

DARTMOUTH COMMON



MASTER PLAN

Final Report

Prepared for:
Halifax Regional Municipality

Prepared by:
CBCL Limited

Project Number: 091200
Date: June 30, 2010

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1 Introduction

1.1 Study Area

For the purpose of this Master Plan, the study area includes the land encompassed by what is typically referred to as the traditional Dartmouth Common boundary. The area is bordered by Victoria Road to the north, Boland Road, Park Avenue, and the Halifax Harbour to the south. This boundary should not be considered as a rigid line; instead this boundary is to be understood as a soft edge, which allows for integration, connectivity and continuity between the Dartmouth Common lands and surrounding neighbourhoods.

Figure 1.1 Study Area Dartmouth Common Master



1.2 Master Plan Objectives

The purpose of the Dartmouth Common Master Plan Project is to prepare a Master Plan and administrative framework for the protection, enhancement and management of the Dartmouth Common for public use. Lands owned by the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) within the Dartmouth Common boundaries are addressed more prescriptively than privately owned lands; however, the Common in its entirety is examined at appropriate levels and opportunities for enhancement and planning are identified. The Dartmouth Common is a public place with historical significance as an open space for the community of Dartmouth. The original granting of the Common by the crown places a special significance on these lands as one of only two traditional designated Common areas within the Halifax Regional Municipality. Its ongoing public use and recognition is an underlying aim of this Master Plan.

Goals

- Establish a public vision, values and objectives for the future use, enhancement and protection of the Common;
- Recognize and enhance the public image and character of the Common;
- Build collaboration for future development and improvement of the Common; and
- Develop a policy and implementation framework to guide capital investment and strategic planning for the HRM and its partners.

Objectives

- Identify areas for aligning future development and use of the Common with municipal land-use, open space, cultural, recreation, transportation, and urban design objectives;
- Develop policy and design guidelines for improving the Common as a highly functioning open space network, including active transportation connections, recreation and parks development;
- Identify principles and objectives for better integrating and building harmony between public facilities and public open spaces on the Common;
- Develop a spatial plan and design framework for opportunity and priority sites, addressing urban design and landscape design principles, parkland development and facility development priorities;
- Establish objectives for the integrated management and stewardship of the Common;
- Better define the regulatory and legislative framework governing the description, use and development of the Common;
- Establish objectives for the acquisition and repatriation of opportunity lands on the Common; and

- Identify initiatives and guidelines for enhanced community and recreation programming, including events, recreation, heritage and cultural interpretation, and public art.

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2 Planning Context

2.1 Policy Context

The Dartmouth Common Master Plan takes places within the larger context of provincial legislation and planning policies within the Halifax Regional Municipality. The Master Plan aligns with the goals and policies outlined in higher level policy documents while providing a guiding vision and specific recommendations for the Dartmouth Common.

2.1.1 Relevant Provincial Legislation

2.1.1.1 HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY CHARTER, 2008

The *Dartmouth Common Act* was established as provincial legislation in 1986 to preserve and protect the Dartmouth Common for the use and enjoyment of present and future inhabitants of the City of Dartmouth. In 1994 the *Act* was amended to allow for additions to the Sportsplex (current sub-section 4). In 2008 further amendments were made allowing for the development of a new transit terminal on up to six acres (current sub-sections 5 and 6). In January 2009, the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter* came into effect and subsumed the *Dartmouth Common Act* (1986); the current legislation is quoted below (amendments are in bold):

- (1) In this Section, "Dartmouth common" means the common of Dartmouth so far as it was vested in the City of Dartmouth on April 22, 1986.
- (2) The Municipality may not sell, lease, license or otherwise alienate the Dartmouth common.
- (3) Subject to subsections (4) and (5), no person shall build on the Dartmouth common.
- (4) A person may build an addition to a building located on the lands described in the Schedule to Chapter 87 of the Acts of 1994, An Act to Amend Chapter 68 of the Acts of 1986, the Dartmouth Common Act, if the building and the addition are both totally located on those lands.¹**
- (5) The Municipality may build, expand or improve public transit facilities on that part of the Dartmouth Common adjacent to Nantucket Avenue and not exceeding six acres.**

¹ The lands described in this section are depicted in Figure 3.3 under "1994 Amendment Dartmouth Common Act"

(6) When the lands referred to in subsection (5) are no longer used by the Municipality for public transit facilities, the lands revert back to their use as part of the Dartmouth Common.

(7) The Dartmouth common is held by the Municipality in trust for the inhabitants of the Municipality.

2.1.2 Relevant Halifax Regional Municipality Policy and Initiatives

2.1.2.1 REGIONAL MPS

The HRM Regional Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS)² identifies the Central Common Area as part of the regional centre (urban core) and capital district, which is the principal economic, social and cultural centrepiece of the region. The Regional MPS also identifies the Dartmouth Common as a major component of the parks and trails system, as well as recognizes significant views of the Halifax Harbour from the Dartmouth Common.

2.1.2.2 DARTMOUTH MPS AND LUB

The Dartmouth Municipal Planning Strategy³ states the overall goal for recreation planning in Dartmouth:

“To make available opportunities for the development of the physical and mental well being of all segments of the population of the City of Dartmouth during their leisure time through the provision and development of open space, the construction of facilities, and the provision of leadership.”

The Dartmouth MPS refers to the Dartmouth Common as a specific element of the Recreation Network:

(h) DARTMOUTH COMMON

In 1788, King George III granted the Common to the community as a whole, for the benefit of all citizens. Since 1988 the citizens of Dartmouth have begun an enhancement plan to reclaim as much of the original Common as possible, and develop it as an open space for outdoor activity. Notwithstanding the need for the open space, there is a requirement for a transit terminal near the intersection of Nantucket Avenue and Wyse Road, to provide an efficient transit system to the Metro area. The only land available is on the Common between the bank and the Sportsplex. Council recognizes that a good transit system protects the environment and has economic benefits to the community. (As amended by By-law C-721, June 9, 1995).

² August 2006, with amendments to 28 March 2009.

³ 1978, with amendments to 25 July 2009

The Dartmouth Common Master Plan is in line with the policies guiding the Regulation of Lake and Park Use⁴ particularly Policy R-6:

*“It shall be the intention of City Council to protect and develop the **Dartmouth Commons... as strong city wide recreation areas.**”*
(emphasis added)

Policy R-19 is also specifically related to the Dartmouth Common and the use of the site for Transit purposes, stating:

It shall be the intention of City Council, subject to the Dartmouth Common Act, to establish a Schedule in the Land Use By-law, which identifies a site on the Dartmouth Common to be considered for the installation of a Metropolitan Transit Terminal, subject to the land Use By-law and to the provisions of leases or agreements, as City Council requires, to adequately control the development and operation of these facilities. (As amended by By-law C-721, June 9, 1995).

The Dartmouth Land Use By-Law (LUB)⁵ outlines uses permitted in each zoning category.

2.1.2.3 DOWNTOWN DARTMOUTH SECONDARY PLANNING STRATEGY AND LUB

The Downtown Dartmouth Secondary Planning Strategy⁶ provides an additional level of detail for the downtown area. Within this Secondary Planning Strategy there are specific policy statements with relevance to the Dartmouth Common. The section on Recreation, Open Space and Environment⁷ specifically highlights the Dartmouth Common as a “regional resource” and an important aspect of the downtown:

“the Common plays a special role for the downtown community: it serves as an open space resource for the many people who live, work and visit the downtown, it provides economic benefits to the region through tourism and quality of life spin-offs, and is a dominant feature of the urban landscape: shaping its visual character and forming a impressive gateway into the downtown.”

In addition, as part of Policy W-1, which is in regard to waterfront development, there is a list of priority projects, including “re-establishment of the Dartmouth Common at the western edge of the waterfront on the Geary Street lands” (See also Policies O-11 and O-12). The Master Plan for the Dartmouth Common takes into consideration the policy and initiatives related to the waterfront

⁴ Dartmouth MPS, Open Space and Recreation, Section 5

⁵ December 1978, with amendments up to 30 March 2009

⁶ July 2000, with amendments up to 26 July 2008

⁷ Recreation, Open Space and Environment, Section 4.6

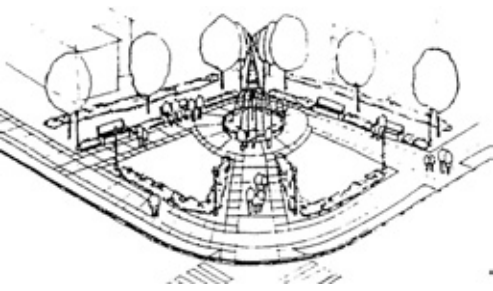


Figure 2.1 Boland & Wyse Corner Park
(Dartmouth Common Enhancement Plan,
1989)

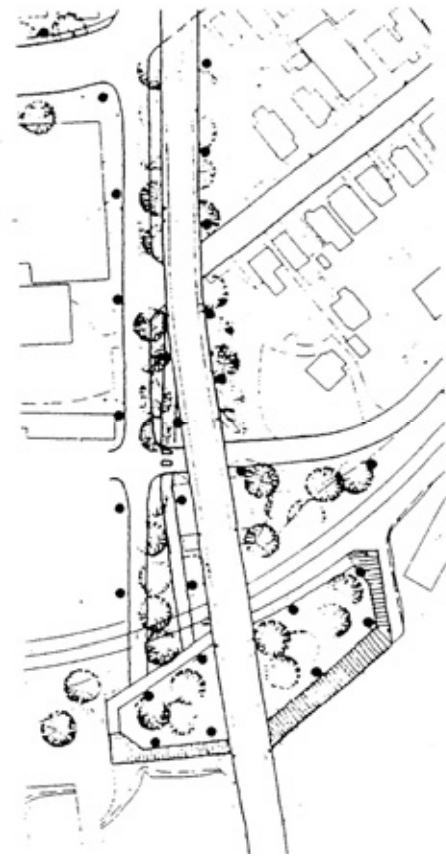


Figure 2.2 Common Waterfront Park leading
into the Pedestrian Promenade (Dartmouth
Common Enhancement Plan, 1989)

district. The Downtown Secondary Planning Strategy establishes viewplanes from the Dartmouth Common, which influence the height of buildings along the waterfront and in other areas within the viewplanes (Policies D-5 and W-4). The Land Use By-Law for Downtown Dartmouth⁸ outlines uses permitted in each zoning category within the downtown Dartmouth area.

2.1.2.4 DARTMOUTH COMMON ENHANCEMENT PLAN

The Dartmouth Common Enhancement Plan (1989) was developed in response to growing concern about encroachment on the Common. The Dartmouth Common Master Plan builds on the 1989 Enhancement Plan and acknowledges the many good ideas that emerged from the planning process that engaged the public. Among many important points, the Dartmouth Common Enhancement Plan (1989) emphasized that:

- the Common is a significant gateway to Dartmouth;
- the spirit of the Common can be enhanced through public awareness, interest and support;
- the use of the Common can be enhanced through better public utility and accessibility; and
- the function of the Common can be enhanced through better municipal maintenance and management.

The Dartmouth Common Enhancement Plan recommended many projects that were never completed, yet which still remain relevant and interesting ideas in today's context, including:

- Boland and Wyse Rd Corner Park – This park would provide an entryway to the northwest area of the Common with a fountain, street furniture, and lighting leading into the “Green Street Promenade” that was also proposed in the 1989 Plan;
- East-West Pedestrian Promenade – The promenade would re-establish a pedestrian connection from Wyse Rd to the waterfront, linking the residential neighbourhoods on the Common;
- Common Waterfront Park – A park developed on the city-owned land under the bridge would provide access to the harbour and “bring the Common back to the waterfront”; and
- Close Thistle Street – Closing Thistle Street between Wyse Road and Victoria Road would link the two largest areas of the Common and add the equivalent area of one small city block to the Common's open space.

⁸ July 2000, with amendments up to 26 July 2008

2.1.2.5 HRMbyDESIGN

In 1989 the Dartmouth Common Enhancement Plan emphasized the significance of the Common as a gateway to Dartmouth. Almost two decades later, the HRMbyDesign process re-emphasized the gateway opportunity of the Dartmouth Common, identifying the built up area in the central Common (at the intersection of Nantucket Avenue and Wyse Road) as a future “Urban Centre” that could serve the surrounding neighbourhoods and become a potential regional destination. Emerging through the dialogue between the consultants and the public during the HRMbyDesign process were a number of concept drawings and several suggestions for the area including establishing a monumental entrance/exit at the gateway intersection of Nantucket Ave. and Wyse Rd., intensifying residential and office use, improving the transportation hub, enhancing the area with more landscaping and streetscaping, and incorporating public art.

2.2 Immediate Development Needs

The two schools, transit terminal, and Sportsplex are all anticipating future development changes and expansions that will have a bearing on the future land use of the Dartmouth Common.

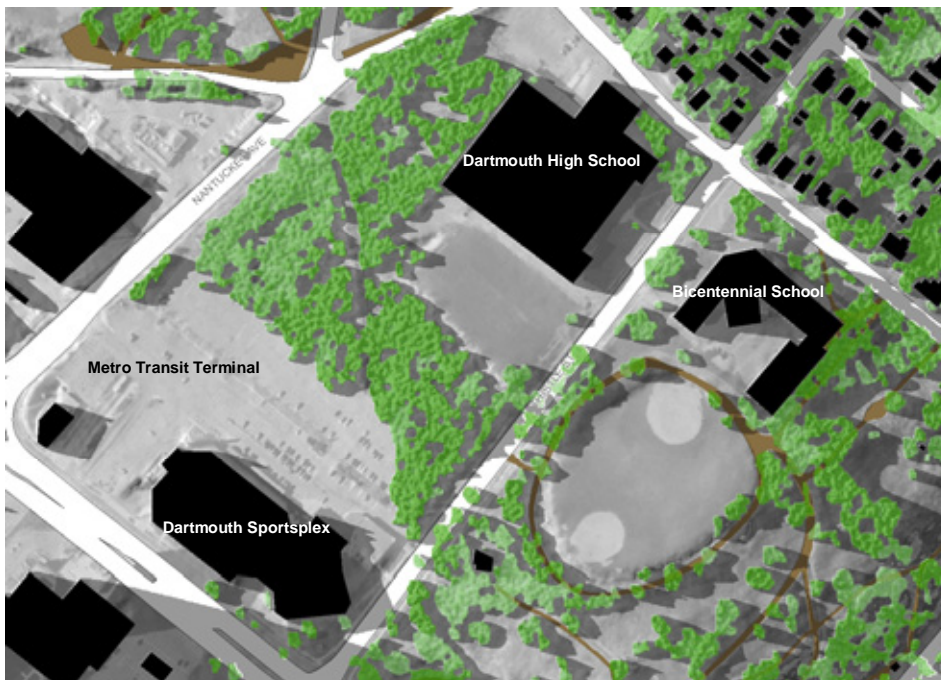


Figure 2.3 Facilities with Immediate Development Needs

2.2.1 Dartmouth High School and Bicentennial School

Major alterations to Dartmouth High School are recommended in the School Board’s “Imagine our Schools” master plan. The alterations would enhance

program delivery, improve parking and drop off areas, add childcare, and possibly develop a Centre of Excellence for Sports in conjunction with the Sportsplex. Provincial funds of approximately \$12 million were approved in the spring of 2009. Dartmouth High School would benefit from the following improvements:

- Improve parking and drop-off area;
- Provide bigger gymnasium;
- Make school a neighbourhood feature;
- Solve safety issues associated with wilderness area;
- Enhance edge between school and wilderness area; and
- Improve connections/paths for students.

Bicentennial School requires alterations to enhance program delivery, and a lunch room. Student safety is a concern for both schools on the Common. The safety of the students travelling to and from school has been a priority in the Dartmouth Common Master Planning process, in addition to considering the movement of non-students throughout the Common without having to pass through school property.

2.2.2 Dartmouth Sportsplex

The Dartmouth Sportsplex is a non-profit community sports, fitness and recreation facility built in 1982. There are about one million entrances per year, with users from across HRM, as well as surrounding communities. Plans by the Dartmouth Sportsplex to expand its operation are currently being evaluated and quantified through a needs assessment and feasibility study (Dartmouth Sportsplex Renewal and Capitalization Plan). The parking requirement for the Dartmouth Sportsplex, currently 500 stalls, is expected to increase pending the outcome of the needs assessment.⁹

The Sportsplex is planning a facilities expansion to include a 47,000 square foot multipurpose, multi court field house on the north side of the current building. The total parking requirement for the Sportsplex will be 700 parking stalls (500 currently existing plus 200 additional spaces for the operation of the new field house).

2.2.3 Metro Transit Nantucket Bus Terminal

With 17,000 daily on and offs, the Metro Transit Bridge Terminal is the busiest bus terminal in HRM and is currently facing Issues with capacity, security,

⁹ Spatial assumptions in this Master Plan are based on previous expansion plans by the Sportsplex. These preliminary design drawings stipulated a 47,000 square foot multipurpose, multi court field house on the north side of the current building. Based on these preliminary plans, the total parking requirement for the Sportsplex would be 700 parking stalls (500 currently existing plus 200 additional spaces for the operation of the new field house).

safety, accessibility and amenities. The Central Common Area was identified by Metro Transit as the only feasible location for a New Bridge Terminal. Preliminary programming for the terminal includes a platform for 16 buses, layover lane, large passenger waiting area, ticket vending and information, leased commercial space, taxi stands, kiss n' ride spots, bicycle storage, pedestrian control measures, guaranteed accessibility, security measures, public art, and green initiatives. Metro Transit has awarded the design contract for the new bus terminal in October of 2009. Construction is expected to begin in 2010.

To allow for the construction of the bus terminal on lands governed by the *Dartmouth Common Act*, Halifax Regional Council recommended amendments to the *Act* on June 17, 2008:

That Halifax Regional Council approve, in principle, the concept of creating a new transit terminal on the Dartmouth Common, *including the Wilderness Park area between Nantucket and Thistle Streets (the area west of Dartmouth High School)*; and further, that Halifax Regional Council approve the recommended amendment to the *Municipal Government Act* in relation to the Dartmouth Common and that the recommended amendment be forwarded to the Province of Nova Scotia for consideration for the Fall 2008 sitting of the Legislature.

The amendment to the *Act* was subsequently passed by the Provincial Legislature in December 2008, **yet without a provision that would allow Metro Transit to replace lost parking for the Dartmouth Sportsplex on Dartmouth Common land.**

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3 Understanding the Dartmouth Common

3.1 What are 'Commons'?

The term “commons” carries many meanings and is used to discuss a range of issues related to shared ownership, access to, and rights over land, and resources. Commons, understood spatially, refer to land and places that are shared to some degree by the community. Commons are part of a place’s public realm. Common spaces are not all outdoor plazas and greens. Public institutions such as schools, libraries, town halls, and transit terminals are all indoor places that allow public access and provide access to public resources. Private spaces can also be important locations for gathering and can act as a centre of a community. Our understanding of common land can be traced back to the medieval period in Britain and how those land practices were incorporated and reinterpreted in the North American context (see *Appendix A - Backgrounder on the Commons - for additional background information and ways of defining the commons*).

3.2 History of the Dartmouth Common

The history of the Dartmouth Common can be divided into four generalized phases of use and development. The first was a period of exploration and use of the Common for basic needs, including burying the deceased. From the mid-1800s to 1917, the time of the Halifax Explosion, use of the Common expanded to include many institutional uses. Following the explosion there was a period of reconstruction and renewal. From the mid-1900s up to the present there has been both expanded development on the Common and increased interest in its protection as a public resource. The following section provides an overview of each phase and Figure 3.1 shows a timeline of the evolution of land use on the Dartmouth Common. Figure 3.2 shows the approximate locations of land uses on the Common since the early 19th century to present (see *Davis Archaeological Consultants Ltd. 2009 report: Dartmouth Common Master Plan: Archaeological Resource Impact Assessment for detailed information about the history of the Dartmouth Common*).

Commons Defined:

“ ‘Commons’ are physical places to which a group shares a set of rights. The group may consist of all citizens or some limited set of members. The rights shared could be all those enjoyed by citizens, or some specific right (such as grazing one’s cattle after the harvest). The rights may be complexly distributed (and traditionally have been...), yet they are shared in some roughly equitable fashion and, to a significant degree, are subject to the will of the group. In some cases, the space is only a commons during the time that it is used as such. Thus, we may think of a parking lot as a commons while a political rally is being held there, but not when it is used for valet parking. The term may be stretched to cover non-place resources such as intellectual property (public domain) (Childs 2004: 22).

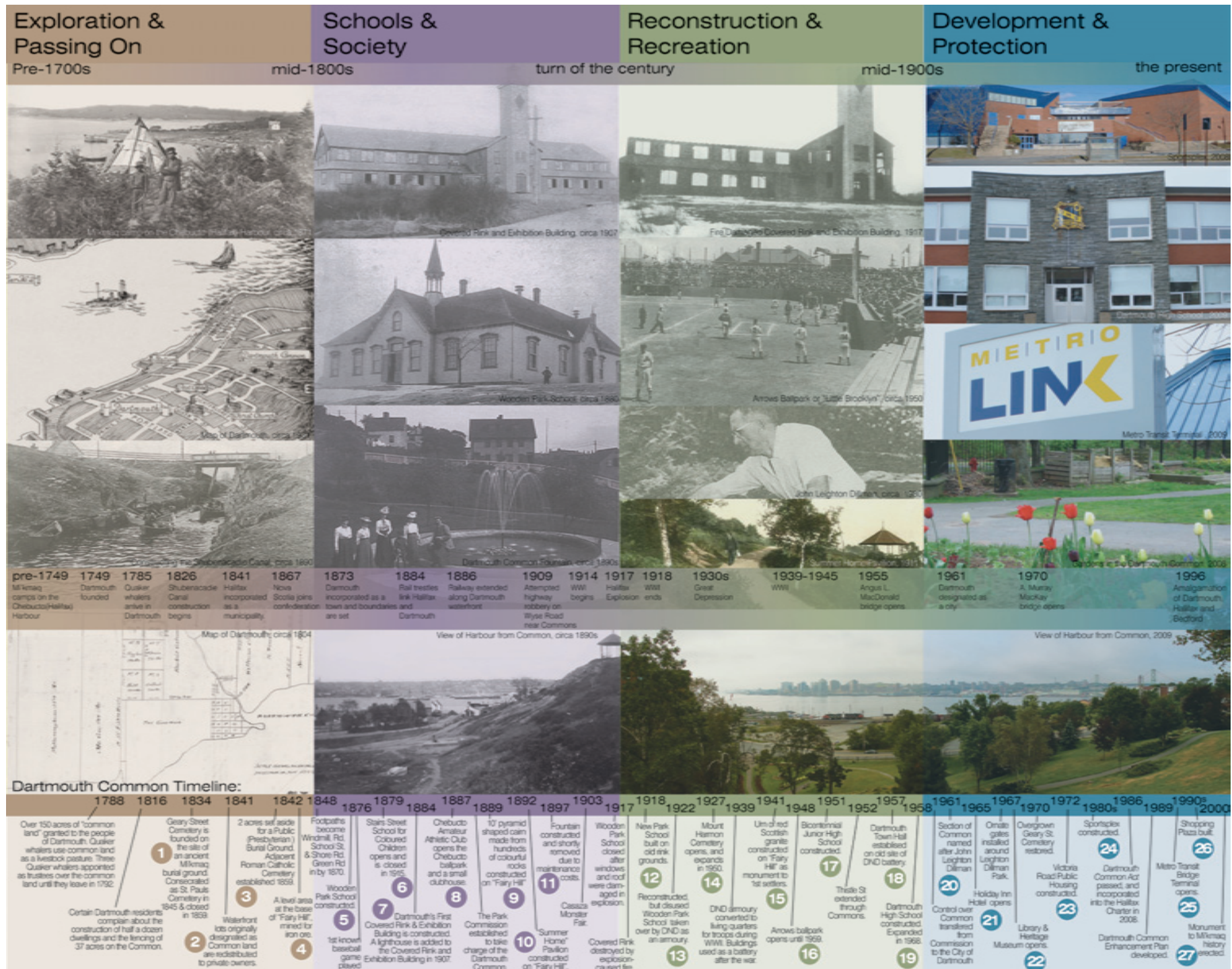


Figure 3.1: Timeline of the evolution of land use on the Dartmouth Common



LEGEND

- 1 1834 Gray Street Cemetery is expanded on the site of an ancient Williams burial ground. Consecrated as St. Pauls Cemetery in 1846 & closed in 1938
- 2 1841 Waterford (site originally designated as Common land) are redistributed to private owners
- 3 1842 3 acres set aside for a Public (Presbyterian) Burial Ground. Adjacent Roman Catholic Cemetery established 1858
- 4 1842 A well area at the base of Fairy Hill, mined for iron ore
- 5 1876 Wooden Park School constructed
- 6 1879 State Street School for Coloured Children opens and is closed in 1915
- 7 1884 Dartmouths First Covered Walk & Exhibition Building is constructed. 8 light towers are added to the Covered Walk and Exhibition Building in 1907
- 8 1887 Chubbuck Amusements Club opens in the Chubbuck Coliseum and a small clubhouse
- 9 1889 107 pyramid shaped cairn made from hundreds of colorful rocks constructed on Fairy Hill
- 10 1892 "Summer Home" Pavilion constructed on Fairy Hill
- 11 1897 Fountain constructed and shortly removed due to maintenance costs
- 12 1918 New Park School built on old ink grounds
- 13 1922 Reconstructed but reused Wooden Park School taken over by DND as an armory
- 14 1927 Mount Harmon Cemetery opens and expands in 1950
- 15 1941 Urn of red Scottish granite constructed on Fairy Hill as monument to settlers
- 16 1948 Arrows ball park opens until 1958
- 17 1951 Bicentennial Junior High School constructed
- 18 1957 Dartmouth Town Hall established on old site of DND building
- 19 1958 Dartmouth High School constructed. Expanded in 1988
- 20 1961 Section of Common named after John Leighton Olinson
- 21 1965 Holiday Inn Hotel opens
- 22 1967 Library & Heritage Museum opens
- 23 1972 Victoria Road Public Housing constructed
- 24 1980s Sportplex constructed
- 25 1990s Metro Transit Bridge Terminal opens
- 26 1990s Shopping Plaza built
- 27 2000 Monument to Williams history erected

Figure 3.2: Landmarks developed on the Common since the 19th Century

3.2.1 Exploration & Passing On (pre-1700s – mid-1800s)

Prior to British settlement in Dartmouth, the Mi'kmaq established seasonal camps along the Dartmouth side of Chebucto (Halifax) harbour. In 1788, shortly after the founding of Dartmouth, 150 acres of land on the east boundary of the Dartmouth settlement were established as common land and granted to the public for their use and benefit. Three Quaker whalers who had migrated to Dartmouth from Nantucket were appointed as trustees charged with the regulation and management of the Common. These Quakers used the Common for firewood and pasture. Their residence in Dartmouth was short, and when they returned to New England by 1792, they turned responsibility of the common land over to the small group of other settlers. Waterfront lots were designated for private property beginning in 1841. There was a brief attempt at iron ore exploration and mining in the mid-1800s. Several cemeteries were established during this early period.

3.2.2 Schools & Society (mid-1800s – 1917)

During the late 19th century the community established many important public facilities and amenities on the Common. Footpaths became roads and the Common developed into a nexus for social, educational, recreational and civic uses. During this time both the Wooden Park School and the Stairs Street School for Coloured Children were constructed. Sports such as baseball and hockey grew in importance during this time and Dartmouth's first Covered Rink and Exhibition Building was built in 1884. The Common was also an important locale for socializing and a fountain, pavilion and cairn were put in during this period.

3.2.3 Reconstruction & Recreation (1918 – mid-1900s)

Following the Halifax Explosion in 1917, public facilities on the Dartmouth Common had to undergo reconstruction. The Covered Rink was damaged beyond repair, and a new Park School was built in its place. DND established a presence on the Common, converting the former Wooden Park School to an armoury, which later served as living quarters during WWII. Mount Harmon Cemetery opened in 1927, and expanded mid-century. Recreation use of common land continued in importance with the establishment of Arrows Ballpark in 1948. The Town Hall established political and civic significance on the Common in 1957. The educational legacy of the Common continued with the construction of Bicentennial School in 1951 and Dartmouth High School in 1958. Areas of the Common underwent beautification and functional improvements, largely due to John Leighton Dillman who volunteered much of his time and efforts.

3.2.4 Development & Protection (mid-1900s to early 2000s)

After Dartmouth was designated as a city in 1961, control of the Common was transferred to the City and ornate gates were installed around an area of parkland named after Leighton Dillman. The late 20th-century brought both increased development and legal protection to the Common. Development included shelter, both houses and a hotel, shopping facilities, the Sportsplex, as well as transportation and transit related uses.



Original Land Grant

- Early years of settlement: Dartmouth Common lands set aside but not formally "granted"
- July 1788: 37 acres granted by King George III; not to the community but to three Quakers (legal title passed from the Crown to these private land owners)
- September 1788: 150 acres formally granted "in special trust" to representatives of the community



1986 Dartmouth Common Act

- The purpose of this Act is to preserve and protect the Dartmouth Common for the use and enjoyment of present and future inhabitants of the City of Dartmouth.
- The City of Dartmouth shall not sell, lease or otherwise alienate the Dartmouth common nor shall any person build thereon.



1994 Amendment Dartmouth Common Act

- (...) any person may build an addition to a building (Sportsplex) that was located on the lands described in the Schedule to this act (...) if the building and the addition are both totally located on those lands.



2008 Amendment Dartmouth Common Act

- The Municipality may build, expand or improve public transit facilities on that part of the Dartmouth Common adjacent to Nantucket Avenue and not exceeding six acres.
- When the lands (...) are no longer used by the Municipality for public transit facilities, the lands revert back to their use as part of the Dartmouth Common.

Figure 3.3 Evolution of the Dartmouth Common boundary and Act amendments

Protective measures emerged in the 1980s as citizens became concerned about increased development on Dartmouth Common land. In 1986 the Province passed the *Dartmouth Common Act* and in the following year established the Dartmouth Common Committee, comprised of citizens and representatives from all levels of government. In 1988 this committee produced a report; the recommendations within it were passed by Dartmouth City Council. In response to the Committee's recommendations in 1989 the Dartmouth Common Enhancement Plan was prepared by Sperry/MacLennan Architects and Planners under the direction of the Dartmouth Common Committee of Trustees and with input from the public (see Section 2.1.2.4).

3.2.5 Evolution of Dartmouth Common

Since its inception the Dartmouth Common has evolved as a hub of activity and movement. The Common land has served the public by providing opportunities for education, recreation, social gathering, memorials, leisure, pasture, gardening, transit, shopping and housing. The use of Common lands has evolved over time and sometimes amidst public controversy over the evolving definition of what a 'Common' is and should be. However, the opportunity here and now is to establish a strong community vision and direction forward for how the Common is used and protected into the future. This includes the everyday and the special use of the Common by the public.

Over the years the Dartmouth Common lands have been developed in a piecemeal fashion and need an updated comprehensive plan to guide future decisions. As a result of the past development pattern, the cohesiveness and special character of the Common has been diminished. Like many common areas across North America these lands have been eroded over the years by both public and private developments. The public use intent of the Common is established under the *Dartmouth Common Act*, which prohibits the sale, lease or "alienation" of the Common. **The HRM as public trustee is obligated to care for and protect the Common according to the Act for the "inhabitants of the Municipality". The current mix of public open space and facilities operating on the Common, while largely considered as public uses under the intent of the legislation, have not been planned or developed in relation to one another or within the context of a larger public vision.** Figure 3.3 illustrates the evolution of the Common's boundary and subsequent amendments to the *Dartmouth Common Act*.

While the character and use of the Common has changed over time its special importance to the community has remained. The guiding principles and enhancement guidelines developed through this Master Plan are integral to

ensuring that the Dartmouth Common remains public in nature and accessible to all.

3.3 Natural Setting

The Dartmouth Common offers substantial greenspaces and open spaces in the core of the capital district.

3.3.1 Role within HRM's Open Space Network

The Dartmouth Common Master Plan is an important element of HRM's comprehensive approach to regional open space planning which aims to achieve an integrated system of natural areas, parks, trails and corridors. The Dartmouth Common is an integral part of this network and is recognized as one of HRM's most significant urban public open spaces (Figure 3.4).



3.4: Dartmouth Common (marked in red) is an important element of the overall open space and parks system in HRM

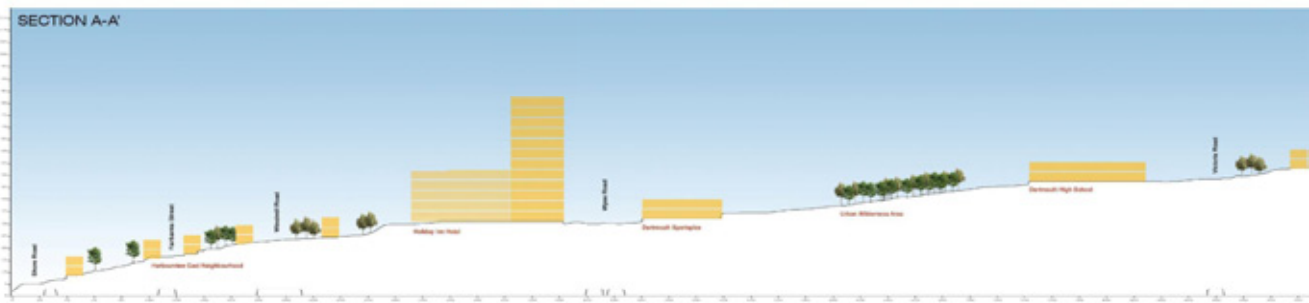
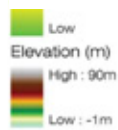
3.3.2 Topography

The topography of the Dartmouth Common is shown in Figures 3.5, 3.6 and 3.7. The general rise in elevation across the site from the shoreline provides stunning views of the harbour. The viewplanes from the Common are recognized and protected in land use policy. Slope is shown in Figure 3.5, which shows a mixed terrain, with a variety of large low-slope surfaces and areas with high slopes. The topography of the Common offers opportunities, such as great views to enjoy, as well as challenges; for example, the slope

limits the potential locations for sports fields that require large flat areas. Figure 3.6 shows a cross section view of the Central Common and Figure 3.7 illustrates the cross section across the southern portion of the Common including Leighton Dillman Park.



3.5: Topography and Cross Sections



3.6: Section through Western End of Central Common



3.7: Section through Leighton Dillman Park

3.3.3 Greenspace

Generally, the area surrounding the Dartmouth Common conveys the image of a green city. Tree canopies on public and private lands appear dense, especially in older residential neighborhoods surrounding the Common. A notable exception is the semi-public area around the Wyse Road/Nantucket Avenue intersection that is nearly completely void of any greenspace or tree canopy.

3.8: Public, semi-public and private green spaces

The Urban Wilderness Park and Leighton Dillman Park provide natural habitat in the centre of the city for a variety of flora and fauna. The Urban Wilderness Park, situated between the Dartmouth High School and the Sportsplex, has



been incorporated into a managed urban forest program, with educational signage and markings. The forest has been selectively groomed and has a vigorous understorey of plant communities. A trail has recently been cut through the Wilderness Park providing a linkage between the parking lot of the Sportsplex and the intersection at Victoria Road and Nantucket. Plants in the Common include: sheep laurel, large cranberry, loosestrife, tufted vetch, morning glory and common cat-tails. Birds including the common yellowthroat, yellow warblers, starlings and pigeons inhabit the Common.

At a request from the Harbour East Community Council, a CPTED Site Audit was performed for the Urban Wilderness Park in 2003 by Halifax Regional Police Services. While the Urban Wilderness Park was a good opportunity for educating the public about forest ecology, it has been poorly implemented and the site has now become unsafe in many ways. At the time of the site audit request, the Park was considered overgrown, unsafe, and unlit, with concerns being expressed by both Dartmouth High and Bicentennial Schools.

Issues identified in the audit included dense brush and plant growth inhibiting users' safe surveillance of the area, poor lighting and poor sight lines. A lack of natural surveillance and dense plant growth would suggest that visual security of the area is limited in winter and non-existent in summer. The audit focused on four key design issues:

- Sight Lines – No clear sightlines exist during daylight hours from the surrounding areas of the Dartmouth Sportsplex, Metro Transit, Dartmouth High or adjacent streets because of the dense vegetation undergrowth. This problem is enhanced at night due to the lack of lighting in or around the park. A lack of sight lines into the park creates entrapment zones and concealment areas;
- Entrapment Zones – Due to the overgrown vegetation and poor lighting, the entire park is seen by the police as an entrapment zone and unsafe to enter;
- Movement Predictors and Activity Generators– Because of the park's location and its surrounding activities (school, bus station, Sportsplex, shopping centre) people tend to use the park as a shortcut from one activity to another. There is a high amount of foot traffic in the park due to the surrounding activity generators, but the pathways are narrow and the sightlines, both from within the park, as well as from the outside looking in are non-existent. There are no well defined areas of refuge, entrances or exits. In addition, there is no control of how people can move through the space making the space difficult for police to secure; and
- Community Impact – The park is signed as an Urban Wilderness Park suggesting that there is little to no maintenance needed. Dense vegetation

prohibits natural surveillance of the park allowing for the opportunity for criminal activity to occur unnoticed. Criminals can be easily concealed within the Park while watching and waiting for potential suspects to pass through.

3.3.4 Vistas

Where the topography might be at times challenging when navigating the Common, it also affords magnificent views of the Halifax harbour at many locations within the area. Stunning and nearly unobstructed vistas through to the water are especially visible from areas with higher elevations, such as near Dartmouth High School, Bicentennial School or the Dillman Park ball diamonds. Lower lying areas with steep slopes, such as in the lower parts of Dillman Park also provide interesting vistas, surprising the visitor with encounters of new views at every turn of the wandering paths.

3.9: View from Dillman Park towards Halifax harbour



3.3.5 Shading

The generally south-facing slopes of the Dartmouth Common guarantee good sun exposure of public open space areas. In the summer, the tree stands in Dillman Park and the Urban Wilderness Park mitigate users' exposure to intense sun and allow for a pleasant alteration between sunny and shady areas. During the shoulder seasons and in the winter the lower portions of Dillman Park are relatively shaded in the late afternoon, due to the steep slopes that block the sunlight.

Shades from building structures have only a low impact on public open space. Shadows from larger structures are most prevalent around the Wyse Road / Nantucket Avenue intersection. Only the multi-story manor building at the lower corner of Dillman Park obstructs the sun exposure of the park in the morning hours.



3.10: Shadow composite: December 21st,
8am to 4pm

3.4 Land Use and Ownership

3.4.1 Land Use Zoning

Land Use zoning and view planes established in municipal planning policies are shown in Figure 3.11. There are residential, commercial, institutional, parks and open space uses in the Common. Certain zoning designations will need to be revisited in light of recommendations in the Master Plan to better ensure the most appropriate use of Common land.

3.4.2 Land Ownership

Currently, approximately 99 acres of the Common is owned by the Municipality. Of the total HRM-owned lands, open space accounts for 59 acres, built facilities and parking accounts for 16 acres and roads and sidewalk infrastructure accounts for 24 acres. Approximately 37% (61.5 acres) of the Common is privately owned and 3% (5.5 acres) is federally owned and used as public housing and open space. Municipal (yellow), federal (green) and private (grey) ownership of Common land is shown in Figure 3.12.

3.5 Current Use and Programming

The Dartmouth Common outdoor space is not typically used as a major event venue. The topography and infrastructure on the Common are not conducive to the kinds of large-scale events that have taken place on the Halifax Common, for example. Community-scale celebrations and gatherings are more the norm for the Dartmouth Common and booking history shows that the demand to host events on the Common is relatively low. More recently, the annual Highland Games event has had success locating at the top portion of Leighton Dillman Park. Former events like the annual Easter egg hunt demonstrate that similar scale events could be successfully accommodated on the Common.

The location of the Dartmouth Waterfront and Alderney Landing events plaza presents a unique opportunity to develop programming infrastructure on the Dartmouth Common to complement that of the waterfront. An opportunity in this regard is the development of a community-scale outdoor amphitheatre on the site of the former Dartmouth Heritage Museum. This could complement festivals and performances taking place at Alderney Landing or provide an independent smaller venue for community performances and cultural events.

Figure 3.11: Zoning and Viewplanes

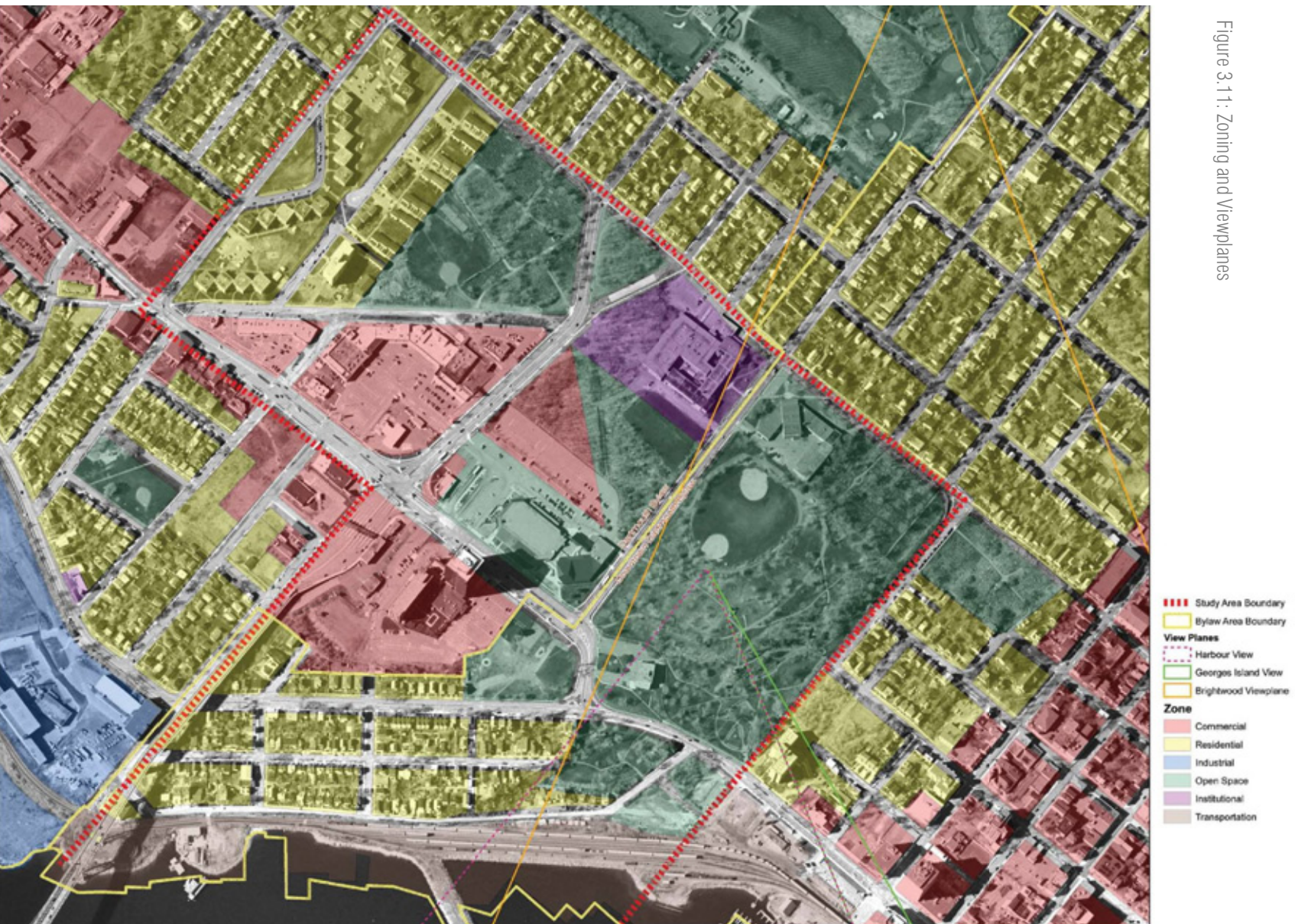


Figure 3.12: Public Land Ownership



Opportunities for hosting indoor programming and events can currently be accommodated through the Dartmouth Sportsplex which can host medium and large-scale special and recurring events and sporting activities. The Sportsplex plays an important role in filling HRM's need for multi-sport, meeting, convention and events infrastructure. The combination of arena, pool, health and fitness centre and meeting spaces offers an attractive indoor venue for events of various sizes and audiences.

The two schools on the Common are currently not equipped to handle events although they do provide important small meeting and programming space for the community outside of school hours. The theatre at Dartmouth High is also available for outside bookings. Both schools are in need of upgrades, however, the Dartmouth High School is in need of significant capital upgrades and renovations and funds have been earmarked for this purpose.

Outdoor facilities on the Common include two ball diamonds on the Central Common; one being adult size and one minor. The adult diamond is well-used and regularly scheduled through HRM's Sports and Community Events Division. The smaller field is currently under-used; however, there is a general need in HRM for more bantam and midget ball play time. A third ball diamond on the Common, located off of Green Road near the Scotia Court neighbourhood is underused and is not meeting the needs of the surrounding residents. This particular community has a higher preference and need for basketball courts and children's play equipment and has successfully advocated for repairs to an existing basketball court in 2005. The future use and enhanced maintenance of this park is important to the overall vision for the Dartmouth Common and the needs of adjacent residents.

There is a sports field adjacent to Dartmouth High which is currently not formally scheduled by HRM and is typically used by the school and community for informal sports play including football and rugby. This field receives a low level of maintenance by HRM and is not appropriate for larger more organized sports events. There is an opportunity to maintain this field for future informal sporting and recreation use to be complemented by the potential development of a larger regulation size sports field on the Dartmouth Common. This would support HRM's need to increase the number of playing fields including artificial turf field inventory and provide much needed sports infrastructure for the schools.

Table 3.1 provides an overview of both the everyday use and activities on the Common as well as current and potential special events and activities. These

uses, activities, and events require supporting amenities, which have been factored into the development of the recommended Master Plan Layout detailed in Chapter 5.

Everyday Use & Activities	Supporting Amenities
Resting, relaxing and quiet contemplation Enjoying nature and the outdoors Exercising and sports Travelling through & transportation Meeting friends and socializing Children playing Dog-walking People watching Learning	Lighting Seating Restrooms Walkways Accessible infrastructure Gardens, trees Sports fields and courts Play & exercise equipment Special features - water, art, signage, etc.
Special Events & Activities	Supporting Amenities
Community gatherings and celebrations Civic Events Markets and festivals Sporting Events Cultural Events and activities Ceremonies and memorials Private and semi-private functions (weddings, graduations, conferences, meetings, etc.)	Lighting Seating Plazas and courtyards Accessible infrastructure Sports fields (regulation size) Performance space Restrooms Signage and way-finding Heritage interpretation Indoor and outdoor meeting/event facilities

Table 3.1: Uses and Activities on the Common and Supporting Amenities

3.6 Transportation

The location of the Dartmouth Common, in the centre of the city and at the base of the bridge between Dartmouth and Halifax, make it a nexus for multiple modes of transportation. Travellers on and off the bridge are brought directly to and through common land. The road network reflects the topography and settlement patterns of the area over time, and is thus not a perfect grid system. This offers certain challenges to circulation through the site, as well as some interesting opportunities for improving the road layout and enhancing connections *within* as well as *to and from* the Common.

Public transit users represent a large group of people who access the Common everyday in their daily commute. The Master Plan recommendations consider how to better facilitate the circulation and movement of transit users and buses and to enhance the experience of the Common for this user group. Improving active transportation (cycling, walking, roller blading, etc.) circulation and

connections in and around the Common is a key objective of the Master Plan and understood to be a critical element of planning urban parks and open space systems. Improved active transportation connections to public facilities and infrastructure on the Common including the Metro Transit Bridge Terminal and other public facilities and destinations are addressed in the recommended options for the Common in Chapter 5.

3.7 Case Studies

The change in use and boundaries of common/public lands are issues that have been grappled with throughout North American cities. Several case studies have been reviewed and are presented in Appendix B. The case studies discussed in Appendix B are: Halifax Common – Halifax, Nova Scotia; Boston Commons - Boston, Massachusetts; Pike Place Market – Seattle, Washington; Sherer Park – Long Beach, California. These case studies enrich our understanding of the development pressures and land use changes impacting common lands, park and open space, and the various creative approaches that governments, stakeholders and the general public have employed to negotiate between the various interests and determine the best solutions for the future that respect the original public use of the land.

3.8 Understanding the Dartmouth Common through Public Engagement

Participation and input from the public has been important in defining the vision and objectives of future land use of the Common.

There was opportunity for public input through the following ways:



Figure 3.13: Walk in the Park Advertisement

Figure 3.14: Public Walk in the Park

"There is no single, simply defined client for a public commons, but rather, if the place is to come alive there is a welter of overlapping stakeholders. The uses that a public commons accommodates change over time, and are often a matter of discourse and dispute" (Childs 2004: 43).

"If we can develop one idea, the idea of 'The Park', this can be an idea that can inspire the minds of all Dartmouthians and have the potential to evoke momentum for change in the near term" (Feedback – Walk in the Park).

- Public Workshop (April 4, 2009): maps, comment sheets, group presentations;
- Public Walk in the Park (May 13, 2009): fill out form, informal conversations (see Figures 3.13 and 3.14);
- Public Open House (October 5, 2009): question & answer period following presentation, comments on presentation panels
- HRM online questionnaire;
- CBCL workshop questionnaire;
- E-mails, faxes, phone calls;
- Strategic one-on-one interviews; and
- HRM focus group – operations and programming.

Generally speaking, the public provided two levels of input:

- High-level overall feedback: public values, perceptions, comfort, use; and
- Site specific feedback: strength, weaknesses, opportunities, constraints

Following is an overview of some of the points that emerged from the consultation.

Perception

- Dartmouth Common is not part of the collective awareness of HRM residents;
- Dartmouth Common is not just a green area; it is much more;
- Dartmouth is under-marketed, continues to suffer from a general negative perception, and most of the development is moving away from the downtown to other places; and
- Dartmouth Common is disconnected (within the Common boundaries and beyond to surrounding uses) – lacks complete sense of identity/place.

Use

- Residents are passionate about use of the Dartmouth Common;
- Dartmouth Common used for leisure, sports, nature, quiet contemplation, ceremony, walking, sports, transit;
- Regulation size sports field is wanted;
- Area north of Green Road is isolated/ separated from the surroundings;
- Dillman Park is not useable year-round;
- Access to Dilman Park is not clear, fence inhibits access, not clear which gates are closed and which not;



Figure 3.15: Walk in the Park Questionnaire

- Some green spaces need revitalization/ redefinition/ change of character;
- Flower beds in Dillman Park are sometimes ruined and vandalized; and
- Need to find better balance between resident and tourist enjoyment of the park, i.e., find a solution for tour buses so they don't idle and block the entrance.

"Soften and revive (for all four-seasons) the current visual vacuum of four-plus lanes of traffic-congested pavement and parking lots" (Feedback – Walk in the Park).

Value

- Urban Wilderness Park is important / interventions should be carefully planned;
- Dillman Park needs to be protected / open space pockets around the park need to be revitalized / no encroachment on Dillman Park;
- Greenspace is highly valued and should not be decimated;
- Sacred spaces on the Common are precious to residents: burial grounds and gardens;
- Major concerns about missing consultation on recent amendments to *Dartmouth Common Act*;
- Urban Wilderness Park highly valued / seen by some as the core of the Common;
- Public lands should not be given up before going through proper planning process;
- Frustration with nibbling away of Common land;
- Gateway function of area is not emphasized and needs improvement;
- Dillman Park is centrepiece of Common;
- Dartmouth has great potential as a place to live and work; and
- Word "common" means relating to the community as a whole.

"Dartmouth High will go from the 'have-not school', to the 'School in the Park'" (Feedback – Walk in the Park).

"It is easy to fall into a trap of public appeals for numerous little projects in various locations that do not add up to much no matter the idea proposed. But, it will be an overall composition and the defining of one "big idea" that will generate excitement, broad-based support, and an armature for future development of the Dartmouth Common" (Feedback – Walk in the Park).

Comfort

- Lack of safety for kids walking to schools;
- Lack of lighting – New lighting needs to be appropriate – not too bright, i.e., light pollution;
- Green road area is a safety and security concern;
- Pedestrian crossings at Nantucket Avenue are very dangerous;
- Wooded areas are safety concern / lack of security; and
- Tourist buses block access to Dillman Park and Alderney Manor.

Opportunities

- Everybody should know when you are In the Common (boundary definition);
- Need new transit terminal;
- Shared community facilities / coordinated planning;
- Better maintenance of public parks;
- Improve the running track;
- Make connections / don't consider pieces in isolation;
- Better pedestrian connections within the area;
- Better bike links to bridge, possibly pedways;
- Put the parking underground;
- Define precious areas and protect them;
- Make Dillman Park accessible year-round / plough main paved trail through park (wheelchair use accessibility, also an issue for strollers);
- Improve lighting (reflecting down not up) and security;
- Provide wheelchair access from Nantucket to Dillman Park;
- Create more places for interaction;
- Improve access to upper Common near Bicentennial School;
- Need public washrooms;
- Need police community presence;
- Stakeholders with specific interests should be consulted;
- Close Thistle Street to better connect Dillman Park and Urban Wilderness Park;
- Create trail links to surrounding areas, waterfront, etc.;
- Create a healthier community;
- Reclaim green space;
- Better maintain Dillman Park;
- Implement recommendations from 1989 report;
- Better promote activities that take place on the Common, i.e., The Highland Games;



- Lower Canadian flag on top of gazebo for fallen soldiers; and
- Planning process is an opportunity to educate the public about the Common and to garner interest in it.

3.8.1 Feedback Regarding the Central Common Area

The various development pressures on the Central Common area were key issues discussed in the public consultation. There is general acceptance that a new public transit terminal is needed; however, people are concerned about location and design of the proposed terminal. There was also concern that the public were not sufficiently consulted by Metro Transit early on in the site design process. Many people, including students and the school administration, expressed concern about the proposed terminal's proximity to Dartmouth High School, and the impacts the terminal would have on the school, including noise, pollution, heat retention and increased pedestrian traffic penetrating the school grounds. Access to and from the terminal and other facilities in the Central Common Area, such as the Sportsplex and Dartmouth High School is also an issue that people wanted to see addressed. In the consultation it was made clear that the public wanted to see the best possible layout and design solution explored for the terminal. The terminal was seen by some as a chance to create a well-connected hub for recreational, educational and possibly commercial activities in the area. In this way, the new terminal was envisioned as a lever to encourage transit oriented development at this important gateway to Dartmouth.



Figure 3.16: Public Workshop April 4, 2009

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4 A Common Vision

4.1 Vision

Capturing the vision of a diverse public is a challenge in every municipal visioning process. The variety of viewpoints produces positive tension from which unique, context appropriate, and creative solutions can emerge.

4.1.1 Community Values

The vision for Dartmouth Common must be shaped by community values. How we design and use our community spaces communicate messages about what we value. The Dartmouth Common tells visitors and residents what the values of the community are. **Right now, there is a disconnect between what the community values and what is seen on the Common – the Master Plan aims to resolve this gap and make the Common truly reflective of community values.** Through the public input opportunities, community members have shared what they value about the Dartmouth Common. The following eleven key community values have emerged through the process and set the starting point for establishing the vision, goals and guiding principles for the Dartmouth Common.

1. Open Space

Dartmouth Common provides a highly valued and unique green oasis of open space in the middle of the city.

2. Community

It is a freely accessible gathering place for family and friends, which makes it an important place for community-building. Generations of Dartmouth residents have helped build their community by volunteering to make Leighton Dillman Park and other areas of the Common beautiful, useful and clean.

3. Quiet Reflection

The Dartmouth Common's pathways, gardens, cemeteries and quiet nooks are valued places for meditation and contemplation.

4. Recreation & Health

The Dartmouth Common provides valued space for many types of indoor and outdoor recreation and promotes community health by making space for physical activity.

5. **Beauty & Views**

Views of the Halifax Harbour, good vantage points for special events like the fireworks, and the beauty of Common itself are valued aspects of the site.

6. **Heritage**

The Dartmouth Common is a location with heritage significance for the Mi'kmaq and was at the heart of the early settlement that would later become known as Dartmouth.

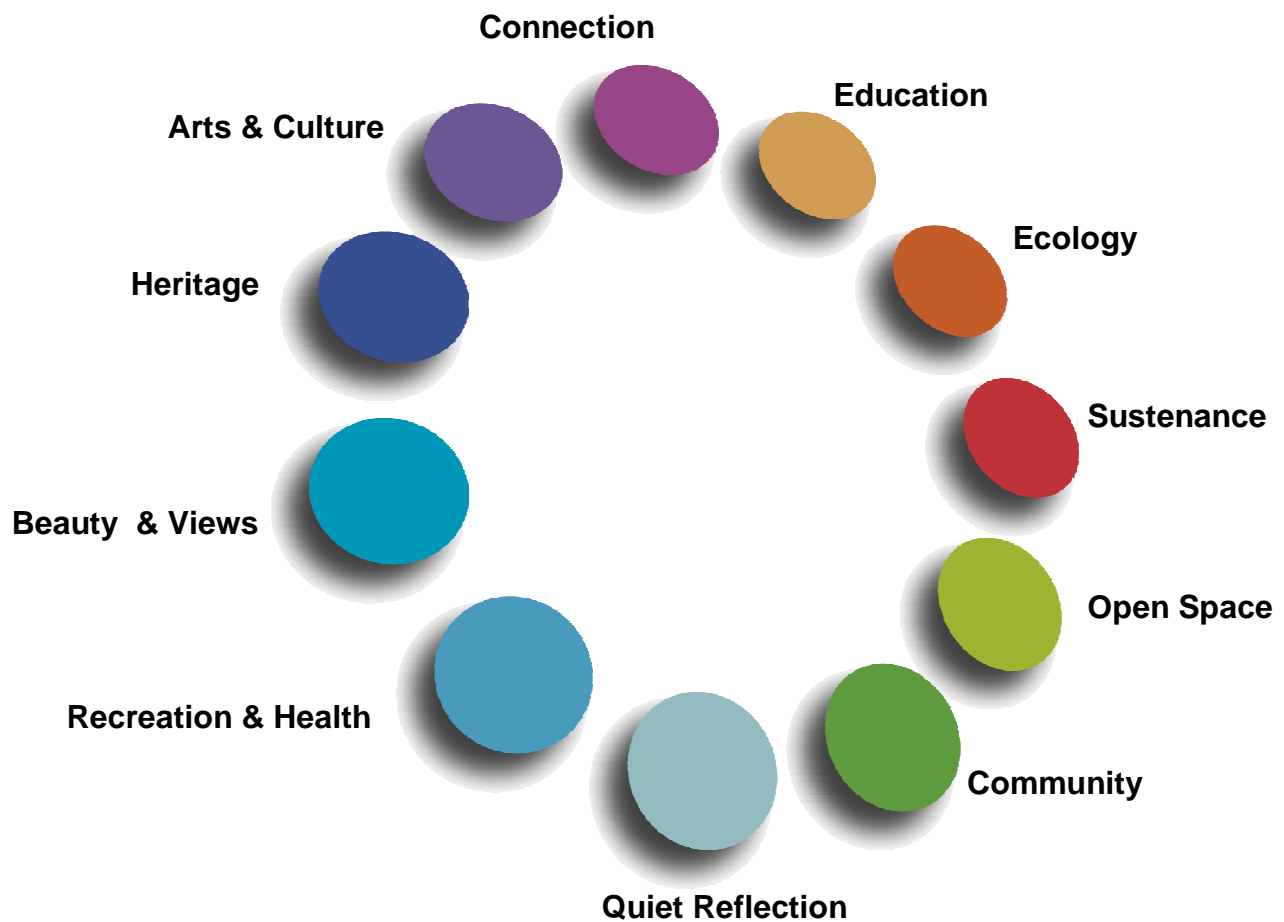


Figure 4.1: Community Values

7. **Arts & Culture**

The Common provided a space for social and cultural gatherings throughout its history, and continues through the Highland games, school and community events and productions.

8. **Connection**

The proximity of the Dartmouth Common to transit, the bridge across the harbour and to the remainder of the road network, mean that it is used every day for travel to work, school, and play. The Common is a well-travelled space that represents the connection between the important places in people's lives.

9. **Education**

Education has been an integral part of the Dartmouth Common throughout history and continues today. The Common is thus highly valued by community members and especially students as a place for learning and growing.

10. **Ecology**

The ecological aspects of the Dartmouth Common greenspaces and gardens are valued by the public, who also want to see the ecology of the area improved and sustained into the future.

11. **Sustenance**

The Dartmouth Common is also a valued space for sustaining the community through growing healthy food in the community garden plots.

4.1.2 **Draft Vision**

The Dartmouth Common is a **gateway** to a great community; both a welcoming, open oasis of greenspace and a lively civic core that sets the stage for both commonplace and extraordinary aspects of our lives.

The Commonplace

The Common is and will continue to be:

- part of our daily passage to school or commute to work as we walk, cycle and drive through it;
- where we meet our neighbours, play with our families and friends, grow our food, and where we exercise and stay healthy; and
- a place where we can hear conversations, laughter, cries, encouragements, and simply the quiet sounds of nature amidst the hustle and bustle of the city and harbour.

The Extraordinary

The Common is and will continue to be:

- where ceremonies are held: graduation, award events, weddings, commemorations, and memorials;
- where milestones are achieved: tests passed, races run, homeruns hit; and
- where we remember our past and anticipate our future.

Strong Sense of Place

The Common will build on its strengths and flourish into an identifiable gateway to Dartmouth that will be recognizable to residents and visitors as an open space landmark and civic destination. The Common will strengthen its sense of place and become:

- a landmark in the Halifax Regional Municipality;
- a place that provides a clear demonstration of the values of the community;
- more safe and accessible for all;
- more ecologically healthy and vibrant;
- better defined and connected; and
- more active and useable year-round.

4.2 Goals and Guiding Principles

The overarching vision for the Master Plan is that Dartmouth Common is a *greenspace and civic gateway* to Dartmouth where sense of place will be intentionally strengthened, and where now and in the future we will experience both the commonplace and the extraordinary. To transform the vision to reality, goals have been set to improve the Dartmouth Common. In order to achieve the goals, guiding principles that reflect community values have been determined to shape the strategies and actions that will lead Dartmouth Common forward. These goals and principles are informed by public consultation, staff input, site analysis, case study research and design.

4.2.1 Goal 1: Strengthen Sense of Place

The Common will be easily identified and develop a strong and cohesive sense of place.

Guiding Principles for Creating a Strong Sense of Place

GP 1.1: Define Strong Edges

- People must know when they are inside or outside of the Common;
- People should have a sense of entering Dartmouth through the gateway of the Common; and
- Strong edges must also be permeable to allow for connectivity.

GP 1.2: Allow for Deep Connectivity

- Within, through, and beyond;
- Legibility of streets and pathways continue into and out of the Common;
- It is important to better connect the pieces: across Nantucket, across Alderney, across Thistle, across Wyse; and

- The Dartmouth Common needs to be linked back into the community both physically and in the collective consciousness. Connectivity can be strengthened through improved links to the Trans Canada Trail, Alderney Gate, the lakes, the bridge, etc.

GP 1.3: Connect the Edge Through Identifiable Nodes

- Entry and exit points – the “gateways” to the larger gateway – “open doors” to the Common.

GP 1.4: Transportation Should Respect and Complement the Common

- It should be made to feel as if the roads such as Nantucket and Thistle are crossing through a park not the other way around.

GP 1.5: Develop a Common Language

- A “common language” is like a tie that binds the visual aspects of the area together and allows it to be read as one continuous entity. A “common language” includes furniture (benches, picnic tables), signs, banners, etc.

4.2.2 Goal 2: Redefine the Dartmouth Common as a Landmark Destination

Dartmouth Common will become a place that attracts people. It is an important place that people pass through (i.e., commuting, going to school), but it also needs to have the element of destination. People will be crossing the bridge from Halifax and coming in from other outlying areas to enjoy the amenities and attractiveness of the site.

Guiding Principles for Creating a Destination

GP 2.1: Establish the Common as a Hub of Activity for Dartmouth

- As the gateway to the city it needs to be a hub of activity; it needs events and intentional programming.

GP 2.2: Promote the Common

- The Dartmouth Common should be promoted as an important hub of activity – for example, there should be photographs in HRM promotional documents and put on the map at the ferry terminal.

GP 2.3: Recognize Opportunity Sites, Yet Ensure Appropriate and Best Use

- Recommendations should be made for the best use of underused and vacant land and corridors;

- The Common already contains a number of important public uses. The open space of the Common should not be seen as unused space that can accommodate any new desire for use that comes along. While it is important that existing uses are maintained, a framework is needed that clearly defines where expansion of existing facilities can take place and where open space must be preserved or enhanced; and
- Zoning of the site that allows appropriate uses to be accommodated in appropriate locations is vital.

GP 2.4: Tell the Story of the Common

- There are many threads of the past on this site that make this place an important spot in the history of the region. These threads will be recognized and woven together to tell a story of the place; and
- Important sites include the First Nation's burial site in St. Pauls Cemetery, St. Pauls Cemetery itself, the old Park School site, the old Library and City Hall site, Leighton Dillman Park, the other cemeteries, the Sportsplex, the Urban Wilderness Park, and even the shopping plaza at Wyse Road and Nantucket Drive, and the mine.

4.2.3 Goal 3: Enhance the Experience of the Commonplace

The Dartmouth Common will provide a great place for the people who access it everyday in their daily commutes, exercise, and leisure activities.

Guiding Principles for Enhancing the Experience of the Commonplace

GP 3.1: Provide Spaces for Community Building

- People who live near the Common, in a sense, live next door and may use it everyday. There needs to be a variety of spaces that provide for group activity as well as solitary contemplation. Formal events and informal use of the Common provide opportunities for building relationships within the neighbourhood and strengthening community connections.

GP 3.2: Facilitate Daily Travel

- People move through the Common everyday. Special consideration needs to be given to ensuring that daily travel to work, school and play is safe, enjoyable, and easy;
- Public transportation is a priority as the bus and nearby ferry services provide links to the rest of the system; and
- Active transportation paths will form spines moving through the site to connecting opportunity sites and other important areas.

GP 3.3: Respect and Enhance the Existing Functions of the Area

- The Common already provides for many public functions that are important to the community including open space, schools, recreational facilities and sports fields, transit, active transportation linkages, etc.

GP 3.4: Safeguard Health and Safety

- Safety for everyone is a priority, with special consideration for the needs of children, youth, students, seniors, and those with special mobility needs who travel through the Common;
- Opportunities for healthy and active living on the Common need to be protected;
- Negative effects from cars and buses, including noise and air pollution, need to be mitigated and reduced, especially near the schools and outside recreation areas; and
- Design should promote safety and discourage crime.

4.2.4 Goal 4: Enhance the Experience of the Extraordinary

Opportunities for special events and activities will be improved so that there are more opportunities for the extraordinary every day.

Guiding Principles for Enhancing the Experience of the Everyday Extraordinary

GP 4.1: Provide Spaces for a Variety of Formal and Informal Events

- The Common should be a destination for local and regional events and activities. Facilities of the highest quality should not only be available to local residents but they should attract people from the larger region as well. Certain spaces within the Common need to be large and have infrastructure to support large events. There should be formal places for programmed activities that have significance at the regional level as well as informal spaces for gatherings and happenstance meetings.

GP 4.2: Preserve Views

- Locations with spectacular views will be demarcated on the ground and the views from these locations will be preserved. Promoting these views as part of the overall experience of the Dartmouth Common also has the potential to draw tourists to Dartmouth.

4.2.5 Goal 5: Improve Greenspace and Open Space

The greenspace and open spaces in the Common will not be treated as space leftover in between developments; these will be regarded as defining and central components of the overall Common, which communicate civic pride.

GP 5.1: Respect the Natural Context

- It is important to realize that micro climatic effects affect the usability of the park. Designs for the places should respond to the cold winds sweep up the harbour in the winter, should take advantage of the southern facing slopes, provides some pockets throughout the open space, should also provide shady areas of respite on hot summer days. Topography constitutes both a challenge and an opportunity.

GP 5.2 Balance Human Use and Wildlife Habitat

- The Common is shared between people, plants and wildlife. Areas of highest ecological importance will be maintained. The whole Common is habitat and even within built up sections, areas for plant and wildlife life can be restored in small but significant ways.

GP 5.3 Improve Connectivity between Existing Greenspace and Open Spaces

- Creating connected corridors for movement and mingling within and beyond the Common is important for plants and animals as well as desirable by human users.

GP 5.4 Better Define Greenspace and Open Spaces

- Whether a community vegetable garden, a flower bed, an open hilltop, a path through a cemetery, or a cobblestone walkway, these greenspaces and open areas need to be better defined so they are recognized, respected, and used according to their purpose.

GP 5.5 Plan for Open Space and Greenspace Maintenance

- The Common is a highly valued and unique feature in the city and it needs to be maintained and cared for in a way that reflects its high value. Existing and proposed greenspaces and open spaces need to be well-maintained. Plans for the maintenance of both natural greenspace and “hardscapes”, such as pathways, streets and, pedestrian promenades are necessary to ensure continued and improved functionality and beauty.

5 Master Plan Layout

Figure 5.1: Overall Master Plan, shows the recommended layout of the Common. The recommended layout reflects a multi-layered integration of the goals and guiding principles outlined in the previous chapter.

As a highly visible and highly valued publicly held open space in central Dartmouth, the Common is not a land bank available for the development of public structures. As such, no new buildings should be allowed on the Common. Proposed expansions or relocations of existing facilities must be very carefully sited and designed to the highest standards to compensate for the valuable open space they are replacing. Structures to support open space uses and the development of hardscapes in appropriate locations are acceptable. The locations and character of these hardscapes are described in the following sections.

Currently, the Dartmouth Common is perceived as a disjointed, not easily identifiable area. The Dartmouth Common should be a coherent physical manifestation of the values of the residents of HRM and Dartmouth. While it is appropriate that it accommodates a variety of functions, it should be seen as a complete entity. The conceptual framework to achieve this is outlined in the higher level general plans and concepts described in Section 5.1 to 5.4. More detailed recommended interventions are described in Sections 5.5 to 5.8.

5.1 Precinct Development

Legible precincts highlight the predominately public nature of activities on Common land and create a character defining structure. Figure 5.2: Precincts illustrates the proposed precincts, described below:

- **Public Outdoor Recreational Precinct** is protected from any future building development. Open space, greenspace, and hardscape developments to accommodate appropriate uses are acceptable;
- **Public Indoor Recreational Precinct** is comprised of the Sportsplex and allows for its proposed expansion with a parking garage to accommodate the long-term parking required;
- **Public Transportation Precinct** accommodates the proposed Metro Transit Terminal;
- **Public Education Precinct** is comprised Dartmouth High School and Bicentennial School;



Figure 5.1

Dartmouth Common Master Plan

Master Plan Rendering

Scale: 1:2000



Project: 091200
Date: January 2010

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- Public Outdoor Recreational Precinct
- Public Indoor Recreational Precinct
- Public Transportation Precinct
- Public Education Precinct
- Urban Edge Precinct
- Urban Edge or Public Outdoor Precinct
- Residential Precinct

Figure 5.2

Dartmouth Common Master Plan

Character Precincts

Scale: 1:2000



Project: 09/200
Date: September 2009

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- **Urban Edge Precinct** has a semi-public character and should act as high quality public realm precincts in their own right. Urban Edge Precincts should furthermore contribute streetscape defining characteristics and enhance the overall gateway function of the Dartmouth Common. Most of the Urban Edge Precinct is not publicly owned and within the current policy framework, the layout of the development cannot be dictated by the municipality. However, through negotiation or the imposition of requirements through HRMbyDesign or another similar process, the Municipality can encourage a form of future development where the buildings create an urban edge to the street. It is suggested that this precinct be established on the eastern side of the Nantucket and Wyse road intersection; and
- While the lots in the adjacent **Residential Precinct** are privately held and the ability for the Municipality to alter development on these properties is limited, HRM does have control of the road rights of way and can upgrade planting, sidewalk paving and road surfacing to create continuity with the rest of the Dartmouth Common.

5.2 Open Space Recreation Concept

By far, the recreational character of the Dartmouth Common is its most cherished quality. The Common is valued as a green oasis of open space in the middle of the city. It provides treasured space for many types of indoor and outdoor recreation and promotes community health by making space for physical activity.

The current fragmentation of open spaces needs to be overcome by establishing strong visual and physical connections between various open spaces (see Figure 5.3: Open Space Recreation Plan). Underutilized and neglected open space should be integrated into the overall open space precinct. Based on intensity of use, two open space recreational categories should be established – **passive** recreational open space areas and **active** recreational open space areas.

In **passive** recreational open spaces, focus is upon unstructured play, relaxation, family picnics and similar activities. These areas are within walking or biking distance of most users and accessible at all times; the activities they support often become a daily pastime for neighbourhood residents. Since active pursuits are inappropriate in the cemeteries, yet walking and contemplation in these areas is encouraged, these sites have been incorporated into this category.

Active recreation areas provide space for programmed team and individual sports activities and other high energy pursuits such as basketball, skateboarding, skating, the outdoor gym, etc. Active-oriented parks are intended to serve a large area. As a result, these areas require more support facilities such as restrooms, playgrounds, shelters and parking. The proposed amphitheatre is included in this category as it requires a fair level of infrastructure and programming. When not in programmed use, active recreation areas are available for informal activities.

Both passive recreation / contemplative open spaces and active recreation areas accommodate active transportation linkages.

Waterfront areas from the Macdonald Bridge to “The Spit” are identified, but their development is predicated on land acquisitions and obtaining access across the CN rail line.

5.3 Circulation Plan Concept

Linking the Dartmouth Common into the community is critical to the overall success of the rejuvenation efforts. The HRM Active Transportation Plan lays out general routes and guidelines for the establishment of an active transportation network in Halifax and Dartmouth (see Figure 5.4: Regional Active Transportation Circulation).

The Dartmouth Common Master Plan reiterates the importance of the primary active transportation network as it relates to the Dartmouth Common albeit with slight modifications to the detailed delineation of trails (see Figure 5.5: Circulation Plan). Regional active transportation linkages pass through the site and connect into other regional connections such as the bike path and pedestrian trail over the Macdonald Bridge and the Trans Canada Trail adjacent to Lake Banook. Other major linkages reflect important routes along the waterfront and connections into the northern and western parts of Dartmouth along Windmill Road, Wyse Road and Victoria Road. These connections should conform to multi-use trails standards outlined in the HRM Active Transportation Plan. Where proposed active transportation routes are located in street right of ways, dedicated bike lanes should accommodate cycling.

Local neighbourhood connections are smaller internal trails that provide connections within the Common and to the surrounding neighbourhoods. These trails accommodate people accessing internal features of the site such as the schools or walking from one of the surrounding streets to the Sportsplex.



- Passive Recreation Open Space
- Active Recreation Open Space

Figure 5.3

Dartmouth Common Master Plan

Open Space Recreation Plan

Scale: 1:2000

0 10 20 m

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dartmouth common
master plan

Regional Active
Transportation Connections
(adapted from HRM Active
Transportation Plan)

Dartmouth Common
Master Plan Area

Figure 5.4

Dartmouth Common Master Plan

Regional Active
Transportation Circulation

Scale: 1:5000

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-  Regional Active Transportation Connections (suitable for bikes and pedestrians)
-  Local Neighbourhood Connections (off-road trails suitable for bikes)

Figure 5.5

Dartmouth Common Master Plan

Local Active Transportation Circulation

Scale: 1:2000



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Figure 5.6

Dartmouth Common Master Plan

Facilities Plan

Scale: 1:2000

Project: 09/2000

Date: September 2009

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They still need to accommodate bike traffic, but at levels of use that would be lower and at slower speeds than the active transportation connections.

Smaller walking paths primarily for quiet contemplation or local internal connections remain important. Existing trails will remain and be maintained as required. New trails can be developed as identified in the detailed design of the particular spaces.

An interpretive history walk should be developed. This walk should talk about the layers of history and the different activities that have occurred on the Common.

5.4 Facilities Concept

The quality of public facilities in the Dartmouth Common sets the overall tone for the commitment by various levels of government to a vibrant downtown public use precinct. High quality public investment can also inspire private-sector activity, providing confidence that private developers may need to invest in distressed residential areas or commercial centres that have reached the end of their life cycle.

The following public facilities should be built or upgraded to the highest standards (see Figure 5.6: Facilities Plan):

- Dartmouth Sportsplex extension;
- New Metro Transit Bridge Terminal;
- New full-size sports field;
- New Outdoor gym and skate park;
- New amphitheatre;
- New Dartmouth Outdoor Orientation Centre;
- New fountain in Dillman Park;
- New stairs at MacDonald Bridge;
- Upgrades to Dartmouth High School; and
- Upgrades to Bicentennial Junior High School.

The facility concept of this Master Plan differentiates between two types of building structures proposed for the Dartmouth Common. Many of the structures proposed under the facilities concept of this Master Plan support open space uses such as the outdoor gym, the skate park, the amphitheatre, or the outdoor orientation area. These structures are small in scale and complement the character of their associated open space functions.

Large-scale permanent building structures are proposed for the Central Common area. The purpose of those structures is to:

- ensure and enhance the vitality of existing buildings (Dartmouth Sportsplex, Dartmouth High School, Metro Transit Bridge Terminal); and
- fortify the urban gateway character of the Central Common area (new buildings at the corner of Wyse Road and Nantucket Avenue).

5.4.1 Central Common Facilities

The Central Common Area is bordered by Wyse Road, Nantucket Avenue, Victoria Road and Thistle Street. It is a primary point of connection between Halifax and Dartmouth where the Angus L Macdonald Bridge, multi-modal travel routes, important community institutions, facilities and open space come to a confluence.

Figure 5.7 Central Common Location



Three major public facilities are situated on the Central Common, all of which have imminent plans for improvements, expansions or relocations. The three facilities are:

- Dartmouth High School;
- Metro Transit Bridge Terminal; and
- Dartmouth Sportsplex.

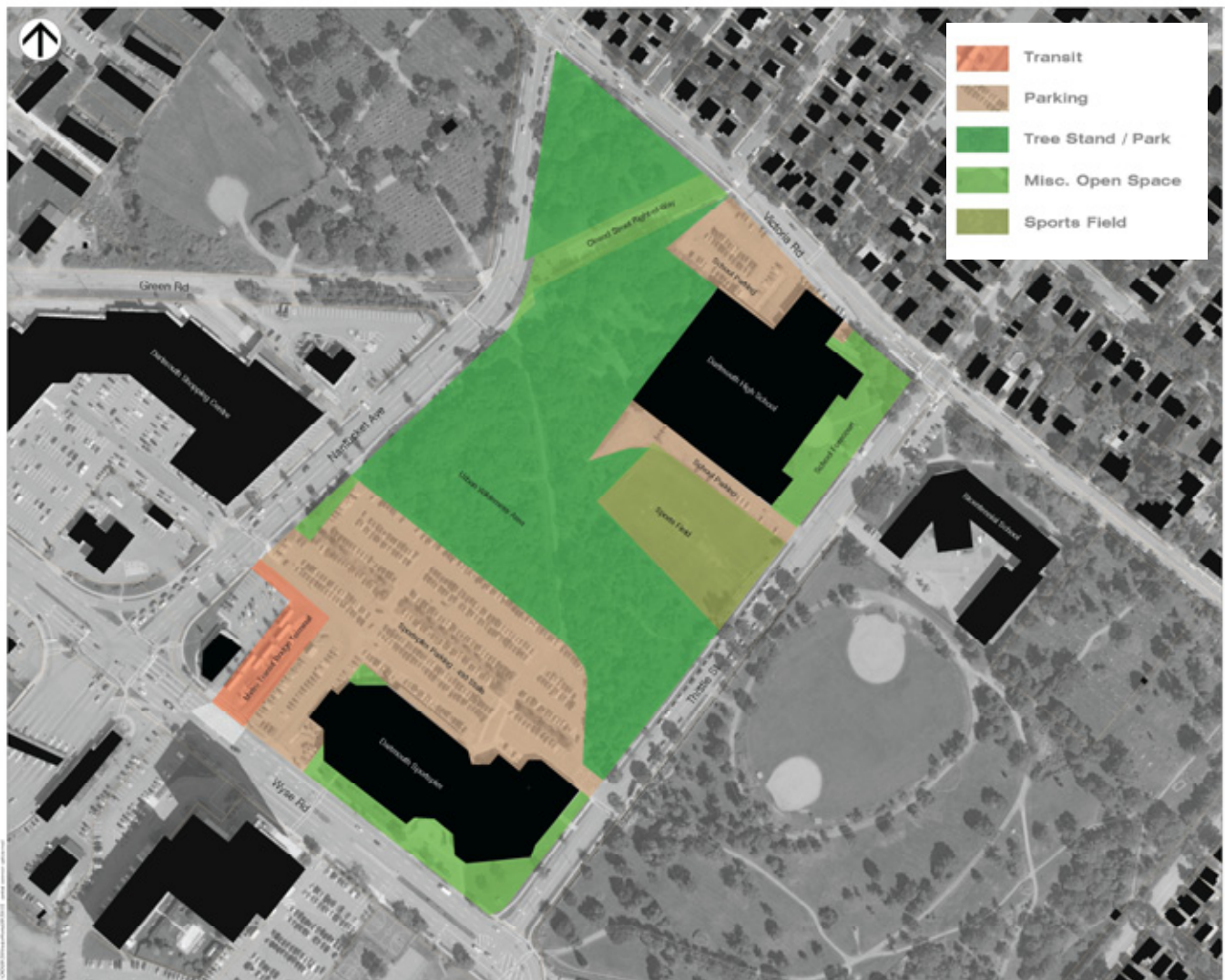


Figure 5.8: Existing Central Common Layout

Current Configuration

The current configuration of the Central Common is depicted in Figure 5.8. The immediate development needs of the three public facilities are described in Section 2.2. In particular, Metro Transit has committed to a tight timeline for the tendering and construction of the new Bridge Terminal which will result in ground being broken on the site by 2010. In the context of current development pressures on the Central Common, the Dartmouth Common Master Plan undertaking has initiated a collaborative effort and mutual dialogue by all three stakeholders, which can be considered as key to unlocking what initially appeared to be situation of conflicting interests.

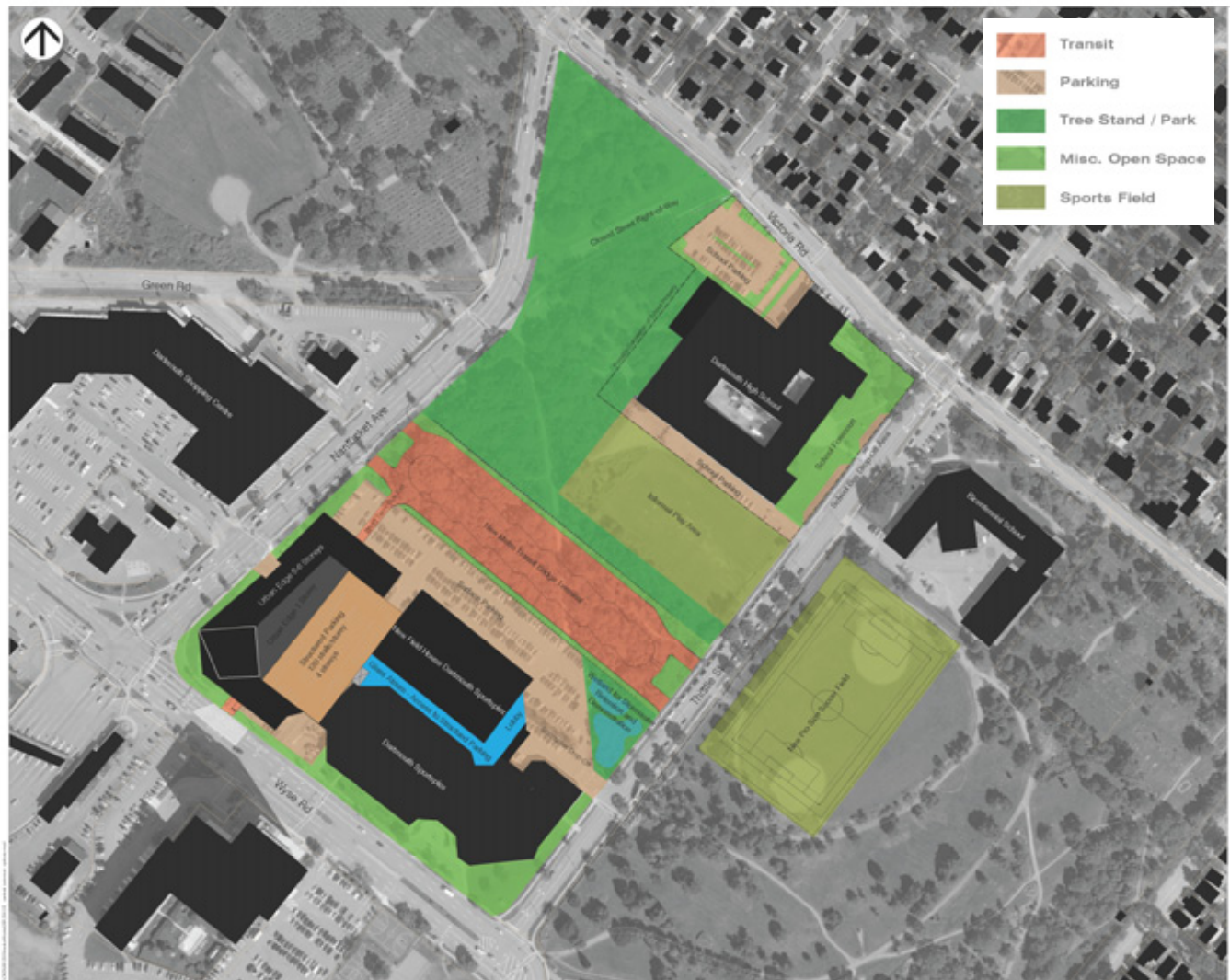
Proposed Configuration

The Dartmouth Common Master Plan integrates the short-term facility developments on the Central Common into the long-term objectives for the entire Dartmouth Common Master Plan area. None of the three public facility

stakeholders (Metro Transit, Dartmouth Sportsplex and Dartmouth High School) can proceed with their developments in a manner that does not take into account the needs and concerns of their immediate neighbours. In the event, that a 'free for all' attitude prevailed, the Central Common would essentially be turned into an asphalt parking lot.

The development scenario put forward by this Master Plan (see Figure 5.9) creates a transit hub that is well connected to all surrounding uses and might encourage adjacent transit-oriented developments to create an attractive urban block at the corner of Nantucket Avenue and Wyse Road. It also seeks to locate the new bus terminal as far as possible from Dartmouth High School to mitigate noise, fume and heat island impacts on the school.

Figure 5.9: Proposed Central Common Layout with Urban Corner





The bus terminal features the same dimensions and general layout as Metro Transit's initial layout of the new Bridge Terminal that was developed prior to this Master Planning exercise. However, in the recommended layout the terminal is rotated on the site thus connecting Nantucket Avenue and Thistle Street, providing Metro Transit with more route flexibility with two distinct entrance and exit points. The bus terminal is cut into slope and mostly invisible from Dartmouth High School. In order to achieve Metro Transit's objective of constructing a 'green' terminal, a triangular shaped parcel of land adjacent to Thistle Street serves as an attractive storm water retention wetland and landscaping feature across from the main entrance to the Dartmouth Sportsplex.

A possible new field house addition to the Dartmouth Sportsplex is added on the north side of the building.¹⁰ The total parking requirement of the Sportsplex is accommodated through a combination of structured parking and surface parking in order to retain as much open space on the Central Common as possible. A four storey parking structure is attached to the western side of the Sportsplex building and is connected to the Sportsplex lobby by a glass atrium. In the full build-out concept, this parking structure is hidden behind a five to six storey building that creates an attractive gateway structure at the corner of Nantucket Avenue and Wyse Road (see Figure 5.9). Alternatively, Figure 5.10 depicts a gateway park at the corner of Wyse Road and Nantucket Avenue. In the event that a gateway park is developed, the new parking structure should feature non-intrusive and attractive facades. If the visual impact of structured parking is deemed too problematic, underground parking should be explored to



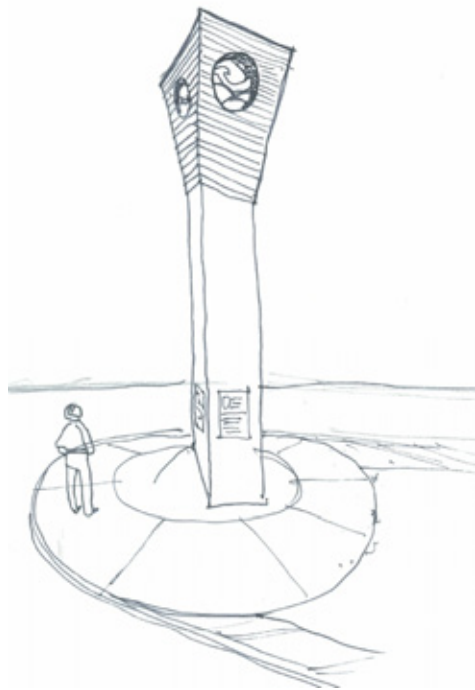
¹⁰ Spatial assumptions in this Master Plan are based on previous expansion plans by the Sportsplex. These preliminary design drawings stipulated a 47,000 square foot multipurpose, multi court field house on the north side of the current building. Based on these preliminary plans, the total parking requirement for the Sportsplex would be 700 parking stalls (500 currently existing plus 200 additional spaces for the operation of the new field house). As of October 2009, a study is being undertaken by HRM to determine feasibility and potential area required for the Sportsplex expansion. The drawings provided here are conceptual only and do not depict the ultimate layout of the potential expansion.

accommodate the Sportsplex parking needs.

Improvements to Dartmouth High School include landscaping and edge definition of the parking lot facing Victoria Road, school bus drop-off areas along Thistle Street and the delineation of the school property by landscaping measures. Alternatively, if an agreement between the School Board and Metro Transit can be reached, school buses could use the new bus terminal for student drop-offs and pick-ups. Possible additions to the school building envelope can be accommodated on the western side of the building. The current sports field is turned into an attractive informal play area. A new pro-size sports field will replace the baseball diamonds in Dillman Park.

During the detailed design stage for the new bus terminal, attention should be placed on an orderly and rational circulation of vehicles and pedestrians between the bus terminal, Sportsplex and high school. Sportsplex surface parking should be well separated from vehicle drop-off and circulation areas related to the bus terminal. Kiss&Ride parking spaces should be located adjacent to the new bus terminal. Furthermore, an attractive drop-off area should be designed at the northern entrance to the Sportsplex.

Figure 5.12: Example of Potential Sculptural Tower to be used as Entry Markers to the Common



By and large, the development of the Central Common should be guided by the principle of all three public lands tenants relying on each other's openness for dialogue and willingness for compromise in order to maintain or enhance the vitality of their operations. In doing so, the future development of the Central Dartmouth Common can proceed in a way that is true to the spirit of the original Dartmouth Common Land Grant of 1788 that put these lands "in special trust" to representatives of the community.

5.4.2 Other Facilities

Figure 5.6 depicts the location of proposed facility capital projects within the Dartmouth Common area. The Park School site on the corner of Wyse Road and Windmill Road is developed into an "Outdoor Gym". As one of the priority sites, it is more fully described below in Section 5.7, the Dartmouth Outdoor Orientation Centre and Amphitheatre across the street are also priority sites and are described in Section 5.7.

To better demarcate the Dartmouth Common, it is recommended that an illuminated sculptural tower structure be designed and built to demarcate important entries or points within the Common. The design could be based on the navigation signal located near the corner of Wyse Road and Windmill Road (see Figure 5.12). The proposed locations for these markers are illustrated on Figure 5.13. To create a more unified presence for the Dartmouth Common in



Figure 5.13: Locations of illuminated sculptural towers

peoples' minds, it is recommended that the fence located around Dillman Park and the south-eastern part of the Common be extended as per Figure 5.14). The style of the extended fencing should match existing.



Figure 5.14: Proposed Dartmouth Common Fence Location

The Facilities Concept also suggests the development of a stairwell up onto the Macdonald bridge pedestrian path. This stairwell located close to the bridge headwall would allow much quicker access from the surrounding neighbourhoods up onto the bridge. The stairwell is located to allow easy access from both sides of the bridge.

Generally, any facility developments on the lands governed under the *Dartmouth Common Act* should be held to higher than average standards in order to comply with the ultimate goal of the original *Act* to “to preserve and protect the Dartmouth Common for the use and enjoyment of present and future inhabitants of the City of Dartmouth”.

5.5 Conceptual Designs of Priority Sites

A number of priority sites have received particular attention in the master plan. The locations of these sites are shown on Figure 5.15. The sections below provide brief point form descriptions of each identified priority site.

Figure 5.15: Priority Sites



5.5.1 St. Pauls Cemetery/Waterfront Park



Figure 5.16: St. Pauls Cemetery/Waterfront Park Area

Action	Guiding Principle Addressed
➤ The HRM parking lots are changed into parkland.	2.3
➤ A multi-use trail link is provided from Alderney Landing. The trail should run through existing HRM parking lots east of the CN Rail building, behind the CN building (access to be negotiated with CN), through the new parklands (the converted HRM parking lots), through the cemetery up to the Alderney Drive/Wyse Road intersection.	3.2
➤ The western part of the open space should be respectful of the existing St. Pauls Cemetery and First Nation's burial mound.	2.4, 3.3,
➤ The open space should take advantage of the views of the waterfront and the multi-use trail that runs through it.	4.2, 3.2, 5.4
➤ The open space should also reflect a connection across the street to Leighton Dillman Park.	1.2, 1.3, 5.3
➤ The buildings at the corner of Windmill Road and Geary Street that are owned by the Municipality should be removed to provide a continuous greenspace / open space experience.	2.3
➤ Geary Street should be closed and Shore Road cul-de-sac-ed to allow for the development of a continuous open space through the area.	1.4, 2.3

Access to the cemetery and the sewage treatment pumping station can be provided from Shore Road.

- Pedestrian access and public connections through any future residential development on the waterfront property next to the HRM parking lot should be accommodated.

Figure 5.18: Former City Hall/Museum Site Area



5.5.2 Former City Hall/Museum Site

Figure 5.17: Potential Design of Outdoor Orientation Pavilion



Action	Guiding Principle Addressed
➤ This is a highly visible site and its development should reflect its importance in the Dartmouth Common and the area as a whole.	2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 1.3
➤ The area closest to Wyse Road should become an "outdoor orientation centre"; the area behind, taking advantage of the natural topography, becomes an outdoor amphitheatre that functions as an independent small venue for community performances and cultural events.	2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 1.3
➤ The outdoor orientation centre should consist of a landmark structure that provides maps and information on outdoor facilities throughout Dartmouth and how the Common is connected to all these locations (see Figures 5.17). The structure should provide shelter from the weather. It should be located to take advantage of views down to the harbour. Some parking should be provided. Well developed trails should extend from the structure into the Dartmouth Common and act as connections to the regional trail network. The orientation centre could also provide facilities for the outdoor amphitheatre, such as entrance control during paid events, toilet facilities, sound and lighting booth, a major electrical point, etc.	2.2, 1.2, 1.3, 4.2

5.5.3 The Outdoor Gym



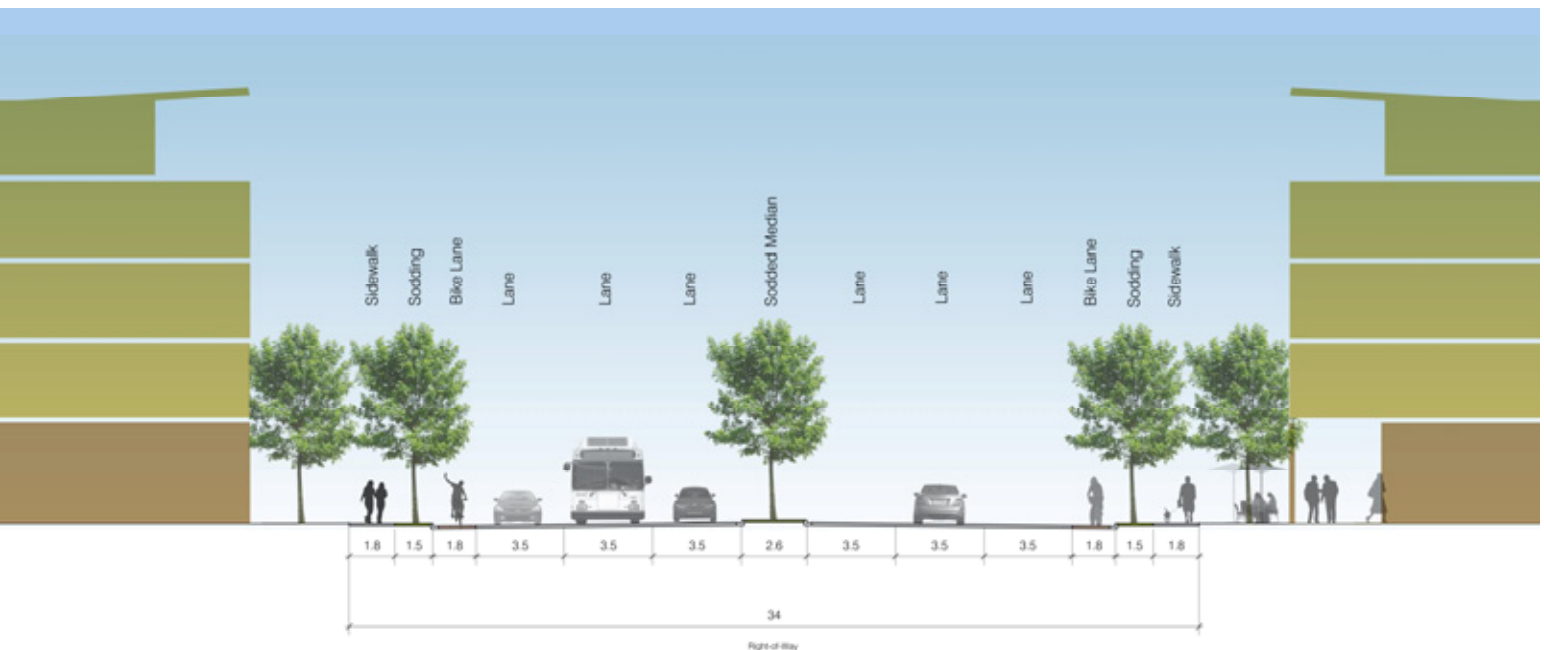
Figure 5.19: The Outdoor Gym Area

Action	Guiding Principle Addressed
➤ The former Park School site could be used as an area of focus for outdoor activities including an outdoor rink, a skateboard park, expanded basketball courts, and an outdoor gym (existing), see Figure 5.19.	2.3, 2.1, 4.1
➤ This use reflects its highly visible location next to the Sportsplex and builds upon the existing activities (the ball courts and the recently installed outdoor gym equipment).	2.3
➤ The outdoor rink and skateboard park could be integrated, whereby a permanent shaped concrete skateboarding area could be placed on the slope adjacent to the flat area of the rink. In the summer, when the rink is not operating, temporary skateboarding equipment could be placed on the concrete surface of the rink area. The skateboard area could be designed in such a way that in the winter it can operate as a seating area/shelter area from the wind that could come up from the harbour.	2.3

5.5.4 Wyse Road/Alderney Drive Right of Way

Action	Guiding Principle Addressed
➤ Improved boulevard and sidewalk tree planting should be installed through this right of way.	1.5
➤ Boulevard areas that are demarcated by lines painted on the pavement should be made into permanent boulevards with raised curbs and planting.	1.5 3.2, 1.1, 1.2
➤ Create a raised boulevard / pedestrian refuge within the painted area at Thistle Street to improve pedestrian safety.	3.2, 1.2
➤ The redesign of the right of ways through this area must accommodate active transportation cycling as well as improved pedestrian connections to the bridge.	3.2
➤ Each end of this priority site should contain a gateway feature indicating to people that they are entering the Dartmouth Common.	1.3, 1.1

Figure 5.20: Proposed Section of Wyse Road



5.5.5 Thistle Street Right of Way



Figure 5.21: Thistle Street Right of Way

Action	Guiding Principle Addressed
<p>➤ As suggested in the 1989 Dartmouth Common Enhancement Plan, this road should be closed from Victoria Road to the new Metro Transit Terminal. This will allow for better integration of the Common as a continuous open space and will allow better pedestrian linkages to be created. It will also replace some of the open space lost as a result of the development of the new Transit Terminal.</p> <p>While a full traffic study is required, preliminary investigations suggest that most of the traffic using Thistle Street between Wyse Road and Victoria Road, is heading out along Prince Albert Drive or Portland Street. On this basis, much of that traffic could use Nantucket Avenue/Victoria Road, Alderney Drive, or Ochterloney Street to access these routes. It is anticipated that there would be a moderate increase in traffic along Victoria Road from Nantucket to Thistle and additional left turns will occur from Victoria onto Nantucket down to the bridge. Alderney Drive as a four lane dual carriageway has capacity for additional vehicles. Ochterloney does not appear to have capacity.</p> <p>Closure of the street will reduce casual observation of the area. In order to improve safety, especially at night time, design of the walkway connection from the Sportsplex and proposed bus terminal should allow clear lines of sight, provide additional lighting, allow for an extra wide pathway, utilize plantings that do not obscure areas, and allow observation into the area from Victoria Road and the bus terminal/Sportsplex.</p> <p>If Thistle Street is not closed, parking should be removed from both sides of the road to narrow the driving surface and allow the park to have precedence over the road. The addition of two additional rows of street tree planting (see Figure 5.22) will help to create the message that the road is passing through an open space and make the road feel more like a parkway rather than a high speed access route.</p>	1.1, 1.2, 3.4, 5.1, 5.3, 5.4
<p>➤ Part of the right of way can be used to provide parking that will allow closure of the unattractive parking lot located on the northern corner of the Dartmouth High School. This new parking can also be shared with the new sports field during off-peak times.</p>	1.1, 2.3
<p>➤ Access to the Sportsplex parking lot and the new Transit Terminal is provided along the right of way. The development of a buses-only lane from the transit Terminal to the corner of Thistle Street and Wyse Road with a signalized intersection with advance lights for buses is suggested.</p>	3.2
<p>➤ If the closure of Thistle Street is not acceptable, then as a minimum the road should be reduced to one lane each way and designed as more of a parkway.</p>	1.4, 3.2

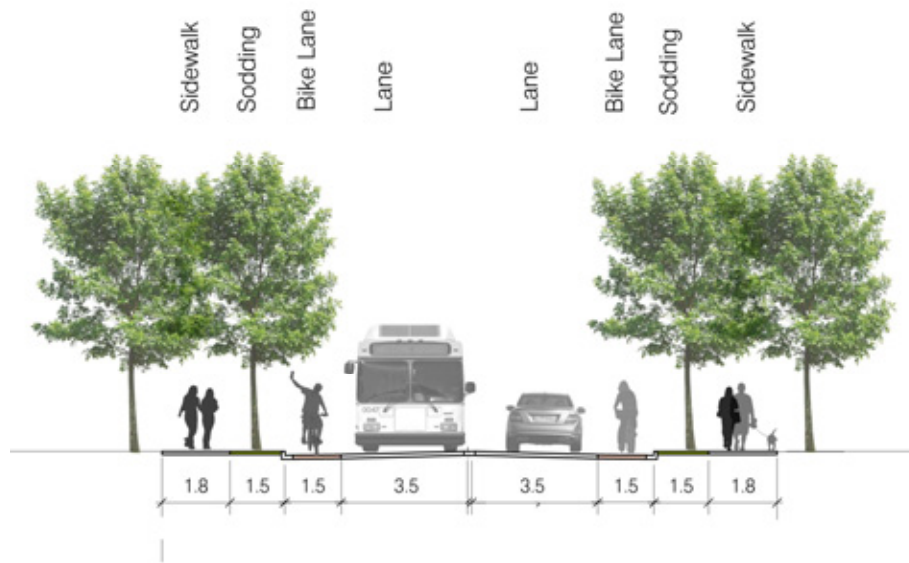
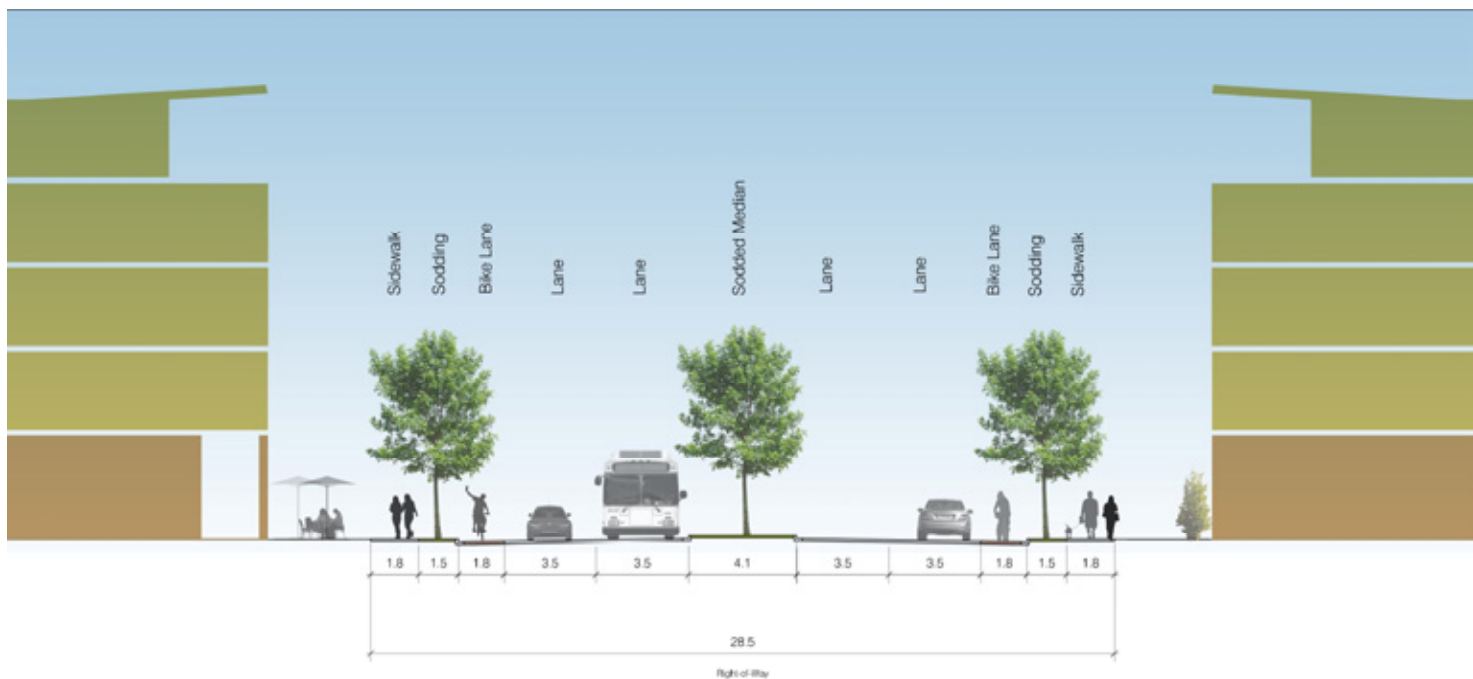


Figure 5.22: Thistle Street Cross Section

5.5.6 Nantucket Avenue Right-of-Way

Figure 5.23: Cross Section of Potential Urban Corridor along Southern End of Nantucket Avenue



Action

- As suggested in the 1989 Dartmouth Common Enhancement Plan, this is an important “promenade” for both vehicles and pedestrians. The visual condition of the road should be improved.

Guiding Principle Addressed

1.1, 1.2, 1.5, 3.2

Action	Guiding Principle Addressed
➤ The pedestrian experience along this right of way should be improved. As a minimum, pedestrian refuge islands should be provided at the crosswalks. Even better would be a shifting of a portion of the road eastwards to allow the development of a fully treed boulevard down the centre of the road.	3.2, 1.1, 1.2
➤ If the McDonald's Restaurant site is acquired, an improved pedestrian crosswalk could be developed and with the new location of the Transit Terminal, the two existing crosswalks could be consolidated into one.	3.2, 2.3, 1.2, 5.3, 5.4
➤ Trees should be planted along both sides of the road as well with a break at the bend near to top of the hill to preserve the view down the cutline though the urban wilderness to the harbour.	1.4, 4.2, 1.1, 5.2
➤ The connection should be re-established to the harbour.	1.2, 5.3
➤ Active transportation links should be provided in this right-of-way.	3.2



5.5.7 The Urban Wilderness / Nantucket Grove

Action	Guiding Principle Addressed
➤ As an important gateway into the Dartmouth Common, the area at the corner of Nantucket Avenue and Victoria Road should be developed to reflect the history of the area as noted with the name of Nantucket Avenue, commemorating the Nantucket Whalers who first settled the area.	1.1, 1.3
➤ A commemorative sculpture with some historical interpretive information integrated with an entrance marker would be appropriate.	1.1, 1.3, 1.5, 2.4
➤ This Urban Wilderness Park area should be expanded to capture the forested triangle next to Nantucket Avenue and Victoria Road. Remove old asphalt of southern fork of the Victoria Road / Nantucket Avenue intersection.	3.3, 2.3, 5.3

5.5.8 Green Road Trail / Urban Park

Figure 5.26: Green Road Trail (Interim Development)



Figure 5.27: Green Road Urban Park (Ultimate Development)



Action	Guiding Principle Addressed
➤ As a highly active connection between the residential areas to the west and the two schools, this route should be upgraded.	1.2, 3.2
➤ Improved tree planting and trail surfacing should be installed.	3.3
➤ The edge of the area where it touches the cemetery needs to provide a respectful boundary.	3.3
➤ In the longer term, the area should be developed as an urban plaza connecting the residential areas to the west to Nantucket Avenue, the bus terminal, the schools and the eastern parts of the Common.	1.2, 2.1, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 5.3
➤ This area which functions as a local park serving the adjacent residents is provided with facilities to support that use.	2.1, 2.3, 3.1, 3.3, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5
➤ Facilities should include basketball courts, a children's play structure, benches, lighting, formal paths connecting the residences to the Green Road trail, an improved trail connection from Victoria Road to Green Road. A portion of the large greenspace is preserved for community events and informal games.	1.2, 2.1, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5
➤ The existing, currently under-utilized ball field will be retired.	2.3

5.5.9 The Bridge Welcoming Feature

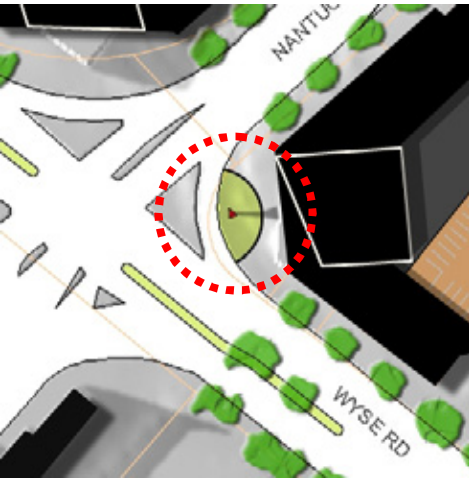


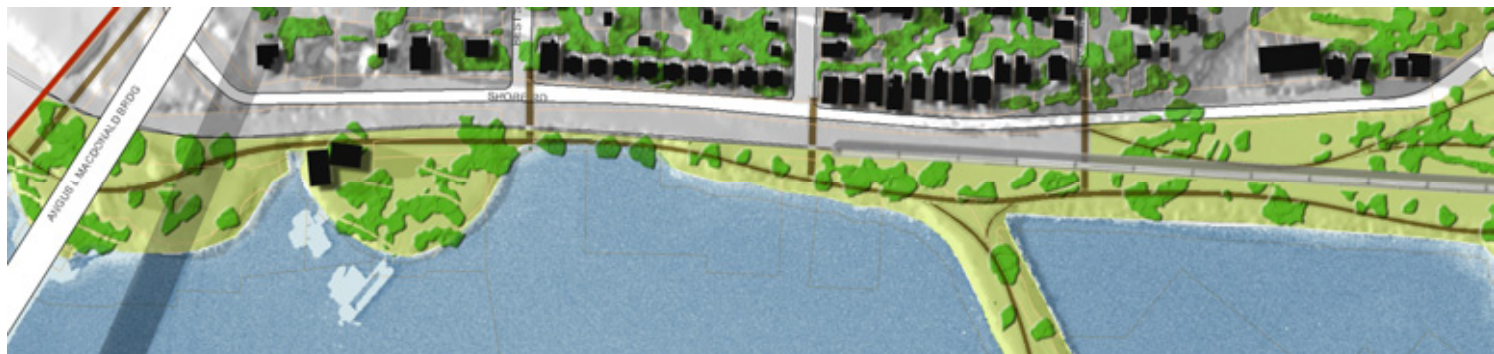
Figure 5.28: The Bridge Welcoming Feature

Action	Guiding Principle Addressed
➤ It is important to appropriately design a welcoming experience at the corner of Wyse Road and Nantucket Avenue, which is the first location people see when crossing over the bridge into Dartmouth.	1.1, 1.3, 2.4
➤ This feature/pocket park needs to work on two scales: one that creates a landmark for drivers and another that provides welcome and orientation for pedestrians and cyclists.	1.1, 1.3, 3.3, 1.4
➤ The feature/pocket park needs to be well connected with sidewalks, active transportation links, and multi-use trails to other facilities within the Dartmouth Common and the area as a whole.	1.2, 3.2
➤ This is also an appropriate location for a sculptural tower.	1.5, 1.1, 1.3

5.5.10 Bridgehead Park

Action	Guiding Principle Addressed
➤ As suggested in the 1989 Dartmouth Common Enhancement Plan, the development of a park underneath the bridge would improve connections to the waterfront in the area. This park could provide access to the potential waterfront trail through the area. Existing grades and structures in the area could also be advantageous allowing access over the railway tracks depending on negotiations with the Canadian National Railway.	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.3, 3.1, 4.2, 5.3

Figure 5.29: Bridgehead and Waterfront Park



5.5.11 Leighton Dillman Park

Action	Guiding Principle Addressed
➤ Based on its unique landscape qualities, Dillman Park should be considered a formal public garden.	3.3, 3.1, 5.4
➤ Park area is left more or less as is with the exception of the redevelopment of the fountain at the gate along Alderney Drive and a full-size sports field to replace the ball diamonds.	2.4, 3.3, 5.4
➤ Pathways and trails through the park are upgraded. One of the trails up the hill from Alderney Manor to the Sportsplex is hard surfaced and cleared in winter to allow all weather universal access.	3.3, 3.2, 1.2, 5.5
➤ Additional maintenance is provided to ensure that the hard and soft landscapes are in top condition.	3.3, 5.5

Figure 5.30: Leighton Dillman Park



5.5.12 The Cemeteries

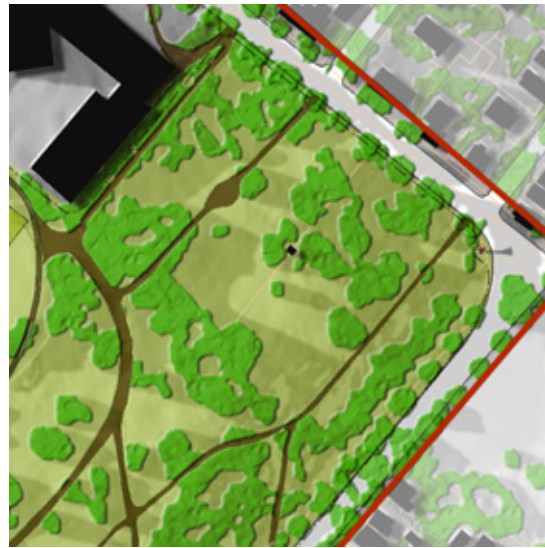


Figure 5.31: Cemeteries on the Commons

Action	Guiding Principle Addressed
➤ As per the 1989 Enhancement Plan, expansion of the cemeteries should be prohibited.	3.3, 2.3
➤ Additional maintenance is provided to ensure that the hard and soft landscapes are in top condition.	3.3, 5.5
➤ Fencing around the cemetery should match the fencing around the existing fence along Dillman Park on Alderney Drive. The fence along the Green Road Trail could be a lower fence styled on the taller fence as found in the Dillman Park area	1.1, 1.4, 3.3, 5.4

5.6 Opportunities for Land Acquisition

Figure 5.32 illustrates the properties suggested for repatriation into the Dartmouth Common through an active land acquisition program by HRM. These lands constitute parcels that have a strategic importance for the improved experience of the Dartmouth Common by improving safety, creating important linkages to other open space lands and trails, and completing open space networks in the downtown Dartmouth area and along the waterfront.

Acquisition of PID 40718140 (the McDonald's Restaurant site) will allow significant improvements to pedestrian access and safety along Nantucket Avenue. By allowing a direct highly convenient connection from the bus terminal and a good connection for students walking from the neighbourhoods to the north to Dartmouth High and Bicentennial School, it would be possible to



Figure 5.32: Opportunities for Land Acquisition

consolidate the existing crosswalks into one location with improved sight lines. In addition, the acquisition of this property would increase open space frontage along Nantucket Avenue, an important aspect of improving the recognition of the Dartmouth Common as a place.

Acquisition of PID 00082800 and 00082792 at the corner of Nantucket Avenue and Wyse Road (the Scotia Bank property) will allow HRM to control the development of this very important corner in the urban fabric of the area. How the corner is developed is dependent on whether the expansion of the Sportsplex occurs or not. If the Sportsplex expands and a parking structure is required, it is recommended that the parking structure be placed on the northern end of the Sportsplex allowing the development of an urban face on this corner to screen the parking structure. Location of the parking structure in any other

position will make it harder to screen and will create a negative visual impact on the surrounding open space. If the Sportsplex does not expand, HRM could develop this corner as an urban park that provides orientation and connection to other features in the Dartmouth Common or as an urban edge development node as described above.

PID 00339648, which is owned by the Canadian National Railway Company (CN), is suggested for acquisition to improve waterfront access and provide a continuous waterfront trail in the area. The acquisition of this parcel is predicated on the removal of the rail line from the area. This is a long-term, strategic acquisition that supports that Harbour Master Plan; however, it is predicated on developments such as a new rail switching yard or the closure of the Autoport, which is one of the prime users of the rail line, which are outside the scope of this project. Negotiations between HRM and CN should continue on a regular basis to allow the development of a trail through the area that allows linkage to HRM properties along the waterfront in front of Shore Road.

The acquisition of PID 00083063, the Fader Property, supports the development of a continuous waterfront trail along the waterfront. This is also a longer term strategic acquisition that is dependent on the relocation of the existing business on the property.

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6 Enhanced Guidelines

The following guidelines are provided to direct future detailed designs, development, use, programming, and maintenance of the Dartmouth Common.

6.1 Urban Design and Landscape Guidelines

The intent of the urban design guidelines is to ensure that high design standards are maintained in building extensions on lands governed under the *Dartmouth Common Act* and in developments adjacent to those lands which are located within the traditional boundary of the original land grant. Furthermore, these guidelines are intended to aid developers, designers and planners in making architectural decisions for projects on the Dartmouth Common.

The landscape design guidelines are intended to create public realm environments that are functional, purposeful, safe, and aesthetically pleasing and that contribute to the design continuity of the overall area of the Dartmouth Common. By and large, the intent is to protect and enhance the Dartmouth Common's authentic sense of place.

6.1.1 Landscape Character

Wilderness Area

- Manage current tree population, including significant trees, to ensure their health and long life;
- Create sightlines across the wilderness area by removing large shrubs and low branching small trees;
- Establish mature tree stands over time;
- Establish legible and safe pathways connecting school, bus terminal and major circulation routes; and
- Consider lighting strategic pathways.

Leighton Dillman Park

- Conserve existing landscape characteristics;
- Retain and replant specimen trees, where appropriate, following the original planting plan of the park;
- Extend fence to include park section at Wyse Road and Windmill Road intersection;
- Improve entry gateway at Dillman Park parking lot with accentuated planting;

- Remove low hanging branches where they obstruct important views, particularly of the harbour; and
- Plan screen planting to protect seating areas exposed to wind.

New Passive Recreational Open Spaces

- Create comfortable seating areas and install new seats, bins and drinking fountains where people gather;
- Keep sightlines towards the harbour clear of obstruction by selecting tree species that are tall growing, with trunks clear of low growing branches;
- Add new trees to reinforce the park composition, including completing the park edge with ornamental trees and accenting the park entries; and
- Reinforce passive recreation areas with planting groups to create intimate spaces and to provide visual cues to visitors that this is not an area for organized sports.

Street and Intersections

- Emphasize streets as the unifying element of the Dartmouth Common;
- Enhance image routes, which provide notable views, and street connections as a way to repatriate streets and roads back into the Dartmouth Common, i.e., Wyse Road, Nantucket Avenue, Victoria Road and Thistle Street;
- Plant all streets surrounding the Dartmouth Common with street trees. Where possible trees should also be planted on grassed medians;
- Use landscaping to highlight building entries and pedestrian connections to the street where building entries front onto the street;
- Accentuate key intersections at public streets with additional landscaping and coordinate landscaping with the architectural treatment of corner sites;
- Select plant species that are non-invasive and tolerant of urban conditions; and
- Complement planted areas with hard landscaping elements such as special pavements (colour, texture, pattern, etc.), architectural features (trellises, screen walls, planters, etc.), and site furniture.

6.1.2 Site Amenities

Guidelines for site amenities include:

- Progressively upgrade all entries to the open space recreation areas;
- Upgrade crossing points at adjacent roadways and pedestrian linkages to the Common;
- Develop a standard palette of high quality site furnishing to be used throughout the Common;
- Upgrade and maintain lighting in the Common;
- Provide new public toilets at proposed sports field and outdoor orientation pavilion;

- Progressively upgrade all park amenities in the Common, with particular attention to design and location;
- Install more seating, as a priority, in locations with harbour views;
- Ensure good design principles drive the development and implementation of improved signage within the Common;
- Develop an interpretative plan for the Common, including information about its history, and tree and wildlife species; and
- Develop new amphitheatre bowl.

6.2 Architectural Guidelines

Architectural guidelines for the Dartmouth Common area illustrate how, through consideration of aesthetic and functional requirements, new buildings can be designed to address human scale and contribute to an active pedestrian environment. In addition to enhancing the visual prominence of buildings, the guidelines recommend reducing the prominence of parking areas by locating them at the rear of buildings or effectively screening them from adjacent pedestrian areas and public streets. The guidelines discuss the creation of a convenient, accessible and linked pedestrian realm. This should be a barrier-free network of sidewalks and walkways that clearly links precincts to each other and to surrounding areas.

Dartmouth Shopping Centre and Future Commercial Buildings along Wyse and Nantucket

The Dartmouth Shopping Centre presents a significant opportunity to intensify the Wyse Road/Nantucket Avenue intersection while integrating the surrounding neighbourhoods. There is support under the HRM Regional Plan and HRM-by-Design for intensifying and revitalizing urban areas like the Dartmouth Shopping Centre and Wyse Road / Nantucket area. Guidelines for the redevelopment of the Dartmouth Shopping Centre and other future commercial/mixed use buildings around the Wyse Road and Nantucket Avenue intersection include:

- Create distinctive building entries that highlight façades and enhance the key intersection of Wyse and Nantucket;
- Accentuate corner sites by designing buildings that relate to both street fronts and provide pedestrian access to the buildings from the corners;
- Ensure visibility into buildings from ground level facades facing public streets and the pedestrian realm;
- Ensure that large blank, unarticulated walls do not face the street and pedestrian realm. Blank walls include both windowless walls and walls with reflective or highly tinted glass facades;
- Ensure minimum ground level (floor-to-ceiling) heights are 4 metres (13 feet);

- Ensure the highest level of architectural detailing on facades facing public streets and the pedestrian realm;
- Locate parking areas to the rear, in underground or in concealed above-grade structures;
- Ensure development is visually and physically well-connected to the surrounding neighbourhoods and districts through cross-streets, mid-block connections and appealing buildings or landmarks at visibly strategic locations;
- Define important intersections and gateways clearly with well designed buildings that give prominence to their corners, the butting-out of sidewalks and public art;
- Ensure that building heights and massing transition down to adjacent low-rise neighbourhoods;
- Allow generally minimum 4 storey and maximum 6 storey heights along Wyse Road and adjacent to low-rise residential areas.
- Allow for taller buildings to be accommodated in appropriate locations where adequate transitions in height to adjacent low-rise residential uses can be achieved (particularly at the Wyse/Nantucket intersection);
- Development on the Wyse Road / Nantucket Avenue corner should follow similar design guidelines for downtown Halifax as set out in HRMbyDesign. that recommend specific minimums and maximum heights to ensure that massing, material and architectural articulation reinforce a 'base', 'body' and 'top' to a building creating an appropriate urban face; and
- Encourage high quality contemporary designs and pay attention to proportions and materials where adjacent to existing residential house-forms.

Dartmouth Sportsplex Extension

The extension to the Dartmouth Sportsplex should unfold in a way that makes it easily accessible to all residents (in particular transit users and students of the neighboring schools), accommodates parking in a way that does not result in paving over the entire Central Common, and creates above ground (or possibly even underground) parking structures¹¹ that have non-intrusive and attractive facades.

Guidelines for the extension of the Dartmouth Sportsplex include:

- Ensure high-quality facade on northern side of the building facing the new Metro Transit Terminal to create a pedestrian-friendly environment on the bus terminal platform;

¹¹ A parking structure on the lands between the current Sportsplex building and the Scotiabank property would be in accordance with the 1994 amendment to the Dartmouth Common Act. For any other location, a further amendment to the Dartmouth Common Act would be required.

- Ensure an easily legible, accentuated main entrance to the lobby on the northern side of the building that is easily accessible from the new bus terminal platform and parking areas; and
- Guarantee a high-quality, non-intrusive façade screening of new above ground parking structure.

New Metro Transit Bridge Terminal

The new bus terminal should be built in a way that relates positively to its neighbours, is enjoyed by all residents (and not only those transferring buses), is built in a way that consumes the least amount of land, fosters future transit oriented development and gateway buildings at the corner of Nantucket Avenue and Wyse Road, enhances the functionality of all other public lands tenants, and is built with highest design standards.

Guidelines for the New Metro Transit Terminal include:

- Design a high quality transparent terminal building that contributes to a pleasant experience for bus riders waiting on that platform;
- Design an inspiring, light-weight, translucent canopy spanning over the entire length of the platform; and
- Ensure that the platform can accommodate pedestrian circulation between Thistle Street and Nantucket Avenue.

6.3 Safety Guidelines

Responsible landscape design provides consideration for health, safety and crime prevention, especially for public areas, such as the proposed precincts identified within the Dartmouth Common. Whether the facilities are public, like a walking trail, or private, such as a business parking lot, consideration must be given to safe creating places that discourage crime. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is a design strategy tool that should be included in the design of any public area on the Dartmouth Common lands. Appendix C provides an overview of the key elements of the CPTED approach.

The CPTED Safety Audit conducted in 2003 of the Urban Wilderness Park (discussed in Section 3.3.3) provided six recommendations for the area including not calling it a 'wilderness' park which implies little to no maintenance is needed. Other recommendations included continued maintenance of the understory vegetation; the addition of lighting in and around the park; clear, readable signs posted at entrances and exits advertising the hours that the Park is open; fencing the perimeter of the Park to better control security and formalize entrances and exits; and that pathways be widened and formalized to create a sense of place and security. Since the 2003 Site Audit, a vegetation

management program has been implemented, with some success in providing opportunity for natural surveillance, although a fence has not been erected around the Park.

The lessons learned from the Urban Wilderness Park can be extrapolated to the Dartmouth Sportsplex parking lot, which also has incidents of vandalism. How pedestrians and vehicles move through the space, particularly with the new proposed Metro Transit configuration and proposed expansion of the Sportsplex should be considered during the design of the Metro Transit facility. It is not enough for Metro Transit to only address how they might secure their facility. Being a part of the Common, Metro Transit has a responsibility to ensure that through the design of their facility they do not displace existing problems nor create new ones for the other tenants in the area.

Guidelines for site safety include:

- Provide clear, controlled access to the space;
- Provide opportunity for surveillance;
- Identify and design for gathering points and places of refuge; and
- Design lighting that provides clear, safe access throughout the site.

6.4 Public Art Guidelines

HRM adopted its first Public Art Policy in 2008 as a commitment to providing for more and diverse works of art in the public realm. The policy places priority on siting and staging public art at strategic areas within the HRM including the Halifax and Dartmouth waterfront, major parks and public places, regional streetscapes and HRM-owned community facilities. The Dartmouth Common, therefore, is well-positioned for future public art investment. The HRM identifies four categories of public art: Art Works of Remembrance, Expressive Artworks, Functional Artworks, and Community Artworks (see the HRM Public Art Policy, July 25, 2008 for details).

Guidelines for public art in the Common include:

- Any new or renovated publically accessible facilities should allocate a minimum of 1% of the total construction costs toward the installation of public art including the new transit facility;
- Artists working on a public art installation be should involved as early as possible in the architectural/engineering design process; and
- Consideration should be given for the installation of expressive and extraordinary artworks at high profile sites to reflect the cultural significance and importance of the Dartmouth Common locally and regionally.

Implementing Action

- Complete a public art site plan to determine opportunities and potential locations for installing public art works. Part of the public art site plan should include the development of gateway entry/exit features discussed in the Master Plan Layout (Chapter 5). While they can be different pieces, they should have a common language that allows them to act as recognizable markers denoting the edge of the Common.

6.5 Programming Guidelines

Detailed programming and events plans are beyond the scope of this Master Plan; however, establishing guidelines for how future programming can help achieve the community's vision for how the Common will be used by Dartmouth residents, HRM citizens and visitors. More work will be required to establish detailed programming guidelines and development initiatives through future phases of planning for the Dartmouth Common.

Guidelines for programming and special use include:

- Strike a balance between everyday informal use and enjoyment of the Common with support for special events and a diversity of programmed activities;
- Enhance public use and visitation on the Common by supporting events and activities that offer new and traditional experiences for people of all ages and all abilities within the Dartmouth Community and all of HRM;
- Raise the profile of the Dartmouth Common as a historically and culturally significant place through events and programs that celebrate community, culture and history;
- Enhance connections and shared use between municipal, school, and community facilities on the Common through joint public use and programming opportunities;
- Build on the role of Downtown Dartmouth as a destination and events venue by supporting the Alderney Landing Cultural and Convention Centre and Dartmouth Waterfront through complementary infrastructure and events programming;
- Support a diversity of public activities and use of the Common by encouraging a range of active and passive recreation experiences which are consistent with the *Dartmouth Common Act* and vision of this Master Plan;
- Locate programmed events on the Dartmouth Common in accordance with defined precincts to ensure the activity is consistent with the character and capacity of the space and the surrounding neighbourhood;

- Minimize conflicts between regular park users and events by maintaining a schedule and operational guidelines that give priority to public access and unobstructed use;
- Support enhanced use (and user experience) by refurbishing and developing infrastructure and amenities at high traffic sites, gateway areas and nodes which enhance both everyday use and activities and special events and activities;
- Encourage the integration of city, school and community facilities including joint use agreements for programming sports fields, indoor facilities and open spaces; and
- Encourage non-profit, community and cultural events and restrict those of a primarily commercial nature (the Dartmouth Sportsplex indoor facilities are an exception).

Implementing Actions

- Develop detailed programming and events guidelines for the Dartmouth Common within two years from the adoption of this Plan;
- Should the school facilities on the Common be surplussed to the Municipality in future, a public consultation process will be initiated to seek public input into future use;
- The future decommissioning, conversion or development of sports fields on the Common will be determined by the policy directions under HRM's Community Facility Master Plan and guided by the Dartmouth Common Master Plan objectives and vision;
- The feasibility of developing a regulation size sports field on the Dartmouth Common will be determined in conjunction with HRSB and the Province and guided by the design concepts in this master plan;
- HRM will work with the HRSB to develop a model of shared use for Dartmouth High School and Bicentennial School to improve community access and programming to indoor and outdoor facilities; and
- HRM, HRSB and Dartmouth Sportsplex will enter into a joint-use agreement to enhance community access and programming opportunities including community access gyms, arts and culture spaces and opportunities to achieve these objectives through the development of a fieldhouse addition to the Dartmouth Sportsplex.

7 Implementation Strategy

7.1 Establishing Priorities

The process necessary to implement the Dartmouth Common Master Plan is a strategic one that will be undertaken over a number of years as the costs associated with implementing the plan are significant. Since the money available from HRM for such capital improvements is limited, other sources of funding will be required. Therefore, careful planning is required to ensure improvements are strategic, that all opportunities for funding are sought, and that, when possible, existing facilities are maximized until they are no longer viable.

For purpose of clarity the implementation strategy is divided into **park** related and **road** related **items**. The phasing strategy is divided into four stages:

- Ongoing projects
- Short term project: 1 to 3 years
- Mid-term projects: 4 to 6 years
- Long-term projects: 7 years and beyond

Responsible HRM departments and divisions are identified in tables 7.1.

**Table 7.1: Dartmouth Common Master Plan Implementation Strategy
Park Related Items**

RECOMMENDATION		PHASE	RESPONSIBILITY	CAPITAL COST
General Items				\$660,000
R1	Design sculpture towers / entry markers as per master plan section 5.6.2	S	IAM/RPP/FD	\$25,000
R2	Expand fencing around park as per master plan figure 5.14	O	IAM/RPP/FD	\$385,000
R3	Develop a standard palette of high quality site furnishing to be used throughout the Common	S	IAM/RPP/FD	\$10,000
R4	Develop upgrading/replacement plan and maintenance schedule for all site furnishings	S	TPW/MO	\$10,000
R5	Enhance maintenance at appropriate levels of trails	O	TPW/MO	\$50,000 per annum*
R6	Design an interpretive history walk through the Common	M	IAM/RPP, CD/PS	\$30,000
R7	Manufacture and install panels for the interpretive history walk through the Common	M	IAM/RPP/FD	\$200,000
Facilities Concept				
R8	Continue to work with Metro Transit to ensure bus terminal enhances the character of the Common	O	IAM/RPP	
R9	Continue to work with the Dartmouth Sportsplex to ensure any expansion of the facility enhances the character of the Common	O	IAM/RPP	
R10	Continue to work with the Halifax Regional School Board to ensure school improvements enhance the character of the Common	O	IAM/RPP	
Priority Site: The Outdoor Gym				\$ 2,090,000
R11	Create detailed design of area as per master plan section 5.7.3 and New Passive Recreational Open Spaces guidelines in section 6.1.1	S	IAM/RPP/FD	\$135,000
R12	Install new park and gateway sculpture	S	IAM/FD	\$1,955,000
Priority Site: The Urban Wilderness / Nantucket Grove				\$610,000
R13	Design trail system and vegetation management plan for wilderness area in line with landscape character recommendations in as per master plan section 6.1.1 and recognizing development of the bus terminal and other desire lines as well as New Passive Recreational Open Spaces guidelines in section 6.1.1	S	IAM/RPP/FD, TPW/MO	\$39,000
R14	Implement trail system and install lighting on strategic pathways	M	IAM/RPP/FD	\$347,000
R15	Remove old asphalt of southern fork of the Victoria Road / Nantucket Avenue intersection and naturalize area	S	IAM/FD, TPW/MO	\$24,000
R16	Design pocket commemorative park at corner of Victoria and Nantucket as per master plan section 5.7.7	S	IAM/RPP	\$20,000
R17	Install pocket park	M	IAM/FD	\$150,000
R18	Install gateway sculpture at Victoria Road	M	IAM/FD	\$30,000
Priority Site: Green Road Trail / Urban Park				\$2,070,000
R19	Design and install interim trail improvements as per master plan section 5.7.8 and New Passive Recreational Open Spaces guidelines in section 6.1.1	S	IAM/RPP/FD	\$15,000
R20	Design concept plan for Green Road Urban Park as per master plan section 5.7.8 and New Passive Recreational Open Spaces guidelines in section 6.1.1	S	IAM/RPP	\$36,000

Phasing: S – Short (completed in 1 to 3 years) M – Medium (completed in 4 to 6 years) L – Long (completed in 7 years and beyond) O – Ongoing

Departments/Divisions:

- IAM-Infrastructure and Asset Management/CDS-Construction Design Services/ FD-Facility Design/ RPP-Real Property Planning
- TPW-Transportation and Public Works/ MO-Municipal Operations/ RE&FS-Real Estate & Facility Services/ T&ROWS-Traffic & Right of Way Services
- CD-Community Development/ PS – Planning Services

* not included in capital cost

R21	Install open space and sports courts improvements on ball diamond area recognizing concept plan	S	IAM/FD	\$150,000
R22	Negotiate with MacDonald's to acquire their site	S	IAM/RPP, TPW/RP	
R23	If and when MacDonald's Restaurant property is acquired, complete detailed design of Green Road Urban Park as per master plan section 5.7.8	L	IAM/RPP/FD	\$100,000
R24	Install Green Road Urban Park with gateway sculptures	L	IAM/FD	\$1,769,000
Priority Site: The Bridge Welcoming Feature				\$165,000
R25	Negotiate with Bank of Nova Scotia to use a portion of their land; perhaps tie this into land acquisition negotiations	S	IAM/RPP, TPW/RE&FS	
R26	Design pocket park and welcoming feature as per master plan section 5.7.9; allow for expansion as urban park or building as per master plan section 5.8	S	IAM/RPP/FD	\$11,000
R27	Install park and gateway sculpture	M	IAM/FD	\$154,000
Priority Site: St. Paul's Cemetery/Waterfront Park				\$1,540,000
R28	Create detailed plan for site as per master plan section 5.7.1 and New Passive Recreational Open Spaces guidelines in section 6.1.1	M	IAM/RPP, CD/PS	\$99,000
R29	Undertake traffic study to close Geary Street	M	IAM/RPP, TPW/T&ROWS	\$20,000
R30	Demolish building at corner of Windmill Road and Geary Street that are owned by HRM	L	IAM/RPP/CDS	\$40,000
R31	Install new park	L	IAM/FD	\$1,381,000
Priority Site: Former City Hall/Museum Site				\$680,000
R32	Create detailed plan for area including pavilion and amphitheatre as per master plan section 5.7.2, and including fence extension as per guidelines in master plan section 6.1.1, Leighton Dillman Park and New Passive Recreational Open Spaces	M	IAM/RPP/FD	\$40,000
R33	Create print-ready interpretation and orientation content	M	IAM/RPP, CD/PS	\$50,000
R34	Install new park	M	IAM/FD	\$ 590,000
Priority Site: Bridgehead Park				\$280,000
R35	Negotiate with CN regarding an overhead crossing of railroad tracks	S	IAM/RPP, TPW/RE&FS	
R36	Negotiate with Bridge Commission for use of their lands and structure in the area; do in conjunction with R33	S	IAM/RPP, TPW/RE&FS	
R37	Based on results of negotiations, design park in area recognizing linear connection to Wyse Road and stairwell onto bridge	L	IAM/RPP/FD	\$18,000
R38	Install park	L	IAM/FD	\$262,000
Priority Site: Leighton Dillman Park				\$5,460,000
R39	Enhance maintenance plan and its implementation, recognizing original planting plan of the park as per master plan section 6.1.1	S	TPW/MO	
R40	Upgrade smaller walking paths including a hard surfaced and winter maintained connection from Alderney Manor to the Sportsplex / Bus Terminal and regional AT route	S	IAM/MO	\$200,000
R41	Design and install fountain at Alderney Drive entrance	L	IAM/RPP/FD	\$240,000
R42	Design and install soccer field to replace ball diamonds adjacent to Bicentennial School in relation to Thistle Street improvements (master plan section 5.7.5)	L	IAM/FD	\$4,990,000
R43	Install gateway sculpture at Victoria Road	M	IAM/FD	\$30,000
R44	Add to formal park elements as appropriate opportunities arise	O	IAM/RPP	

Phasing: S – Short (completed in 1 to 3 years) M – Medium (completed in 4 to 6 years) L – Long (completed in 7 years and beyond) O – Ongoing

Departments/Divisions:

- IAM-Infrastructure and Asset Management/CDS-Construction Design Services/ FD-Facility Design/ RPP-Real Property Planning
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- CD-Community Development/ PS – Planning Services

* not included in capital cost

Priority Site: The Cemeteries				\$560,000
R45	Continue to prohibit expansion of the cemeteries	O	TPW/MO	
R46	Enhance maintenance plan and its implementation	S	TPW/MO	
R47	Upgrade fencing to match existing Dillman Park fencing as per master plan section 5.7.12	M	IAM/RPP/FD	\$530,000
R48	Install gateway sculpture at northwest corner	M	IAM/FD	\$30,000
Architectural Guidelines				
R49	Create guidelines for redevelopment of Dartmouth Shopping Centre and future commercial buildings along Wyse and Nantucket as per master plan section 6.2	S	CD/PS	
R50	Monitor potential redevelopment activities at Dartmouth Shopping Centre and Sportsplex and implement redevelopment guidelines	O	CD/PS	
R51	Work with facility staff to implement recommendations in master plan section 6.2, Dartmouth Sportsplex Extension	O	IAM/RPP	
R52	Work with Metro transit to implement recommendations in master plan section 6.2, New Metro Transit Bridge Terminal	S	IAM/RPP	
Safety Guidelines				
R53	Conduct CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) review on a triennial basis	O	IAM/FD, TPW/MO	
R54	Implement CPTED recommendations in a manner that does not compromise the character of the Common	O	IAM/FD, TPW/MO	

This opinions of probable cost included in this table are based on a Class D budget that is found in appendix #. A Class D budget is a conceptual order of magnitude of probable cost; for budgeting purposes only. It is not a guarantee of a price, tendered price, or actual costs. Uncertain market conditions and developing bidding conditions may affect the accuracy of this budget. CBCL is not responsible for any variances from this budget.

Phasing: S – Short (completed in 1 to 3 years) M – Medium (completed in 4 to 6 years) L – Long (completed in 7years and beyond) O – Ongoing

Departments/Divisions:

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- CD-Community Development/ PS – Planning Services

* not included in capital cost

**Table 7.2: Dartmouth Common Master Plan Implementation Strategy
Road Related Items**

RECOMMENDATION		PHASE	RESPONSIBILITY	CAPITAL COST
Priority Site: Thistle Street Right of Way				\$2,168,000
R1	Undertake traffic study re. partial closure of Thistle Street	M	TPW/ T&ROWS	\$40,000
R2	Based on results of study, decide if road is to be closed	M	TPW/ T&ROWS	
R3	Undertake detailed design of area as per master plan section 5.7.5 and New Passive Recreational Open Spaces guidelines in section 6.1.1	M	IAM/RPP	\$138,000
R4	Install new park features	L	IAM/FD	\$1,900,000
R5	Install gateway sculptures at Victoria Road and Sportsplex parking entrance	M	IAM/FD	\$90,000
Priority Site: Wyse Road/Alderney Drive Right of Way				\$7,500,000
R6	Undertake detailed design to improve street as per master plan section 5.7.4	M	IAM/RPP	\$488,000
R7	Install gateway sculptures at Leighton Park Street, Thistle Street and Green Street	M	IAM/FD	\$180,000
R8	Install street upgrades	M	IAM/RPP, TPW/ T&ROWS	\$6,832,000
Priority Site: Nantucket Avenue Right of Way				\$3,569,000
R9	Undertake detailed design to improve street as per master plan section 5.7.6 and recognizing potential acquisition of McDonald's restaurant property, crosswalk consolidation, development of Green Road Urban Park and potential redevelopment of Scotia Bank property at corner of Nantucket Avenue and Wyse Road as building or urban park	S	IAM/RPP	\$232,000
R10	Negotiate with Bridge Commission for access from Wyse Road to waterfront through their lands parallel to the bridge and include development of a stairwell on south side of bridge opposite William Street right of way	S	IAM/RPP, TPW/ RE&FS	
R11	Install street upgrades	M	IAM/RPP, TPW/ T&ROWS	\$2,917,000
R12	Design linear connection from Wyse Road to Bridgehead Park including stairwell recognizing New Passive Recreational Open Spaces guidelines in section 6.1.1	M	IAM/RPP	\$30,000
R13	Install linear connection and stairwell	L	IAM/FD	\$300,000
R14	Install gateway sculptures at Victoria Road and bus terminal entrance	M	IAM/FD	\$90,000
Enhance Green Road				\$533,000
R15	Design enhancements	M	IAM/RPP, TPW/ T&ROWS	\$35,000
R16	Implement enhancements	M	IAM/CDS, TPW/ T&ROWS	\$498,000
Enhance Victoria Road				\$140,000
R17	Design enhancements	S	IAM/RPP, TPW/ T&ROWS	\$9,000
R18	Implement enhancements	S	IAM/CDS, TPW/ T&ROWS	\$131,000
Enhance Boland Road				\$68,000
R19	Design enhancements	S	IAM/RPP, TPW/ T&ROWS	\$5,000
R20	Implement enhancements	S	IAM/CDS, TPW/ T&ROWS	\$63,000

This opinions of probable cost included in this table are based on a Class D budget that is found in appendix #. A Class D budget is a conceptual order of magnitude of probable cost; for budgeting purposes only. It is not a guarantee of a price, tendered price, or actual costs. Uncertain market conditions and developing bidding conditions may affect the accuracy of this budget. CBCL is not responsible for any variances from this budget.

Phasing: S – Short (completed in 1 to 3 years) M – Medium (completed in 4 to 6 years) L – Long (completed in 7years and beyond) O – Ongoing
Departments/Divisions:

- **IAM** – Infrastructure and Asset Management/CDS-Construction Design Services/ FD-Facility Design/ RPP-Real Property Planning
- **TPW** – Transportation and Public Works/ MO-Municipal Operations/ RE&FS-Real Estate & Facility Services/ T&ROWS-Traffic & Right of Way Services
- **CD**-Community Development/ **PS** – Planning Services

7.2 Capitalizing on Opportunities

The phasing sequence outlined above identifies the ideal sequence of improvements based on the relationship between projects. However, should funding be made available from an unexpected source, or other pressures surface, opportunities to implement should be capitalized upon. This is of particular importance to road maintenance and improvement work that may have to be executed in the upcoming years, regardless of the phasing sequence of the Dartmouth Common Master Plan. Obligatory road improvements as a result of wear and tear, for example, should prompt street right-of-way improvements as set out in this Master Plan to ensure that streets around the Dartmouth Common act as a unifying element.

The implementation of other improvements should also be opportunistic. For example, while, the ultimate goal is to build the fence around a large portion of the Common, this fence can be built incrementally as an addition to other projects in the area. It is okay if a portion of the fence is built that is unconnected to another section. The missing piece can be filled in later. In fact, the missing section may provide impetus to obtain funding to fill in the gap, which could accelerate the implementation of some of the improvements.

7.3 Policy and Administrative Framework

The future of the Dartmouth Common largely depends on the applicability of the Dartmouth Common Act, the provincial legislation that was enacted to “preserve and protect the Dartmouth Common for the use and enjoyment of present and future inhabitants of the City of Dartmouth.”

Unfortunately, the initiation of Dartmouth Common Act was not backed by a clear vision of what the common lands should look like in the future. The impression the Dartmouth Common conveys today is in fact evidence of the absence of a coherent plan. Fascinatingly, the only portion of common land that is recognized by most people as the Dartmouth Common is Leighton Dillman Park, an area for which one individual, the late Leighton Dillman, had a clear vision and the fortitude to accept personal stewardship of the park to see his vision carried through.

Depending on special interests and political forces of the day, amendments to the Act have been made, that have resulted in a piece of legislation which has been incrementally eroded not unlike the lands it was intended to protect. Today, it must be HRM Regional Council that resumes the role of champion for the Dartmouth Common. The Dartmouth Common Master Plan, prepared under

passionate public scrutiny and in close consultation with the major stakeholders in the area, provides Council, staff and citizens with a powerful tool to resume stewardship for this invaluable piece of land in Downtown Dartmouth.

By endorsing the Dartmouth Common Master Plan, HRM Council should subsequently seek to have the Dartmouth Common Act amended to reflect the vision set forth by this Master Plan. Without the adoption of an appropriate amendment to the Act many of the intended improvements to the park elements of the Plan cannot be implemented. On the municipal legislative level, various zoning changes should also take place to allow for the implementation of the Plan and correspond to provisions of the amendment.

The Dartmouth Common Act was established as provincial legislation in 1986 to preserve and protect the Dartmouth Common for the use and enjoyment of present and future inhabitants of the City of Dartmouth. In 1994, the Act was amended to allow for additions to the Sportsplex (current sub-section 4). In 2008, further amendments were made allowing for the development of a new transit terminal on up to six acres (current sub-sections 5 and 6). In January 2009, the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter came into effect and subsumed the Dartmouth Common Act (1986); the current legislation is quoted below (amendments are in bold):

- (1) In this Section, "Dartmouth common" means the common of Dartmouth so far as it was vested in the City of Dartmouth on April 22, 1986.
- (2) The Municipality may not sell, lease, license or otherwise alienate the Dartmouth common.
- (3) Subject to subsections (4) and (5), no person shall build on the Dartmouth common.
- (4) A person may build an addition to a building located on the lands described in the Schedule to Chapter 87 of the Acts of 1994, An Act to Amend Chapter 68 of the Acts of 1986, the Dartmouth Common Act, if the building and the addition are both totally located on those lands.
- (5) The Municipality may build, expand or improve public transit facilities on that part of the Dartmouth Common adjacent to Nantucket Avenue and not exceeding six acres.**
- (6) When the lands referred to in subsection (5) are no longer used by the Municipality for public transit facilities, the lands revert back to their use as part of the Dartmouth Common.**
- (7) The Dartmouth Common is held by the Municipality in trust for the inhabitants of the Municipality.**

Although the Dartmouth Common Act (now subsumed by the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter) was enacted to "preserve and protect the Dartmouth

Common for the use and enjoyment of present and future inhabitants of the City of Dartmouth,” it has had some unintentional consequences. Subsection (3) is problematic in that it states “no person shall build on the Dartmouth Common.” The intention to protect the Common through this general prohibition is clear but its restrictions on any type of development can legally be interpreted to extend to the building of new trails, sport fields and other recreational amenities in the Common. It is evident that in order to achieve the vision of the Master Plan that some “building” will have to take place but the wording of any amendment will have to be carefully crafted to ensure that the overall intent of the legislation is maintained.

As previously stated, it must be HRM Regional Council that resumes the role of champion for the Dartmouth Common. To ensure that the Plan’s vision is met, Council could enlist the aid of stakeholders and citizens to form an advisory committee to provide oversight and advice in the Plan’s implementation. At the same time, Council should ensure that an integrated HRM staff steering committee is commissioned to coordinate and enact the recommended elements for the implementation of the Master Plan.

The implementation strategy establishes target timeframes for significant changes. It provides a guideline for Council and staff to plan, fund and execute what are considered to be the Dartmouth Common Master Plan recommendations between 2010 and 2025. Determining the priority for each improvement within each phase, however, is not clear-cut. One must consider various factors including current demand, funding availability, political will and whether a project is contingent on another before implementation.

7.4 Phased Cost Estimates

The general implementation costs per phase are summarized in table 7.2 below. For detailed cost estimates please see Appendix E.

Table 7.3: Cost Estimates by Phase

PARK RELATED ITEMS	Total	Ongoing	Short-Term (1-3 years)	Mid-Term (4-6 years)	Long-Term (7 years +)
General Items	\$660,000	\$385,000	\$45,000	\$230,000	\$0
Facilities Concept	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
The Outdoor Gym	\$2,090,000	\$0	\$2,090,000	\$0	\$0
The Urban Wilderness / Nantucket Grove	\$610,000	\$0	\$83,000	\$527,000	\$0
Green Road Trail / Urban Park	\$2,070,000	\$0	\$201,000	\$0	\$1,869,000
The Bridge Welcoming Feature	\$165,000	\$0	\$11,000	\$154,000	\$0
St. Paul's Cemetery/Waterfront Park	\$1,540,000	\$0	\$0	\$119,000	\$1,421,000
Former City Hall/Museum Site	\$680,000	\$0	\$0	\$680,000	\$0
Bridgehead Park	\$280,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$280,000
Leighton Dillman Park	\$470,000	\$0	\$200,000	\$30,000	\$240,000
*New Sportsfield (in Leighton Dillman Park)	\$4,990,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,990,000
The Cemeteries	\$560,000	\$0	\$0	\$560,000	\$0
Architectural Guidelines	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Safety Guidelines	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTAL COST PARK RELATED ITEMS	\$14,115,000	\$385,000	\$2,630,000	\$2,300,000	\$8,800,000

ROAD RELATED ITEMS	Total	Ongoing	Short-Term (1-3 years)	Mid-Term (4-6 years)	Long-Term (7 years +)
Thistle Street Right of Way	\$2,168,000	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,168,000.00	\$0.00
Wyse Road/Alderney Drive Right of Way	\$7,500,000	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$7,500,000.00	\$0.00
Nantucket Avenue Right of Way	\$3,569,000	\$0.00	\$232,000.00	\$3,037,000.00	\$300,000.00
Enhance Green Road	\$533,000	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$533,000.00	\$0.00
Enhance Victoria Road	\$140,000	\$0.00	\$140,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Enhance Boland Road	\$68,000.00	\$0.00	\$68,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
TOTAL COST ROAD RELATED ITEMS	\$13,978,000	\$0	\$440,000	\$13,238,000	\$300,000

TOTAL COST ALL ITEMS	\$28,093,000	\$385,000	\$3,070,000	\$15,538,000	\$9,100,000
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Appendix A

Backgrounder on the Commons

Appendix B

Case Studies

Appendix C

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) Key Elements

Appendix D

Central Dartmouth Common Development Scenarios

Appendix E

Class D Cost Estimates

Appendix F

Bibliography