



Barrington Street Revitalization: Final Report

PLAN6500

Integrative Team Project

Aastha Thapa
Braeden Soltys
Derrick Boakye
Doliba Durkin
Eden Pang
Karim Ahmadu
Mo Li
Yahui Chen

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1. Executive Summary

Barrington Street is downtown Halifax's most important historic corridor, but in recent decades it hasn't been living up to its potential.

Despite strong population growth in the area, the street has consistently had difficulty remaining the 'main street destination' of Halifax, being overshadowed by Spring Garden Road, Argyle Street and the Waterfront.

The most visible symptom of this issue is storefront vacancy. A significant number of commercial lots have remained vacant for long periods of time. A small number of landlords control much of the street and frequently hold out for financially secure, high-end tenants rather than renting to diverse or independent businesses. This creates a self-reinforcing cycle, where vacancies reduce foot traffic, reduced foot traffic discourages new businesses, and the street becomes less vibrant and intriguing as a result.

Economic pressures worsen this problem on both sides of the landlord-tenant relationship, with property owners facing higher taxes and businesses dealing with higher rents and tighter profit margins.

Beyond economics, there's a fundamental problem with the street's role as both a transportation corridor and its role as a pedestrian-oriented public space. The high volumes of vehicle traffic on Barrington make it a significant street for cars and buses, but also make it noisy, congested, and uncomfortable for pedestrians.

The pedestrian environment worsens this dynamic: there's limited seating, minimal greenery, low lighting, and narrow sidewalks. This suggests that the pedestrian thoroughways are meant solely for walking to a destination rather than for lingering and enjoyment.

Background research, jurisdictional scans, interviews, field observation and a public survey have been used to inform a multitude of suggestions, including a vacant storefront tax, a meanwhile use program, physical improvements such as new benches, new opportunities for greenery, arts and placemaking opportunities, and pedestrian-based wayfinding. Finally, though its implementation is outside the scope of this project, a bus-only street is shown to potentially solve many of the problems brought forward in interviews and surveys.

Over the course of the project, it's been shown that Halifax already has good ideas for Barrington Street, but implementation remains an issue. There are many disagreements between departments and municipal decision-makers, and a consistent gap between policy intentions and on-the-ground action. This has allowed the same challenges to persist across multiple planning cycles. Meaningful revitalization will not only need the right ideas for intervention but will require more commitment and coordination to see these ideas through.

2. Introduction

2.1 About Us

3105 Studios is a collective of young planning professionals working from Halifax (Kjipuktuk), Nova Scotia. The organization offers unique solutions to urban challenges, using a diverse methodological toolkit that includes diligent research, data analysis, best practices research, field observations, surveys and interview-based consultation.



Figure 1: Logo of 3105 Studios

3105 Studios members:

Aastha Thapa - Policy Research, Field Observation

Braeden Soltys - Demographics, Real Estate, Placemaking and Arts Research

Derrick Boakye - Historical Research, Field Observation

Doliba Durkin - Graphic Design, Historical Research

Eden Pang - Historical Research, Field Observation

Karim Ahmadu - Policy Research, Communications

Mo Li - Policy Research, Quality Assurance/Quality Control

Yahui Chen - Communications, Field Observation, Policy Research

2.2 Purpose

This work has been undertaken on request of Paul MacKinnon and Jonathan Goldson of the Downtown Halifax Business Commission (DHBC), who have tasked 3105 Studios with analyzing and making suggestions for the revitalization of a 1.15km section of Barrington Street in Downtown Halifax.

The resulting work from this request has culminated in this document, which serves four primary objectives:

- 1. To use existing research and documentation to get a full understanding of Barrington Street.**
- 2. To get firsthand data on the site through field observations.**
- 3. To gather diverse perspectives about the street from stakeholders through interviews & surveys.**
- 4. To identify the best possible suggestions for the street's future.**

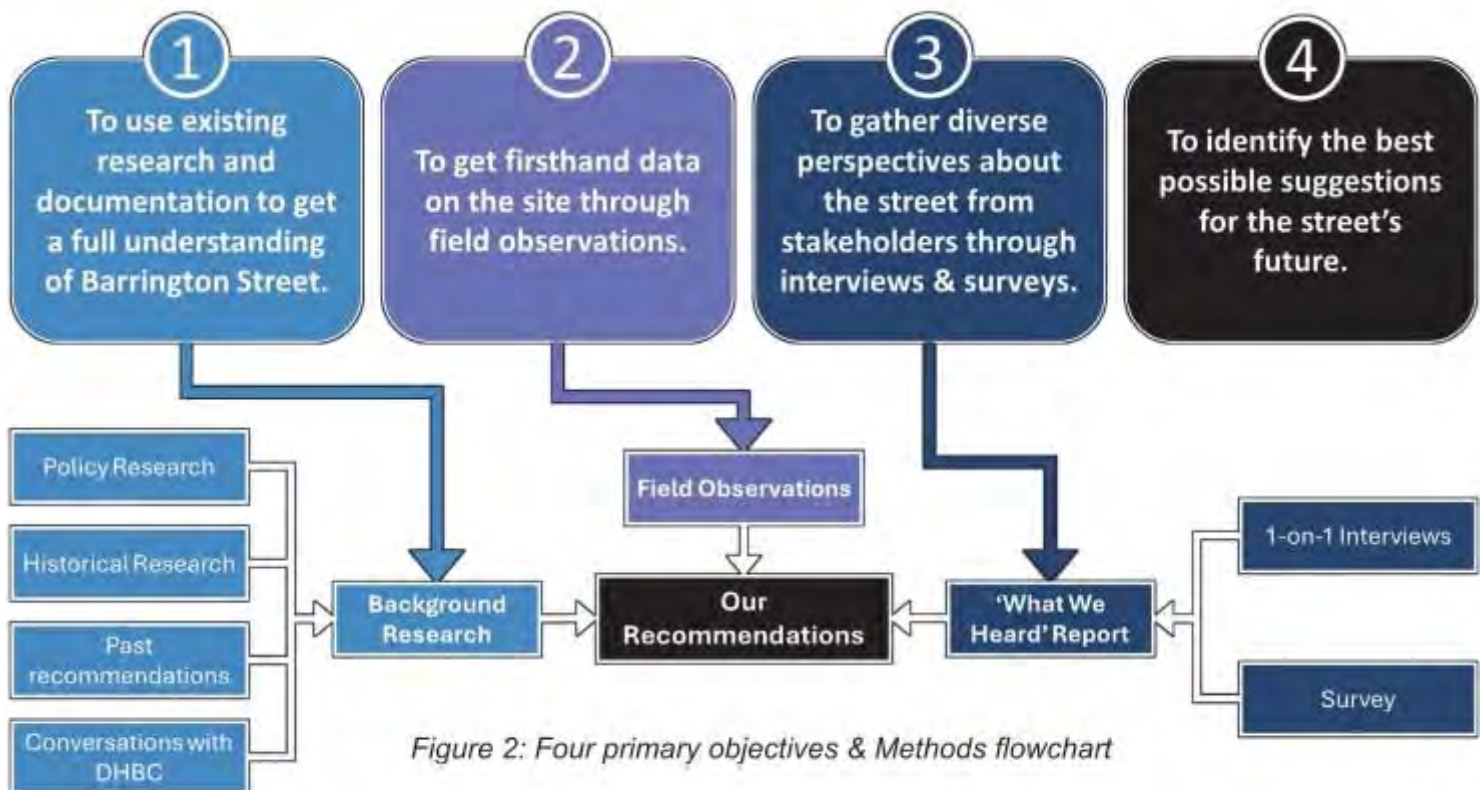


Figure 2: Four primary objectives & Methods flowchart

3. Background

Barrington Street is a key historic corridor in Halifax and continues to play a vital role in the downtown area. The study area measures 1.15 kilometres, stretching from Cogswell Street to Morris Street, and connects major civic, commercial, and cultural destinations. It is also part of the Barrington Street Heritage Conservation District and Old South Suburb Heritage Conservation District; the former features a continuous façade of heritage buildings that significantly contribute to the street's identity.



Figure 3: Study area

Despite its importance, Barrington Street has struggled to maintain the vibrancy and activity expected of a main street. Ongoing challenges, such as ground-floor vacancies, limited pedestrian traffic, transit operations, and the overall street experience, negatively affect the corridor's performance. Although these issues have been highlighted in several previous plans and studies, many proposed improvements have not been fully implemented.

This section offers a brief overview of the current conditions along Barrington Street, drawing from demographic data, real estate trends, field observations, and policy reviews to better understand the factors influencing how the street operates today.

3.1 Demographic Context

The downtown population around Barrington Street has grown significantly since 2016. This growth has been concentrated among younger, working-age residents, with a high proportion of renters and one-person households. Compared to the broader Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM), the area has fewer families and seniors, along with a higher level of residential mobility.

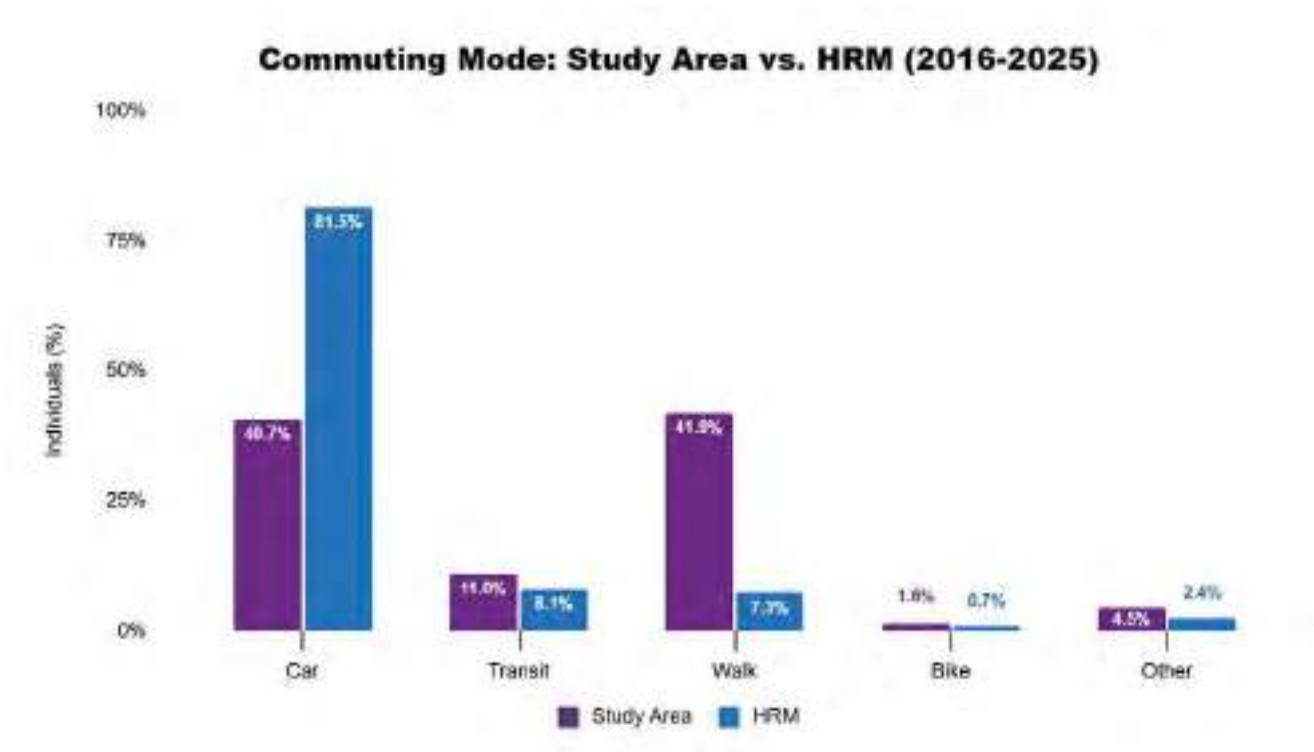


Figure 4: Preferred form of commuting: Study Area vs. HRM (2016-2025)

Commuting patterns reflect this demographic shift. Walking is the most common mode of transportation, followed closely by personal vehicle use, while transit usage is also higher than the municipal average. This suggests that the population is well-positioned to support a more active and walkable street environment. However, income patterns present a more mixed picture, with both lower median incomes and a growing number of higher-income households. This points to increasing inequality in the area, which has implications for who is able to access and use the street's services and businesses.

Regardless of strong population growth and a demographic profile that would typically support street activity, Barrington Street has not consistently reflected this level of vibrancy. This suggests that population growth alone is not enough, and that other structural and physical factors are shaping how the street is used. This disconnect between population growth and street activity highlights broader structural and economic factors, particularly concerning real estate conditions and utilization of space along the corridor.

3.2 Real Estate Conditions

Real estate trends significantly influence activity on Barrington Street. The downtown area has experienced a considerable rise in residential development, with many new rental units added in recent years. Despite this dramatic increase in supply, average rents have increased just as substantially, leading to affordability challenges particularly for lower-income residents.

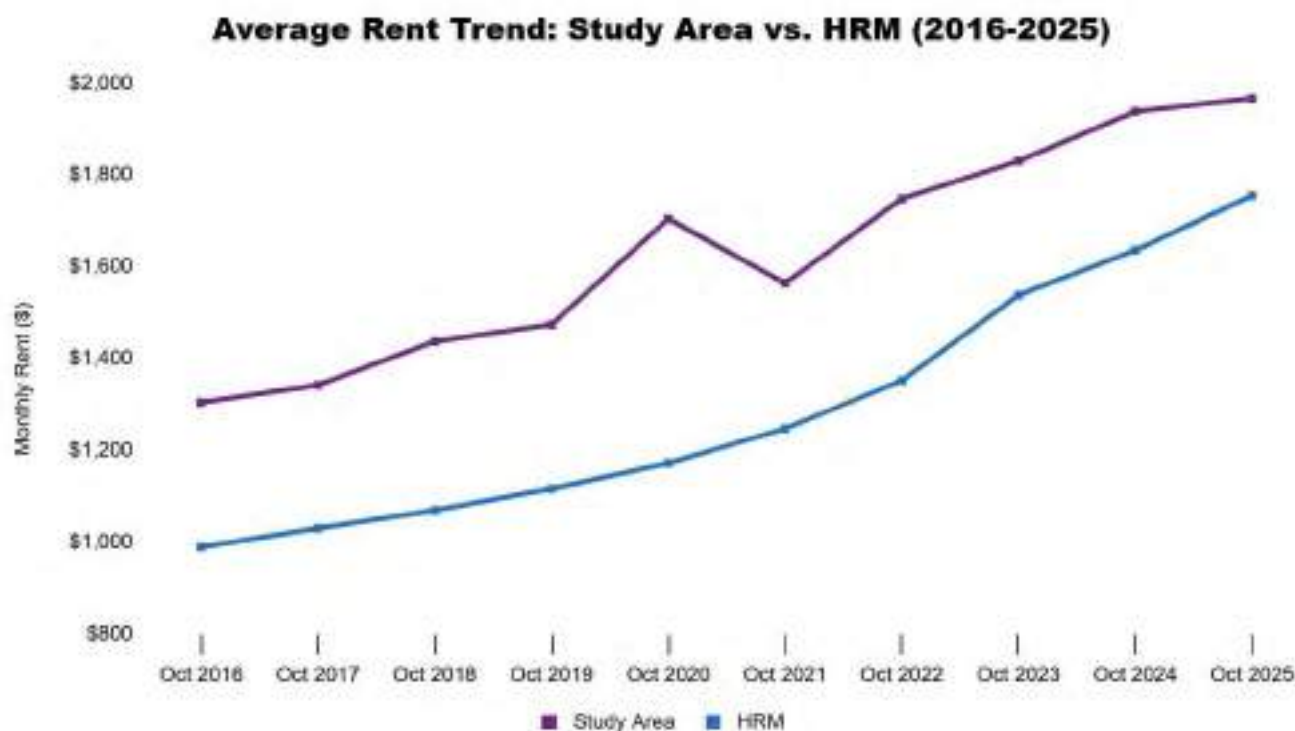


Figure 5: Average rent prices in the study area vs. HRM (2016-2025)

Although the growth in residential units indicates strong demand for housing downtown, the ground-floor commercial activity along Barrington Street remains inconsistent. A noticeable number of storefronts are vacant, and existing businesses are primarily concentrated in the food and beverage sector. This lack of diversity

limits the types of activities available and reduces the street's potential for consistent, all-day use.

Several factors contribute to these vacancies. Rising costs, including property taxes and maintenance, especially for heritage buildings, create financial pressure for property owners. Simultaneously, businesses encounter challenges related to high rent levels, operational costs, and changing consumer behaviour.

Additionally, property ownership patterns play a role in the situation. A smaller number of landlords control large portions of the street, which can impact leasing decisions and timelines. In some cases, this leads to spaces remaining vacant for extended periods as landlords wait for specific types of tenants.

Overall, while the downtown real estate market shows signs of growth, these benefits are not fully reflected at the street level. The persistence of vacancies and the limited diversity of tenants continue to affect the overall activity and perception of Barrington Street.

3.3 Street Context, Function & Use

Barrington Street serves as a major downtown corridor, supporting transit, vehicle traffic, deliveries, and pedestrian movement. Ongoing changes such as the Cogswell District redevelopment further increase the importance of Barrington Street functioning as a more active and connected corridor. However, these functions often compete against one another rather than work in harmony.

Currently, the street prioritizes movement over creating a welcoming environment. It accommodates a high volume of buses and vehicles, making it a crucial part of the transit network. Unfortunately, this heavy traffic also leads to noise, congestion, and a less comfortable experience for pedestrians. The limited curb space adds to the challenge, as it needs to cater to bus stops, delivery zones, and short-term parking.

As a result, while Barrington Street sees a lot of movement, it does not effectively support local businesses or encourage people to linger. Pedestrians are more likely to pass through than stop, which diminishes opportunities for street-level engagement. This conflict between mobility and creating a vibrant public space is a significant issue affecting how Barrington Street operates today.

3.4 Field Observations

Field observations provide insight into how Barrington Street operates on a daily basis. Observations were conducted at key intersections, including Spring Garden Road, Sackville Street, and Duke Street, which represent some of the busiest points along the corridor.

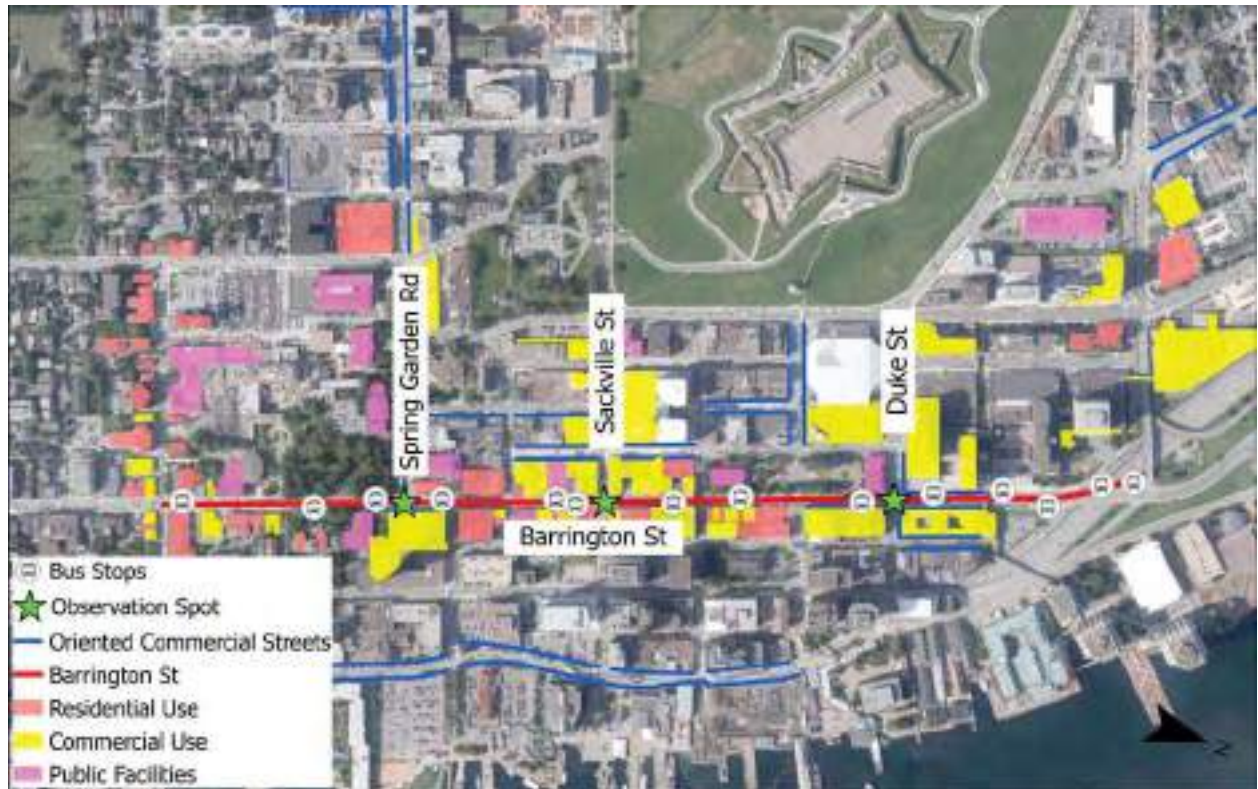


Figure 6: Map of field observation sites

Field observations were conducted focusing on pedestrian activity, street conditions and vehicular activities including public transit. To date, our team conducted four field observations.

The field observations were located along Barrington Street at the intersections of Spring Garden Road, Sackville Street, and Duke Street. The selection of these locations were due to their high pedestrian and vehicular use and activities. However, emphasis was placed on the intersections with Spring Garden Road and Sackville Street as they represented the busiest section of Barrington Street.

The first field observation was conducted for thirty minutes at 5 P.M. on Thursday February 17th, 2026. It was a general observation of the street conditions on

Barrington Street. The locations included were between Duke Street, Sackville Street, and Blower Street.

The second field observation was conducted for thirty minutes at 3 P.M. on Wednesday March 4th, 2026. The purpose of this field observation was to do a detailed count of the population on the street using a mechanical counter. The locations included the Sackville Street and Spring Garden Road intersections.

The third field observation was conducted for thirty minutes at 4:30 P.M. on Sunday March 29th, 2026. The purpose was to keep count of vehicular activities by recording private vehicles, trucks, and buses passing through Barrington Street using a mechanical counter. The locations included the Sackville Street and Spring Garden Road intersections.

A fourth field observation was included to provide more insights into vehicular activities on weekdays compared to weekends. This field observation was conducted on Thursday April 9th, 2026 with the same observation points as the third field observation.

3.4.1 Results

First Field Observation

In our first field observation, we observed a lack of heated bus shelters along the street. This forced riders to wait in temperatures below zero and disincentivized ridership.

Moreover, there was severe traffic congestion at the Sackville Street intersection, reinforcing Barrington Street as a primary transportation corridor for all vehicle types.

Lastly, there is a lack of street benches, meaning transit riders would have to stand during their wait for buses.



Figure 7: Image of a bus near the Barrington/Duke intersection.

As for the flow of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, we noticed an influx entering from the direction of the Cogswell Street intersection and Duke Street. There was also a consistent movement of pedestrians towards the Scotia Square Bus Terminal. However, pedestrians stopping to enter shops was very limited, especially near the Spring Garden Road observation point.

Second Field Observation

The findings of the second field observation were largely related to population count of Barrington Street. On that day, a total of 196 pedestrians crossed the Sackville Street intersection observation point but only eight pedestrians entered shops.

At the Spring Garden Road intersection observation point, we recorded a total of 156 pedestrians crossing the observation point.

Third Field Observation



The results of the third field observation provided us with information regarding the vehicular activity on Barrington Street.

At the Sackville intersection observation point, we were able to record a total of 15 transit buses and 263 cars. At the Spring Garden Road intersection observation point, a total of 15 transit buses and 294 cars were recorded.

Figure 8: Image of field observation on the Barrington/Spring Garden Intersection

Fourth Field Observation

The fourth field observation captured a record of 48 buses and 288 cars at the Spring Garden Road intersection observation point. At the Sackville intersection observation point, 48 buses and 301 cars were counted. This showcased Barrington Street's transit identity as one geared towards weekday workers rather than weekend shoppers.

3.4.2 Implications

The first field observation revealed Barrington Street lacking necessary infrastructure to incentivize pedestrians to use the street and retain them. This was shown through issues such as the lack of heated bus shelters where it might create unpleasant experiences for transit riders on Barrington Street, due to continuous exposure to cold temperature.

The lack of benches on the street might lower pedestrians' desire to stay on the street as there are no resting points, which was partially reflected by the low number of pedestrians entering shops.

However, the traffic congestion, the influx of vehicles and pedestrians entering the street, the consistent movement of pedestrians, the pedestrians and vehicles counting are directly showing that Barrington Street is a very important traffic and transit corridor that connects various major roadways in the road network of downtown Halifax.

This also shows that currently there is a heavier emphasis on vehicular movement than pedestrian attraction on Barrington Street.

3.5 Streetscape

Barrington Street has a strong historic character, featuring well-maintained heritage buildings that contribute to its appeal. The continuous street wall and architectural consistency create a solid foundation for a traditional main street environment. However, the public space does not fully enhance this potential.



Figure 9: Inconsistent sidewalks outside St. Mathew's Church

The sidewalk materials are inconsistent and, in some areas, appear outdated compared to nearby streets that have recently been upgraded. Additionally, there is limited greenery, seating, and street-level features that would encourage people to spend time in the area.

Lighting also affects the street's atmosphere, especially at night. Certain sections feel dark and uninviting, which can negatively impact perceptions of safety and activity. Overall, while the built environment is a significant strength, the streetscape and public realm do not currently foster a vibrant or comfortable pedestrian experience.

3.6 Policy Context

Barrington Street is supported by various municipal plans and policies that promote heritage conservation, mixed-use development, and pedestrian-friendly design. Key documents, including the Regional Centre Plan and Vision 2030, position the street as an important commercial and cultural corridor.

These policies emphasize the creation of a vibrant main street that combines retail, residential, and office spaces while preserving the area's historic character. Additionally, there is a strong focus on increasing the downtown population and encouraging active transportation.

Despite the numerous policy frameworks, many of the challenges identified in earlier plans persist today. This indicates that the issue lies not in the lack of policy direction, but rather in challenges related to implementation, coordination, and follow-through.

3.7 Key Challenges

These findings together, plus several interconnected challenges shape how Barrington Street currently functions. Across all areas of analysis, several key challenges consistently emerge. One of the most visible issues is the number of vacant storefronts along the street. These vacancies reduce activity, affect perception, and create a cycle where fewer people are drawn to the area.



Figure 10: Map of vacant storefronts along study area

There is also a clear tension between the street's role as a transportation corridor and its potential as a pedestrian-oriented main street. High volumes of transit and vehicle traffic make the street functional, but also limit its ability to support a comfortable and engaging public environment.

Economic pressures further complicate the situation. Property owners and businesses are both affected by rising costs, making it difficult to take risks or

support a more diverse mix of tenants. At the same time, the physical environment does not fully support street activity. A lack of seating, greenery, and pedestrian-focused design makes the street less inviting, especially during the day.

Finally, there is a broader issue related to implementation. While plans and ideas for improving Barrington Street exist, they have not consistently translated into visible change on the ground. Taken together, these challenges highlight that revitalizing Barrington Street is not about addressing a single issue, but about responding to a set of interconnected factors that shape how the street functions. The challenges we face are interconnected and reinforce each other, creating a cycle where physical conditions, economic pressures, and street functions all lead to decreased activity. Tackling any one issue in isolation is unlikely to be effective without taking into account how these factors interact with one another.

4. What We Heard

4.1 Interviews

Interviews help to gather insights from people who have lived, worked and studied on Barrington Street at a one-to-one level. Personal experiences and frustrations are necessary to recognize barriers or issues people have that may not be apparent at a surface level. Therefore, interviews are a major aspect of the planning process for this project.

Most suggestions for interviewees were picked by the DHBC, selected based on a diverse range of perspectives, from planners to business owners to political figures. Each was reached out to via email, where in-person or virtual meetings were scheduled and held if agreed to. Notes during the interview were either copied down manually or recorded if the interviewee permitted it. All original recordings have been deleted for the safety and privacy of the interviewed subjects.

In total, eighteen local stakeholders were contacted for interviews, three of which requested their comments be kept anonymous. These are the community members who had interviews with 3105 Studios that did not request to be kept off record:

Name	Relation to Barrington Street	Interview Date
Andrew Childs	Landlord	February 12, 2026
Adriana Afford	Argyle Fine Arts	March 25, 2026
Brendan Waddel	Craig's Cookies	March 18, 2026
Chris Davis	HRM Right-of-Way Manager	February 27, 2026
Erin McIntyre	Senior Municipal Planning Official	March 23, 2026
Frank Palermo	OSO Planning & Design	

Name	Relation to Barrington Street	Interview Date
Jeremy Smith	Freak Lunchbox, Permanent Resident on Street	March 23, 2026
Laura White	Councilor for District 7	March 30, 2026
Robin Gerus	HRM Transit	February 26, 2026
Rob LeBlanc	Eskiticks, Fathom Studio	March 20, 2026
Simon Wilbee	Starfish Properties	March 3, 2026
T.J. Maguire	Planner, Author of 2012 Thesis on Barrington Street	February 13, 2026

Figure 11: Table of confirmed interviewees

Four community members who were reached out to but were not able to confirm a meeting:

Name	Relation to Barrington Street
Andy Fillmore	Mayor
Bill Plaskett	Retired Planner, Specialized in Heritage
David Garrett	Architect
Louis Reznick	Owner, Starfish Properties

Figure 12: Table of unreached target interviewees

4.2 Stakeholder Engagement & Interview Themes

Our team conducted a series of semi-structured interviews with a variety of stakeholders connected to Barrington Street, including municipal staff, property owners, business operators, and planning professionals. Although not all invited participants were able to attend, the completed interviews provided a wide range of perspectives on how the street is planned, managed, and experienced on a daily basis.

While each conversation reflected different roles and experiences, a consistent pattern emerged: the challenges facing Barrington Street are not isolated issues. Instead, they result from overlapping economic, physical, and policy conditions that influence how the street functions.

The conversations were guided by a common set of questions but allowed to evolve based on each participant's unique experiences and roles. This approach provided us with a well-rounded understanding of Barrington Street, encompassing not only policy and design aspects but also the realities of operating a business, managing properties, and working along the street itself.

The challenges highlighted by stakeholders often reside at the intersection of these systems rather than in isolation within one specific area. The following themes highlight the most consistent ideas and concerns raised across interviews.

4.2.1 Common Themes

Throughout the interviews, several common themes emerged despite the varying perspectives of the participants. The following themes outline the key patterns and recurring ideas that arose from these conversations.

Barrington as a Multifunctional Street

Barrington Street is trying to fulfill too many roles at once. It is expected to serve as a major transit corridor, a route for deliveries and servicing, and a commercial main street, while also supporting pedestrian activity and public life. In practice, these roles often compete with one another rather than complement each other. Although policy frameworks promote concepts like "complete streets," participants described the reality as a series of difficult trade-offs.

A significant issue raised was the absence of loading bays on side streets, which forces servicing and deliveries directly onto Barrington, further intensifying these conflicts. As a result, the street is busy in terms of movement but not necessarily active in a meaningful way; there is a high level of movement, but very little that encourages people to stay. This tension between movement and place was a recurring theme, with many describing Barrington as feeling more like a thoroughfare than a destination.

Participants also emphasized that the street cannot be viewed in isolation. Its role within the broader downtown network, particularly in relation to transit, limits how much change can be implemented effectively. This perspective was reinforced in discussions at the municipal level, where Barrington Street was described as primarily functioning as a transportation corridor. The need to accommodate buses, vehicles, and servicing within limited space makes it difficult to introduce pedestrian-oriented improvements without creating trade-offs elsewhere.

Property Monopoly & Vacancies

Vacancy has emerged as one of the most noticeable issues on Barrington Street, with many participants directly linking it to patterns of property ownership. A small number of landlords control large portions of the street, and several people noted that these landlords often prefer to wait for more established or financially secure tenants rather than filling spaces quickly. As a result, storefronts frequently remain empty for extended periods, negatively impacting the overall atmosphere of the street.

Participants described this situation as a cycle: vacant storefronts lead to reduced foot traffic, making the street feel less vibrant. This diminished activity, in turn, discourages new businesses from setting up shop. Some participants also pointed out that businesses are more likely to choose alternative locations, such as malls or other districts, where there is already consistent activity.

In contrast, Barrington was once known for supporting a diverse mix of smaller, independent businesses that contributed to a lively environment. The shift toward larger property ownership and more consolidated retail spaces has reduced that diversity, making the street feel less active and distinctive. This perspective was also reflected at the municipal level, where vacancy was linked to broader development and leasing strategies, particularly a perception of preference for higher-end tenants, which can contribute to longer vacancy periods.

Economic Constraints & Viability

Interviews with property owners and business operators revealed that economic viability is a significant barrier to revitalization. Vacancy rates and tenant turnover are not solely the result of landlord decisions; they are linked to deeper financial pressures affecting both parties. Property owners expressed concerns about high property taxes, rising costs, and the challenges of maintaining heritage buildings while keeping them financially viable. Meanwhile, business operators described facing tight profit margins, high rents, and the risks associated with operating in downtown areas. In some cases, property taxes were reported to be nearly equal to rental income, leaving little room for flexibility. This situation makes it challenging for landlords to lower rents, even if they wish to support their tenants, while small and creative businesses struggle to survive despite the availability of space.

Throughout the interviews, both property owners and business operators shared a common understanding that they are constrained by the same financial pressures, which limit their ability to take risks or support the local independent businesses.

Street Use Pattern (Day vs. Night)

A consistent theme that emerged from the interviews with business and property owners was the changing patterns of how and when people use Barrington Street. Many participants observed a significant decline in daytime activity, especially on weekdays and during lunch hours, which has negatively affected businesses that rely on this time for customer traffic. In contrast, evenings and weekends were reported to show somewhat stronger activity, particularly for restaurants and events.

Additionally, visitors to Barrington Street now tend to have more specific intentions; they come for particular destinations, reservations, or events, rather than simply browsing or leisurely spending time on the street. Several participants attributed this shift to broader societal changes, including post-COVID habits, the rising cost of living, and the increasing prevalence of online shopping and services. As a result, Barrington Street has evolved from a daily-use main street into more of an occasional, destination-based location, leading to less continuous activity throughout the day.

Streetscape Quality & Street Experience

In almost every interview, participants emphasized the physical experience of the street. Barrington was often described as uncomfortable, noisy, and lacking essential elements that encourage people to stay. Issues such as limited seating, lack of greenery, minimal weather protection, and narrow or cluttered sidewalks all contribute to this perception, along with the frequent noise from buses and traffic. Many participants noted that the street feels more like a pass-through corridor rather than a place to spend time. While people don't actively avoid it, they also don't linger, because there's little to invite them to stay.

This situation is directly linked to vibrancy and activity patterns, especially during the daytime. If the street doesn't feel comfortable or engaging, people are less likely to stop during lunch hours or throughout the day, which exacerbates the already weak daytime economy. In this way, the physical conditions of the street reinforce broader patterns of low foot traffic and limited activity. Several participants suggested that improving the streetscape by adding seating, greenery, weather protection, and more active storefronts could help change this dynamic, making the street more inviting for longer stays.

Transit

Transit emerged as a key topic in nearly every discussion, highlighting both its benefits and challenges. On one hand, transit is crucial for ensuring accessibility and attracting people to downtown. On the other hand, the high volume of buses and current transit operations on Barrington contribute to noise, congestion, and a less enjoyable experience for pedestrians.

Participants noted a clear tension between the need for efficient movement and the desire for a more people-oriented street. Limited curb space for bus stops, loading, and servicing further complicates this issue, making it difficult to reallocate space without affecting other parts of the downtown network. Consequently, transit is not just a mobility concern but a major factor shaping the overall experience of the street.

This creates an ongoing trade-off between accessibility and livability that remains unresolved, often reinforcing the perception of Barrington as a corridor to pass through rather than a destination to enjoy.

Beyond these operational challenges, the discussion also addressed the broader impact of transit on downtown activity. While fares are relatively affordable, limitations in service quality and reliability were identified as factors that reduce the

number of people coming downtown. This, in turn, affects street activity and the viability of local businesses. Additionally, the presence of diesel buses contributes to noise and air quality concerns, further impacting the pedestrian experience.

Policy vs. Implementation

From a planning and policy perspective, a consistent theme that emerged from the interviews was the disconnect between what is documented on paper and what is actually implemented in practice. Participants acknowledged that Halifax has many strong concepts reflected in downtown plans, mobility frameworks, and cultural strategies, but they felt that these do not always translate into visible changes. This gap is often linked to the complexity of decision-making, which involves multiple departments, competing priorities, and the need to balance various uses of public spaces.

This sentiment was echoed in an interview with TJ Maguire, whose earlier work on Barrington highlighted many of the same issues that persist today, suggesting that progress has been limited over time. More broadly, participants noted that projects can shift direction late in the process or face challenges in securing support, which can slow progress or undermine intended outcomes.

A key takeaway from these discussions is the importance of understanding who holds influence and how decisions are made. This understanding is just as crucial as the design concepts themselves. Municipal processes, council priorities, business groups, and individual stakeholders all play significant roles. Advancing projects requires not only strong ideas but also the ability to navigate these complex dynamics. At the same time, challenges within the municipal system were identified as barriers to progress. Decision-making was described as fragmented, with multiple departments and competing priorities making coordination difficult. This often leads to delays and limits the implementation of even well-supported initiatives.

Identity & Vision

Many interview participants expressed a strong belief that Barrington Street currently lacks a clear identity. While they see the potential for it to function as Halifax's main street, they feel it does not offer compelling reasons for people to visit or linger. The street faces strong competition from areas such as the Halifax Waterfront, the North End, and Downtown Dartmouth, which provide more defined experiences and attractions. In addition, Barrington is missing everyday amenities that support regular

activity, such as essential retail and services. As a result, participants described the street as lacking both destination appeal and day-to-day functionality.

It was clear from these discussions that revitalization must go beyond addressing individual issues; it requires a clear definition of what the street is intended to be. Without this clarity, improvements risk feeling disconnected or temporary, rather than contributing to a cohesive and lasting sense of place.

This perspective was also reflected at the municipal level, where there was recognition that Barrington Street lacks a clearly defined identity. While there is potential to strengthen the street through clustering uses such as arts, culture, or retail, the absence of a shared vision makes it difficult to guide consistent improvements or establish a strong, unified sense of place.

4.3 Engagement & Interview Summaries

The themes outlined above highlight several interconnected challenges currently affecting Barrington Street. The key challenges identified through interviews include:

- High vacancy rates and concentrated ownership limit the diversity of businesses that can thrive in the area
- Economic constraints affect both property owners and business operators, reducing flexibility and long-term viability
- Changing use patterns have led to weaker daytime activity and more destination-based visits
- Physical design limitations and transit pressures reduce comfort and the overall quality of the public realm
- A gap between planning intentions and implementation continues to slow visible progress
- A lack of a clearly defined identity limits the street's ability to function as a cohesive and vibrant main street

Overall, these findings indicate that revitalizing Barrington Street requires a coordinated approach that addresses physical design, economic conditions, and governance together, rather than treating these elements in isolation.

4.4 Public Survey

3105 Studios conducted a public survey to capture public opinion of the study area. The primary goal of this project was to gather real-world perspectives on the current conditions and future opportunities for the revitalization of Barrington Street.

The survey was designed to be inclusive, targeting a wide range of individuals who interact with the street on a regular or occasional basis. The target audience included business owners, property owners, residents, local employees, and visitors. By distributing the survey in partnership with the DHBC, the research team was able to reach a broad and highly relevant local demographic.

In total, the survey successfully collected 142 anonymous responses within 3 weeks. The questionnaire was organized into brief sections that explored the respondents' personal connection to the street, their perceptions of current physical and economic conditions, and their specific priorities for future improvements.

There were 17 questions in the survey, including multiple-choice questions for demographic sorting, 1-to-5 Likert scale ratings to quantify perceptions of safety, vibrancy, and infrastructure, and open-ended questions to capture thoughtful, detailed feedback. This structure was designed to capture both measurable insights and deep qualitative data to meaningfully support recommendations for Barrington Street's long-term vitality.

To better understand these dynamics from the perspective of the people who use Barrington Street, the results are divided into four chapters.

4.4.1 User Profile and Street Engagement

The first section of the survey established the profile of the 142 respondents and how they engage with Barrington Street. When asked about their relationship to the street, the largest group identified as employees at 33.5%. This was followed by customers at 22% and visitors at 19.4%. Business owners and residents made up smaller portions of the respondents at 8.8% and 9.3%.

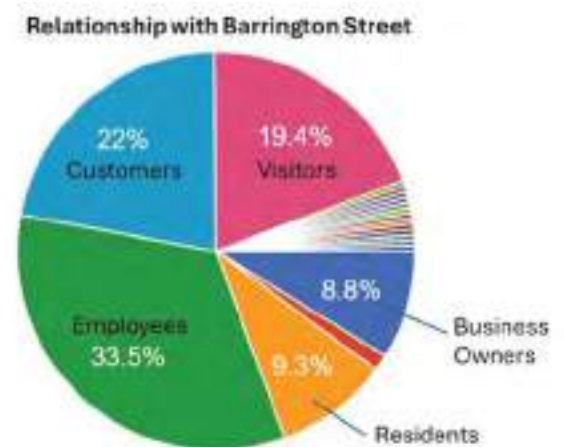


Figure 13: Survey respondents' relationship to Barrington Street

Years Residing on Barrington Street

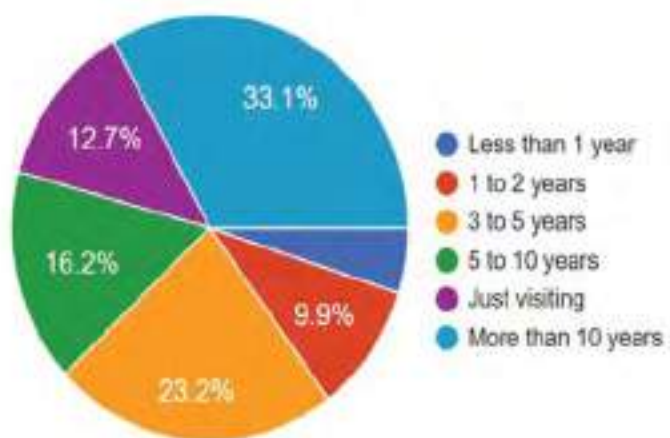


Figure 14: Survey respondents' amount of years residing on Barrington Street

The survey then asked how long these individuals have lived, worked, or operated in the area. The majority of respondents have a history with Barrington Street spanning multiple years. A significant portion of 33.1% have been connected to the street for more than 10 years. The second largest group at 23.2%, has been in the area for three to five years, while 9.9% have been present for one to two years. Those engaged for less than one year made up only 4.9%, while 12.7% were just visiting.

Finally, respondents were asked to identify their main ways of getting to and from the street. Walking was the most common method at 57%. Using a personal vehicle followed closely at 51.4%. Public transit was utilized by 31% of the respondents. Active transportation such as biking captured 15.5%, while 7.7% used a combination of methods and 5.6% used rideshare services.

Primary Mode of Transportation to and from Barrington Street

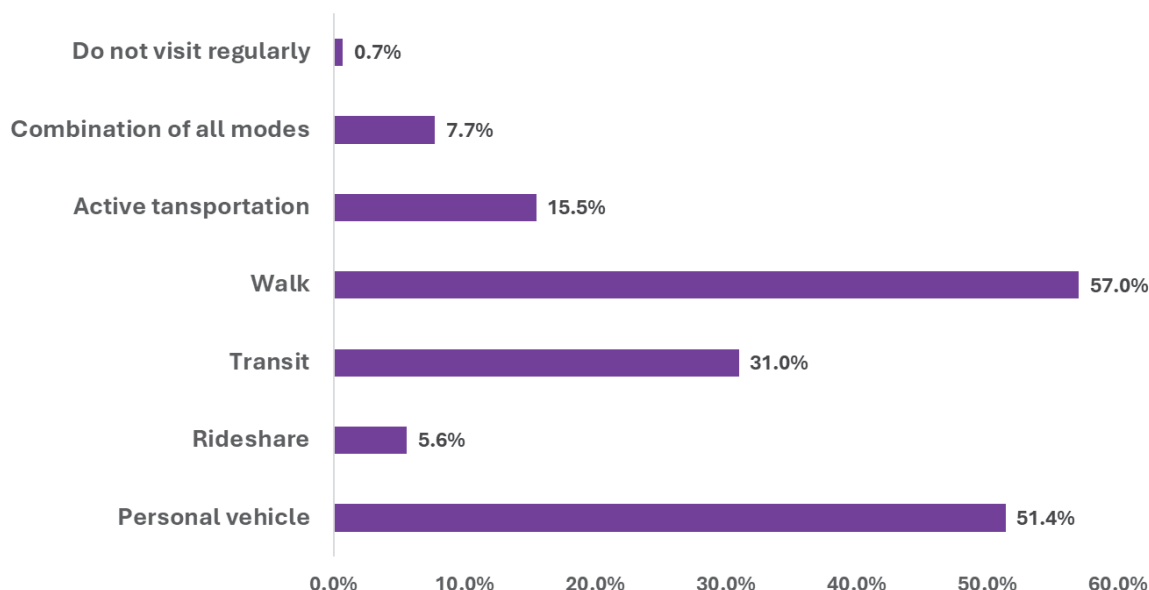


Figure 15: Survey respondents' primary mode of transportation to and from Barrington Street

This data clearly shows that the street functions primarily as an employment and commercial center. Because employees, customers, and visitors make up the vast majority of respondents, the economic vitality of the street highly depends on how it accommodates and attracts this daily influx of people. In addition, the duration data reveal a deeply rooted core community. The largest group has been on this street for over ten years. Transportation data shows that even though over half of the users travel on foot, almost an equal number rely on personal vehicles to access the street. This tight margin indicates that the physical space of the street struggles to simultaneously accommodate large volumes of vehicles and active pedestrians.

4.4.2 Physical and Commercial Challenges

In the second section of the survey, respondents rated the current conditions on Barrington Street using a 1 to 5 scale, where 1 meant strongly disagree and 5 meant strongly agree. When asked if the street feels vibrant and welcoming, the average rating was 2.53. Specifically, 33.8% gave a rating of 2 and 42.3% gave a neutral rating of 3. Only 0.7% strongly agreed. Regarding the mix of businesses, the average score was 2.98. Most respondents, 39.4%, felt neutral while 21.8% agreed that the business mix works well.

The statement that vacant storefronts negatively impact vitality received the strongest consensus with an average rating of 4.46. A total of 65.5% strongly agreed. When evaluating safety at night, the average rating was 3.25. The largest group, 31.7%, gave a score of 4. The lowest score was assigned to the physical environment, including sidewalks, lighting, and cleanliness, which averaged 2.25. For this question, 35.2% strongly disagreed that the environment encourages people to spend time there, and another 29.6% disagreed.

On transit, respondents gave an average score of 3.43 when asked if transit access supports street activity. However, the statement that improved transit frequency would increase their use of the area received a more mixed response, averaging 3.12, with 28.4% neutral and 19.9% strongly disagreeing.

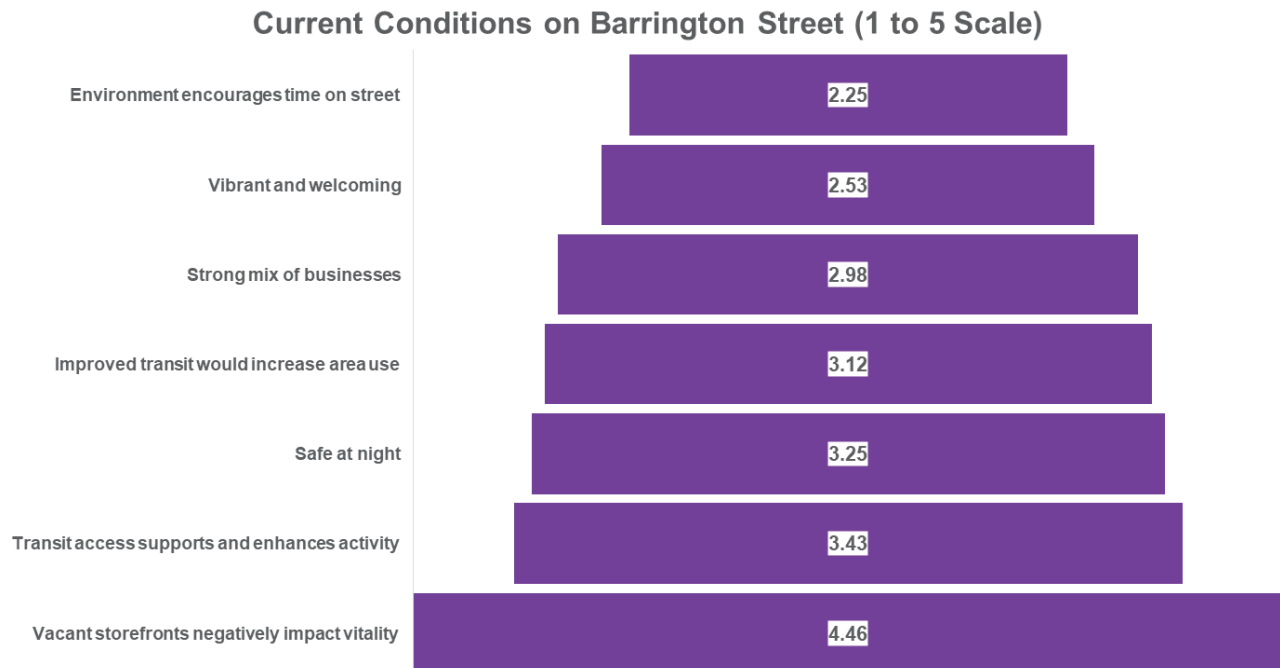


Figure 16: Survey respondents rating of current Barrington Street conditions

The data from this section paints a picture of a street struggling with significant physical and commercial deterioration. The low scores regarding the physical environment and overall vibrancy highlight a severe lack of welcoming public space. When nearly 65% of users explicitly state that the physical environment actively discourages them from spending time there, it becomes clear that the ground floor infrastructure is failing its community.

This physical decline is deeply intertwined with the commercial reality - the overwhelming consensus that vacant storefronts are destroying the vitality of the area. People recognize that empty buildings create dead spaces that contribute to the unwelcoming atmosphere. While the mix of existing businesses received a mediocre score, the sheer volume of vacancies overshadows any positive commercial aspects. Interestingly, while safety at night scored slightly better than other metrics, the overall physical neglect likely suppresses evening activity regardless. The transit responses further complicate the situation. While users acknowledge that transit is necessary for access, they are highly divided on whether more buses would actually make them want to visit the area more often.

4.4.3 Revitalization Priorities Pedestrians and Public Realm

The third section of the survey shifted focus to establishing priorities for the street's revitalization. When respondents were asked to rank the types of transportation infrastructure that should be prioritized, "Pedestrian" infrastructure was overwhelmingly ranked as the first priority. Conversely, "Car" infrastructure was most frequently ranked as the fourth or fifth priority. "Bus" infrastructure showed strong support as a second or third priority, while "Bike" infrastructure generally fell into the third or fourth priority slots. Following this, a multiple-choice question asked respondents to identify which specific areas should be focused on for revitalization. The top priority selected was "Public realm improvements" such as sidewalks, streetscape design, and lighting, chosen by 78.7% of respondents. This was closely followed by "Reducing ground floor retail vacancies" at 72.3%. Other significant focus areas included "Supporting existing businesses" at 63.1% and "Transit improvements" at 36.2%.

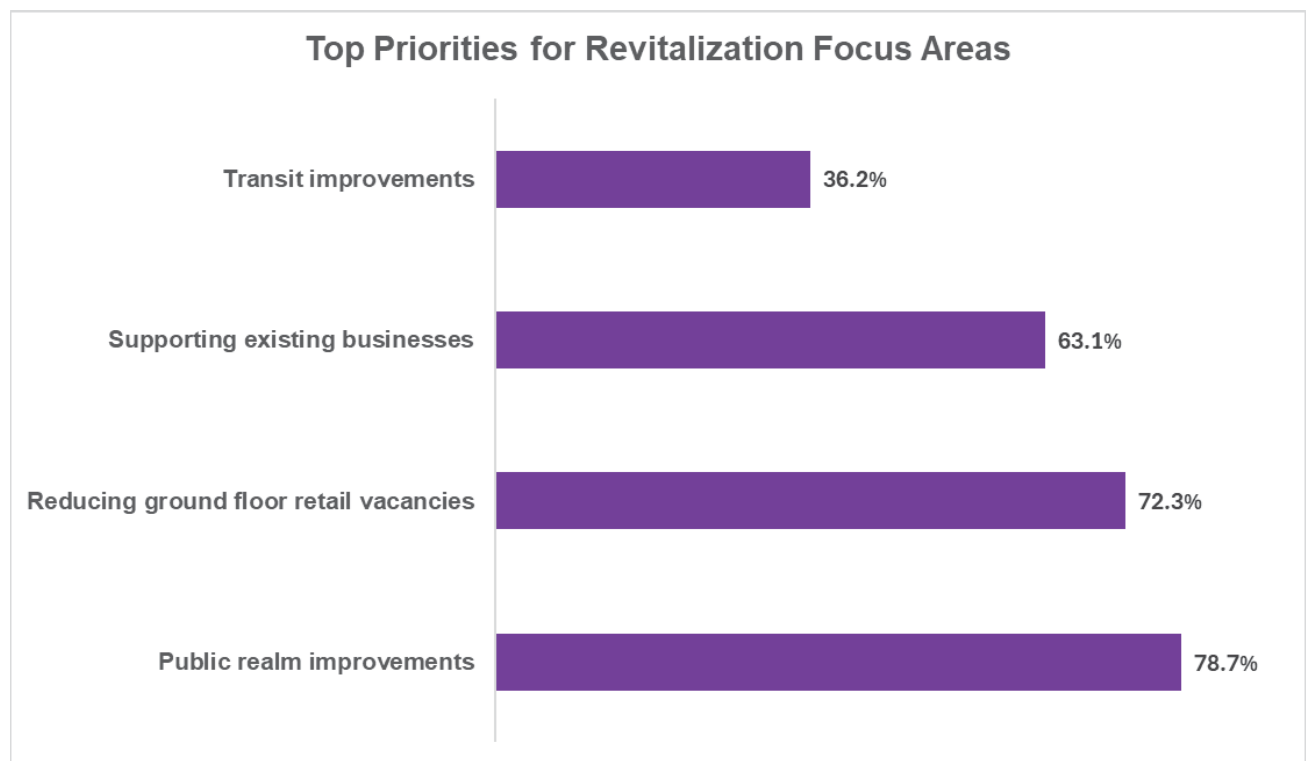


Figure 17: Survey respondents' preferred priority areas for revitalization

This concentrated data shows the community eager to reclaim the street for people. The transportation ranking makes it clear that the traditional street hierarchy needs to be flipped. By placing pedestrians first and cars last, respondents are demanding that

sidewalks and pedestrian safety become the primary focus of any infrastructure investment, transforming the area from a vehicle corridor into a welcoming destination. This aligns with the overwhelming call for public realm improvements. The community recognizes that physical degradation is the most pressing issue, viewing expanded sidewalks, added greenery, and better lighting as essential revitalization steps. Furthermore, the strong emphasis on reducing vacancies and supporting existing businesses proves that physical and commercial environments are deeply interconnected. The community understands that a beautifully paved street with empty storefronts remains a dead space.

4.4.4 Commercial Ecosystem and Future Vision

The final section of the survey collected open ended feedback, letting respondents describe what they want for the street in their own words. When asked what types of businesses or spaces they would like to see, the most common request was for practical, daily amenities. People repeatedly called for affordable grocery stores and supermarkets. Several respondents noted that while a grocery option exists nearby, a more affordable regular store is urgently needed in the downtown core to support those who live and work there. Alongside essential groceries, there is massive demand for small, locally owned shops, independent cafes, bakeries, and hardware stores. A clear theme emerged from the written responses: a rejection of luxury retail. Participants want businesses that cater to everyday needs rather than high end boutiques aimed only at wealthy consumers. They noted that luxury businesses often experience high turnover and generate less customer loyalty. Respondents also expressed a strong desire for arts and cultural venues, community spaces, and galleries to be integrated into the commercial landscape.

When asked what Barrington Street should be primarily known for in the future, the responses clustered around three main visions. A significant portion identified the area as a future shopping destination. Another distinct group strongly advocated for an arts district, with specific mentions of leveraging historic properties like the empty Khyber building to create spaces for local artists to make and show work. However, the strongest consensus came from respondents who merged these two ideas, envisioning a hybrid shopping and arts district. They want a vibrant daytime and nighttime city center filled with retail, food, and culture. The concept of the street serving as a transit hub generated highly conflicting views. Some users acknowledged its current evolution into a north south bus corridor and a key transit hub, but many others pushed back against this identity. These dissenting voices stated that the area should not be defined primarily as a busy transit hub or a

highway. They argued that the focus must remain on pedestrian friendly commercial and artistic spaces.

Analyzing these responses reveals a commercial demand focused on daily utility. Across diverse groups, there are repeated requests for basic grocery stores, pharmacies, and hardware stores. This exposes a critical gap in essential services. Employees, customers, and regular visitors all rely on the downtown core for daily routine shopping. The community is saying that the retail environment must serve everyday survival rather than transient tourism. High end boutiques do not meet the actual needs of the people who use the street most frequently. On future identity, the community vision is complicated. By advocating for a combined shopping and arts district, respondents are asking for a street that balances economic activity with cultural engagement. The friction over the transit hub label highlights a practical physical problem. Heavy bus traffic makes the street uncomfortable, generating constant noise and pollution. Large vehicles crowd the narrow roadways, making the sidewalks highly uncomfortable for people trying to shop, eat, or enjoy public art.

4.5 Public Survey Summaries

Participants are deeply connected with Barrington Street while dissatisfied with its current physical and commercial condition. Key findings from the public survey can be concluded as follows:

- **Participant Demographics:** The street serves primarily as a commercial and employment hub. Employees represent the largest user group at 33.5% while 22% are customers. 33.1% of respondents have maintained a connection to the street for over a decade.
- **Commuter Mobility:** Walking is the primary mode of access at 57% though personal vehicles follow closely at 51.4%. This narrow margin creates significant physical tension between vehicle volume and pedestrian safety in a constrained space.
- **Physical and Commercial Unsatisfaction:** Respondents expressed low satisfaction with street vibrancy at 2.53/5 and the physical environment at 2.25/5. There is a powerful consensus as 65.5% strongly agree that vacant storefronts are the primary factor destroying the area's vitality.
- **Infrastructure Priorities:** The community explicitly demands a reversal of the traditional street hierarchy. Pedestrian infrastructure is the top priority while car-centric infrastructure is ranked as the lowest.

- **Revitalization Focus:** Public realm improvements like upgraded sidewalks, lighting, and greenery are the most requested interventions at 78.7%. This is followed closely by the need to reduce retail vacancies at 72.3%.
- **Commercial Needs:** Feedback reveals a critical gap in daily essential services. Residents and employees call for affordable grocery stores, pharmacies, and hardware shops instead of luxury retail or high-end boutiques.
- **Future Vision:** There is a strong desire for Barrington Street to evolve into a hybrid shopping and arts district. However, significant friction exists regarding its role as a transit hub because many feel heavy bus traffic creates noise and pollution that detracts from a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere.

5. Jurisdictional Scan

This section reviews policy, programming, and design interventions in jurisdictions around the world. Focus was given to small and medium sized cities in Europe and North America. Stand out or novel examples from larger cities are also included based on their applicability to Halifax.

Due to the broad scope of research topics, results are organized by theme and intervention rather than jurisdiction.

5.1 Ground Floor Vacancies

5.1.1 Vacant Storefront Tax

Vacancy taxes are charges levied against owners of unleased properties. They are relatively new tools that have grown in popularity in the past decade. The most common form is taxes on vacant residential units (ie. Toronto and Vancouver). However, other forms of vacancy taxes include commercial properties.

San Francisco (United States)

The clearest example is in San Francisco. Established in 2022, the “Commercial Vacancy Tax” (CVT)¹ applies to vacant commercial properties in specific districts.



Figure 18: Map of San Francisco where CVT applies (green applies, red is exempt)

¹ Treasurer & Tax Collector: City and County of San Francisco (n.d.)

Properties must be on the ground floor, adjacent or tangent to public right of way, and not be residential. Properties in mixed-use buildings must register commercial and residential uses separately. The tax applies if the unit has been vacant for 182 days or more, consecutively or non-consecutively. Exemptions are given for the following circumstances:

- Permit application period
- Construction period
- 183 days after first completion of application for conditional use permit
- Up to two years after date of severe damage that rendered property unusable
- Tenant with a lease of at least two years that operated a business for at least 182 consecutive days
- Organizations exempt from income tax

The tax is charged by linear foot of frontage with revenue raised directed to the City's "Small Business Assistance Fund". It has three tiers based on the number of years the property has been vacant. The tiers are as follows:

- \$250 per linear foot for vacancies of one year
- \$500 per linear foot for vacancies of two years
- \$1,000 per linear foot for vacancies of three years

San Francisco also charges a \$1,850 annual fee for registering vacant storefronts². 50% of the fee can be reimbursed if the vacancy is filled that year.

Analysis of the CVT shows mixed and unclear results. Most evidence for the tax's success in reducing vacancies is anecdotal and neighborhood specific³. City staff pointed to a drop in vacancies the year after the tax's introduction, however it was unclear whether it was due to filling said vacancies, or non-compliance from property owners⁴. A two-year grace period for failing to file the tax return was granted, but the grace period is over as of 2025.

Due to the recent implementation of the tax, the recent changes to its grace period, and lack of publicly accessible retail vacancy data, it is difficult to determine whether the tax is successful city-wide.

² City and County of San Francisco (n.d.)

³ Melendez, L. (2025) - ABC 7 Eyewitness News

⁴ Dickey, M. (2025) - Gazetteer: San Francisco

Oakland (United States)

Established in 2018, the “Vacant Property Tax” (VPT) targets all property uses. Rather than a dollar per foot tax, the VPT charges a flat rate of \$3,000 per parcel for “parcels with ground floor commercial activity but vacant”⁵.

This model has an outsized impact on smaller property owners compared to San Francisco’s example. A flat rate allows for larger property owners to pay the same as smaller properties. Additionally, because the rate is per parcel rather than per foot of frontage, this again allows for buildings on larger lots with potentially multiple vacant units to pay the same rate as the owner of a smaller lot with potentially a single vacant unit. Larger landlords can better absorb the tax whereas smaller landlords with smaller or fewer revenue sources will feel its impact more.

Washington, D.C. (United States)

Washington, D.C. is an example of an approach several cities take to tax vacant properties. Rather than a specific vacancy tax, the District modified its property tax code to have a distinct class for vacant properties⁶. Vacant buildings (aka Class 3) are taxed at a rate of \$5 per \$100 of value.

Class 3 buildings can be residential or commercial. Properties vacant for over 90 days are deemed vacant and must be registered as such. The property is automatically assigned Class 3 status if the owner fails to register a vacancy within 90 days.

The public can report vacant properties to the Department of Buildings. An inspector will then be sent to inspect and verify. If the inspector deems the property vacant, its tax status is updated to Class 3⁷.

Washington boasted a 4.6% retail vacancy rate in Q3 2025, a rate below historical norms⁸. This low rate could be due to a host of factors - the District’s status as the national capital being one of them - so it is difficult to determine how much impact can be attributed to the distinct vacant property class.

⁵ City of Oakland (n.d.)

⁶ Office of Tax & Revenue: District of Columbia (n.d.)

⁷ DC Department of Buildings (n.d.)

⁸ Matthews (2025)

Relevance to Barrington Street

Unlike income taxes, a targeted vacancy tax is not meant to be a revenue source relied on to pay for essential city services. A vacancy tax is meant to change undesirable behaviours. The behaviour, as it relates to Barrington Street, is the purposeful refusal to lease vacant storefronts. This behaviour is possible due to the monopolization of property ownership by large landlords on the street.

As more properties are accumulated by the same owner, more control is granted over the makeup of tenants along the street. The owner can choose to withhold properties for the perfect tenant, or better market conditions to negotiate higher rent. These issues were frequently mentioned in our stakeholder engagement and survey results.

To be effective in shifting behaviours, a tax must be high enough to dissuade it being considered just another cost of doing business. San Francisco and Oakland charge only a few thousand dollars a year, an amount that could easily be ignored by larger landlords. Oakland has the additional issue of charging small and large landlords at the same flat rate, perpetuating the inequities between the two.

Establishing vacant properties as their own unique class in the general property tax structure, like in Washington's example, addresses both shortcomings. At a rate of \$5 per \$100 of value, the penalty would be more severe.

For example: 1557-1563 Barrington Street is currently valued at \$2.4 million⁹. Assuming the three storefronts are worth half the building's value (\$1.2 million) and all three are vacant, the total tax levied would be \$60,000. Currently, this property pays approximately \$78,000 annually.

Washington's ability to follow up on public reports of vacancy also potentially tackles issues related to self-reporting of vacant properties. The combination of fines and automatic classification in the property tax scheme is a much stronger deterrent against non-compliance.

Creating a separate class for vacant buildings within the existing tax structure has two additional benefits: lower administrative costs due to not creating an entirely new system of collection and reporting, and better public optics as the Municipality would be defending changes to an existing tax structure rather than introducing a *new* tax.

⁹ Property Valuation Services Corporation

Recommendation: HRM creates a new property tax rate for vacant properties that has a base rate considerably higher than the current commercial rate of 2.588 per \$100 of value. Property owners must be required to register their property as vacant within 90 days and pay a registration fee that is refundable should the vacancy be filled within a year. Additionally, HRM should create an office for the public to report vacant properties to curtail potential avoidance of self-registration.

5.1.2 Meanwhile Use

Long-term leases require long-term financial viability, an increasingly difficult projection to show prospective landlords. Present economic uncertainties due to trade conflicts with the United States and recent inflationary pressures on supply chains have created a difficult financial environment, especially for small local businesses. Comments from local property owners reaffirm the need to provide alternatives with less risk. A potential solution is “meanwhile use leases”.

“Meanwhile use” is the temporary use of vacant or underused properties. There are no uniform rules that precisely define a meanwhile use. This flexibility is actually a strength as the precise program can be tailored to local contexts. There are two general types of users associated with meanwhile uses: retail vendors and artists.

Space Project (Various)

Arts workers are among the lowest paid workers in the country. The national median annual income for creative and performing artists is \$18,400¹⁰. Reports frequently cite the lack of affordable rehearsal or workshop space as a major barrier to artists’ ability to create¹¹, which directly impacts the cultural output and vibrancy of a city.

Toronto-based theatre company Why Not Theatre is in the third iteration of its “Space Project” program. The project pairs live performance artists with owners of vacant or underused space to provide free or affordable rehearsal space.

Why Not chose to explore this program after a period of growth. They had been giving advice to develop a permanent brick and mortar theatre space, but pursued a meanwhile use program for two reasons: 1) they were wary of the high costs and

¹⁰ Statistics Canada (2022)

¹¹ Toronto Arts Council (2023)

financial risks of maintaining a permanent location, and 2) Why Not's leadership was interested in developing the company's social purpose activities¹².



Figure 19: Space Project: Northgate Mall, Unit 78 - Regina (Mary Anderson)

Initially, Why Not planned to act as a broker between artists and real estate owners, however projections indicated that long-term administrative costs would be too high. Additionally, most scenarios still required artists to pay for rehearsal space, which Why Not felt compromised the intention of the program.

Why Not relaunched a decentralized model in 2024.

This model was a consortium of arts-based, or arts-friendly organizations that acted as brokers between real estate owners and artists. This spread administrative costs across organizations and allowed for the Space Project to expand to Hamilton, Kitchener Waterloo, Regina, and Edmonton¹³.

Théâtre français de Toronto (*Toronto*)

A similar, smaller program is currently being run by the Théâtre français de Toronto (TfT). TfT secured 985 Woodbine Avenue, a vacant former bank. TfT worked with the local Councillor to secure the space and uses it for a variety of purposes. Use of the space is organized privately by TfT with artists they are familiar with at no cost to the artists themselves¹⁴.



Figure 20: Rehearsal at 985 Woodbine Ave - Toronto (Braeden Soltys)

¹² Why Not Theatre (2022 - business plan shared privately)

¹³ Sokoloski, R. - Mass Culture (2025)

¹⁴ La Roche-Francoeur, E. (private correspondence)

Créer des ponts (Montréal)

Meanwhile spaces have also been used for visual arts. Managed by Art Souterrain - a local not-for-profit specializing in atypical locations - "Créer des ponts" was a 2021 city-wide initiative pairing local artists with vacant or unused properties to create and present their art.



Figure 21: *Créer des ponts - Montréal (Thierry du Bois)*

Billed as a festival, 60 emerging artists were given residencies in 17 vacant spaces across Downtown Montréal for three months. The festival was made possible primarily through support from the City and an alliance of real estate interests that provided the spaces¹⁵.

"Créer des ponts" differs from festivals like Nocturne in that physical space was provided for creation as well as presentation.

Prominent Retail Brand Activations (Various)

Outside of arts-based uses, a trend has emerged in recent years where prominent brands will launch temporary pop-up locations.



Figure 22: *Truffaut's "Green Addict" Pop-up - Paris (Storefront)*

For 200 years, the French garden retailer giant Truffaut operated mostly in non-urban settings. This 2017 pop-up allowed the brand to test its ability to reach a new market with urban customers. It also focused on product types geared for smaller apartments and homes rather than their typical larger garden products¹⁶.

¹⁵ Art Souterrain (n.d.)

¹⁶ Kerbrat, A. - Storefront (n.d.)

Dutch retailer HEMA coordinated an Easter-themed pop-up in both Amsterdam and Paris. This example of seasonal activation strategies is designed to provide experiences digital retail cannot offer. While sales are important, the goal is focused more on promoting brand recognition¹⁷.



Figure 23: HEMA's Easter-themed Pop-up - Paris (Storefront)



Figure 24: "NikeLab chicago re-creation center" - Chicago (designboom)

basketball court¹⁸.

Nike partnered with Chicago designer Virgil Abloh on this temporary outlet and social purpose workshop. Multi-disciplinary mentors would be paired with 10 local artists whose work would be displayed in the store. Customers could also bring in old sneakers to be repurposed into particulate in the creation of a local

These examples showcase the potential for attracting large brands to new markets by experimenting first. The success of these initiatives, however, relied on their location in prominent, high traffic commercial areas. Barrington Street does not have the same reputation as these areas, despite its potential for being a commercial high street. Additionally, Survey respondents highlighted a desire for more daily-use retailers like affordable grocery stores, pharmacies, hardware stores rather than luxury retailers. Until Barrington Street redevelops an identity as a shopping destination, meanwhile uses may be better targeted at local entrepreneurs and community serving initiatives.

¹⁷ Kerbrat, A. - Storefront (n.d.)

¹⁸ Stevens, P. - designboom (2019)

Vancouver's former "The Chinatown Experiment" is an example of a locally-focused initiative. The company opened its 600 square foot vacant storefront to small pop-up concepts in 2012. After two years of success hosting 70 concepts, including the world's first cellphone signal-repelling cafe, the company rebranded to this open space aiming to expand its operations¹⁹. Some of thisopenspace's clients went on to open long-term businesses afterwards²⁰.



Figure 25: thisopenspace interior - Vancouver (thisopenspace)

The organization did not survive the economic hardships caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, however it demonstrates a successful technique in activating underused space while creating opportunities for local businesses and artists.

The challenge with a model like this openspace, is that it requires the long-term commitment to running a program like it. This would require owning property, or being a long-term lease holder that then subleases to the temporary business. In the absence of a dedicated meanwhile-use organization in Halifax, DHBC could act as an intermediary between prospective tenants and landlords. The only risk to DHBC

¹⁹ thisopenspace - Vancouver is Awesome (2014)

²⁰ Lee, J. - Vancouver Sun (2014)

in this scenario is having to dedicate labour hours, which could detract from the commission's other initiatives depending on the program's design.

Vacant to Vibrant (San Francisco)

San Francisco-based not-for-profit SF New Deal is an example of an intermediary. The organization creates programs that support small businesses in Downtown San Francisco. Their "Vacant to Vibrant" program pairs interested parties together, be they property owner or prospective tenant. SF New Deal supports the partnership through logistical support (ie. permit applications, communications with the City), and financial grants²¹.

There are two grant streams:

- Activators - \$2,000 to \$5,000
- Property owners - Up to \$5,000 (covers fit out costs and utility expenses)



Figure 26: 7x7 Social Club - San Francisco (Vacant to Vibrant)

²¹ SF New Deal (n.d.)

SF New Deal itself signs leases up to three months long. This helps clear common roadblocks related to who takes on liabilities. It is unclear, however, if SF New Deal is responsible for insurance or if those costs are passed on to businesses. SF New Deal works with the San Francisco Office of Small Businesses on partnerships interested in extending past the initial three month lease. Since its 2023 inauguration, Vacant to Vibrant has launched 35 pop ups in 27 storefronts across Downtown San Francisco. 50% of these pop-ups converted to a long-term lease²².

General Considerations

The main advantage of meanwhile use spaces is reduced risk. Businesses and organizations do not have to lock themselves into long-term leases. Additionally, the short-term nature of these leases requires much lower start up costs. In 2025, 44% of American pop-up shops cost less than \$5,000 to open²³.

Tailored arts-based programs do not always create pedestrian activity in the same way as pop-up shops, unless the program includes a performance or exhibition component. Regardless, these programs allow for tenants with low to zero revenue potential, like artists, to access space they might not otherwise be able to access.

The best approach to logistics regarding meanwhile uses depends on the initiative's goals. Programs run through centralized intermediaries help mitigate concerns about liabilities and insurance, but have higher administrative costs. These programs would be best suited for retail-based revenue-generating uses, or arts festivals.

Low to zero revenue generating uses, or artist support initiatives can also be centrally organized, but the goal of the program would not be to cover expenses through program participation. External funding sources like Canada Council for the Arts or Arts Nova Scotia could potentially be leveraged, however arts funding is very competitive with low application success rates.

Recommendation: establish a new “Events & Community Activation” role at DHBC to create and run meanwhile use programs alongside the Placemaking Manager and Membership Engagement Manager. HRM’s increase of the DHBC tax rate from 0.13 to 0.14 in the 2026 budget could help cover this cost. From this increase, an additional \$45,500 will be raised from properties within the study area alone²⁴.

²² Vibrant to Vacant by SF New Deal (n.d.)

²³ Capital One Shopping (2025).

²⁴ Manual calculations based on PVSC data

5.2 Placemaking

5.2.1 Open Street Events

Open Street Events are novel ways for residents to experience their city. They typically draw large crowds, providing opportunities for both local brick and mortar businesses and start-up vendors.

Single Events (Various)

A Canadian city to look to for several examples of street closure festivals is Toronto. Dozens of multi-day festivals are hosted across the city, the largest examples being Pride and Caribana. These large events are coordinated by organizations whose sole purpose is to run these events.

Smaller, albeit still well attended, festivals are also abundant in Toronto several of which require the closure of major transit corridors. Three events to highlight are the Cabbagetown Festival, Do West Fest, and Roncesvalles Polish Festival. All three are organized by their respective local business improvement areas.



Figure 27: Cabbagetown Festival - Toronto (Cabbagetown BIA)

The Cabbagetown BIA is particularly impressive given it is a three-person team with only two people dedicated to events. The festival has received several awards in its 47-year run²⁵. About 1.2 km of road is closed during the weekend festival, roughly the same length as the Barrington study area. The closures require three transit routes to be rerouted.

HRM has its own history of open street markets. The most relevant example is the Open Street Sunday series. Previously known as SWITCH: Halifax, Open Street Sundays are hosted in different parts of HRM throughout the year. Events were most recently held in Dartmouth and the North End, however coordinated same-day street

²⁵ Cabbagetown Business Improvement Area (n.d.)

closures have occurred. In 2022, Agricola Street, Argyle Street, Grafton Park, and Spring Garden Road were utilized for the Halifax Open Street Sundays event. This was done in collaboration between business associations, the Municipality, and planning and design firms²⁶.

A challenge to these types of festivals is the logistical burden related to street closures. The high cost and complexity of securing several permits is a barrier to organizations with limited resources. Comparisons of Toronto and HRM's permit application process reveal similar levels of complexity, however Toronto's process is slightly more transparent and easier to navigate.



Figure 28: 2022 Halifax Open Street Sundays poster

Downtown Pedestrian Mall (St. John's)

An alternative approach to open street events are ones that occur regularly. St. John's recently converted a COVID-era program into a permanent fixture of summers in the City.

Dubbed the "Downtown Pedestrian Mall" (DPM), this summer-long initiative sees the closure of Water Street - one of St. John's primary commercial and transit corridors - to personal vehicles from 12 PM to 10 PM. Delivery drivers and "other business related traffic" can access the street from 8 AM to noon²⁷. Business owners are able to create temporary patios on the sidewalk and into the street so long as they do not block emergency vehicle access. The DPM occurs from the last day of school to Labour Day each year.

Three programs that occur during the DPM are the "Markets on Water", "Community Event Space", and "Music @" series. Markets on Water takes place every Thursday starting in mid-July. Market organizers are given space on Water Street for free and supply materials for vendors who are charged for participation. Markets can accommodate up to 60 vendors who must set up in parking stalls.

²⁶ Waterfront Media HFX (2022)

²⁷ City of St. John's (n.d.)



Figure 29: Downtown Pedestrian Market - St. John's (Gabby Peyton)

The City also provides space for free for community events or experiences that fall outside of traditional markets. Called "Community Event Space", organizations are encouraged to "get creative and engage with the community".

Finally, the Music @ Concert series occurs throughout the City from July to September. The signature concert is at Harbourside Park, directly off of Water Street. The concerts are free and are on Fridays from 12:30 to 1:30.

The total cost of the DPM to the City is approximately \$367,000, the majority of which are security fees²⁸. This budget does not include indirect expenses like the costs associated with rerouting buses.

The public was surveyed about potential changes to the DPM, however staff recommended to the City that the program remain largely unchanged. Minor

²⁸ City of St. John's (2026)

recommendations were made such as improving training for contracted security, encouraging the creation of a clean up incentive for business, and expanding aspects of cultural programming.

The DPM is particularly relevant to Barrington Street due to its similar profile to Water Street. Both are historic commercial corridors with heavy bus and car use. Both streets have neighbouring pedestrian-oriented streets (Argyle Street and George Street) and both run parallel to their respective waterfronts, though St. John's waterfront uses are more industrial compared to Downtown Halifax's.

First Thursday Street Gallery (Portland, OR)



Figure 30: First Thursday Street Gallery - Portland, OR
(Travel Portland)

Another recurring event example is Portland's "First Thursday Street Gallery". The program differs from St. John's DPM in that it is only on the first Thursday from April to October from 5 PM to 9 PM. Four blocks are closed to pedestrians only where local artist vendors display and sell their art. The event draws crowds up to 10,000 and supports over 150 local artists²⁹.

The local arts-based not-for-profit Urban Art Network has been running the event for the past 24 years.

Like Toronto, Portland has a culture of hosting street fairs. 12 fairs are planned for May to September 2026 alone.

Living Streets (Ghent)

A more radical approach to open street events is Ghent's "Living Streets" program. The Living Streets program is a recent addition to a multi-decade strategy to reduce

²⁹ Travel Portland (n.d.)

car usage in central Ghent. Since 1997, the small Belgian city has been slowly and progressively pedestrianizing the historic city centre in an attempt to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote more active modes of transportation³⁰.

Living Streets is a resident-driven closure of roads for a wide variety of events. Events are typically smaller, and more intimate, but there are no limitations to what is possible. Living Streets is unorthodox in that it is entirely resident-driven. Residents generate the idea and then approach community groups and the City who support the idea through provision of street furniture, signage, and permits. Ultimately the residents are responsible for set up, maintenance, and organization³¹.

The program's managers lauded the democratic, community centred focus of the program design. They spoke about the increased social cohesion in addition to the usual benefits of a placemaking program. Another factor they cited was the City's commitment to supporting the program's success by directly providing resources where applicable.



General Considerations

Figure 31: Living Streets - Ghent (Hanne Geutjens)

Open street events have a layer of complexity indoor events do not. In HRM, street closures require several different permits that quickly add costs and administrative hours to a project. The previous examples show different strategies to mitigate this problem.

Depending on the scale of the event, an organization whose purpose is to host said event would be better suited to navigate the complexities of the street closure process. This said, the Cabbagetown Festival example shows that having staff with the right knowledge may be enough. DHBC's prior history of collaboration with other associations for Open Street Sundays shows another approach to lessen the administrative burden.

³⁰ McAskie, L. (2021)

³¹ Stad Gent (n.d.)

It should be noted that this report fails to showcase the true scale of popularity for this type of placemaking. Examples ranging from Auckland to Mexico City were examined and could easily have been included, but were not for sake of brevity. What every example showcases, however, is open street events acting as a magnet for residents and visitors alike.

Recurring programs like St. John's Downtown Pedestrian Mall could also act as a way to ease into a transit-only street. It builds public acceptance of the idea while allowing the Municipality to test impacts on traffic flow. The narrowness of Barrington Street may not allow for such an initiative, however, so would require a feasibility study. To transition historic city centres from a car-centric present, increasing alternative transportation options is imperative; Ghent proves it is possible when a city sticks to those commitments.

Recommendations: DHBC create a regular open streets event along Barrington Street. This responsibility could be led by the new "Events & Community Activation" role recommended in the previous "Meanwhile Use" section of this report. HRM should also conduct a study of street widths along Barrington Street to assess its suitability for a lighter version of St. John's Downtown Pedestrian Mall where restaurants would be allowed to open patios on sections of the street.

5.2.2 Public Art

HRM's public art policy does not mandate public art be included in municipal projects. If, however, a municipal project does include public art, no less than 1% of the project's budget must be dedicated towards public art³². Incentive or bonus zoning in land use by-laws also sets aside funds for the creation of public art in private developments. Because the inclusion of public art in municipal projects is at the discretion of Council, third parties have stepped in to fill gaps.

DHBC's "Gritty to Pretty" program is one such successful example of increasing public art in Downtown Halifax. Because of its success, this section will instead focus on public art initiatives that target vacant storefront windows.

³² Halifax Regional Municipality (2020)

Urban Art Gallery Beautification Program (St. John's)

The City of St. John's runs a program known as the Urban Art Gallery Beautification Program. Targeted specifically for Water Street and Duckworth Street, two core downtown streets, property owners of vacant buildings can request the City display artwork in their windows.

Vinyl prints of pieces from the City's Civic Art Collection are displayed in vacant storefront windows. Installation and removal is handled by the City and property owners may not alter the prints once hung. Prints will remain for 12 months, or until the property is leased or sold³³. In March 2026, City staff recommended to expand the program and consider sanctioned graffiti opportunities.



Figure 32: Urban Art Gallery - St. John's

³³ City of St. John's (n.d.)

Portland, ME (United States)

Portland, Maine has a similar initiative to St. John's. Rather than draw from the City's Civic Art Collection, instead Portland property owners can choose from a juried selection of 2D art. Selected artists will receive a \$300 stipend if their piece is chosen³⁴.

St. Catharines (Canada)

Another program that leverages local artists' work is in St. Catharines. The City went further than Portland by compensating artists \$1,720 plus installation fees. This rate was based on the Canadian Artists' Representation/Le Front des Artistes Canadiens (CARFAC)'s recommended fee structure for non-advertising public art installations. Artists must be Niagara-based and are selected by a jury³⁵.

Recommendations: HRM create a dedicated program for displaying vinyl prints in vacant storefronts. This juried program should commission new or showcase existing contemporary Nova Scotian artists at CARFAC's non-advertising public art installation fees. DHBC should also consider waiving general liability insurance requirements for Gritty to Pretty applications, and consider covering insurance as part of grant fees. This would remove potential financial barriers for artist participation in the program.

5.2.3 Heritage-led Cultural Corridor

Bredgade (Copenhagen)

Bredgade is one of the historic streets in Copenhagen which represents an urban form, cultural clustering and a planning framework that prioritizes public life. The street of Bredgade is shaped by a strong mixture of design-focused retail, galleries and cultural institutions. Bredgade corridor is associated with Danish design and art



Figure 33: Bredgade Street, Copenhagen

³⁴ City of Portland (n.d.)

³⁵ City of St. Catharines (2024)

galleries are concentrated in and around the street reinforcing it as a cultural destination.

The Designmuseum - originally a public hospital adapted into a cultural space that includes a museum garden, cafe and a design shop - demonstrates how historic buildings can be repurposed to meet changing urban needs while remaining active³⁶. This transition of usage shows how an existing building can be adapted over time to meet changing needs rather than keeping it vacant and unused.



Figure 34: Extended seating space in Mormous cafe along Bredgade street



Figure 35: 5 free standing display cabinets at the entrance of Copenhagen's design museum

Additionally, these clustering of related uses contributes to a coherent street identity and supports the destination based visit. The extended seating spaces in the restaurant and cafes along the Bredgade street helps to invite and engage more pedestrian flow and enhances on the street activity.

³⁶ VisitCopenhagen (2026)



Figure 36: Cafe inside Design Museum



Figure 37: Public garden inside Design Museum

At the city level, Copenhagen emphasizes creating public spaces that support walking, resting, and everyday social interaction³⁷. This strategy highlights practical interventions such as widening pavements, improving lighting, removing obstructive street furniture, adding more resting places at strategic points and adding greenery to enhance pedestrian comfort. Though these are city-wide principles, they are reflected in streets like Bredgade, where public realm design supports everyday activity without relying on temporary programming.

Rue Saint-Paul (Montréal)

Rue Saint-Paul in Old Montréal is the oldest street and the central spine within the historic district, which shows how the heritage corridors can remain active and economically viable over time. As part of a protected heritage district, this street reflects a planning approach that integrates heritage conservation along with contemporary urban uses.

The City's Plan emphasizes maintaining Old Montréal as a living neighborhood and a major cultural destination, which is intended to remain active and adaptable throughout³⁸. This approach supports Rue Saint-Paul where historic buildings are preserved and contemporary uses such as restaurants, cafes, gallery spaces and retails are accommodated which supports in the tourism, local business and street-level activity³⁹. This clustering of uses contributes to a strong sense of place,

³⁷ City of Copenhagen (2011)

³⁸ Ville de Montreal (2021)

³⁹ Old Montreal (n.d)

where historic setting enhances both the visitor experience and the economic function of the street.

The recent redevelopment initiatives along Rue Saint-Paul Ouest further demonstrates how heritage corridors can be enhanced by improving pedestrian experience and accessibility, while maintaining the street's character and reinforcing its role as a shared public space⁴⁰.

Beyond these physical improvements, the corridor is operating as a pedestrian-oriented environment shaped by tourism and everyday activity. Although the street is not

formally designated as a pedestrian-only street, some features such as outdoor dining, high pedestrian flow and limited vehicular movement has allowed the space to function as an informal shared space that prioritizes people especially during certain times of the year⁴¹. This informal pedestrian prioritization plays an important role in supporting street vitality and heritage-led placemaking.

Rue Saint-Paul renowned as one of Montréal's oldest streets has transitioned from being a commercial trade route to a contemporary cultural and tourism corridor shows evidence on how historic infrastructure can adapt to changing new urban needs without losing its original identity.



Figure 38: View along Rue Saint-Paul



Figure 39: Rue Saint-Paul

Turret Arts Space

The examples from Bredgade and Rue Saint-Paul show that successful heritage streets are not just about preserving heritage buildings but how these spaces are

⁴⁰ Ville de Montreal (n.d)

⁴¹ Tourisme Montreal (n.d)

activated in everyday use. In both cases, ground-floor uses like restaurants and cafes, galleries, and small retail business create a consistent activity throughout time and helps the street to function as a destination rather than just a historic setting.

A particular example of repurposing heritage properties to create a cultural corridor is the Turret Arts Space. The Turret is an important piece of Queer history in Halifax that hosted the Khyber Arts Centre for Arts. The building was sold to the Turret Arts Space Society in 2018 to be revitalized into an arts incubator and performance venue with ground floor food and beverage services. The project has experienced setbacks recently with HRM staff recommending the Municipality buy back the building from the Society. The Society publicly refuted staff's statements, claiming the Municipality actively worked against the project's success in an unfair and concerning manner.

3105 Studios reviewed the HRM staff report, Turret Arts Space Society's public response, and consulted stakeholders familiar with the matter. The primary issue is the substantial increase in project costs from the Society's initial project phase. Municipal staff claimed this increase was indicative of the Society's inability to manage the project⁴². Staff feared the Society would not be capable of managing the long-term operational costs, and that the project's updated plans did not reflect their initial proposal. The Society's rebuttal consists of three main arguments⁴³:

- 1) Municipal staff failed to engage the Society throughout the process - including with the Society's requests for more information and to provide the Municipality updates. This failure specifically resulted in six months worth of delays due to non-responsiveness and repeated last minute meeting cancellations.
- 2) Construction costs skyrocketed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Arts organizations typically operate with comparatively limited resources, making the construction cost increase especially impactful on the Society.
- 3) The updated plans were a reflection of any development project that moves from initial pre-development to execution. Updated plans were crafted to ensure the project was aligning with HRM's policies and plans.

Though increased project costs are concerning, our team finds the Society's explanation to be credible and convincing. It also reflects a broader pattern of concerns in our stakeholder interviews about a lack of communication and support from the Municipality. Inadequate financial support in maintaining heritage properties,

⁴² Halifax Regional Municipality (2025)

⁴³ Turret Arts Space Society (2026)

in particular, was a frequent comment. The case of the Turret Arts Space is a more high profile example of this phenomenon.

General Considerations

Both Bredgade and Rue Saint-Paul operate under different conditions than Barrington Street. Both streets are not major transit routes so they experience a lower traffic volume allowing them to focus on pedestrian movement. Barrington Street has been serving as a key transit corridor, making it difficult to directly apply the strategies as a complete pedestrian street.

Despite these differences, there are still several approaches that can be adapted. For example, strengthening ground-floor activity and supporting adaptive reuse can help maintain both the economic vitality and the street's identity. Likewise, prioritizing sidewalk improvements and pedestrian amenities can also help enhance street use and activity without disrupting the transit.

The examples from these cities also suggest that change does not need to happen all at once. Overall these examples show that a successful heritage street is defined by activity and experience rather than the absence of vehicles. For Barrington Street, the focus should be on balancing the mobility along with placemaking strategies as active storefronts, introducing flexible seating and creating a pause space along the street to create a more engaging and activity based corridor that can function on the everyday activity within the street by itself.

Though Halifax has already demonstrated how temporary street activation can work through initiatives like the Open Street Sundays festival, Barrington Street does not have any consistent program by itself. Although these open street concepts are not heritage focused, they do highlight the potential on how small-scale and culturally sensitive programs can support street activity. These small interventions might help to translate the existing movement into street-level activity. In this way, Barrington Street should not only position itself as a pedestrian-oriented corridor but a transit-supported cultural street, where transit brings people to the area and an active and engaging public realm encourages people to stay and interact within the spaces.

Recommendation: Barrington Street should focus on activating its underutilized and heritage building by encouraging small, active ground floor uses along with supporting adaptive reuse for cultural and commercial purposes. At the same time, placemaking intervention such as small scale cultural programs or festivals can help to create inviting streets that encourage people to stay.

Additionally, HRM should consider increasing the funding for the Heritage Incentives Program to help property owners offset the higher costs of heritage facade maintenance. HRM should also cease its plans to buy back the Turret Arts Space and provide the \$1.5 million in funding requested by the Turret Arts Space Society as well as future funding required to guarantee the project's success.

5.3 Arts District

The results of our team's public survey revealed a desire for Barrington Street to be designated as an arts district. There are several examples of arts districts that differentiate from HRM's Cultural District or Heritage District designations. While HRM's focus is on heritage preservation and interpretation, these districts focus more on the curation and success of arts-affiliated businesses and organizations.

Pittsburgh Cultural District

Since 1984, the non-profit arts organization Pittsburgh Cultural Trust has been managing and revitalizing 14 square blocks of downtown Pittsburgh. The Trust owns much of the land within the Cultural District with a total one million square feet of property⁴⁴. A former redlight district, the Cultural District is now home to new parks, galleries, and theatres. Theatres range in size from over 2,000 to under 200 seats and host performances of operas, symphonies, plays and musicals. The District generates an estimated \$303 million from over two million annual visitors.



Figure 40: Byham Theatre Marquee - Pittsburgh (Pittsburgh Cultural District)

⁴⁴ Greiner, M. (n.d.)

⁴⁶ City of Tucson (2004)

The District comprises early 20th century warehouses used for rail-based industrial activities. After years of disinvestment, the area was slated to be demolished for a major highway project. The highway project was abandoned and artists slowly began moving in in the 1980s, taking advantage of the low cost of space. The buildings were master leased with the artists subleasing them for "shoestring" amounts⁴⁶.



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the land. The State transferred ownership of the relevant lots to the City to help facilitate the District's creation.

Today, the District is managed by the Warehouse Arts Management Association (WAMO), a not-for-profit organization. WAMO manages three affordable studio facilities, 15 art businesses, 70 artist studios, and 6,000 square feet of exhibition space⁴⁷.

General Considerations

Barrington Street and surrounding areas are already set up well for an arts district designation. The second highest ground floor use identified in our team's field observations is arts programming or arts supply retailers. Many office spaces are currently and have historically been leased to arts not-for-profits and companies working in live performance, film and television, video game development, and visual art. Arts institutions such as Neptune Theatre, NSCAD, and the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia are also present on neighbouring streets. This said, there are several challenges to creating an Arts District in the area.

Pittsburgh's Cultural District is an amazing example of civic investment in the arts. Despite being a city of a similar size, the size of the district is unrealistic for Halifax. Pittsburgh's proximity to New York makes it an ideal destination for pre-Broadway trials. Canada's theatre industry does not operate in the same structure. Canadian theatre is much more regional with the largest local theatres having their own incubation programs - Neptune Theatre's IGNITE program being an example. Instead of original American shows aiming to end up on Broadway, original Canadian shows aim to tour around the country. The Canadian Actors Equity Association's (CAEA) collective agreements' terms for touring productions make it very expensive for this to happen compared to local theatres programming their own seasons⁴⁸, so these types of tours are rare.

The need for arts venues in HRM is high, however it is smaller venues that are the more urgent priority⁴⁹. HRM's venue study called for these future venues to be clustered in the downtown core. The issue with Barrington Street as a location for an arts district is that the vast majority of properties on the street are privately owned except for government offices and Government House. In the previous examples,

⁴⁷ Warehouse Arts Management Association (n.d.)

⁴⁸ Canadian Actors Equity Association (n.d.)

⁴⁹ Halifax Regional Municipality (2024)

either the City or an affiliated arms-length not-for-profit owned the land which sidestepped the issue of profit-driven rent seeking. To make an arts district using this method would require expropriation, a highly improbable and expensive endeavour.

Restraining an arts district solely to Barrington Street is also unrealistic given the proximity of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia on Hollis Street, and Neptune Theatre and the Lighthouse Arts Centre on Argyle Street. A broader arts district encompassing these areas and potentially Granville Mall - given its use by NSCAD - could be possible. In this situation, tools like Pittsburgh Cultural Trust's Shared Services run by a dedicated management organization like the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust could make coordination across a district possible.

With higher vacancy rates in C class office buildings, of which there are many along Barrington Street, there is also an opportunity to convert these office units into affordable artist live-work studios as demonstrated by Tucson's Warehouse Arts District, Toronto's former Artscape properties, or Vancouver's Granville Island. The need for these types of units are further supported by the previously mentioned venue needs study, the growing income inequality in the area, and the general financial precarity of artists in the Municipality.

Ultimately, the creation of an arts district requires a deeper, dedicated study that goes beyond the scope of this report. The current tenant mix on Barrington Street, nearby streets with existing arts uses, and strong public interest in the concept of Barrington as an arts district indicate that it would be wrong to dismiss the idea outright.

Recommendation: HRM to conduct a feasibility study analyzing possible tools and properties appropriate for creating an arts district in Downtown Halifax with Barrington Street as its central spine.

5.4 Public Realm Improvements

5.4.1 Green Infrastructure

Barrington Street currently lacks street trees, planter boxes, or parks. Green infrastructure like these are important elements with many social and health benefits. Adding greenery to a street reduces the urban heat island effect, improves air quality, improves energy efficiency in certain cases, and boosts urban biodiversity.

The sun's arc combined with Barrington Street's narrowness and building heights causes heavy shadows throughout much of the day, severely hampering tree growth. Previous studies of the street have recommended against street trees, focusing instead on parks and open spaces⁵⁰. The new Cogswell District has completed several new parks and parklets in the north section of the study area, however the remainder of the street has fairly limited space for new parks or other green infrastructure.



Figure 42: Concept for additional Grand Parade entrance - (HRM)

Suggested improvements that 3105 Studios reaffirms is adding an additional eastern entrance to Grand Parade, and creating a parklet by the service entrance to St. Mary's Glebe. The additional eastern entrance to Grand Parade has a benefit in addition to increased access to greenery. It breaks up the long stretch from George Street to Duke Street where there is currently only a retaining wall. This wall creates an imposing, uninviting atmosphere that discourages pedestrian use of the area.

⁵⁰ Maguire, T. (2011)

Green Walls (Various)

Because there are very few opportunities for adding green infrastructure to the street, unorthodox options should be considered. Since previous studies, green walls and roofs have emerged as recent trends in environmental design.

The Barrington Heritage Conservation District provides protections for most buildings in the study area. As such, there are almost no opportunities for adding a green wall. The Maritime Centre, however, has tremendous potential and could transform the drab exterior into a more inviting landmark. The building is exposed to far more sunlight than the rest of the street due to its positioning at an intersection, and lack of obstruction from neighboring buildings and uses. Its large vertical slabs of concrete with no windows provides an ideal canvas for installing panelized green walls.



Figure 43: Spring Garden facing Maritime Centre - HRM (Braeden Soltys)



Figure 44: Duke's Court green wall - Woking (Vitiropia)

Most large scale green wall projects are for new builds. Duke's Court in Woking, UK is a recent example of a retrofit that added a green wall to an existing building. At 460 m², the living green wall is believed to be the tallest of its kind in the UK outside of London⁵¹. Duke's Court was led by the company Vitiropia who specialize in massive green wall installations around the world.

⁵¹ Vitiropia (n.d.)

Another company working in this field is Paisajismo Urbano. Founded by Spanish botanist Ignacio Solano, the company also specializes in green walls and green facades. They have developed a modular system that allows for taller installations. An example that is close to the Maritime Centre's height is in Medellín. At 92 m in height, this project is the second tallest vertical ecosystem in the world. Paisajismo partnered with Gancol SAS on the installation using their patented technology⁵². Installation of the modular system takes approximately 20 days per 100 m² and is done by Paisajismo Urbano. The company has different systems they use for implementation, but every system installs a superstructure onto the building itself. Some systems require more maintenance than others.



Figure 45: Edificio Green: Ecosistema Vertical - Medellín (Paisajismo Urbano)

General Considerations

Large scale green wall projects hold potential for increasing greenery in urban areas with limited space. The main challenge with the Maritime Centre is that it is a privately owned building. Implementation of this kind of technology could have significant costs and while there are some systems that are self-sufficient, there would be some long-term regular maintenance to pay for. [note: review of HRM policies to determine possible applicable green incentives for property owners, to be included in final draft]

The Maritime Centre is one of the identified properties with vacancy issues. The costs of implementing a green wall may be a deterrent in this context, but simultaneously it could be viewed as a draw for prospective tenants. Regardless, it has the potential of turning the building into an iconic landmark.

⁵² Paisajismo Urbano (n.d.)

5.4.2 Public Amenities

Norway's Oslo Karl Johans Gate Street comes with adequate public amenities such as benches offering free resting places, drinking fountains and public washrooms. This positions the street as a comfortable and accessible place for all demographics to linger without making commercial purchases⁵³.

Similarly, The Royal Mile Street in Edinburgh, Scotland provides pedestrian comfort through the provision of benches, waste bins, bicycle racks and removable bollards to separate vehicular and pedestrian traffic which greatly influence the street's usability and comfort⁵⁴.

Street Furniture

Street Furniture can be categorized as small scale physical elements that are placed within the public spaces to support the useability, comfort, and social interaction. Some of the common types include benches for seating/waiting, lighting, waste bins, bike racks and way finding signage.

Benches and Bench Materials

Despite being a major transit and heritage corridor in downtown Halifax, Barrington Street currently has very limited or no seating benches. As per previous studies, existing benches are primarily concentrated near specific locations such as George Street, which are often integrated with planters and providing few seating opportunities along the street⁵⁵. This lack of evenly distributed seating benches reduces the opportunities for resting, waiting, and informal social interaction for transit users and pedestrians. As a result, Barrington Street has been functioning as a corridor for movement rather than an active public space, discouraging people's willingness to visit and stay.

Recent improvements along Spring Garden Road demonstrates how seating can enhance the public realm when integrated as part of the streetscape. The redesign of Spring Garden Road included widening of sidewalks, adding greener spaces and providing more seating along the street to improve pedestrian comfort and support

⁵³ NorwayExplained. (2025, October 8). *Karl Johans Gate: A local's guide to Oslo's main street*. Retrieved from <https://norwayexplained.com/karl-johans-gate/>

⁵⁴ Edinburgh World Heritage. (n.d.). *Public realm improvements*. Retrieved from <https://ewh.org.uk/our-work/public-realm/>

⁵⁵ Maguire, T (2011)

everyday street activity⁵⁶. Though the evaluation of seating experience is limited, the presence of these benches within active commercial frontage emphasizes comfort, accessibility and lingering along the street. A similar example is Argyle Street, which emphasized the role of benches and street furnitures in supporting pedestrian activity particularly in conjunction with sidewalk cafes and bars and active ground floor uses⁵⁷. The street's evolution into a vibrant and pedestrian-oriented corridor demonstrates how small improvement in seating and sidewalks can contribute to increased street activity.



Figure 46: Argyle Street (Fathom Studio)



Figure 47: Street Furniture / Benches on Argyle Street (Aastha Thapa)



Figure 48: Installed outdoor seating embedded with planter box along Spring Garden Road



Figure 49: Street furniture in Spring Garden Road - Halifax (Aastha Thapa)

⁵⁶ Halifax Regional Municipality (n.d)

⁵⁷ Transport Canada (2006)

In terms of heritage streets, benches are usually designed using materials that reflect the historic character of the street but also ensure ease of maintenance. The benches along the street corridor or public spaces are generally designed using cast iron or steel frames combined with timber seating widely used in Rue Saint-Paul, Montreal, Argyle Street and Spring Garden Road. The timber seatings are generally considered user friendly in colder climates, providing comfort to users.



Figure 50: Street furniture in Rue Saint-Paul - Montréal

General Considerations

As Barrington Street currently lacks resting and waiting space, the addition of benches is important to support everyday use, improve the comfort for pedestrians and transit users and encourage people to spend more time on streets. However, one of the main challenges in the installation of benches might be the corridor's narrow right-of-way and the need to balance pedestrian movement, transit flow and heritage considerations which can restrict where seating can be designed.

To address this issue, benches should be integrated within active areas such as transit stops, and public nodes along the street corridor. Durable, low-maintenance materials such as metal frames with timber seating respond well with Halifax's climate as well as the heritage corridor of the street. Overall adding context based seating might help Barrington Street provide more comfortable and active public space than just a passing corridor.

Recommendations: As Barrington Street lacks seating benches along the corridor, adding seating benches within the active areas such as transit stops, intersections, and active storefronts will allow people to pause, wait, and engage with the street rather than just pass through. The benches should be designed using metal frames with timber seating as seen in Rue Saint Paul and other streets as these materials resemble historic character. Though Spring Garden Road does not resemble a heritage street, the transit seating benches installed in the area are the perfect example of streetscape improvements and shows how these small scale installations have been loved and well utilized as everyday activity along the street.

5.4.3 Signage

Wayfinding and Signage

The historic Royal Mile of Edinburgh in Scotland has lots of directional signage for navigating the street which facilitates pedestrian movement and walkability, particularly for visitors and tourists. Such way-finding elements include maps showing nearby locations, signs directing visitors towards major landmarks, and interpretive panels explaining historic sites which improve visitor experience and encourage exploration of surrounding streets⁵⁸.

Relevance to Barrington Street

As part of its revitalization effort, Barrington Street, which is also a historic street, could improve signage and wayfinding to assist navigation on the street. This could be done through the installation of similar elements like maps showing nearby historic and heritage landmarks, interpretive panels further explaining these historic landmarks, their walking distances, and walk-times. This will encourage walkability and enhance pedestrian retention along the street, while subsequently improving visitor experience towards further exploration of surrounding streets.

Recommendations: Implement a comprehensive and interpretive wayfinding and signage system along Barrington Street featuring maps, heritage landmark information, walking distances and estimated walk-times to enhance navigation, promote walkability and enrich overall visitor experience for further exploration to continuously boost pedestrian retention.

Type Recommended: Wall-Engraved Epoxy Painted Stainless Steel

⁵⁸ VisitScotland. (n.d.).



Figure 51: Examples of Wall-Engraved Epoxy Painted Stainless Steel for wayfinding

5.4.4 Lighting

Lighting conditions along Barrington Street vary in quality and coverage. There are few functional streetlights and uneven exterior lighting among buildings along the street. The available streetlights are all highway scaled instead of pedestrian scaled. This plunges the street into darkness, becoming intimidating to walk on at night. What worsens the experience on Barrington Street at night is how pedestrians suffer from the beaming rays of traffic on the street. This challenges nighttime vision which reduces pedestrian activity at night and subsequently affects nighttime business activities.

The installation of heritage style LED architectural façade lighting on historic stone walls along the Royal Mile street in Edinburgh provided pedestrian-scale lighting rather than highway-scale lighting; this not only improved visibility and safety at night, but also provided warm lighting that highlights and showcases the presence of these historic stone buildings at night⁵⁹.

⁵⁹ Edinburgh World Heritage. (n.d.).

Argyle Street Canopy Lighting

One example of lighting can be seen on Argyle Street and Grafton Street, where canopy lighting has been installed across the street to create a strong visual aesthetic and give direction to the pedestrian focused experience. This suspended street lighting creates a sense of direction, enclosure, and a visual that makes the street feel more active, welcoming, comfortable, and safe even during night time. This lighting primarily functions as a source of illuminance to the street, but also plays a major role in contributing towards the identity of a social and cultural destination, where people are encouraged to stay longer and engage with the surrounding atmosphere.



Figure 52: Canopy Lighting on Argyle Street, Halifax (Aestha Thapa)



Figure 53: Canopy Lighting on Argyle Street during nighttime, Halifax (Fathom Studio)

Relevance to Barrington Street

Similar to the Royal Mile, Barrington Street has numerous heritage buildings of varying architectural designs, creating fertile ground for facade enhancements. The installation of attractive, high-quality architectural façade lighting would reinforce pedestrian-oriented goals for the street because they are specifically pedestrian scaled to improve visibility and safety at night. This will illuminate the street, enhance safety, and attract and retain pedestrians at night.

Existing institutional support from DHBC further fortifies the installation of exterior architectural facade lighting on buildings along Barrington Street. The DHBC's Gritty to Pretty Facade Lighting Grant Program provides funding specifically for exterior facade lighting projects within the downtown area including Barrington Street. The

program is implemented to enhance the architectural streetwall and improve the overall urban experience at a macro level, rather than focusing on individual businesses or tenants. The program offers fifty percent (50%) financial support on hardware and installation cost to reduce implementation barriers and encourage property owners to invest in high-quality lighting interventions.

The integration of facade lighting as part of the Gritty to Pretty program presents a real-world and policy-aligned potential to advance Barrington Street's revitalization goals. This provides clear-cut evidence that design interventions are not only conceptually sound but also financially and institutionally feasible.

Though Barrington street functions as a primary transit corridor with heavy traffic flow, this should not limit the opportunity to introduce canopy lighting interventions that help to enhance the public realm. Barrington street lacks consistent ambient lighting which makes it feel less inviting, especially during night time and makes the street feel like designed for movement rather than public life.

Instead of replicating Argyle's street canopy lighting fully in the streets, Barrington street could adopt lighting to some stretch where they have high pedestrian activity giving the sense of inviting and welcoming. In this case, the canopy lighting might serve as a placemaking element that can help to improve nighttime visibility along with strengthening the street's identity.

Recommendations: Install attractive, high-quality, energy-efficient LED architectural façade lighting along Barrington Street to improve visibility, safety, and nighttime vibrancy, while leveraging the DHBC Façade Lighting Grant Program to support implementation.

During installation of canopy lighting along the Barrington street, further study on careful placement, height and installation guidelines needs to be followed. Moreover, coordination with transit operation is must in order to ensure that the installed canopy lighting does not interfere with transit buses, service vehicles and emergency vehicles. Installing canopy lighting throughout the street might bring monotony so studying the potential stretch for canopy lighting is recommended.

Type Recommended: Energy Efficient LED Architectural Façade Lighting.



Figure 54: Architectural Façade Lighting in Edinburgh

5.4.5 Sidewalk Improvements

Sidewalks along Barrington Street are in substandard condition ranging from broken sidewalks, missing/broken curb ramps to other barriers in the public right of way. Some pose a hazard to walkability on the street due to their undulating surfaces, especially to disabled and mobility-challenged residents. Also, most sidewalks at intersections where pedestrians usually cross do not meet municipal, provincial and Federal accessibility standards⁶⁰.

Recommendations: Restore sidewalks by thoughtfully designing them to support safety, accessibility and connectivity along Barrington Street in such a way that does not limit mobility for the abled, disabled and mobility-challenged residents while meeting the municipal, provincial and federal accessibility standards.

Specifications

1. On both sides of Barrington Street
2. Street lighting, signage and drainage improvements

⁶⁰ Halifax Regional Municipality. (2024). *New sidewalk level of service*. Retrieved from <https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/240123rc1516.pdf>

3. Wheelchair ramps where appropriate

Material Used: Concrete reinforced with steel rods, wire mesh and standard control joints for extra strength and durability.

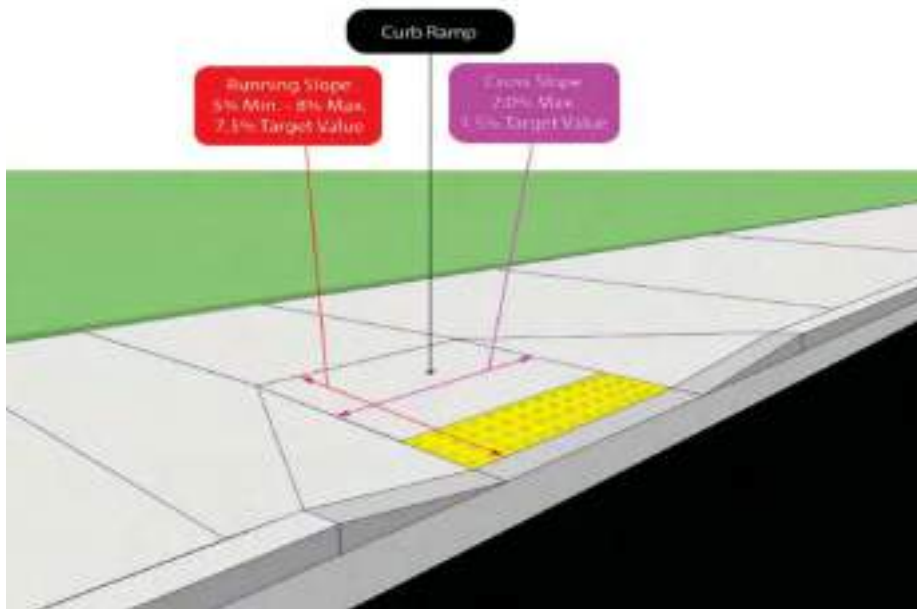


Figure 55: Dimensions of sidewalk slope for accessible crosswalks

5.5 Transit-Only Street

According to HRM, a transit-only street is defined as dedicated corridors that give an advantage to buses where it reduces travel times and increases reliability by allowing buses to bypass general traffic⁶¹. This indicates street priority dedicated to public transit over private vehicles.

5.5.1 Why Barrington Street?

Throughout our team's field observations and interviews, issues including traffic noise originating from vehicular activities, traffic congestion, and narrow sidewalks were brought up frequently, reflecting the urgent need to respond to these issues. In essence, the majority of the issues stemmed from or related to vehicular activities on Barrington Street.

The result of the surveys revealed that there is a mix of opinions on making Barrington Street transit-only, as respondents were inclined to make Barrington Street a destination rather than being a transit route. However, through our research, we believe that establishing Barrington Street as a transit-only street will accelerate the process of making the street a destination where pedestrians are attracted to it.

Based on the issues outlined within the project and the benefits of a transit-only street, we believe that a transit-only Barrington Street is in the best interest of business owners and pedestrians, and is essential to the revitalization effort.

5.5.2 Benefits of a Transit-Only Street

According to Toronto's King Street transit pilot program, a transit-only street is beneficial to local businesses, efficiency of the transit system and activation of retail activities as reflected by the following findings outlined in the City's staff report.

⁶¹ Halifax Regional Municipality (2025)

The report found that transit times became faster and more predictable. On average, public transit travel was faster during the entire service duration and had more predictable servicing time, in turn making the service more attractive by saving 30,000 minutes of travel time⁶².



Figure 56: King Street, Toronto

For Barrington Street, this implies reducing the possibility of traffic congestion and increasing efficient traveling time through the elimination of private vehicles on the street. The main effect of reducing traffic congestion is creating a more pleasant experience for pedestrians visiting Barrington Street.

The report also outlined an increase in the total number of people moving through the downtown core by 3% during morning and afternoon commutes resulting in increases in transit ridership on the street⁶³. For Barrington Street, this would translate to higher pedestrian traffic during commuting hours and increased exposure of local businesses to pedestrians.

Most importantly, the pilot program on King Street contributed to improving public space and supporting business and economic prosperity along the corridor. The transit-only corridor contributed to the adding of forty-five amenities across 18 new public realm spaces in the curb lane, including cafes, art installations, public seating areas, and parklets. Within the report, it was stated that the addition of new spaces created opportunities for people to linger and provided extra space for pedestrians to walk. In addition, the number of business license turnover was lower within the transit

⁶² The City of Toronto (2019)

⁶³ The City of Toronto (2019)

only corridor compared to surrounding areas and city-wide over a three year period⁶⁴.

The results mean that a transit only street could potentially increase the number of retail activities, retain local businesses and expand available public spaces, which could further encourage economic activities.

5.5.3 Spring Garden Road Transit-Only Pilot Program

Within HRM, the concept of a transit-only street had been implemented once on Spring Garden Road through a pilot program. However, the pilot program only lasted for five days due to critical implementation failures.



Figure 57: Intersection of Spring Garden Road and Queen Street during testing for a Transit-Only Street, Halifax (2022).

According to HRM, the primary reasons for its failure included insufficient police enforcement due to lack of available staff resources, timed-based approach where the street was transit-only from 7 A.M. to 8 P.M., confusing drivers and making management more difficult than

originally envisioned, and lacking driver compliance despite signage and promotion⁶⁵. From this, it is evident that the failure of the Spring Garden Road transit-only pilot program was due to man-made mistakes such as poor resources coordination and allocations, and confusing regulations.

⁶⁴ The City of Toronto (2019)

⁶⁵ Halifax Regional Municipality (2022)

5.5.4 Case Study: Bourke Street Mall – Melbourne

Bourke Street Mall is a pedestrian and tram-only corridor in central Melbourne. Private vehicles were removed in 1978 and it was converted to a pedestrian mall starting in 1983.

The case study of Bourke Street Mall is applicable to Barrington Street for a number of reasons. The street is a narrow downtown retail corridor with mixed uses such as retail services and a transit corridor running through the street. More importantly, similar to Barrington Street, Bourke Street Mall also has a limited right-of-way where it cannot accommodate vehicles, transit and pedestrians comfortably.



Figure 58: Bourke Street Mall, Melbourne.

As a result of becoming a transit-only street, the Bourke Street Mall was considered as one of the two main generators of pedestrian traffic in the area, comparable to Melbourne Central station⁶⁶. The transit-only street also attracted several department stores and shopping malls, and formed a link between the street and the Melbourne Central station. The street's location being 400 metres south of the station, generated a "dumbbell" shaped cluster of shops. In addition, the transit-only nature of the street

⁶⁶ Rao F & Pafka E (2021)

ensured 80% of the added walkable interfaces were located in close proximity of storefronts⁶⁷.

5.5.6 Bourke Street Mall Implementation

The Bourke Street Mall adopted the transit-only model by implementing several noticeable actions.

First, the City of Melbourne widened footpaths and laid high-quality pavement - specially bluestone - to improve the pedestrian environment⁶⁸.

Second, traffic signal cycle times were reduced to support public transport improvements and increase the attractiveness of the area through increased accessibility⁶⁹.

Third, the Melbourne Walking Plan encouraged outdoor dining with outdoor installments such as tables, chairs and patios⁷⁰.

Fourth, to ensure pedestrian safety on the street, the City installed signalised pedestrian crossings and reduced wait times⁷¹.

To prevent vehicles from entering the street, The City of Melbourne enacted a permit system where vehicles must have a vehicle access permit to enter, stop, and park in the transit-only street. This allows reasonable access for vehicles that are required to service businesses located within the area. Permit holders must print and display their permit on their vehicle's dashboard⁷². Vehicles with permits are only permitted to park in areas marked "Authorised Vehicles Excepted" during the times that the permit is valid⁷³.

For Bourke Street Mall, permitted vehicles are only allowed to park for up to 30 minutes and are not allowed entry to the street between 7:30 A.M. and 9:30 A.M and 10:30 AM and midnight⁷⁴.

⁶⁷ Rao F & Pafka E (2021)

⁶⁸ Rao F & Pafka E (2021)

⁶⁹ Rao F & Pafka E (2021)

⁷⁰ The City of Melbourne (2014)

⁷¹ The City of Melbourne (2014)

⁷² The City of Melbourne (2026)

⁷³ The City of Melbourne (2026)

⁷⁴ The City of Melbourne (2026)

In terms of enforcement, a number of surveillance cameras have been installed along the street which can automatically scan license plates, compare it with the database of permit holders and verify automatically. It was referred to as Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR). Once a violation is discovered, tickets are delivered to the vehicle owner⁷⁵.

5.5.7 Implications for Barrington Street

Based on the success of the Bourke Street Mall achieving active commercial and pedestrian activities, some of the actions outlined in its implementation could be applied to Barrington Street.

Implementing the permit system as seen in the Bourke Street Mall example as a pilot program could help eliminate vehicles completely on Barrington Street, as vehicles that are entering would be screened and vehicles without the permit would be fined. In the Spring Garden Road Pilot Program, there was not any strict guidance or penalty to let vehicle users understand what was allowed to enter the street and when.

To reduce confusion for drivers, the time frame for transit-only should cover the entire day with exceptions for delivery trucks at certain times during the morning. This could potentially overcome challenges to transit-only strategies implemented partially throughout the day.

Pairing the improved aural pedestrian experience - due to less noise and congestion - with streetscape improvements such as widening the sidewalk, providing the options for local businesses to conduct outdoor dining, replacing the material of the sidewalk with more aesthetically pleasing materials should be considered. These similar interventions in the Bourke Street Mall example supported the greater improvement of the street.

In the long term, a transit-only street should consider implementing a mature automatic number-plate recognition (ANPR) system where a fully integrated database exists and consistent enforcement could be carried out without the physical presence of police officers.

According to the case study, these were factors that constitute the success of Bourke Street Mall. Potentially, the improvements could foster a better shopping and walking

⁷⁵ Pixelcase (2025)

experience and help attract more storefronts that shape a linkage of shops between Argyle Street and the Waterfront, turning the downtown core into a “pedestrian heaven”.

Recommendation: A detailed traffic diversion study should be conducted to understand the potential impact of closing down the street to vehicles and the influx of vehicles entering nearby streets such as Hollis Street, Lower Water Street and Brunswick Street.

6. Recommendations

Recommendations have been chosen based on results from stakeholder interviews, public survey results, and jurisdictional scans. Each suggestion includes a reference to a more detailed description elsewhere in the document, as well as rough approximations of their costs and time needed to implement.

Suggested Intervention	Specific Actions	Page Reference
Streetscape Overhaul	- Replacing the current concrete sidewalk with materials that reflect the history and characteristics of Barrington Street will help it stand out and create a sense of uniqueness. - Additional improvements, such as benches and facade lighting, could be added to improve the ambience of the street.	Stakeholder interviews Jurisdictional Scan (pg. 65)
Wayfinding	- Providing more signage and giving information on places to explore in downtown Halifax might help more people to explore downtown. (Targeting tourists during summer, cruise). - Educating the road users and riders and proposing licensing requirements for cyclists might help pedestrians feel safer on sidewalks. - Information board and printed maps.	Stakeholder interview Jurisdictional Scan (pg. 68)
Vacant Storefront Tax	- New property tax class for vacant properties - New class' base rate to be considerably higher than commercial base rate - Public reporting and auditing mechanism	Jurisdictional Scan (pg. 34)
Meanwhile Use Program	New "Events & Community Activation" role at DHBC to facilitate meanwhile uses	Jurisdictional Scan (pg. 38) Stakeholder Interviews
Open Street Event	New "Events & Community Activation" role at DHBC to plan annual Barrington Street	Jurisdictional Scan (pg. 45)

Suggested Intervention	Specific Actions	Page Reference
	- festival - HRM to conduct feasibility study on partial street closure to allow for patios	
Public Art in Vacant Storefront Windows	- HRM to create a public art program displaying local artists' work in vacant storefront windows - Artists to be compensated at CARFAC rates	Jurisdiction Scan (pg. 50)
Adaptive Re-use	- Consider adaptive re-use of underutilized and vacant heritage buildings either for arts and local business in the ground floor and upper floors for commercial, cultural or office space. - HRM to halt attempts to buy back the Turret Arts Space - HRM to approve \$1.5 million funding request from the Turret Arts Space Society, and future funding required to revitalize the building	Jurisdictional Scan (pg. 52)
Arts District	HRM to conduct a comprehensive feasibility study on creating an arts district in downtown Halifax with Barrington Street as its central spine	Public Survey Jurisdictional Scan (pg. 58)
Gritty to Pretty Insurance Requirements	- DHBC to consider waiving general liability insurance requirements for Gritty to Pretty mural applications - DHBC to consider covering insurance as a part of grant fees and program participation	Jurisdictional Scan (pg. 52) DHBC document review
Transit-Only Street	- Implementing a permit system to limit vehicle access - Extending the duration of transit-only street to 24 hours except a small time frame to drop off goods - Widen sidewalks and encourage outdoor dining - Introduce automated system to scan for violations	Stakeholder interview Jurisdictional Scan (pg. 71)

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