



The Role of Fusion Halifax in the Halifax Urban Development Dialogue

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Executive summary

Planning activities provides venues for citizens to express and inscribe their views on development projects occurring within cities (Grant, 1994). Halifax, Nova Scotia, one of Canada's oldest cities, displays its wealth of history through the built environment. For this reason, heritage advocates have been strong voices in development discussions since the 1960s. In 2007 upon the founding of Fusion Halifax, a social networking organization for young professionals, members of the organization began to create an alternative voice that advocated for tall buildings with modern urban design, which often opposed heritage interests. The Fusion Halifax aims to engage younger generations in current issues within (HRM) and defines urban design and development as a specific interest. The goal of this research project is to understand how Fusion Halifax promotes urban design within the development process and dialogue.

Shifts in development dialogue occur with changes in government visions change and policy agendas with the influence of popular theories. With the amalgamation of HRM in 1996, the city began to promote economic development strategies targeted at revitalizing HRM's urban core. As a strategy of economic growth, Richard Florida (2002)'s theory of the creative class was introduced promoting creative clusters (concentration of creative workers) as means to entice investors to invest in innovation industries in the region. In recent discussions, urban entrepreneurialism, a form of urban governance that operates through collaboration with the private sector, has emerged as an alternative economic development strategy. Iconic development that includes modern urban design is distinctive of entrepreneurial cities, because this strategy aims to attract private investment by giving a city a new image. Emphasis is

also placed on government partnership and collaboration with interest groups, known as urban coalitions, to achieve economic objectives.

To document the organization of Fusion Halifax and to understand the role the organization assumes in the development dialogue a mix of research techniques were used including reviewing news papers, staff reports, and council minutes; attending Fusion Halifax events; and conducting personal interviews.

Findings were organized in three main thematic categories: The role of Fusion Halifax, topics of debate in urban design and development, attitudes towards development. The results revealed that Fusion Halifax has not only established itself as a new voice within the development dialogue, but provides a platform for promoting urban design through community engagement. The establishment of a new voice created two visions within the city: preserving heritage and encouragement modern architectural design. Debates between the two voices centralize on the topics of the view planes from Citadel Hill, tall buildings, iconic design and urban density. Additionally, the two visions for the city have constructed diverse attitudes between citizens who support and oppose development.

This research contributes to local knowledge on the progression of local development dialogue. Results reveal that Fusion Halifax has emerged as a significant voice in the dialogue has helped to shift the Halifax urban development dialogue.

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What is Fusion Halifax?

Fusion Halifax is a networking organization that aims to connect and engage young professionals (aged 20 to 40) in current debates within the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM). The Greater Halifax Partnership (GHP), a public-private economic



development association, supported the establishment of the organization during the last decade, as HRM began to adopt progressive economic development strategies to revitalize the city. The initial intentions of Fusion Halifax were to strengthen civic opinion within HRM by bring cultural, social and economic agendas together (Fusion Halifax, 2007). Fusion Halifax is involved in many activities, but the focus of this study is on the organization's activities in urban development (Figure 1 is Fusion Halifax's logo).

Planning: A Venue for Dialogue

Grant (1994b) explains that planning activities provide a venue for citizens to express and inscribe their views on development within the city. Planning tools such as city plans produce a broad vision and tell important stories about a community. Debates in planning occur when the different actors involved (the local municipality, interest groups and citizens) have diverging visions of the city. To express and defend a point of view, actors use language and popular concepts and theories as persuasive tools to construct their arguments. As language is far from neutral, the terms used in

debates reveal the opinions and values of actors (Grant, 1994a). Understanding the meaning of language will help discern an actor's position and their role in the dialogue.

Planning Dialogue in Halifax

As one of Canada's oldest cities, Halifax, Nova Scotia, possesses a wealth of history that is shown through its built environment. For this reason, heritage advocates have been strong voices within development discussions, first reacting to large-scale urban renewal schemes in the 1950s that eradicated various areas with historical significance, but also because heritage is an important part of the local culture. Grant (1994a) explains that through time, development debates shift and incorporate new popular planning theories (new urbanism and smart growth) and government visions aiming to enhance economic growth for the city. These shifts in debates indicate changes in political, social, economic and cultural agendas of the local government and values and opinions of citizens.

Fusion Halifax emerged as the "creative cities" movement began to gain momentum within urban development discussions across North America, thus marking a shift in the discourse about growth. (Grant, Holme & Pettman, 2008; Peck, 2005). At the core of this movement is Richard Florida's theory of the "creative class", which suggests that creative clusters (concentrations of creative workers) drive economic development within a city. Since Fusion Halifax's establishment in 2007, it has incrementally assumed a more prominent role in the urban development process in the form of a lobbying group (Queen, 2007). Members of Fusion Halifax often offer support for prestigious development projects with modern urban design aimed at repositioning the city economically and symbolically. Fusion Halifax defines urban design as a challenge

within the city and emphasizes the issue within its strategic focus. The distinct voice that the organization has developed often opposes the long-standing heritage voices within the city.

To examine Fusion Halifax's involvement in the development process, the research question for this study is as follows:

“ What role does Fusion Halifax play in promoting urban design within the process of urban development in Halifax? ”

Documenting Trends in the Urban Development Dialogue

1960 -1980s

Halifax, the capital of Nova Scotia and the largest urban centre in Atlantic Canada, is a major port city that played an important role in Canadian history and transatlantic trade. The city's historical significance is embedded in the architecture of heritage buildings, the form of the city and within its local culture. During the period of industrialization through the 1950s, citizens played passive roles as recipients of good governance (Grant, 2007; Gillis, 2011). From the 1960s to 1980s, public opinion towards urban development became increasingly vocal, as a response to large-scale urban renewal schemes that were implemented in Halifax. These urban renewal schemes were large-scale redevelopments that occupied several city blocks; Scotia Square located on Duke Street is an example. To preserve the city's historical character citizens began to organize and exercise heritage advocacy in opposition to large-scale redevelopments (Grant, 1994a). Major topics of disputes were the conservation of historical buildings, the density of development, and the preservation of view planes from Citadel Hill and the Halifax Harbour (Figure 2 is a photo of Citadel Hill). In "The Battle of Citadel Hill" by Elizabeth Pacey (1979) recounts the famous dispute to save the views from Citadel Hill. Citadel Hill situated at the centre of the downtown core was a prominent strategic fortress within the military history of Halifax. Pacey (1979) explained that the two-year



Figure 2: Citadel Hill

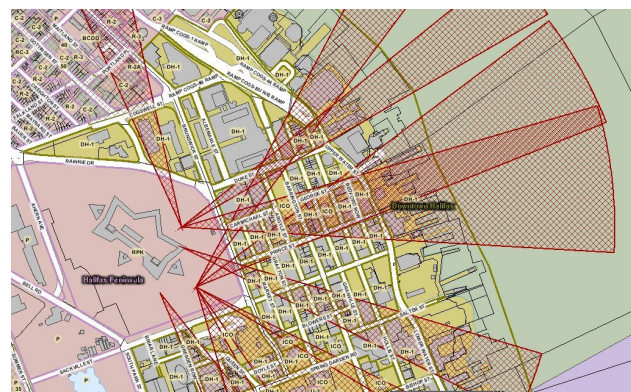


Figure 3: The View Planes

battle to preserve the view planes and rampart views reflected the differing visions between local government and the citizens. Pacey (1979) suggested that people from diverse facets of city life gathered as citizens to oppose the “on-slaught of high rise-redevelopment” (Pacey, 1979, p. 3). The “battle” ended with the city government deciding to legislate preservation of the view planes and rampart views in planning documents, which profoundly impacted the form of the city, even in contemporary development (Figure 3 is map of the view plane regulations). As interest towards heritage preservation grew during this period, heritage groups became key voices in the public development process and discussions. As a result, heritage values incrementally became one focus of HRM’s planning policies and influenced the approach towards development (Grant, 2007)

1990s – 2000s

In the early 1990s, heritage concerns remained important in many planning decisions and policies downtown. However, new urban planning theories and principles such as new urbanism, smart growth and mixed-use development began to enter into the development debate. The vision of Halifax began to include features such as sustainability, vibrancy, diversity and human scale. Collaboration between diverse groups of people including business leaders, the government, and citizens in city development became desirable (Grant, 2007).

Halifax during the 1990s was experiencing a period of relatively slow economic growth. As cities in western Canadian began to engage in rapid economic growth, Halifax struggled to keep pace. In 1996, the amalgamation of the City of Halifax with three surrounding municipal governments (Bedford, Dartmouth, and Halifax County)

formed Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM). With amalgamation, the government aimed to increase Halifax's international and regional economic competitiveness by integrating resources and mitigating internal costs. Governmental restructuring set in motion a new direction towards promoting economic development targeted at revitalizing the decline in HRM's urban core. In the same year, The GHP was created and tasked with the responsibility to direct economic development and improve private sector investor relations. The organization established collaborative ties with other interest groups such as the Nova Scotia Business Association, Destination Halifax and Fusion Halifax (Gillis, 2011).

In the early 2000s the concept of the "Creative City" penetrated many local city debates as a strategy for urban and economic growth across Canada. The concept of "Creative City", coined by Charles Landry, is a planning paradigm addresses the organizational culture of city. Landry (2000) argued in response to dramatic political, economic and social changes taking place in the 1980s, creative potential within a city's residents (businesses, city authorizes and citizens) is essential to confronting complex urban problems and providing opportunities for a city to prosper. Landry's (2000) concept of the "Creative City" may have inspired Richard Florida to develop the theory of the "creative class".

The "creative class", a term coined by Richard Florida, identifies a particular cohort, which seems to drive the growth of urban centres. Florida (2002) defines two groups within the creative class: the "super creative core" and the "creative professionals". The super creative core includes the "thought leaders" in society such as the artists, cultural-figures, and editors. The creative professionals are the knowledge-

based workers, who work in sectors such as business management, health care and legal services. Florida's (2002) research shows that this group tends to cluster in cities that have three prerequisites - technology, talent and tolerance. For Florida (2002) technology means the innovation and concentration of high technology industries, whereas talent refers to the attainment of a degree or diploma. Tolerance is a central theme to the theory: it refers to the openness and diversity of people in a place, and the willingness of the community to tolerate difference. Florida (2003) argues that contrary to the traditional theories that favour capital investment or access to resources as the driver of urban growth, the creative class theory suggests that human capital is the foundation and continuation of urban growth (Florida, 2003).

In 2004, the GHP commissioned Gertler and Vinodrai (2004) to complete "Competing on Creativity: Focus on Halifax", which explored Richard Florida's (2002) concept of integrating creativity to enhance economic development. The report showed HRM scored well on the indexes (Gertler & Vinodrai, 2004; Grant, 2009). The GHP began to actively introduce art and cultural aspects into HRM's economic development and policy agenda to enhance urban growth and retain young professionals classified under as "creative class" (Grant, 2009; Grant, Holme, Pettman, 2008).

In 2005, the GHP established an economic development strategy known as "Strategies for Success", that aimed to increase Halifax's economic competitiveness. The development of this document involved the consultation of business groups, the local government, politicians and citizens. The vision of the strategy reflected elements of the creative cities discourse because it argued that economic success and livable communities lead to retention of talented people (HRM, 2005).

In 2007, the GHP established Fusion Halifax to connect young professionals across diverse sectors through providing social networking opportunities for these individuals. Another intention in creating the organization was to build a more reliable civic governance structure that could make recommendations to council on policy and development issues (Grant, Holme, Pettman, 2008). As a non-profit organization, Fusion Halifax is composed of a board of directors and engages specific interest groups, named “action teams”. These teams focus on arts and culture, immigration, sustainability, professional development, health and wellness, and urban development (Fusion Halifax, 2007).

Between 2005 -2008, a new Downtown Secondary Plan known as HRM By Design was developed. HRM By Design is a set of policy guidelines that aim to enhance the clarity of the city’s vision, predictability of the planning process and the design quality of development. The project manager of HRM By Design stated that it was, “...a plan that strikes the balance between encouraging new growth and protecting our built heritage” (HRM 2009, News Release; Gillis, 2011, p. 35). The plan introduced a new planning tool known as form based codes, which are used to regulate the urban form of development. This differs from traditional land use policies that distinctly monitor the types of uses on a property. In effect, the plan introduced new planning and design language into public discussions. HRM By Design was one of the first projects that Fusion Halifax supported and later endorsed.

By integrating new urban growth strategies such as economic development and creativity in HRM’s agenda, topics of urban design and form have also entered the

discussion. Where previous discourses focused primarily on conservation, and social and economic factors, current development projects tend to feature modern urban design and form. Examples of the new debate are recent proposals in downtown Halifax such as the Twisted Sisters, The Waterside Centre, The YMCA/CBC building, Skye Halifax and The Nova Centre.

3. Shifts in the Dialogue

Local governments often use popular theories and concepts to support their economic, political and social decisions and policy agendas. A review of the literature provides an account of relevant theories and case studies that influences paradigm shifts within the city, and consequently are integrated into the ideology, behavior and interests of Fusion Halifax. The review commences by evaluating the applicability of creative class theory in the context of Halifax. Next, the behaviour of interest groups will be examined through reviewing literature on civil society and the Theory of the Growth Machine. Literature on urban entrepreneurialism, a form of urban governance, identifies interest groups in the form of urban coalitions and raises the importance of urban design and form will be analyzed. The review will conclude by evaluating literature on language and meaning, which aids the interpretation of dialogue between actors.

Creative Cities Discourse within Halifax

In connecting the relevance of the creative class theory to the local situation in Halifax, Grant and Kronstal (2010) evaluated the three creative city prerequisites suggested by Florida and the ability to attract young professionals. They described three groups of creative workers: (1) health researchers, (2) musicians and (3) architects/engineers/planners. Interviews surveyed workers' locational preferences and attraction to the city. The results diverged from the creative class theory in two major ways. Firstly, diverse groups of creative professionals, classified within the creative class, did not have the same priorities and preferences within a city (Grant & Kronstal, 2010). This finding conforms with Markusen's (2006) study, which argues that the composition of the creative class is not critically defined, thus the theory cannot

generalize the preferences of the whole creative class cohort. Secondly, Grant and Kronstal (2010) suggest that although Halifax has a high rate of receiving new immigrants, respondents did not consider the city particularly tolerant of cultural differences. Despite the relative intolerance, the city continues to attract young professionals due to the social support provided in workplace environments and the high quality of life that can be attained (Grant & Kronstal, 2010). Although Halifax possesses creative indexes, the conclusions drawn by the creative class theory may not be applicable, as each locality is complex and distinct.

Civil Society

To understand the role of special interest groups within development debates, it is important to consider the motivations and interests of civil society. By definition, civil society is a tertiary sector separate from the government or businesses and is comprised of groups with specific interests such as professional organizations, labour unions, and advocacy groups etc (McCormick, 2010). Friedmann (1998) explains that civil societies emerged during the development of globalization and the market economy. As governments move to adopt more laissez-faire economic policies, this sets the stage for non-government actors to interfere, through encouraging the rise of multiple opinions and viewpoints. The autonomy of civil society enables special interest groups to pursue individual or specific interests regardless of the government's objectives (Friedmann, 1998).

The Theory of the Growth Machine

Molotch (1976) discussed the motivations of interest groups in the context of urban politics and land development, and proposed the theory of the “growth-machine”. The theory argued that urban, economic, or political growth were major drivers of human political action in urban land development. In a given locality, a parcel of land represents interests, whether for owners or users. A collection of land parcels was then a sum of stakeholder interests. As landscapes are continuous systems with constant interacting land uses, Molotch (1976) described land-parcel aggregation as, “ a mosaic of competing land interests capable of strategic coalition and action” (Molotch, 1976, pp. 310). Groups or organizations with business and professional interest attached to a parcel of land were defined as “growth coalitions” (Molotch, 1993). Molotch (1976) argued that growth coalitions consider collaborating with other organizations (private or public), to sustain and enhance individual needs. Competition between groups occurs due to the scarcity of development funds provided by the government and environmental resources available for development (Molotch, 1976). Growth coalitions view land parcels as a commodity and coalitions use institutional systems, with embedded political and social agendas, to intensify land use and make money (Molotch, 1976, 1993). Fusion Halifax demonstrates a connection with the concept of growth coalitions, as the organization includes social, economic and political objectives in its vision and participates in various urban development discussions within Halifax.

Urban Entrepreneurialism

Urban Entrepreneurialism is a form of urban governance that emerged in the 1980s when western industrialized cities began to transform into post-industrialized

cities (Harvey, 1989; Hubbard 1996; Gospodini; 2010). When city governments realized Managerial urban governance, predominantly concerned with provisions of services and welfare, was unsustainable governments began to seek innovative and creative strategies to resolve governance issues. Urban Entrepreneurialism was a strategy developed to shift away from Managerialism (Harvey, 1989). Entrepreneurial governments promote economic development through establishing partnerships with the private sector. Government management regimes evolve to adopt risk taking, inventiveness, promotion and profit motivation, which were once distinctive of the private sector. Hall and Hubbard (1996) explain that as a result of blurring the lines between the public and private sector, the private sector gains increased control and authority over development decisions, forming an “urban coalition” consisting of businessmen and property interests and inevitably marginalizing working class constituencies. In addition, urban entrepreneurialism is reflected in the physical form. Urban entrepreneurial governments tend to support large prestigious or iconic developments aimed at rebranding a city to establish an image of economic competitiveness (Hall & Hubbard, 1996).

Growth Machine Revisited: Urban Coalitions

Hall and Hubbard (1996) argue the notion of partnership is a large component of urban entrepreneurialism and entrepreneurial governments gain the power to act by cooperating with external private organizations or interest groups forming “urban coalitions”. The concept of urban coalitions is derived from Molotch’s (1993) idea of growth coalitions within The Theory of Growth Machines. Urban coalitions consist of informal partnerships with a multiplicity of interest groups typically between property interests, rentiers, utility groups, university groups, business interests, trade unions and

the local media, which collaborate to achieve specific government objectives such as attracting investment or achieving economic prosperity within a city. Hall and Hubbard (1996) adopt the term “elitist pluralistic approach” to characterize local politics to be uneven and certain groups (coalitions) are favoured over the general population in a given locality. Often, the perspectives of coalitions have narrow agendas and partisan interest towards development projects that focus on enhancing economic prosperity.

Hubbard (1996) explains that the ability for urban coalitions to operate depends on the ability to garner popular support. Coalitions may promote visions and goals that are broad-based to encapsulate a wide range of citizen interests; however, in reality their goals are specific in scope (Hall & Hubbard, 1996). Given that these urban coalitions require regular meetings to act in concert with each other, coordinate actions and set agendas, trees of social networks are established to ease communication (Molotch, 1993). In addition, coalitions are often formed on the basis of achieving maximum objectives and means in a short time span. Such action lacks long-term planning and strategic foresight; as a result, the longevity of these coalitions is challenged (Hall & Hubbard, 1996).

On the local level, examples of urban coalitions in Halifax are: The GHP, the former Urban Design Task Force and the Waterfront Development Corporation. The GHP is public-private partnership agency that developed the economic development strategy for HRM (GHP, 2013). The Urban Design Task Force, which is no longer active, comprised a panel tasked with advising the regional council on the implementing the urban design study for the downtown core. The Task Force was primarily composed of government representatives and business leaders (HRM, 2006). The Waterfront

Development Corporation is a provincial crown corporation that aims to enhance economic development along the waterfront. The organization functions to invite private investors to develop lands along the waterfront (Waterfront Development Corporation, 2012). All three of the organizations relate to criteria of urban coalitions whether it be through private-public partnership or through the representation of business leaders with the composition of the organization.

Social Networks

Social networking is the fundamental basis for establishing Fusion Halifax and reflects the form through which urban or growth coalitions function. Social networks contribute a significant aspect of governmental and business interactions in Halifax, because the small scale of the city enhances interaction between professionals (Grant, Holme, & Pettman, 2008). To survive small business need to form social networks so that expertise, knowledge and resources can be shared, to increase productivity, innovation and creativity. In the face of globalization, collaboration between smaller businesses facilitates a competitive advantage over larger firms (Kingsley and Malecki, 2002; Holme, 2007).

There are two types of social networks: “formal” and informal”. A formal network results from intentional formation of business clusters in a region, in order to share input and output to produce an outcome (Kingsley and Malecki, 2002; Holme, 2007). The clustering of businesses creates a community oriented string of social networks, which profits production processes and business outcomes (Wolfe, 2008). Informal social networks (ISN) have embedded relationships based on friendship, personal ties, and negotiated strategic coalitions (Kingsley & Malecki, 2002; Holme,

2007; Van Laere & Heene, 2003). ISNs often increase productivity, because of these embedded relationships. Embedded relationships can facilitate conflict resolution, build trust, increase speed of decision-making and develop new opportunities for partnerships (Van Laere & Heene, 2003; Holme, 2007; Wolfe, 2008). However, the dominance of ISN is also a constraint in a given locale. The familiarity of cooperation between local businesses decreases the opportunities of international organizations to enter the market. This not only encourages nepotism and favoritism, but can also decrease the overall competitiveness of the business environment on the regional or international level (Grant, Holme, Pettman, 2008; Van Laere & Heene, 2003). Social networking is both the objective and way in which Fusion Halifax function.

Urban Entrepreneurialism and Prestigious Projects

A physical product of urban entrepreneurialism is the use of prestigious architectural and urban design projects as strategies to attract investment and regenerate the local economy. Prestigious projects are defined as innovative, large-scale and high profile developments that create a symbolic image and identity for a city.

Prestigious urban development projects (See figure 4) are, in general, financed through private investment or a private-public partnership (Hubbard, 1996). These projects may not be financially profitable developments themselves, but aim to stimulate economic activity by projecting an image of urban growth (Loftman & Nevin, 1995).



Figure 4: Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao, Spain

Urban Entrepreneurialism is, observably, a form of governance that has developed within Halifax. In efforts to revitalize the downtown core, prestigious projects are integrated in new development proposals. An example of this is: the 2004 Twisted Sisters proposal on Granville Street in downtown Halifax, which embodied the critical elements of a prestigious project. A major reason that this project garnered government support was the belief that an iconic building would generate economic activity (Grant & Gillis, 2012). Other projects that have similar prestigious attributes include the revised design for the Twisted Sisters site, known as Skye Halifax, and the New YMCA/CBC building located on Sackville Street. The Nova Centre proposed on Argyle Street is example of private-public partnership as the federal and provincial government has committed to funding the development.

Benefits and Challenges of Prestigious Projects

Gospodini (2010) argues that urban entrepreneurialism appropriately uses urban design as a way to attract economic development. Through studying multiple cases across Europe, Gospodini (2002) suggests urban design provides positive impacts on metropolitan and smaller sized cities, and for different classes of people. For metropolitan sized cities, prestigious urban design gives a city status and acts as a symbol. For smaller less-resource-based cities it rejuvenates the area and becomes a form of place making for a community (Gospodini, 2010; Loftman & Nevin, 1995). Loftman and Nevin (1995) discuss the positives of prestigious projects, emphasizing that these projects are “signs of confidence” for financial investors and can increase the land values of adjacent properties.

Harvey (1989) produces a contrasting view, by noting that urban entrepreneurialism often uses spectacular forms of urban design to mask the core political and economic issues within a city, thus “valuing image over substance” (Harvey, 1989 p. 13). Loftman and Nevin (1995) evaluate the negatives of prestigious projects by characterizing these developments as often involving over ambitious intentions that are unrealistic. Government agencies may opt to direct scarce public funds towards prestigious projects while curtailing welfare funds for public housing, services or education. This creates inequality within community funding distribution. Moreover, the scale of prestigious projects requires a lengthy period for planning and construction, meaning these projects can be placed on hold when the market or economy experiences fluctuations. This challenges the overall stability and predictability of prestigious projects (Loftman & Nevin, 1995).

Hubbard (1996) examines how spectacular forms of urban design are socially represented in a local context. The research is based on a case study of a new post-modernist style development in Birmingham, United Kingdom. The results found local residents recognized the new development as a positive addition to the city, but had seemingly no connection with it (Hubbard, 1996). Although using urban design as a strategy of urban entrepreneurialism can give a city a positive impetus, the way that the strategy is replicated and how the local community receives these developments depends on local social and cultural contexts.

Language and Meaning

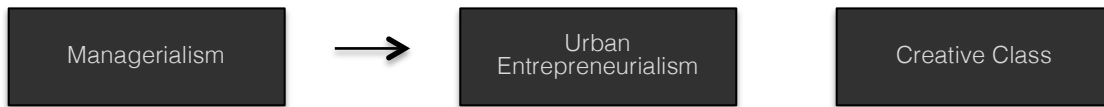
To understand the intent and motivations of interest groups in urban development, a close examination of language and meaning is useful. Grant (1994a)

states that language is far from neutral; the way an individual chooses words and phrases contain embedded valued judgments. The terms that are used reveal meanings within political debates. Often in planning and political processes and disputes, similar concepts are used to construct different arguments, or as Gaillie (1956) explains these similar concepts are “essentially contested concepts” that are open-ended and interpretive instruments of language (Grant 1994a,b; Gillis, 2010). Concepts expressed in disputes and arguments are persuasive tools that reflect the meaning of what an individual intends to convey (Grant, 1994, Throgmorton, 2003, Gillis, 2010).

In interpreting the meaning behind communication Bailey (1983) explains that there are “sophisticated codes” and “ simple codes”. In modern industrial cities, sophisticated codes are scientific, rational and logical and are recognized as the mode of communication, because they are viewed as credible sources to substantiate claims. By contrast, simple codes are based on passion, which reflects an individual’s knowledge, experiences and feelings. Naturally, in planning and development hearings and discussions, planners and the local government favour empirical evidence and reason. Grant (1994b) argues, however, rational forms of communication accomplish little when the argument is based upon normative issues (e.g., aesthetics of a streetscape and pedestrian feeling of a street wall height).

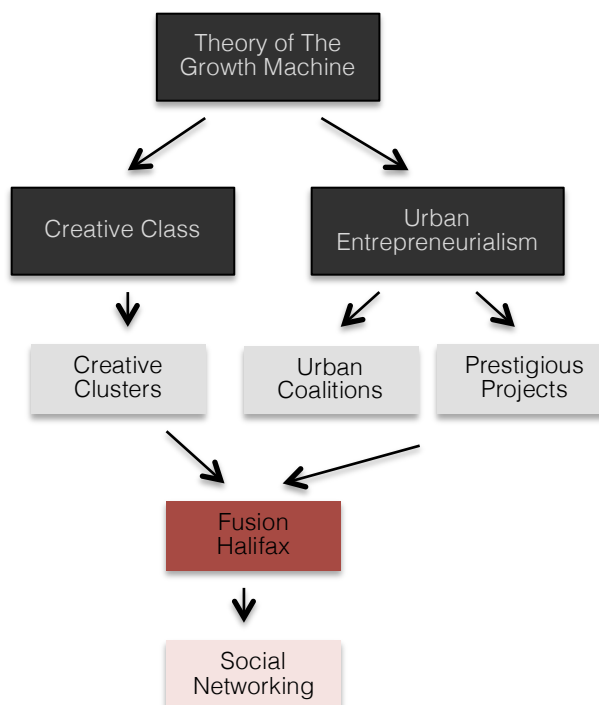
A review of relevant theories provides way to conceptualize the behaviour and function of Fusion Halifax. Diagram 1 shows how government shifted from a Managerial governance system during the industrial period to seek strategies to promote economic development. Both urban entrepreneurialism and creative cities concept are strategies to enhance economic development.

Diagram 1: Urban Governance and Growth Theories



Molotch's (1976) Theory of the Growth Machine provides a general theory in conceptualizing politics of land development. As the adoption of general theories within local governments vary, in terms of form and time of implementation, Halifax first inducted Florida's (2002) theory of the creative class as part of the city's economic strategy (See Diagram 2). Fusion Halifax's ideology draws from the Creative Class theory. However, a shift towards an urban entrepreneurial governance system has developed within the city as the government is seeking private sector collaboration and investment in iconic developments. Connections can also be drawn with Fusion Halifax and urban coalitions as the organization engages collaborative projects with business associations and the government. Finally, social networking is reason for establishing Fusion Halifax but is also a way in which urban coalitions operate.

Diagram 2: Adaptation of Theories in Halifax



4. Goals and Objectives

The goal of this study is to assess the role of Fusion Halifax within the Halifax urban development debate, through evaluating the organization's structure, interests and intervention in the urban development process. The objectives used to guide the study are the following:

- 1) To document the development, structure, motivation and activities of Fusion Halifax; and
- 2) To identify the role Fusion Halifax assumes in advocating for urban design and form within development discussions in Halifax.

5 Approach

The study takes a case study approach and uses a mix of qualitative research techniques. The case study approach is an exploratory method for researching cases that are complex, have few known variables and are difficult to overview or predict (Gummesson, 2007). This approach is applicable here because (a) little is known about the organization of Fusion Halifax, and (b) many complex (economics, social networks, people) are involved in the local urban development debate. Qualitative research techniques are selected because the nature of the research focuses on understanding Fusion Halifax's behavior and activity and extracting values and perceptions of the organization from individuals. Using a mix of techniques, or triangulation within a case study approach aids the development of themes or patterns in the research (Yin, 2008). The three main techniques used in the approach are: (1) reviewing public documentation and news coverage of cases where Fusion Halifax participated, (2) observing events that Fusion Halifax is a participant or an organizer (3) conducting interviews with members of Fusion Halifax and other relevant individuals.

6. Methods

Public Documentation and News Paper Analysis

To analyze the role Fusion Halifax in the development process a review of public documentation and news coverage provides evidence to uncover the perspectives, values and relations between members in Fusion Halifax and others in the urban development dialogue. Public documentation such as meeting minutes and development staff reports were reviewed, which documented the participants involved, discussions and decision made during these meetings. News coverage offers a record of the activities that Fusion Halifax was involved in and gave varying perspectives or opinions on the organization and its work. Documentation in general aids the reconstruction of past and on-going processes that were not immediately available from observation (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). Select development projects that include both Fusion Halifax and heritage groups in the dialogue were used as case studies for analysis. These case studies include: Twisted Sisters, the Waterside Centre, the YMCA, Skye Halifax, the Nova Centre (See section 7 Case Studies). Information on the cases was organized into profiles to give factual information to contextualize the dialogue on urban development. Collected data on Fusion Halifax was organized into a chart to characterize the organization's hierarchy and structure and tables to summarize the organization's activities.

Direct Observation

Direct observation provides additional descriptive information on the activities of Fusion Halifax and the attitudes and behaviours of individuals in urban development discussions. Direct observations were made at monthly UDAT meetings and Fusion Halifax events during the winter of 2013.

The investigator using the direct observation technique was a passive participant. A passive participant was a “bystander” or a “spectator” at social events or meetings and was recording the situation from an external perspective (Spradley, 1980; Yin, 2008). Direct observation produces credible data because the observer was readily available to take field notes, ask questions when confusion occurs and view a situation as a third party. The direct observation technique ensures data quality by maintaining objectivity (Yin, 2008).

Data from observing meetings and events were recorded in a descriptive format through field notes. A set of criteria developed by Spradley (1980) was used for observation including:

- activities, a sequence of related acts that people carry out;
- events, a set of related activities that people carry out;
- actors, the people involved;
- time, the sequence that takes place over time;
- goal, the things people are trying to accomplish; and
- feeling, the emotions that are felt and exposed.

To facilitate the understanding and interpretation of relationships between the six criteria listed above, a modified version of Spradley’s (1980) description matrix was used. (See appendix 1)

Qualitative Interviews

Interviews were used for the purpose of gaining an understanding of the motivations and interests of the organization and secondly to gain perspectives of why members participate or affiliate with the organization. The experiences and perspectives deduced from interviews were often key factors that form a connection or fill in the gaps between the findings from observational and documentation analysis (Gummesson, 2007; Lindlof & Taylor, 2002).

Interviewees were drawn from a broad spectrum of individuals involved with Fusion Halifax and urban development discussions in Halifax. Selecting from a diverse spectrum was to ensure the construction of a holistic perspective of the organization's role in urban development discussions. Two types of interviews were conducted: informant and respondent. Informant interviews were interviews conducted with informants who were leaders or high ranked officials that were influential and knowledgeable about the development, structure and mandate of the organization (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). These individuals may be the stakeholders of groups such as: Fusion Halifax, Heritage Trust, Save the View, GHP or land developers. Respondent interviews were conducted with respondents who were typical members of Fusion Halifax who can offer an individual opinion or perspective on specific events. Respondents contrast with informants in that they gave personal accounts and not holistic perspectives of a given topic (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). These individuals were general members of Fusion Halifax and Heritage Trust and other participants in urban development discussions in Halifax.

Twelve in-person interviews were conducted. Interviews lasted 45 minutes to an hour. Prior to the interview a consent letter was distributed to the interviewees, which required their signature in order for an interview to occur (see Appendix 2). A set list of interview questions was prepared (See appendix 3). A semi-structured format question design outlined the main topics discussed in an interview, but allowed flexibility in phrasing questions during interview sessions. The flexibility within the questions reduced restrictive answers and provided the interviewee the opportunity to give their opinions and perspectives. Interviews were recorded through note taking and tape recording. Interviewees were asked to give consent to recording the interview before the interview proceeded. Information from the interviews was used in the general analysis for the research. Quotes were extracted from the recording to characterize specific themes.

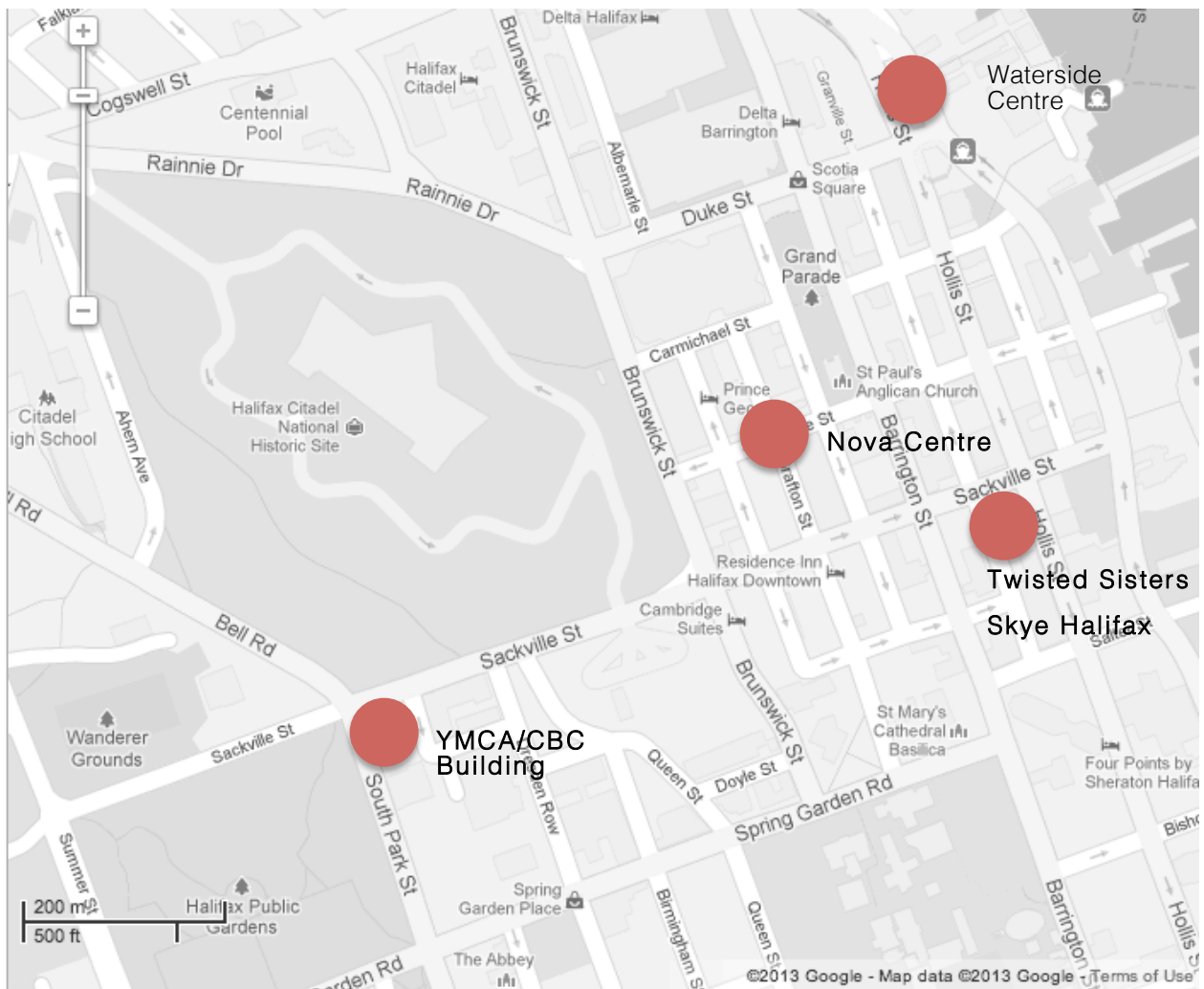
The collected data was organized and analyzed through a profile of Fusion Halifax and thematic analysis that examined themes extracted from public documentation and news coverage, direct and participant observations and qualitative interviews. The themes from the thematic analysis were divided into three categories and included sub-themes: **The Role of Fusion Halifax** (A New Voice, Leadership Action, Community Engagement, Quality of Arguments, A New Dynamic), **Topics of Debate in Urban Design and Development** (The View Planes, Iconic Design, Tall Buildings and Urban Density), and **Attitudes Towards Development**. In theme concerning “The Role of Fusion Halifax” perspectives from Fusion Halifax members, heritage group members, planners and developers were considered to develop an objective understanding of the role the organization plays in the development dialogue. “Topics of Debate in Urban Design and Development” reviewed and examined

contentious topics between Fusion Halifax and various actors within the development debate. Finally, the theme of “Attitudes Towards Development” analyzes the set of attitudes that actors have created for various groups with the local development dialogue. These three categories of themes were then interpreted to discern the position of Fusion Halifax. With understanding gained on Fusion Halifax’s behaviour connections were drawn to the general literature on urban governance and politics.




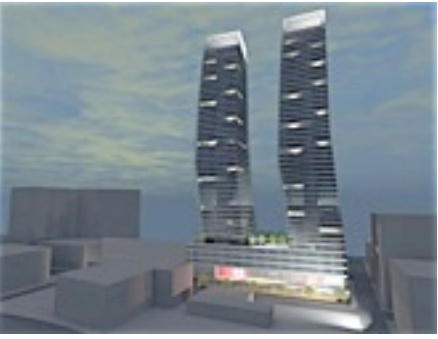

7. Case Studies

Five case studies that are either proposed or approved development proposals within downtown Halifax were reviewed to assess the role of Fusion Halifax in development discussions. Below is map that indicates the location of the proposed developments.

Figure 4: Location Map of Development Case Studies in Downtown Halifax



Source: Google Maps, 2013

Development Profiles					
Title	The Twisted Sisters	Waterside Centre	YMCA/CBC Building	Skye Halifax	Nova Centre
Developer	United Gulf Developments	Armour Group	The Young Men Christian Association	United Gulf Developments	Rank Inc.
Development Description	The Twisted Sisters was a 27 storey mixed-use development proposed for the Tex-Park Site at the corner of Sackville St and Hollis St. The design included a four-storey podium, which would contain retail and office uses and two asymmetrical towers, one of which would contain condominiums and the other, hotel. This building would have been the tallest building in downtown Halifax, if it were built.	The Waterside Centre is a 9 storey office and retail development located on Upper Water St. As the existing property is part of the Historic Properties, a heritage area in the city, the development is designed to retain the original facades and glass of the existing building. Modern materials such as glass are used for the additional levels. This project generated considerable public attention. Three Council Meetings were held to accommodate citizens who wanted to voice their opinion on the project.	Park St. and Sackville St. The development will consist of a recreational facility at the ground level, retail and office space on the side facing South Park St and mixed-unit residential housing on the upper levels. The massing of the building will cover the whole lot, but set backs on the upper floors are proposed to accommodate the views from Citadel Hill to the Public Gardens. The application is requesting a height amendment to the Downtown Secondary Plan.	Skye Halifax was a 48-storey mixed-use development proposed in 2011 on the same site as the Twisted Sisters. The Skye Halifax Development would have included a four-storey podium intended for commercial space and two towers of affordable residential units targeted at the young professional market. The total height of the building would have been 150 meters. The design recognized the sea faring traditions in Halifax; with two tall thin towers created to resemble " ...a ship's twin sails that push the seafarer towards the horizon - analgous of the future opportunity and discovery. "	The Nova Centre is an approved one million square feet development for the central block in downtown Halifax bounded by Argyle St, Sackville St, Market St and Prince St. The development consists of a convention centre, international finance centre, retail uses at the podium of the building and residential uses on the upper levels. A pedestrian walkway through the centre of the development is incorporated in the design . The federal government is financing one third of this project and the provincial and municipal government has also committed funding for this project.
Project Timeline	<div>December2005Project Initiation</div> <div>March2006Project was approved by Council</div> <div>April2006A coalition of heritage groups appealed Council's decisions.</div> <div>September2007URB approved development agreement.</div>	<div>June2008Project Initiation</div> <div>October2008Council rejected development proposal</div> <div>November2008Armour Group appealed the decision</div> <div>March2009URB voted to approve the development agreement</div>	<div>December2010Project Initiation</div> <div>March2011Project was approved by Council</div> <div>April2011Public Information Session</div>	<div>Feburary2012Project Initiaion</div> <div>May2012Public Information Session</div> <div>November2012Proposal rejected by Council</div>	<div>October2010Project Initiation</div> <div>December2010Approved by Council</div> <div>July2012Province wide public consultation process</div>
Current Status:	The project was not constructed. The development agreement expired in March 2007. Since then United Gulf Developments has pursued another development proposal on the site - Skye Halifax.	Construction of the Waterside Centre commenced on September 2012 and is still in progress	The development application is the public participation process.		Federal government approved funding on August 2011 and the provincial government approved funding in July 2012. After receiving funding the developer launched a provincial public consultation process.
Key Discussion Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The height of the development and its relation to the view planes• The modern design of the project and consistency with the surrounding heritage neighbourhood• The shadows that the development would cast on surrounding areas and the wind tunnel effect on the street level• The economics of the project to the downtown Halifax by increasing residential, office and retail space	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The preservation of historical buildings and the consistency of the building design with the surrounding area• The right to alter heritage properties• The decrease in tourism due to the modernization of historic buildings• The economic benefits of creating more office and retail space	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The suitability of the modern building design with surrounding historical significant assets (Citadel Hill and the Public Gardens).• The benefits of the recreational facility and residential units to citizen health and wellness and the city's economic growth• The amendment of the newly approved HRM By Design Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The obstruction of the view planes and rampart views due to the height of the development• The appropriate use of planning policies• The economic and social benefits that the development provide for downtown Halifax• The credibility of the developer to carry the project through to construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The credibility of the economic forecast for convention centre demand produced for the project• The height, massing and density of the development near Citadel Hill• The urban and architectural design of the development

8. Fusion Halifax Profile

The Origin of Fusion Halifax

Fusion Halifax Social Networking Organization (the organization's official title) was initiated by a group of young professionals with a vision to shape the future of Halifax by providing opportunities for young professionals to learn about their city, lobby for civic issues and establish a social network. Peter Moorhouse, the first chair of Fusion Halifax and the director of investor relations at the GHP, was inspired by similar networking organizations established in Saint John's, New Brunswick and Bangor, Maine. The organizations in Maine and New Brunswick both aimed at engaging young people in discussions within the city (Power, 2008).

Before the launch of Fusion Halifax, the founding members of the organization together with the GHP conducted an informal survey of 700 people (Ryan, R and Foley, M). The results of the survey revealed a growing younger generation in Halifax that was struggling to be heard and to establish a voice in urban issues. The survey participants identified entertainment venues and public transit as two areas that required improvement within the city (Power, 2008).

The Fusion Halifax inauguration event was held at the Maritime Museum on October 25, 2007 and attracted 250 attendees (Power, 2007). In the early stages of Fusion Halifax, a large proportion of the organization's membership concentrated their involvement with urban development and design. Members of the organization actively participated and spoke at various public development hearings. In 2009, when the new design guidelines, HRM By Design, were in process of approval Fusion Halifax as a whole endorsed the plan (Macleod, 2009). Since the founding of the organization,

activities have gradually developed into other areas of interest such as sustainability, and arts and culture (Fusion Halifax, 2007).

To determine the focus, interests and organizational structure of Fusion Halifax, founders categorized specific interests under strategic pillars including: arts & culture, urban design, diversity, economic development and jobs. Working groups formed, such as the Sustainability Action Team, Health and Wellness Action Team, People Factor Action Team (PFAT), Urban Development Action Team (UDAT), Arts and Culture Action Team (artScene), and Immigration and Diversity (ImDiv) (Fusion Halifax, 2007).

Organizational Structure

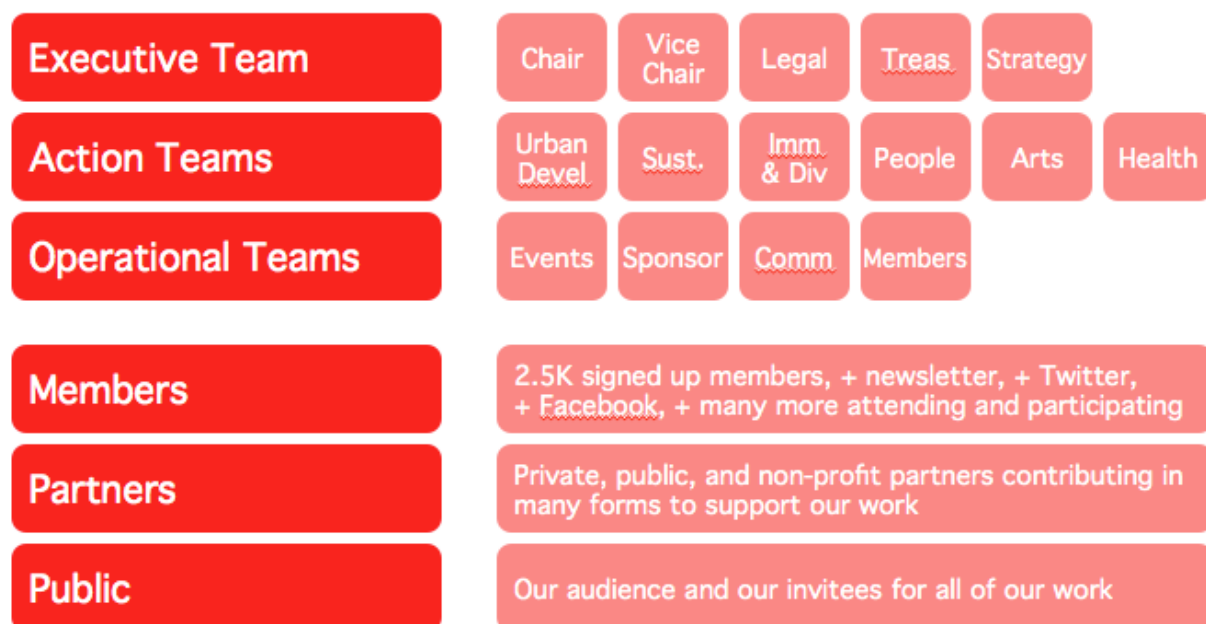


Diagram 2: Fusion Halifax Organizational Structure
Source: (Ritchie, 2013)

Fusion Halifax's board of directors comprises the "executive team", the "action team" directors, and "operational team" directors, who manage the large-scale planning and operations of the organization. Action teams operate separately from the board of directors in terms of meeting times and planning events. General members have the flexibility to participate in the various action teams. The organization currently has 2,500 members registered through various forms of social media such as newsletters, Facebook and Twitter; however, only approximate 150 members regularly attend events. Membership is obtained through the Fusion Halifax website by filling out an electronic form and is free of charge, as the organization is based on volunteerism. Partners of Fusion Halifax are business associations or the government and non-profit organizations, which sponsor or collaborate with the organization on events and programs (Ritchie, 2013).

Fusion Halifax recently established a Community Advisory Committee comprised of developers, city leaders and business professions. As a maturing non-profit organization, the aim of creating an advisory committee was to improve the organization's structure and operations (Lavers, 2011).

Activities and Programs

Aside from the hosting bi-weekly "Every Second Thursday" social networking events where individuals connect and meet other young professionals within the city, Fusion Halifax also hosts several major events and programs. The Table 1 below documents the organization's major events.

Table 1: Major Fusion Halifax Events

Title	Date Implemented	Action Team	Description
Go Awards Gala	2011	General	An evening gala event awards and recognizes 16 people for their contribution to the city. Each award addresses a different area of interest. (eg. urban design, immigration, arts etc.)
Mentorship Program	2011	People Factor	A program that matches senior level professionals in various industries (i.e development, telecommunications and manufacturing) with young professionals involved with the organization.
VivaCity	2010	Urban Development	An exhibition event that showcases urban development occurring in Halifax, allowing developers to interact with citizens.
Mix+Mingle+ Play		Arts & Culture	A theatre event that offers a performance and cocktail hour that allows members to connect and network.
Source: (Fusion Halifax Website, 2007)			

All the major events listed in Table 1 have increased Fusion Halifax's recognition and presence within both the public and urban development dialogue within Halifax. Additionally, Fusion Halifax members also recently engaged in talks with Darrell Dexter the premier of Nova Scotia through its Ideas in Fusion program, which is series of discussions between Fusion Halifax and political, economic or social leaders (Sterling, 2012). This event was not only an opportunity for Fusion Halifax members to form connections, but also demonstrates the organization's effort to advance a civic governance mandate.

Funding

Table 2: Funding Breakdown

Fusion Halifax Networking Association		
Statements of Income and Retained Earnings		
(Unaudited - see Notice to Reader)		
Year ended August 31	2012	2011
Revenue		
GO revenue (Note 4)	\$ 39,200	\$ 32,500
Sponsorship (Note 5)	21,080	10,402
Other ticket sales	1,875	-
	<u>62,155</u>	<u>42,902</u>
Expenses		
Action teams	2,925	4,752
Bank charges	273	322
Board of Directors expenses	3,126	3,840
Donations	-	235
Events (Note 6)	1,934	-
GO program (Note 7)	31,842	26,732
Insurance	1,917	1,941
Office and administration	149	-
Professional fees	2,355	1,200
Projects (Note 8)	3,989	577
	<u>48,510</u>	<u>39,599</u>
Net income	\$ 13,645	\$ 3,303
Retained earnings, beginning of year	\$ 8,021	\$ 4,718
Net income	13,645	3,303
Retained earnings, end of year	\$ 21,666	\$ 8,021

Source: (Fusion Halifax Financial Statements, 2012)

Two-thirds of Fusion Halifax's funding comes from the GO Revenue, which refers to the GO bi-annual awards event. This event generates its own revenue through partner sponsors listed in Table 3. The partner sponsors are mainly representative of business, telecommunication, media and medical firms. The Province of Nova Scotia sponsors the remaining one-third of the

project through its Come-to-Life campaign. Other events hosted by the organization generate costs of hosting and operating the event (Thorton, 2012).

Table 3: GO Sponsorship Breakdown

4. GO revenue		
	2012	2011
McInnes Cooper	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,500
Province of Nova Scotia	2,500	-
Medavie Blue Cross	2,500	-
AML Communications	5,000	-
NS Business Inc	2,500	2,500
Globe and Mail	2,500	2,500
Scotiabank	2,500	2,500
Atlantic Lotto	2,500	2,500
Office Interiors	2,500	-
Chronicle Herald	2,500	-
East Port Properties	2,500	-
Halifax Region Municipality	2,500	2,500
RIM	-	2,500
Rogers	-	2,500
Capital Health	-	2,500
Ticket sales	6,700	7,500
	<u>\$ 39,200</u>	<u>\$ 32,500</u>
5. Sponsorship		
	2012	2011
Province of Nova Scotia	\$ 20,000	\$ 10,000
Other	1,080	402
	<u>\$ 21,080</u>	<u>\$ 10,402</u>

Source: (Fusion Halifax Financial Statements, 2012)

Urban Development Action Team (UDAT)

The Urban Development Action Team (UDAT) is the largest and most active working group within Fusion Halifax. The action team's membership includes individuals ranging from those who are involved in urban development to general citizens who are interested in the subject. UDAT has hosted many activities and programs, two notable projects that the action team has completed in the past are: VivaCity, an exhibition that showcases on-going urban development projects in Halifax; and It's More Than Buses, a set of citizen developed guidelines to improve transportation within Halifax. Aside from large-scale projects, UDAT also hosts monthly meetings and community engagement sessions (See Appendix 4 for the UDAT Business Plan).

Team Objectives 2013

The strategic pillars of the organization guide the objectives for UDAT.

To promote:

- **Education** by continuing to host VivaCity, launch information sessions on topics of interest, and encourage members to attend keynote speaker presentations;
- **Urban Design** by renewing interest in HRM streetscape renewal plans, and disseminating information through Do It Yourself placemaking knowledge & grants;
- **Collaborative Development** by launching the "Development Framework" assessment tool and related development information sessions
- **Partnerships** by strengthening planning and design knowledge through strategic partnerships (Strategic Urban Partnership, Planning and Design Centre, Emerging Green Builders, etc)
- **Dissemination** by clarifying the HRM's complicated public engagement process for planning applications

(Dalziel, 2013)

9. Themes in the Contemporary Development Dialogue

The thematic analysis is divided into three sections beginning with examining the role of Fusion Halifax from the perspectives of Fusion Halifax members, heritage group members, planners and developers. The second section examines contentious debates on urban design and development and the last section addresses attitudes that have emerged within the development debate.

Perspectives on the role of Fusion Halifax

In the view of Fusion Halifax Members:

A new voice

Fusion Halifax members view themselves as creating a new voice within the development discussions.

"One of the goals of the organization since its inception was to make a difference in the community and be a voice of a younger generation." – (Pugsley Fraser, 2008)

The creation of a new youth voice is indicated as a chief motivation behind the development of the organization. Another member within Fusion Halifax articulates the importance of establishing a youth voice within the dialogue.

" By saying we have a large group of people, we have a common voice in something. So it is not piecemeal. It seems more focused and leads to a larger sense of credence to what we are saying...it really adds a level of importance to a youth voice, which older people have or an established professional pull. So by having strength in numbers it establishes a voice." – Member of Fusion Halifax 01

The respondent argues by establishing a group with a young demographic this establishes a common denominator for developing a new voice in the dialogue. The

group's large membership base is used as leverage for young people to gain credibility and to substantiate their opinions in public discussions. The respondent uses "strength in numbers", a figure of speech, to explain that young people need leverage because they lack life experiences and professional acclaim that older people have to reinforce their perspectives.

On the other hand, other members are concerned with how the collective membership of Fusion Halifax or the "Fusion Halifax voice" is represented in public development dialogue.

"The Waterside Centre is one of the first ones that Fusion took a stance on and they [the executive of Fusion Halifax] didn't really know how to properly represent that many people...when you are representing 1000, 2000 to 2500 people it is really hard to get unanimous votes, and so you don't want to misrepresent. So then it became, you know, you can go to these public hearings and say "I am a Fusion member and I support this" instead of "Fusion supports this". It's a bit about the dialogue and about how it is exactly worded." – Member of Fusion Halifax 03

Despite the creation of a young membership as a common denominator within the group, members recognize that the views of young people on specific debates within the city. In considering the growing number of people affiliated with the organization, the respondent expresses concern in accurately distinguishing the difference between what the organization is advocating for as whole and the opinion an individual member of Fusion Halifax. This highlights a challenge with defining a single voice or a unified perspective of an organization that has a wide spread membership.

Leadership Action

Members of Fusion Halifax note that the organization has evolved from its initial objectives building awareness into assuming a leadership role in various issues within

the city. The organization's initial goals were to,

“ Build awareness, generate support for ideas, and communicate potential areas for improvement” – Level Chan (Come to Life Nova Scotia, 2013)

Once the organization began to gain momentum by expanding its membership base, the direction of the organization began to change.

“ Initially, the main priority [of Fusion Halifax] was awareness. That's still a focus but we're getting more involved at the organizational level to make Halifax into the city we want it to be... government and business really value the perspectives we offer as an organization of young professionals. We're receiving more invitations to speak and to get involved in planning committees. That's how we know we've made progress.” - Level Chan (Come to Life Nova Scotia, 2013)

It is clear that there is impetus for transformation, whereby attention placed on building awareness is reoriented towards taking action through involvement in public committees. The indication of a public invitation to government and business events does not only highlight the organization's affiliation with these organizations but is viewed as a form of legitimizing Fusion Halifax's role within the city. Social networking is also reinforced as main goal of the organization, but Fusion Halifax members explain that objectives have transformed into creating practical opportunities to improve the city.

“Our goal was and still is to help our members connect with each other - and to create opportunities that allow them to contribute in a meaningful way. We've achieved a lot so far but it's only the beginning of what we can do to shape the future of our city and province.” – Peter Moorhouse (Queen, 2008)

With in the phrase “ to shape the future of our city and province” the use of “our” suggests that members of Fusion Halifax are taking ownership toward improve current

issues within the city, while “to shape the future” reflects the view that the organization has the ability to lead and form the future of the city.

“ We have a demographic that is eager to be engaged and our governments and businesses understand that young people must be involved in leadership opportunities, community capacity building and a plan for the future.” - (Moorhouse and Stewart, 2008)

In this extract, the argument is that the younger demographic has the capability to “build” or “plan” for the future, if given the opportunities for leadership. This theme of leadership reveal that Fusion Halifax is aiming to expand a representation role for the young generation within the dialogue into an active position that provides recommendations on current challenges within in Halifax.

Community Engagement

In understanding Fusion Halifax’s role in promoting urban design, many people indicate that the organization, specifically UDAT, provides a venue for discussions to occur. Within the development community, there was a general consensus towards a lack of opportunity for “public dialogue” and “forums for discussions”. Many citizens commented that the development process was a “closed-door event” that does not engage the public (Council Minutes, September 16, 2008). The past director of Fusion Halifax said that objective of UDAT’s annual VivaCity event was to allow for the public to discuss development proposals.

“ There is a perception that development is a closed-door process, but, in fact there are avenues for it to be an open one.” – Hannes Weiland (The Chronicle Herald, 2012)

“Avenues” is used as a metaphor that reflects UDAT’s event and is used to explain that the organization is opening a channel for discussions.

In commenting on the public engagement atmosphere in Halifax, prior to Twisted Sisters and Fusion Halifax, an interview respondent reinforces the fact that a forum for discussion was lacking.

“ The problem is there really wasn’t a forum. The forum that did exist was skyscraper page, where people who like to talk about big buildings would comment on the page. It was where that sort discussion was taking place...There really wasn’t a mechanism for that kind of conversation it was just individual e-mails. How did you find people, thoughts and ideas? And do they know that they have those kinds of opinions, you’ve got to get people together talking to others and explore the ideas before they even know that have got the ideas...That was the power of Fusion” – Planner 02

The respondent argues that before Fusion Halifax was established, the major platform for people to discuss development issues was through social media such as an online blogging site, and e-mail. The respondent also constructs the concept that ideas about development and design generate when information is exchanged from conversations. Fusion Halifax provides a vehicle and venue for people to connect and exchange ideas, opinions and perspectives. The Members of Fusion also comment on the intention of the organization is to provide an inclusive venue for dialogue on design, development and planning.

“ Fusion provides that middle ground for discussions” - Member of Fusion Halifax 01

“ When we are engaging in actual community consultation processes we need to start bringing in people who aren't at the table and try to make it [discussions] more meaningful” – Member of Fusion 01

The notion of inclusion emerges with the mention of bringing “ people who aren't at the table” into development discussions. The words “meaningful discussion” is used to reflect the idea of an inclusive discussion that comprise citizens with diverse backgrounds, expertise and knowledge.

In the View of Heritage Members:

Quality of Arguments

Members of heritage groups recognize the emergence of a new young professional group in contemporary discussion, but comment on the quality of the arguments that are presented in support for development within the city.

“ What gripes me, is that they [Fusion Halifax] don’t have enough dialogue, they don’t do their research, they don’t think these things through, and they have an idea that anybody who opposes development is holding the city back.” – Member of a Heritage Group 02

The respondent explains the need for Fusion Halifax to engage in more discussions within the public dialogue. Apprehension is expressed towards how Fusion Halifax members prepare and develop a rationale for offering their support for specific development cases. The respondent also places concern on how Fusion Halifax members may view the opposition to be “holding the city back” by presenting other sides of the argument. The respondent comments on the type of argument presented by Fusion Halifax members.

“ They [Fusion Halifax members] lobby more on the emotional level rather than on the factual level” – Member of a Heritage Group 02

The interview respondent draws on the concept of “sophisticated codes” and “simple codes” used in language and communication (Bailey, 1985). In the view of the respondent, development discussions should be based on factual information rather than “simple codes” such as emotional arguments. The concern is placed on maintaining objectivity within the arguments.

In the view of planners and Developers:

A New Dynamic

Planners and developers also indicate that the voice of Fusion Halifax is a dynamic addition to the contemporary development dialogue.

“ So the Twisted Sisters and Fusion that sort of happened around the same time, it changed the kind of dynamic: who showed up, what they could say, what they had the right to say and the opinions to express.” – Planner 02

The respondent views the Twisted Sisters project and Fusion Halifax as catalysts that contributed to enhancing a change in the development discussion within the city, by opening up the development dialogue to include new people, ideas and opinions.

A member of the development community also indicated the importance of Fusion Halifax’s support in a development project during the approval process.

" Their [Fusion Halifax] support is very important, as a label. There are certain labels or groups you want to support your project before you go to council, you want the Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Halifax Business Commission and you want Fusion.” – Member of the Development Community 01

The respondent uses the metaphor of a “label” to characterize Fusion Halifax, arguing that the organization is a helpful partner during the approval process of a development project. The respondent also includes Fusion Halifax within a list with other organizations that have defined economic development and business objectives.

Another respondent also explains the positive aspects of the UDAT’s annual event, VivaCity.

“It is an opportunity to bring ideas and people together, many of the projects they show case are projects we [HRM] already supported. So it seems quite a positive

thing to have. A group that promotes planning projects that fits within our [HRM's] planning structure." - Planner 03

The respondent explains that UDAT plays the role of providing an opportunity for public engagement. The display of the developments that have been approved by HRM is a reflection of a connection between the organization and the government. By aligning with the local government's decisions, Fusion Halifax is viewed as a positive addition to the dialogue.

Topics of Debate in Urban Design and Development

The first sentence of Fusion Halifax's vision on urban design depicts the challenge of development within city.

"Our city is currently challenged to find a blend of heritage and history with modern architectural design." – (Fusion Halifax, 2007)

Within contentious arguments on design and planning such as the view planes, iconic building, tall buildings and density, the contrasting visions defined in Fusion Halifax's visions emerges with the topics of debate.

The View Planes

Policies in municipal and the provincial planning documents aim to protect the view planes and the rampart views from Citadel Hill. In particular the rampart view policy was established to ensure that people standing on the Citadel Battlement could not see the tops of new buildings (Staff Report, December 16, 2005). These policies were created for cultural reasons as citizens felt strongly about the history of the city and its connection to the harbour. With proposals of modern high-rise development discussions have risen over the relevance of maintaining view regulations. Heritage advocates argue the continual maintenance of the views is important for the city due to historical, cultural and tourism purposes.

" It is a benefit for people to be able to go to the Citadel and see the maximum view, 360 degrees, as they possibly can. The change in height limit will definitely restrict that and decrease the amount of view from the Citadel and that would be extremely negative. It would not be of benefit to the city but would damage the economy, cultural and historic life of the city. Yes, it might be nice to have a new YMCA but the view is something that belongs to everybody in HRM. That is more important than a

new YMCA.” – Member of a heritage group (Public Information Session, April 21, 2011)

In dialogue on the YMCA/CBC redevelopment proposal, heritage advocates argues that the views from the citadel are a public good and maintenance of the views is a public benefit. Relaxing the heights restrictions would impede the preservation of historical and cultural asset and would hinder the ability to sustain the character of the city. In the case of the Nova Centre the proposed height of the building was also opposed by, members of the Save the View Coalition.

“The project would dominate the central downtown skyline. It would break the tradition of low-rise buildings in this area” – Member of Save the View (Mellor, 2012)

In emphasizing the importance of the “tradition of low-rise buildings in the area”, the goal to preserve the character and block patterns within the city is expressed.

The Skye Halifax proposal challenges the applicability of maintaining the traditional views in contemporary development.

“It is time to re-consider whether protecting the rampart views on this site for the purposes of tourism is still preferred over the benefits of economic revitalization, creating an interesting skyline with a new internationally recognized landmark.” – (Staff Report, October 30, 2012)

The argument is presented as to whether protecting the rampart views for tourism is worth forgoing an opportunity for revitalizing the downtown. In comparing the opportunity of an interesting skyline or internationally recognized landmark, the proposal challenges whether heritage should be the only image Halifax should exhibit.

Tall Buildings

Tall buildings are reoccurring topics of dispute within the development dialogue. In a survey called “Challenging the myths that exist around HRM’s attitudes towards growth and development” created by the GHP, the results showed the residents on the Halifax Peninsula are skeptical towards the advantages of building tall structures (Dorey and Morley, 2008). Within the staff report of the Twisted Sisters project, the planner frames the polarized debate on tall buildings.

“ Each time a tall building is proposed in Halifax, debate polarizes into supporters who see tall buildings as sign of progress and opponents who believe they threaten the city’s intrinsic character. Each staff report is viewed as a litmus test to see which view point staff supports” - (Staff Report, December 16, 2005).

The planner distinguishes two sides of the debate those who believe that tall buildings would bring progress and those who aim to preserve the character of the city. The term “litmus test” is used as analogy for planning staff reports, because these reports are viewed as a test to see which side city planners take a side with proposals of tall buildings. The planner continues to explain the reason behind the opposition of tall buildings within Halifax.

“ The limited experience HRM has had with tall buildings has resulted in several tall buildings which have created harsh pedestrian environments and are unsympathetic to adjacent heritage assets. It is not surprising that many citizens oppose taller building. Architecture and urban design, however, have come a long way towards understanding how to create livable cities since the unadorned glass and concrete slabs, which were constructed in the 1960s and 70s. There are numerous proven strategies for making taller buildings fit into and even enhance a city.” - (Staff Report, December, 2006).

The planner suggests that opposition exists due to staff’s previous inexperience with

approving tall buildings and associates the negative examples of tall buildings with the urban renewal period of 1960s and 70s. The planner uses ideas such as “livable cities” and “progressed architecture and urban design skills” as tools to persuade the public that tall buildings have a place within the city.

At the Waterside Centre council meeting a citizen spoke of the disadvantages of tall buildings.

“The development would damage the integrity of a historic part of Halifax; I moved to the area from Ontario to start my career and part of the reason was the city’s history and historic buildings. I acknowledge that Council often heard of young people wanting tall, modern buildings, however, I advise council to be careful about making such assumptions...as a building is much more than just its façade.” – Citizen (Public Hearing, September 9, 2012)

The citizen emphasizes that tall buildings will challenge of maintaining the integrity of the city’s historical character. The city’s historical character is a defining reason behind the citizen’s career move to Halifax and argues for the rejection of tall buildings within the city. Skepticism is inserted into the dialogue towards expectations of the benefits that tall buildings contribute to city by warning councilors “ to be careful in making assumptions” and “ buildings are more than just its façade”.

In arguing for the approval for Skye Halifax, a city’s skyline and tall buildings are used as part of the argument.

“ A city’s progressiveness is often measured by the skyline. More often than not, progressiveness includes high-rise buildings.” (Staff Report, October 30, 2012).

The planner for Skye Halifax projects an opinion that modern and tall developments add to the skyline as symbols that measure the progress and growth of a city. Rationales for the support of tall buildings often relate to characteristics of an entrepreneurial city.

Iconic design

All five development case studies that were reviewed used modern design and technology as a marketing strategy to enhance economic development with the city. Actors repeatedly use the words “signature”, “landmark”, “striking” and “state-of-the-art” to describe the buildings. The developer for the Twisted Sisters Projects states,

“The site was purchased with the intention of creating a landmark for Halifax. The goal with this particular project is to create an innovative and artistic focal point for downtown and help revitalize the city core” – Developer (Council Minutes, February 28, 2006)

The developer characterizes modern and iconic development as a tool and a solution to revitalize the downtown core. This touches on the advantageous project for prestigious projects within an urban entrepreneurial government. The terms “innovative” and “artistic” also draw connections to the creative class theory, where creating a centre for arts and culture is viewed to attract people and potential investment.

“The unique architecture will enhance Halifax’s reputation as a city of contrasts – one that celebrates its past while embracing its future on the world stage. Skye Halifax has internal “floating” ballrooms and flowing lines representative of the sea and sails that is at the architectural level of other landmark building that have an international draw” – (Staff Report, October 30, 2012).

The Skye Halifax application is envisioned to create a defining image and international reputation for the city. Creating this project is also proposed as a solution for

integrating heritage with modern design. Imagery of “floating ballrooms” and “the sea and sails” is used to define a high quality level of architecture. The idea behind giving a project an “international draw” or “world-class image” attracts attention and enhances the competitiveness of a city. A heritage advocate provides an alternative perspective on the introduction of iconic buildings within the city.

“Enhance our heritage resources and streetscapes, the things that speak of us as a people; the things that visitors come to see. Any place can have shiny new buildings. The Bilbao effect is ‘so last year’.” – (Miller, 2012)

Heritage assets and the streets of the city are viewed as resources that promote the character and add cultural and tourism value to the city. The author uses “shiny buildings” as a synonymous term with iconic developments and projects the view that iconic buildings does not add character or value to the city, because these buildings can be found any where in the world. The “Bilboa effect” is used as analogy to describe the “wow factor” in architecture, which is the aim of iconic developments. Bilbao is a city a Spain that is home to the Guggenheim Museum - a building that is internationally recognized as an architectural landmark. The author emphasizes that this “Bilboa Effect” has gone out of trend in architecture and iconic developments are no longer popular proposals for cities.

Urban Density

The introduction of density within the development discourse was stimulated by the approval of the city’s urban design guidelines, HRM By Design, which aims to regulate and encourage density on the Halifax Peninsula. With the regional goal to attract the

population density and revitalize the downtown core, many developers have translated the need for densification into intentions to build tall buildings (Haiven, 2012). The Skye Halifax project is an example of this phenomenon. The project promoted the concept of “eco-density”, which aims to achieve efficiency in utilities and affordability through high-density developments (staff report, October 30, 2012).

“ While these very good projects [YMCA/CBC project and TD Bank project on Spring Garden Road] were supported by HRM by Design, they do not provide the critical residential mass necessary that will see a reversal of downtown’s current downward trend. ...Skye provides the necessary residential mass that will attract and retain an under-served youth market.” – (Skye would Add to the Downtown Pie, 2012)

The reference made towards “mass” can be translated to mean “density” as massing, refers to the volume of a building. The author uses descriptive adjectives in front nouns such as “critical residential mass” and “ under-served youth market” as tools of persuasion in language to construct an argument for the necessity of the project. Density is also used as an argument towards the revitalization of the downtown core by meeting the demands of the younger generation.

In a community letter presented to the mayor of HRM, citizens have opposing views towards the benefits of density that Skye Halifax will produce for the downtown.

“ Allocating extreme density on individual sites, such as that sought by Skye, was carefully avoided [in the planning of HRM By Design] so that demand would not be met only on one or two sites, thereby leaving other sites to languish undeveloped...There is absolutely no need to destabilize the downtown by amending the Plan’s [HRM By Design] heights in year three of the plan” – (Community Letter to HRM, 2012)

The author also uses the descriptive adjective such as “extreme density” to describe density, which exemplifies a tone of urgency for the consideration of various community members’ perspective. In addition to indicating that the density

requirements exceeded the proscribed levels within HRM By Design, the author also raises the issue of whether downtown needs the level of density proposed by the Skye Halifax project.

Attitudes towards Development Dialogue

The two contrasting visions of preserving heritage and encouraging modern development for the city have created a set of attitudes within the public debate on development in the downtown. An interview respondent comments on those who are viewed to support modern developments.

“ They [the opposition] can be constructive rather than be obstructive, because they all have the same opinion. Every time they stand up they say exactly the same thing, ‘I want to raise my children here and I want to stay here. I won’t stay here unless this developer builds this 24 storey class A office building.’” – Member of a heritage group 02

The respondent characterizes an attitude of citizens who support development often uses a similar rationale for offering support. The arguments used to support of development primarily draw on themes of retaining people within the downtown. The respondent expresses that the differentiating opinions provide the dialogue a constructive contribution.

In offering support for Skye Halifax, a citizen expresses an attitude of people who are opposing the development.

“ This project [Skye Halifax] needs to be approved and needs to start tomorrow. While all the anti-development types will be screaming bloody murder, their irrational fear of tall buildings needs to be overcome once and for all” – Citizen (Taylor, 2011)

The citizen uses a hyperbole such as “screaming bloody murder” to explain a reaction of people who oppose the tall buildings. The use of the adjective “irrational” to emphasize fear constructs a view that people who oppose buildings should not use fear

to justify their arguments. The citizen projects a general perspective that new proposals within downtown are opportunities for the city to move forward and to overcome an attitude of resistance to tall buildings.

A respondent also provides a general observation towards discussions on the development with the emergence of a new youth voice.

“What was going on in the downtown in terms of development was too much vested in older people, an older generation, people with a more traditional perspective and it was time to hear from young professionals who want to live in the downtown and see it become more vibrant.” – planner 02

The respondent explains that previous discussions included too much of a “ traditional” perspective, which alludes to the long-standing heritage preservation vision for city often associated with the older generation. The respondent identifies growing voice of the younger generation that is advocating for an alternative vision for the downtown. In highlighting the two attitudes in the development, the topic of age is included as part of factor that defines the attitude of groups within the development dialogue.

A member of Fusion Halifax found the fundamental membership of the organization, which is composed of younger generation, contributes to the creation of divisive attitudes in development dialogue within the city.

“ That's the nature of a young organization, run by passionate people is that unless you have elder voices in the conversation, the group is biased based on the fact that it is young. To be completely honest I see value in it [Fusion Halifax] but ideologically, fundamentally I disagree with the idea of segregating people into a young group to get a youth voice. It's like our politics where you have liberal voices versus conservative voices”. – Member of Fusion Halifax 02

The respondent uses the analogy of Canadian politics to depict the polarized discussion

created when interest groups are segregating membership by age. With a group that has its membership based on young motivated people, the foresight elders of community brings with their experience is lacking in the decision making process, as such a balanced perspective is harder to achieve within an organization. The emergence of Fusion Halifax has enhanced the notion of age as a factor that people use in depicting attitudes of different groups within the development dialogue.

10. Interpretation

Fusion Halifax's role in promoting urban design within the development process is through providing a platform for discussion and establishing a new voice within the development dialogue. The creation of UDAT establishes a venue for community engagement, aiming to provide opportunities for open dialogue and exchange of ideas surrounding urban development issues within the city. UDAT's events such as Vivacity is an occasion for the public interact, discuss and learn about the current development projects and issues occurring within the city.

The initial membership of Fusion Halifax and particularly members of UDAT showed interest in new development proposals with modern design elements and actively spoke in favour of these developments during public meetings and hearings. The reoccurring presence of a young professional cohort during public hearings and meetings initiated the development of a "new voice" in the dialogue, which contrasted with traditional voices to preserve heritage within the city. Interest in modern developments has distinguished several contentious topics within the dialogue such as the persistent debate on view planes and tall buildings and adopted new discussions on icon design and density. Arguments in support for iconic design as a tool to "revitalize the downtown", "attract investment" and give the city "international reputation" draws a link with characteristics of urban entrepreneurialism.

With the emergence of two visions for the city, a set of attitudes within the development discussions have developed towards those who support and oppose developments. Supporters of developments are viewed to have homogenous rationales behind encouraging development. This rationale is depicted by the idea that new

investment in downtown will retain people within city and encourage economic development. Where as the attitude of impeding on change and progress within the city is formed towards those who oppose development. With Fusion Halifax's membership defined within the younger demographic, age has been integrated into the attitudes towards development. The membership criteria of Fusion Halifax contributes to the perspective that the younger generation is viewed to support development, while the older generation is viewed to oppose and lobby for the retention of the city in its existing form.

Urban Coalitions

Results from the thematic analysis on the role of Fusion Halifax reveal that the behaviour and composition of the organization demonstrates connections with urban coalitions found in entrepreneurial governments (Hall and Hubbard, 1996). Urban coalitions are defined as business and professional interests that collaborate through loose partnerships to achieve government objectives. Fusion Halifax presents the following urban coalition qualities based on:

- The support provided by the GHP during the initial stages of forming the organization
- The social networking aim of the organization, which is an operational strategy of urban coalitions.
- The sources of sponsorship received predominantly from government and business associations such as the province of Nova Scotia, Planning and Design Centre, Downtown Halifax Business Commission, and Scotia Bank.
- The types of events the organization creates such as opportunities for dialogue

within electoral debates and programs that engage business leaders within the city

- The organization's partnership with other interest groups such as Our HRM Alliance and the Strategic Urban Partnership.
- The endorsement of HRM By Design, which shows commitments to promoting government growth visions and objectives for development.

Despite exemplifying the characteristics of urban coalitions, the power of the organization to mobilize and contribute as civic governance mechanism such as making policy recommendations to the government are hindered by current challenges the organization faces. Fusion Halifax operates through volunteerism, which challenges consistency and dedication of the membership base. Difficulty also rises in developing clearly defined objectives with a wide membership base of 2500 people. Lastly, the one-year term of the leadership positions of Fusion Halifax impacts the sustainability of a consistent vision for the organization. Therefore, the organization is constrained to a supporting role within urban coalitions.

11. Conclusion

This research contributes to further knowledge on the local urban development dialogue in Halifax. Since the mid 20th century when planning and development processes were introduced in Halifax, urban development discussions involved strong traditional perspectives of heritage preservation (Grant, 1994). As urban planning paradigms and theories shift overtime, urban governance regimes and visions adopt similar changes. In Halifax, government restructuring in 1996 lead to the reorientation of the city's vision towards encouraging economic growth and prosperity in the region. Florida's (2002) creative class theory was used as a strategy to promote the city's HRM economic development agenda. The ideology of Fusion Halifax was inspired by the creative cities movement.

In 2006, the iconic development proposal of Twisted Sisters initiated discussions and ideas of using signature urban and architectural to attract economic development, which is a characteristic of urban entrepreneurial governance, another strategy of promoting economic growth. Since then, a trend of iconic development proposals including the Waterside Centre, YMCA/CBC building, Skye Halifax and the Nova Centre have begun in the downtown.

As an active participant within the discussion of new iconic development proposals, Fusion Halifax's has developed a voice and platform for discussion on urban design and development. The views of encouraging urban architectural design within the city often contrasts with the traditional perspective of preserving heritage creating two visions for city. The creation of two divergent visions has developed set of attitudes between people who support and oppose development. With Fusion Halifax defined

membership based on young professionals, age has become a factor that is used to characterize the type of people who support and oppose development in the dialogue.

Fusion Halifax's affiliation with business interests, through sponsorships and collaborative project ventures, demonstrates connections with the concept of urban coalitions. Fusion Halifax's association with similar organizations urban coalition qualities such as the GHP, Planning and Design Centre and the Strategic Urban Partnership exemplify the increasing inclusion voices vested in business interests within the local development debate. The emergence of Fusion Halifax has developed a new voice and platform for discussion on urban design and highlighted the increased representation of business groups within the debate, constituting a shift in the Halifax urban development dialogue.

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Figure 3: <http://smarcityblog.greaterhalifax.com/.a/6a0115706c9ae2970c0133f277b3e4970b-800wi>

Figure 4: <http://smarcityblog.greaterhalifax.com/.a/6a0115706c9ae2970c0133f277b3e4970b-800wi>

<http://smarcityblog.greaterhalifax.com/.a/6a0115706c9ae2970c0133f277b3e4970b-800wi>

Development Profile photos:

<http://ourhalifax.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/twisted sisters.jpeg>

<http://www.halifax.ca/planning/images/Case0114RenderingUpperWater1.jpg>

http://www.ns.dailybusinessbuzz.ca/media/photos/unis/2011/03/08/photo_1379637_resize.jpg

<http://assets.inhabitat.com/wp-content/blogs.dir/1/files/2011/10/skye-halifax-537x406.jpg>

<http://img594.imageshack.us/img594/3781/novacentremarch212012.png>

Interviews:

Planner 01 – Jan 18, 2013

Member of FH 01 – Jan, 21, 2013

Member of the Development Community 01 – Jan 25, 2013

Member of FH 02 – Jan 29, 2013

Member of FH 03 – Feb 1, 2013

Planner 02 – Feb 1, 2013

Member of FH 04 – Jan 22, 2013

Member of Heritage Group 01 – Feb 6, 2013

Member of FH 05 – Feb 4, 2013

Planner 03 – Feb 6, 2013

Member of Heritage Group 02 –Feb 8, 2013

Member of Fusion Halifax 06 – Feb 26, 2013

Appendices

Appendix 1: Descriptive Question Matrix

Descriptive Question Matrix						
	Activity	Event	Time	Actor	Goal	Feeling
Activity	<i>Can you describe in detail all the activities?</i>	what are all the ways activities are part of events?	How do activities vary at different times?	What are all the ways activities involve actors?	What are all the ways activities involve goals?	How do activities involve feelings?
Event	What are all the ways events incorporate activities?	<i>Can you describe in detail all the events?</i>	How do events occur over time? Is there any	How do events involve the various actors?	How are events related to goals?	How do events involve feelings?
Time	How do activities fall into time periods?	How do events fall into time periods	<i>Can you describe in detail the time periods?</i>	When are all the times actors are "on stage"?	How are goals related to time periods?	When are feelings evoked?
Actor	How are actors involved in activities?	How are actors involved in events?	How do actors change over time or at different	<i>Can you describe in detail all the actors?</i>	Which actors are linked to which goals?	What are the feelings experienced by
Goal	What activities are goal seeking or linked to goals?	What are all the ways events are linked to goals?	Which goals are scheduled for which times?	How do the various goals affect the various	<i>Can you describe in detail all the goals?</i>	What are all the ways goals evoke feelings?
Feeling	What are all the ways feelings affect activities?	What are all the ways feelings affect events?	How are feelings related to various time periods?	What are all the ways feelings involve actors?	What are the ways feelings influence goals?	<i>Can you describe in detail all the feelings?</i>
This matrix is a modified version of the descriptive question matrix found in James Spardley's book on Participant-Observation. Source: Spradley, J. P. (1980). <i>Participant observation</i> . (pp. 82 -83) United States of America: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.						

Appendix 2: Consent Letter

February 6, 2013

Project Title: The Role of Fusion Halifax in the Halifax Urban Development Discourse

Principal Investigator: **Gladys Leung**

Supervisor: **Dr Jill Grant**

Contact Information

E-mail: wk222120@dal.ca

Phone: (902) 402 1120

Dear Study Participant:

We invite you to take part in a research study being conducted by Gladys Leung who is a student at Dalhousie University, as part of her Bachelor of Community Design Honours in Urban design studies program. Taking part in the study is voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time. We will use the information collected only for research purposes. This letter explains what you will be asked to do, and any risk or inconvenience you may experience. Participating in the study may not benefit you directly, but we hope to learn things, which will improve the understanding of community planning and design. This research will be conducted by the principal investigator Gladys Leung, under the supervision of Dr Jill Grant, professor at Dalhousie University School of Planning. Please feel free to discuss any questions you have with me, Gladys Leung or my supervisor, Dr. Jill Grant. If you agree to participate, please sign the form at the bottom and return it to me in person or via e-mail.

The purpose of the study is to identify the role Fusion Halifax (a social networking group) plays in promoting urban design within the process of urban development in Halifax. We focus our research on documenting the structure of the organization and its activities within the local urban development process. By understanding the social dynamics and aims of Fusion Halifax we hope to gain a better perspective of how interest groups influence the urban development process and discussions in Halifax.

For this research we are arranging in-person interviews with people living and working in Halifax. We hope to interview members of Fusion Halifax, members of other interest groups, **developers** and other individuals who have been involved in the urban development process within the Halifax Regional Municipality. We expect each interview to take about 30 to 45 minutes; it will consist of semi-structured questions about your experience and opinions. (We have attached an outline of the question topics we will discuss.) If you agree, we will tape record the interview; alternatively we can take notes. You may refuse to answer any question, or end the interview at any point. (If you decide to withdraw from the study, we will destroy any data you contributed.)

We recognize that participating in this study may cause you some inconvenience, but we will try to minimize that by visiting at a time and place convenient for you. We will try to limit the risk that anyone reading the results of the research can identify you from your comments. In publications, we will not use any identifying information other than your type of position (for example, “planner”, “project manager” or “ member of Fusion Halifax”) or use direct quotes from the interview without your consent.

We will keep your remarks confidential. We will never reveal your identity. We will maintain our interview notes and any analysis based on them in a secure location. Only the research team (myself and my supervisor) at Dalhousie University will have access to this information. Dalhousie University policy requires that data be stored securely. I will retain the data for the duration of this study.

We are happy to share the results of the research with you, as we hope that you may find benefit in knowing more about the topic. The work contributes to general knowledge about the local urban development process and discussions in Halifax (Should any new information arise which may affect your decision to participate in the study, we will let you know immediately.)

In the event that you have any difficulties with, or wish to voice concern about, any aspect of your participation in this study, you may contact Catherine Connors, Director, Research Ethics, Dalhousie University at (902) 494-1462, or email: ethics@dal.ca

If you agree to participate, please sign the consent form attached, and check the boxes to signal your preferences. Thank you for considering our request.

Sincerely yours,

Gladys Leung, Undergraduate Student

Date

Appendix 3: Interview Questions

Prior to Recording:

Would you mind if I recorded the interview to ensure that I don't miss details during the discussion?

Interview Questions for Fusion Halifax Members:

What position do you hold in Fusion Halifax?

Why did you choose to join FH?

What types of individuals chose to affiliate with the organization?

What is the organizational structure of FH?

Who are the stakeholders of FH?

How much do external organizations influence the activities of FH?

In your opinion, what are the main goals and objectives of the Urban Development Action Team (UDAT)?

What is the motivation of FH or Urban Development Action Team (UDAT)?

What are some of the challenges that Fusion Halifax or UDAT face in achieving its goals and objectives?

What are some of the benefits of UDAT to urban development in Halifax?

What role does FH assume in the development debate?

What does the Urban Development Action Team do to promote urban development and design within the city?

How effective is the UDAT in promoting urban development in Halifax?

Do you think Fusion Halifax is an effective lobbying group?

How is urban design and form entering the urban development discussion?

How does Fusion Halifax promote urban design and form in the city?

Interview Questions for non Fusion Halifax Members (developers, Heritage Trust/ Save the view members, GHP):

What position do you hold in the Halifax Urban Development process?

What are your views on the intentions of Fusion Halifax?

In your opinion, what types of groups do you think associate with Fusion Halifax?

How important is the role of Fusion Halifax within the process of urban development in Halifax?

How do you think Fusion Halifax is promoting urban design and urban development?

Note questions designed for members of Fusion Halifax can also be used for the non-Fusion Halifax Members*

Appendix 4: UDAT Business Plan

TEAM OBJECTIVES/PRIORITIES:

The Urban Development action team can look back on a successful year of events in 2012 with VivaCity, Its More Than Buses and numerous individual events with developers. The year 2013 will focus on:

- Education: Continue with last year's successful VivaCity, launch information sessions on topics of interest, and promote members to attend keynote speaker presentations;
- Urban Design: Renewing interest in HRM streetscape renewal plans, and disseminating information on DIY placemaking knowledge & grants;
- Collaborative Development: Launching the "Development Framework" assessment tool and related development information sessions
- Partnerships: Strengthening knowledge of planning & design through strategic partnerships (Strategic Urban Partnership, Planning and Design Centre, Emerging Green Builders, etc).
- Dissemination: Clarifying the city's complicated public engagement process for planning applications.

These activities align with the Strategic Pillars, by:

- Focusing on increasing participation amongst a younger and broader audience through targeted engagement of stakeholder groups (e.g. Dalhousie University planning students)
- Creating new working groups and formalized roles within the team that create meaningful and continuous opportunities for involvement
- Adding a constructive voice in the development community via a framework assessment tool that promotes innovation (rather than just criticism) and a revamped communications strategy
- Engaging members to actively pursue a vibrant Halifax.

STRATEGIES:

Membership - Working Groups, UDAT positions and Meetings

Currently UDAT has a core group of members that are involved both in meetings as well as in the delivery of events. In order to steer toward alignment with the Strategic pillars, the team will be looking to create on-going working groups, as well as define specific positions for members (e.g. Communications officer, government and development liaison, Retention leader, secretary). UDAT will host one meeting a month, but presupposes that working group meetings are held outside.

Communications Strategy

Currently communication with members and stakeholders is ad hoc and very situational. While team members are extremely knowledgeable with what is happening within our community, their knowledge and their connections often remain untapped or not leveraged. A

communications strategy will look to the internal communication with current members, as well to communication with external stakeholders. Channels we will be looking to optimize are our website, twitter, e-mails and events.

The newly created “Development Framework” will serve to inject a constructive aspect into the external engagement of the development community. The framework therefore falls under the objectives of the communication strategy.

Events and Information Sessions

Recognition of the Urban Development team springs primarily from the events that we put on. Therefore this year will look to build on the success of VivaCity and to continue to host public information sessions.

EVALUATION:

Evaluation of the team will be made up of both quantifiable and subjective measures. As identified in the objectives, there are definitive targets to meet regarding the events and the Development Framework. Subjective measures include membership engagement, which if successful will lead to increased long-term participation and new membership.

Objective	Evaluation
Education: Continue with last year’s successful VivaCity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revenue > \$6,000 Attendance > 300 Public exposure – media coverage pre- and post event in local newspapers
Education: Launch information sessions on topics of interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To meet or exceed five new information sessions in the year 2012
Education: Promote members to attend keynote speaker presentations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure a significant Fusion presence (15 members) at 3 University / College lectures
Urban Design: Renewing interest in HRM streetscape renewal plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attract media / Council attention on how these plans could be reworked for implementation
Urban Design: Disseminating information on DIY placemaking knowledge & grants;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold at least two information meetings on grant opportunities, and opportunities for involvement
Collaborative Development: To have a minimum of two developments complete the “Development Framework” by the end of June and an additional two before October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> July 1st, 2012 – completed 1 or more development framework assessments November 1st, 2012 – completed additional 1 or more development framework assessments

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnerships: Strengthening knowledge of planning & design through strategic partnerships (Strategic Urban Partnership, Planning and Design Centre, Emerging Green Builders, etc). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have multi-member ties between organizations, and possibly written agreements.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dissemination: Clarifying the city's complicated public engagement process for planning applications. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put upcoming public information meetings into bi-weekly newsletters, on facebook and twitter Hold a public information meeting on how planning applications are processed

ACTIVITIES/INITIATIVES:

PROJECT: VivaCity (October) PROJECT LEAD: Events Coordinator (tbd, February) PROJECT TEAM: tbd BUDGET: \$525 (projected revenues offset costs)			
FUSION STRATEGIC THEME: Our Voice – Be active and responsible participants in the strategic issues affecting the growth and vibrancy of Halifax			
TEAM PRIORITY: Education: Continue with last year's successful VivaCity			
DESIRED OUTCOMES: Meet or exceed last years' attendance, revenues and exposure; Celebrate successful application of the "Development Framework"; Secure a notable keynote speaker.			
ACTIVITIES/TASKS	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY	RESOURCES/BUDGET REQUIRED
Establish a project team	February	Events Coordinator + Director	N / A
Develop Overall Plan, Including theme, venue, list of desired speakers, etc.	February/ Ongoing	Events Coordinator + Director	Covered by presenter fees.
Develop Logistics approach in partnership with Events	April/ May	Events Coordinator + Director + Events	N / A
Outline sponsorship needs, and contact sponsors	April/ May	Events, Development + Director	N / A
Develop collateral material	May/ June	Events Coordinator + Communications	\$500, secure discount / sponsor
Contact potential presenters: Developers, NGOs, HRM	July/ August - October	Director + Development Liaison	N / A
Roll out event promotion – paper, digital/ social media, word-of-mouth	August - September	Events Coordinator + Communications	\$25 – Materials (Gas, stapler, tape, etc.)

ACTIVITIES/INITIATIVES:

PROJECT: Development Framework PROJECT LEAD: Director, and a team administrator PROJECT TEAM: Development framework working groups, discussion open to general FUSION membership BUDGET: \$0			
FUSION STRATEGIC THEME: Our Members – Create meaningful opportunities to engage our members. Our Voice – Be active and responsible participants in the strategic issues affecting the growth and vibrancy of Halifax.			
TEAM PRIORITY/STRATEGY: Collaborative Development: Launching the “Development Framework” assessment tool and related development information sessions.			
DESIRED OUTCOMES: To have a minimum of two developments complete the “Development Framework” by the end of October. Have the framework act as a transparent, respected indicator for development.			
ACTIVITIES/TASKS	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY	RESOURCES/BUDGET REQUIRED
Tweak Informational Materials for Developers / Councillors	Ongoing	Director, Communications Officer	Communications, graphics (Jared), Minor printing cost for Councillors
Release a call for expressions of interest in progressing through the development framework	Ongoing	Government, Development + Academic Liaisons, Help from Adam Sterling	Some time required: Email contact list already exists from VivaCity, some edits/ additions likely needed.
Continuous communication surrounding contacts of commencing the development framework, and it's implementation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial contact: Director Individual Project/ Development Lead Framework Follow-through 	Ongoing	Director + Development Liaison, and team administrators Director UDAT Member Team of 6	Medium time requirement from all those involved. Donation request from developers going through the project to cover materials costs (\$20 – markers, paper, etc).

ACTIVITIES/INITIATIVES:

PROJECT: Information Sessions PROJECT LEAD: Events Coordinator PROJECT TEAM: UDAT Members assigned as required, help from Events and Emerging Ideas team as needed BUDGET: \$100			
FUSION STRATEGIC THEME: Our Members – Create meaningful opportunities to engage our members.			
TEAM PRIORITY/STRATEGY: Education: Launch information sessions on topics of interest, and promote members to attend keynote speaker presentations;			
Dissemination: Clarifying the city's complicated public engagement process for planning applications.			
DESIRED OUTCOMES: Create new educational opportunities for FUSION Halifax to be involved in the community, and increase awareness/ education on urban development matters.			
ACTIVITIES/TASKS	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY	RESOURCES/BUDGET REQUIRED
Information session on green building rating systems (LEED, Living Building Challenge, BuiltGreen, Build Smart, etc.)	TBA (Q1 2013)	Director + Events Coordinator	Food / drink (Budget - \$30); Space paid at the HUB
Partner with the Architecture Student Association (Dalhousie) for their speaker series.	Ongoing	Academic Liaison	Space paid at the HUB
Presentation on Halifax planning process	Q2 2013	Director + Government Liaison	Space either paid at the HUB, or in-kind at City Hall; Food / drink (Possibly in kind?)
Encourage participation in development information sessions.	Ongoing	Director – Government + Development Liaisons	N / A
Additional sessions based on team interest	TBD	Director + Events Coordinator	Monetary resources needed to be determined by the idea / particular session, Space at the HUB

ACTIVITIES/INITIATIVES:

PROJECT: Encourage Development & Placemaking Discussions and Action PROJECT LEAD: Director, Urban Development Action Team PROJECT TEAM: UDAT Members assigned as required, help from Events and Emerging Ideas team as needed BUDGET: \$0			
FUSION STRATEGIC THEME: Our Members – Create meaningful opportunities to engage our members. Our Legacy – Develop a foundation to support the ongoing sustainability of FUSION Halifax.			
TEAM PRIORITY/STRATEGY: Urban Design: Renewing interest in HRM streetscape renewal plans, and disseminating information on DIY placemaking knowledge & grants. Partnerships: Strengthening knowledge of planning & design through strategic partnerships (Strategic Urban Partnership, Planning and Design Centre, Emerging Green Builders, etc).			
DESIRED OUTCOMES: Create stable partnerships with likeminded organizations to minimize event overlap. Encourage individual and public action to improve Halifax's vibrancy, and ensure activities to increase the quality of the public realm are followed-through on.			
ACTIVITIES/TASKS	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY	RESOURCES/BUDGET REQUIRED
Strategic partnerships with:	January – February Start	Director + Academic Liaison + Possibly Legal?	Strong human capital component – people needed for cross-pollination of ideas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning and Design Centre Heritage Trust Emerging Green Builders 	Ongoing	Jacob Ritchie TBA Development Liaison	
Facilitate and educate the public / organizations about HRM's upcoming placemaking grants	March – April Start	Director + Government Liaison Director + Events	N / A

ACTIVITIES/INITIATIVES:

PROJECT: Encourage Development & Placemaking Discussions and Action PROJECT LEAD: Director, Urban Development Action Team PROJECT TEAM: UDAT Members assigned as required, help from Events and Emerging Ideas team as needed BUDGET: \$0			
FUSION STRATEGIC THEME: Our Members – Create meaningful opportunities to engage our members. Our Legacy – Develop a foundation to support the ongoing sustainability of FUSION Halifax.			
TEAM PRIORITY/STRATEGY: Urban Design: Renewing interest in HRM streetscape renewal plans, and disseminating information on DIY placemaking knowledge & grants. Partnerships: Strengthening knowledge of planning & design through strategic partnerships (Strategic Urban Partnership, Planning and Design Centre, Emerging Green Builders, etc).			
DESIRED OUTCOMES: Create stable partnerships with likeminded organizations to minimize event overlap. Encourage individual and public action to improve Halifax's vibrancy, and ensure activities to increase the quality of the public realm are followed-through on.			
ACTIVITIES/TASKS	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY	RESOURCES/BUDGET REQUIRED
Strategic partnerships with:	January – February Start	Director + Academic Liaison + Possibly Legal?	Strong human capital component – people needed for cross-pollination of ideas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning and Design Centre Heritage Trust Emerging Green Builders 	Ongoing	Jacob Ritchie TBA Development Liaison	
Facilitate and educate the public / organizations about HRM's upcoming placemaking grants	March – April Start	Director + Government Liaison Director + Events	N / A

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation with HRM Cultural Affairs 	April	Coordinator Government Liaison	N / A (We could use HRM space pro-bono for this)
Renew discussions surrounding urban design, and streetscape improvement initiatives. Encourage the translation of previously created plans into action.	Ongoing	Director + Government Liaison	N / A

Appendix 5: Observation Analysis of UDAT Meeting

UDAT Meeting

Date: January 31, 2013

Location: The HUB (Coffee shop/ Internet café/ work space)

Activities: Jared Dalziel (Director of UDAT) made a presentation in the beginning of the session by giving an overview the organization's background, activities, and objectives and goals. He also gives a brief explanation of what planning is and the process involved. The main themes for UDAT this year will be:

- Education: Living building challenge
- Urban Density: enjoyable environment
- Collaborative Development: development information sessions
- Partnerships: engaging other groups
- Dissemination: sharing information

A brainstorming session was conducted to identify the major issues the group would like to discuss and take action on. Ideas were written on large news print sheets and sticky notes were used for the “ big ideas”. Main ideas discussed were:

- Streetscape revitalization of Barrington and Quinpool
- Street connection to the waterfront
- Engaging other action teams (sustainability + arts & culture) on collaborative events

Actors: Around 16 people were present at the meeting. People ranged from students, representatives from other interest groups (Quinpool Business Association, HRM Alliance, Green Building Group and Graduate Planning Society (Dal planning)), and citizens. Everyone was between the age of 20 – 40. No introductions between attendees were made.

Time: The meeting was two hours long: 1 hour for the presentation and 1 hour for the brainstorming session and discussion.

Goal:

- 1) To establish a list of agenda items and projects that the group would like to part in during the year.
- 2) To inform the group of planning and development issues occurring within the city

Feeling: Everyone was very relaxed, open and ready to make introductions. As the room was organized into rows of seating with desks, it was hard to move around; therefore, people were confined to talking with the same five people the whole night. The feeling was not very energetic and people seem disengaged by the end of the meeting. It seemed that people attended the meeting because of an objective (i.e representative of an interest group/ association)