



## 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Show Us Your City Photo Contest

Enter your digital photos for free in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Show Us Your City Photo Contest to win fantastic prizes! Submit photos taken in four areas: Downtown Dartmouth, Downtown Halifax, Quinpool Road and the Spring Garden Area. Enter up to **two photos per area**, for a maximum of **eight photos in total**.

Images can represent: architecture, streetscape, landscape and scenery, public art, public events and outdoor activities and urban life. Prizes include: a Nikon D60 digital camera with memory card, UV filter and camera bag; a Canon PowerShot G10 digital camera with camera pouch; and an Olympus Stylus 850 SW digital camera. Visit [www.halifax.ca/photocontest](http://www.halifax.ca/photocontest) for photo requirements, complete rules and regulations and to submit your photos online. Deadline is April 30<sup>th</sup> and there is no entry fee. Show Us Your City Photo Contest is presented by: the Halifax Regional Municipality, Downtown Dartmouth Business Commission, Downtown Halifax Business Commission, Quinpool Road Mainstreet District Association and the Spring Garden Area Business Association.



Julie Marshall 2008 Winner

## Park Smart

DHBC's popular parking guide is back! Park Smart provides handy tips on Downtown parking including facts, rules for on-street parking, common myths, parkade and parking lot information, and a map of metered and timed parking. Park Smart can be found at HRM Customer Service Centres, HRM Visitor Information Centres and participating retailers and restaurants. For more information or to request a brochure, visit [www.downtownhalifax.ca](http://www.downtownhalifax.ca) or call 423-6658.

## Members in the News

**Halifax Business Awards** presented by *The Globe and Mail* and the Halifax Chamber of Commerce presented the **Hamachi Group of Restaurants** with Gold for Small Business of the Year, **Southwest Properties Ltd.** and **Extreme Group** won Silver and Bronze respectively for Business of the Year and Ben McCrea, Chairman of **Armour Group** took home Gold for Business Person of the Year.

Developer **Ben McCrea**, of **Armour Group**, is one step closer to developing Waterside Centre since winning the appeal at the Utility and Review Board.

**Garrison Brewing Company's** Grand Baltic Porter won a gold medal at the World Beer Championships in Chicago. Garrison also received a silver medal for its Martello Stout brew.

**Durty Nelly's Authentic Irish Pub** at 5221 Sackville Street and **The Hub** at 1673 Barrington, are among the newest additions to Downtown. Both opened their doors in February.

**The Wooden Monkey** re-opened in its larger new space located at 1707 Grafton Street and will feature live music.

**The Courtyard by Marriott Halifax Downtown** was recently awarded a Platinum Service Award for Overall Guest Satisfaction during 2008. The award was presented by Marriott International Hotels & Resorts. The award is based on customer feedback from 750 Courtyard hotels across North America.

**Hamachi House, Press Gang, Gio and Bear** participated in "Chef Wars - A Culinary Battle," as part of the largest food service trade show in the region. After the semi-final round, only Gio and Bear were left, moving on to compete in the final round. Gio eventually came out on top.

## A Look Ahead to Summer 2009!

### FRED Rolls Through Downtown Halifax Starting July 4

The Downtown Halifax Business Commission (DHBC) is pleased to announce that everyone's favourite free shuttle bus, FRED (Free Rides Everywhere Downtown), will be rolling through Downtown Halifax once again! From July 4 to October 23, FRED will operate seven-days-a-week from 10:30 am until 5:00 pm. Last year, FRED saw more than 60,000 passengers.

FRED makes getting around Downtown easy and encourages people to get out, see and do more in Downtown Halifax. During peak times, FRED features a live, on-board guide providing insightful, historic commentary about the Downtown.

From Pier 21, FRED runs along Lower Water Street to Ferry Boat Lane, past Historic Properties to the Casino. FRED then heads up Barrington Street to Spring Garden Road to Brunswick Street and then up Sackville Street up and around Halifax Citadel, turning right on Sackville Street. FRED turns left on South Park Street, past the Public Gardens and then down Spring Garden Road to Barrington Street until Cornwallis Park and turns left, passing Superstore, the Via Rail Station and the Westin Nova Scotian Hotel before proceeding back to Pier 21.



FRED on Citadel Hill

Thanks to our sponsors that have a stop along FRED's route: Alexander Keith's Nova Scotia Brewery, Bishop's Landing, Casino Nova Scotia, Halifax Citadel, Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, Marriott Halifax Harbourfront and Pier 21. FRED is also generously supported by: CTV, Metro News, Halifax Regional Municipality, Hotel Association of Nova Scotia, KOOL 96.5 FM and Spring Garden Area Business Association. For schedule, route, and sponsor information, visit [www.downtownhalifax.ca](http://www.downtownhalifax.ca) or call 423-6658.

### Clean Sweep on June 3

Dedicated citizens will take to the streets once again this year as part of DHBC's annual Clean Sweep. The event will tackle the city's litter and spruce up the Downtown in preparation for the busy summer season and kick off the Enviro Team program. The event will take place on June 3 with teams meeting in Grand Parade and then spreading out to clean their assigned area of Downtown. It will be followed by lunch, prize draws and awards for the top team in categories such as: most garbage collected, most unique garbage item and most enthusiastic or creative team. Due to the popularity of this event, businesses are invited to submit a maximum of two teams, consisting of four to six members each, and registration will be on a first-come, first-serve basis. To register a team, please contact Ivy Ho by calling 428-5433 or emailing [ivy@downtownhalifax.ca](mailto:ivy@downtownhalifax.ca).



Delta Barrington Hotel in 2008

### Tunes at Noon 2009

Tunes at Noon summer music series, in partnership with the Halifax Regional Municipality, DHBC and Music Nova Scotia, will return for another summer. The annual concert series, supported by The Coast and C100, features the talents of Nova Scotian musicians as part of a series of free concerts in Grand Parade during the lunch hour, from 12 noon to 1:00 pm. The concerts give Downtown employees, shoppers and visitors the opportunity to sit in the sun, relax and listen to live music in the heart of the city. A schedule of concerts and musical acts will be posted on the DHBC website in early July at [www.downtownhalifax.ca](http://www.downtownhalifax.ca).





## The Urban Thinker

Paul MacKinnon

### The Dawn of a New Downtown

HRMbyDesign. You must have heard of it by now. It is the proposed new development plan for the Downtown core, which has been over two years in the making. Of course, its origins date much farther back than that. The call for a new plan has been, in some circles, desired since the formation of the last plan, over 30 years ago. But particularly in the past decade, urban champions have emerged, the Downtown Halifax Business Commission foremost among them, seeking a better alternative.

We have a beautiful Downtown now. But as you walk the streets, you see problems: new buildings that aren't respectful of the pedestrian environment; older buildings left in disrepair; blank walls where retail should be; crumbling public infrastructure; not a single heritage conservation district in one of the oldest cities in North America. We have a development process that seems to endlessly pit heritage advocates against developers, which are ultimately often decided by legal bodies, rather than professionals. We have cherished view planes between the Citadel and the harbour, but we seem to have forgotten the importance of how the city looks between them.

Every Carmichael Lecture guest speaker who has visited Halifax has commented on the great potential we have here, but wondered at the lack of fundamental design practices and the lack of cranes. Halifax is a port city. A heritage city. A business capital. It should bustle and hum. It should showcase the best of restored 19<sup>th</sup> century architecture alongside the best of 21<sup>st</sup> century architecture. It should be a thing of beauty. It should be the first place residents want to live and developers want to build.

We pushed and the city listened. An Urban Design Project Manager was hired. A citizen based task force was formed, and consultants were brought in to form a new Downtown plan, HRMbyDesign. The new plan creates a Downtown vision. It assigns specific heights, to create certainty for developers and their neighbours. It creates one heritage district and recommends two more. It moves the decision-making powers from the politicians and courts and gives it to design professionals. It integrates activities such as heritage preservation, affordable housing, sustainable building, and public realm and art. It takes the best from other cities, and retains the things we hold sacred.

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It incorporates (and finds compromise) between the often varied views of our engaged citizenry.

Two weeks ago, the DHBC distributed a brochure in *The Chronicle Herald* and *The Coast*, outlining the positives of HRMbyDesign. In the brochure, we encourage you, the reader, to contact your Councillor and let him or her know that you support the plan. If you feel passionately about your Downtown, you should speak at the public hearing in front of the Mayor and Council, May 5-7.

This spring HRM Council will either accept a new plan or stay the course with the existing policies. We believe the new plan is vastly superior. Its adoption is not an end unto itself but it is, perhaps, a new beginning for Downtown Halifax.

To read the plan in its entirety, go to [www.hrmbdesign.ca](http://www.hrmbdesign.ca). To contact your residential Councillor, go to [www.halifax.ca/](http://www.halifax.ca/) districts. To receive notification about the public hearing, email [capdistrict@halifax.ca](mailto:capdistrict@halifax.ca).



Artistic rendering of Lower Water Street

*Paul MacKinnon has been the Executive Director at the DHBC since August 2002. Having earned an MBA from Dalhousie University, he now works as an advocate for urban revitalization speaking to and acting upon issues that affect citizens of the Downtown.*

## DHBC Launches New Downtown Brand

For the past several months, DHBC has been working closely with award-winning marketing and advertising agency, Extreme Group to re-brand the Commission and Downtown Halifax. The new brand and tagline, "Where the Maritimes Meets the World" reflect Halifax's history as a port city and its evolution as the hub of Atlantic



Canada. Downtown Halifax is the most diverse area in the region with an eclectic and innovative mix of stores, dining, arts and architecture. Downtown Halifax also hosts the majority of national and international events and conferences, and is the gateway to international and regional trade. The tagline and the brand represent where all of these things come together.

The new ad campaign tells of a "missed opportunity," by recounting a story that could have happened. These stories illustrate the vibrant and diverse retail, services, restaurants, entertainment and culture in Downtown Halifax. The goal is to encourage people to "tell a better story" by taking part in all that Downtown Halifax has to offer. The campaign was designed with flexibility in mind and it can easily be adapted to speak to different audiences.

Part of the re-branding process is a redeveloped website for DHBC. The new website was first launched as a micro-site, featuring the new look and feel and a selection of content, with the full website launch to follow by the end of April. The new URL is [www.downtownhalifax.ca](http://www.downtownhalifax.ca). The website will tap into social media networks by featuring a blog by Executive Director, Paul MacKinnon; live feeds from Twitter; the ability to link content to other social networking sites such as Facebook; and enhanced video and photo content including podcasts.

## Are You a DHBC Member?

The Downtown Halifax Business Commission (DHBC) represents businesses located in the area between the Halifax Waterfront and Brunswick Street, and between the Cogswell Interchange and the south end of Barrington Street. There are approximately 1,800 businesses within the geographic area.

By virtue of being located in the Downtown area, all these businesses, both property owners and tenants are members of the DHBC. The DHBC gives its membership a collective voice at the table on all major issues concerning Downtown Halifax, including Downtown development, heritage preservation, in the Mayor's office, in the Premier's office, the media and with other stakeholders like the Greater Halifax Partnership and the Halifax Chamber of Commerce. The collective voice of 1,800 businesses focused on Downtown, focused on you.

The DHBC runs many programs, events, and marketing initiatives to make Downtown Halifax a better place to live, work and play. For more details on how the DHBC works for your business, visit [www.downtownhalifax.ns.ca](http://www.downtownhalifax.ns.ca).

## Navigator Program Update

February has been an exceptionally busy month for the Navigator Program. Street sweeping and the \$12-lunch program continue to be popular and referrals to employment programs such as Youth Live remain steady.

The Navigator has recently partnered with the Parker Street Food and Furniture Bank to develop a project that will assist low-income individuals and members of the street population obtain skills that will enable them to become self-sufficient. Representatives from the Department of Community Services, Parker Street, the St. Leonard's Society and the Navigator met to discuss potential funding and collaboration on this new project. The proposal is currently being developed and programming is tentatively set to begin on May 1, 2009.

Panhandling is a common issue in many large city centres and Downtown Halifax is no exception. Recently, the issue resurfaced in the Spring Garden Road area with some debate among panhandlers regarding the Property Protection Act (PPA). The act prevents certain members from the street population from entering businesses or using their washroom facilities. PPAs had been issued to members of the street population stemming from a number of incidents. The issue sparked some media attention and as a result, the Navigator and the Executive Director of the Spring Garden Area Business Association, met with members of the media to clarify the issue. Some of the panhandlers were also interviewed and had some very positive things to say about the Navigator Program.

As always there are challenges that lie ahead, such as remaining connected to the members of the street population who require other treatment, such as addiction and mental health services, and the ongoing challenge of supported affordable housing. The Navigator remains positive that through consistent communication, progress will be made.

If you have any questions about the Navigator Program, contact Tommy Boutilier, Capital District Navigator, at 209-6517 or [youthnavigator@gmail.com](mailto:youthnavigator@gmail.com).