

1. Municipal Land
The Municipality manages a large portion of the land within the Halifax Common. These lands are structured and operate as recreational green spaces and cultural landscapes, providing users with a mix of leisure and recreation spaces. The North and Central Common are generally characterized by a limited number of structures and support buildings to maintain the openness of the Common land, while the Wanderers Grounds has greater levels of control to limit the types of uses and user groups. Cultural landscape sites managed by the Municipality, including the Camp Hill Cemetery and Public Gardens, provide passive recreation areas and are managed with the intention to preserve their traditional design and uses.

2. Categorizing Municipal Land
The Municipal Open Space Character Areas can be categorized into two subareas:'Recreational Parkland' and 'Culture and Heritage Parkland' (Figure 4.1.2). The Recreational Parkland areas are defined by a mixture of current recreation and leisure uses, and emphasize structured and unstructured recreation that may adapt to changing circumstances. The North and Central Common are included within the Recreational Parkland areas.

The Culture and Heritage Parkland areas emphasize maintaining the respective heritage and cultural significance of parks and providing recreational experiences that are focused on interpretation and appreciation. Victoria Park, Public Gardens, Camp Hill Cemetery, Wanderers Grounds,

University Avenue Open Space, and the Associated Area of Citadel Hill are included within the Culture and Heritage Parkland areas.

3. Institutional Lands
There is considerable variability in the built form of institutional uses across the Halifax Common. Smaller, more defined street blocks south of Spring Garden Road results in an urban form that is more organized and rhythmic. Structures are built closer to lot lines, leaving fewer spaces for public open spaces within and between buildings; however, University Avenue, acting as an east-west green corridor provides an important open space for users. University Avenue connects with Victoria Park on the eastern extent of the Halifax Common, joining these institutional lands with the remainder of the Halifax Common. North of Spring Garden Road, large, irregular lots and larger building setbacks results in larger green spaces surrounding institutional structures that contribute to the character of the Halifax Common and reinforce its openness.

4. Benefits of Green Space
There are a number of important benefits from spending time in green spaces and parks. A significant body of research and practice indicates that green spaces promote physical, mental, and social health and well-being for all communities. They promote physical activity, decrease stress, bring people together with social opportunities, and promote a sense of community and social supports. Equitable access to green space can minimize health disparities and enhance overall quality of life.

5. Naturalizing the Landscape
The vast majority of trees on the Halifax Common line the streets or are located in the Culture and Heritage Parkland areas such as the Public Gardens. Existing Recreational Parkland green spaces consist largely of open lawns of mowed grass, which are energy intensive to maintain. There is a community desire to both increase tree and vegetative cover while also maintaining a balance of open spaces and views. Public consultations revealed a preference for natural landscaping and undulating terrain that retains a sense of orderliness.

6. Streets as Open, Public Spaces
Streets contribute to the character and experience of people who visit and use the Halifax Common and should be designed to be inviting and reinforce a unified park identity. Streets are reinforced as open, public places when they are safe, comfortable, and enjoyable to use. Street intersections and termini offer opportunities as key placemaking entry plazas to the Halifax Common and as meeting places. Plazas, including those on North Park Street and in Victoria Park, provide access points to the Halifax Common and act as congregating areas.

Trees currently define much of the street edge of the Halifax Common. The benefits of street trees and other landscaping treatments should not be overlooked as they are among the most cost effective means to improve the character, consistency, and comfort of a roadway. Other amenities along streets, including pedestrian scale lighting, seating, and surface treatments, are all powerful tools for branding a district, and signalling to visitors that it is intended for people.

The aesthetic and character of streets across the Halifax Common vary significantly. The western edge, bound by Robie Street, is defined by mature trees on the street's edges with newer growth along the central median. Overhead street lighting along the central median of Robie Street transitions to pedestrian scale lighting within and around the North Common. This pattern is generally replicated along Summer Street where large, mature, streets frame the street. The large canopy transitions to a more open area in the North and Central Common through the use of manicured landscaping, and is aided by larger building setbacks.

North Park Street is an excellent example of streetscape design that is among one of the most inviting and engaging edges to the Halifax Common. Roundabouts and the associated pedestrian and cycling improvements create a streetscape that calms traffic and invites people into the park. Mature trees along this edge frame views into the park and create a sense of enclosure. Ground-level plantings in warmer months creates variability in the vegetative species and pockets of enclose spaces. The streetscape is well

integrated surrounding heritage sites like the Armoury, and the Halifax Explosion commemorative marker, reveals the rich history and identity of the Halifax Common.

7. Balance of Active and Passive Recreational Areas

Open spaces and recreation spaces on the Halifax Common are ultimately shaped by the organization and functionality of facilities and vegetated spaces. The vegetative cover across the Halifax Common varies—the edges are often framed with mature tree stands with grassy natural areas composing a large portion of the open and recreation space. Built facilities including the skatepark, the Oval, and the playground/splash pad offer distinctly unique recreation opportunities to the public.

The range of available uses within the Halifax Common is heavily skewed towards structured activities. This is especially true in the North and Central Common, which are dominated by the Oval and ball diamonds. The associated cost to participate in structured recreation (fees, equipment, time commitment) in addition to high usage rates by softball teams during peak hours in warmer months, reduces public access to participate and use the Halifax Common. At present, there is a lack of infrastructure for unstructured activities and casual socializing such as seating and shaded gathering areas. Public consultations reveal a desire for a mix of infrastructure to support both structured and unstructured activities, with a slight preference for unstructured active uses such as skating, walking or skateboarding.

Legend

ACTIVE RECREATION

PASSIVE RECREATION

HALIFAX CITADEL

Proposed Recreation Experience

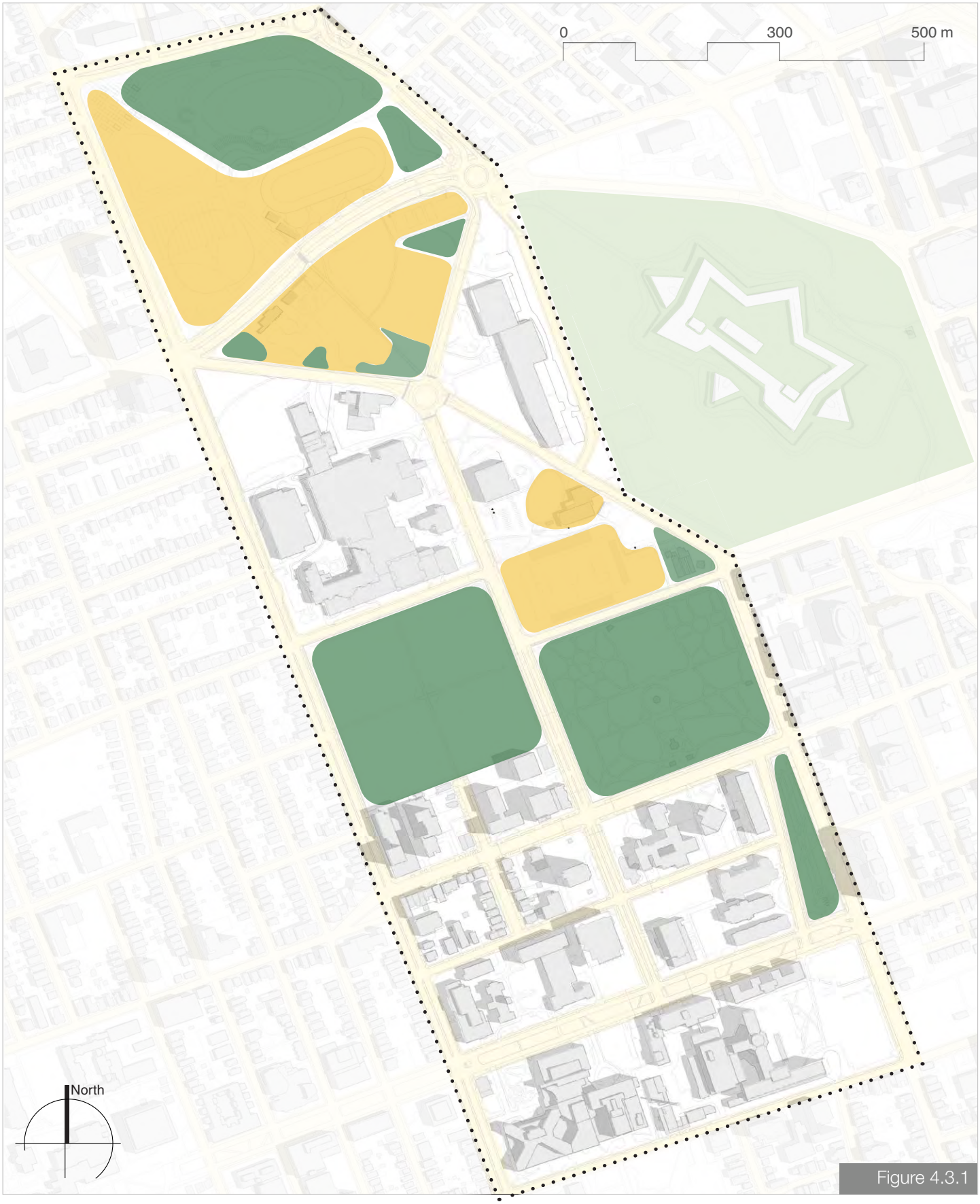


Figure 4.3.1

POLICY DIRECTIONS

4.3.1 Recognize the importance of green space and equitable access to it for physical and mental well-being, in the planning of the Halifax Common and in particular within Municipal Open Space Areas.

4.3.2 Recognize and retain semi-public open space areas identified on Figure 4.1.2 for the contributions they make to open space on the Halifax Common.

4.3.3 Plan for buildings in the Halifax Common with setbacks and a street presence as outlined in this plan to support the character and identity of the Halifax Common.

4.3.4 Recognize and plan for streets within the Halifax Common, inclusive of centre boulevards, tree lawns, and sidewalks, as a park-like setting, comprised of features such as mature and other trees, vegetative ground cover, amenities such as seating, and wide pedestrian sidewalks and paths, wherever physically practical.

4.3.5 Recognize the boulevard areas of University Avenue as open space areas to provide open space amenities to for surrounding uses and linkages beyond the Halifax Common.

4.3.6 Categorize and plan municipal open space on the Halifax Common as 'Culture and Heritage Parkland' and 'Recreational Parkland' areas as outlined in this plan.



Figure 4.3.2: Appropriate Institutional Setback. Approximately 4.0 m from the streetline and comprised of vegetation and entrances.

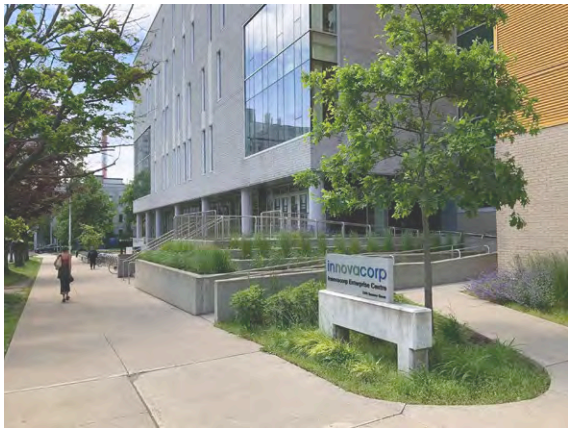


Figure 4.3.3: Appropriate Institutional Setback. Approximately 4.0 m from the streetline and comprised of vegetation, an extended sidewalk, seating, and entrances.



Figure 4.3.4: Appropriate Institutional Setback. Approximately 4.0 m from the streetline and comprised of vegetation, an extended sidewalk, bicycle racks, and entrances.



Figure 4.3.5: Appropriate Institutional Setback. Approximately 4.0 m from the streetline and comprised of vegetation but could have an improved pedestrian-oriented interface of seating and building entrances.

Actions

Actions	
A4.3.1	Engage with Institutional stakeholders on the importance of retaining the semi-public open spaces identified on Figure 4.3.6 with the adoption of this plan, and on an on-going basis as institutional planning for the Halifax Common occurs.
A4.3.2	Review the municipality's Service and Specifications Manual, and where applicable, include specifications for streets, inclusive of centre boulevards, tree lawns, and wide sidewalks within the Halifax Common as outlined in this plan.
A4.3.3	As streets are recapitalized, include measures to design and establish a park-like setting within the Halifax Common, that includes the retention of mature trees and the introduction of new trees, vegetative ground cover, amenities such as seating, and wide pedestrian sidewalks and paths, wherever physically practical.
A4.3.4	Add new seating and related amenities within the boulevard areas of University Avenue as short-term measures to increase the recreational use of these areas.
A4.3.5	Plan and develop the boulevard areas of University Avenue as open space areas with vegetation, plazas, seating, and other amenities to support recreational uses.
A4.3.6	Consider the inclusion of building setbacks, streetline landscaping, parking, utilitarian area screening, and design appearance standards requirements as outlined in this plan within the municipality's planning documents.

For Actions regarding municipal open spaces, please see Chapter 5 - Municipal Land Strategies.

Legend

MUNICIPAL OPEN SPACE

INSTITUTIONAL OPEN SPACE

HALIFAX CITADEL


0
300
500 m
North
CUNARD STREET
COGSWELL STREET
RAINNIE DRIVE
BELL ROAD
SACKVILLE STREET
SPRING GARDEN ROAD
COLLEGE STREET
UNIVERSITY AVENUE
SOUTH PARK STREET
SUMMER STREET
VETERANS MEMORIAL LANE
JUBILEE ROAD
COBURG ROAD
WATT STREET
BLISS STREET
BINNEY STREET
CHERRY STREET
CEDAR STREET
SHIRLEY STREET
PEPPERELL STREET
WELSFORD STREET
WILLIAMS STREET
PARKER STREET
ROBIE STREET
VERNON STREET
HOLLIS STREET
BRUNSWICK STREET
ABLEMARLE STREET
GOTTINGEN STREET
BAUER STREET
FALKLAND STREET
DRESDEN ROW
BRENTON STREET
CATHEDRAL LANE
HENRY STREET
EDWARD STREET
SEYMOUR STREET
LEMARCHANT STREET

Figure 4.3.6

4.4 CULTURAL HERITAGE

GOALS

The Halifax Common will reveal its rich cultural and natural heritage, creating a sense of connection with the past and a contemporary sense of place for new generations.

The municipality will demonstrate that safeguarding significant heritage resources provides a foundation for future planning and enhancing the sense of place and community identity embodied in the Halifax Common.

INTRODUCTION

Established in 1763 on the traditional territory of the Mi'kmaq people, the Halifax Common is Canada's oldest urban civic park. Over the last 250 years, the Halifax Common has evolved and changed shape many times, being transformed from a boggy pasture to a Victorian pleasure ground, to a military parade ground, to a temporary housing site after the Halifax Explosion, and through a period of urbanization and encroachment in the last century, to the mixed-use green space of today. There are, however, significant areas of the Halifax Common that remain essentially intact, with their early form, materials and use generally unchanged. The many layers of the Halifax Common's natural and cultural heritage reveal the story of Halifax and its people, but are not readily apparent to the casual visitor.

Much of the Halifax Common's identified heritage resources are associated with events and persons that may be related with the 'founding' of the city. While these circumstances might continue to be recognized, ideas about commemoration are evolving and should occur in a broader context that accounts for different perspectives and builds on opportunities for reconciliation and the opportunities to establish shared values over open space.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

1. Heritage as a Community Cultural Resource
The Halifax Common is not a museum but an actively evolving landscape composed of many layers. Each period has left its mark on the Halifax Common, reflecting the needs and priorities of the era. Preserving and protecting this cumulative cultural heritage should not preclude the Halifax Common from continuing to evolve to meet the open space and public realm needs of today and tomorrow.

The heritage structures and landscapes within the Halifax Common connect us to our past and help tell the story of how Halifax was developed and how people lived as the community grew around it. Far from being a static relic of the past, heritage structures and landscapes are cultural resources that can help inform a rooted sense of place and serve as learning environments for new generations.

2. Cultural Landscapes
The geographical area of the Halifax Common, together with the Halifax Citadel, is identified in other municipal plans and open space studies as a *cultural landscape* for its historical relevance in the founding and settlement pattern of Halifax. There are also opportunities to recognize the presence of first nations in the consideration of cultural landscapes.

The *Heritage Property Act* of Nova Scotia defines 'cultural landscapes' to mean a distinct geographical area or property uniquely representing the combined work of nature and of people. Cultural landscapes can vary dramatically in size and character, from an individual site such as the Halifax Public Gardens, to a geographical area such as the entirety of the Halifax Common District.

Within the Halifax Common there are individual cultural landscape properties that have high significance for their intentional design and landscape style. The Halifax Public Gardens is a designed cultural landscape and a rare surviving example of a Victorian public garden. Camp Hill Cemetery is the first example of the Rural Cemetery Movement in Canada. Victoria Park, University Avenue and the grand boulevard streets within the Halifax Common District also have design elements indicative of park and street development in the early 20th Century that have shaped the open space character of the Halifax Common today. Although the design of the North Common and Central Common is more vernacularly evolved, these areas are culturally significant as common land.

3. Natural Heritage

An important, though occasionally overlooked aspect of heritage on the Halifax Common, is the land itself. Cultivated elements such as mature trees, the Halifax Public Gardens, and viewsheds enabled by topography are important aspects of its natural heritage. Furthermore, for thousands of years this landscape was inhabited by the Mi'kmaq people and composed of woodland, small streams and wetland habitat rich with fish, water fowl, moose, and other wildlife. This original state and the labour of transforming it to open pasturelands and fields are other layers of natural heritage that can be made visible.

4. Archaeology

Decades of disturbance have generally diminished the significance of the Halifax Common for archaeology, as indicated in the Archaeology Report in the Appendix. Nevertheless, pockets of archaeological deposits may remain intact beneath the grassed areas as well as beneath the playground, basketball court, ball diamonds, tennis courts, and asphalt parking lots and walkways. The Archaeological Resource Impact Assessment commissioned as part of this Master Plan (Appendix C) recommends an archaeological monitoring program that applies to any ground disturbance within areas of the Halifax Common not previously excavated, including undeveloped lands within the institutional properties.

5. Formal Registration

As indicated in the detailed Halifax Common Conservation Strategy in Appendix D, formal registration of the Halifax Common as a "cultural landscape" would provide a meaningful lens for review and approval of proposed removals, alterations and additions. The registration process involves identifying the character-defining elements that are evidence of significant past uses. Designation at the national or municipal level allows for the full range of heritage resources of the historic place to be considered, including not only the structures but their relationships with each other, the adjacent lands and their overall setting or context. The formal processes to designate elements, properties or portions of the Halifax Common under the *Heritage Property Act* may identify other priorities than what is outlined in this plan and its appendices. A Cultural Landscape designation will include a significant public engagement process and additional background research.

Registration triggers an elevated standard of care, and requires new initiatives on the Halifax Common to be formally evaluated as to how they impact heritage values, and how negative impacts are to be mitigated or avoided. When the provincial policy is finalized for the designation of Cultural Landscapes, it will provide further guidance toward the decision whether to register parts or the whole of the Halifax Common. Until then, the Halifax Common can be treated as a cultural landscape as defined by the *Heritage Property Act* of Nova Scotia, and its heritage resources protected through land use policies consistent with the intent of the Act.

6. A Cultural Landscape Approach

Maintaining the Halifax Common and ensuring it evolves as the community evolves can partly be accomplished through a cultural landscape approach. This approach entrenches the Halifax Common as a place being created for, and by, citizens. It also ensures the community will be involved in any major proposed alterations to the Halifax Common. A cultural landscape framework will preserve the essential nature of the Halifax Common but also facilitate its continued evolution.

The numerous heritage structures, landscapes, and cultural destinations connect citizens to the past, helping tell the story of how Halifax developed, and how people lived as the community grew around it. Reinforcing the Halifax Common as a cultural landscape can be achieved through commemoration, public art, event spaces, and heritage interpretation. These elements strengthen and create connections to the spaces that people use; thus supporting the entire Halifax Common District as a physical, cultural, and social space.

KEY DEFINITIONS

Conservation: all actions or processes that are aimed at safegaurding the character-defining elements of an historic place so as to retain its heritage value and extend its physical life. This may involve preservation, rehabilitation, restoration or a combination of these actions or processes.

Preservation: the action or process of protecting, maintaining, and/or stabilizing the existing materials, form, and integrity of an historic place, or of an individual component, while protecting its heritage value.

Rehabilitation: the action of process of making possible a continuing or compatible contemporary use of an historic place, or an individual component, while protecting its heritage value.

Restoration: the action or process or accurately revealing, recovering or representing the state of an historic place, or of an individual component, as it appeared at a particular period in its history, while protecting its heritage value.

Legend

Registered Heritage Sites:

- NATIONAL HISTORIC SITES
- WANDERERS GROUND PARCEL
- MUNICIPAL REGISTERED HERITAGE PROPERTIES

Identified Cultural Landscapes:

- GEOGRAPHICAL AREA - HALIFAX COMMON & HALIFAX CITADEL
- INDIVIDUAL DESIGNED LANDSCAPES
- COMMON LAND PARCELS

Conservation Management Recommendations:

- PRESERVATION
- RESTORATION & REHABILITATION
- PRESERVATION & REHABILITATION

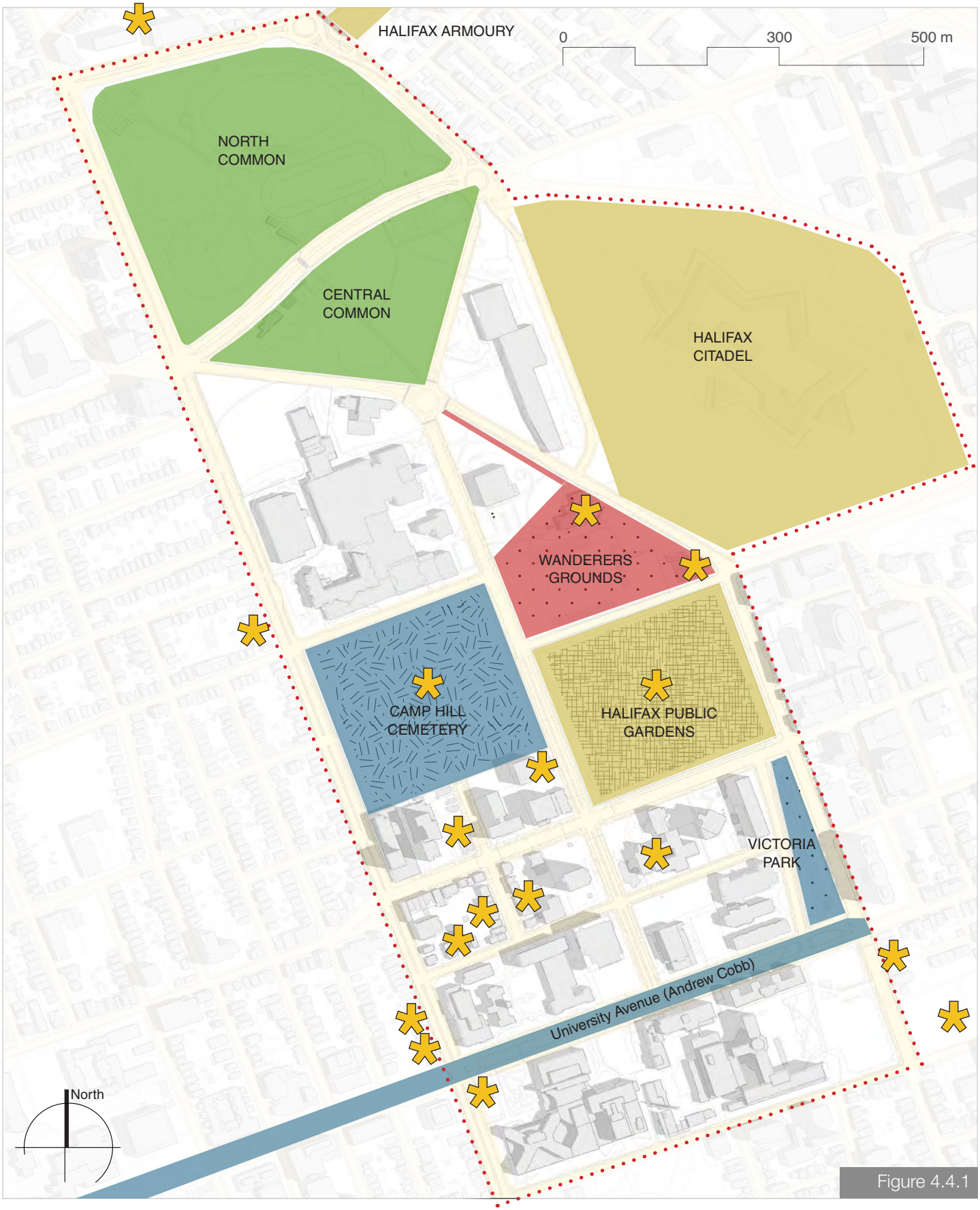

HALIFAX ARMOURY
0
300
500 m
NORTH COMMON
CENTRAL COMMON
HALIFAX CITADEL
WANDERERS GROUNDS
CAMP HILL CEMETERY
HALIFAX PUBLIC GARDENS
VICTORIA PARK
University Avenue (Andrew Cobb)
North

Figure 4.4.1

7. Interpreting the Landscape

Despite the rich legacy of cultural and natural heritage, the Halifax Common offers few opportunities for visitors to discover this history. Public consultations revealed a strong desire to learn about the heritage of the Halifax Common through creative and interpretive interventions. The history of the Halifax Common and its diverse narratives, including the stories that do not currently occupy the dominant historical accounts, must be presented for current and future generations.

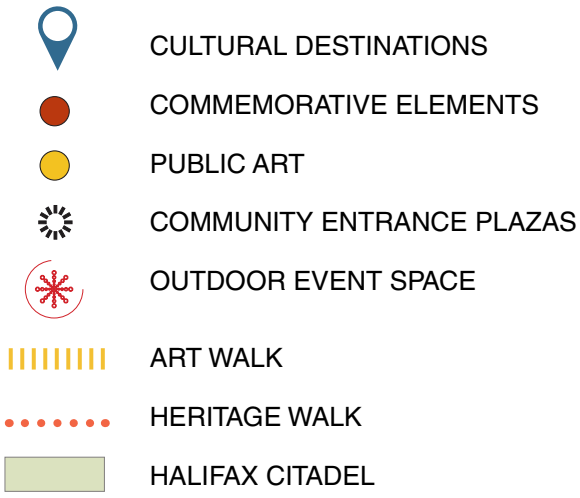
At the same time, consultations indicated a community desire to take greater efforts toward ensuring that all people feel welcome and represented in the Halifax Common. As such, there is a need for continued recognition of contemporary culture and events that hold broad community significance.

The scale and distribution of significant cultural elements within the Halifax Common presents opportunities to focus conservation at different scales and locations. Commemorative art that is embedded in the landscape, such as the Halifax Explosion markers, are a creative update on more traditional forms of commemoration such as monuments and plaques. Expanding the scope of historical commemoration to include a greater variety of narratives and deploying creative interpretive features, will effectively link the past with the present and future.

Interpretation should consider the different perspectives and lenses for understanding heritage. Historical narratives and perspectives should reflect the distinct history of the Halifax Common and Halifax more general. There are interesting and powerful stories to be told that will provide nuance and depth to interpretation. Mi'kmaq, African Nova Scotian, European and other perspectives must be represented in the recognition and interpretation of the Halifax Common.

Cultural landscapes each have particular needs for conservation management. The Public Gardens has had a conservation management plan for many years and these measures for preservation should continue. The Wanderers' Grounds is in need of preservation and rehabilitation of some areas, and the Camp Hill Cemetery requires work to restore and rehabilitate its heritage value through a site-specific conservation and interpretation management plan, similar to what exists for the Public Gardens.

Legend



COLAB HTFC PLANNING & DESIGN UPLAND


0
300
500 m
Explosion Marker
(New)
COMMON GREEN
THE OVAL
(New)
(New)
COMMUNITY SPACE
(New)
(New)
CITADEL CC
CULTURAL SPACE (New)
SPATZ THEATRE
HALIFAX
CITADEL
Explosion Marker
MUSEUM OF
NATURAL HISTORY
GARRISON
GROUNDS
WANDERERS
GROUNDS
Bandstand
CAMP HILL
CEMETERY
HALIFAX PUBLIC
GARDENS
Public Gardens Gate
Robert Burns
VICTORIA
PARK
Oland Fountain
School for the
Blind
Explosion Marker
North

Figure 4.4.2

8. Public Art, Commemoration, and Cultural Event Spaces

Public art enlivens the public realm and can attract people to the Halifax Common. Artworks that are located within the Halifax Common should echo the narratives and perspectives of the area and the people of Halifax in general. Priority should be given to public art that reflects and embraces the cultural diversity and considers the geography and history of the Halifax Common. As a high-profile public space, major streetscape and park developments within the Halifax Common district should have public art funded as a component of the project. For smaller park recapitalization projects, a funding reserve can be set up to achieve significant public art at strategic locations. Another option is for smaller scale artworks to be integrated into the use and design of landscape elements. The size and cost of artworks for smaller projects can be modest and can provide opportunities for emerging artists to gain experience and recognition. Priority should be given to siting public art at key entry points, gathering nodes and along the Promenade as described in Section 5.2. The three gateway plazas built as part of the North Park Street improvements were community art collaborations with the Mi'kmaq, the LGBTQ+ and the African Nova Scotian communities in the neighbourhood. Future park entrances can be opportunities to engage with other cultural groups.

The Halifax Common as a distinct geographic and cultural area would benefit from a public art awareness program whether as a standalone program or incorporated into a larger municipal program. Collaboration with institutional partners and community organizations can support the delivery. There are a number of public art works installed on the Halifax Common that have been neglected and their original intent and meaning are lost to present audiences. Providing identification signage for new and existing public art will refresh these past stories and keep public art pieces relevant into the future.

The Halifax Common is under constant pressure as a site for commemoration or memorials that has the potential to overburden the public spaces with monuments. Benches, tree planting or other ornamental landscape elements or gardens can be appropriate ways to commemorate. Care should be made that the style of memorials is appropriate to a public space, avoiding artifacts that resemble grave markers. Further consideration for evaluation should be given to whether there is a broader story that relates to the thematic framework for the Halifax Common.

There are a number of cultural event spaces for hosting cultural events and live performances within the Halifax Common district. Outdoor venues include the Public Gardens bandstand, the Oval plaza, and the Wanderers field. The Garrison Grounds managed by Parks Canada is another outdoor cultural space for concerts and events. The indoor space at the Pavilion on the Central Common has been a venue for all-ages live music events that provides opportunities for aspiring underage musicians to develop and better their craft through live performance. It has been a safe space for youth to see bands with no alcohol and low cover charge. Future investment in cultural spaces and park infrastructure to support events is further elaborated in Chapter 5.

POLICY DIRECTIONS

4.4.1 Honour the cultural and natural history of the Halifax Common through placemaking, naming, wayfinding, monuments, interpretive features, and public art.

4.4.2 In the spirit of reconciliation, work in partnership with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia to share Mi'kmaw perspectives and stories and facilitate opportunities for sharing Mi'kmaw culture and history.

4.4.3 Embrace the diversity of cultures by including the perspectives of cultural communities such as the Mi'kmaq, Acadians, African Nova Scotians, and other less-represented groups.

4.4.4 Follow the Public Art Policy for new facility development and recapitalization projects. Include public art for all major park development and park recapitalization projects. Consider opportunities for small-scale works of public art in smaller park renewal projects.

4.4.5 Give priority to siting and staging public art and interpretive elements at key entry points, gathering places, and along the Art Promenade described in Section 5.2.

4.4.6 Promote and interpret the built and living heritage which reflect the Halifax Common's evolution, history and culture through walking tours, wayfinding, interpretive elements, and signage.

4.4.7 Encourage institutional and community stakeholders to play a part in the promotion and interpretation of the Halifax Common's heritage.

4.4.8 Provide cultural spaces for outdoor music and cultural program delivery that foster community-based and emerging artists.

4.4.9 Continue to provide indoor cultural spaces that foster the participation of youth in arts and cultural activities.

4.4.10 Recognize the Halifax Common's cultural and heritage significance, defined by its longstanding public nature, purpose, and open space qualities.

4.4.11 Safeguard the character of the Halifax Common through the conservation of significant heritage resources and identified character-defining elements.

4.4.12 Continue to recognize and conserve the Halifax Public Gardens National Historic Site for its heritage significance as one of the rare surviving Victorian gardens in Canada and continued use as a public park.

4.4.13 Continue to recognize and conserve municipally-owned Registered Heritage Properties including the Halifax Lancers facility (1690 Bell Road), Power House (1606 Bell Road) and Fire Station No.2 (5988 University Avenue).

4.4.14 Continue to recognize and conserve Camp Hill Cemetery for its heritage significance as an excellent example of the Rural Cemetery Movement in Canada and the final resting place of many key figures of influence.

4.4.15 Continue to recognize and conserve the heritage significance of the Wanderers Grounds for its historic use by the Wanderers Amateur Athletics Club and continuing use for recreational clubs and spectator sports venue.

4.4.16 Consider the heritage values and reasons for the heritage designation in considering future adaptive reuses of a Registered Heritage Property resources.

4.4.17 Support the retention of non-municipal heritage resources and the additional designation of valued resources that may not yet be registered.

4.4.18 Respect the historical significance, landscape setting and traditional use of the Power House and the Horticulture Works Depot, and their connection to the Halifax Public Gardens, when considering any adaptive reuse/redevelopment of these buildings.

4.4.19 Continue to follow the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada, (2nd Edition)* for appropriate conservation management processes and actions where significant alterations, additions, removals, and adaptive reuses are proposed to municipally-owned Registered Heritage Properties and identified cultural landscapes.

4.4.20 Incorporate conservation practices in the general maintenance activities for heritage sites and heritage resources to ensure that they are kept in good repair for continued use.

4.4.21 Recognize and conserve important individual heritage resources such as the Egg Pond wall on the Central Common and black iron fences as found in Municipal Open Space Areas.

4.4.22 Conduct appropriate archaeological monitoring for any excavation work within the Halifax Common area.

ACTIONS

Actions	
A4.4.1	Investigate the designation of the Halifax Common geographic area as a cultural landscape under the *Heritage Property Act*.
A4.4.2	Investigate the designation of Camp Hill Cemetery as a Registered Heritage Property or cultural landscape under the *Heritage Property Act*.
A4.4.3	Investigate the designation of Victoria Park as a Registered Heritage Property or cultural landscape under the *Heritage Property Act*.
A4.4.4	Evaluate the Wanderers Grounds property to identify further cultural and heritage significance for designation, including the potential for an updated designation to include the two existing Registered Properties and further identified heritage assets and significance.
A4.4.5	Develop a Cultural Asset Conservation Management Plan for the Halifax Common's municipal open space areas.
A4.4.6	Regularly review and update the Cultural Asset Plans for the Halifax Public Gardens.
A4.4.7	Prepare a Site Conservation Management Plan for Camp Hill Cemetery.
A4.4.8	Develop a thematic framework for public art that considers the geography, history, and culture of the Halifax Common.
A4.4.9	Identify a list of pre-selected sites for public art that are accessible, visible, and compatible with current and potential uses.
A4.4.10	Develop a wayfinding system that identifies and directs people to cultural heritage destinations and celebrates the Halifax Common's built and living heritage. Coordinate interpretive and commemorative work with the strategies forthcoming in the Cultural and Heritage Priorities Plan.
A4.4.11	Incorporate the Common Link Walking Route pilot project into future wayfinding and heritage interpretation programs.

4.5 MOBILITY AND LINKAGES

GOAL

The Halifax Common will be served by an integrated and accessible transportation network that favours active modes of travel, offering safe, legible and efficient connections between local destinations and continuity with regional transportation systems.

INTRODUCTION

In order to meet the goals of integrating character areas and bolstering use and access to open spaces, the circulation system on the Halifax Common needs to be reconsidered. Mobility on the Halifax Common needs to be assessed not only in terms of meeting local needs, but it should also anticipate and capitalize on broader trends that include a shift toward more active modes like cycling, and the growing recognition of walkability as a top driver of urban revitalization.

Improving connectivity for people walking and cycling is a core Halifax Common direction, both connection to the Halifax Common and throughout. To ensure the Halifax Common is served by an integrated and accessible transportation network, this plan aligns the needs of existing facilities with proposed facilities. Proposed facilities on the Halifax Common seek to encourage connections and accessibility for people walking through the institutional lands and formalize and simplify linkages.

This section includes policy directions and actions that build on existing municipal transportation plans while making recommendations for entry points, routes, parking and supporting infrastructure throughout the Halifax Common. This plan prioritizes active transportation, especially walking, and makes recommendations about ways to use landscape design and wayfinding strategies to make travel safer and more accessible for everyone.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

1. Connecting Destinations
Navigating between destinations within the Halifax Common (e.g., between Victoria Park and the North Common) is not intuitive. The sheer scale and size of the Halifax Common combined with the diverse mix of uses, the branching road network and formal and informal pathways pose a challenge to mobility and access. In order for the Halifax Common to function as an integrated whole and fulfill its role as a destination green space within the municipality and region, a coordinated approach to planning roadways and circulatory networks must be addressed.

2. Pedestrian Priority
A significant proportion of the population on the Halifax Peninsula regularly walk or cycle between work and home. With its central location between destinations, and with it being a destination itself, the Halifax Common has a high number of active transportation users along roads and within municipal parkland, which pairs well with its prominent open space setting. But if municipal open space is to be more than a commuter area, people need to be enticed to linger, pause, and enjoy the Halifax Common and that occurs most effectively through a focus on the quality of the pedestrian environment. While transit and bicycle infrastructure needs are seen to be at the forefront for recent municipal roadworks projects, pedestrians have been and will continue to be a priority for transportation initiatives. Active transportation also includes pedestrian walkways. Such facilities are critical in decreasing the dependence on automobiles and promoting a walkable city and ‘Pedestrian First’ planning approach.

The Integrated Mobility Plan (IMP) identifies where multi-use pathways should be established, with an east-west connection across the North Common and north-south through the Central Common. Such shared pathways can function well within park areas provided the volume of cyclists and pedestrians is moderate, and the amount of area required does not reduce the open space functionality of parkland. Physically separated cycling and walking paths may not be achievable in tight park areas and it is envisioned that increased amounts of cycling, particularly high-speed cycling, would cause conflicts with park activities and walking. Therefore, while parkland should include multi-use pathways, these should be considered more unhurried routes deferring to park uses. On-street bikeways, such as those along Bell Road should be considered for faster-speed cycling routes. This plan aligns with the IMP and proposes formalizing some of the most-used informal routes into a new rationalized and simplified network that will reduce conflicts between users and activities.

3. Road Crossings

Busy roads surround the Halifax Common, and some complex intersections such as Robie Street/ Cogswell Street/ Quinpool Road can be challenging to navigate for people walking or cycling. Beyond the safety considerations, the quality of the perimeter crossings also sets a tone and influences whether the Halifax Common will be seen as accessible and inviting or isolated from the surrounding community. For example, the public reported general satisfaction with the roundabout intersections on North Park Street: they are easy to cross, attractive, and slow traffic. However, there are still a number of crossings and intersections that feel unsafe for people walking, and places where crossing may be desired but are hindered by obstacles such as grade differences (e.g., Ahern Avenue across from the Citadel.) Revising the network of cycle and pedestrian routes within the Halifax Common will require a reassessment of existing crossing points, and the design of some new ones.

4. Informal Paths and Trails

People walking and cycling have established a web of informal pathways and “desire lines” across various parts of the Halifax Common. In many cases, such as on the North Common, informal trails are favoured over nearby paved routes. Working the most-used informal routes into a new rationalized and simplified network will reduce conflicts between users and activities, connecting people to where they want to go while also ensuring optimal use of the park for recreation activities.

5. Parking

Parking on the Halifax Common consists of on-street and dedicated off-street lots for particular destinations. The background study and public engagement highlighted several issues related to parking—including observations that public access to on-street parking is often limited by employees parking on the street, and the sense among some participants that parking lots are not a good use of valuable land. Many of the existing lots are unscreened and lack internal planting, defined pedestrian routes, pavement markings, provisions for accessible parking and circulation, and wayfinding.

6. Public Transportation

Public transportation is a sustainable transportation option for Haligonians of all income levels. Improving Halifax Transit access to the Halifax Common will require a multi-pronged approach that includes improvements to transit stops around and within the Halifax Common, and connections with pedestrian and cycling routes. It also means looking at the bus operations more broadly. Currently, the North and Central Common are not as well served by Halifax Transit as the South Common and institutional lands. There are no buses on Cogswell Street and only one stop on Bell Road. New facilities and venues will also need stops nearby. Summer Street, however, is served by up to nine routes, supporting the vision of creating a multi-modal spine within that corridor.

7. Alignment with Municipal Plans
There are a number of recommendations in the municipality's plans that are relevant to transportation planning within the Halifax Common. The Halifax Regional Municipal Planning Strategy (RP +5) recommends supporting sustainable transportation modes and accelerating their development where feasible. Both the Integrated Mobility Plan and Active Transportation Priority Plan identify the Halifax Common as a major component of a proposed active transportation network, with Bell Road and South Park Street as proposed future protected bikeway corridors, and a greenway running from Bell Road to Spring Garden Road along Summer Street. There are also plans for enhanced walking and cycling improvements for the North and Central Common T-junction. Additionally, Robie Street and Spring Garden Road are identified as proposed future Transit Priority corridors, and University Avenue is being planned as part of the municipality's bicycle network.

8. Street Hierarchy
Streets within and around the Halifax Common can be grouped according to a hierarchy based on their function within the network. Arterial and collector streets bring people to the Halifax Common while a local streets help people move around, either terminating at key nodes or branching into other routes. Both kinds of streets need to be designed appropriately, with special attention paid to the character of those interior pass-through roadways to ensure they are complementary and safe.

9. Character of Perimeter and Interior Streets
Streets that ring the perimeter of the Halifax Common are the location of key gateways and interfaces with the surrounding areas and should have a simple, recognizable streetscape that defines and enhances the dignity of the Halifax Common. Key gateways such as significant entrances or intersections of the Halifax Common can be reinforced through the creation of plazas. Interior streets provide connections between different functional zones and with surrounding neighbourhoods. These streets should be designed to promote pedestrian mobility and social interactions, with landscape and wayfinding elements that reinforce a park-like ambiance.

10. Links to the Broader Open Space Network
As a centrally located open and recreation space on the peninsula, the Common land is complemented by links to other nearby destinations. The Halifax Waterfront, one of the most visited areas in Halifax, runs parallel to the Halifax Common, and is connected to the Halifax Common through an extensive street and sidewalk system. Point Pleasant Park is linked to the Halifax Common by South Park Street/Young Avenue. Both the Halifax Waterfront and Point Pleasant Park offer open space users a mix of natural and built spaces.

11. Traversing Roadways
Most roadways into the Halifax Common terminate there or end in branches. Only three traverse the entire width—Cogswell Street, Spring Garden Road and University Avenue. The streetscapes of these pass-through roadways are an opportunity to signal to travellers whose destination is not the Halifax Common that they are passing through a special precinct by creating a short 'parkway' segment that starts and stops at the edge of the Halifax Common. It is also important on roads like Cogswell Street with recreational attractions on both sides to integrate good sightlines, well-designed pedestrian crossings, and traffic calming measures into the streetscape where possible.

12. Nighttime Experience
Although its primary purpose is nighttime visibility for security and safety, successful street and pathway lighting takes into account the human users of the street. For instance, one way to emphasize pedestrian activity over automobile traffic is to replace standard overhead street lights with smaller-scale, more frequently spaced fixtures geared to pedestrians. The parkways identified in this plan offer an opportunity to utilize pedestrian scale lighting as a unifying design element that connects the edges of the Halifax Common and signals users that they have entered a special precinct of the peninsula. Carrying the pedestrian lighting into the park pathways encourages more winter use and active transportation through all seasons.

Legend

STREET CORRIDOR

PATHWAYS - MULTI-USE

PATHWAYS - PEDESTRIAN

PATHWAYS - INSTITUTIONAL LANDS

Bicycle & Pedestrian Circulation

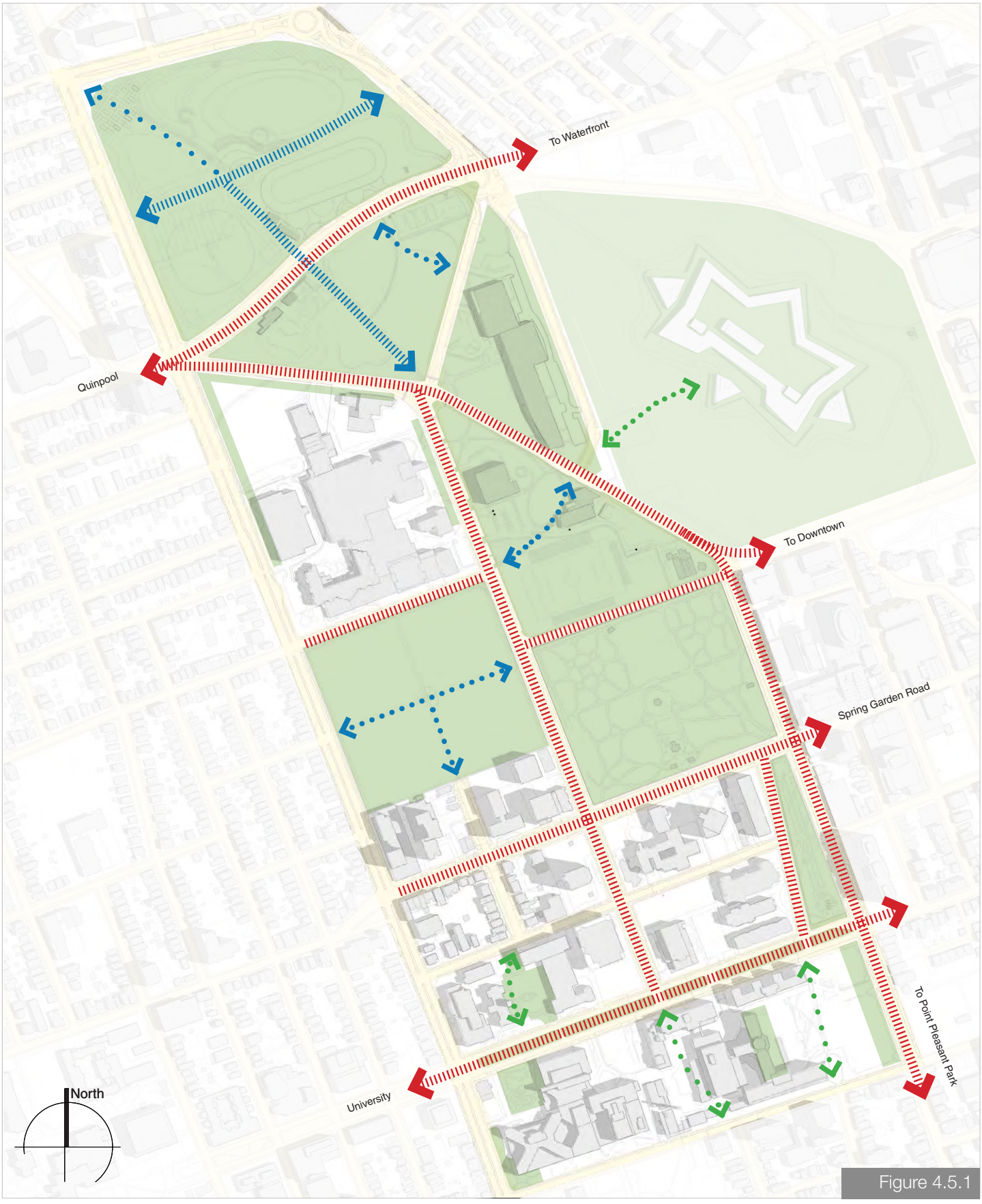


Figure 4.5.1

Legend

PARKWAYS
(Prioritizes Pedestrian Experience - Boulevard or Median, Tree Canopy, Wide Sidewalks & Pedestrian Scale Lighting)

THROUGHWAYS
(Prioritizes Efficient Movement)

CEREMONIAL PROMENADE
(Connects Landmarks, Monuments & Public Art)

CEREMONIAL PROMENADE FEATURE
(Cultural Destination, Commemorative Elements & Public Art)

SMALL STREETS
(Commonplace Pedestrian Experience)

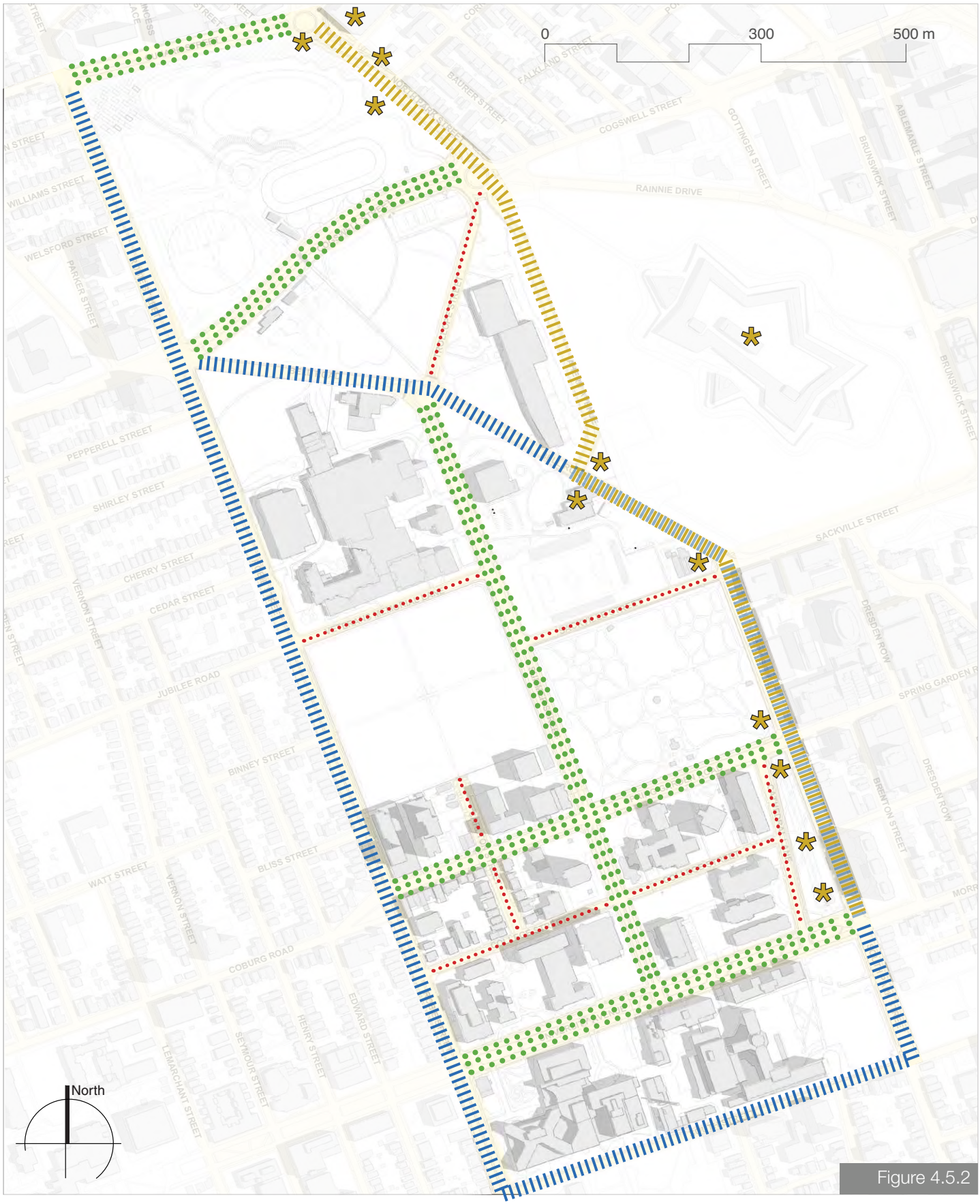
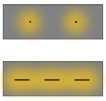

0
300
500 m
North
COGSWELL STREET
RAINNIE DRIVE
SACKVILLE STREET
SPRING GARDEN R
BRUNSWICK STREET
GOTTINGEN STREET
ABLEMARLE STREET
DRESDEN ROW
BRENTON STREET
WELSFORD STREET
PEPPERELL STREET
SHIRLEY STREET
CHERRY STREET
CEDAR STREET
JUBILEE ROAD
BINNEY STREET
BLISS STREET
WATT STREET
COBURG ROAD
VERNON STREET
PARKER STREET
WILLIAMS STREET
FALKLAND STREET
BAUER STREET
EDWARD STREET
HENRY STREET
SEYMOUR STREET
LEMARCHANT STREET

Figure 4.5.2

Legend



DIRECT POST LIGHTING

INDIRECT LOW PATH LIGHTING

COLAB HTFC PLANNING & DESIGN UPLAND

Pedestrian Night Time Experience

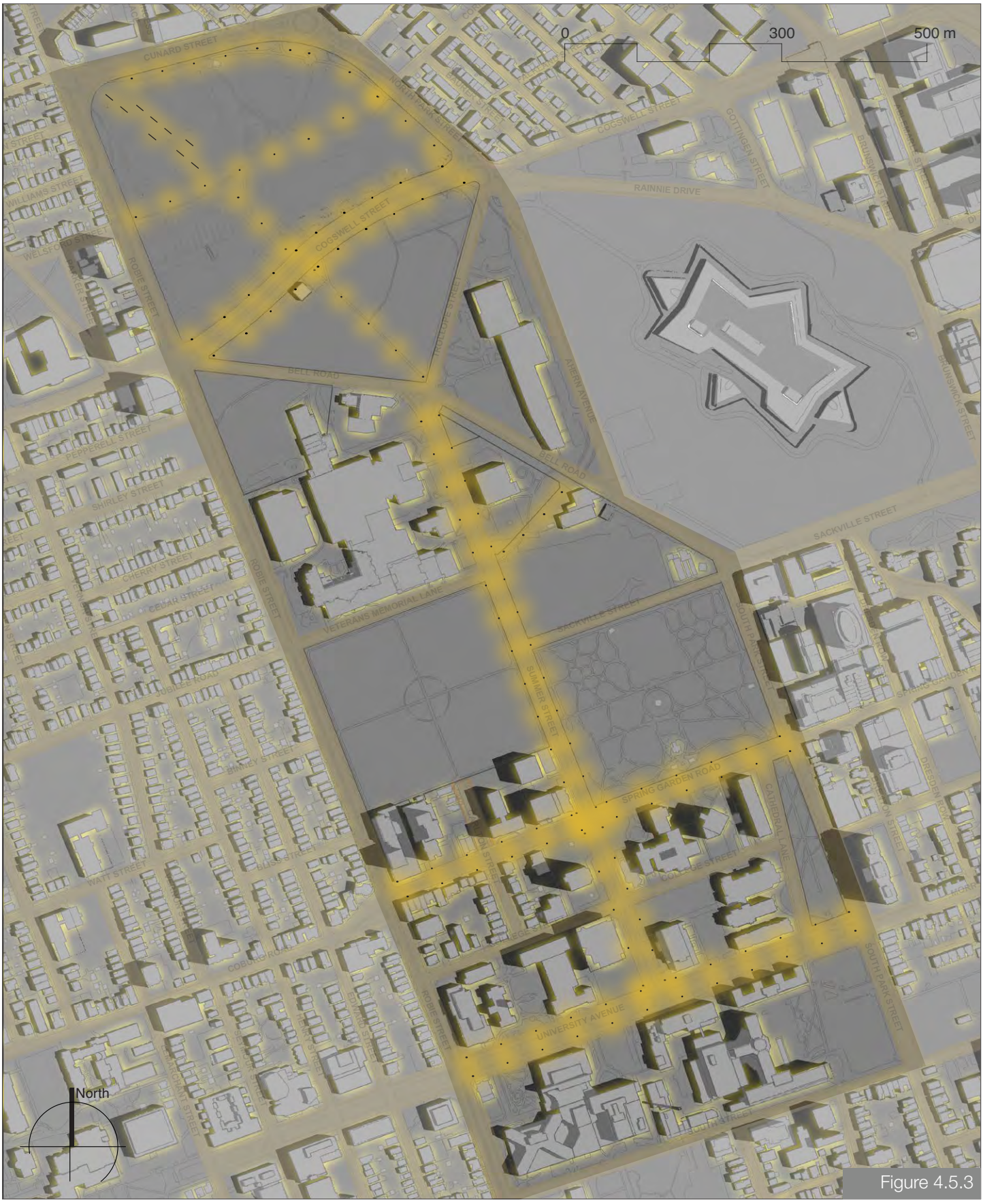


Figure 4.5.3

POLICY DIRECTIONS

4.5.1 Recognize the importance of green corridor connections between the Halifax Common and other prominent areas of the peninsula and its parks and open spaces.

4.5.2 Align mobility planning on the Halifax Common with regional transportation and mobility plans to ensure network continuity, the promotion of active transportation and public transit use, and the reduction of private vehicular use.

4.5.3 Place an emphasis on non-vehicular travel within the Halifax Common, with a prioritization on pedestrians.

4.5.4 Plan for a multi-modal system of non-vehicular connections within the Halifax Common through high quality sidewalks, bikeways, and multi-use pathways that are designed and maintained for use during all seasons.

4.5.5 Align pathways to match established desire lines where possible and redirect informal trails to avoid crossing through high activity areas.

4.5.6 Plan for multi-use pathways as envisioned as part of the municipality's active transportation network, or as otherwise proposed, within municipal open space, if park functionality, the retention of green space, and compatibility with pedestrians, recreational uses and open space functions are prioritized.

4.5.7 Plan for frequent pedestrian connections across streets on the perimeter and within the Halifax Common through means that include mid-block crosswalks where possible.

4.5.8 Place an emphasis on short- and medium-term on-street vehicular parking needs upon streets and other longer-term needs through structured parking. Limit parking within Municipal Open Space Areas in favour of open space uses and where such parking is provided, place an emphasis upon it being buffer and screened from streets.

4.5.9 Promote pedestrian connections through large blocks of the Halifax Common, including those defined in concept as shown on Figure 4.5.1.

4.5.10 Ensure that sidewalks and major pathways have suitable lighting to enable safe nighttime use and where opportunities are present, plan for a comprehensive lighting program as a means of defining and distinguishing the Halifax Common.

ACTIONS

Actions	
A4.5.1	Engage with Institutional stakeholders on establishing and maintaining connections through large institution blocks, such as those found in map Figure 4.5.1 and others, with the adoption of this plan and on an on-going basis as institutional planning for the Halifax Common occurs.
A4.5.2	As opportunities arise, develop green corridor routes to strengthen the connections between the Halifax Common with other major open spaces and destinations, including those shown on Figure 4.5.1.
A4.5.3	Collaborate with the province to realize public realm and linkage improvements as identified within the Memorandum of Understanding (2010), with emphasis upon: (a) the widening of Bell Road for enhanced sidewalks, tree lawns, and cycling infrastructure; and (b) the establishment of linear open space along South Park Street between University Avenue and South Street.
A4.5.4	Assess pedestrian needs at intersections and mid-block crossings upon the periphery and within the Halifax Common. Plan for short-term tactical improvements where appropriate as well as long-term permanent treatments to facilitate safer access for people walking, rolling and cycling.
A4.5.5	Implement improvements for active transportation and other paths that addresses: (a) active transportation connections through the North Common, Central Common and along Bell Road; and (b) Informal pathways upon the North Common
A4.5.6	Review the municipality's planning documents to address the presence, placement, and design of parking in this section.
A4.5.7	Assess the municipality's short-term/long-term parking plans and regulations relative to the directions of this plan.
A4.5.8	Assess pedestrian lighting on pathways and sidewalks within the Halifax Common.

4.6 RECREATION, PROGRAMMING AND EVENTS

GOAL

The Halifax Common will provide a diverse mix of recreation and leisure opportunities with flexible and accessible spaces that invite a wide range of community uses and public events.

INTRODUCTION

The Halifax Common is a critical part of recreation infrastructure in Halifax. The presence of nine ball diamonds, multi-use sports fields, the Oval, and other recreation amenities are a testament to the popularity of the Common as a destination for active living. There is an opportunity, however, to broaden the notion of recreation on Common land to include a greater range of activities that are inclusive of both structured activities and more unstructured, passive and social uses. Creating opportunities for diverse community groups to animate and take ownership of the Halifax Common, by creating spaces for social gathering, especially around food, can help inject new life into old or one dimensional spaces. This section outlines policy recommendations to diversify the range of uses on the Halifax Common by creating new forms of public space that support a wide variety of activities and events.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

1. Balance of Recreational Activities
Structured activities currently dominate the Halifax Common's Recreational Parkland areas. One of the major themes that emerged from the public engagement was the desire for a more balanced mix of structured and unstructured activity options. Unstructured activities are essential to the social and cultural wellbeing of citizens, and are often more inclusive of all abilities and ages than structured recreation. Unstructured activities should not be misconstrued as lacking all physical activity; many unstructured pursuits, like walking, gardening, yoga, and lawn games also help people to be active, especially those who may not have the means or skills to participate in traditional sport and structured recreation. Infrastructure for over represented sports and structured recreation can be consolidated or relocated to make room for other more unstructured activities.

2. Access and Inclusion
Public consultations revealed a strong desire to see the Halifax Common as a fully accessible space for all members of the community. Steps can be taken to eliminate physical barriers and ensure universal access throughout the Halifax Common. It can also be inferred that any fees to participate may serve as an encumbrance to inclusion. Therefore, ensuring access in a financial sense requires reducing the number of uses on the Halifax Common that need to be booked for a fee, in order to keep all activities on the North and Central Common areas free and accessible to all. Further planning and program development should also consider access and inclusion through the lens of gender and cultural diversity.

3. Trends in Recreation

A number of important recreation trends should be taken into consideration in the design and delivery of recreation program in the Halifax Common's Recreational Parkland areas. As years go by and trends evolve, an ongoing effort should be made to ensure that programs continually align with emerging community needs and desires.

- Family Programming (activities that caregivers can do with children of all ages)
- Life Sports (physical activities that can stay with a person throughout life, independent of organizations or teams)
- Small Sports and Games (small groups and mini versions that require less space, equipment and coordination)
- Arts and Culture (an increasingly important component of the recreation and leisure mix, especially for youth)
- Unstructured Play (open-ended play that has no specific learning objective)

4. Community Events and Gatherings

The Halifax Common should be a place where everyone feels welcome to spend time. As a very important open space, the Halifax Common should be designed with outdoor spaces that accommodate a wide range of community gatherings of every size, from a neighbourhood picnic to a local market or large-scale musical event and concerts. Both informal, drop-in spaces and more formal booked spaces are needed in order to meet the range of community events that are possible. Allowing food vendors and markets is also a great way to bring communities together on the Halifax Common.

5. Flexible Event Services

Inviting new forms of use on the Halifax Common such as markets, pop-up events and performances requires public spaces layered with wired and wireless services. Consideration should be given to the way electrical services and access points are integrated into the public realm, ensuring maximum flexibility and wide variety of uses from mobile charging stations to higher-voltage uses. Access to WiFi is becoming a standard and expected public service in parks, requiring consideration of the appropriate bandwidth to suit the needs of vendors and casual visitors alike.

6. Booking System

The procedure for scheduling playing fields on the Halifax Common was identified as needing improvement. Groups who historically booked fields had priority for scheduling in upcoming seasons, with no clear rules for how other groups could equitably access time. Currently, there are limitations for the public to view field availability online which also adds to a lack of public transparency.

7. Communal Gardening

There is significant interest in community gardening among communities in the municipality; it is also an important trend in recreation programming nationally. Community garden programs serve a wide range of purposes and benefits:

- Bringing people together who might otherwise not have a chance to interact;
- Low-impact physical activity that is great for people of all ages;
- Fostering skills and inclusion of newcomers, and enabling newcomers to contribute to the community.
- Improving food security for low income families through direct involvement in gardening and food donations.

Adding opportunities for gardening to the Halifax Common's recreational parkland areas can create dynamic park spaces offering diverse and changing landscapes that stimulate all the senses and offer a rich counterpoint to playing fields, open lawns, and plazas. In order to ensure equitable access, gardening should focus on communal growing opportunities and learn-to-garden programs instead of the allotment garden plots allowed under the current municipal community gardening programs. Communal gardens do not have to be food crops; they can also be cutting gardens, habitat/pollinator plots, herbs, floral displays, native restoration, etc. They are as varied as the communities tending them. Communal gardening programs can be organized in a variety of ways, with coordination over access to water and a space for tools, plots, herbs, floral displays, native restoration etc. They are as varied as the communities tending them. They should be situated in locations that do not detract from the flexible use of municipal parkland and can be extended as a program throughout the Halifax Common.

POLICY DIRECTIONS

4.6.1 Plan Municipal Open Space Areas as Culture and Heritage Parkland and Recreational Parkland as outlined in the section 4.3.

4.6.2 Place an emphasis on unstructured recreational activities within Recreational Parkland through a phased approach.

4.6.3 While recognizing the presence of existing specialized facilities, plan recreation areas to be flexible for a multitude of recreational activities, during all seasons.

4.6.4 Respect the intent of the Halifax Common in being 'for the people' with regard to access and inclusion to Municipal Open Space Areas and minimizing pay-to-play activities.

4.6.5 Plan for broad recreation needs in facility planning within Municipal Open Space Areas, including family programming, lifelong physical activity, small-scale sports and games, arts and cultural activities, and unstructured play.

4.6.6 Plan for amenities throughout the Halifax Common to enable all-day and multi-season use.

4.6.7 Plan for multi-use flexible spaces within Municipal Open Space Areas to accommodate accessible cultural programming, youth arts/music performance, and small-scale community events.

4.6.8 Permit occasional large-scale concerts or other events within Municipal Open Space Areas with an emphasis that they are open to the public, free to attend, and have minimal impact to the condition of facilities and park spaces.

4.6.9 Permit small-scale temporary commercial activities such as neighbourhood markets and pop-up food vendors throughout the Halifax Common in locations that may not be served by existing services.

4.6.10 Consider communal gardening through the Halifax Common, including gardening that is not comprised of allotments, in locations within Municipal Open Space Areas that are complimentary to other recreational activities.

4.6.11 Recognize the importance and tradition of the Wanderers Lawn Bowling Club and Halifax Lancers and consider possible reconfigurations and improvements of these facilities as part of any overall planning of the Wanderers Grounds, where the public interest of lands is prioritized.

4.6.12 In the event that the Wanderers Lawn Bowling Club and Halifax Lancers cease to have a presence on the Wanderers Block, reclaim the lands for public use.

4.6.13 Recognize the value of the Wanderers Field for premiere sport use and as spectator venue that is in municipal control and available for a variety of sporting teams.

4.6.14 Recognize existing hardscape recreation facilities in Municipal Open Space Areas and enable their renewal but preclude new facilities in municipal open space areas that are primarily characterized by landscaped open space.

ACTIONS

Actions	
A4.6.1	Undertake a municipal-wide review of recreational playing fields and ball diamonds and where supported, undertake a phased reduction of ball diamonds and facilities in favour of unstructured recreation spaces.
A4.6.2	Undertake a review of structured booking within Recreational Parkland to ensure there are sufficient opportunities for unstructured recreation.
A4.6.3	Undertake a review of the municipality's vending and other related regulations to support opportunities for vending and other commercial services that enhance the use of the Halifax Common as outlined in this plan.
A4.6.4	Evaluate the implementation of communal (publicly shared) community gardens within the open space of the Halifax Common.
A4.6.5	Develop acceptable parameters for hosting large-scale sponsored events/concerts while providing flexible, multi-use spaces for artistic and cultural expression and small-scale community events.
A4.6.6	Evaluate the need for longer term permanent infrastructure to support the Wanderers sport field venue.

4.7 ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN

GOAL

The Halifax Common will be planned, designed and managed with incorporation of sustainable practices to create healthy and resilient environments.

INTRODUCTION

The Halifax Common will play an increasingly important role in the coming decades as the region adapts to climate change. Large scale urban green spaces can provide an exciting testing ground for low-impact green infrastructure that will be critical to helping the municipality meet its sustainability goals and build resilience to an uncertain future.

This section outlines key considerations and recommendations to guide the planning, design and management of the Halifax Common in a more sustainable way.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

1. Sustainable and Efficient Design
Site planning and design for the Halifax Common should respond to environmental factors such as available light and sun, wind patterns, and snow drifting. Micro-climates and local conditions created by surrounding buildings and trees must be factored into the design process. The future of the Halifax Common should also emphasize sustainability in the design of structures and the open and recreation spaces. The design of structures and open spaces should adopt net-zero energy consumption principles in addition to the overall reduction in the amount of water that is required to maintain these structures and open spaces. Existing buildings with a significant remaining lifespan should be considered for retrofitting with net-zero energy consumption and water reduction in mind.

2. Green Infrastructure
Many of the functions of traditional stormwater management systems can be offset or replaced by low impact development techniques or ‘green infrastructure, which works to protect, restore and mimic the natural water cycle. Techniques include the use of bioswales, rain gardens, naturalized retention ponds and soil cells which can be applied on different scales, from the local level to more landscape level implementations. Green infrastructure works by reducing the burden of traditional stormwater infrastructure by retaining water on site. There are many benefits, including habitat creation, aesthetic qualities, sequestering carbon, reducing the burden on pipes and treatment facilities, and recharging groundwater. Actions 12 and 13 in the Halifax Green Network Plan (2018) direct the municipality to promote green infrastructure as “the preferred approach to managing stormwater.”

3. Climate Change and Resilience
Changes to the climate in the coming decades will have implications for the planning and design of the Halifax Common, as identified in HalifACT, the municipality's climate action plan. The municipality has a number of related environmental design strategies that can help create a more resilient Halifax Common. For example, guidelines around tree canopy management and renewal will be a very effective tool in mitigating the urban heat island effect and rising temperatures in general. Tree canopy targets should increase over time as the impacts of climate change alter weather patterns. And active transportation and transit improvements have a number of environmental benefits including mitigating air pollution, reducing the imbedded energy in vehicle production and maintenance processes, and reducing carbon emissions.

4. Naturalization and Biodiversity
There was strong interest among the public in diversifying the planting palette on the Halifax Common, including naturalization. The presence of naturalized areas offers a number of benefits beyond visual interest and habitat creation, such as groundwater recharge, reduced loads on treatment plants and aging municipal infrastructure, moderated ambient temperatures, and more. Green infrastructure can be incorporated into the streetscapes at the edges and other vestige spaces to realize these benefits without encroaching on open space.

5. Micro-climate Comfort
Generally, Halifax's moderate climate allows residents and visitors to enjoy the Halifax Common year-round. Despite high levels of precipitation, the Halifax Common receives high levels of sun exposure throughout the year. Creating a landscape and urban environment that is responsive to the climate can create spaces that ensure the Halifax Common remains an enjoyable and comfortable place to use and congregate. Proposed development in proximity to the Halifax Common should prevent any negative impacts and the creation of uncomfortable micro-climate conditions by way of the structure's design, citing, or orientation.

POLICY DIRECTIONS

4.7.1 Promote sustainable and efficient landscape and facility design throughout the Halifax Common and incorporate such practices within Municipal Open Space Areas for retrofits and new facilities.

4.7.2 Value greenspace within the Halifax Common to sequester carbon and mitigate the impacts of climate change and urbanization.

4.7.3 Promote climate change resiliency throughout the Halifax Common and in the planning and design of landscapes and facilities within Municipal Open Space Areas.

4.7.4 Promote biodiversity and the naturalization of open spaces and incorporate such measures within Municipal Open Space Areas.

4.7.5 Protect, maintain and expand the urban tree canopy throughout the Halifax Common.

4.7.6 Promote green infrastructure approaches such as increasing vegetation and pervious ground surfaces throughout the Halifax Common and incorporate such measures in the planning and design of landscapes and facilities in Municipal Open Space Areas.

4.7.7 Promote water conservation throughout the Halifax Common and incorporate such practices in the planning and design of landscapes and facilities in Municipal Open Space Areas.

4.7.8 Ensure that Municipal Open Space Areas are comfortable from a micro-climate perspective, including the impacts from sun/shade and wind from buildings on and near the Halifax Common.

ACTIONS

Actions	
A4.7.1	Review the municipality's policy documents to ensure the environmental directions relative to outlined in this plan are addressed, including those related to: • climate change; • biodiversity and naturalization; • the tree canopy; • green infrastructure approaches; • water conservation; and • renewable energy.
A4.7.2	Review the municipality's planning documents to consider that sun/shade and wind requirements protect Municipal Open Space Areas from the impacts of buildings on and near to the Halifax Common.

4.8 FACILITIES, INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC AMENITIES

GOAL

The Halifax Common will provide infrastructure and public amenities that deliver high quality visitor experiences and enable new forms of interaction with public space.

INTRODUCTION

The Halifax Common is a vital piece of public infrastructure in its own right that delivers important social and environmental benefits for the Halifax region. Unlocking the full potential of the Halifax Common as a 21st century gathering place requires thinking in new ways about the infrastructure and services that shape the park experience. Established underground and overhead services both constrain the site and open up possibilities for new forms of park experiences. This section outlines policy recommendations for planning around existing infrastructure and layering in new public amenities.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

1. Existing Underground and Overhead Services
The Halifax Common is intersected by a number of underground municipal services such as water mains and a major artery in the combined sewage system. There are also a number of overhead services located along interior streets and connecting key institutional sites. The location of these services will need to be taken into consideration when renewal projects are undertaken. They will constrain where new facilities and infrastructure can be located, and overhead wires may pose a liability during severe weather events, which are projected to become more frequent with climate change.

2. Public Washrooms and Basic Amenities
Amenities such as public washrooms, water fountains, waste and recycling receptacles are an essential form of infrastructure that influences the overall visitor experience. These amenities should be considered as part of any renewal scheme to ensure convenient access from all public gathering areas within the Halifax Common. Access to basic amenities, especially public washrooms, lays the foundation of the visitor experience and enables people are able to stay on the Halifax Common for longer periods of time.

Existing washroom facilities on the North and Central Common are in poor condition, unwelcoming and inaccessible, and are not consistently open to the public; in some cases, washrooms are only unlocked while the associated facility is operating programming or for the duration of a special event. Public consultation revealed that improved washrooms are a very high priority for the community. New washroom facilities need to meet contemporary design standards for safety, comfort, accessibility and gender inclusivity. Ideally, they would be grouped with existing facilities where there may also be staff present. Additionally, they should the designed and managed in a manner that will enable longer hours of operation throughout the year. Drinking fountains, subject to the location of services, should be in convenient locations with an emphasis on proximity to active recreation facilities and other areas of need.

3. North and Central Common Buildings
Special care must be taken when planning recreation support buildings to ensure any structure honours the original intent of the Halifax Common to be unencumbered open land. This is of particular importance on the North and Central Common, where the significant remaining open spaces must be protected. There should be an emphasis on keeping the North Common free of additional buildings.

Any building must directly support public recreation services that are widely accessible to the community. If a building exists it must be a destination for the provision of regional service, intended to provide a recreation experience to as many people throughout the municipality as possible. Buildings should be designed and constructed with a high degree of attention to quality, with modest footprints and efficient use of space. Multi-functional program space is preferable, and seasonal storage of equipment should be found at a facility off the Halifax Common. Similarly, buildings themselves must be physically accessible and linked to nearby facilities and amenities with accessible pathways.

4. Maintenance and Operations
The integration of public amenities and infrastructure outlined in this section will require balancing the targeted level of public service with resources available for ongoing maintenance. For example, peppering the Halifax Common with waste receptacles that are beyond the capacity of the municipality to regularly empty is of questionable public benefit. Operational capacity should be considered in the planning phases, and opportunities for collaboration with institutional partners to deliver amenities and services should be explored.

POLICY DIRECTIONS

4.8.1 Recognize the regional significance of facilities, infrastructure and public amenities within Municipal Open Space areas while also recognizing local needs in the provision of parkland and facilities.

4.8.2 Plan, develop, and maintain facilities, infrastructure and public amenities to support the varied and all-day use of Municipal Open Space areas throughout the year.

4.8.3 Use a centralized approach in the planning and development of facilities and public amenities such as public washrooms in Municipal Open Space areas.

4.8.4 Consistent with other municipal initiatives, incorporate universal design standards in the development of the facilities, infrastructure and public amenities.

4.8.5 With consideration of factors such as the availability of piped infrastructure, provide public drinking fountains in strategic locations throughout the Halifax Common.

4.8.6 Plan and develop utility services within locations such as street right-of-ways, so as avoid limitations in the siting of recreation facilities.

4.8.7 As opportunities arise and where it is practical, remove overhead utility wires and utility boxes that are within street right-of-ways and open spaces.

ACTIONS

Actions	
A4.8.1	Access the opportunities to provide WIFI services and charging facilities for the general public throughout the Halifax Common.
A4.8.2	Access the opportunities to provide additional drinking fountains throughout the Halifax Common.

4.9 GOVERNANCE AND PARTNERSHIPS

GOAL

The Halifax Common will be governed in an accountable and transparent manner, with collaborative partnerships that foster public participation and equitable decision-making.

INTRODUCTION

The lands within the Halifax Common district are under the ownership of the municipality, province, institutions, and a variety of private owners. For the publicly owned lands, and particularly the municipal lands, the potential of the Halifax Common to become a more egalitarian public place can best be achieved if the decision-making process is open and collaborative. A 2012 study of park governance models by the Toronto Public Space Initiative states, "Indeed, partnerships between government and civil society groups is growing, and is increasingly being recognized as an effective means to help governmental agencies meet current governance challenges, as well as to develop innovative programs and policies. Similarly, public sector partnerships with non-governmental agencies can help bolster services, programming and funding." While such an approach may not be possible for the entirety of the Halifax Common, it provides a foundation for the municipality to realize a more open decision-making process.

This section outlines key considerations and policy directions to guide the municipality as it builds new partnerships and more effective working relationships with stakeholder groups to refine and achieve a shared vision.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

1. Coordinated Vision

The Halifax Common's diverse stakeholder groups include local residents, visitors from the Halifax region and beyond, sports and recreational user groups, maintenance workers, municipal administration, and others. Institutional partners that occupy public land within the Halifax Common District have a particular civic responsibility. Bringing the wide variety of stakeholders together behind a common vision and plan of action for the Halifax Common requires a collaborative planning process that makes spaces for multiple views and perspectives. While challenging, the benefit of engaging in this process and building relationships with stakeholder groups is the opportunity to surface new opportunities and creative approaches to developing, programing and maintaining the Halifax Common.

2. Memorandum of Understanding & Enhanced Open Space

In 2010 the municipality and the province entered into an MOU that arose from the consideration of a number of land transfers to the province. It specifies certain open space enhancements, including new open spaces south of Victoria Park. It is intended that these open spaces ideas be realized when planning for new facilities occurs.

3. Stewardship Groups
Currently, there are a number of community groups who have partnerships with the municipality on specific components of the Halifax Common. The close relationship between the municipality and the Friends of the Public Gardens offers particular benefit for the management of a public amenity as intricate as the Public Gardens. The Friends contribute to fundraising, programming, educational initiatives and various conservation efforts—activities that add great value but are increasingly difficult to deliver solely through a public administration. The 'Friends of…" model may be a good fit for other amenity spaces on the Halifax Common as well, such as a new arts and performing venue (see Section 5.8) or programming the 'Common Green' (see Section 5.1).

4. Transparency and Accountability
Building and maintaining stakeholder relationships requires ongoing transparency and accountability around decision-making. The lines of communication must be open and two-directional, providing a platform for stakeholders to share ideas and concerns, and the municipality to report back on progress and current projects. This, and demonstrating due process in responding to feedback, can be the foundation for effective partnership.

5. Equity
Equity is about ensuring the fair and equal treatment of stakeholders and their ability to access and participate in governance. When stakeholders and advisors are selected, and public engagement events are conducted, striving for equity should be top of mind, with particular attention to involve groups that can be difficult to engage.

6. Public Participation
Effective governance of the Halifax Common needs to be supported by ongoing and meaningful forms of public participation. Involving the public in the decision-making process can help communities feel a sense of ownership over the space and enhance volunteer involvement.

POLICY DIRECTIONS

4.9.1 Promote the incorporation of this plan and the shared responsibility of upholding the original intent of the Halifax Common between various levels of government, institutional and other landowners, and stakeholders.

4.9.2 Follow the directions contained in the Memorandum of Understanding between the province and municipality in realizing additional lands for open space and recreational uses.

4.9.3 Plan collaboratively with institutional stakeholders to protect the integrity of the Halifax Common and advance the goals of the master plan.

4.9.4 Value stewardship organizations in the promotion and interpretation of the Halifax Common.

4.9.5 Undertake major decisions respecting the development and use of Halifax Common with public and stakeholder engagement.

4.9.6 Engage with broad representations of stakeholders, organizations and individuals through varied means to obtain fulsome input in undertaking major decisions on the Halifax Common.

4.9.7 Recognize the Halifax Common as being located on unceded Mi'kmaq territory and incorporate municipal and other initiatives in its management, in a spirit of reconciliation based on truth, dignity, and mutual respect.

ACTIONS

Actions	
A4.9.1	Further to identification of the western side of the Citadel Hill as an Associated Area of the Halifax Common in Section 4.1, engage with Parks Canada to recognize and plan for this area as an important contributing area to the Halifax Common, further to its heritage, open space and landscape qualities.
A4.9.2	Engage with the province during the planning and implementation of its hospital development plans and other initiatives to support the intent of this plan.
A4.9.3	Realize the open space development that is outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding between the municipality and the province or as otherwise updated.
A4.9.4	Engage with the province over its hospital and other public lands development plans.
A4.9.5	Engage with institutional stakeholders on the intent of this plan relative to any future development initiatives.
A4.9.6	Establish a bi-annual (once every two years) public information meeting and information report to Regional Council as a progress update related to issues impacting the Halifax Common.

5 MUNICIPAL LAND STRATEGIES



5.1 North and Central Common

5.2 Summer Street and University Avenue Green Corridors

5.3 The Promenade

5.4 Wanderers Grounds

5.5 Camp Hill Cemetery

5.6 Halifax Public Gardens

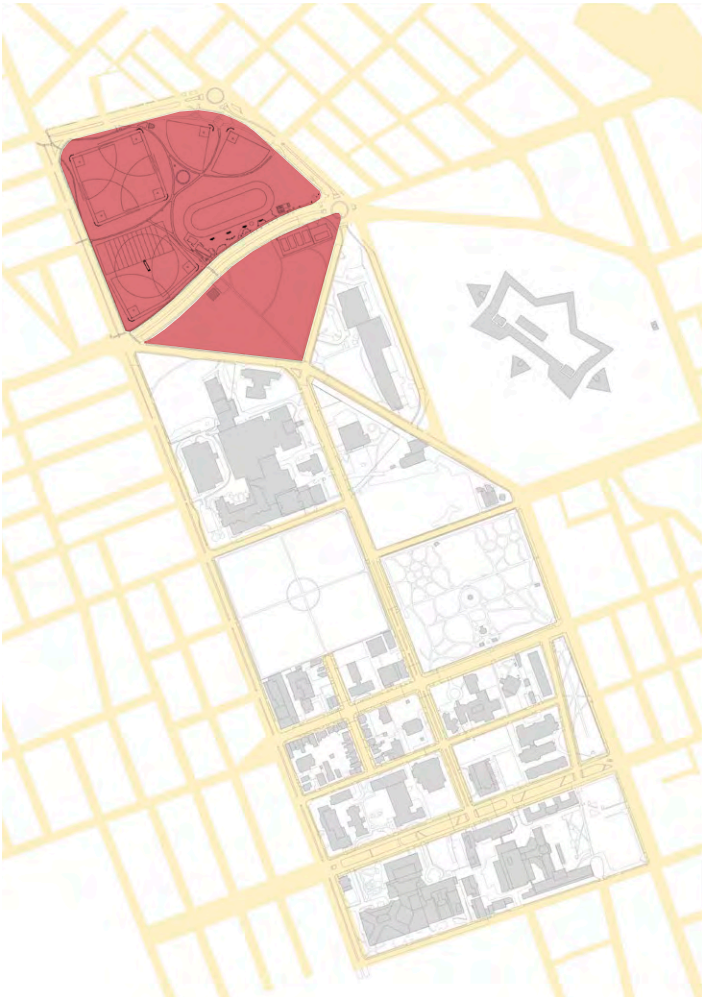
5.7 Victoria Park

5.8 Indoor Community Spaces

5.1 NORTH AND CENTRAL COMMON

GOAL

The North and Central Common are welcoming, accessible, free, and flexible open spaces that offer a well-balanced diversity of landscapes and recreational options serving the needs of local neighbourhoods and the region.



INTRODUCTION

The North and Central Common's most impressive attribute is its openness—over 17 hectares of contiguous public open space in the heart of the Halifax peninsula. Historically, this area was kept treeless due to its importance in defensive sightlines from the Citadel, resulting in convenient open space for pasture land, military exercises, and the continuing traditional use for large civic gatherings and events. This is an area where some of the boldest actions are proposed, and also where the broad-reaching revitalization concepts touch on most of the Master Plan guiding principles.

Municipal Open Space Areas include the North and Central Common, as presented in Section 4.1. These lands will continue to be used for recreation and leisure activities and will evolve to meet current and future needs for recreation and open space.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

1. Active/Passive Balance

The North Common open spaces are dominated by single-use, booked playing fields, particularly softball. This does not match the guiding principle of open and equitable access, or the current and projected recreational needs in the Halifax region, which call for more diverse forms of recreation and a more inclusive balance of structured and unstructured activities. There is also a need to address the dominance of scheduled activities over unscheduled, and casual access. The need to re-balance organized and unstructured uses was also identified in the 1994 Halifax Common Plan. Furthermore, the Halifax Community Facilities Master Plan 2 (2016) reported that many ball diamonds elsewhere in Halifax are underutilized, suggesting that investment in other sites could mean no net loss in ball diamond availability and use regionally. By shifting some of the regional demand for ball diamonds off the Halifax Common, there is an opportunity to develop an open 'Common Green' on the North Common suitable for events, pickup sports, lounging, picnics, kite flying or any other pursuit community members might desire.

2. Diversity

The public strongly desires that the North and Central Common be a leisurely and welcoming public space, functioning as a contemporary park, with a broad assortment of activities and varied landscapes. Suggestions include an off-leash dog park, more trees and native plantings, and gathering spaces with opportunities to picnic, barbecue, and buy from local food vendors.

3. Sports Fields/Courts Condition and Usage

Most of the ball diamonds on the North Common are well used during peak times in comparison to the usage of other unlit diamonds within the municipality. However, they still have some capacity for additional use. The ball diamond on the Central Common (#9 Canada Games), for example, is a lit field with extended hours but has a good amount of unused peak time. Locked fencing around the Central Common ball diamond further limits its use and has a negative visual impact on the site. Many of the ball diamonds do not meet the dimensions recommended for their current use, have overlapping outfields, or have a field of play areas that conflict with other park activities. As such, the large number of scheduled ball diamonds located within a shared multi-use park setting requires considerable space and restricts unstructured activities, particularly during peak periods, which many users have expressed as being important.

The sport fields on the North Common (#13, #14) share space with the cricket pitch and two ball diamonds. Having overlapping fields limits the utilization of each individual playing field; however, the limited time that is available to each field is well used and the multi-field area serves a greater variety of sport groups. The sport field on the Central Common (#16) also serves the field requirements for the neighbouring Citadel High School and has had frequent turf repairs from overuse. With the transition of the Wanderers Grounds to a venue for premier sporting events, it is expected there will be increased demand for sport fields on the North and Central Common.

The cricket pitch and tennis and basketball courts are well used and help diversify the recreation offerings on the Common land. However, the cricket pitch is in poor condition, with ruts from wear paths, poor drainage, and standing water. Informal basketball is highly valued by the public.

Field upgrades such as evening lighting and all-weather turf should be considered to extend evening use and expand the recreational capacity of selected facilities on the Common land. The use of field monitors who provide equipment and facilitate use on site should be explored as well. Other upgrades like improved drainage and connecting activities should be studied.

4. Play Structure
As a regional amenity, the play structure receives heavy use and must be larger than typical structures, while also accommodating all ages and abilities. The play structure is not on an accessible route, is aging, and the poured-in-place rubber surfacing is failing from wear and poor drainage. The public perceives the play structure as outdated and isolated from the other amenities on the Central Common, calling for better integration and circulation between the different recreation facilities, including the skatepark.

5. Skatepark
The skatepark is well used and is to continue to support a variety of age groups and types of uses, including skateboarding, bmx, scootering, and others. Its first phase consists of the asphalt section built within the walled area of the former Egg Pond. The second phase was built in the early 2000s and consists of concrete bowls and street elements. The site of the first phase is outdated and showing signs of deterioration including damaged skate elements and cracked surfaces.

6. Heritage Values
The North and Central Common are the most intact, open pieces of the original 1763 land grant, and are thus arguably the most historically significant remaining portion of Canada's first public open spaces, but their heritage value is generally not well-understood or appreciated by visitors and the general public. For example, the skatepark is a good opportunity to commemorate the former location of the Egg Pond. It is important to safeguard and celebrate the heritage values of this area, while recognizing that the Halifax Common has been in a state of change since it was created, and should continue to evolve. That evolution can be guided by the strategies offered in the Halifax Common Heritage Conservation Strategy (Appendix D).

7. Existing Street Edges & Neighbourhood Interface
In order to maintain the essential openness of the North and Central Common, most of the proposed actions should occur on the periphery. As noted in Section 4.1, the existing ambiance of those edges varies substantially. The Robie Street side of the Halifax Common is noisier and separated from the neighbourhoods by a busy thoroughfare. The Cunard Street and North Park Street edge is more inviting and easier to access. Gateway features, intersection improvements for crossings, wider sidewalks with seating edges, streetscaping and better continuity in the street tree canopy can help provide a more consistent character for the perimeter and a sense of arrival along the Cunard Street and Robie Street edges. A new entry point and improved crossing off of Robie Street at Welsford Street connecting to the new internal path system will take pressure off the Cogswell Street and Cunard Street crossings of Robie Street (see Section 4.4 for more in crossings). The corner of Robie Street and Cunard Street is one of the first major entry points into the Halifax Common district travelling from the north and west. This entrance warrants a gateway treatment to mark the northwest corner of the Halifax Common and signal the transition into the district. All these interventions will strengthen the links to the surrounding communities. These physical links can be paired with social links, encouraged through creative programming.

8. Circulation
Currently, the unorganized, informal network of paths conflict with the ball diamonds and sport fields, damaging the grass and exposing people walking and cycling to hazards of errant balls and play. These routes are often muddy or icy and present a safety hazard as well. Formal paved pathways are often indirect, unjustly obliging individuals with mobility issues to take the longest route. Also, some of the existing formal paved paths are in poor condition (potholes and poor drainage), which poses an additional barrier for people with mobility issues. The North Common in particular would benefit from a simplified hierarchy of shared paths connecting destinations and lending order to the open spaces they border. New pathways must meet current accessibility standards, including tactile cues to separate cycle and pedestrian tracks and frequent rest areas.

9. Gathering Spaces
The openness of the North Common provides very few well-defined, sheltered spaces for smaller gatherings, or other infrastructure to encourage gathering. The Oval has become a successful addition to the Halifax Common, becoming a hub for winter use and year-round activities. However, there is an opportunity to make the south plaza a more comfortable and inviting place throughout the year by incorporating flexible seating, shade structures, and diverse programming such as market days, food vendors and buskers. In general there is a need to improve existing gathering places and incorporate new ones as part of the redevelopment of the North Common and Central Common.

10. Amenities
Expensive and maintenance-intensive amenities like the public washrooms on the North Common tax the resources of the municipality to operate and maintain. However, public washrooms are highly valued by the community, offering an essential support for young families and school groups. Washrooms are to be in centralized locations, co-located with existing buildings, such as the Oval building or replaced Pavilion. Other amenities like site furnishings, bike racks, drinking fountains, shady spots to sit, and play spaces are of inconsistent quality and character, and generally in short supply for such a large and prominent public space.

11. Fountains and Water Features
The fencing around the Centennial fountain sets an inhospitable tone and creates an inelegant barrier between people and the water. Other heritage water features (Egg Pond, Freshwater Brook) have disappeared from the Halifax Common and spurred calls for their re-establishment, but these could displace recreation activities and come at a prohibitive infrastructure and maintenance cost. The fountain can be redeveloped to create a more open and accessible water feature, as a focal point within a new public space in the Halifax Common that gives this commemorative feature some prominence and breathing room. The scale and relationship can be altered to be more interactive and set in a more human-scaled gathering space. Rather than 'daylighting' the brook, it can be commemorated through interpretive materials on the Halifax Common, and its general diagonal alignment acknowledged in the pavement and walking routes that follow it.

12. Aquatic Area
The aquatic area was perhaps the most valued amenity aside from the Oval on the Halifax Common. In contrast, however, the building and pool are severely undersized for the current demand, in poor condition, and fail to meet current accessibility standards. A new modernized and accessible pool building is needed to serve the expanded program for the pool, which will include age-friendly features such as a beach entry, lift, splash pad and 'crush space' for caregivers. The pool program will focus on general recreation use, prioritizing core public service delivery, open swims, learn to swim, and general active living, over bookings by external groups, such as swim clubs. This expanded program will not fit in its current location due to the existing underground services that run on either side of the existing site. Further study revealed the capital cost of moving the facility to the west on the Central Common was preferred and more technically feasible than moving the underground services. The new facility on the Halifax Common can be closely integrated with the existing recreation facilities such as the skatepark and viewing court. The splash pad can be located outside the fence in order to extend the hours of use and the guiding principle of free and unobstructed access to all.

13. Sustainable Features
There was considerable interest among the public in developing naturalized areas and enhanced sustainability features on the Halifax Common. The challenge is to incorporate them in a manner that does not deter from the character-defining openness and high demand for turf for organized and unstructured recreation. Meadow-type naturalized areas are an option that would maintain the visual openness. Around the perimeter, small pockets of denser trees and shrub naturalization can be used to define sub-spaces and offer shade, shelter, and visual interest. These benefits are in addition to the resilience, lowered maintenance and various ecological services that naturalized landscapes provide, as outlined in Section 4.9.

14. Event Spaces

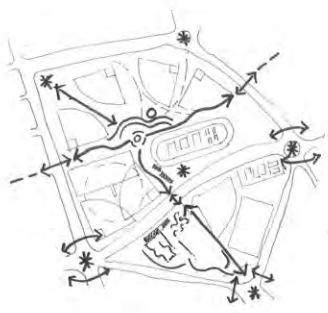
Demand remains for a regional scale festival and event venue in the heart of the peninsula—but events are very hard on grass, and require a large, level, defined space with a clear perimeter and unobstructed views. By locating the event space on non-scheduled playing fields, the disruption and damage to grass fields will be reduced. There is also a need for more structured concert space with access for semi-trailer loading. For concert events, the Oval would be ideal to take advantage of the underutilized open space for audiences and the plaza for vendors. Stage set up east of the Oval would be logical as it is located near the existing power source and semi-trailer access designed into the intersection of Cogswell Street and North Street, and can be oriented to minimize noise impact on the neighbourhood. Proposed events on the Halifax Common will be largely traditional and free to the public, such as Canada Day and New Year's Eve celebrations, with periodic special events, rather than previous "Concerts on the Common" ticketed events.

15. Other Uses for the Oval

The long-track speed skating oval is a well-used and highly valued attraction on the Halifax Common. There has been considerable attention in the media and through the public engagement process on potential uses for the area in the centre of the Oval. Ideas included the construction of a regulation hockey rink, the addition of summer field sports, and other passive opportunities, but there was also apprehension as to how the use of the centre could negatively affect the quality of the experience for the Oval and future competitive skating events. Overall, the community is hopeful that there is a way to enable coordination of casual hockey activities within the existing ice surface, replaced in summer with temporary field sports like badminton.

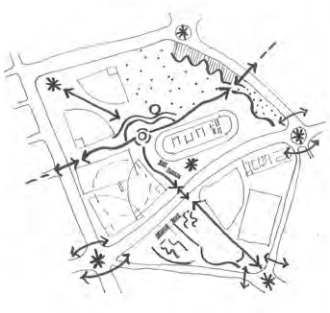
EVOLUTION OF THE NORTH AND CENTRAL COMMON

The phased rebalancing of activities should occur at a pace that ensures that opportunities for structured activities are accommodated elsewhere on the Halifax Common and within the region, and that the facilities that remain are located, managed and equipped to provide optimal value to the community. This could take many forms. These diagrams illustrate how the evolution of the North and Central Common could unfold.



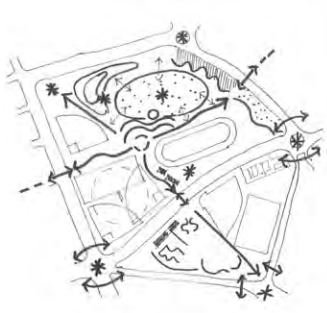
PHASE 1

- New aquatic Centre, consolidate/ improve Central Common fields
- Improve circulation, crossings
- New fountain with stage, gardens



PHASE 2

- Begin converting select fields to unstructured uses
- Add arts promenade along North Park Street



PHASE 3

- Add further amenities for unstructured play, socializing in small to large groups and festival uses



PHASE 4

- Ongoing response to evolving demands in urban open space, e.g. naturalization, stormwater retention, diversified social opportunities, etc.

DESIGN AND PROGRAMMING GUIDANCE

The following site design and programming recommendations are intended to inform and guide the design of the North Common and Central Common towards park development that enables greater use and positive experiences. The following guidance recommendations are all to be further investigated through detailed design and programming considerations. Many of the recommendations are captured in the accompanying Illustrative Plans (Figure 5.1.1-5.1.6).

District Identity

5.1.1 Develop a major entrance plaza and gateway feature at the corner of Robie Street and Cunard Street.

5.1.2 Develop an entrance plaza to the Central Common at the corner of Trollope Street and Bell Road. Locate a wayfinding landmark or public art piece that acts as a view terminus for Summer Street.

5.1.3 Develop the park entrance at Welsford Street to continue the neighbourhood plazas around the North Common perimeter. The design intent is to create a welcoming park entrance and neighbourhood identity that includes park identification signage, community bulletin board, various seating options, plantings, and public art.

5.1.4 Use a consistent landscape treatment along the perimeter of the site that reflects and complements the design language used for the park edge along North Park Street.

5.1.5 Use consistent materials, colours and styles that reflect or complement the aesthetic and design language of the Halifax Common District and Recreational Parkland Character Area.

Views & Open Space Character

5.1.6 Retain the general openness and views across the North and Central Commons with the Centennial Fountain, Halifax Armoury and Citadel Hill as important focal points.

5.1.7 Retain views into the North and Central Common from the surrounding areas, especially from the vantage point of the western flank of Citadel Hill.

5.1.8 Retain views into the Central Common from the surrounding areas, primarily from the North Common across Cogswell Street.

5.1.9 Retain the generally flat topography and open lawn areas on the North Common.

5.1.10 Introduce more variety of terrain with treed landforms and berms along street edges where it offers placemaking, buffering or recreational value, taking care not to compromise views.

5.1.11 Maintain the scale and form of any support buildings or structures on the North and Central Common to be subordinate to the open space.

5.1.12 Maintain the distinct planting of mature trees along the perimeter of the site and street boulevards that reflect the civic beautification activities of the 20th century.

5.1.13 Safeguard the green space and prominent stand of mature trees at the corner site of Bell Road and Cogswell Street that distinguish the western entry into the Common land from Quinpool Road and contribute to the aesthetic image and open space character of the Halifax Common.

Culture & Heritage Conservation

North Common

5.1.14 Retain the general openness and large lawn areas on the North Common for its continuing historic use for major civic gatherings and special events. Provide interpretation of the past uses and major events that have occurred since the founding of the Halifax Common.

5.1.15 Assess events planned on the Common land for potential damage to character defining elements and historic resources, and hold organizers responsible for all necessary protective and remedial measures.

Centennial Fountain Redevelopment

5.1.16 Redevelop the Centennial fountain to achieve a more human scale and interactive water features.

5.1.17 While respecting the original intent of the Centennial Fountain to celebrate and mark Canadian Confederation 1867-1967, future redesigns of the fountain should also acknowledge the Peace and Friendship Treaties and that we are all Treaty People within the ancestral and traditional lands of the Mi'kmaq people.

5.1.18 Where new construction is considered, the new design should not replicate the original but should be compatible with the original design intent. Key features to be part of a new design are:

- a circular form and central location highly visible from the surrounding streets;
- a distinctive display of water jets, illumination;
- an overall inviting appearance that welcomes public views and interaction; and
- an accessible connection with the park's pathway system.

5.1.19 Prior to any redevelopment or removal of the fountain, inventory and document to retain a record of the original materials and construction techniques.

5.1.20 During recapitalization of the fountain systems, apply best practices for water conservation, energy efficiency and sustainability.

5.1.21 Develop the area around the fountain as a major gathering space with seating, shade structures, and gardens.

5.1.22 Consider barrier-free design options for the fountain that incorporate other uses when fountains are not activated, such as a program space or small platform stage that relates to the open lawn area.

5.1.23 Through interpretation, expand the story of the Centennial Fountain and the commemoration of Canada's Confederation to include recognition of the Peace and Friendship Treaties.

Historic Freshwater Brook and the Egg Pond

5.1.24 Recognize the traditional recreational uses in the early 20th century of the Central Common and Egg Pond as the focal point for family outings, water play, and children's playground.

5.1.25 Honour the heritage of Freshwater Brook and the natural water courses that historically ran through the Halifax Common through commemoration and interpretation of the former alignment.

5.1.26 Interpret the heritage of the Egg Pond as a water attraction that was a key part of the early 20th century recreational activities.

5.1.27 Conserve the masonry wall remnant that edged the former Egg Pond, that is now part of the skatepark.

5.1.28 Interpret the natural history of Freshwater Brook and Black Duck Pond and the associate heritage value of the Mi'kmaq people who used the site for thousands of years for hunting and fishing.

Mobility & Linkages

5.1.29 Rationalize the pathways and provide a simplified circulation network through the North and Central Common that links the surrounding neighbourhoods and destinations.

5.1.30 Construct accessible pathways and routes that enable pedestrians to easily access and interact with the open space and park facilities. Give special attention to the needs of people with visual impairments or using mobility devices such as wheelchairs.

5.1.31 Choose appropriate pavement materials for primary pathways that enable maintenance for all-season access.

5.1.32 Develop multi-use pathways for active transportation through the North Common that connect the entrances at Welsford Street and Cornwallis Street, and the mid-block crossing on Cogswell Street;

and through the Central Common that connects the mid-block crossing on Cogswell Street with the park entrance at the intersection of Bell Road and Trollope Street.

5.1.33 Manage potential conflicts between different modes of travel through appropriate path widths, curve radii and intersection design, pavement markings, and etiquette signage including speed limit and Code of Conduct.

5.1.34 Develop new pedestrian pathways that connect the corner entrances at Robie Street and Cunard Street, Agricola Street and North Park Street, and North Park Street and Cogswell Street with the central pathway system.

5.1.35 Continue the wider sidewalk treatment along the north side of Cogswell Street from the mid-block crossing to the Robie Street intersection.

5.1.36 Develop the section of the Promenade along the northern and eastern perimeter pathways that is optimized for pedestrian comfort and provides stops and interest along the route.

5.1.37 Consider opportunities for the continuation of a perimeter pathway system along the western Robie Street edge to create a circuit loop around the park.

5.1.38 Consider other pathway routes that address potential desire lines and walking patterns through the open lawn area connecting to the park entrances off Cunard and North Park Streets.

5.1.39 Continue upgrades to pathway lighting. Use pedestrian-scale lighting with energy-efficient, full cut-off light fixtures and automatic shut-off devices.

5.1.40 Retain the pathway along Trollope Street for multi-use.

5.1.41 Widen perimeter sidewalks along Bell Road as opportunities arise.

5.1.42 Restrict vehicle access and parking on the North and Central Common, except for service vehicles. Remove the parking lot from the Central Common.

5.1.43 Provide accessible parking on Cogswell Street for the skating oval and outdoor aquatic facilities.

Recreation Programming & Facilities

Ball Diamonds and Informal Green Spaces

5.1.44 Include more green space and informal areas for a wider variety of unstructured recreation and leisure activities, such as open lawn areas, seating areas, and plantings.

5.1.45 Reduce, in increments, the amount of area dedicated to playing fields and scheduled activities to allow for more opportunities for unstructured activities and green space.

5.1.46 Resolve conflicts of use and broaden utilization on the North Common by rationalizing and improving the layout of ballfields through a phased planning approach that considers:

- Prioritization of the reduction of ball diamonds based on safety, circulation improvements, and the need for informal green space areas for unstructured recreation.
- Upgrades of the remaining ballfields on the North Common that may include lighting improvements for expanded play.
- A new, purpose-built multi-diamond complex elsewhere within the municipality as part of the forthcoming Playing Field Strategy.
- Improvement of booking procedures to ensure that any unused field time can be publicly viewed and booked by all users.

5.1.47 Continue to program and schedule the North Common's southwest quadrant for multi-use for the playing field, cricket pitch, and ball diamond.

Learning Activities & Gathering Places

5.1.48 Develop a variety of smaller, human-scale spaces that give respite from the large open areas and emphasize physical comfort from weather. Consider areas along the edges of the park, and the central area around the redeveloped Centennial Fountain.

5.1.49 Provide a variety of spaces that include more trees and vegetation planting and multiple seating options where people can relax, socialize, view activity in the park, and enjoy nature.

5.1.50 Animate spaces with interactive elements such as public art, commemorative or interpretive pieces, and small play elements.

5.1.51 Develop areas for planting and vegetable garden beds that foster communal use, education opportunities and knowledge sharing, and community celebrations.

5.1.52 Provide picnic areas with tables, support infrastructure for portable barbecues, and food vending stands.

Canada Games Ball Diamond

5.1.53 Program the Canada Games ball diamond as primarily serving recreational co-ed slo-pitch softball and accommodate this usage from any reduction of ball diamonds on the North Common.

5.1.54 Expand the size of the outfield to meet minimum dimensions for co-ed slo-pitch. Realign circulation path and field lighting to suit. Review whether a short outfield fence is warranted to reduce ball conflicts from the adjacent playing field.

5.1.55 Remove secondary fencing on the outside of the ball diamond area. Maintain public access. Do not completely fence or lock the facility.

5.1.56 Improve booking procedures to ensure that any unused field time can be publicly viewed and booked by all users.

Central Common Sports Field

5.1.57 Upgrade the sports field to better accommodate high use and extended play with artificial, all-weather turf and field-of-play lighting.

5.1.58 Program the sport field for more informal and unscheduled use such as times for drop-in play, cross-play mini-fields, free equipment loan and staff facilitation and monitoring.

5.1.59 Install fencing along Trollope Street to contain stray balls.

5.1.60 Maintain public access. Do not completely fence or lock the facility.

Skating Oval

5.1.61 Promote and manage the skating oval to emphasize year-round general public use.

5.1.62 Continue no-cost equipment loan programs to reduce barriers to recreation and increase participation.

5.1.63 Maintain the skating oval as a viable venue for hosting competition for long-track speed-skating tournaments by maintaining open sight lines for judging and areas for spectator viewing.

5.1.64 Expand the winter programming schedule to include other activities such as shinny hockey.

5.1.65 Continue to allocate times for long-track speed skating.

5.1.66 Retain the lawn area in the centre of the skating oval for informal lawn sports and use for special events.

5.1.67 Develop the north side of the skating oval for additional seating and gathering spaces. Consider additional temporary program elements such as food vending stands and winter warming huts.

5.1.68 Add vegetation planting on the northwest side of the skating oval to help mitigate prevailing winter winds.

Special Events Infrastructure

5.1.69 Continue the use of the North Common as a cultural venue for large-scale special events and outdoor music concerts and live performances.

5.1.70 Move all outdoor civic events use from the Central Common to the North Common.

5.1.71 Retain flat, open lawn areas co-located with the skating oval to accommodate large gatherings and events.

5.1.72 Consider the use of the skating oval, including the plaza and centre lawn area, for temporary community markets and special events.

5.1.73 Adapt the site to the east of the skating oval and adjacent to existing electrical service building to better accommodate mobile stage setup, audience viewing area, and back of stage needs. The design should consider solutions that are scalable for small performances to large events.

5.1.74 Provide permanent infrastructure for smaller outdoor performances to reduce barriers for local and emerging performing artists. The design should consider rain shelter for performers and low-cost access to electrical power.

Tennis Courts

5.1.75 Continue to program the tennis courts primarily for recreational tennis with open public access.

5.1.76 With limits, allow some bookings of the courts that demonstrate community benefit and minimal impact to general public use.

5.1.77 Promote and expand uses of the courts during the off-season for other compatible activities, such as pickup soccer or ball hockey.

5.1.78 Monitor the demand for pickle ball for consideration in future recapitalization plans.

Skatepark

5.1.79 Keep the skatepark in its current location on the Central Common.

5.1.80 Redesign the older asphalt section of the skatepark to provide more low impact features for beginners, scooters, bmx riders and skaters wishing to develop skills. Replace with better materials and construction techniques.

5.1.81 In the new design, retain and restore the heritage masonry wall that was part of the original Egg Pond.

5.1.82 Provide more shaded areas adjacent to the skatepark using shade structures, tree planting, and variety of seating options.

5.1.83 Incorporate the public art piece “Octagonal Posts” into the redesign of the area around the skatepark.

5.1.84 Upgrade the facility lighting to improve visibility and safety during evening use.

5.1.85 Address surface water drainage and erosion issues.

5.1.86 Consider additional infrastructure requirements for hosting skateboarding events and competitions, such as electrical service and space for temporary staging and viewing areas.

5.1.87 Continue to monitor the facility for repairs and safety, particularly for surface pavement cracking.

Outdoor Pool & Aquatic Area

5.1.88 Continue to provide aquatic recreation on the Halifax Common and recognize that the aquatic facility performs an important role in the network of outdoor aquatic facilities throughout the region.

5.1.89 Replace the existing outdoor pool, splash pad and Pavilion building with a new outdoor aquatic facility that emphasizes general aquatic recreational use and can accommodate families and summer day camp groups.

5.1.90 Develop an outdoor pool that emphasizes public use and leisure aquatic recreation with a diversity of features for broader participation. The design intent is having a combination of facility features that allow for more diverse programming, multi-functionality, scheduling flexibility, and designed for all ages and abilities.

5.1.91 Develop a splash pad that is co-located with the pool, shower change rooms, and washroom facilities but can operate independently and allow more public access outside of the pool operation.

5.1.92 Schedule the outdoor pool primarily for family open swims with no admission fees to reduce barriers and provide access comparable with beach locations in other parts of the Halifax Region.

5.1.93 Continue to provide no-cost learn-to-swim and water safety programs.

5.1.94 During recapitalization of the aquatic facilities, apply best practices for reduction of water consumption, water recycling and reclamation. Consider grey water reclamation for site irrigation.

5.1.95 Apply best practices for energy efficiency and sustainability. Consider the reuse of the rooftop solar panels on the existing Pavilion building.

5.1.96 Design the pool for evening summer use with sufficient lighting for safety and lifeguarding visibility.

5.1.97 Consider ways to soften or add visual interest to the required fencing around the pool and deck area.

5.1.98 Provide shade structures, fixed seating and sufficient deck space to allow families and groups to stay together within the pool's fenced area.

Playground

5.1.99 Continue to provide a playground on the Halifax Common that is designed for high volume use.

5.1.100 Replace the existing playground with a new play area and structures that emphasizes:

- connecting children with nature through a variety of nature play opportunities and vegetation plantings; and
- design for inclusive play for children of all abilities.

5.1.101 Consider thermal comfort in the selection of materials and the provision of shade structures and tree planting.

5.1.102 Provide accessible routes to the playground area from the street and surrounding pathways.

5.1.103 Develop a sundeck space that connects the playground area with the outdoor aquatic facility. Provide flexible seating for lounging and picnicking.

Buildings & Park Infrastructure

Oval Pavilion

5.1.104 Maintain the skating oval pavilion to support the recreation activities and equipment loan programs for the North Common.

North Common Washroom Building

5.1.105 Rationalize the need and location of the North Common public washroom building for future ball tournament support.

5.1.106 Investigate the feasibility of operating the building as public washroom year-round.

5.1.107 Consider other park uses for the building that can take advantage of the existing sewer, water and electrical services, such as a support building for community gardening.

Central Common Pavilion

5.1.108 Develop a replacement for the Pavilion building that supports the aquatic facility and houses the pool mechanical systems, shower change rooms, lifeguard offices, and pool storage. The building replacement should also house a public universal washroom available for all park users, and a multi-purpose community room that can also function as a small live music venue.

Park Amenities & Servicing

5.1.109 Provide drinking water at several locations within the North and Central Common through a distributed system of water bottle filling stations collocated with public washroom buildings and in high activity areas, such as the tennis courts, playground and skatepark.

5.1.110 Provide public Wi-Fi access at concentrated gathering spaces and high activity areas, such as the skating oval plaza, new aquatic area, playground and skatepark.

5.1.111 Provide a distributed system of waste and recycling receptacles, collocated at park entrances and high activity areas, such as the skating oval, skatepark, playground and aquatic area.

5.1.112 Provide bicycle parking distributed throughout the North and Central Commons and located next to recreation facility destinations.

5.1.113 Consider outdoor charging stations for mobile devices, and electric bicycles or scooters.

Indoor Recreation Facilities

5.1.114 Provide indoor recreational facilities with multifunctional and accessible spaces which can be used for a variety of year-round programs and community uses.

5.1.115 Manage indoor and outdoor facilities as a cohesive facility cluster supporting the "Hub and Spoke Facility Model".

5.1.116 Ensure that community arts, youth music performance, and cultural programs are considered within new multifunctional community spaces.

5.1.117 Safeguard public ownership of recreation facilities on the North and Central Commons.

5.1.118 Foster collaboration with the Halifax Regional Centre for Education and the Province to ensure effective and efficient public programming.

5.1.119 Limit the use of public programming spaces for the sole purpose of equipment storage and investigate off-site options for this use.

5.1.120 Assess the future need for the best public use for the vacant second-floor space of the Citadel Community Centre.

5.1.121 Ensure the following program requirements are considered within indoor recreation facilities:

- community meetings, gatherings
- workshops
- cultural celebrations and support of community events
- summer day camps and other community programs
- arts and cultural programs
- fitness, dance, sport rentals
- music venue

Environmental Design (Sustainable Landscape Practices)

5.1.122 Prioritize the retention of green space and limit hardscaping to circulation and gathering spaces. Consider pervious paving surfaces where applicable.

5.1.123 As identified in the Urban Forest Master Plan, increase the tree canopy cover in the North and Central Commons to 20% or greater, through additional tree planting mainly around the perimeter of the site.

5.1.124 Introduce naturalization areas and native plant material for visual interest, habitat creation and groundwater recharge.

5.1.125 Consider planting edible plants such as fruit trees and berry bushes.

5.1.126 Manage thermal comfort with light-coloured materials, more tree planting and shade structures near playgrounds and high activity areas.

5.1.127 Moderate wind exposure on the skating oval through additional vegetation planting to block prevailing winter winds.

5.1.128 Replace or retrofit existing park and pathway lighting with energy efficient fixtures (e.g. L.E.D.)

ACTIONS

Actions	
A5.1.1	Implement the aquatic facility replacement that includes an outdoor recreational pool, splash pad, and support building comprised of change rooms, public washrooms, and community space.
A5.1.2	Implement the playground replacement.
A5.1.3	Plan for a phased reduction of ball diamonds on the Halifax Common to redistribute ball diamond use to other under-utilized facilities, following the Playing Field Strategy.
A5.1.4	Create an online public portal for viewing field availability and establish practices that enable unused time to be transparently available for all users.
A5.1.5	Improve the Canada Games diamond on the Central Common to meet the outfield dimensions for recreational slo-pitch use. Work to include expanding the outfield, relocating field light standards and removing redundant fencing and locked gates.
A5.1.6	Provide more greenspace and informal areas for a wider variety of unstructured, and passive recreation activities, including the Common Green open lawn area, seating areas, plantings and naturalized landscaping.
A5.1.7	Consider additional food vending sites on the North and Central Common under By-law C-501. Consider sites on Cogswell Street for food service vehicles and additional sites for food vending stands at park entrances, the Oval plaza, and the central area around the Centennial Fountain.
A5.1.8	Plan and upgrade the pathway system and road crossings for the North Common and Central Common in coordination with Active Transportation Planning.



Figure 5.1.1

COLAB HTFC PLANNING & DESIGN UPLAND

Legend

1. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAZA
   - Community games tables
   - Reclaim traffic slip-lane
   - Picnic tables & seating
2. BERMS
   - Treed landform
   - Bird feeders
   - Hammock swings
   - Discovery play
   - Fitness equipment
   - Group bbq and picnic shelter w/ hearth
   - Winter sledding
3. COMMON GREEN
   - Shared space for gathering, events and informal sports and leisure activities
4. PROMENADE
   - Active edge to the Great Lawn and the Common
   - Public Art
   - Seat wall art & garden displays
5. GATHERING PODS
   - Smaller gathering areas
   - Bbq & picnic areas
6. SEATING
   - Retaining wall / sitting edge for North Park Street trees
7. INFORMAL LAWN SPORTS
8. PUBLIC PLAZA PROGRAMMING
   - Programmable space (markets, food carts, buskers)
   - Flexible seating and shade structures in summer
9. VENDING SITE
   - Designated vending site in parking lane (separate from Oval Plaza)
10. INTERIOR PLAZA PROGRAMMING
    - Food carts and picnic area
    - Winter: warming huts
11. MAJOR GATHERING AREA & FOUNTAIN PLAZA
    - At grade water sprayers of varying heights with underlighting. Concrete plaza sits perched above the great lawn complete with wide steps for sitting and seat wall
    - Sprayers can be turned off for casual stage use or special gatherings such as yoga, dance, music, theatre in the great lawn etc.
    - Trellis Walk with ornamental display gardens and 'Porch/Garden Swings' and park benches.
    - Communal gardening display
12. ENHANCED PAVED PATHWAY
13. PEDESTRIAN ROUNDABOUT
    - Major pedestrian / AT node
    - Introduce meadow in leftover spaces and between sports fields
14. NEW MAJOR MULTI-USE PATH
15. REALIGN EXISTING MULTI-USE PATH
16. ENTRANCE PLAZA

★ EXISTING SCULPTURE / ART FEATURE

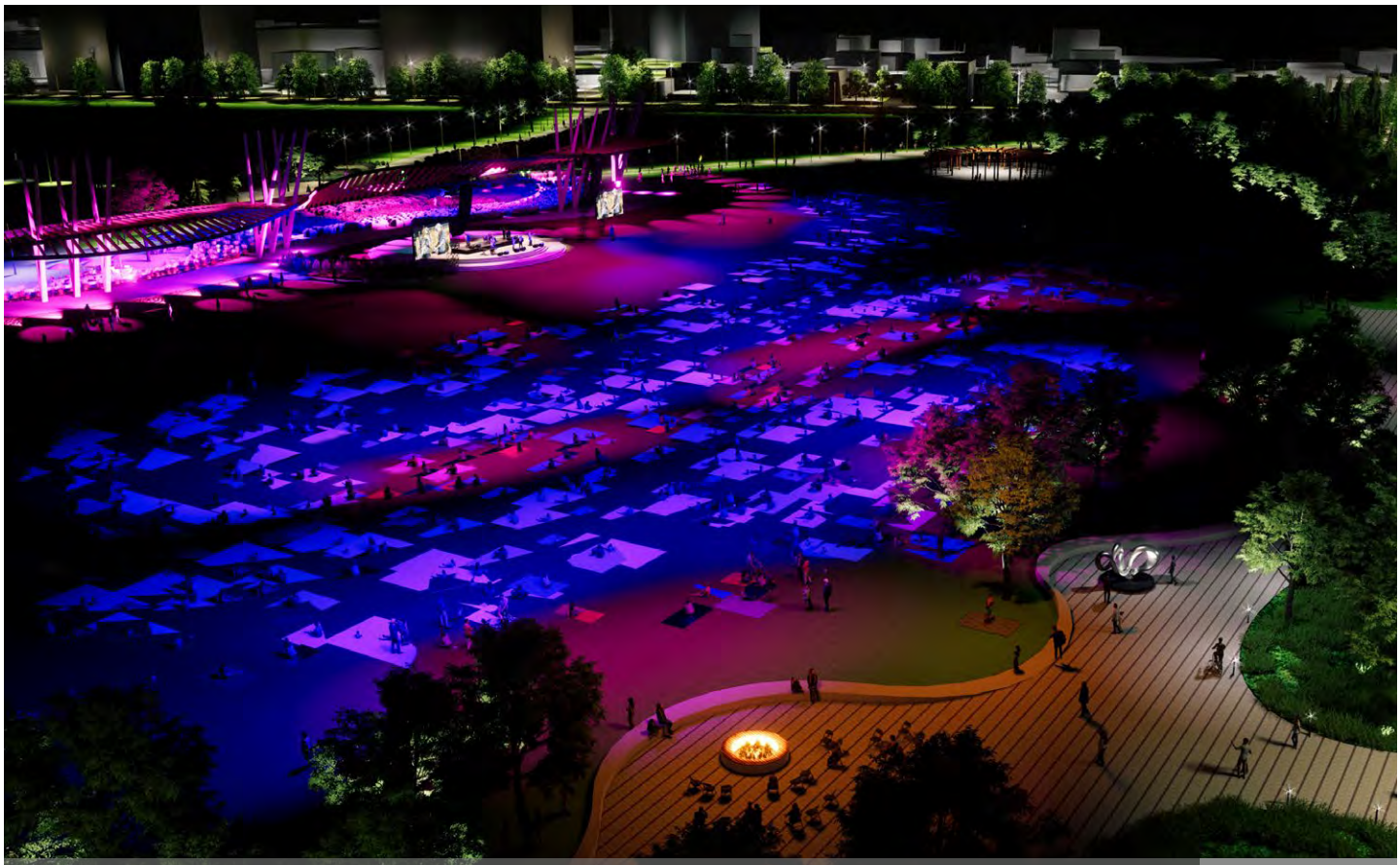
★ NEW SCULPTURE / ART FEATURE



Figure 5.1.2 Common Green as a public concert venue.



Figure 5.1.4 The Centennial Fountain Plaza and gardens create a rallying point for activities on the North Common.



View from Cunard/North Park Street intersection, showing neighbourhood-oriented socializing spaces. Figure 5.1.3





Figure 5.1.5

COLAB HTFC PLANNING & DESIGN UPLAND

Legend

1. TEMPORARY MAIN STAGE
2. TEMPORARY SECONDARY STAGE (24' x 32' LEVEL AREA)
3. SEMI TRUCK ACCESS TO BACK OF STAGE DELIVERIES
4. EVENT AREA FENCING



Figure 5.1.6

COLAB HTFC PLANNING & DESIGN UPLAND

Legend

OUTDOOR AQUATIC AREA

1. NEW AQUATIC BUILDING & WASHROOM FACILITIES
2. RECREATIONAL POOL
   - Beach entry w/ handrail
   - Spray features - ocean theme
   - 6' deep leisure pool w/ lift
   - Activity wall
   - Lane swimming
   - Picnic tables and loungers

   SPLASH PAD
   - Meadow, brook and bug theme
   - Seat wall
3. SEATING DECK:
   - Crush space between buildings
   - Umbrella shade seating and picnic area
4. BOARDWALK:
   - Access to pool and community space
   - Trellis edge for seating and north perimeter of nature play
5. NATURE PLAY AREA
   - Meadow, brook and bug theme
   - Accessible play
6. IMPROVED PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE CROSSING
7. TRANSITION PLAZA
   - For multi-use path and surrounding activities (seating, game tables etc.)
8. OUTDOOR BALL FIELD
   - Partial fencing along Cogswell Street & multi-use path
9. VIEWING HILL
10. MULTI-PURPOSE SPORTS FIELD
    - Synthetic all-weather turf multi-purpose sports field
    - Lighting
    - Partial fencing along Trollope Street
11. PEDESTRIAN AMENITIES
    - Trees, Benches, Recycling & Garbage Receptacles, Pedestrian lights etc.
12. TREE ORCHARD
    - Fruiting trees and seating
13. SKATE PARK IMPROVEMENTS
    - Access off multi-use path w/ treed edge
    - Enhanced paved edge w/ lighting and seating
    - Egg Pond wall seating and commemoration and interpretation
    - Seating node
14. GARDENS & MEADOW PLANTINGS
15. MULTI-USE PATH
16. EXISTING MULTI-USE PATH ON TROLLOPE STREET
17. CENTRAL COMMON ENTRANCE PLAZA
18. CITADEL - SHARED BASKETBALL FACILITIES

* NEW SCULPTURE / ART FEATURE

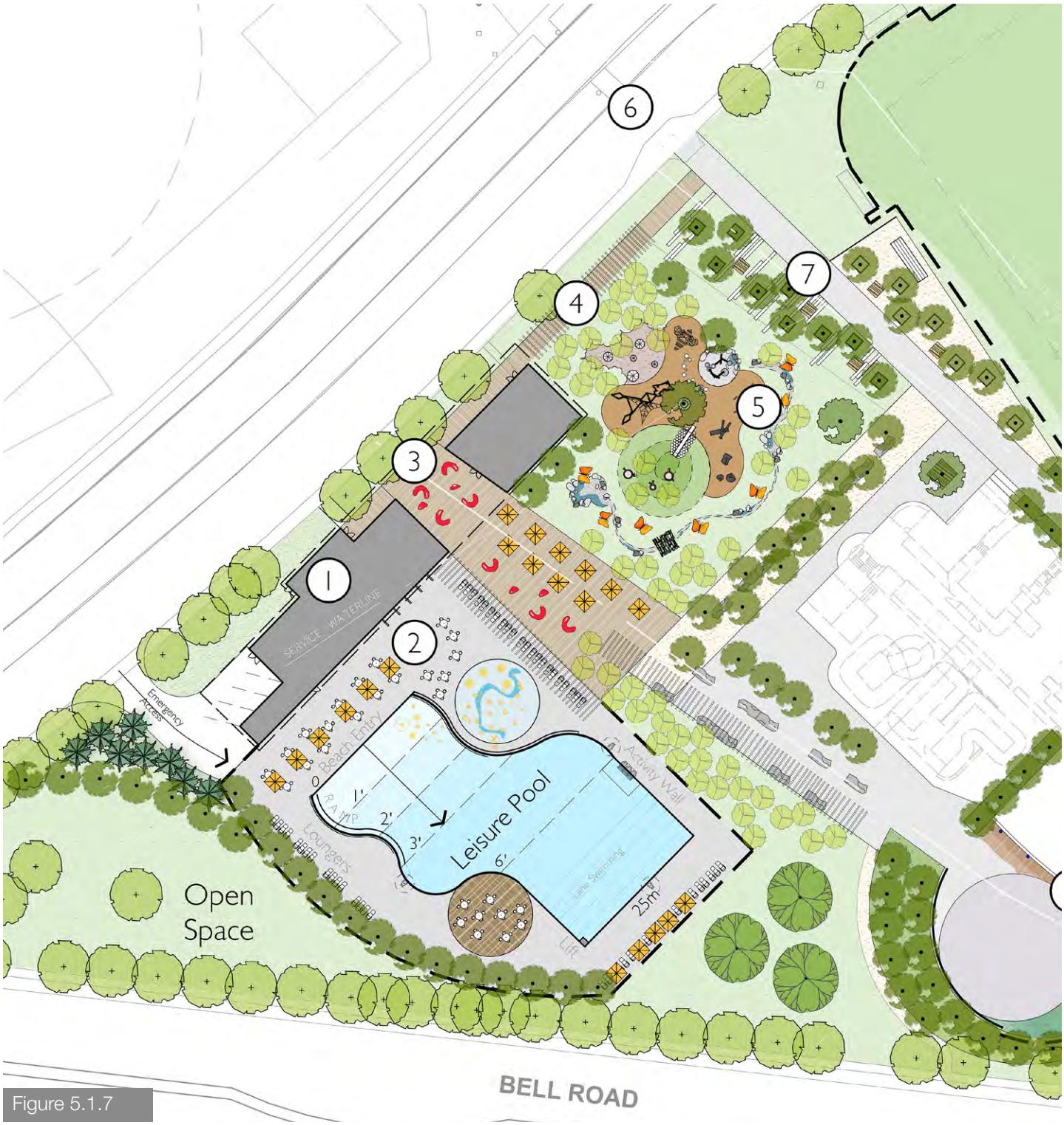


Figure 5.1.7

COLAB HTFC PLANNING & DESIGN UPLAND

Legend

OUTDOOR AQUATIC AREA

1. NEW AQUATIC BUILDING & WASHROOM FACILITIES
2. RECREATIONAL POOL
   - Beach entry w/ handrail
   - Spray features - ocean theme
   - 6' deep leisure pool w/ lift
   - Activity wall
   - Lane swimming
   - Picnic tables and loungers

   SPLASH PAD
   - Meadow, brook and bug theme
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   - Trellis edge for seating and north perimeter of nature play
5. NATURE PLAY AREA
   - Meadow, brook and bug theme
   - Accessible play
6. IMPROVED PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE CROSSING
7. TRANSITION PLAZA
   - For multi-use path and surrounding activities (seating, game tables etc.)



Figure 5.1.8 Aerial view of new outdoor aquatic area and Central Common upgrades.

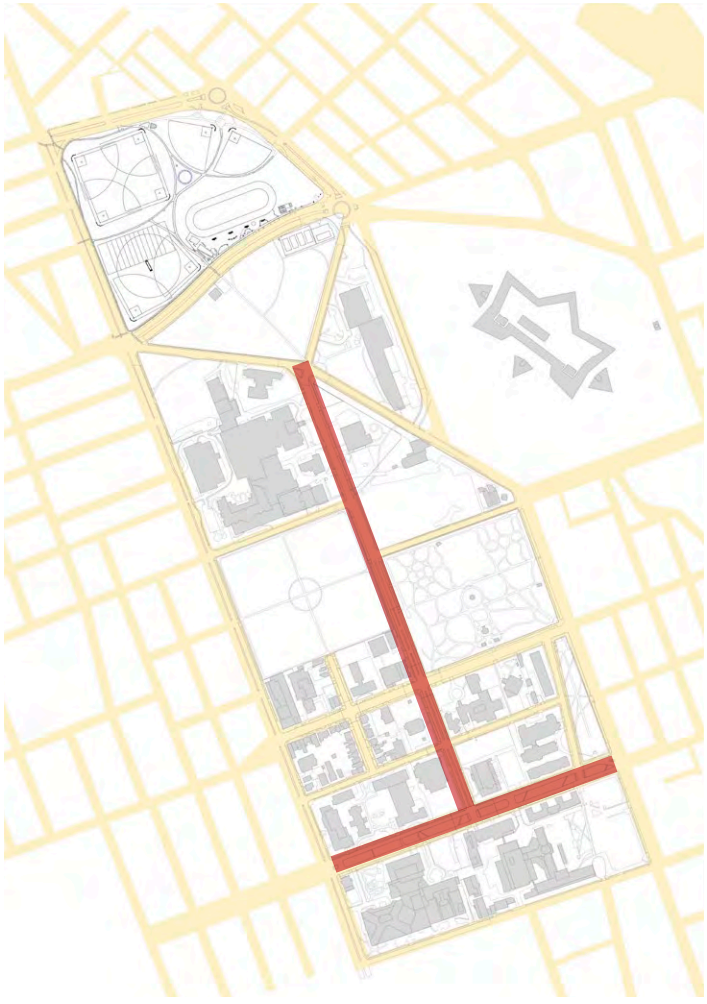

LEGEND:
1 FEMALE CHANGE ROOM
2 MALE CHANGE ROOM
3 UNIVERSAL WASHROOM
4 COMMUNITY SPACE
5 STAFF SPACE
6 CIRCULATION
Mechanical / Chemical Storage
Basement Plan
Roof Line
Outdoor Showers

Figure 5.1.9

5.2 SUMMER STREET AND UNIVERSITY AVENUE GREEN CORRIDORS

GOAL

Summer Street and University Avenue are redeveloped as high quality pedestrian-oriented streetscapes with provision for future cycling infrastructure, focused on providing a strong sense of place for people moving between campuses and character areas on the Halifax Common.



INTRODUCTION

The dense but somewhat disconnected pattern of open spaces on the Halifax Common presents an opportunity for increased connectivity and integration. This could be achieved either by establishing direct connections between open spaces or by utilizing urban green corridor opportunities in public street rights of way. As indicated in Section 4.5, Summer Street and University Avenue have great potential as connective green corridors. Summer Street currently plays an important role as a central spine, linking character areas and institutional anchors in the Halifax Common, and ties directly into the proposed primary pedestrian route across the North and Central Common and an aspirational pedestrian connector through the hospital lands to the south. University Avenue, on the other hand, represents an important east-west corridor within primarily Institutional Character Areas. Together, Summer Street and University Avenue green corridors would strengthen movement throughout the Halifax Common.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

1. Planning Context
The Active Transportation Priorities Plan (2014) identifies Summer Street as an 'envisioned greenway' in its candidate bicycle route and greenway network maps. This means it is considered an important missing piece of the network, though a functional design study has yet to be completed for this site. The Integrated Mobility Plan proposes the addition of protected bike lanes along University Avenue as part of an east-west corridor across the peninsula.

In 2012, both Summer Street and University Avenue were proposed as potential 'bikeways' by Dalhousie University, Capital Health, IWK Health Centre and Saint Mary's University in their Urban Halifax Institutional District Bikeway Plan. Potential plans by the Health Authority to temporarily use the soon to be demolished Victoria General Hospital site for staff parking could mean that large volumes of hospital staff will need to move between the parking lot in the south and the new hospital at the northern tip of Summer Street. The Institutional Bikeway Plan is a community-based vision, and has many similarities with current municipal planning on active transportation, but both of the cited documents highlight the potential for Summer Street and University Avenue to strengthen the network and support the alternative mobility needs of institutions and the public.

2. Streetscape Improvements
Along Summer Street, except for the block along the Public Gardens, sidewalks are between 1.5 metres and 1.7 metres wide, while along University Avenue, sidewalks vary between 1.5 metres and 3.0 metres in width. Doubling the width of the sidewalks in some cases along both sides of the streets to 3.0 metres would more comfortably accommodate groups of students, hospital staff and tourists streaming between destinations, and signal this as a significant pedestrian corridor.

There is also space within the treed boulevards to add benches, pedestrian scale lighting, wayfinding features and other streetscape amenities along both streets. The treatment of the street edge of the Community Health Education Building at the corner of University Avenue and Summer Street should be highlighted as a good example of the character intended for the Halifax Common. This street edge includes building setback for public amenities such as benches, seating walls, bicycle racks, ornamental street lights, and no overhead wires.

3. Entry Spaces
Enhanced entrances to institutions and open spaces could further contribute to reinforcing a Halifax Common identity, such as the 'campus' setting that is now established with the setback of institutional buildings at the corners of the Summer Street and Bell Road intersection. Establishing a Central Common enhanced entrance at this intersection will provide a sense of arrival and a smooth transition between street and park.

4. Future Bicycle Infrastructure
In addition to increasing pedestrian ease of access, bicycle access to institutions along Summer Street and University Avenue can be encouraged by adding bicycle parking and including provisions in the plans for future bicycle infrastructure on the road or in conjunction with the sidewalks.

5. Transit and Cycling Links
Summer Street, and to a lesser extent, University Avenue, is an important transit corridor within the Halifax Common, serviced by regular and peak-time commuter routes. This adds significantly to the pedestrian activity on these streets which would benefit from enhanced pedestrian amenities at major bus stops. Halifax Transit offers bike racks on their buses and secure bike lockers at MetroLink terminals for people who want to cycle to their stop. There may be an opportunity to encourage more 'trip chaining' within the Halifax Common by providing sheltered bike parking at major transit stops like the Halifax Infirmary.

Legend

SUMMER STREET / UNIVERSITY AVENUE

OPEN SPACE ENTRY POINT

INSTITUTIONAL ENTRY POINT

A' A'' STREET CROSS SECTION

COLAB HTFC PLANNING & DESIGN UPLAND

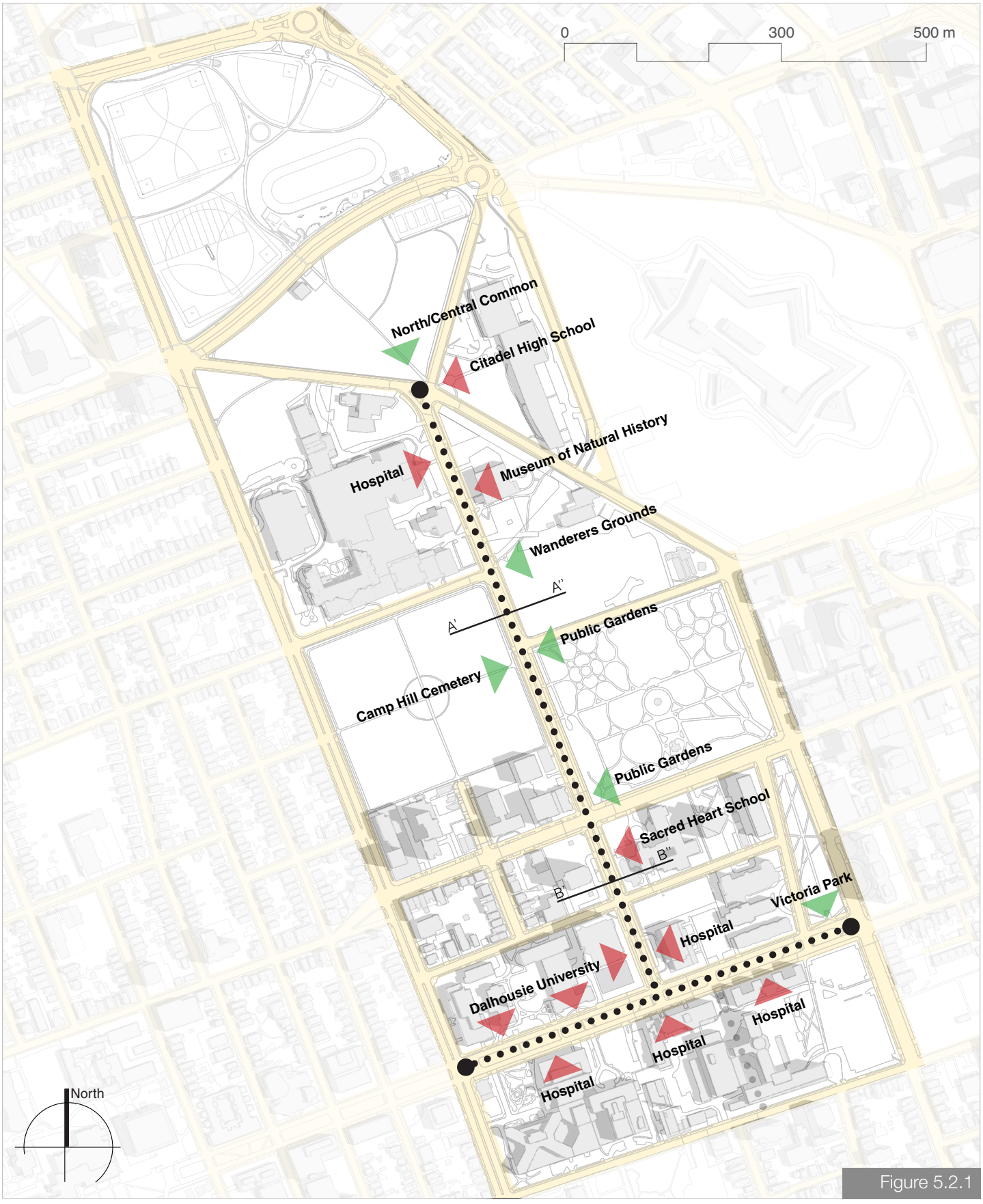

0
300
500 m
North/Central Common
Citadel High School
Hospital
Museum of Natural History
Wanderers Grounds
A'
A''
Public Gardens
Camp Hill Cemetery
Public Gardens
Sacred Heart School
B''
B'
Victoria Park
Hospital
Dalhousie University
Hospital
Hospital
Hospital
North

Figure 5.2.1

DESIGN AND PROGRAMMING GUIDANCE

The following recommendations are intended to inform and guide the design of the Summer Street and University Avenue as multi-modal green corridors for connecting the open spaces and institutions along these streets. They are all to be further investigated through detail design and programming considerations.

5.2.1 Recognize Summer Street and University Avenue as green corridors, image routes and potential multi-modal transportation corridors.

5.2.2 Prioritize tree care, protection and replacement. Consider wider boulevard and tree lawn widths where possible.

5.2.3 Reinforce and complement existing streetscape segments that fit the vision for Summer Street Greenway.

5.2.4 Ensure sidewalks include lighting for pedestrian nighttime use.

5.2.5 Widen the sidewalks on both sides of Summer Street and University Avenue where possible.

5.2.6 Add pedestrian amenities aimed at comfort and creating a recognizable identity for the corridor, reflective of the Halifax Common.

5.2.7 Enhance open space and institutional entry points off Summer Street and University Avenue.

5.2.8 Implement a top-tier wayfinding system for this road as the key transportation corridor within the Halifax Common.

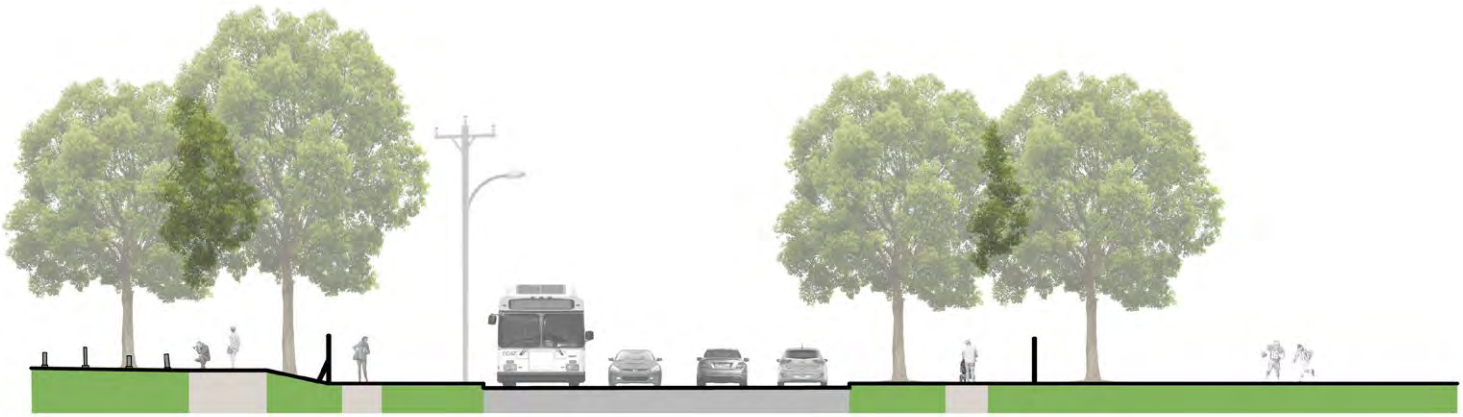
5.2.9 Improve cycling by adding cycle wayfinding signage, maps and secure parking, including sheltered bike parking at select locations.

ACTIONS

Action	
A5.2.1	Develop a detailed Street Improvement Plan for Summer Street that enhances the street as a greenway.
A5.2.2	Collaborate with institutional stakeholders on Summer Street's and University Avenue's redevelopment to find synergies between institutional and municipal aspirations.

Existing Camp Hill Cemetery

Existing Wanderers Grounds



Summer Street Existing - Looking North
A'-A'' (between Sackville Street and Bell Road)

CONCEPTUAL: SUBJECT TO FURTHER DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS

Existing Camp Hill Cemetery

Existing Wanderers Grounds



Summer Street Proposed - Looking North
A'-A'' (between Sackville Street and Bell Road)

Figure 5.2.2

COLAB HTFC PLANNING & DESIGN UPLAND



Summer Street Existing - Looking North
B'-B'' (between Spring Garden Road and University Avenue)

CONCEPTUAL: SUBJECT TO FURTHER DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS



Summer Street Proposed - Looking North
B'-B'' (between Spring Garden Road and University Avenue)

Figure 5.2.3

5.3 THE PROMENADE

GOAL

The existing streetscape on North Park Street is enhanced and extended along the east edge of the Halifax Common to create an art-rich promenade that will serve as a cultural threshold to the Halifax Common.



INTRODUCTION

The quality of the streetscape work on North Park Street between the roundabouts framing the Armoury and Georgian house facades set this corridor apart from the rest of the roadways surrounding the Halifax Common. Pedestrian-scale lighting, seating nodes, public art, undergrounding the overhead utility lines, rich materials and planting beds create a hospitable sense of care and an appropriate level of distinction. Building on this quality and in addition to the existing multi-use pathways and protected cycling infrastructure, a generous pedestrian promenade is proposed within this stretch and extending southward to Point Pleasant Park, to further strengthen the clarity of boundary, welcome and orient visitors, create a new regional recreation link, and introduce some of the Halifax Common's stories.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

1. Threshold to the Halifax Common
This east edge provides the first impression of the Halifax Common for many tourists coming from the waterfront or the Citadel, including the large groups that arrive on the peninsula from cruise ships each summer. As such, the aesthetic quality is critical, but more important are the legibility and orientation functions—providing information about routes, destinations, hours of operation and transportation options in a manner that facilitates further exploration.

2. Citadel Edge
There is a thematic connection between the Citadel and the adjacent heritage landscapes on the Halifax Common, but the physical connection is weak—the new parking lot and pedestrian trail leading up the west side of the Citadel embankment help, but grade differences on Ahern Avenue and the high school building effectively separate the two, and limit the space available for promenade development. The new pedestrian trail also meets Ahern Avenue on a curve in the road that is not ideal for crossing. Nevertheless, the Citadel remains a powerful presence, and it is fitting that the link between it and the Halifax Common, which was in the early days kept clear to give the military an unobstructed view of potential landside invaders, was initially visual, and remains so.

3. Public Art and Interpretive Features
The existing public art pieces along North Park Street, as well as the Halifax Explosion interpretive markers, provide visual interest and some cultural context for the Halifax Common, created by different artists that begin to represent the Halifax ethnic mosaic. The Promenade as a cultural threshold would continue to include works from Haligonians with diverse backgrounds distributed along its length, interspersed and combined with interpretive features that reveal aspects of the human and natural history of Halifax and the Halifax Common. For example, the Cogswell roundabout presents opportunities to interpret Citadel history. The installations should follow the principles of public art placemaking: they should be flexible, humane, stimulating and inviting dialogue, sited with places to socialize, and conceived as part of a larger civic-minded vision for the district. Refer to Figure 4.4.2 for locations of public art and interpretive pieces.

4. Orientation
Figure 5.1.5 shows an undulating retaining wall or seating element along the edge of the Promenade that creates seating pockets that alternate in orientation, addressing the street and the Halifax Common simultaneously. At the Oval, the wall is integrated into the temporary stage space as a seating ledge for small performances, or back of stage for larger ones.

5. Planting and Infrastructure
The Promenade is one expression of the strategy employed throughout the Halifax Common to meet the diverse new demands: articulating the edges with fine grained human-scaled spaces and a mix of activities, while the vast central spaces are left unencumbered. Pockets of shrub and perennial planting and green infrastructure trials can be worked into these edge spaces, providing colour, texture, screening, and seasonal variety.

DESIGN AND PROGRAMMING GUIDANCE

The following recommendations are intended to inform and guide the design of a promenade and green corridor along the eastern edges of the Halifax Common that emphasizes heritage and culture. They are all to be further investigated through detail design and programming considerations.

5.3.1 Recognize the Promenade as an identity route and primary threshold into the Halifax Common District.

5.3.2 Establish places along the Promenade that would receive enhanced maintenance.

5.3.3 Art and commemoration installations should follow placemaking principles, enriching social interaction, honouring diversity and local stories, revealing different aspects of Halifax's shared sense of identity.

5.3.4 Discourage commemorations that involve assigning naming rights to existing or new facilities to retain the principles of the Halifax Common belonging equally to the entire community of Halifax.

5.3.5 Prioritize tree care, protection and replacement along the Promenade route.

5.3.6 Use a consistent streetscape language along the Promenade route.

5.3.7 Incorporate seating and plaza nodes along the perimeter multi-use pathways on the North Common and Ahern Avenue.

5.3.8 Prioritize street crossing improvements along the Promenade route.

5.3.9 Add pedestrian amenities that create a recognizable identity for the Promenade and are coordinated with the overall streetscape character for the Halifax Common District.

5.3.10 Create an undulating seating and retaining wall element that integrates into existing berms and embankments and defines seating and art installation nodes.

ACTIONS

Action	
A5.3.1	Develop a detailed Plan for an enhanced heritage and cultural promenade route along the eastern edges of the Halifax Common.
A5.3.2	Collaborate with Parks Canada on the development along Ahern Avenue and the Associated Area of Citadel Hill to find synergies for site and heritage interpretation.
A5.3.3	Develop a public art and interpretive framework for the Promenade to guide artwork selection and story themes.

Hospital Parking

Existing Residential



South Park Street Former - Looking North

CONCEPTUAL: SUBJECT TO FURTHER DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS

Existing Residential



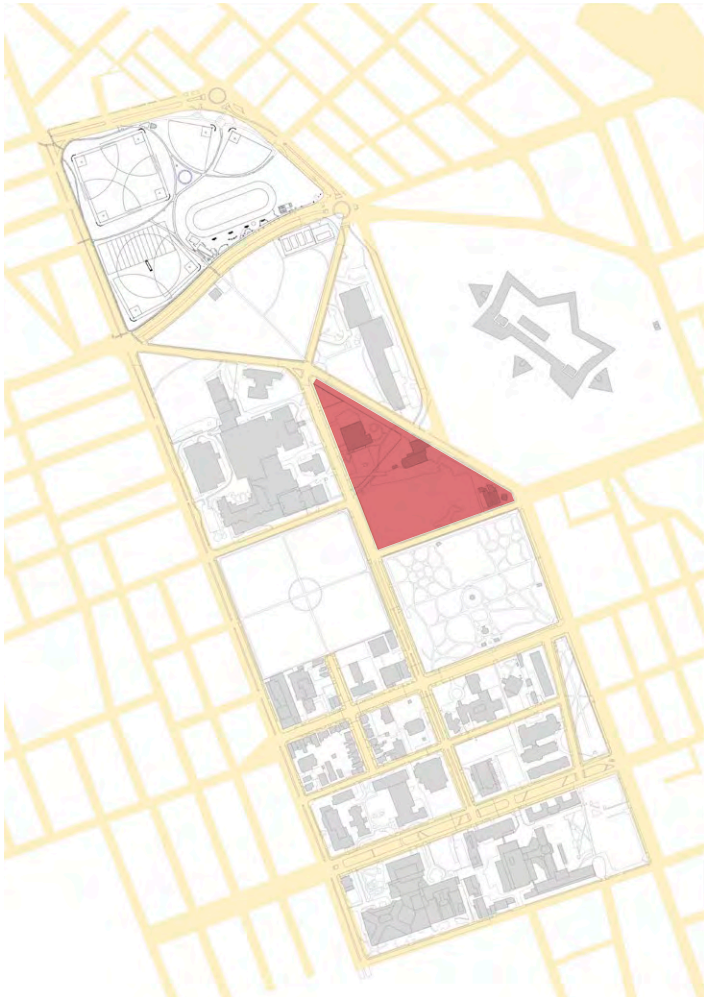
South Park Street Proposed - Looking North

Figure 5.3.1

5.4 WANDERERS GROUNDS SITE

GOAL

To continue to manage the Wanderers Grounds site for organized sports, with a balance of complimentary public uses, while improving the site's functionality, permeability and safeguarding its heritage elements.



INTRODUCTION

The Wanderers Grounds site is part of a triangular shaped block bounded by Sackville Street, Summer Street and Bell Road. First established in 1880 by the Amateur Athletic Association for rugby and lawn bowling on the lands now owned by the municipality, it is today used for soccer and rugby pop up sports events, an equestrian facility, a lawn bowling club and the municipality's horticultural operations. In addition, the land is home to the Richard Power House, the former residence of the Public Gardens superintendent. The area immediately to the north of the Wanderers Grounds site is home to the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, which is owned and operated by the Province. This section focuses on rearranging the spatial configuration of the Wanderers Grounds site to improve its physical and visual accessibility, enhance the functionality of its long-standing active recreational areas and enhancing public access to the grounds.

DESCRIPTION OF USES TO BE UPDATED PENDING COMPLETION OF DETAILED PLANNING

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

1. Public Use and Access

In its current configuration, the Wanderers Grounds are not perceived as a publicly accessible open space. This is partly due to the for-pay-only access to its active recreation areas, and in other parts due to its spatial configuration and fenced off areas that aren't open to the general public. Only one pedestrian trail zig-zagging the grounds from east to west invites users into the Grounds. In the absence of any amenities except for lighting, however, this trail is mainly used as a commuter link between Ahern Avenue and Veterans Memorial Lane. The remainder of the publicly accessible lands consists of poorly delineated gravel driveways, an underutilized lawn surrounding the museum and a small recently renovated entry plaza to the museum. Bushes and small trees, utilitarian buildings and maintenance laydown areas, particularly along Bell Road, as well as some non-translucent fences limit visual access from the surrounding streets and contribute the sense of isolation of the Wanderers Grounds from the Halifax Common and the surrounding urban fabric.

2. Sports Field

Recent investments in upgrades to the sports field by the municipality have brought the field up to standard for premier sporting events played on natural turf. Because of the high level of maintenance required, site access is restricted to events booked through the municipality. In 2017, the municipality executed a rental agreement with Sports Entertainment Atlantic for the use of the Wanderers Grounds to host a professional soccer team and other events in a temporary stadium on the site with seating for up to 7,000 spectators. The rental agreement with preferential bookings for soccer league-mandated events dates for a period of 3 years, to a maximum of 14 events per year. The first games under this agreement were played in 2018. With the arrangement, the municipality continues to provide access to community sports groups at nominal rates. The temporary nature of the seating does not predetermine any ultimate use of the Wanderers Ground. Rather, it is considered a trial period under which the municipality can assess the desirability of such a facility in this location.

3. Halifax Lawn Bowling Club

This Club was established on this site in 1887. The facility includes a club house, equipment shed, a lawn bowl green, a green area plus other grass areas with the perimeter fence, and the municipality has an ongoing relationship with the club. Club membership has been rising in recent years and the possibility of replacing the old club house with a multi-use facility that could be shared with other organizations and groups has been raised. The current location of the lawn and the fence surrounding it means that the activities on the lawn are not visible to the public. Reconfiguring the layout of surrounding structures and creating inviting pedestrian routes and gathering places would dramatically increase the Club's presence.

4. Equestrian Facility

The history of the Halifax Lancers and its presence on the Wanderers Grounds dates back to 1936. The Halifax Lancers barn is listed on the Canadian Register of Historic Places. Today, the Halifax Junior Bengal Lancers is a not-for-profit equestrian club that teaches people of all ages to care for and ride horses and also offers therapeutic programs. The Club leases land and buildings from the municipality and is responsible for all maintenance and utilities. The riding program is currently at capacity and the addition of stalls and a new riding paddock space has been contemplated by the Club to expand its membership. The present multi-use pathway is an essential active transportation route through the site connecting the crosswalk on Bell Road and the multi-use pathway along Ahern Avenue. Although the pathway doesn't line up with the crosswalk with the current configuration of the outdoor paddock, the pathway should be retained and the alignment potentially improved. The location of the Club's parking lot fronting Bell Road could be improved to better promote the vibrant presence of the riding activities, and enhance the aesthetics of the edge of the Halifax Common District.

5. Museum of Natural History

In 1970, the Province acquired the land to build the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History which is located on the northern triangle of the Wanderers Block. Plans to expand the museum have been discussed periodically but have so far not materialized. The generous grounds of the museum are partially fenced off for museum programming. The unfenced treed lawn wedged between Bell Road and Summer Street presents a lost opportunity for park space. As owners of the land, the Province plans to build a parking structure for the hospital on the northern triangular wedge of green space. The existing surface parking lot on the south side of the museum, however, provides an opportunity for redevelopment as public open space in collaboration with the Museum for programming needs for both the Museum and Wanderers sports venue.

6. Power House

The former Richard Power house is a remarkable Victorian residence now used as youth programming space by the municipality, and is a landmark dominating the intersection at Sackville Street and South Park Street. The building is listed on the Canadian Register of Historic Places and is a municipally registered heritage property. The building was the residence of the first superintendent of the Public Gardens, Richard Power, who was instrumental in the design of the Public Gardens and the street beautification around the Halifax Common. The street presence of the Power House could further be enhanced as a significant location on the Halifax Common through the use of lighting and landscaping in addition to the plaza or markers identified in Figure 4.2.1.

7. Horticultural Operations

The municipality operates the Bell Depot & Greenhouses between Bell Road and Sackville Street. A recent Horticulture Review recommended downsizing the facility to become a satellite depot with only staff dedicated to the Halifax Common remaining on the site. Due to the proximity to the Public Gardens the relocation of the greenhouses was deemed not practical. However, a higher utilization of the greenhouses means that two greenhouses and the poly shed can be closed and the workhouse attached to the remaining greenhouses can be rebuilt with a storage component. Laydown and equipment parking must remain but can be reconfigured to reduce the utilitarian optics of this prominent corner of the Wanderers Grounds. The removal of two greenhouses also presents an opportunity to create an entry plaza and garden at the site.

8. Defined and Transparent Edge

Low bushes, small trees and blank walls facing public sidewalks around the Wanderers Grounds reduce the visual presence of the grounds and contribute to a perception of exclusion of public use. In other parts, missing trees compromise the definition of the ground's edges.

DESIGN AND PROGRAMMING GUIDANCE TO BE UPDATED PENDING COMPLETION OF DETAILED PLANNING

DESIGN AND PROGRAMMING GUIDANCE

The following site design and programming recommendations are intended to inform and guide the design of the Wanderers Grounds towards park development that enables a more functional spatial configuration and public use. They are all to be further investigated through detail design and programming considerations. Many of the recommendations are captured in the accompanying Illustrative Plan (Figure 5.4.1).

District Identity & Open Space Character

5.4.1 Site development along the perimeter of Sackville Street and Summer Street should complement the open space character of the adjacent Culture and Heritage Parkland Character Area and be sympathetic to views from the Public Gardens and Camp Hill Cemetery.

5.4.2 Upgrade the streetscape amenities on Sackville Street to improve the pedestrian connection and image route from downtown to the Wanderers Field sport venue.

5.4.3 Consider relocating the fence line to the inner side of the tree line to widen the pedestrian zone on Sackville Street.

5.4.4 Improve the front yard of the Power House to function as a wayfinding node and district gateway to the Halifax Common District.

5.4.5 Provide more visibility of recreation activities from the surrounding streets.

5.4.6 Minimize visual impact of all necessary utilitarian functions, spaces and structures.

Culture & Heritage Conservation

5.4.7 Follow the *Standards and Guidelines* for conservation of heritage buildings and significant character defining elements of the site.

5.4.8 Encourage the continued traditional use of the Wanderers Grounds as a venue for spectator sports and recreational club facilities.

5.4.9 Recognize the heritage value of the Power House in its association and adjacency to the Public Gardens. Consider ways to better connect the interpretation of the two sites.

Mobility & Linkages

5.4.10 Balance ease of pedestrian movement and circulation through the grounds with the functionality and club use of recreation facilities.

5.4.11 Emphasize pedestrian connectivity by aligning pathways with crosswalks and intersections.

5.4.12 Provide more efficient use of the site by relocating club parking areas into shared parking lots and access points.

5.4.13 Create better street presence of recreation activities by relocating parking lots to the back of facilities.

5.4.14 Rationalize the amount of club parking required with future hospital parkade on the Museum property.

Buildings & Facilities

5.4.15 Develop a shared facility building for lawn bowling and soccer field house building with washrooms, change rooms, and other amenities.

<u>Sports Field Venue</u>

5.4.16 Consider the following for a permanent spectator sports venue:

- Develop an entrance plaza at the North Gate off Summer Street.
- Remove the old press box building and relocate utility services to a new building.
- Develop an egress route from the east side of the field towards Bell Road.

- Develop an entrance plaza at the South Gate off Sackville Street.
- On the north side of the field, consolidate spectator seating with washrooms and concession stands underneath to provide space for shared facility parking and access drive.
- Construct a field house to support both the Wanderers Field and Lawn Bowling Club.

Halifax Lancers Equestrian Facility

5.4.17 Retain access off Bell Road for hay deliveries.

5.4.18 Relocate parking to south side of facility with shared access drive from Summer Street.

5.4.19 Remove old press box building and provide accessible parking and entrance into facility from shared access drive on south side.

5.4.20 Reconfigure shape of horse paddock to realign multi-use pathway with crosswalk on Bell Road.

5.4.21 Provide seating along multi-use pathway for spectator viewing of riding ring.

Lawn Bowling Facility

5.4.22 Relocate parking from front of club house to north or east side of lawn bowling pitch. Consider consolidating parking with other facilities on the site.

5.4.23 Replace club house with new field house shared with Wanderers Field.

Parks Works Depot and Greenhouses

5.4.24 Modernize and consolidate greenhouses, operation buildings and staff offices.

5.4.25 Provide parking for service fleet and equipment. Relocate staff parking off-site.

5.4.26 Retain smaller operations footprint to service the Halifax Common. Relocate other park operations to McIntosh Depot.

5.4.27 Provide access from works depot area to Public Gardens and Wanderers Field separate from public access drives.

5.4.28 Consider repurposing any space made available foremost as public parkland.

Power House

5.4.29 Consider future use of the Power House for a visitor reception function to take advantage of its location at a prominent entrance to the Halifax Common from other tourist areas in the downtown.

5.4.30 Develop more park space around the building as more space becomes available through the consolidation of the works depot.

Museum of Natural History

5.4.31 Encourage Nova Scotia Museum to activate its grounds for public programming and greenspace.

5.4.32 Consider the south parking lot for public programming and shared event space with the Wanderers Field venue.

ACTIONS

Action	
A5.4.1	Consult with the recreation club lease holders to further develop the Site Plan for the Wanderers Grounds.
A5.4.2	Collaborate with the Museum of Natural History to develop plans for the south parking lot and lawn areas as part of the Wanderers Grounds site planning.
A5.4.3	Evaluate the agreement with the Halifax Wanderers Football Club Corporation for the use of the Wanderers Grounds at the end of the subsequent term.
A5.4.4	Negotiate and renew agreements with the Halifax Lawn Bowling Club and Halifax Lancers Club with defined terms for the provision of community events, charitable uses and periodical free-of- charge use of their facilities.

SITE PLAN TO BE UPDATED
PENDING COMPLETION OF
DETAILED PLANNING



Figure 5.4.1

COLAB HTFC PLANNING & DESIGN UPLAND

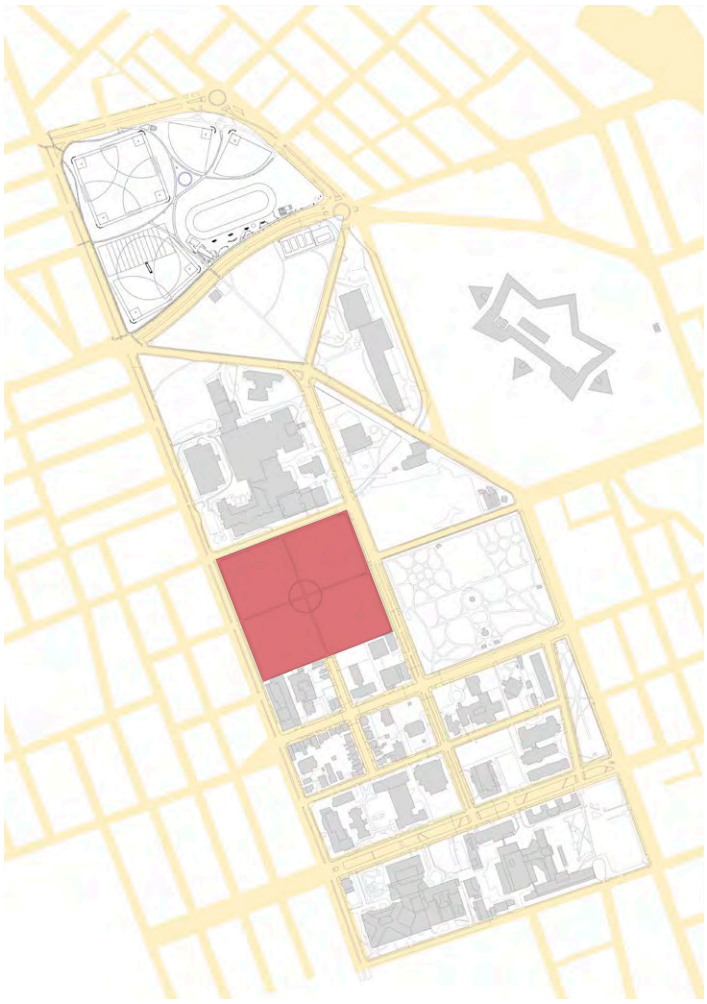
Legend

1. MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
2. HALIFAX LANCERS OUTDOOR PADDOCK
3. HAY LOADING
4. HALIFAX LANCERS BARN
5. PARKS MAINTENANCE & GREENHOUSE COMPLEX
6. NORTH GATE ENTRY PLAZA
7. PREMIER SPORT FIELD & SPECTATOR VENUE
8. LAWN BOWLING PITCH
9. NEW FIELD HOUSE
10. SOUTH GATE ENTRY PLAZA
11. SOUTH GARDEN
12. POWER HOUSE
13. PROGRAMMABLE PLAZA
14. QE II PARKING GARAGE
15. LANCERS PARKING
16. LAWN BOWLING PARKING
17. FURTHER COLLABORATIVE PLANNING

5.5 CAMP HILL CEMETERY

GOAL

Conserve Camp Hill Cemetery's heritage values and ambiance, while improving visitor comfort and access to interpretive information.



INTRODUCTION

Established in 1833, Camp Hill Cemetery is Canada's first example of a Rural Cemetery Movement made famous by Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Massachusetts. It is the resting place of several famous locals, including Viola Desmond and Alexander Keith. This section focuses on managing the cemetery as a significant heritage resource within the Halifax Common, taking into consideration the original design intent, current conditions of the heritage resources, and best practices in heritage conservation.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

1. Public Uses
By regulation and custom, the range of activities permitted is narrow. For example, dogs and cycling are not permitted. People come to the cemetery to survey grave marker inscriptions or seek out the gravesites of famous Haligonians. Despite the meditative ambiance, there are few places to sit and additional seating would enhance the user experience.

The cemetery is also used for cut-through foot traffic. Unlike the Public Gardens, the main pathways in Camp Hill Cemetery are direct and connect to mid-block gates on three of the four sides. While foot traffic is desirable, providing animation and informal surveillance, there is an important attitudinal difference between strollers deliberately visiting the Cemetery as a destination and those who would use it as a shortcut, which may present an elevated risk of noise, litter and disrespectful behaviour. Some of those desired security and walkability benefits can accrue with the proposed improvements to the perimeter sidewalks around the Cemetery. There is also an opportunity to boost destination-oriented visitation through inventive programs like candle-light walks. Any changes to the internal circulation—such as new gates or upgrades to the walking environment in general—should not only be assessed to ensure the historical integrity outlined in the Camp Hill Cemetery Heritage Conservation Guidance Report (Appendix E) is protected but also consider the impact of non-destination traffic on Camp Hill Cemetery's singular ambiance.

2. Heritage Values and Character Defining Elements
The Camp Hill Cemetery Heritage Conservation Guidance Report states the cemetery "has tangible heritage value associated with the cemetery layout, the collection of grave markers, the perimeter fence, pathways and the vegetation collection. As well it has intangible heritage value as it is associated with the historic development of Halifax as the final resting place of so many key figures of influence."

The extensive tree collection within the cemetery requires special care and management. As the trees age, there is a risk to damaging burial sites from falling limbs or uprooting. Additional conservation measures are required for grave markers, fencing, paths, and family plot markers as described in Appendix E.

3. Interpretive Programming
There are signs within the cemetery directing visitors to famous gravesites. This information could be supplemented or replaced by a digital app, helping visitors understand the significance of this site in the Halifax context, find relatives buried there, and delve deeper into historical storylines. In time this could lead to a reduction in the number of signs on site. There is an opportunity to connect the interpretation of the cemetery to the Old Burial Grounds.

The close proximity to the Halifax Public Gardens National Historic Site creates the foundation for a district approach to heritage interpretation. Visitors interested in history can move easily between the two destinations, and on to the Wanderers Grounds and Citadel. The intersection of Summer Street and Sackville Street is an opportune node for heritage tourism.

DESIGN AND PROGRAMMING GUIDANCE

The following site recommendations are intended to inform and guide the management of the Camp Hill Cemetery with the objective of safeguarding the heritage of the Cemetery while enabling year-round public use and enjoyment. They are all to be further investigated through detail design and programming considerations. Many of the recommendations are captured in the accompanying Illustrative Plan (Fig 5.5.1). See also the Camp Hill Cemetery Heritage Conservation Strategy report included in the Appendix.

District Identity & Open Space Character

5.5.1 Strengthen the identity and open space character of Camp Hill Cemetery within the Culture and Heritage Parkland Character Area by:

- using similar materials and design styles to the Public Gardens along the street edges and site entrances;
- providing an appropriate level of material finish and maintenance that is in keeping with the Public Gardens;
- maintaining the visual connections from the Cemetery to the Public Gardens and Wanderers Grounds.

5.5.2 Maintain the planting character and urban forest canopy.

5.5.3 Replace the chain-link fencing along the south edge with black iron ornamental fencing consistent with the rest of the site. Screen the concrete wall and parking lot with vegetation.

5.5.4 Redevelop the south entrance and gate to create a better presence and identity for the cemetery from Spring Garden Road.

5.5.5 Redevelop the east entrance to create a better presence and connection to the Halifax Public Gardens and the Wanderers Grounds.

5.5.6 Develop site identification signage at each entrance gate that is in keeping with the historic character of the site.

Heritage Conservation

5.5.7 Follow the *Standards and Guidelines* for conservation of heritage buildings and significant character defining elements of the site.

5.5.8 Conservation management of Camp Hill Cemetery should address the following heritage values, assets, and character-defining elements:

- Visual relationships – views between the cemetery and adjacent lands
- Grave markers – historically significant and a variety of ornamentation
- Heritage vegetation – the diverse and mature tree and shrub collection
- Fencing and gate pillars – decorative iron fence and stone pillars at entrance gates
- Pathways – defined circulation route encourages contemplative strolling
- Signage – Identification and interpretive

5.5.9 Apply the *Standards and Guidelines for Historic Places* for all site improvements and interventions.

5.5.10 Undertake Heritage Impact Assessment prior to implementing any major renovations, additions or removals.

Mobility & Linkages

5.5.11 Recognize the relationship of Camp Hill within the urban open space network and its importance for people walking between different areas of the Halifax Common.

5.5.12 Consider the addition of lighting to improve public access to the cemetery after dusk.

5.5.13 Initiate planning for the elimination of vehicular access into the site by the general public.

5.5.14 Reduce width of the east and west gates to restrict vehicular access. Maintain the Carleton Street entrance for essential service vehicles only.

5.5.15 Provide accessible parking for the cemetery near the Carlton Street entrance.

5.5.16 Improve the arrival and orientation functions at the south (Carlton Street), east (Summer Street), and west (Robie Street) entrances.

Public Uses & Interpretive Programming

5.5.17 Plan for the site's transition from an operational cemetery to a heritage site taking into consideration impacts of increased visitation on cultural resources and prominent grave sites.

5.5.18 Add more seating to increase opportunities for reflective contemplation and visitor comfort.

5.5.19 Continue to restrict dogs and cycling in the cemetery to maintain the peaceful character of the site.

5.5.20 Improve the interpretation and animation of the cemetery through means such as interpretive signs, markers, interactive web-based information and creative programming.

5.5.21 Provide heritage tourism information at the intersection of Summer and Sackville Streets.

5.5.22 Consider improvements to the maintenance shed for visitor information and interpretive programming.

ACTIONS

Action	
A5.5.1	Develop a Conservation Management Plan for the Cemetery that includes vegetation management and maintenance plans. (Refer to the recommendations in the Camp Hill Cemetery Heritage Conservation Guidance Report in Appendix E)
A5.5.2	Develop a Site Interpretation and Signage Plan for Camp Hill Cemetery that considers a coordinated approach for the whole Halifax Common District and other sites within the Culture and Heritage Parkland Character Area.
A5.5.3	Following the Conservation Management Plan, develop a detailed Site Amenities Improvement Plan that includes: • additional seating, • fencing replacement and screening along the south boundary • entrance features and gate posts • pathway improvements • location of site amenities such as waste receptacles and bicycle racks.
A5.5.4	Investigate options for low impact site lighting that includes an archaeological investigation of gravesites for any proposed underground work.

Camp Hill Cemetery Plan

Legend

1. PRESERVED MATURE TREES
2. REINSTATED GRANITE PILLARS
3. UPGRADED PATHWAYS
4. NEW SEATING
5. NEW SEATING ALONG PATHS
6. NEW ENTRANCE PLAZA
7. NEW TREE PLANTINGS

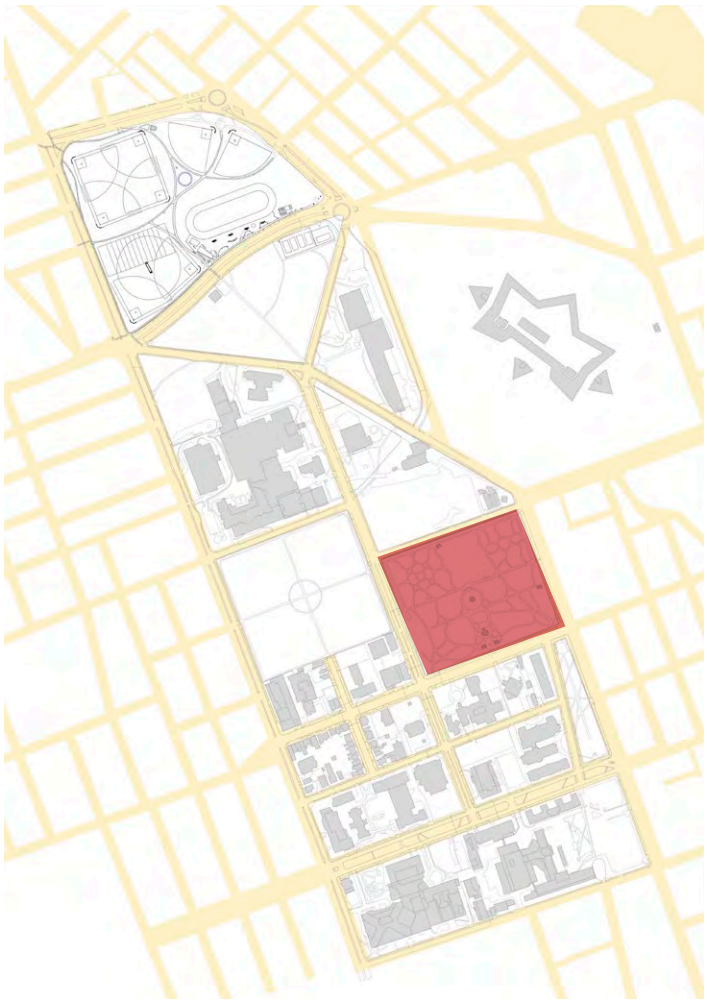


Figure 5.5.1

5.6 HALIFAX PUBLIC GARDENS

GOAL

Strengthen the physical and programmatic links between the Halifax Public Gardens and the rest of the Halifax Common.



INTRODUCTION

The Halifax Public Gardens site was first established as a private horticultural society garden in 1837, to which a public civic garden was added in 1867. In 1874 the two gardens were merged to form the gardens as they are known today. The site is the oldest and among the finest Victorian gardens in North America, essentially unchanged since Richard Power, the first superintendent, took charge and began reshaping the green space in the 1870s.

Basic usage guidelines for the Gardens have been followed since Power's day, to help protect the site and find balance between public demand and overuse. These guidelines govern winter use and monitoring, evening closures, unstructured activity, restrictions of impacting activities, free entrance and open access (prohibiting private functions), and security monitoring.

Various legislation has been enacted to protect the Gardens from incompatible development in the surrounding area. *The Halifax Public Gardens Protection Act* was temporary Provincial Legislation drafted in 1991 to safeguard the gardens against development that cast strong winds or shadows on the Gardens. Since this time, the *Downtown Halifax Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy*, the *Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy,* and the forthcoming *Centre Plan* all address compatibility of development adjacent to the Gardens.

The Halifax Public Gardens were severely damaged by Hurricane Juan in 2003, which led to a successful public campaign that raised $2 million for its restoration. The work was guided by a site restoration plan prepared in 2004, and a Cultural Asset Study that included a conservation plan, work plan, maintenance plan, park database and cultural asset report.

The Gardens was designated a National Historic Site in 1983. Its heritage value and character defining elements are set out in a Commemorative Integrity Statement published on the Canadian Register of Historic Places. Any plans for the future management of the Halifax Public Gardens must consider the protection and conservation of these character-defining elements in order to ensure that any changes, planned or reactive, are in keeping with the best practices contained in the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada* (Second Edition), The Commemorative Integrity Statement and the 2010 Conservation Plan by McIvor Conservation. These documents contain several policy recommendations that are carried forward in this Master Plan.

The focus of this section is not on the content of these plans, which are focused on heritage preservation/restoration, but on the role of the Gardens as an attraction within the Halifax Common. The key intent is to ensure the Halifax Public Gardens remains an urban oasis where people with a variety of needs and interests will be able to enjoy the special sense of place that makes the Halifax Public Gardens an outstanding feature of the municipality.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

1. Public Uses

The Friends of the Public Gardens are an important group to the Gardens who continue to promote the gardens, spearhead campaigns for restoration projects and provide resources for tours and programming. The Gardens is used for strolling, wedding photos, horticulture tours, yoga, and theatre performances. The historic bandstand hosts concerts every Sunday in the summer. There are public washrooms and a café.

Dogs are not allowed in the Gardens, but they are allowed in Victoria Park. Bicycles and scooters are also restricted.

2. Heritage Values and Character Defining Elements

The primary treatment for conservation management of the historic site should be a **preservation** approach, as defined in Section 4.4, as it has not changed function since its inception, and is an early and high quality example of this type of landscape. The Public Gardens is a special place and its upkeep and public use and is different from other parts of the Halifax Common. There is a need to safeguard this special character of the Gardens.

The Gardens' character defining elements are listed in the Canadian Register of Historic Places. Two that are relevant to the focus of this section are "the integrity of the boundaries and siting between Spring Garden Road, South Park Street, Summer Street and Sackville Street, including the marking of the boundaries by surrounding streets, sidewalks, fencing and perimeter trees;" and "the wide sidewalks with avenues of trees on Spring Garden Road and South Park Street in their role as a transitional zone been the gardens and the urban setting".

It is also important to recognize that some adjacent landscapes reinforce the special character of the Halifax

Public Gardens. Examples are the Power House and greenhouses to the north, the Citadel to the east, and Camp Hill Cemetery to the west.

3. Access and Perimeter Circulation
Access to the Gardens is restricted to the corners by fences and gates, except for one mid-block gate on Spring Garden Road. Internally, the path network is winding and indirect, further limiting the Gardens as a viable shortcut or link in the Halifax Common-wide circulation system. Instead, they function well as a renowned destination, a contemplative respite served well by the access limitations.

There are generous sidewalks and boulevards and street trees on Spring Garden Road, Summer Street and South Park Street. There is also a narrower sidewalk and boulevard on Sackville Street, with no street trees. Despite the fencing, these routes borrow some of the ambiance of the Gardens, and are among the highest quality pedestrian environments on the Halifax Common.

4. Public engagement findings
The Gardens is deeply valued by the community as a place for respite and enjoyment of beauty. While the design and plantings are protected and valued, the community would like to see new ways to animate the space with contemporary programing and events, especially interventions that are interactive.

DESIGN AND PROGRAMMING GUIDANCE

The following site recommendations are intended to inform and guide the management of the Halifax Public Gardens with the objective of safeguarding the heritage of the gardens while enabling year-round public use and enjoyment. They are all to be further investigated through detail design and programming considerations.

District Identity

5.6.1 Apply visual and experiential cues from the gardens' edges to improve connections to the greater Halifax Common District and as a transitional zone to the urban setting, specifically:

- wide sidewalks;
- wide, treed boulevards; and
- black metal fencing.

5.6.2 Include the Gardens' high-quality perimeter sidewalks within designated routes and circuits on the wayfinding maps.

5.6.3 Through commemoration and interpretation, recognize the natural history of Freshwater Brook and the natural water courses that formerly connected the entire Common District, and are still observed within the gardens today.

5.6.4 Recognize the Public Gardens' bandstand a major destination and attraction in the southern Common District.

5.6.5 Identify the main Public Gardens gates as a major ceremonial promenade feature on Common District mapping and interpretation.

Open Space Character & Heritage Conservation

5.6.6 Continue to follow the Cultural Resource Management plans developed for the site and apply the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada* against all changes in landscape management.

5.6.7 Continue to update natural and cultural asset inventories (i.e., presence and condition of trees, shrubs, bridges, fountains, etc.) as they change to accurately plan, budget, maintain, and restore.

5.6.8 Preserve the longstanding associative value of animals in the garden, especially waterfowl, and educate the public on how their actions influence the health of these species.

5.6.9 Protect and preserve registered heritage structures within the garden (e.g., Horticultural Hall) and with associative value to the gardens (e.g., Power House), and others with associative value (e.g., Wanderers' Ground greenhouses).

5.6.10 Continue to study the Garden's archaeology and site history as renovations and excavations occur.

5.6.11 In support of the Victorian sentimentality for creating enchanting places, preserve and restore, when necessary, water features and associated elements like the waterfowl house, lighthouse, Titanic replica, and other miniature structures along the stream edges.

5.6.12 Preserve the prominence of water in the garden as a character defining element and as the only surface representation of Freshwater Brook.

Mobility & Linkages

5.6.13 Maintain the meandering and slow passive quality of the gravel path network in the garden.

5.6.14 Continue year-round access to the Halifax Public Gardens when weather and the pathway network conditions allow. Accept that full accessibility will not be possible during the winter months given the soft path surfaces, lack of salting, and limited ability to clear snow.

5.6.15 To improve winter garden access, consider the rehabilitation of path subgrades and drainage to prevent soft conditions underfoot. In strategic areas (e.g. entrances or gathering areas), consider alternatives such as paving with stabilized gravel to recreate the historic character of the gravel paths.

5.6.16 Continue to offer periodic programmed after hours access to the gardens, but maintain regular garden closures at dusk given the high value of horticultural and cultural resources.

5.6.17 Improve pedestrian-scaled lighting around the perimeter of the gardens to improve pedestrian experience and safety.

Recreation Site Programming & Facility Improvements

5.6.18 Encourage cross-promotion and programmatic links between events on the Halifax Common, including the Halifax Public Gardens.

5.6.19 Continue the traditional use of the bandstand for concerts and events.

5.6.20 Entertain opportunities for contemporary activation of the Gardens so long as the program does not conflict with horticultural or cultural assets.

5.6.21 Through site tours and unique programming, connect the associative value of the Power House, the Wanderer's Grounds and greenhouses, and Camp Hill Cemetery.

5.6.22 Maintain the informal lawn space for special event and seasonal programming.

5.6.23 Develop opportunities to engage and educate the public about Victorian plant collection and production within the gardens. Consider whether a historically appropriate conservatory or structure would satisfy this purpose.

5.6.24 Ensure repairs and maintenance practices are well-planned to support, not conflict with character defining elements. Ongoing monitoring and preventative maintenance will extend the life of the heritage resources.

5.6.25 Ensure that future site furnishings (e.g., benches, statuary, planters) are in-keeping with Victorian character.

5.6.26 Continue to provide the highest level of access for all ages and abilities with the lowest level of impact to character defining elements, with specific reference to:

- accessible path surfaces; and
- washroom and Horticultural Hall access.

5.6.27 Continue to deliver public Wi-Fi access throughout the Gardens. Consider implementing character-appropriate charging stations in a central location (e.g., Horticultural Hall).

Environmental Considerations (Sustainable Landscape Practices)

5.6.28 Any interventions for upgrading energy or water efficiency need to be assessed to safeguard the character defining elements of the landscape and heritage structures.

5.6.29 Continue to retrofit existing pathway lighting with energy efficient fixtures, while maintaining the historic character of the existing or replacement standards.

5.6.30 Any intervention or restoration work around waterways should plan to reduce the impact on garden waterfowl, other urban wildlife, and water quality.

Governance & Engagement

5.6.31 Continue to maintain relationships with allies and partners, such as Friends of the Public Gardens.

5.6.32 Enhance the interpretation of the Gardens through permanent and seasonal signage and experiences, training of official guides and regularly-updated online resources.

5.6.33 Embrace the diversity of cultures in Halifax using the gardens through temporary artwork, installations, and programming.

5.6.34 Expand and update the labeling of plant material in the garden to identify unique and heritage plant species.

5.6.35 Promote the Garden's historic connection to agricultural practices by creatively displaying food plants and providing commentary to their names and uses.

ACTIONS

Action	
A5.6.1	Review and update the Conservation Management Plan for the Halifax Public Gardens National Historic Site on a 5-year cycle.
A5.6.2	Develop a Cultural Resource Management Policy to provide direction for strategic and capital planning.
A5.6.3	Develop a park usage policy that considers garden access and usage limits with maintenance and protection of assets.
A5.6.4	Provide support for cultural resource management training for decision-makers and maintenance staff.
A5.6.5	Retrofit washroom building entrances to comply with the Nova Scotia Building Code for accessibility.
A5.6.6	Conduct a horticultural review of the Gardens to identify efficiencies in plant production and landscape maintenance.
A5.6.7	Develop a Site Interpretation Framework to provide direction on how volunteering, communication, marketing, fundraising, programming and engagement are managed and presented to the public.

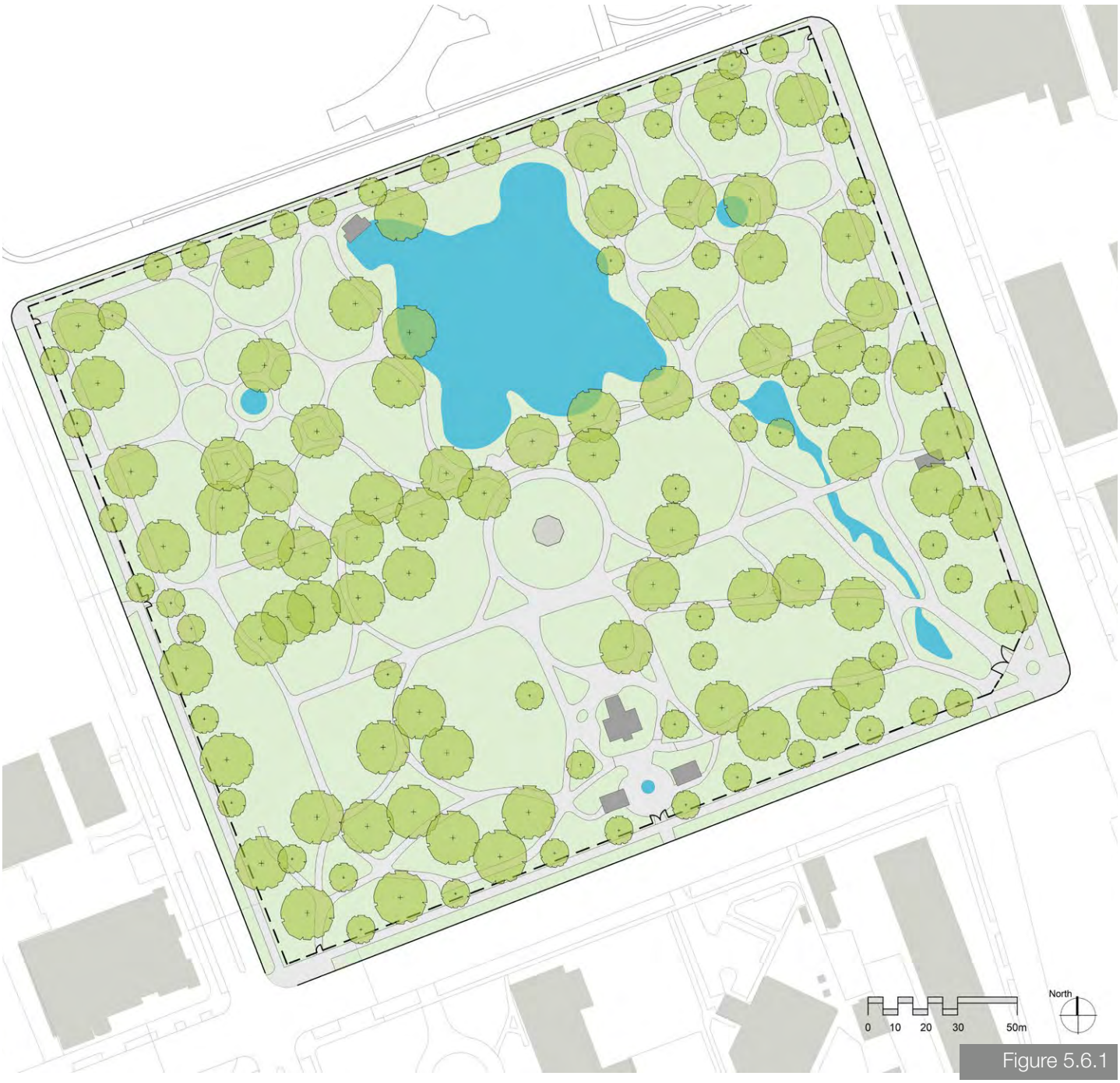


Figure 5.6.1

5.7 VICTORIA PARK

GOALS

Preserve the heritage value and character defining elements of Victoria Park, while enhancing its function as a connector, social space, and venue.



INTRODUCTION

Victoria Park was built at the end of the 19th Century and is one of Halifax's significant cultural assets. Today it is a green oasis in the city, used for pass-through foot traffic, dog walkers and quiet relaxation. Its location near the hospital, university, and shops on South Park Street all contribute to the life of the park, but it is not as vibrant as it could be. The section identifies measures to enhance Victoria Park's role as a people place, a heritage resource and a unique front door to the Halifax Common.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

1. Public Uses

Victoria Park's proximity to South Park Street and Spring Garden Road affords convenient access to shops and cafés—the most immediate commercial access of any public open space on the Halifax Common. The park is well used by pedestrians moving between surrounding destinations including the Dalhousie University campuses and hospital complex.

Victoria Park's northern plaza has many booked events, markets and festivals throughout the year and is a popular spot for social and political rallies and demonstrations. Due to its location on Spring Garden Road, the public open space is desirable for programming. There may be potential to enhance programming through a partnership with the Spring Garden Area Business Association.

Throughout the park, mature trees and frequent benches offer ample shaded seating along its length. The more open south end of the park invites picnics and sunbathing, but needs more seating and more direct access down to University Avenue.

2. Heritage Values and Character Defining Elements

Named for Queen Victoria, most likely for her Diamond Jubilee, the park was developed circa 1891 during the time Richard Power was superintendent of the Public Gardens. It is a continuation of the streetscape improvements done around the Public Gardens at that time. Freshwater Brook once ran longitudinally through the land that is now Victoria Park. The Conservation Strategy and Management Recommendations (Appendix D) emphasize the protection of Victoria Park's character defining elements, which include various features characteristic of the City Beautiful movement.

3. Oland Fountain and other Donated Commemorative Features

The Oland Fountain (1966) was gifted to the City of Halifax by S.C. Oland in memory of his wife. It is one of the water features that traces the original path of Freshwater Brook and bookends the Centennial Fountain on the North Common. The fountain is over fifty years old, and requires ongoing funds for repair, maintenance and operation. The surrounding steel fence also gives the fountain an unappealing, fortified appearance. Removing the fences would allow more interaction and an element of play, and convert this visual landmark to a more intimate experience.

The North British Society (the Scots) have made contributions to Victoria Park since the early 20th Century in recognition of Scottish culture. This group has been active in Halifax since 1768. The society's fundraising and donation contributions in the park include sculpture and artworks, monuments and interpretive signage to recognize famous Scottish poets and novelists including Robert Burns, Sir Walter Scott and Sir William Alexander.

The municipality has a Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") with the North British Society in respect to the maintenance of existing artworks and interpretive elements and future donations and improvements in the park related to Scottish culture. According to the MOU, the North British Society is to be apprised of any new capital improvements or changes that may impact the commemorative features. The MOU, which was signed in 2014, does not preclude the municipality from working with other cultural groups on improvements to the park.

4. Movement and Linkages
Two major transit stops are situated at the corner of Spring Garden Road and South Park Street. Wide sidewalks offer refuge for transit users waiting or stepping off the bus. The bus shelter location blocks the flow between the plaza and major entry point into the park at the corner of Spring Garden Road and South Park Street.

There is a high volume of foot traffic along the sidewalks and cross paths; the park is a major node in the pedestrian travel routes between Dalhousie University campuses on University Avenue and down Clyde Street to the Sexton Campus and connecting entry points from Cathedral Lane with South Park Street. The multiple formal and informal crossing pathways are not conducive to mature tree preservation.

The central path terminates at the Oland Fountain in the south end of the park; it is elevated above street level with no accessible route down to University Avenue other than backtracking toward Spring Garden Road.

5. Park improvements
A number of desired amenities were identified through the course of the analysis, including public wi-fi, site furnishings with phone charging stations, electrical service sized to support events, and a drinking fountain/water bottle filling station.

6. Public Engagement Findings
Participants were interested in improved lighting including winter holiday lighting, a designated performance space, and community gardens within Victoria Park.

DESIGN AND PROGRAMMING GUIDANCE

The following planning recommendations are intended to inform and guide the design of Victoria Park towards park development that enables open space and heritage conservation, improved accessibility and greater use, and improved user experience. They are all to be further investigated through detail design and programming considerations. Many of the recommendations are captured in the accompanying Illustrative Plan (Figure 5.7.1).

District Identity & Open Space Character

5.7.1 Maintain the heritage character of Victoria Park and its identification with the Halifax Public Gardens and inclusion within the Culture and Heritage Parkland Character Area by:

- Using similar materials and design styles;
- Providing a higher level of material finish and maintenance.

5.7.2 Strengthen the Park's presence on Spring Garden Road by opening the visual and physical access into the park by relocating the bus shelter and redesigning the planting edge.

5.7.3 Recognize that the Park, along with the Public Garden's ornamental gate, provides a gateway identity into the Halifax Common District from Spring Garden Road.

Heritage Conservation

5.7.4 Conservation management of Victoria Park should address the following heritage values, assets, and character-defining elements:

- Visual Relationships - the open understory of mature trees that frames scenic glimpses of historic landscape, including the allée of trees lining the axial view terminating at Oland Memorial Fountain
- Circulation - paths following formal central axis

- Vegetation - the mature tree canopy
- Water Features - Oland Memorial Fountain
- Cultural Assets – sculptures and plaques of Robert Burns, Sir Walter Scott and William Alexander.

Mobility & Linkages

5.7.5 Increase the width of the sidewalk along Cathedral Lane to improve the pedestrian experience and consistency with other sidewalks in the District.

5.7.6 Improve the pedestrian route along University Avenue with a sidewalk or expanded plaza area. Consider new tree planting to replace removed or damaged trees.

5.7.7 Provide a more direct accessible route down from the upper fountain area to University Avenue.

5.7.8 Rationalize the circulation and consolidate the number of crisscrossing paths to provide space for park other uses.

Park Programming & Improvements

5.7.9 Consider decorative lighting to animate the park during the evenings and winter months.

5.7.10 Maintain the multifunctional use of the northern public plaza for event programming, public demonstrations, and general park use.

5.7.11 Establish lawn areas for programming and play opportunities.

5.7.12 Enhance the Robert Burns, Sir Walter Scott and William Alexander plazas with ornamental planting.

5.7.13 Create seating terraces at the south lawn between the Oland Memorial Fountain Plaza and the William Alexander Plaza.

5.7.14 Redesign the fountain and develop a new plaza. Consider including interactive water play features and removing the fencing.

5.7.15 Add a drinking fountain/water bottle filling station.

5.7.16 Add public Wi-Fi and consider site furnishings with phone charging stations.

5.7.17 Add electrical service to support programmed events.

5.7.18 Collaborate with the local merchants and business district to provide programming to animate the park through the support of festivals and events

Environmental Considerations (Sustainable Landscape Practices)

5.7.19 Preserve the mature trees and amount of tree canopy cover in the park and surrounding street rights-of way.

5.7.20 Protect the health of the trees by providing path edging and raised mulching beds around the base of the trees to limit salt runoff and soil compaction.

5.7.21 Use more permeable surface materials where possible.

5.7.22 Increase biodiversity through a tree planting succession plan and use of perennials in planting beds.

Governance & Engagement

5.7.23 Review the terms of Memorandum of Understanding with the North British Society and update periodically.

ACTIONS

Actions	
A5.7.1	Develop a Conservation Management Plan for the cultural assets within Victoria Park.
A5.7.2	Investigate Victoria Park's heritage value for consideration for designation as a cultural landscape or Registered Heritage Property under the *Heritage Property Act*.
A5.7.3	Develop a detailed Site Improvement Plan that includes: (a) Circulation rationalization and pathway upgrades (b) Sidewalk improvements and location of streetscape and transit amenities. (c) Decorative site lighting and electrical servicing (d) Renovation of the fountain and redevelopment of the area including the southern slopes (e) Upgrades of pavement and materials at plazas and entrance areas (f) New planting beds (g) Location of park furnishings (seating, waste receptacles and bicycle racks) and service amenities (Wi-Fi, charging stations, drinking fountains).
A5.7.4	Prepare a Tree Management and Succession Planting Plan for the park and surrounding right-of-way areas.

Victoria Park Plan



Figure 5.7.1

5.8 INDOOR COMMUNITY SPACES

GOAL

The Halifax Common will retain multi-purpose indoor community spaces, including a youth-focused arts and performance space.



INTRODUCTION

The existing Central Common pavilion building has served a wide range of purposes over the years, including a 20-year history of use as an all-ages concert venue. A number of factors are aligned to indicate that new indoor community space is needed to replace the aging Pavilion, and help support the local arts programs and organizations striving to meet existing and future demand.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

1. The Existing Pavilion Building
In addition to its use as a music venue, the Pavilion has served as space for municipal recreation programs, change rooms for the pool, and a support facility during sport events. The building is at least 50 years old and there are many issues with the functionality and condition of the structure. With the relocation and expansion of the aquatic area, the Pavilion, which is at the end of its lifespan, requires replacement.

2. Music on the Common
Music performances are part of the heritage of the Halifax Common. As early as 1880, concerts were held in the Public Gardens, and the bandstand built there in 1887 remains in use today as a venue for live music. Performances are also frequently held on the Oval or within the Spatz Theatre. The Pavilion building on the Central Common has been integral to the local all-ages music community over the past two decades, providing young people throughout the municipality with a place to organize, perform, and experience live music. Today, the Pavilion is one of very few all-ages music venues in Halifax. It is highly valued in the community as a safe space for young people and has been the launchpad of many celebrated musicians.

3. Community Facilities Master Plan and HRM Culture Plan
The Community Facilities Master Plan (2016) provides direction to consider the role of recreational facilities to foster participation in arts and cultural activities. It identifies the importance of considering arts and cultural components as facilities are designed, redeveloped or retired, and recommends broader programming, including arts and cultural programming. It also prioritizes the use of vacant or underutilized space over new facility construction.

The HRM Culture Plan (2006) set forth a number of related policies in regard to youth access to art, entertainment and culture. The plan's goals include enhancing the role of community facilities as hubs for cultural program delivery and building a network of civic spaces that offer cultural opportunities to residents and visitors.

4. Public Engagement Findings
Many participants were strongly in support of maintaining a similar year-round multi-use arts space on the Halifax Common, accommodating performance and practice spaces for music, dance, theatre, and visual arts. The engagement outcomes emphasized the important benefits provided by participation in arts, especially for youth. Participants expressed a need for space to host community-based, youth-focused arts programming at a developmental level. Some of the ideas offered include:

- Partnerships, rentals and program delivery through community groups
- Partnering with Citadel High School for after school programs
- Including a youth cafe/hang out with seating, games, resources, quiet space for study or homework
- Consideration of the growing demand in the community for studio space for artists and performers

5. Aquatic Area Community Room
The new aquatic area will include a building to support pool uses. It will include a Community Room to provide year-round space for a wide range of groups and purposes, including summer camps, community gatherings, and event support. It will be a highly flexible space, but will not have the spatial capacity to meaningfully enable arts programming. An arts and performance facility has particular design needs that would be difficult to achieve on the aquatic area site.

6. Citadel Community Centre

The second storey of the Citadel Community Centre is a 372 square metre unfinished room with high ceilings. It was originally built with the intent to be a space for community needs. It is currently underutilized storage space. The proximity of the Citadel Community Centre to the High School is advantageous, while its separate entrance and position on the school property create a sense of autonomy. It is also near Spatz Theatre, providing a complimentary cluster of uses. A preliminary evaluation indicates that the Citadel Community Centre second storey is of suitable size and volume for an arts and performance space. An elevator would need to be added to the Citadel Community Centre if the second storey were opened to the public.

DESIGN AND PROGRAMMING GUIDANCE

The following site design and programming recommendations are intended to inform and guide decisions around the future use of the second storey of the Citadel Community Centre.They are all to be further investigated through detail design and programming considerations.

Design & Programming Guidance

5.8.1 Invite innovative partnerships to foster new opportunities and deliver arts and performance uses of the underutilized Citadel Community Centre facilities to replace the Pavilion functions.

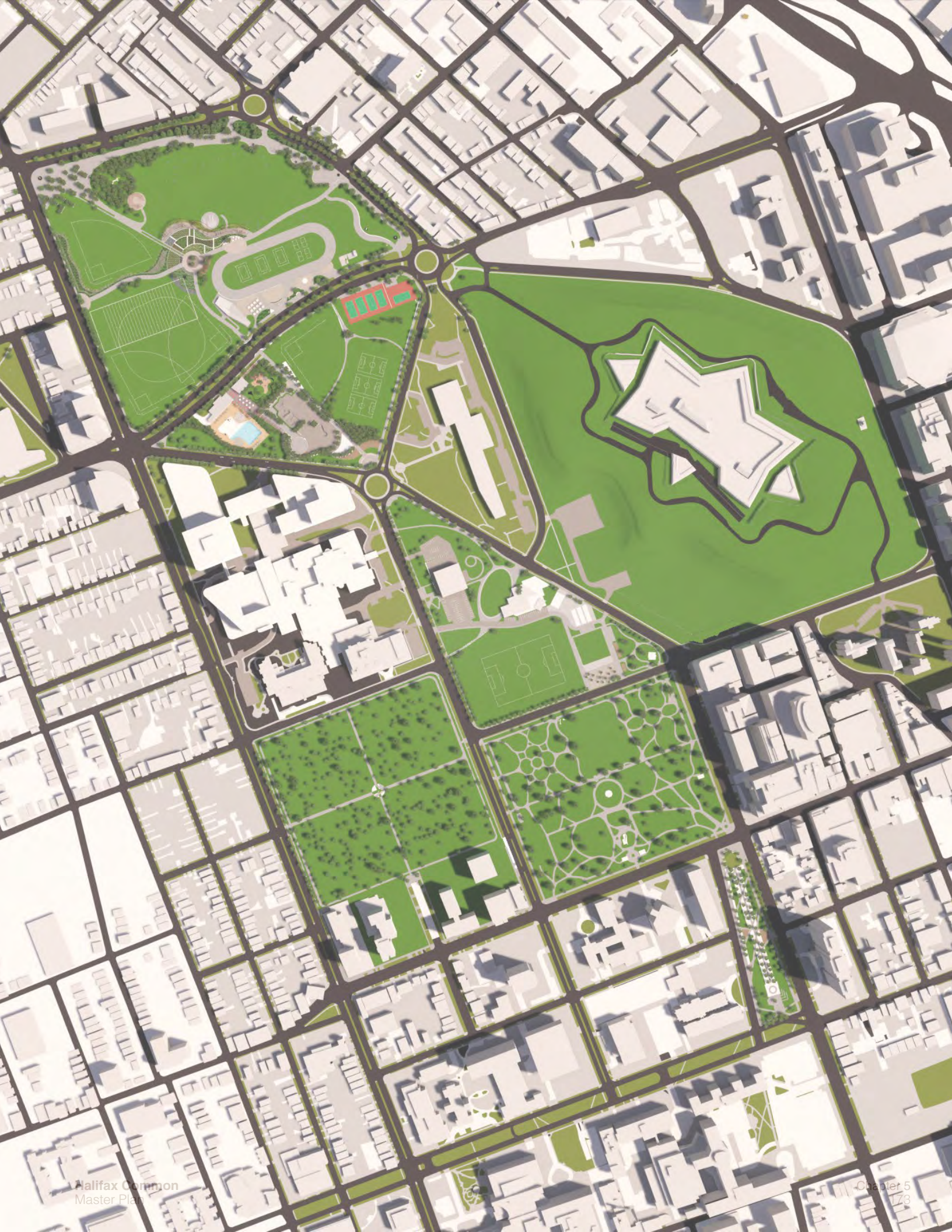
5.8.1 Plan collaboratively with local youth arts organizations and service providers, as well as with youth themselves.

5.8.1 Support and promote local arts throughout the Halifax Common, complementing its suite of public benefits.

5.8.1 Develop the second storey of the Citadel Community Centre for community use that would include a youth-focused arts space and associated programs for music, performance, and visual arts. Gather input on the design features, functional requirements, operational framework and costs, including installation of an elevator.

ACTIONS

Actions	
A5.8.1	Plan for the inclusion of youth live music use in the multi-purpose room of the Aquatics Facility replacement building.
A5.8.2	Identify opportunities for the development of the second storey of the Citadel Community Centre to replace the Pavilion functions.



APPENDIX A

What We Heard Reports 1-4

APPENDIX B

Background Report

This document contains preliminary background information that was prepared in 2018. It may not include information that was further considered in the development of the Halifax Common Master Plan.

APPENDIX C

Archaeological Resource Impact Assessment

APPENDIX D

Halifax Common Conservation Strategy

This document is a preliminary investigation done in conjunction with the Halifax Common Master Plan. Details and priorities identified in the Conservation Strategy may change upon formal designation of any properties within the Halifax Common district under the *Heritage Property Act*.

APPENDIX E

Camp Hill Cemetery Conservation Strategy

This document is a preliminary investigation done in conjunction with the Halifax Common Master Plan. Details and priorities identified in the Conservation Strategy may change upon formal designation of the property under the Heritage Property Act. The list of character defining elements, statements of significance, or description of heritage value should defer to the formal registration documents.

APPENDIX F

MOU Provincial and Municipal Land Transactions

COLAB HTFC PLANNING & DESIGN UPLAND