

APPENDIX A

What We Heard Reports 1-4

OVERVIEW

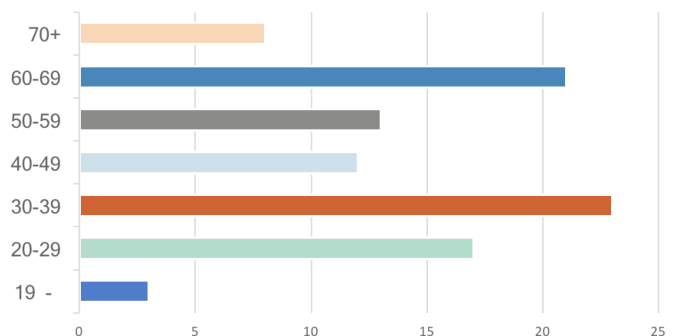
What We Heard at the Halifax Common Public Engagement Launch Event

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

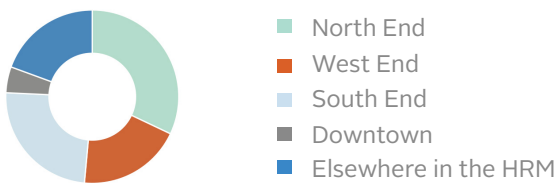
Who Was There

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

Age of Participants



Home Neighbourhood of Participants



What Happened

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



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

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

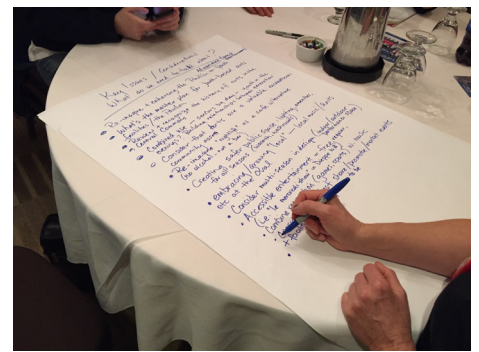
How might the Common best serve your needs and the needs of our growing city?

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



PHOTOGRAPHS

What We Heard at the Halifax Common Public Engagement Launch Event



Appendix One: Raw Input from Small Group Conversation

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

ROUND ONE QUESTION

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

Green and Open Space

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

Natural Landscaping

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

People Places

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

Equitable Access

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

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

The Whole Common

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

Integration with Context

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

Pedestrian and Bike Experiences

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

Indoor Spaces and Shelter

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

Limiting Imposing Structures

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

Inclusive Process

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

Good Process

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

Action on Implementation

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

Outliers

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

ROUND TWO QUESTION

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

Animated Public Space

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

Recreation Infrastructure & Activities

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

Sense of Connection

Thresholds/entrance connections

Incorporate the natural pedestrian paths

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

Footpath, signage, wayfinding, linkages

Expand the common link connections to all common areas

Quality hardscaping a place to be proud of

Upholding quality of life, connectivity among paths of common

Minimize Development

No more buildings

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

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

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

Protecting and expanding the common and adjacent streets

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

Minimizing infrastructure, coordinating programs

Diversity and Inclusivity

Accessibility for all - keep activities free and inclusive

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

Destination for diverse users

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

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

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

Keep accessible - no financial barriers

Multigenerational and Family Focus

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

Multifunctional, multigenerational spaces

Considerations for different age groups

Flexibility and multigenerational use

Opportunities for recreation and learning across generations

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

Naturalize

Refuge

Place to enjoy time outside

Shaded natural space

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

Establish Acadian forest arboretum at Museum of Natural History

Maximize outdoor experiences - get people outdoors

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

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

Grow Food

Permanent Common Agricultural Site

Continue to support urban farming on the common

Maintain the urban farm, Common Roots

Food and Vending

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

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

Safety

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

Better, safe bathrooms

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

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

Open space, paths

Water Features

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

More water features, ie. fountains

Arts and Events

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

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

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

Outliers

Snow removal

Retain the horse stable

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

That the plan is actually implemented

Canada Games Diamond renovation and upkeep. Halifax Minor Baseball Use

Experimenting with uses of space

Appendix Two: Raw Input on the Aquatic Area

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

AQUATIC AREA QUESTIONS

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

Lap Swimming

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

Children Swim & Play

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

Multigenerational

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

Wading Pool

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

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

Swimming Lessons

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

Various Depths

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

Bath and Change Rooms

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

Wait for Master Plan

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

Confusion around Centennial Pool

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

All Ages Music Venue

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

Outliers

Relax

Keep it!

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

See more natural water on common

Natural

Flexible outdoor space that has seating options, outdoor grill

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

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

Trees shade and sun

Cross country ski trails in the winter

Low/no cost

Preferred aquatic area design characteristics:

Sloped beach entry at shallow end

Naturalized swimming pool

Sense of connection between wet and dry areas

Waterplay with spray from below

Amenities like lockers and water fountains located outdoors

Preferred words to describe how the aquatic area should be:

Multi-functional

All ages

Youth focused

Safe

Flexible

Multi season

Natural material

Beautiful

Barrier free

Energy efficient

Integrated

Relaxing

Playful

Colourful

OVERVIEW

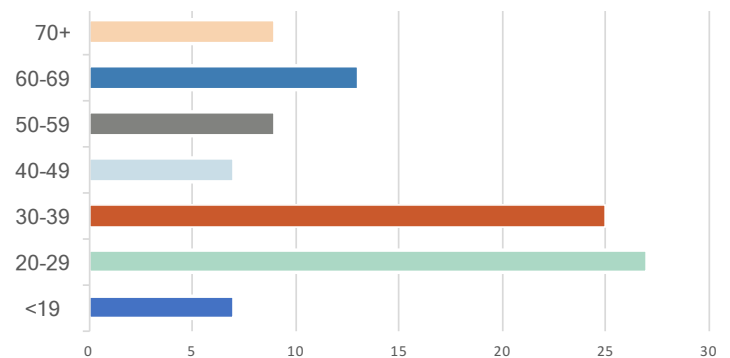
What We Heard at the Second Halifax Common Public Engagement

The second public engagement meeting for the Halifax Common master plan was held on January 31, 2018 from 7:00-9:00, at the Citadel High School atrium. This document is a summary of the meeting activities and public input.

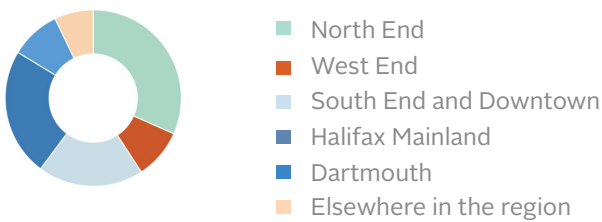
Who Was There

Approximately 125 people attended and were asked to self-identify their postal code and age range. Most attendees live on the peninsula followed by a good number from the Halifax mainland. People in their 20s and 30s were strongly represented and the other adult demographics were relatively proportionate with the overall population.

Age of Participants



Home Neighbourhood of Participants



What Happened

The project team began the meeting with presentations of background information. The first half of the workshop session was spent in small-group discussions around maps of the entire Halifax Common area. The groups were asked to define what about the Common is cherished and should be protected, and what could be changed or improved.

The second half focused on the outdoor aquatic area. Participants were shown different ideas and layouts for a new swimming pool, spray pad, playground, and support building. Each group was then asked to indicate shared preferences and priorities.



Participants worked together in groups of 3 to 6 people, identifying features of the Common that should be cherished and protected. All considerations were marked on the maps, then each group found consensus to identify their 3 top priorities. The priorities identified by the groups are listed below. The overall Common priorities were more frequently identified and are singled out as highly important overall, and the specific priorities were less frequently identified.

Overall Common Priority Features to cherish and protect

**Common Roots
Urban Farm**

**All green
space**

Skatepark

**Public
Gardens**

The Oval

Common Precinct Priorities to cherish and protect

North Common

- Some ballfield
- Cricket pitch
- Sunlight

Central Precinct and Wanderers Grounds

- Lawn bowling
- Playing field
- public access
- Bengal Lancers
- Museum of Natural History

Public Gardens

- The entirety
- Fountain
- Heritage
- Pond
- Main gate

Central Common

- Pavillion
- Skatepark
- Soccer playing field
- Tennis courts
- Pool

Victoria Park

- The entirety
- Square
- Fountain

Camp Hill Cemetery

- The entirety
- Heritage or historic value

Participants worked together in groups of 3 to 6 people, identifying features of the Common that should be changed or improved. All considerations were marked on the maps, then each group found consensus to identify their 3 top priorities. The priorities identified by the groups are listed below. The overall Common priorities were more frequently identified and are singled out as highly important overall, and the specific priorities were less frequently identified.

**Overall Common Priority Features
for change or improvement**

**Youth art and
music space
(Pavilion)**

**Pool and
splashpad
area**

**North Common
green and open
spaces**

**Comfort, access,
movement and
diverse uses**

**Common Precinct Priorities
for change or improvement**

North Common

- Reduce number of ballfields
- Green space upgrades
- Create hockey rink
- Remove fountain fence
- Lighting upgrades
- Crosswalks and pedestrian access
- The Oval
- Food vending and markets
- Robie Street edge
- Outdoor stage
- Building controls around the Common
- Connection between North and Central
- Seating, picnicing

Wanderers Grounds

- Open space
- Access road to the Bengal Lancers
- No stadium

Public Gardens

- Access
- Allow people to sit on grass

Central Common:

- Skatepark
- Playground
- Intersections at Robie/Quinpool and Bell/Cogswell
- Basketball courts
- Baseball diamond
- Outdoor space for music
- Cover over tennis courts
- Green plantings

Victoria Park

- Lighting
- Extend it along South Park Street
- Performance space
- Urban gardens

Camp Hill Cemetery

- Maintenance
- Interpretation
- Seating



LEGEND

- Deep pool
- Sitting/picnic area
- Plantings
- Temporary stage

This map shows the compilation of each group's preferred arrangement for the aquatic features, playground, picnicing and green space. Each scheme was digitized and overlaid revealing considerable consensus on the favoured elements and their relationships.

What we heard about seating and the playground

For the pool and spray pad area, there should be a mix of seating options with open lawn and deck space, maybe some chairs.

There should be seating around the edge of the skateboard park with shade, built into interesting landforms, with use of wood materials.

The surrounding green space beside the playground would be great for picnicking and group BBQ's. There should also be some traditional-style park benches, hammocks, and seating suited for solitude.

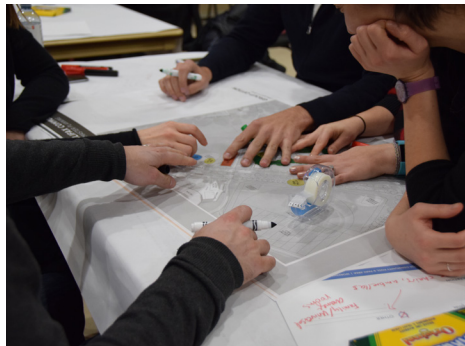
The playground should have natural play elements mixed with manufactured structures.

What we heard for improving the outdoor pool, spray pool and Pavilion building

The experience should first and foremost be about recreation, play and fun. It should also be about physical activity, learning to swim, socializing, and sometimes relaxation. It shouldn't be for sport training or competitions.

The aquatic area must be accessible in every way with a sloped beach-style entry for the pool. It should have spray features or a water fall, shade canopies, lounging areas, and places of calm. Don't make it "over-the-top" with themes.

The spaces should connect in a way that makes it easy to move from one area to another. It would be nice to have the pool, spray pad and playground areas together without a big fence that restricts access times.



OVERVIEW

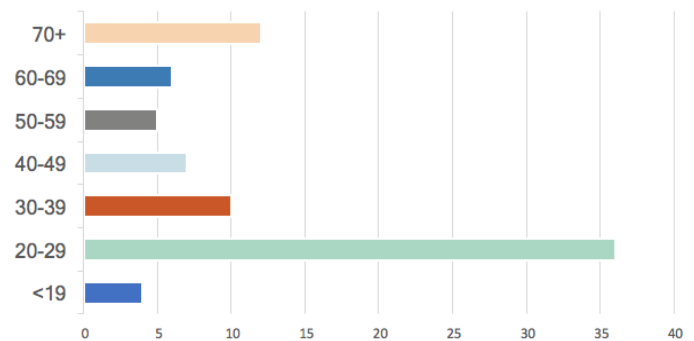
What We Heard at the Third Halifax Common Public Engagement

The third public engagement meeting for the Halifax Common master plan was held on April 25, 2018 from 7:00-9:00, at the Citadel High School atrium. This document is a summary of the meeting activities and public input.

Who Was There

Approximately 90 people attended and were asked to self-identify their postal code and age range. Most attendees live on the peninsula. People in their 20s were strongly represented and the other adult demographics were relatively proportionate with the overall population.

Age of Participants

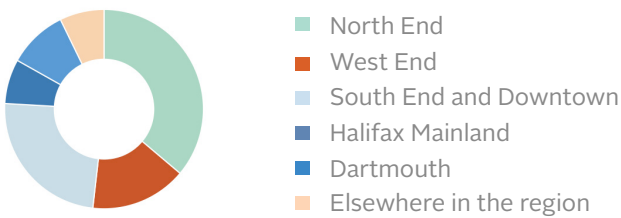


What Happened

The project team began the meeting with presentations of the engagement findings so far. This included highlights of past public meetings, top results of the online survey, and outcomes from stakeholder meetings and outreach. The presentation is available to view on the Shape Your City website.

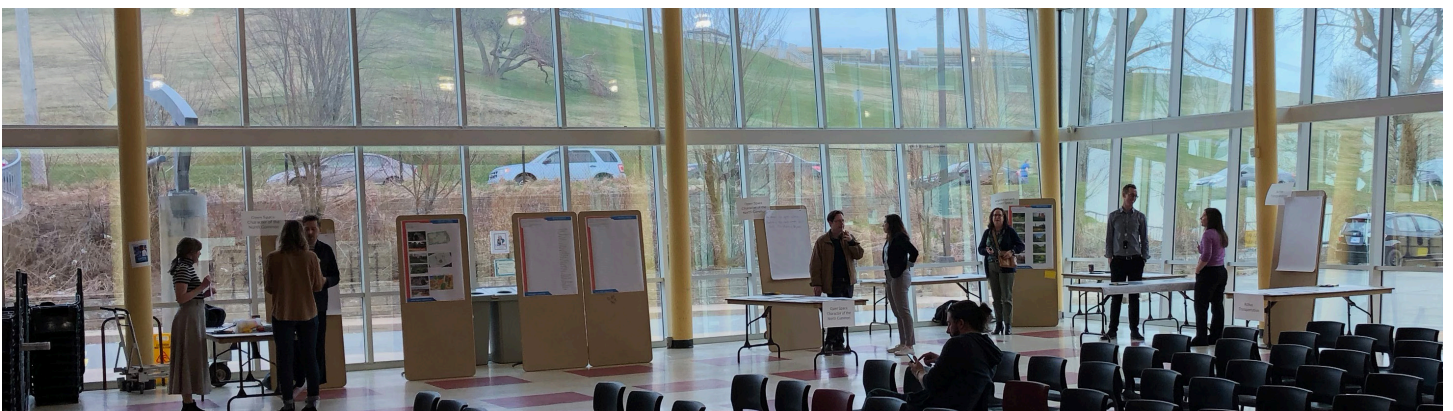
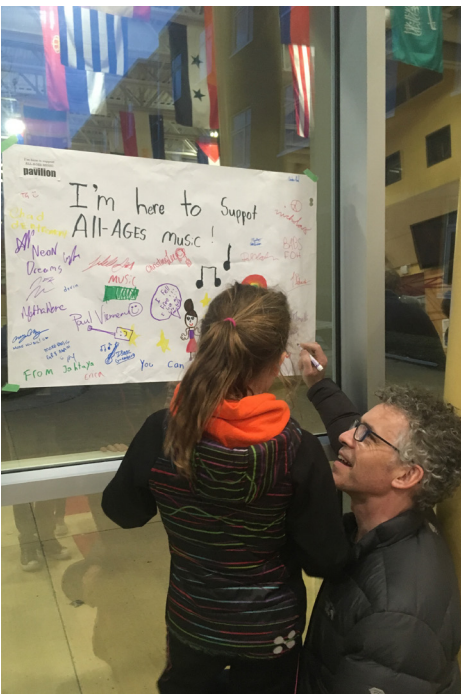
The second half of the meeting was spent working on seven big design challenges for the Halifax Common. Participants moved among thematic stations at their own pace, to learn more about each challenge and help shape solutions. The topics, questions, outcomes and discussion summary of each station are detailed below.

Home Neighbourhood of Participants



PHOTOGRAPHS

What We Heard at the Third Halifax Common Public Engagement



Open Space Character of the North Common

How might the open space character of the North Common best suit the desires of the public?

Discussion Summary

The public strongly desires that the North Common be a leisurely and welcoming public space, functioning as a contemporary park, with a balance between different types of activities and increased planting. Participants articulated a range of changes to the open space character that would help to meet these desires, including two “big moves”: formalizing footpaths and reducing the number of ballfields.

Music is also an important component of the North Common. While some neighbours struggle with noise from speakers at the Oval, others feel that music is a vital component of the space. Overall, it is agreed that music ought to be of good quality, supportive of local artists, and that the sound system be improved to minimize neighbourhood disturbance.

Many people enjoy time on the Common with their pet dogs. Some dog owners would like to be permitted to play with their pets off leash, while other feel it interferes with multi-purpose use. Improvements to the nearby fenced dog area were also suggested.

Participants filled out worksheets to demonstrate the balance they would like to see among four types of uses on the North Common.

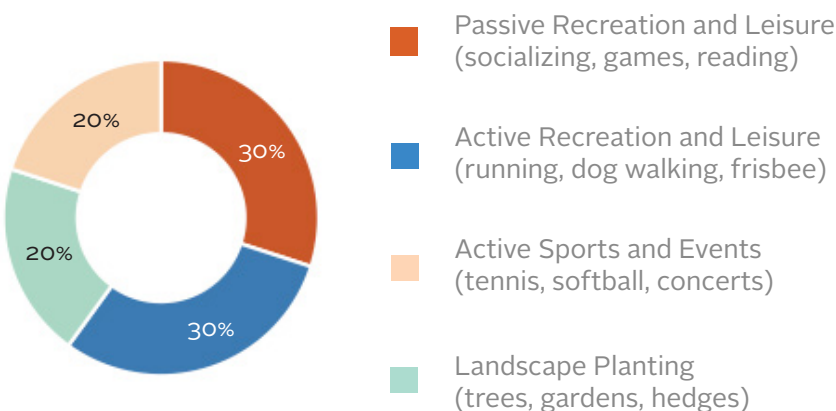
The completed worksheets were compiled to find the average proportion of each type of use participants would like to see. Compared to current use, the averages represent an increase in passive and active recreation and leisure, and landscape planting.

Participants “voted” for the open space features they would most like to see introduced on the North Common, selecting 5 features from a list of 38.

Ten Most Popular Features

1. trees in the middle
2. outdoor amphitheatre
3. urban farming
4. BBQs
5. dog park
6. fire pits
7. food vendor area
8. drinking fountain
9. pizza oven
10. seating for groups

Desirable Balance of Uses



Gathering Places

How might the Common become a place for more people to linger and socialize?

Discussion Summary

Food

- Picnics were mentioned several times. Currently, the completely open, flat space is not conducive for peaceful picnics, and there is too much risk being hit by a softball or frisbee.
- BBQs were popular, and garnered excitement.
- Local food vendors are highly desirable.

Pavilion Youth Arts

- Supporters of the Pavilion told their stories about the magic of all ages gathering space for personal development, a reason for being in Halifax, their friendships, happiness, etc.
- People of all ages clearly support music in general, and a youth arts space specifically.

Accessibility

- Wheelchair accessibility was emphasized. Accessibility advocates ought to be brought into the detailed design process.
- Easy seating for elderly people walking the route from Gottingen to Quinpool.

Green

- Green space doesn't have to mean grass. People want to feel safe but slightly enclosed in trees, shrubs, plants, etc.
- Both the Public Gardens and Common Roots were highlighted as amazing outdoor classroom-style spaces.

Participants “voted” for the types of gathering places they would most like to see introduced on the Common, selecting 3 types from a list of 10.

Five Most Popular Features

1. grass and stone amphitheatre
2. café style seating
3. picnic tables and BBQ grills
4. community garden/outdoor classroom
5. landform seating and play structure

Active Transportation

How might the Common best serve people traveling on foot, bicycle, and wheelchairs?

What we heard about traffic and intersections

There is much satisfaction with the treatments at the North Park intersections. The roundabouts make these intersections easy/safe to navigate, and they slow traffic. However, there are several intersections that feel unsafe:

- Robie/Bell/Quinpool/Cogswell
- Robie/Cunard
- Sackville/South Park (this is specifically bad for biking)
- Trollope/Bell/Summer

Robie/Bell/Quinpool/Cogswell is a notoriously bad intersection (even for cars), and is of special interest because many people cross the common in order to go to shops on Quinpool. This intersection would naturally be part of this route if it wasn't so dangerous; instead, many people cross Robie at the crosswalk at Welsford St. to avoid it.

What we heard about pathways and connections on the North Common

Some of the desire lines of the North Common are extremely well used, particularly the routes from Cunard and Robie to the Cogswell crosswalk, and to Cornwallis Street. Muddy and icy conditions, as well as use conflict with sport is a concern. Cunard and Robie is also a primary entry point. Notably, the paved path mid-block at Cunard to the fountain is infrequently taken.

There is a need for clarification about how multi-use paths are to be used, perhaps separate bikes from pedestrian paths, signage or pavement markings.

The crossing at Cogswell should be improved to strengthen the connection between the Oval and the Central Common amenities.

There is also a need for improved lighting.

What we heard about connections throughout the Common

Connectivity between the VG hospital and the Public Gardens could be improved via Victoria Park, with crosswalk improvements across University Ave, and comfortable access around the fountain/hill at Victoria Park. A second route via Summer Street would also enhance the north-south connectivity.

A unifying design aesthetic would make it clear when you were on the Common. Some ideas include:

- Signage throughout
- Standard types of infrastructure (pavers, benches, lamps, etc)
- Subtle cues, such as markers embedded in sidewalks at corners where you are entering or leaving the Common

Vegetation and Green Space

What does “green space” mean to you?

Discussion Summary

For the majority of participants, green space is more than just flat grass; it is trees and other plants along paths and supporting gathering spaces. Trees are essential as windbreaks, sound buffers, for shade and for play. Grassy hills and undulating landforms would be enjoyed for sitting and observing, and play and sledding for young children. A variety of vegetation is desirable to attract birds, to express the seasons, and for beauty. At the same time, there is a strong desire for open grass space with no prescriptive use, in addition to ball fields.

Other details included urban gardening, engaging all the senses (smell, sound, touch), biodiversity and native species, flowing water, and interactive green spaces.

Participants were asked to identify their preferences for green space and vegetation in three areas of the Common, by selecting examples on two different spectrums; manicured to naturalized and dense to open. The images below were the most popular for each area.

Vegetation and Green Space Preferences

Overall, these images demonstrate a desire for more vegetative enclosure than exists currently, but also a strong balance of open spaces and views, as well as a interest in somewhat natural landscaping, but with a sense of orderliness.

	Manicured - Naturalized	Dense - Open
North Common		
Central Common		
Victoria Park		

Cultural Heritage Landscape

In what ways might we celebrate heritage while balancing current needs?

In general, participants were supportive of the idea that the entire Common be designated as a cultural heritage landscape, with clarity around the pieces that hold the most heritage value, and the pieces that have become contemporary.

Design Based Solutions

A number of ideas were proposed by participants, to enhance the heritage value and understanding of the Common:

- Enhance and celebrate Camphill Cemetery
- Improve circulation through Camphill Cemetery
- Public spaces should be open at all times (like in other countries)
- Designated areas for busking and music
- Remove ballfields
- Instruments and tools for public play (like Denver)
- Update and open Wanderers Ground greenhouses
- Shiny outdoor hockey space
- Protect views from within the Commons - tall buildings adjacent to Commons should have glass glazing on upper floors to reflect blue skies
- Strong continuous green edge on the North Common
- Extend Victoria Park further south

Awareness Building

Participants also offered suggestions to foster knowledge of the heritage value of the Common, and its ongoing role as a community space:

- Information desk about the entire Halifax Common at the Public Gardens building
- Social media promotion of the Halifax Common and its history
- Events and activities celebrating the Halifax Common
- Interactive chalkboards with questions and answers (like Saskatoon River Landing project)
- Create a “Halifax Common Commission”

The Centre of the Oval

What should be done with the centre of the Oval?

Discussion Summary

Participants expressed that they highly value the Oval. Generally, people felt that the addition of recreational activity in the centre of the Oval should not negatively impact the current functioning of the facility. There was some support for the addition of an ice rink, the addition of summer field sports, or passive opportunities, but there was also apprehension as to how the use of the centre would effect the Oval.

General Comments

- Open and free, accessibility is #1
- Occasional events
- Scheduling - can hockey and skating lessons be held on divided straight-away?
- Play local music for the oval
- How can we wind shelter the west winds?
- Fill the centre of the oval without it being ugly and making the oval feel like a tunnel?
- Think of Rockefeller Centre but in reverse – instead of café/culture on the outside of the skating, lets put it inside. Build berms/bridge ways at both ends to ease us over and in and create a gathering place for all seasons where we can meet, sip, watch, have art shows, etc.
- More summer time uses: Roller-derby, ball hockey, volleyball concert space

In Favour of Ice Surface

- An amazing opportunity to build on the success of the oval and utilize existing infrastructure to build an outdoor hockey rink, provide a much-needed service to those who do not have the skill or available income to be part of the game
- Multi-purpose ice surface(s) for shinny, curling, informal skating, figure skating, ringette, learn to skate, learn to play hockey
- Have hockey equipment available, make it open to all
- Have clear hockey boards, clear netting - needed for safety of people in the Oval

Concerns or Alternatives to Ice Surface

- Oval cannot handle more traffic
- Like the Oval the way it is - skating outdoors, learning to skate, open public skating
- Don't want a lot of noise – pucks hitting boards – like to talk to friends and hear the music
- Due to climate this area must have useful non- ice plan
- Limitations of the building – already at max at times
- Can't see how to coordinate the use of a hockey rink and the free skating of the Oval. Rink boards and nets are needed for safety but would diminish the appearance and feel of the entire space -and I'm a hockey fan!
- Safety? Crossing? Barriers?
- If the goal is shinny – HRM funds and refrigeration could go to neighbourhood rinks
- The expense is not justified compared to the number of people who use the Oval
- There are hockey facilities in the city already

Money Matters

What role does commercial use play in creating a great public place?

What we heard about small scale supportive uses

Participants felt that commercial use is great, sometimes even essential, when it supports the experience of being on the Common. People said they want business that supports both special events, and the everyday experience on the Common. Examples: tours, organized social and recreation activities, sauna, ice cream stand, food trucks, farmers markets, outdoor craft fairs, and food festivals. Spending a day on the Common means having places to buy food, just like having accessible washrooms, at the minimum.

Some participants feel the current regulations and fees are a barrier for small local businesses. Small business owners are looking to provide supportive commercial activity, but are restricted by the “one size fits all” criteria which they feel are only obtainable by large promoters and national chains (fees, insurance, etc.) They are looking for some support or ways that the city can encourage them to operate, and build their enterprises.

What we heard about large scale events

There was of support among participants for both paid entry concerts and free public concerts and events.

Wetspot, Canada Day 2017, Rolling Stones, Paul McCartney all cited as good examples.

Participants like the tourism and excitement it brings to the city.

Participants recommended that a percentage of the revenue from any paid events goes directly to park amenities and maintenance (general improvement and park clean up after events).

It is felt that large scale commercial activities should be treated differently from small scale.

Other comments

Central Communications / Promotions Hub

- Participants recommended a social media presence, or website, that informs the public about the Arts, Cultural, and Sports events happening on the Common.

All Commercial Use Contingent Upon:

- “not another blade of grass, or tree would be lost.”
- Must be wheelchair accessible
- No land sold, all ownership remains as municipal

Commission or Foundation

- Recommendation to start a foundation or commission that could support the Common

The following additional input was gathered, which did not directly align with the seven stations.

What we heard about Pavilion all ages music

There were many participants at the meeting who are strongly in support of the Pavilion. They provided the following comments:

- Renovate or rebuild the Pavilion
- Create a year round multi-use arts space: music // dance // theatre // drama // visual arts
- Can generate revenue through rental to community groups
- Can partner with Citadel High for after school programs
- Can include a youth cafe/hang out with seating, games, resources, quiet space for study or homework
- Pavilion plays a very significant role in the lives of the youth who are involved

What we heard about the 1994 Common Plan

Some participants are concerned about components of the 1994 Plan that have not been upheld or implemented, as well as a general deviation from public open space. Specific comments included:

- Don't privatize the view of the Common with high rises around the perimeter
- What about the promise of a park on the School for the Blind property?
- Communicate about Wanderers Grounds privatization
- Common Roots farm to Wanderers Grounds or St. Pat's high lands
- Regulate the whole of the Common
- Make entire Common green and keep development out
- No more private buildings on Common land, no privatization. Common owned by the commons
- Get rid of the HRM Parks works depot
- Connect North and Central Common by returning Cogswell Street to green space or at least close it on weekends

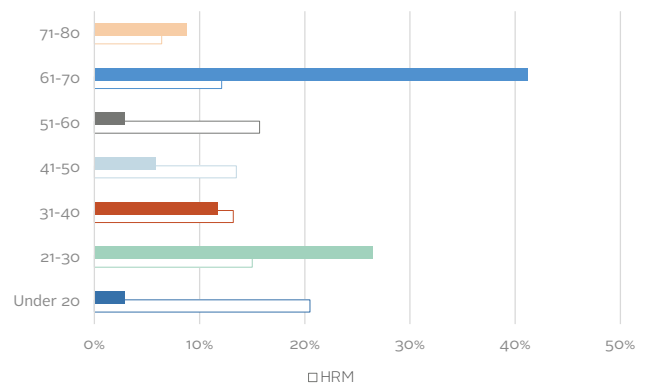
What We Heard at the Fourth Halifax Common Public Engagement

The final public meeting for the Halifax Common Master Plan was held on Monday June 17th between 7 and 9pm. Hosted at Citadel High School, around 70 members of the public were in attendance.

Who Was There

The meeting was attended by a group of approximately 50 people, with 32 individuals who signed in and provided their age. People in middle age (41-60 years) were underrepresented compared to the actual population of that age group in HRM. Seniors 61-70 were the most overrepresented age group (41% of meeting compared to 12% of the actual population in HRM), while youth 21-30 years were also overrepresented in the meeting. Youth under 20 were underrepresented.

Age of Participants



What Happened

The meeting began with a 40-minute presentation from members of the project team which reviewed previous engagement, introduced the plan's vision, and provided an overview of draft concepts.

Following the presentation, participants were invited to visit stations that share information about common-wide directions and municipal lands site plans.

Panels laid out the information, and input boards allowed participants space to comment on what was done well, what they had concerns about, and what was missing, as well as their overall level of satisfaction.

The following sections include a summary of feedback received at each of the stations, accompanied by the transcribed comments.

What We Heard at the Fourth Halifax Common Public Engagement



Discussion Summary

Participants were happy with the improved movement and flow of the Wanderer's Grounds, as well as the preservation of heritage areas and added green space. One participant felt the area needed more bleachers and a fieldhouse facility to expand the capacity, though there was one concern about the aesthetics of the bleachers and storage spaces from the street. Other suggested improvements included seating north of the Museum of Natural History, and gardening plots for workshops and community use.

What do you like best?

- Walking paths are great. Access to SE corner is awesome.
- Appreciate improvements re: access/flow (north gate as improved entryway).
- I appreciate the recognition of heritage areas and efforts to enhance and feature their inherent value to Halifax.
- Love the use of space where maintenance facilities will be moved from!

What do you dislike or have concerns with?

- Need more stands, move field North. Build fieldhouse.
- Always consider uniqueness of having a riding field in the centre of city. Eco-friendly.
- Please use the word "stable" instead of "barn" for Spencer Stable.

Is there anything missing that should be addressed?

- Containers and stands are unsightly from the street.
- Would like to have a place to sit north of the Museum of Natural History.
- I take advantage of the expertise of the gardens and greenhouses to offer workshops on growing your own food and perhaps a community garden or demonstration plots.

Discussion Summary

One participant was happy with the concept of lighting recreation areas for extended use, and another added that the balance of new unstructured spaces with sports and recreation will be key to success. A couple participants were interested in incorporating nearby lands such as Citadel Hill, Centennial Pool and new developments into this strategy, in order to ensure the pedestrian environment and green network does not end at the Common boundaries. Other concerns addressed burying power lines and improving accessibility of all spaces.

What do you like best?

- Lights for recreation.
- Love the concept of connecting through Victoria Park at Carlton St.

What do you dislike or have concerns with?

- Maintain balance of unstructured green space and outdoor rec / sports. Common gets some of its vibrancy from the wealth of sports and activities.

Is there anything missing that should be addressed?

- To create a unified common district, bury all power lines.
- Keep in mind winter, how will this work for all abilities?
- Include Centennial Pool and nearby municipal lands in the strategy. At least in a similar way as Citadel Hill is included.
- Ensure that any hospital redevelopments adds to the pedestrian experience along the street.
- Integrating Citadel Hill into the common, rather than just having a blank wall of grass.

Discussion Summary

Participants were very happy with the formalized pathways throughout the North and Central Common, though the details of these pathways fell short for some. Some pointed out that a few desire lines were left unaddressed in the concept design, particularly where the Great Lawn has been placed. Road infrastructure surrounding the Common also came up in discussion, and many felt that Cogswell Street should be closed to traffic for the length of the Common.

Many participants were unhappy with the bicycle access in the plan, and wanted more separated paths for bicycles which would enable cyclists to get from A to B fastest, rather than delineating specific access routes. Participants felt that bike lanes along adjacent streets will be necessary to connect the Common to a wider network, as well as bike access on the pathway between Summer and Bell connecting the Museum with Bengal Lancers and the Camp Hill Cemetery pathways. Some participants noted that for all users, snow removal will be crucial to creating an accessible and all-seasons space.

What do you like best?

- Fountain fence comes down! Great! More social space, less softball.
- It looks good. More opportunities to walk. Please ensure snow clearance.
- More bike lanes (protected).
- This is fine.
- Addition/acknowledgement of multi-use paths.

What do you dislike or have concerns with?

- Shared path on West side.
- Bells on bikes required.
- Build formal paths on desire lines.
- Close Cogswell through commons to only allow bikes and pedestrians.
- Multi-use connection between Summer and Bell, between Museum and Bengal Lancers.
- Not enough attention to bike commuters circulation (fastes A to B).
- Multi-use paths not great for biking.
- Why no bikes through Camp Hill?
- Get rid of centre islands on Summer St to add bike lanes.
- Keep bikes circulating along well beaten paths across North Commons.
- Cogswell cuts through North and Central Common and should be closed to traffic.
- North Common—retain paths leading from African NS installation on NE corner. The Great Lawn has removed. This is important for circulation from North End to shops on Quinpool.

Is there anything missing that should be addressed?

- Bike lanes on Cogswell.
- Are bike lanes on Bell Rd possible? Or a dream.
- Bike access to Cunard and Robie St.
- Bike lanes on Bell Rd.
- Separated bike path on Summer.
- Direct bike route from northwest corner.
- Paths should separate people biking from people walking.
- Separate paths for people walking where there is heavy bike traffic (ie. Robie / Williams > Deedee's ice cream).
- Close access to cars from Cogswell St to Robie / Quinpool to reduce mess at intersection.
- Bike lane on Summer St.
- Maintain bikes multi-use between citadel and high school.
- Follow existing desire lines.
- Have indications (either signs or painted symbols) for pedestrians and bikes.
- Need to plow bike lanes in winter.
- Snow clearing for bike lanes.
- Get rid of parking on Summer St.
- For a multi-purpose pathway, go for a wooden bridge which will not disturb the green space.
- Bike pathways are only useful (and usable!) if part of a larger network (not there yet!)

Discussion Summary

Participants were happy with the increased openness of Camp Hill Cemetery, and some added that they were pleased this space has been treated as the sacred park space that it is. An additional entrance at the corner of Jubilee and Robie could improve pedestrian circulation, one felt, and there was some dissatisfaction with the proposed closing hours of the cemetery.

What do you like best?

- Camp Hill definitely needs to be open and treated as a park/amenity.
- More open/inviting/wider entrances.
- Camp Hill underutilized gem “quiet reflection”.
- Appreciation and recognition of heritage value.
- Lighting to increase public safety in Camp Hill.

What do you dislike or have concerns with?

- Closing hours—do not like. More open is better!

Is there anything missing that should be addressed?

- Have repeatedly had interactions with Garden staff who are surly/unpleasant, especially at end of day when closing. Be nicer!
- Open up fence along Robie/Jubilee for access from intersection.

Discussion Summary

The more favourable components of the North Common design concept included the neighbourhood plaza, berm, great lawn, interior plaza, fountain improvements, and pedestrian roundabout. A couple panels showed input from participants concerned about the loss of the pathway from the northeast corner to Quinpool, as well as participants promoting the reduction or elimination of traffic along Cogswell Street. Some individuals felt that the size and scale of the fountain was important to retain, and others worried about the provision of winter spaces such as shinny hockey.

What do you like best?

- Neighbourhood plaza, berms, great lawn, interior plaza programming, major gathering area and fountain plaza, and the pedestrian roundabout.
- Addition of seating areas/trees at the neighbourhood plaza and on the berms.
- Neighbourhood plaza, berms, great lawn, and the major gathering area and fountain plaza (but ensure mass and scale of fountain).
- I love the new people friendly fountain.
- Great ideas for the neighbourhood plaza, berms, great lawn, interior plaza programming, major gathering area and fountain plaza, enhanced paved pathway, and the pedestrian roundabout, don't interfere with the cricket pitch.
- Concept of lights.
- You fixed so many things I hated about the North Common! Thank you.

What do you dislike or have concerns with?

- Don't diminish size and scale of fountain—sightline, sound.
- Lost walkway connecting to Quinpool grocery from northeast corner.
- Make Cogswell single lane in each direction.
 - (this is good—reclaim lane).
- Don't make two paths with grass in the middle.
- Baseball and softball fields??

Is there anything missing that should be addressed?

- What about winter activity?
- Loss of openess from the berm.
- Pedestrian crossing on Cunard—to be same as three other sides of North Common.
 - What will you do when (not if) people make a path here?
- Visual connection.
- Dedicated space for shinny hockey.
- If the storage is going away from the pavilion, please let some gear be stored in the oval building/structure.
- Scale of fountain to be maintained (sound).

Discussion Summary

Some felt the vision for the Common was overly complex, but one participant was particularly happy about the emphasis on re-integrating partner lands into the open space network—though others were not satisfied with the weight of these statements. Several participants worried that winter uses were left out of the vision, and one showed concern about development protections surrounding the Common.

What do you like best?

- Maintaining/reclaiming public space and re-integrating “partner” lands.

What do you dislike or have concerns with?

- Use CBC site to balance lost green space. Cost to hospital expansion onto Common Roots Farm.
- Much too complicated explanation
- A better vision would be much more simple eg. “a modern park that people want to go to.”
- Too much words.

Is there anything missing that should be addressed?

- Protection of perimeter from high rise development.
- Year-round use.
- Nothing mentioned about reclaiming the land from the original boundaries. Instead of cramming all this stuff into the north and central commons, plan to do some of this work on “new” land by buying it out instead of continuing to develop huge development plans (Spring Garden and Robie for example.)
- Public space for informal, accessible sports, opportunity here for an outdoor hockey rink with low capital investment, building off systems in place at the oval.
- Winter city strategy, build on the the oval!
- A concrete pad may serve dual purposes in the centre of the oval, event surface in summer, shinny in the winter.
- Opportunity to make hockey free and inclusive with an outdoor rink.

Discussion Summary

Improvements to the path network and plazas in this plan were well received, as were plans for the mature trees and seating. Additional ideas brought forward included seasonal string lights, permeable pathways, improved openness of Rabbin Burns Plaza, community gardens here or elsewhere on the Common, and support for more public art and market style events. Some participants felt that this park could be better connected to the greater network of open spaces, particularly through the reclamation of institutional lands.

What do you like best?

- I love the criss-crossy paths.
- I like that platforms and plazas will exist on both ends.
- Seating terraces, barrier free access ramp, and the steps from William Alexander Plaza to the Oland Fountain, and especially appreciate recognition of value of the mature trees.
- Thank you for preserving the cultural artifacts already there! (statues and monuments.)

What do you dislike or have concerns with?

- Spruce up the “Rabbin Burns” plaza a bit—make it less closed off.
- Pathways are increasing impermeable surface.
- No connections from Spring Garden to southeast corner (pathways are too rigid.)
- Connections between green spaces—need better connectivity.
- No reclaimed land present in plan.
 - Connection to VG lot / former public space missing
 - Plaza makes park seem like the final end to commons rather than a continuation.

Is there anything missing that should be addressed?

- A lighted Christmas tree in the entrance to the park during December.
- Light in trees at Christmas, give the area a beautiful holiday look and feel.
- More outdoor art to slow down pedestrian traffic, also some temporary food (unintelligible) to have people sit and chat.
- Closing roads to traffic.
- Maybe one or two more “criss cross” paths added?
- Lets make it known what an important NS link this park is (common to point pleasant)
- Hyde park set up #1.
- Community garden space here or elsewhere on the common?
- Opening up to more markets and events.
- Daylight river.

Discussion Summary

The pool and surrounding area were well received by the public, though some participants had other ideas about where to move the pool, and others were concerned about the winter use of this space.

What do you like best?

- Aquatic building a great idea!
- Love the new aquatic area plan.
- Love the community centre.
- Recreational pool, nature play area, and the transition plaza.
- Like the improved transition / entrance (1); biggest issue currently is separation / lack of cohesion from north.

What do you dislike or have concerns with?

- Please keep the storage open for structured play users (pavilion today.)
- An outdoor swimming pool?! In this climate? What a waste...
- Need wide path for bikes!

Is there anything missing that should be addressed?

- Tennis courts, pickle ball courts.
- Not sure how nature play area will survive first contact with children.
- Winter uses.
- Why not use/improve Centennial Pool and its outdoor space for a deeper swimming area, instead of building another pool?
- Move leisure pool to Citadel High. Indoor and outdoor pool!

Discussion Summary

One participant was particularly satisfied with the improved use of Citadel's Community Centre, though there was some debate over the loss of the Pavilion. Extended washroom hours were top of mind for one participant, and another took this opportunity to promote hockey uses near the oval.

What do you like best?

- The attempt to better use the space at Citadel.

What do you dislike or have concerns with?

- Washrooms should be open 18/7 at least (2 to 8 today).
- The loss of space for patrons of the pavilion is unfortunate.

Is there anything missing that should be addressed?

- Opportunity for community hockey space at or near the oval.

Discussion Summary

Throughout the panels, seasonality and extended use of the oval were discussed. Many participants at the meeting were eager to see food gardening uses in the space, either for public plots or demonstration gardens. Some comments on the chalkboard focused on logistical concerns such as timelines, budgeting and land use connections.

- New community garden and urban agriculture spaces.
- Protection of perimeter from high-rise density and developments.
- Winter uses!!
- Implementation.
- Winter city strategy.
 - Opportunity to leverage existing oval infrastructure for an outdoor hockey rink and lessons, roller derby, figure skating etc.
- Time frame and cost estimates should be included.