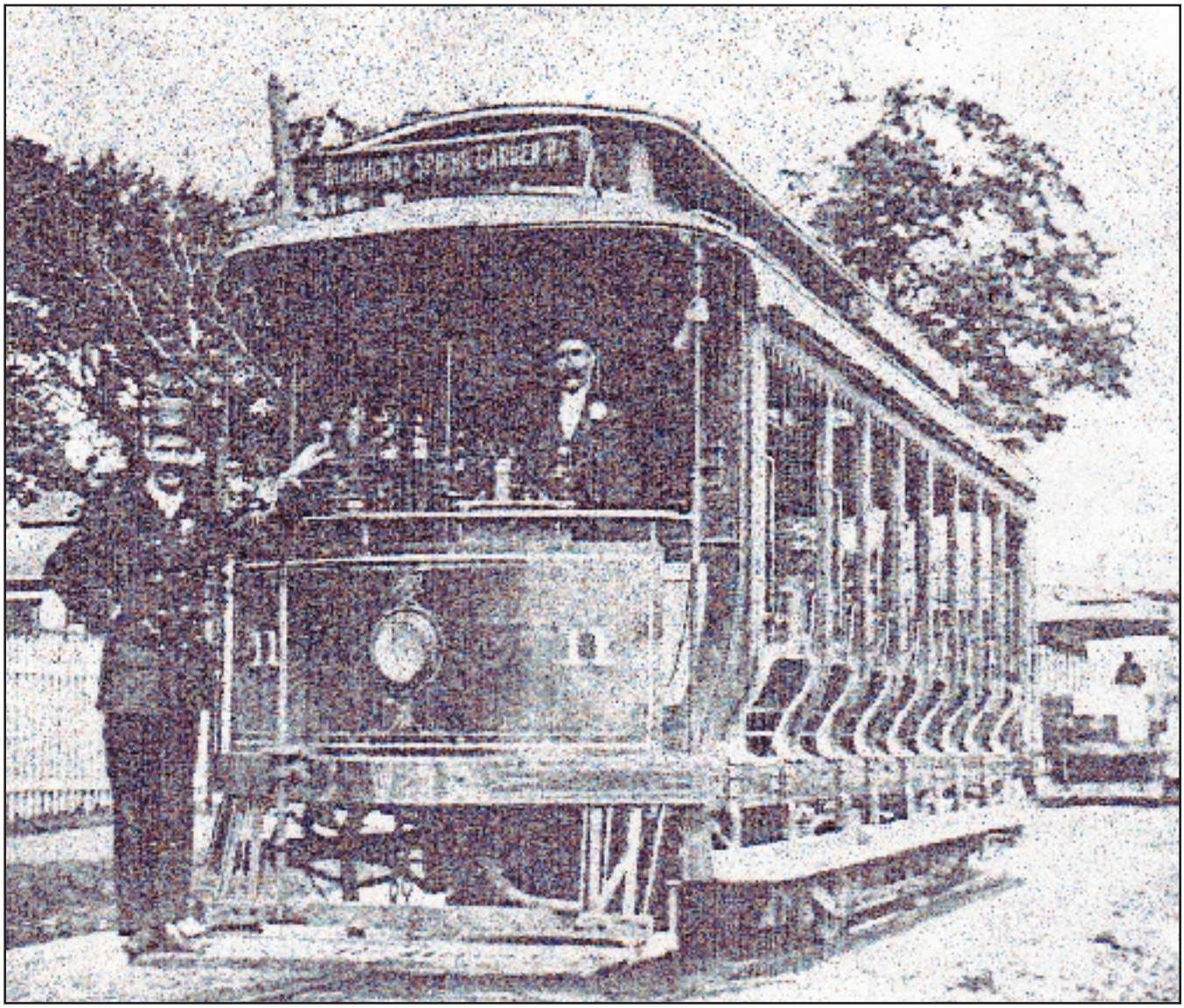
Halifax's Streetcars

Connections Between Transportation and Urban Form

by Sean Gillis



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Introduction

The introduction of the streetcar in the mid-nineteenth century had a significant effect on the development of cities. Streetcars, along with the railroad, created new transportation options in cities which previously relied on walking as the dominant transportation mode. Exceptionally fine-grained neighbourhoods of residential, retail, and light industrial uses characterized walking cities, allowing citizens to live close to where they worked and shopped. New urban forms and development patterns were created in response to the greater mobility provided by streetcars. This paper will study the changes that occurred in Halifax's urban form in response to streetcar development in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Halifax had no mass transit service until 1866. For over 100 years the majority of Haligonians made most of their trips by foot. Private carriages and cabs were available but were beyond the means of all but the wealthy. Poor road conditions and winter weather also hampered wheeled vehicles. Despite poor road conditions goods had to be moved throughout the city by either wagons drawn by horses or peddler's push carts. The slow speed of foot travel, coupled with the inconvenience and expense of other forms of travel, limited the spatial extent of Halifax well into the nineteenth century. Halifax's urban form was determined primarily by how far its citizens could comfortably walk and the need to cluster activity near the harbour. Houses were packed tightly onto small lots (Fig. 1-3). Even wealthy citizens made do with small lots if they wished to reside within the city (Fig. 4). Much of this urban fabric has survived to this day.

In 1854 the railway arrived in Halifax providing the first alternative mode of land transportation to poor roads. Railroads are best suited to long distance transportation, and the railway's immediate effects on Halifax were concentrated near the railroad station in the city's north end (Erickson, 2004). Street railway service commenced in 1866 with horse drawn streetcars carrying passenger's from the railroad terminus into Halifax's core (Brown, 1966). Thirty years later streetcars were electrified using power from a central coal fired power station. Electric streetcars ran at higher speeds than horsecars and were less expensive to operate, allowing electric trolleys to serve less densely populated areas than the horsecar (Vuchic, 2007). Electric streetcars allowed the city to expand and decentralize, lowered

Figure 1. Detached housing from the 1870s on Lucknow St. in the south end of Halifax. The city had a small physical extent and consequently housing was packed closely together even outside of Halifax's downtown core due to small lot sizes.

Figure 2. Attached housing on Maynard St. north-west of Halifax's core.

Figure 3. Attached housing on Smith St., c. 1875.

Figure 4. Merchant's housing on South Park St. Even the homes of wealthy Haligonians were built close to the property line on small lots.

population densities and helped create important commercial streets such as Barrington and Gottingen. In just a few decades new technologies, such as the streetcar, restructured Halifax's urban form which had taken over a century to develop.

Much of Halifax's current urban fabric is heavily influenced by earlier streetcar dependent development. Commercial main streets, suburban streetcar neighbourhoods and peripheral shopping districts in Halifax can all be traced to the streetcar. The streetcar not only reshaped our city, but the development patterns left behind still influence our ideas about urbanity. Important retail streets such as Barrington and Gottingen developed around streetcar lines in the early 20th century and to many represent an urbanity now lost in Halifax. Streetcar suburbs in the western portions of the peninsula are some of the most popular neighbourhoods in the city. It is important, however, to study not only the city which the streetcar has left us but to carefully consider the urban forms which came before the streetcar. Trolleys not only created new development patterns they also drastically altered the pre-existing urban fabric.

This report will study how streetcars shaped the urban fabric of Halifax in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Three facets of the streetcar era will be explored: the effect of streetcars on Halifax's physical extent and population density; the rise of retail high streets on trolley lines and the streetcars effect on micro-retailing; and the new suburban forms the streetcar made possible. The changes that accompanied streetcar lines must be considered in the context of the early nineteenth and twentieth centuries when increased industrialization, technological advancement, and higher disposable incomes were raising living standards, especially among the middle and upper classes. Halifax's streetcar suburbs and retail high streets represent new urban forms made possible both by increased wealth and new transportation technology.

Micro-retailing and the Creation of Retail High Streets

Between Halifax's founding in 1749 and the introduction of horse-drawn tram service in 1866 the dominant mode of transportation was walking. Although the railway began to change this pattern in 1854 the terminal was almost three kilometers north of the central city and its effects were therefore limited to the Richmond area for a number of years.

The "walking city" (Warner, 1962) refers to a specific urban form that develops in settlements which rely primarily on walking for transportation. Most development in walking cities was densely clustered to allow convenient trips on foot with housing, light industry, artisans workshops, civic institutions and retailing all mixed freely throughout the city (Fishman, 1987). In Halifax the walking city persisted from 1749 until at least 1854 when the railway arrived in the city. There is no precise date, however, at which walking was no longer the dominant transportation mode. Certainly the street railway's construction in 1866 was a key move away from the walking city, although its effects on urban form took decades to fully realize.

One important characteristic of walking cities was the fine-grain mix of housing and micro-retailing. Not only did most citizens travel by foot but refrigeration capabilities were limited. Goods were also difficult to transport over land. Retailers, especially vendors providing fresh meat and produce, had to be very close to their customers, wholesalers and shippers (Rae, 2003). Most residents shopped daily for fresh food. Several separate stores were required to provide a complete range of grocery needs, resulting in a plethora of small butchers, bakers, fruit vendors, fish dealers and dry grocers (Millward and Winsor, 1997). These operations were sometimes as small as a single first storey room which fronted onto the street (ibid).

It is now difficult to comprehend the small markets in which these micro-retailers operated. Halifax City Directories from the time period provide an idea of the large number of stores in the city; in 1868 Halifax had 165 grocers, approximately one grocer for every 170 people (Hutchinson's Business Directory). By 1878 the competition had intensified further and 243 retail grocers vied for the business of thirty-five thousand Haligonians, a ratio of roughly one grocer for every 150 citizens (McAlpine's Halifax Directory). In addition to these grocers were dozens of bakers, butchers, fish mongers and small farmer's markets (Fig. 5). This crowded retail scene was not unique in Halifax nor was it limited to the 19th century. In a study of New Haven, Connecticut the average number of residents per grocer was only 220 in 1913, perhaps forty to fifty households per grocer (Rae, 2003). Many of these New Haven grocers avoided streetcar lines, presumably to avoid paying higher rents along the busier main streets (ibid). Although local micro-retailers continued to provide service to dense residential neighbourhoods in many cities,

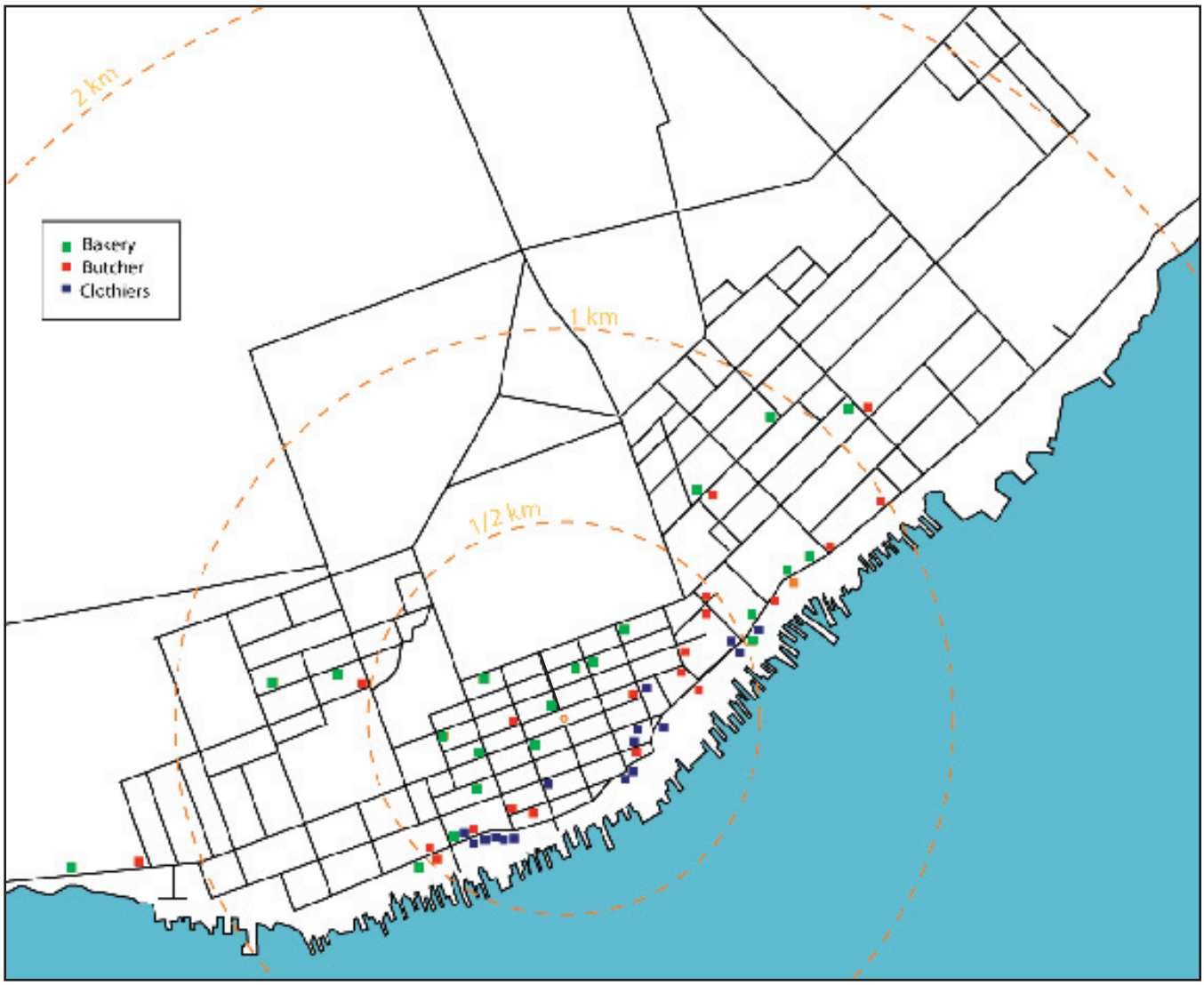

Figure 5. Retail distribution in Halifax. 1868. (Hutchinson's Business Directory, 1868)

Bakery Butcher Clothing

Concentric rings show the distances from Grand Parade.

Local food retailers, such as bakers and butchers, are evenly distributed throughout Halifax's core. Fewer of these retailers are located more than half a kilometer from the Grand Parade. The highest concentration of food retailers was clustered in downtown where population densities were highest.

The comparison shopping core of Halifax was centred around the docks along Upper Water St. Disposable incomes were low and comparison shopping was a small portion of the retail market in 1868. Banks were located primarily along Hollis St. The cluster of banks near Province House is similar to the pattern which survives to this day. In the twentieth century this area of the city would become the core of the central business district.

streetcar lines increasingly became the focus of higher value retailing.

In Halifax the small amount of early comparison shopping concentrated on the waterfront and in the dense downtown core. Barrington St., however, became one of the city's important commercial streets during the 1880s (Millward and Winsor, 1997). Between 1866 and 1876 Barrington St. was one of the city's main horse-railway lines, although service was discontinued for eight years between 1876 and 1884. Barrington St. developed as a retail street during the 1880s despite the demise of horsecar service. After 1896 when Halifax's streetcar system was electrified Barrington became Halifax's premier retail destination (ibid). The rise of important commercial streets such as Barrington during the streetcar era represent a dramatic change in the retail distribution in Halifax.

Just how did these important commercial streets impact the fine-grained mix of micro-retailing

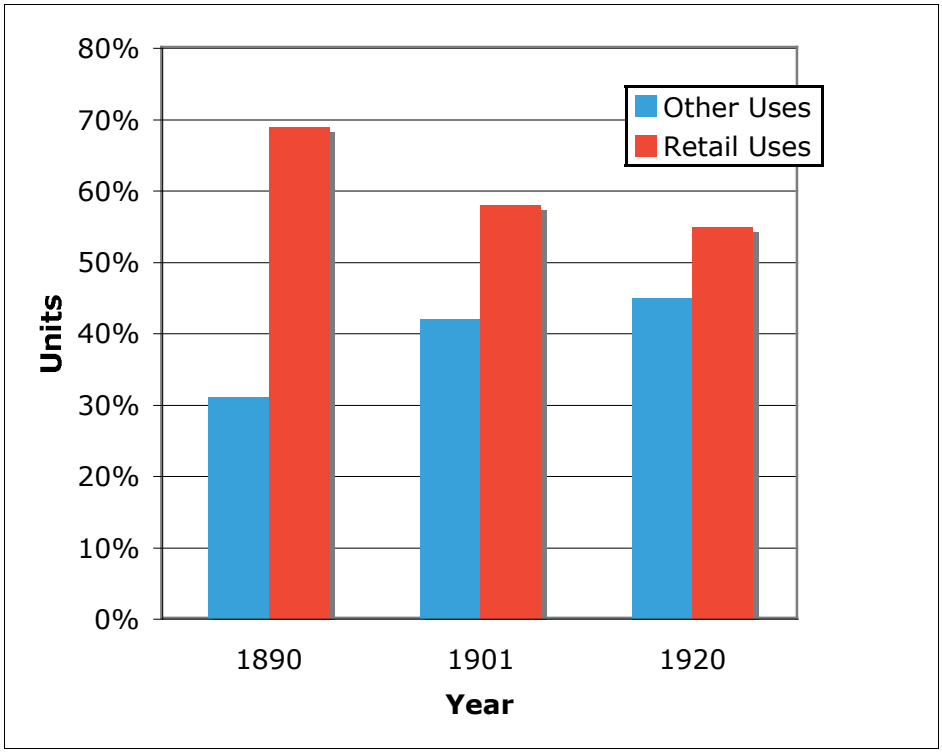

Fig. 6. Percentage of units on Barrington St. between Blowers and Buckingham devoted to retail or other uses at street level. In 1890 this section of Barrington had 120 units, 83 of which contained street level retail. In 1901 there were 125 units, 79 of which were retail. By 1920 there were 116 units, 64 of which contained street level retail. Although the street enhanced its commercial importance in the early twentieth century the percentage of the street devoted to retail fell. Larger buildings with fewer businesses at street level contributed to the decline, as did the growing prominence of street level office space. (McAlpine's Halifax Directory; 1890, 1901, 1920)

that proceeded the development of the commercial street? Studying Barrington, Spring Garden, and Gottingen, three of Halifax's primary retail streets, between 1890 and 1920 demonstrates the relationship between micro-retailing and the emergence of comparison shopping on retail streets. The retailing on these commercial streets is compared to the number of small grocers in Halifax throughout the streetcar era. The number of retail grocers, the core group of micro-retailers (Millwood and Winsor, 1997), indicates the continued importance of micro-retailing in Halifax throughout the streetcar era.

Barrington St. was one of the earliest commercial streets established in Halifax. The core retail section on Barrington was between Blower's St. and Buckingham St. (ibid). By 1890 this section of Barrington was the city's leading commercial street and a high percentage of addresses contained some form of retailing at street level (Fig. 6). The proportion of addresses on Barrington devoted to retailing

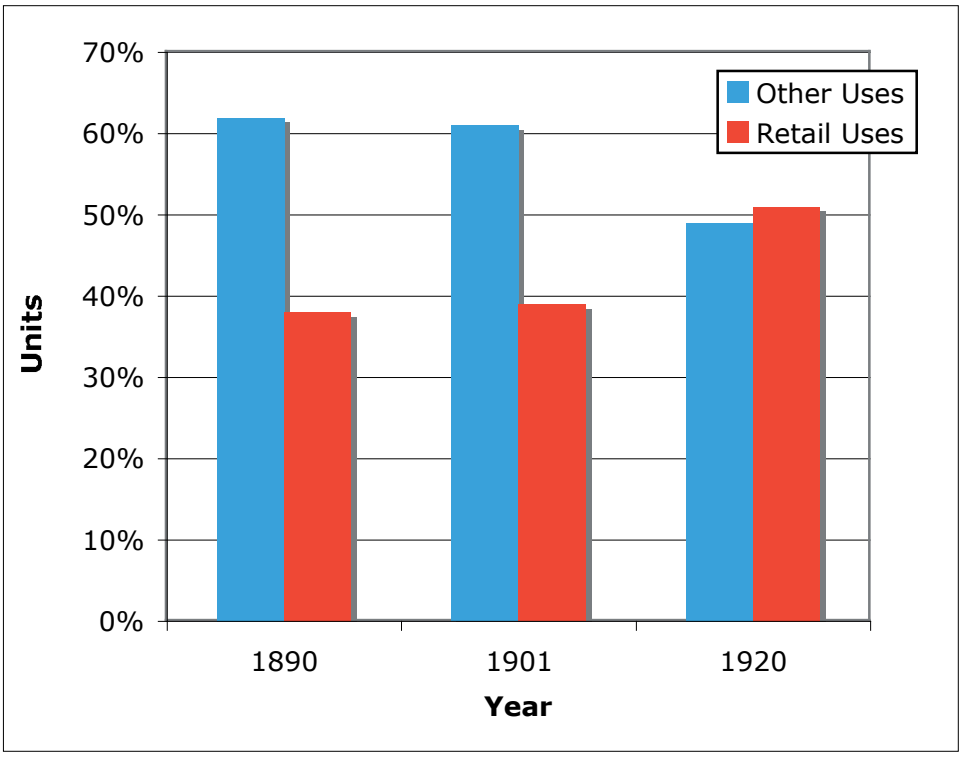

Fig. 7. Percentage of units on Gottingen between Cogswell and Gerrish devoted to retail or other uses at street level . In 1890 this section of Gottingen had 150 units, 57 of which contained street level retail. In 1901 there were 160 units, 63 of which were retail. By 1920 there were 140 units, 71 of which contained street level retail. Gottingen St. had an important commercial cluster between Cunard and Cornwallis streets by 1890. The retail section of Gottingen had expanded northward by 1920. Gottingen's streetcar line was extended northward in 1913, aiding Gottingen's development as a commercial strip. (McAlpine's Halifax Directory; 1890, 1901, 1920)

dropped between 1890 and 1920 as stores became larger and more offices located on Barrington.

As Barrington St. evolved into the city's leading shopping district the type of retailing also changed. Clothing and jewellery stores replaced lower value retailing such as grocery stores. In 1890, before the streetcar system was electrified, the street contained an incredible mixture of businesses. Most high end clothing, shoe stores, watchmakers and jewellers on Barrington were clustered between Prince and Duke. Only a block away near Buckingham St., Baldwin & Co. China and Glassware was just a few doors away from McLean and Sander's feed store. The retail mix was not as diverse by 1901; almost half of the city's watchmakers and jewellers were located on Barrington St. between Blowers and Buckingham, while fully three quarters of jewellers were located within a five minute walk of the Grand Parade. The few grocers and victuallers still on the street retreated further from the high value corners such as George and Barrington and Prince and Barrington.

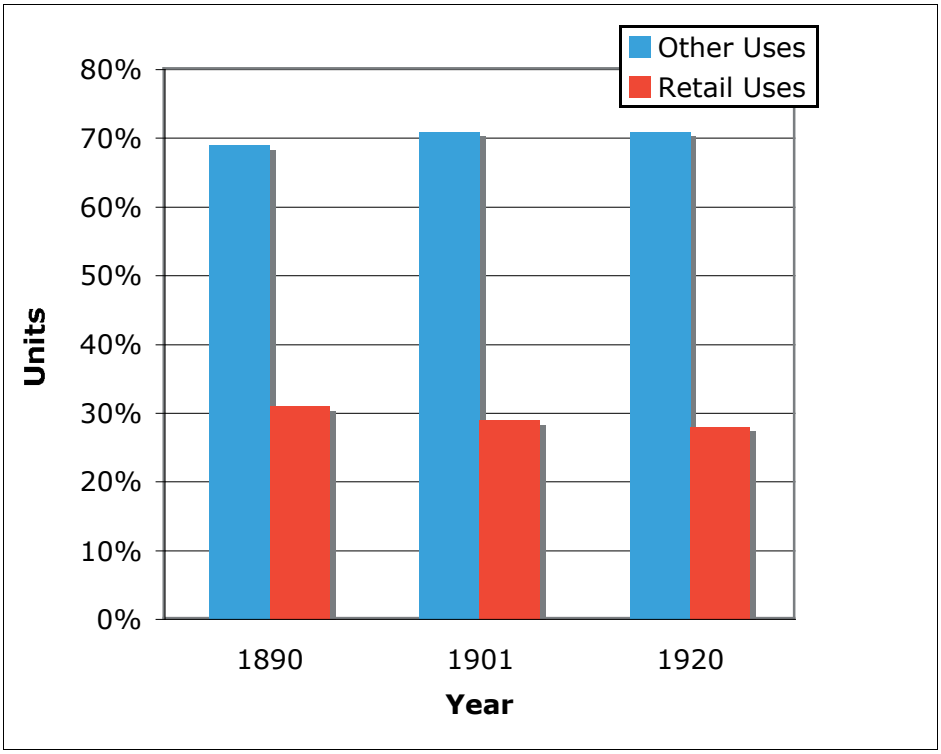

Fig. 8. Percentage of units on Spring Garden Rd. between Queen and South Park St. devoted to retail or other uses at street level. In 1890 this section of Spring Garden Rd. had 39 units, 12 of which contained street level retail. In 1901 there were 45 units, 13 of which were retail. By 1920 there were 46 units, 9 of which contained street level retail. Despite being an important trolley line Spring Garden Rd. did not develop into an important retail street until after 1920. (McAlpine's Halifax Directory; 1890, 1901, 1920)

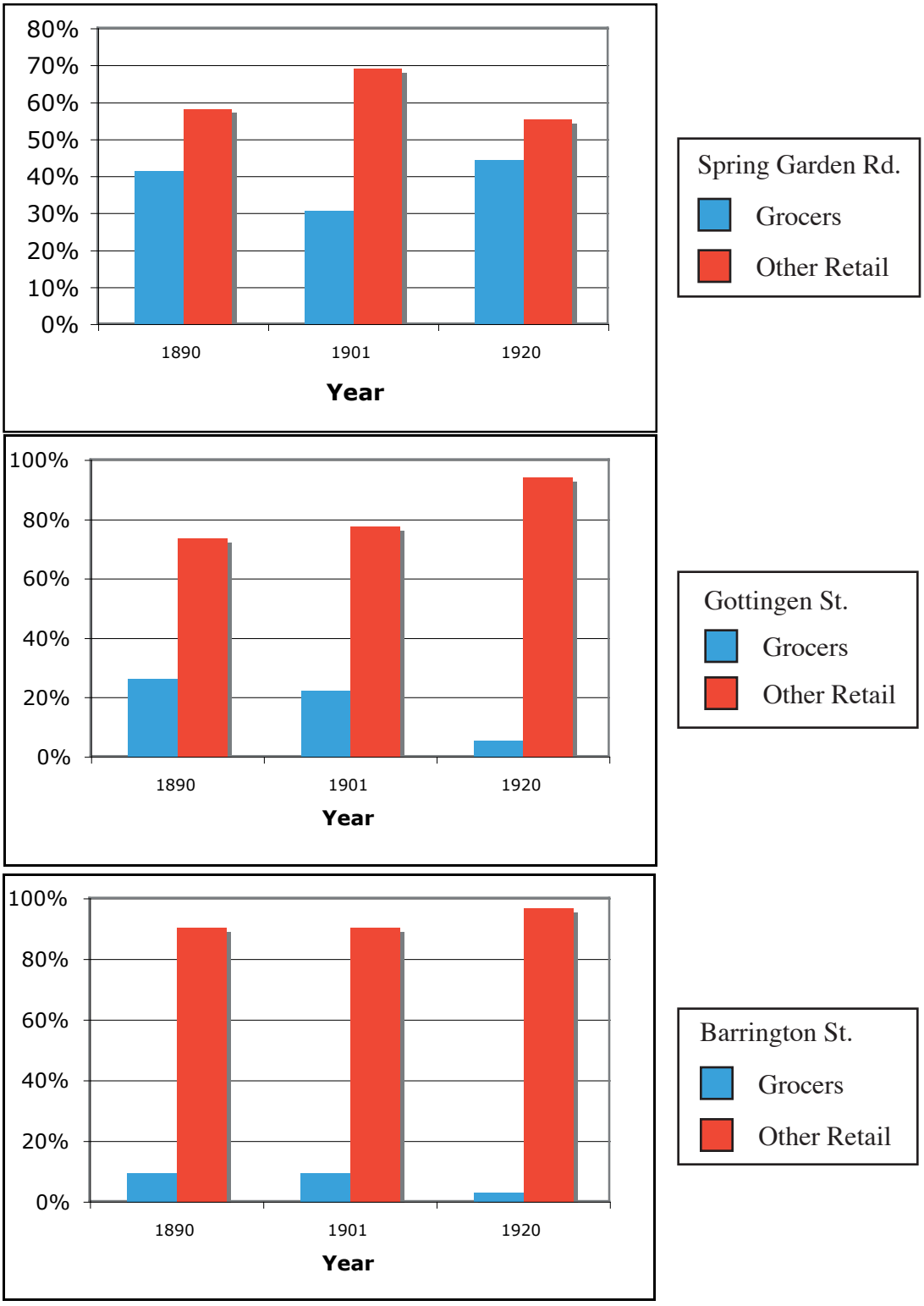

Figure 9. Grocers as a percentage of total retail locations of Barrington St., Gottingen St., and Spring Garden Rd. between 1890 and 1920. Barrington and Gottingen emerged as important retail strips in the early twentieth century, resulting in higher rents and fewer small grocers on these streets. Spring Garden Rd. had not emerged as an important commercial street and the retail scene was heavily dependent on local grocers. (McAlpine's Halifax Directory; 1890, 1901, 1920)

Gottingen St. was the primary retail street for the densely populated area north west of downtown Halifax (Millward and Winsor, 1997). In 1890 a branch of the horsecar system ran along Gottingen from downtown before turning up Cunard. The section of Gottingen between Cunard and Cornwallis was an important retail cluster, and a moderate amount of retailing also took place along other sections of Gottingen between Cogswell and Gerrish St. (Fig. 7). The electrification of the streetcar network in 1896 had little effect on the proportion of buildings on Gottingen St. devoted to retail, although the number of stores on Gottingen increased between 1901 and 1920. In 1913 the Gottingen street line was extended northwards beyond Cunard St. and the cluster of retail between Cornwallis and Cunard St. spread northwards.

Today Spring Garden Rd. is Halifax's premier downtown shopping district. In the early twentieth century is was an important tram line connecting the south end and new residential suburbs to downtown Halifax. Despite Spring Garden Road's importance as a tram line, and its proximity to both downtown and residential areas, Spring Garden had not developed as a major commercial street by 1920. Only a small percentage of addresses on Spring Garden were retail locations before 1920 (Fig. 8.). Between 1890 and 1920 a high proportion of Spring Garden Road's businesses were grocers (Fig. 9). Despite being an important trolley route the street had not yet emerged as a major retail street. Unlike Gottingen and Barrington grocers and other local businesses could still afford to locate on the Spring Garden Road.

Although two streetcar routes, Barrington and Gottingen, emerged as prominent commercial streets in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century other tram line routes did not. Although a major streetcar route Spring Garden did not develop a strong retail presence in the decades following the electrification of the streetcar system. Clearly factors other than streetcars were important in determining where retail clusters located. Barrington St. was ideally located as both a major streetcar route and in close proximity to banking, government and other office jobs in the downtown core. Barrington became the focal point for high end retailing in Halifax (Millward and Lorna, 1997). In addition to being a streetcar line Gottingen St. was a central location in the dense working class neighbourhoods on the north side of downtown. Although streetcars were important in cementing Barrington and Gottingen as primary shopping streets other conditions were present to aid retail development.

The spread of retailing along Barrington and Gottingen, and later Spring Garden and Quinpool,

was dependent on the pedestrian traffic and accessibility provided by streetcar lines. Instead of making stops at discrete stations, such as along railway or subway lines, trolleys stopped at most street corners. Long stretches of downtown streets were easily accessed by trolley allowing comparison shopping to diffuse along the streetcar lines in strips instead of clustering around railway stations or subway stops. The retail strip became a fixture of post-war suburbs, although the urban form was drastically different when dependent on the automobile and large amounts of parking separated retailers from the street (Jackson, 1985).

The emergence of retail strips along streetcar lines did force grocers and other local retailers away from streets like Gottingen and Barrington, however, this restructuring of Halifax's retail scene does not appear to have affected the fine-grain mix of businesses found off the major commercial streets. It appears that small micro-retailing was prominent in Halifax until at least the 1930s. Food goods were the largest type of retailing in the early twentieth century (Millwood and Winsor, 1997) Small grocers continued to be an important part of the micro-retailing landscape in the streetcar era; 221 grocers operated in the city in 1901, 355 in 1920, and 289 in 1929 (McAlpine's Halifax Directory; 1901, 1920, 1929). Micro-retailing continued in Halifax, while other retailers increasingly clustered along streets such as Gottingen and Barrington. The type of comparison shopping found on Barrington and Gottingen was not in competition with small grocers, butchers, and other food dealers that comprised a large portion of the micro-retailing in Halifax.

Despite the continued importance of micro-retailing major changes took place in Halifax's retail landscape during the streetcar era, although the effect on Halifax's micro-retailers can only be briefly considered in this study. The rise of chain grocery stores in Halifax most likely contributed to a shift in the retail landscape away from local, small-scale grocery retailing. By 1929 chain grocery stores competed with smaller grocers for business. Acadia (6 stores), C&R (5 stores), and International Provisions (3 stores) were all operating in Halifax. Some of these stores located on the principle retail streets that other grocers had left; C&R for example operated a store on Gottingen St. Three of Acadia's stores were located on the streetcar lines of Agricola, Spring Garden, and Quinpool.

Department stores were also introduced to Halifax. Eaton's, Zeller's, Woolworth's, and Birk's

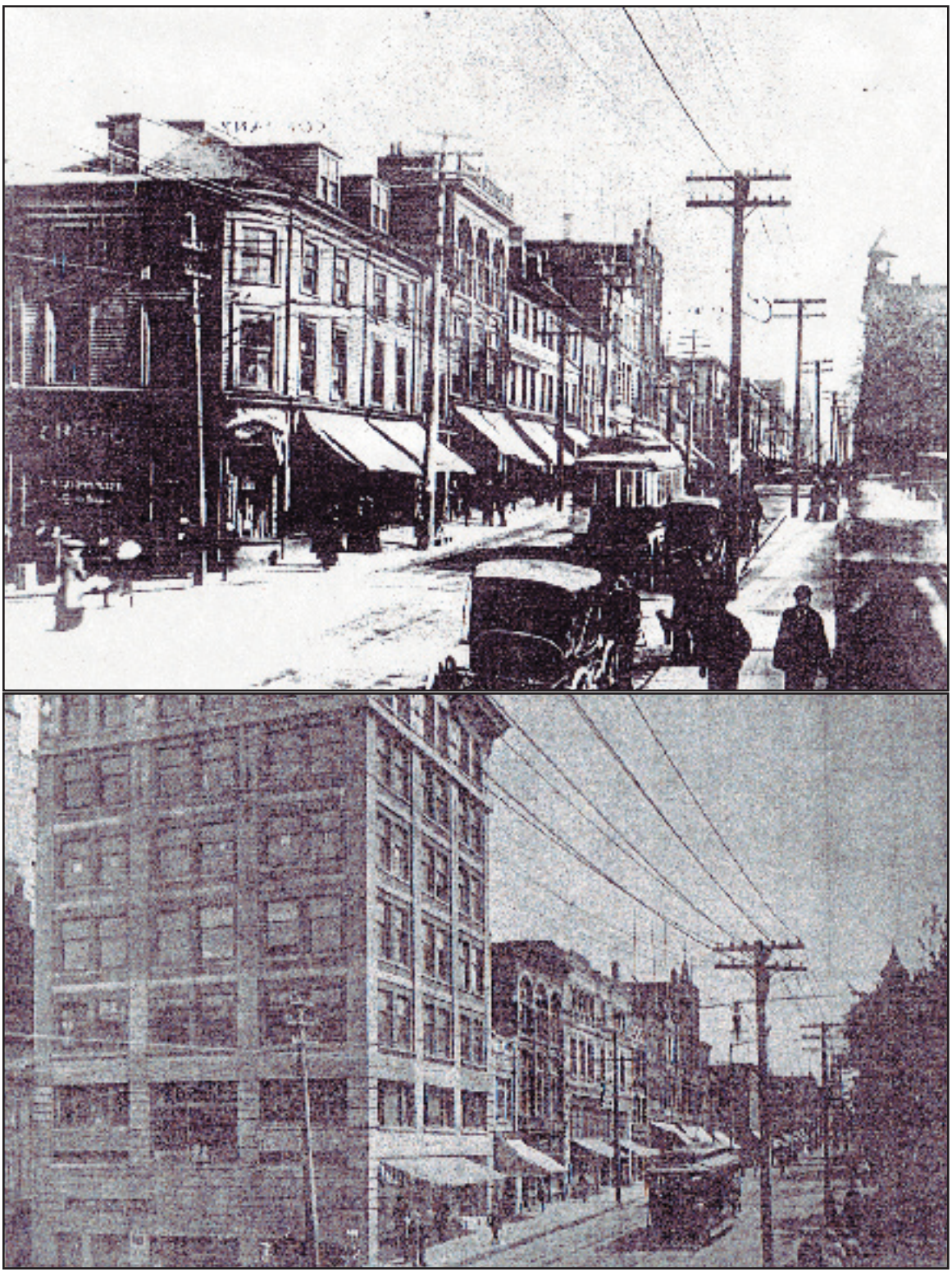

Figure 10. The corner of Barrington and George at the turn of the twentieth century (top) and after construction of the Birk's building in the 1930s (bottom). As Barrington developed into Halifax's premier commercial street department stores such as Birk's, Eatons, Woolworth and Zeller's replaced two or three storey wooden buildings with grander storefronts that transformed the street. Public Archives of Nova Scotia (PANS).

all located on Barrington St. adjacent to the city's main streetcar line. Woolworth's store resided in the ground floor of the Green Lantern Building, constructed in 1896. Birk's built a large store on the corner of Barrington and George adjacent to the Grand Parade. Eaton's opened on the corner of Barrington and Prince in 1930. Several smaller buildings were demolished to allow construction of the new Eaton's which fronted on Barrington, Prince and Granville (Halifax Daily Star, 1930). Zeller's constructed a new building at the corner of Sackville and Barrington in 1939, destroying several smaller buildings in the process (Mail Star, 1939). The evolution of Barrington saw continually larger buildings as the street gained in importance as both a retail strip and a streetcar route (Fig. 10). Despite the growth in retail and

Figure 11. Barrington St. had significant parking problems by the 1920s. Automobile congestion slowed streetcars considerably and by the 1920s private vehicles were hurting the streetcar's ridership. (PANS).

office space on the street larger buildings such as the Roy Building, Green Lantern Building, or the Eaton's and Zeller's Buildings did not totally replace smaller two storey wooden buildings. Various economic setbacks during the early twentieth century stalled construction on the street. A variety of smaller buildings that existed prior to Barrington's growth as a commercial street are still in existence today.

The connection between trolley lines and retailing was well established by the 1920s. As residents left the downtown core retailers increasingly relied on streetcars to bring shoppers downtown. A route map published by the Nova Scotia Tramways & Power Co. Ltd. describes the importance of the streetcar lines to retailers:

> Obviously the streetcar is the merchant's friend. Slow and congested traffic is his enemy. Auto parking is the greatest contributor towards the latter evil. Some merchants still imagine that a line of standing autos indicates business. The fact is that it means decentralization - the driving of retail business to the outlying and less congested centres. Street car riding shoppers become more and more reluctant to go downtown and have their

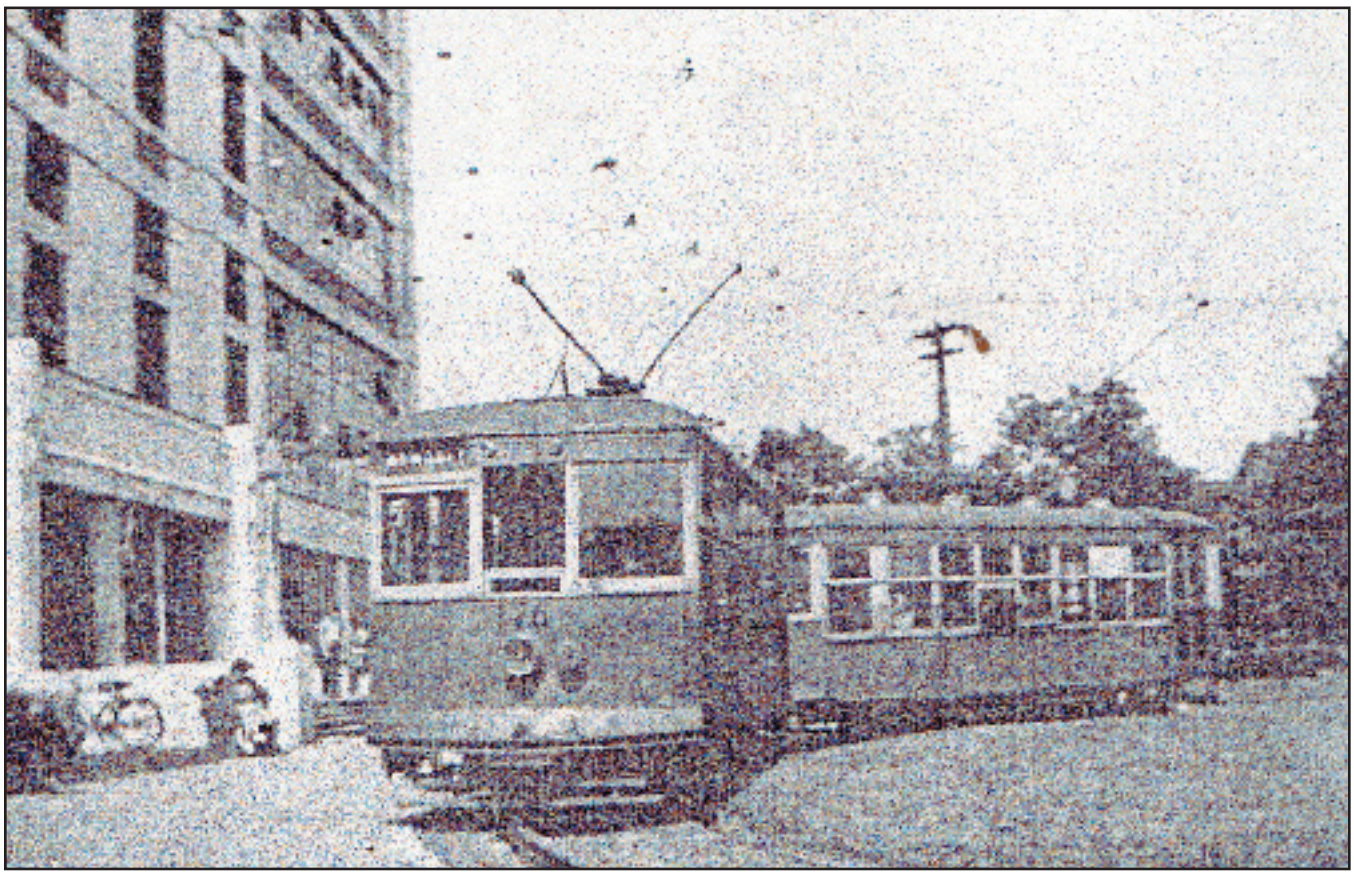

Figure 12. Trolley car outside Simpson's department store in 1947. (Brown, 1966)

> patience exhausted by repeated uncalled for stops or crawling progress (Tramway Routes of Halifax, 1927).

Insufficient parking and traffic were becoming a problem on Barrington by the 1920s (Fig.11). Shoppers, merchants and delivery vehicles alike were inconvenienced by automobile congestion. Although Halifax's streetcar company was willing to rally against the automobile and decentralization in its own publications the tram lines soon ran to Simpson's department store, located on the periphery of Halifax near the Armdale rotary. In 1928 a small extension of the Quinpool line connected Simpson's to the tramcar network (Fig. 12). The streetcar lines in Halifax not only created central shopping districts such as Barrington and Gottingen but also encouraged peripheral retail clusters such as Quinpool Rd. and the Simpson's department store (Millwood and Winsor, 1997). By the 1960s peripheral retail clusters were challenging older main streets such as Gottingen and Barrington (ibid).

Physical Expansion During the Streetcar Era

The streetcar system allowed Halifax to physically expand beyond the boundaries of the walking city. In 1866, the first year the horse-railway operated, the city had a population of roughly twenty-seven thousand[1] and an area of just under 2 km^2. The economic drivers of the city were the wharves located on the downtown waterfront and the naval dockyard located further north. Halifax was a linear city stretched along the waterfront. Its railway station was located over a kilometer from the city's edge (Fig. 13). Although the railway had been operating since 1854 the line originally had limited effect on Halifax's urban form outside of the immediate vicinity of the station. A small construction boom followed the completion of the station and the community of Richmond began to grow (Erickson, 2004). The opening of the horse-drawn street railway by the Halifax Horse Railway in 1866 provided the second impetus for Halifax to expand northward. The horsecar lines ran along Campbell Rd. (close to the route

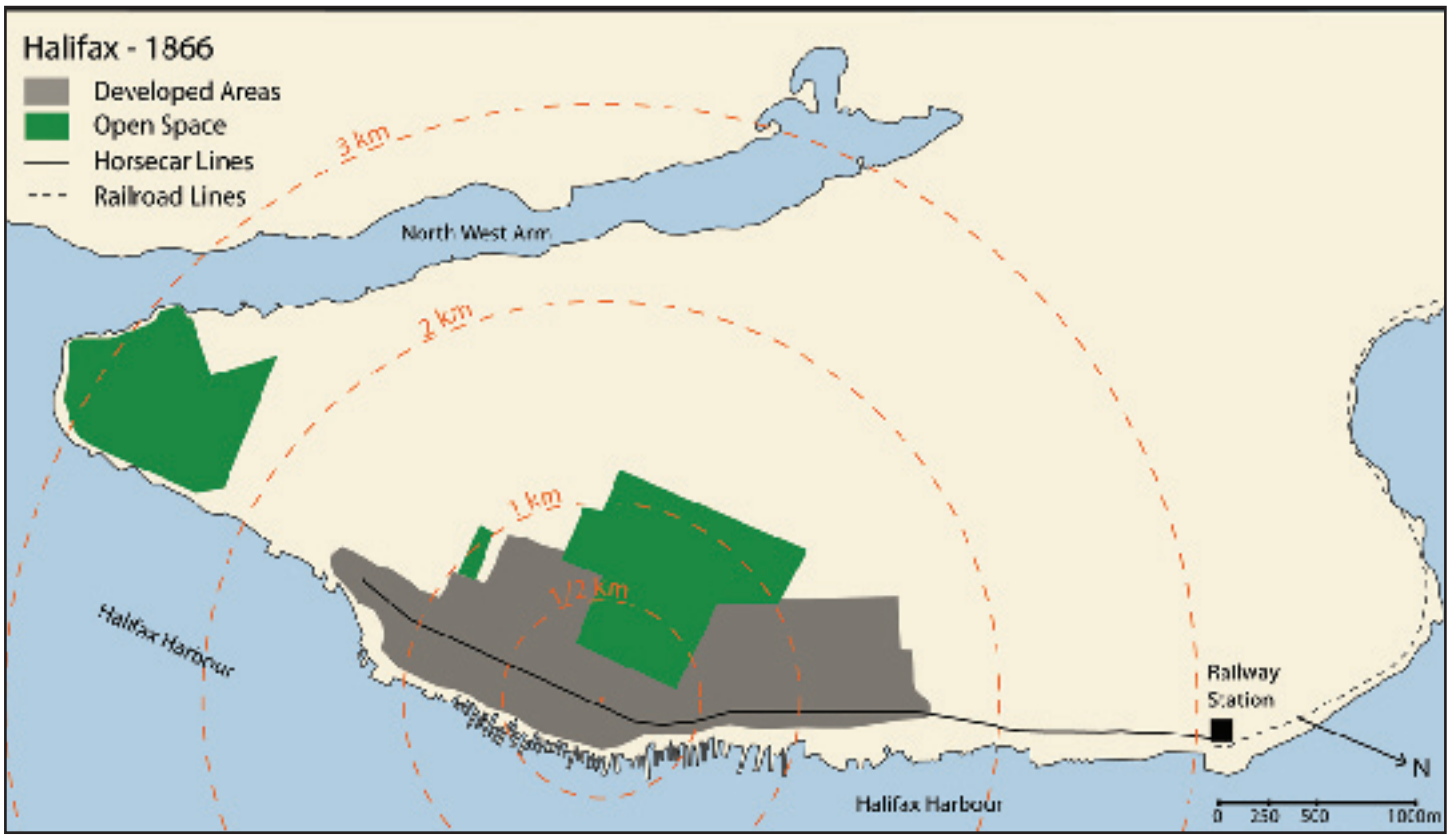

Figure 13. In 1866 a horse-drawn railway began operating between the Richmond rail station and downtown Halifax. The route ran along Campbell Rd. and Barrington St. before terminating at Freshwater Bridge. (based on Map of Halifax, 1865)

1. 1866 is an inter-censal year. This population estimate was obtained by interpolation from the 1861 census and the 1871 census. All populations in this paper not directly from census years are interpolated.

of Barrington today). Houses along Campbell Rd. were renovated and new development began spreading along the street (Erickson, 1986). Over the next decades the combination of the rail depot and the horsecar line spurred the development of an industrial suburb in Richmond. Earliest development centered on Campbell Rd. but slowly spread westward away from the horsecar line. By the 1880s the north end of Halifax contained a variety of heavy industries including sugar refining, a cotton company, paint works, railcar manufacturing, and shipbuilding (ibid). The development of several factories in the Kempt Rd. area was encouraged by a new railway spur that was built in the 1880s (ibid). Other industries of all sizes spread throughout the northern section of Halifax, employing thousands.

Access to railways and docks appear to have played a greater role in the development of the northern industrial suburbs than the provision of good horsecar service. In 1876 the railway extended its line northward along Campbell Rd. to the foot of North St. (Fig. 14). The horsecar lines along Campbell

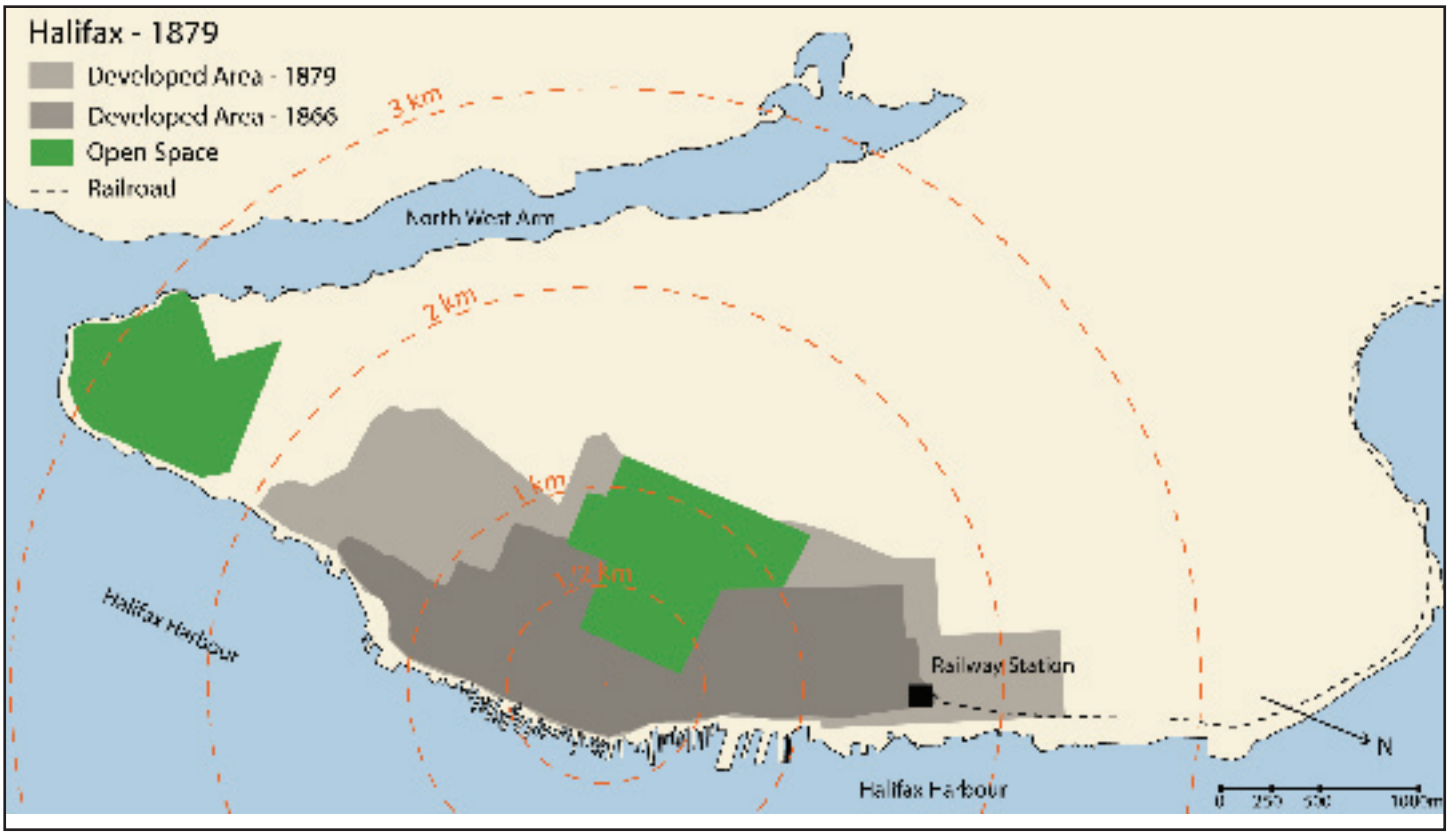

Figure 14. In 1876 the railway was extended closer to downtown along Campbell Rd. The horsecar lines were torn up and the entire service was abandoned between 1876 and 1884. Despite the lack of mass transit services the city continued to expand to the north and the south of the downtown core. (based on Bird's Eye View of Halifax, 1879)

Rd. were torn out and the horsecar operator discontinued service throughout the entire city. Industrial expansion in the north end continued at a rapid pace despite the loss of the horse-drawn street railway. Residential development in the north end was quite robust and many workers lived close to the factories and shops in which they worked. The city was still relatively small, downtown being only 3 km from the outer reaches of Richmond. Warner (1962) suggests that a radius of 3 km is near the upper limits of city size when most citizens are dependent on walking. Beyond this point effective communication and travel between different neighbourhoods, businesses, and institutions becomes difficult (ibid). Halifax lacked horsecar service for part of the 1880s but the city was still small enough for a resident to walk across it in about an hour. Residential and industrial expansion continued throughout the 1880s without the impetus of the horsecar.

The city not only expanded northward in the late nineteenth century, it also grew southward. Development south of Morris St. quickened while Richmond developed as an industrial suburb. Halifax's wealthy residents lived predominantly on Gottingen and Brunswick streets prior to the 1860s, however as the north end industrialized the area became less desirable and the elite began relocating to the southern portion of the city. As with the northern areas of Halifax the south end developed during the 1870s and 1880s. Street railways did not operate between 1876 and 1884, however the neighbourhoods between Morris and Inglis were within 2 km of downtown. Wealthy south end residents were also more likely to hire cabs or to have their own carriages to travel about the city, increasing their ability to move outside of the downtown area. Street railway service resumed in 1884 and the South End was sufficiently populated that the main horsecar line ran along Barrington and up Inglis to South Park. In 1887 the line was extended along South Park and down Spring Garden Rd. creating a south end loop (Fig. 15). Streetcar service was not introduced south of Inglis until 1928.

The next major expansions in Halifax were not to the north or south but to the west. Before westward expansion the city had a linear form that stretched along the harbour. Much of Halifax's economy depended on the port and military on the waterfront and the city clustered near its economic drivers. Growth to the west was also restricted until the 1870s by the Halifax Commons which extended

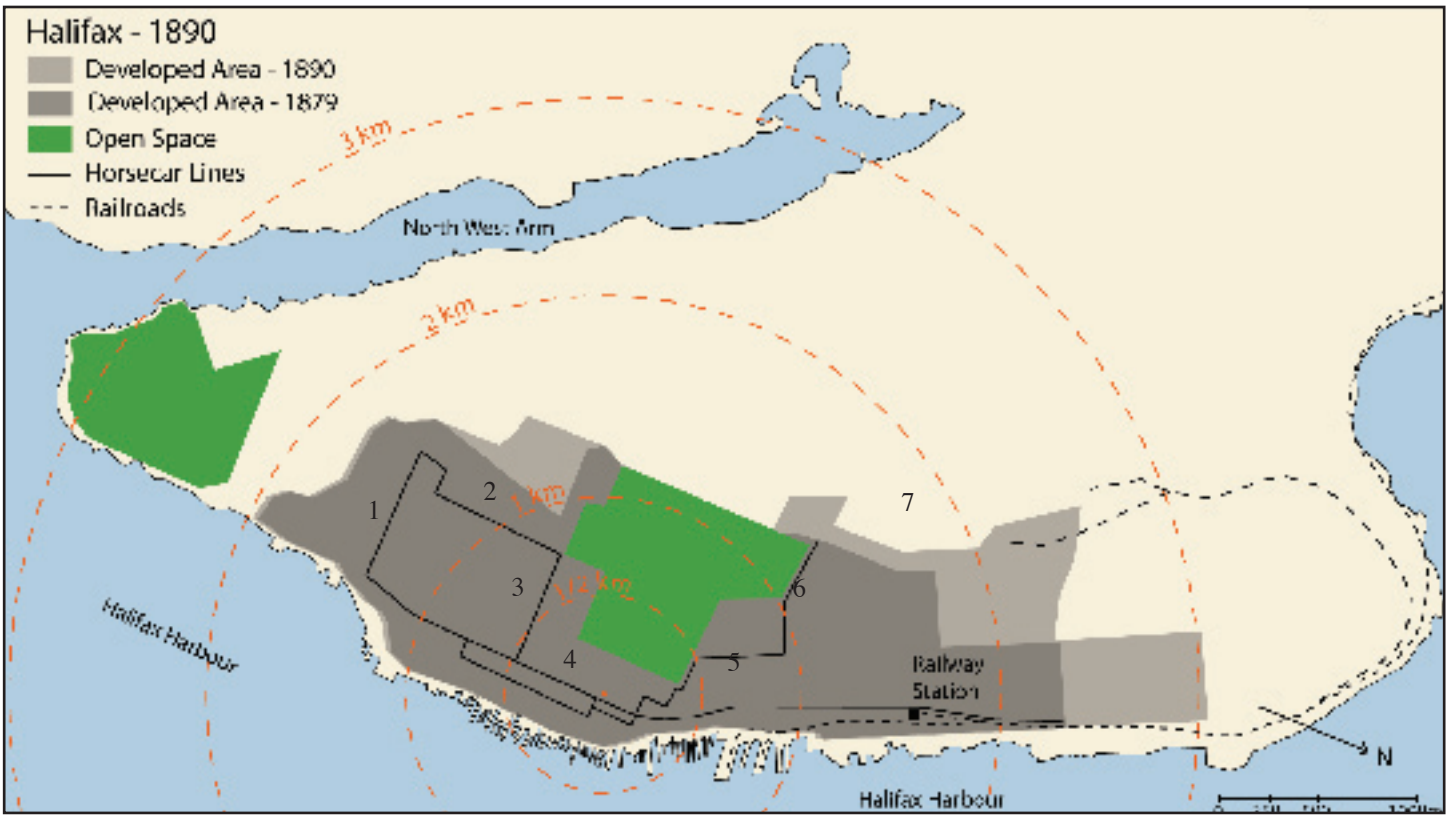

Figure 15. Halifax's horse railway was resurected in 1884 and expanded considerably by 1890. The main line ran down Barrington St. (4) to the railway depot. The south end loop consisted of InglisSt. (1), South Park (2) and Spring Garden Rd (3). A northwestern branch briefly operated as a horsecar route travelling along Gottingen St. (5) and Cunard St. (6) to Robie St. The northwestern branch was intended to continue along Windsor St. towards Willow Park (7), however, due to financial difficulties the horsecar company could not complete the extension. (based on Bird's Eye View of Halifax, 1890)

from their current location all the way to South St. Development restrictions were eased by the end of the nineteenth century, and new mobility provided by the streetcar allowed Halifax to expand westward at the beginning of the twentieth century.

One of the first westward residential expansions was Willow Park, located just west of Windsor St. and south of Almon St. An omnibus service ran from downtown to Willow Park throughout the 1870s and 1880s. By 1890 the small subdivision was developed enough that the city's horsecar company began a line towards Willow Park. The line stopped short of Willow Park, at the corner of Robie and Cunard, an area of tightly packed homes on small lots (Fig. 15). The line was abandoned several years later as the horsecar operators ran into financial difficulty due to the high cost of caring for their horses. Although

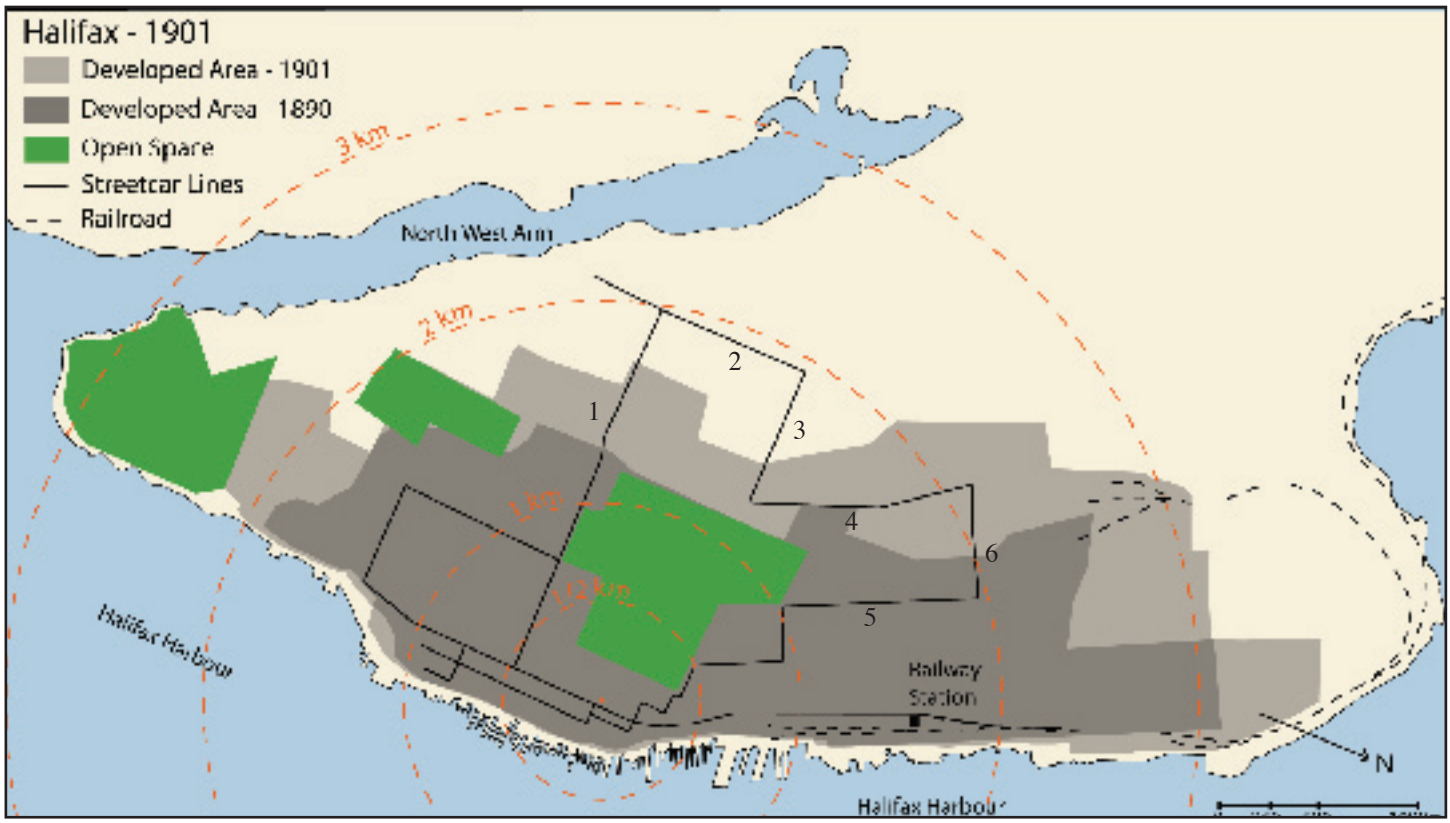

Figure 16. The core of Halifax's streetcar system was complete by 1901. Extensions along Coburg Rd. (1), Oxford St. (2) and Quinpool Rd. (3) connected with track laid on Windsor St. (4), Agricola St. (5) and Almon St. (6). The westward expansion of the streetcar network were mandated by the City of Halifax in 1900; the streetcar company was forced to expand service along Coburg, Oxford, and Quinpool or risk loosing its monopoly on public transit in Halifax. Expansion of the streetcar service permitted a large amount of residential suburbanization between 1900 and 1920. (based on Plan of the City of Halifax, 1901)

Willow Park would not gain tramway service for another decade the short spur to Robie St. did encourage development near the corner of Robie and Cunard.

Electrification of the street railway permitted further expansion of the service. In 1895 the Halifax Electric Tramway Co. bought the local gas and electric utilities. It also acquired a monopoly franchise over public transit when it bought the struggling horsecar service the same year (Brown, 1966). By June of 1896 new track had been laid and the entire horsecar system had been electrified. Electric streetcars were much cheaper to operate than the horsecars and their higher speed allowed streetcar expansions into sparsely populated land on the periphery of Halifax.

In 1900 residents from the western part of Halifax began to petition city council for an expansion

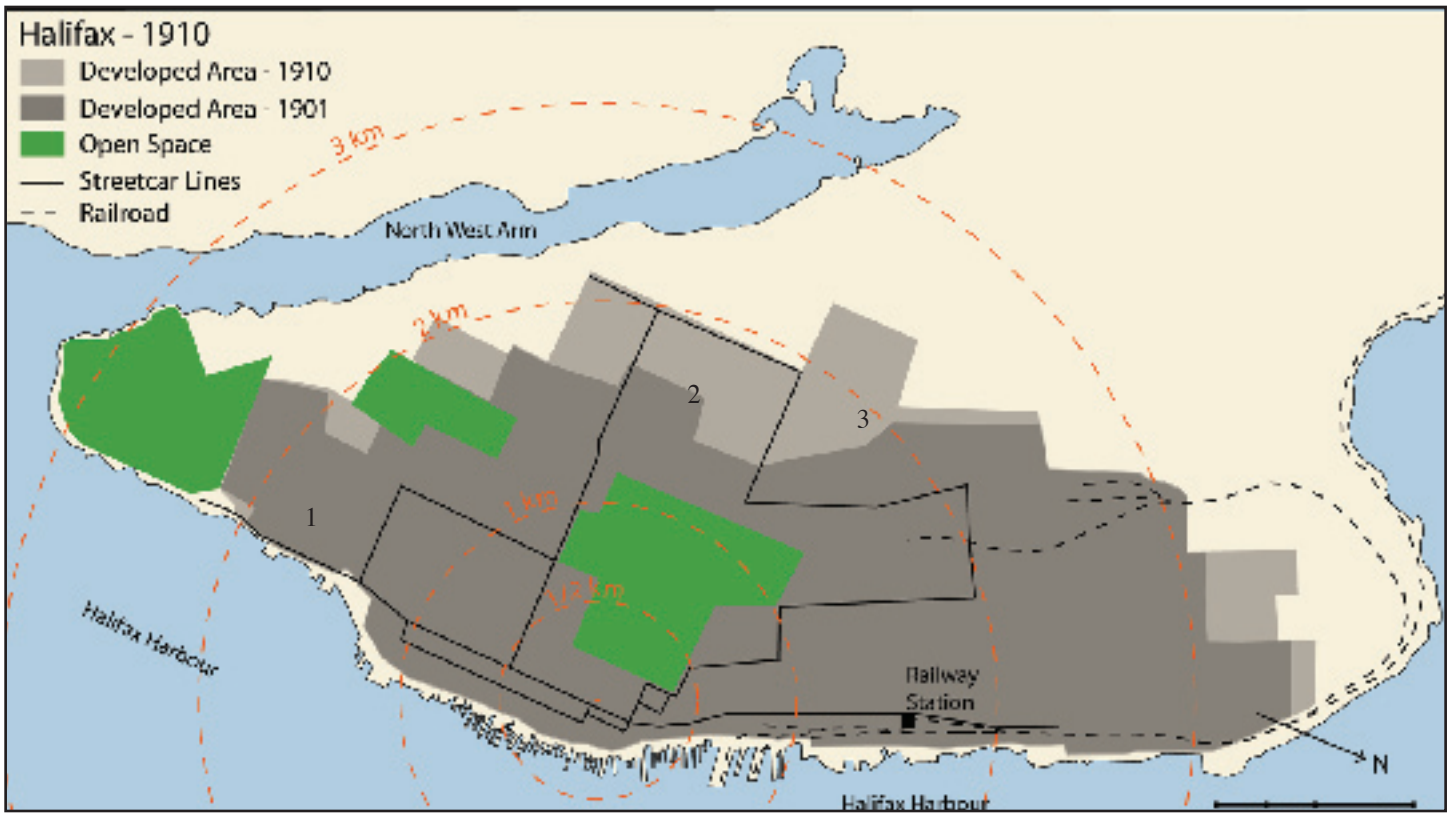

Figure 17. Only minor changes to the streetcar network occured between 1901 and 1910. A line was extended along Pleasant St. (1). Many suburban streetcar neighbourhoods continued to develop (2)(3). (based on Plan of the City of Halifax, 1910)

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of electric tramcar service (Halifax Herald, 1900). Although the streetcar operation was a privately owned monopoly the city asked that a line along Coburg Rd., Oxford and Quinpool be completed within a year. The streetcar operators complied with the city's demands, despite the low number of people living west of Robie St. at the time. Tramcar service was extended along the desired route and track was also laid along Agricola St., Almon and Windsor (Fig. 16). These two extensions together formed the "Belt Line". When the Belt Line opened the section of track along Cunard St. between Robie and Agricola was abandoned and streetcars were routed to downtown via either Gottingen Street or Spring Garden Rd. Direct service from Quinpool Rd. to downtown would not begin for almost 20 years.

The new land opened for development by streetcar lines in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was subdivided and developed predominantly as single family homes. Despite strong population growth neither Halifax's physical extent nor it's streetcar network expanded dramatically in the decade

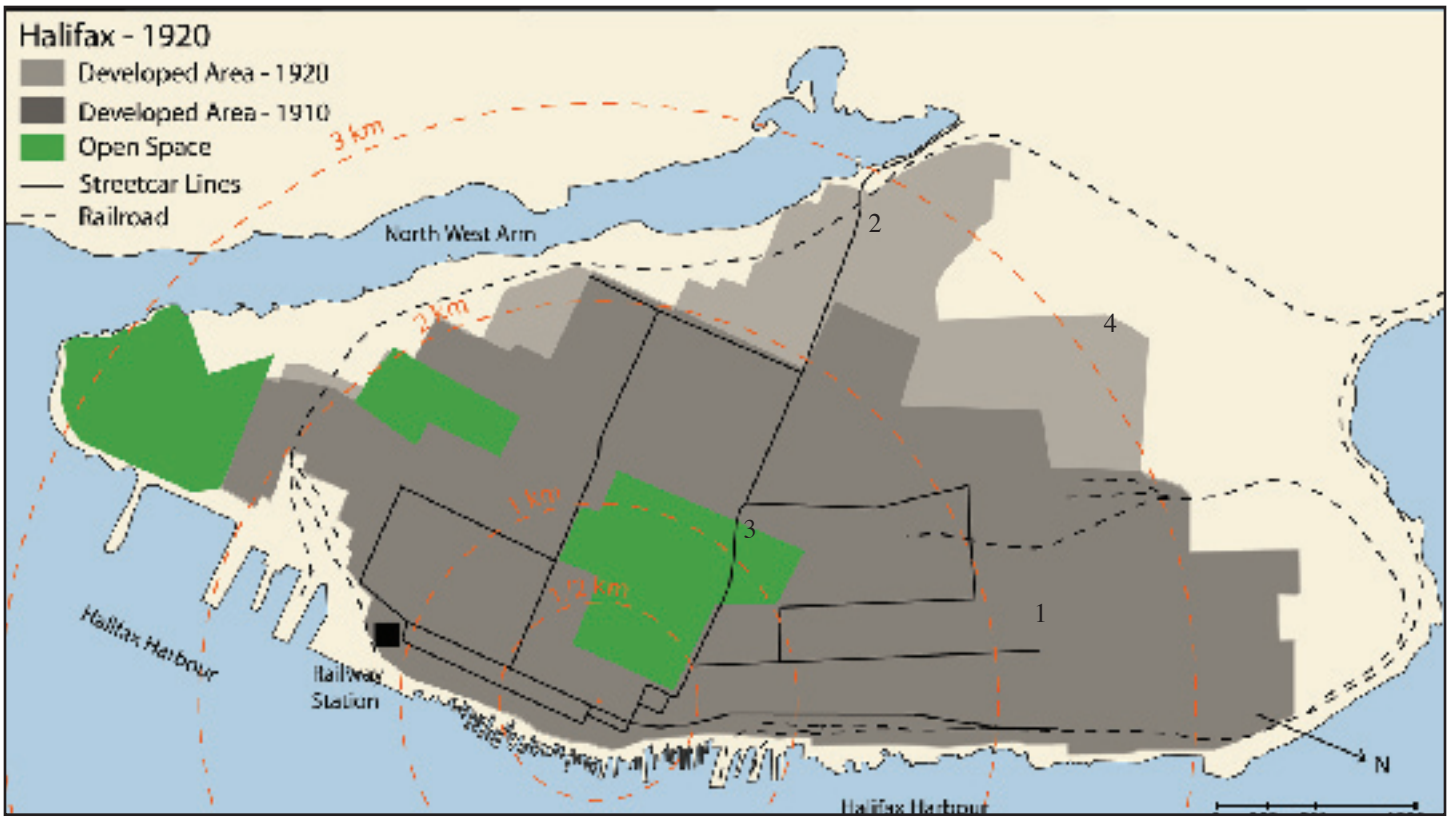

Figure 18. Streetcar expansion resumed in 1912 with an extension along Gottingen St. (1) and a line along Quinpool Rd. (2). A line across the Commons was completed in 1920 (3). One notable change in Halifax's development is the growth of neighbourhoods not dependent on streetcar service - the area near Connaught Avenue (3) is almost 1 km from the nearest streetcar line. By the early 1920s streetcar ridership was suffering from automobile competition. (based on Map of Halifax and Dartmouth, 1920)

following the construction of the Belt Line (Fig. 17). Development of these large tracts of land continued for almost two decades, with some lots still empty in the middle of the nineteen-tens. The existing suburbs became more built up between 1900 and 1920. As the western streetcar suburbs grew in importance ridership grew requiring the double tracking of Barrington (1906) and Spring Garden (1908).

Major streetcar expansion resumed in 1912 with a line on Gottingen St. and an extension along Quinpool Rd. to the Arm Bridge in 1913. By 1920 development had followed the Quinpool line towards the northwest arm (Fig. 18). A line across the Commons connecting Quinpool Rd. to downtown was completed in 1920. Several kilometers of streetcar route was double tracked along South Park St., Oxford, Coburg, Quinpool, Windsor, and Agricola to accommodate higher ridership (Brown, 1966).

Until the 1920s most development in Halifax was within walking distance (400m) of the streetcar

lines. One exception was in the north end. The limited amount of streetcar lines penetrating beyond North Street is surprising considering that from 1880 onwards thousands of workers toiled in north end factories such as the Acadia Sugar Refinery, Sillinger Car Works, Nova Scotia Cotton, the Halifax shipyards and dozens of other businesses in Richmond. Industrial development and housing occurred side by side, allowing more workers to reach their job on foot, and reducing the need for streetcar service. Working class residents were also less likely to use streetcars as the fare was sometimes beyond their means.

Residential areas of Halifax began to develop beyond the reaches of streetcar service by 1920. The furthest reaches of the neighbourhood near Connaught Ave. were almost one kilometer from streetcar lines. Rising automobile ownership was beginning to have an effect on the development patterns of Halifax, and on streetcar ridership. In 1922 ridership dropped for the first time since electrification in 1896. Halifax Electric Tramway reported in its annual report that the drop in ridership was "aggravated by the

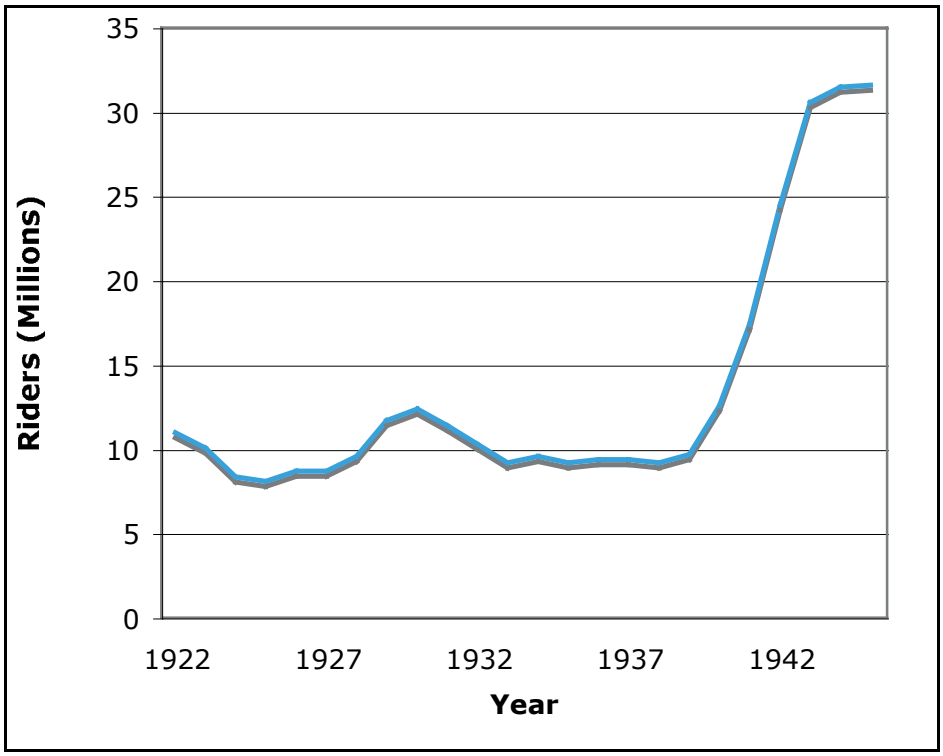

Figure 19. Ridership on Halifax's streetcar system declined in the 1920s before rebounding at the end of the decade. The Great Depression lowered employment and streetcar ridership in the 1930s. Ridership rebounded strongly in World War II and by 1942 the system was exceptionally over-crowded and carrying over one hundred thousand passengers per day. (Nova Scotia Light and Power Co. Ltd, Annual Reports 1922-1942)

increased use of the private automobile" (Halifax Electric Tramway Co. Ltd., 1922). Ridership dropped dramatically between 1923 and 1924 (Fig. 19) before rebounding slightly as service improvements and discounted weekly passes began to increase ridership in 1925 (Halifax Electric Tramway Co. Ltd., 1922). Ridership on Halifax's tram lines rebounded slightly at the end of the decade before once again dropping during the Great Depression. Tram ridership would not fully recover until World War II.

Between 1920 and the start of World War II Halifax stagnated. When World War I ended the military activity in the city scaled back dramatically sending the local economy into a prolonged recession. The Great Depression of the 1930s continued the stagnant economic activity. Halifax grew by just over a thousand people between 1921 and 1931. There was little new development until the start of World War II. Small streetcar extensions were made in an attempt to attract riders outside of the core customer base

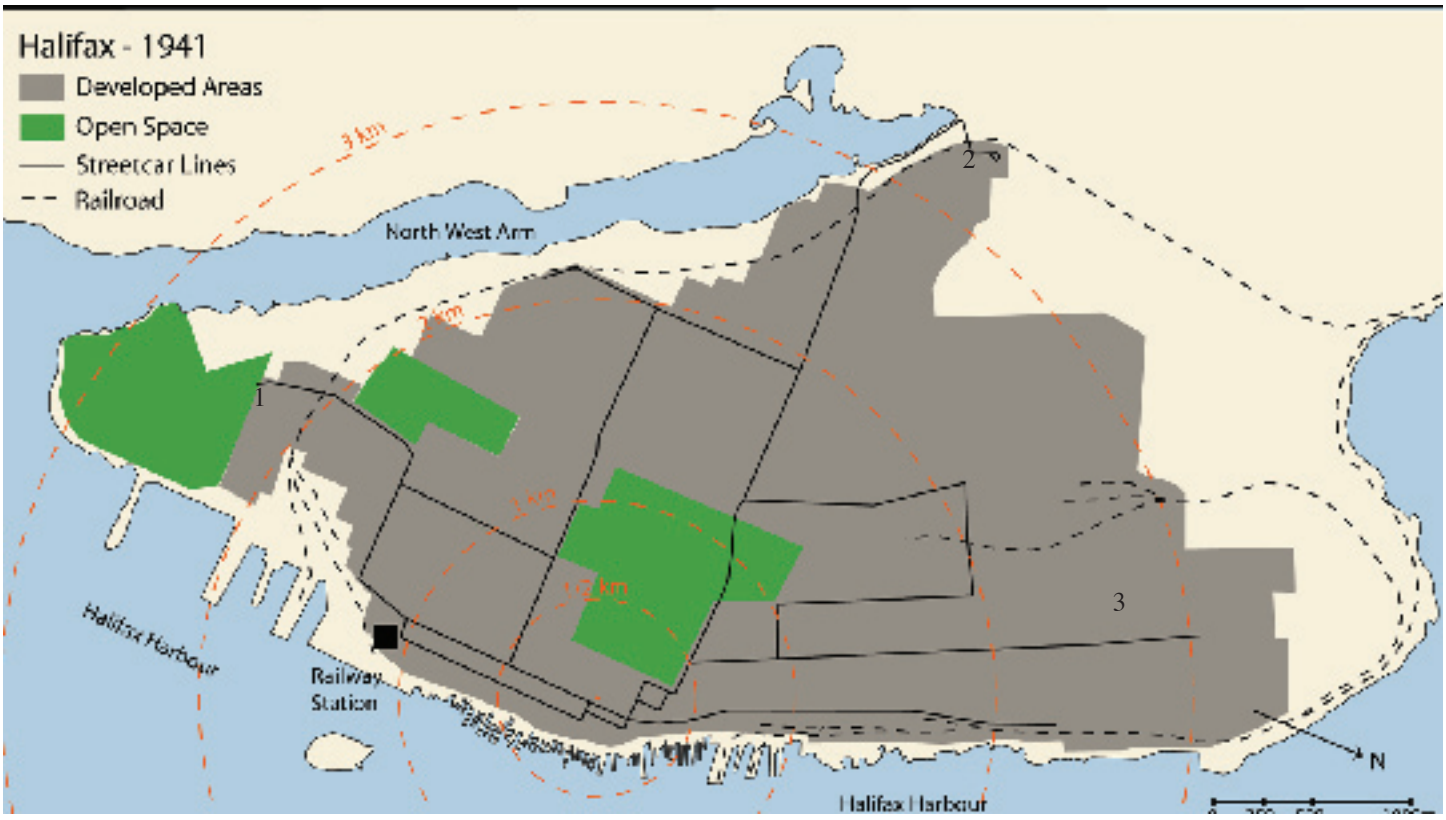

Figure 20. Halifax's economy and population growth stagnated between World War I and II. Little physical expansion of the city took place. Expansions to Tower Rd. (1) and Simpson's Department Store (2) occured in 1928. A small extension occured along Gottingen in 1926 to the Hydrostone district (3). Expansions in the 1920s were an attempt to increase ridership in the face of increased automobile use. (based on Halifax Housing Atlas, 1941 and Map of Halifax, 1941)

of the middle class (Fig. 20).

The Gottingen St. line was extended northward in 1926. Shuttle buses had been operated by the streetcar company to encourage those living in the Hydrostone district to use the trolleys (Nova Scotia Light and Power Co. Ltd., 1931). As middle class transit ridership declined due to increased car use, trolley service in the north end increased to try and attract working class riders. The increased service in the north end and lower prices on weekly passes proved successful at boosting ridership for a short time (ibid).

Track was laid on Tower Rd. into Point Pleasant Park in 1928 in an attempt to capture leisure riders on weekends (Brown, 1966). The company even built a bandstand and park on the North West Arm in Point Pleasant Park in an attempt to attract riders to the new line (ibid). Similar routes and amusement parks were owned by streetcar companies in other cities. Ottawa's streetcar company operated an amusement park at one terminus (McKeown, 2004) and Regina's street railway underwent large expansions to connect to provincial exhibition grounds (Hatcher, 1971). Halifax's exhibition grounds and race track were located on Almon St. and had been connected to the streetcar system since 1901.

Another extension along Quinpool Rd. in 1928 connected the streetcar network to Simpson's Department Store, a major national retailer located in Halifax. Streetcar extensions to leisure and shopping destinations indicate the continuing importance of attracting new riders, even in tough economic times.

Halifax in 1941 was drastically different than the city in 1866 when horsecars first began operating. Population density for the entire city had dropped dramatically, especially in the decades before the twentieth century, before stabilizing after 1900 (Fig. 21). This trend is surprising, as the streetcar system was not electrified until 1896. The dropping population density before 1900 is most likely due to the emergence of Richmond as a major industrial suburb of Halifax. Halifax's first railroad depot was located almost three kilometers north of the city's core, creating the impetus for a large expansion of the city northward. Industrial activity and worker's housing in Halifax were concentrated in Richmond from the 1880s onward. Lot sizes in the northern suburbs were larger than in the central city which limited the

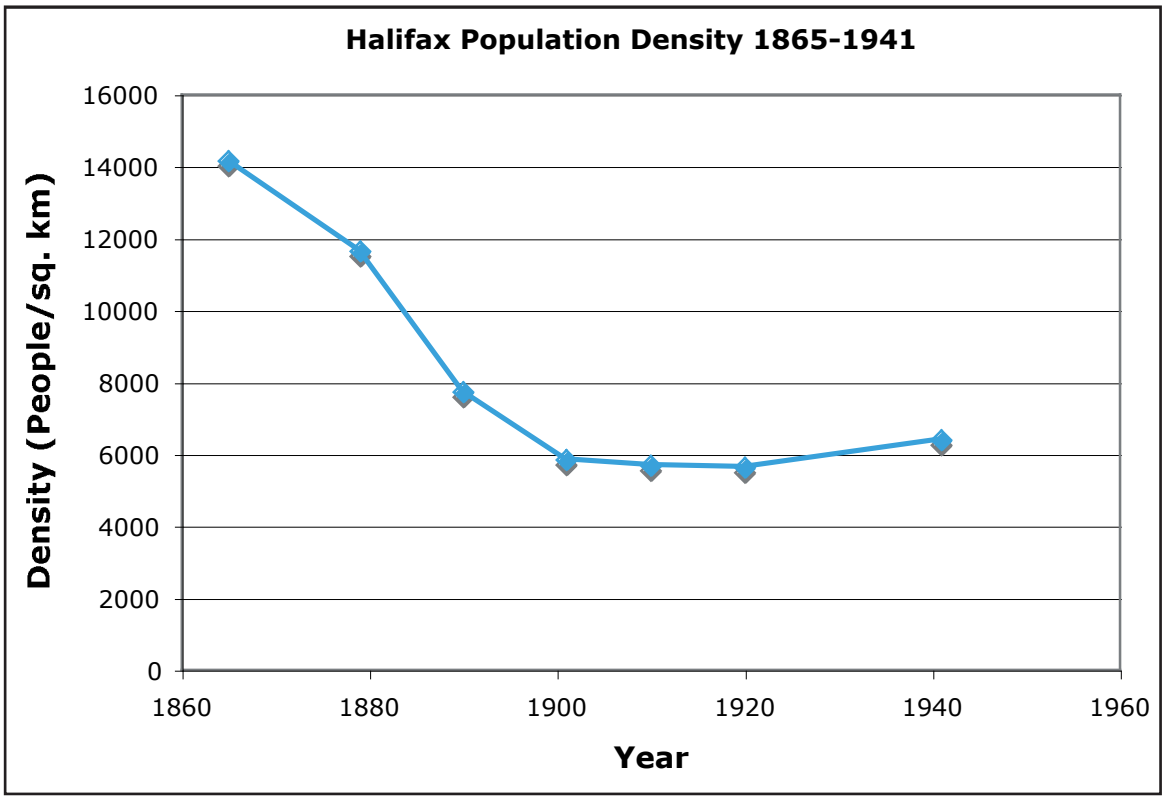

Figure 21. Halifax's population density dropped dramatically in the decades prior to 1900. Larger lot sizes in the northern and southern suburbs contributed to this drop. By the electric streetcar era in 1896 the city's population density leveled off. The major wave of streetcar suburbanization which occured after 1896 allowed a large physical expansion of the city but did not lower population densities. (calculated from Halifax, Population, 1868-1941 (Appendix B) and Halifax, Physical Extent, 1868-1941 (Appendix C))

population density in these growing suburbs (Erickson, 2004). Similarly the south end had larger lot sizes than central areas of Halifax and expansion south also lowered the city's overall population density.

There are two major reasons why population densities in Halifax did not drop after 1900. The first is the development pattern which accompanied electric streetcar lines. Streetcar suburbs were generally composed of single family homes, however, these homes had to be within walking distance of an economically viable streetcar line. A minimum density of units were necessary to support the streetcar lines and provide a comfortable walk for residents which created a de facto minimum density in many of Halifax's suburbs. High population densities also persisted in the central areas of the city until urban renewal projects in the 1960s. In 1941 some areas of central Halifax were over 4 times as dense as outlying suburbs (Fig. 22). Densities of over twenty thousand people per square kilometer in Halifax

demonstrate that although the city expanded rapidly the benefits of streetcar suburbanization were not felt by all residents. Working class residents still lived in overcrowded conditions well after the major wave of streetcar suburbanization was finished.

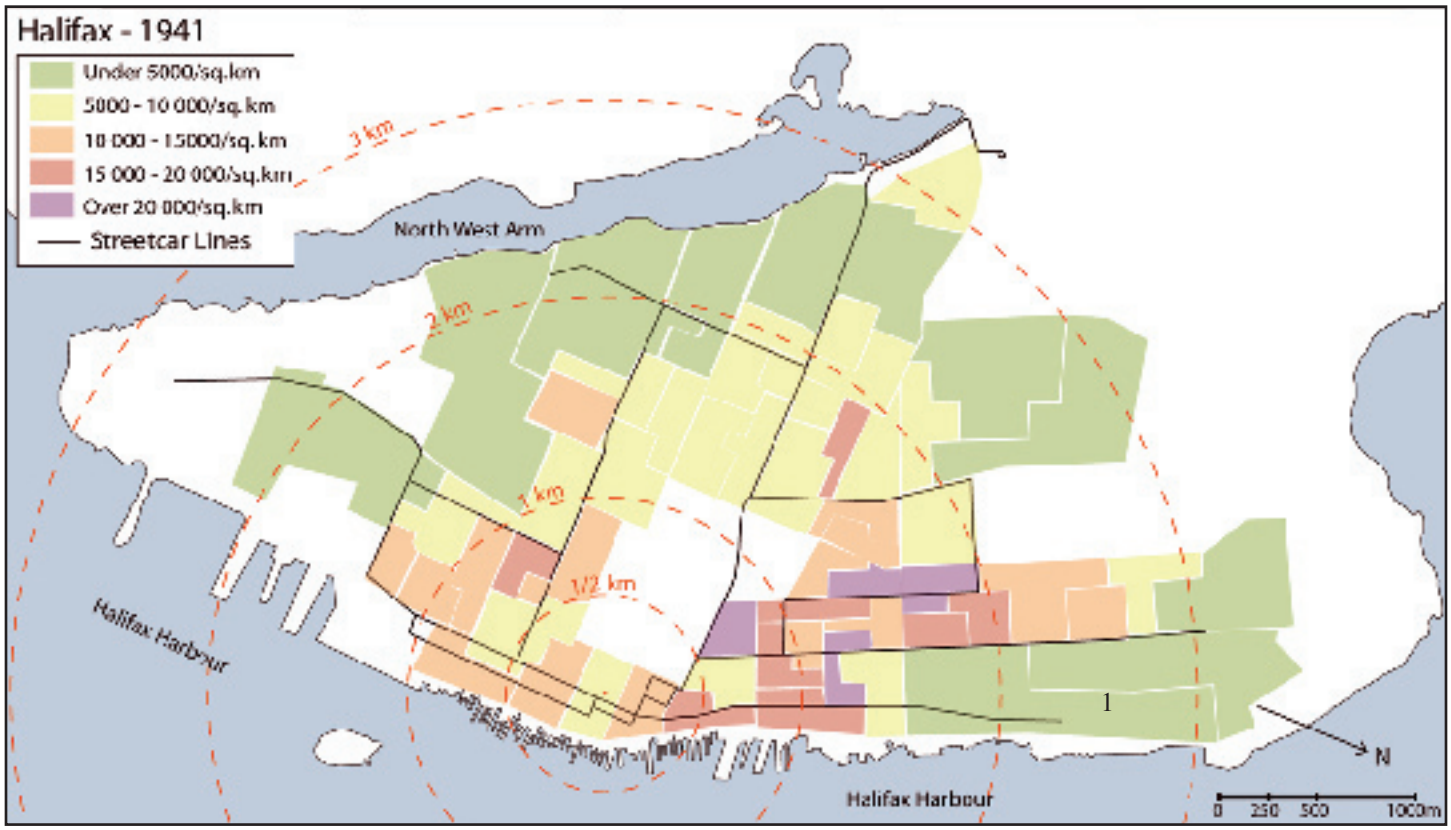

Figure 22. High population densities persisted in portions of central Halifax well into the twentieth century. Peripheral suburban areas, as well as areas that had been devastated by the 1917 Halifax explosion (1), had significantly lower population densities. (modified from *Halifax NS, Total Population, 1941*. In Halifax Housing Atlas, 1941, p. 11 (Appendix A))

Streetcar Suburbanization in Halifax

The Halifax Commons, stretching between Cunard St. in the north, and South St. restricted the westward spread of Halifax until the last decades of the nineteenth century. During most of the nineteenth century the city's growth occurred to the north and the south of the downtown core. In the north industrial suburbs developed in close proximity to the rail yards and docks of Richmond during the 1880s and 1890s. The south end became the neighbourhood of choice for the city's wealthier citizens during the same time period. Although the north and south end were only serviced intermittently by horsecar lines Halifax was small enough that growth was not dependent on this transportation mode and sections of the city expanded without horsecar service.

Willow Park, on the western side of Windsor St., was one of the first western suburbs in Halifax. Private horse-drawn omnibus service was operated for a time as the development was over 2 km from downtown Halifax. Building lots became available in the 1870s and by 1890 the area was developed enough to warrant streetcar service. Horsecar lines were planned to reach the area but track was only laid as far as the corner of Robie and Cunard before financial difficulties halted progress. Willow Park continued to develop without horsecar service. Advertisements described "handsome villa residences" and "genteel, quiet homes" (Halifax Herald, 1894). 106 lots were released for sale in 1894 (ibid) and a further 44 in 1896 (Acadian Recorder, 1896). Electric streetcar service to Willow Park commenced in 1896 when a line was constructed along Agricola to the corner of Almon and Windsor. Willow Park was now a quick tram ride from downtown Halifax, a convenience not lost on developers who advertised that "this neighbourhood [Willow Park] has come into special prominence in the last year on account of proximity to: City Water, New Gas Pipe Line, Electric Car Line" (ibid).

Willow Park was not the only western neighbourhood to gain streetcar service in 1896. A short extension west along Coburg Rd. to Walnut St. also opened in that year. Neither Willow Park nor the western section of Coburg Rd. were heavily developed when they received streetcar service. Few homes fronted on Coburg Rd. in 1895 and most homes near the Coburg tram line were on side streets such as

Henry and Seymour (Fig. 23). Similarly Willow Park contained only a handful of streets and several dozen homes in 1890 when horsecar service to the area was first proposed. By 1896 when streetcar service to Willow Park began it was still only a small peripheral neighbourhood.

Despite the sparsely populated areas of Halifax that these early electric streetcar extensions served they proved quite popular and profitable. Ridership grew steadily between 1898 and 1900, from 2.4 million to just under 3 million in 1900 (Halifax Electric Tramway Co. Ltd., 1898-1900). The successful expansion into early western suburbs, and lobbying from Halifax City council, prompted the Halifax Electric Tramway Co. to pursue aggressive streetcar expansions during the first decades of the twentieth

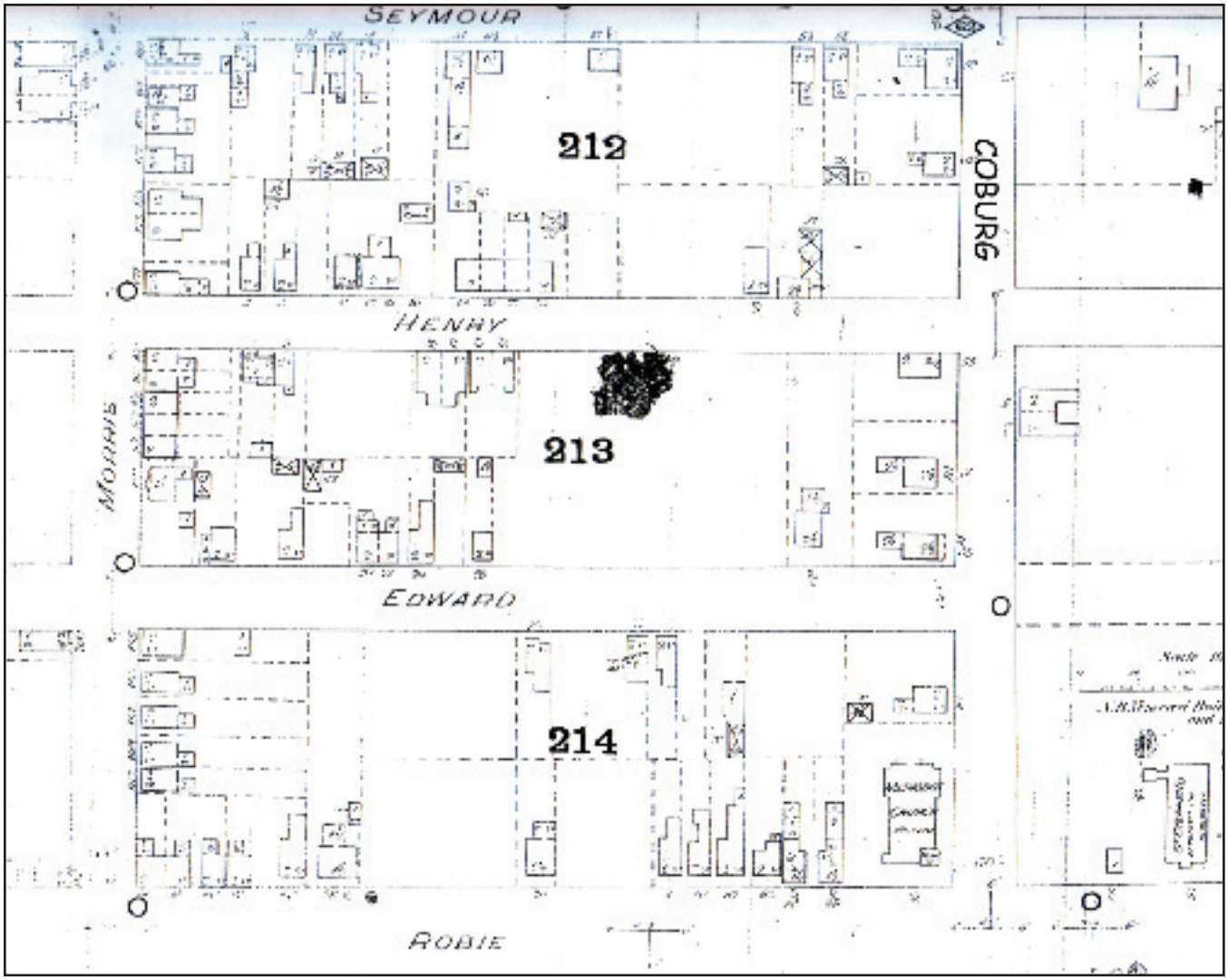

Figure 23. The section of Coburg Rd. between Robie St. and Walnut St. was sparsely developed in 1895, only one year before electric streetcar service. (E. Goad, 1895, Insurance Plan of the City of Halifax)

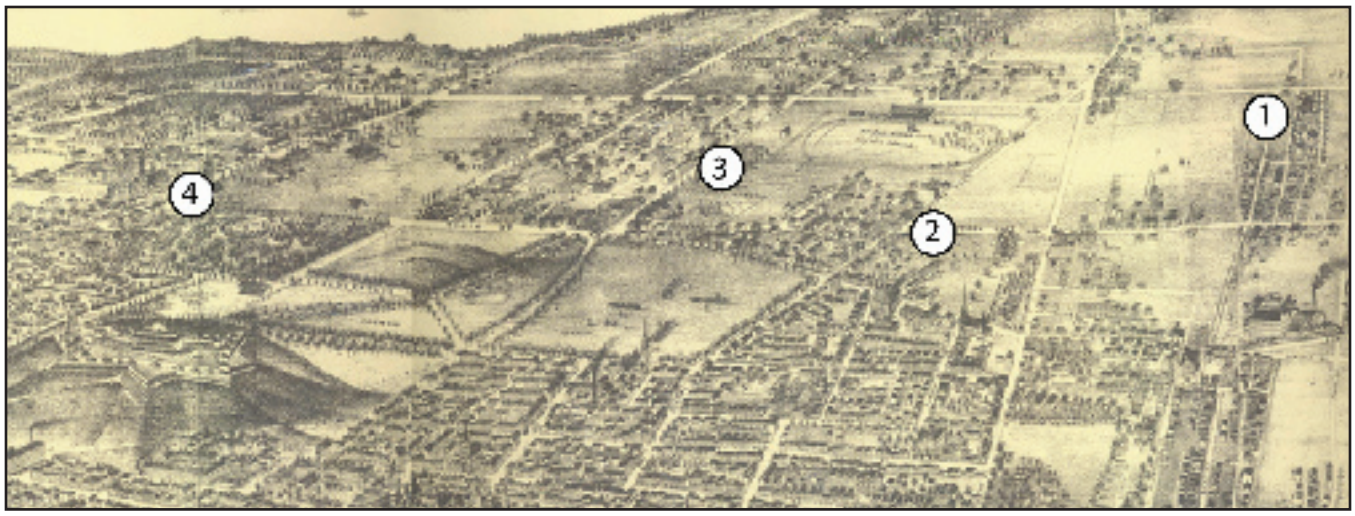

Figure 24. In 1890 settlement in western suburbs of Halifax was quite limited. Despite the low density and large parcels of undeveloped land four residential clusters, Willow Park (1), Windsor and Cunard (2), Quinpool Rd. (3) and Robie and Coburg (4), became focal points for expansion of the city's trolley network. Willow Park and the corner of Robie and Coburg received electric trolley service in 1896. Quinpool Rd. and the corner of Windsor and Cunard were still quite sparsely built in 1901 when they received streetcar service. The high speeds and inexpensive operation of the electric streetcars allowed economical expansions into Halifax's peripheral settlements that were not possible using horsecars. (Bird's Eye View of Halifax, 1890)

century. Further expansion into several developing areas west of Robie St. promised increased streetcar ridership (Fig. 24). One area devoid of streetcar service was the corner of Windsor and Cunard (Fig. 25). Neighbourhoods around Quinpool Rd. also lacked streetcar service. The former area was quite well developed, having been briefly served by horsecars in 1890, while the Quinpool area still had large tracts of undeveloped land (Fig. 26).

In 1900 Halifax's City Council demanded that streetcar service be expanded along Coburg Rd. to Oxford St., and down Oxford St. to Quinpool Rd. by 1901 (Halifax Herald, 1900). The city also demanded streetcar extensions down Quinpool Rd. and Chebucto Rd. to the Arm Bridge (ibid). The Coburg-Oxford-Quinpool section was completed in 1901 and was connected to track on Windsor St. to form the Belt Line. An extension along Quinpool Rd. wasn't completed until 1913, while a Chebucto Rd. line was never completed.

The streetcar lines opened in 1901 created a large suburban development opportunity as many of the western neighbourhoods served by new streetcar lines were sparsely developed. The construction of

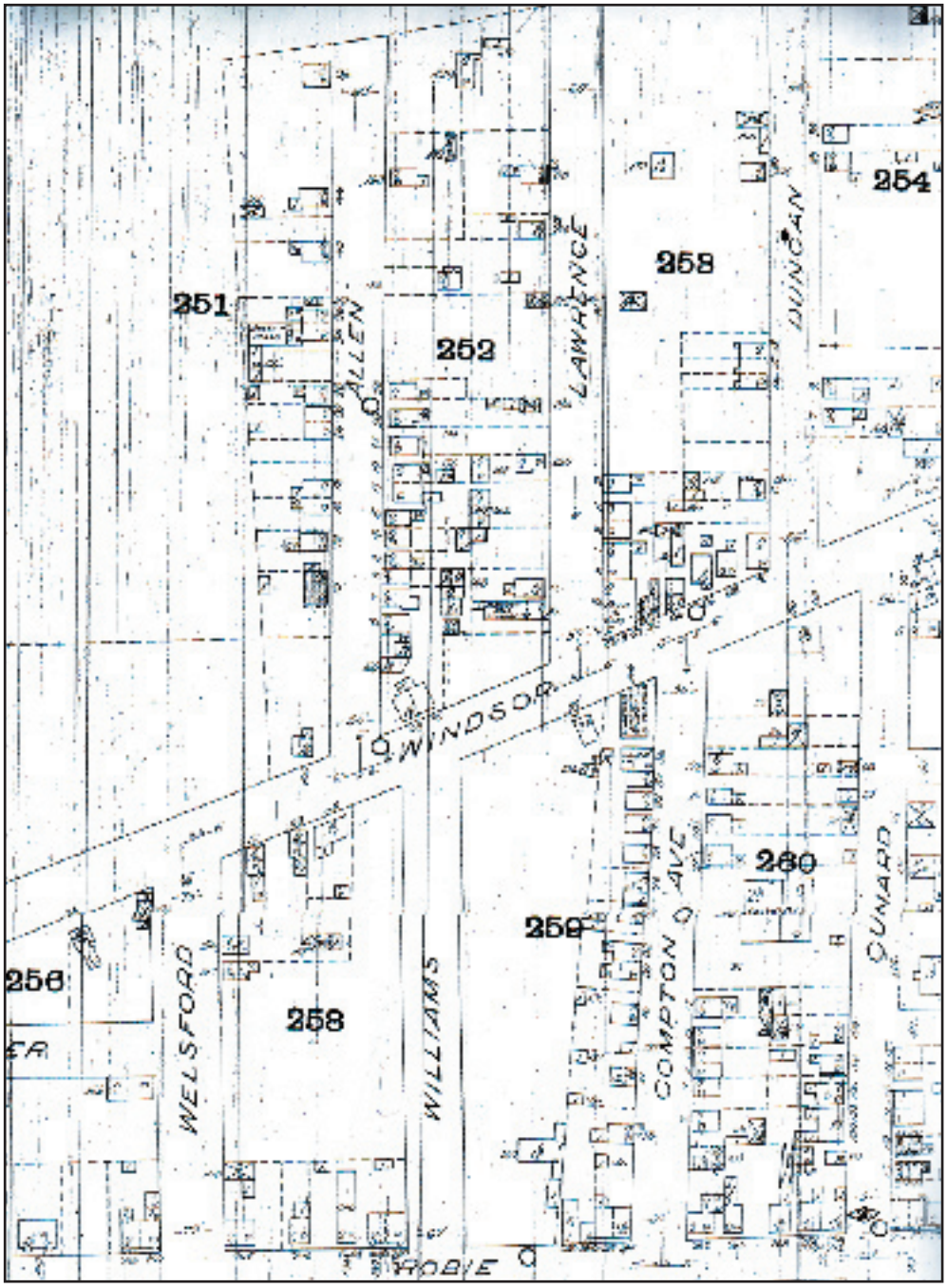

Figure 25. The intersection of Windsor and Cunard in 1895. The area was served by horsecars for a number of years starting in 1890 and by 1895 was the most developed neigbhourhood west of Robie St. The area gained electric streetcar service in 1901. (E. Goad, 1895, Insurance Plan of the City of Halifax)

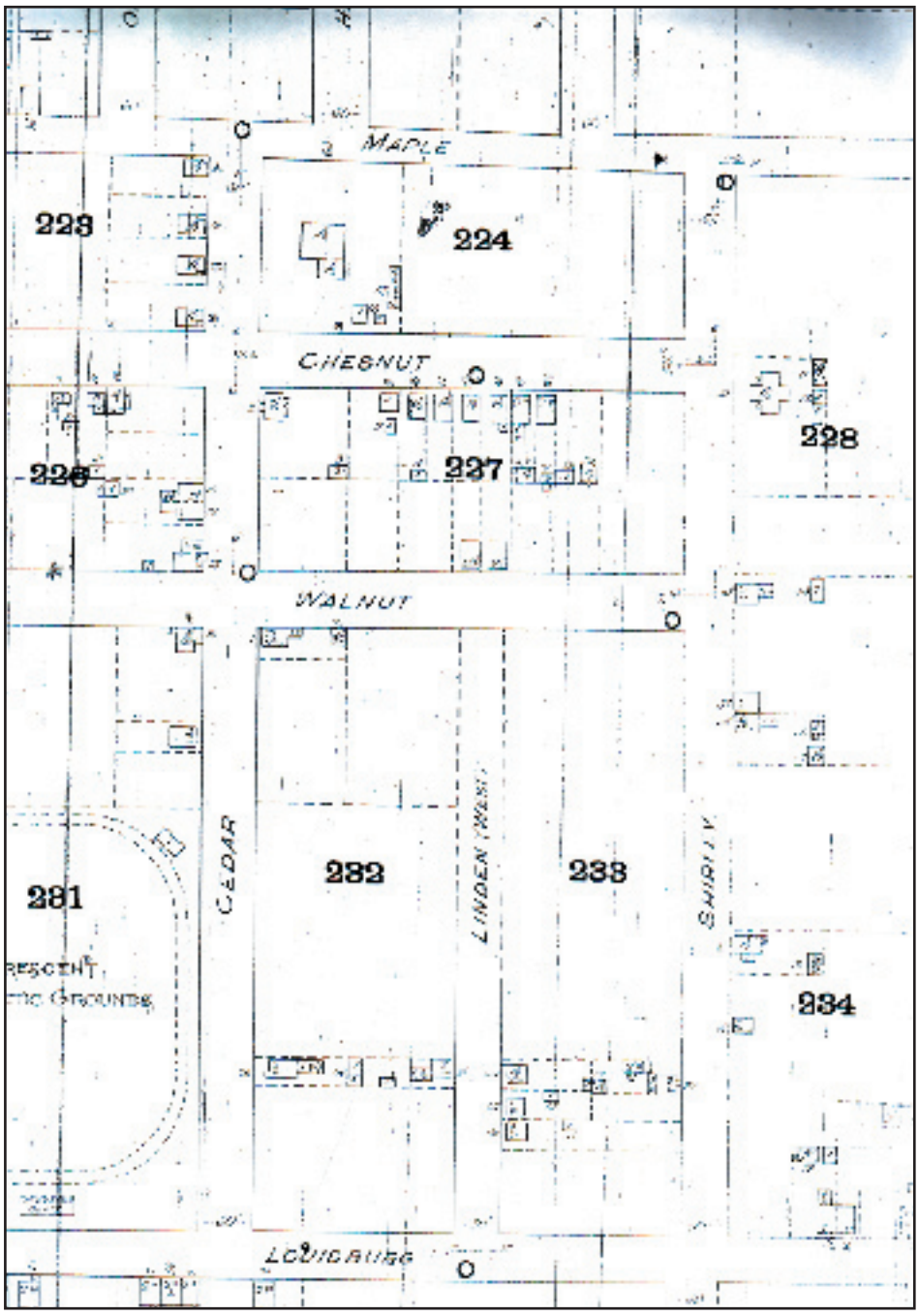

Figure 26. The area near Shirley St., just south of Quinpool and west of Robie, was almost entirely undeveloped in 1895. This developing neighbourhood gained streetcar service in 1901. (E. Goad, 1895, Insurance Plan of the City of Halifax)

Halifax's western streetcar suburbs took place at a surprising slow rate. Unlike suburbanization in many cities Halifax's streetcar company does not appear to have actively taken part in development or land speculation near streetcar lines. Land was not sold in large parcels and lots were sold by the dozens rather than the hundreds. When 38 lots on Oxford St. were sold at auction in 1896 the lots were split among a number of buyers, four of whom bought the majority of the lots (Halifax Herald, 1896). The lots were beyond the edge of the city and quite inexpensive as it would be another five years before tram service was available on Oxford St. Land speculators may already have been buying land in expectation of new streetcar service in western sections of Halifax.

Development continued at a slow pace throughout the streetcar era. In 1914 the corner of Oxford and Jubilee had a large number of undeveloped lots (Fig. 27). Six years later the Acadian Recorder observed that between 12 and 20 houses would be built in 1920 on Oxford St. between Jubilee and Quinpool (1920). The fact that at least twenty housing lots were still available directly on the Oxford streetcar line twenty years after it opened underlies how slowly the western suburbs developed.

The pattern of small scale development which occurred in Halifax's suburbs is not surprising as large land holdings were uncommon. Most land on the edge of the city was held in small farms or estates and building lots only became available as these properties were subdivided. Individual property owners controlled the rate at which land became available. The urban fabric at the edge of Halifax was quite random when still developing and streetcar suburbs took on many of the characteristics of urban edge sprawl. Some parcels in Halifax were subdivided and built upon years before neighbouring parcels. Sometimes several houses were built by themselves among vast amounts of undeveloped land (Fig. 27). In other cases entire neighbourhoods were well developed except for small undeveloped gaps where property had not been subdivided. Western suburbs were a patchwork of small clusters of housing interrupted by large gaps of land which had not been subdivided well into the 1910s. The cities edge continued to move farther down Quinpool Rd. as streetcar service expanded westward, despite the lots available in older suburbs.

Despite taking several decades to fully develop many of Halifax's streetcar suburbs have quite a

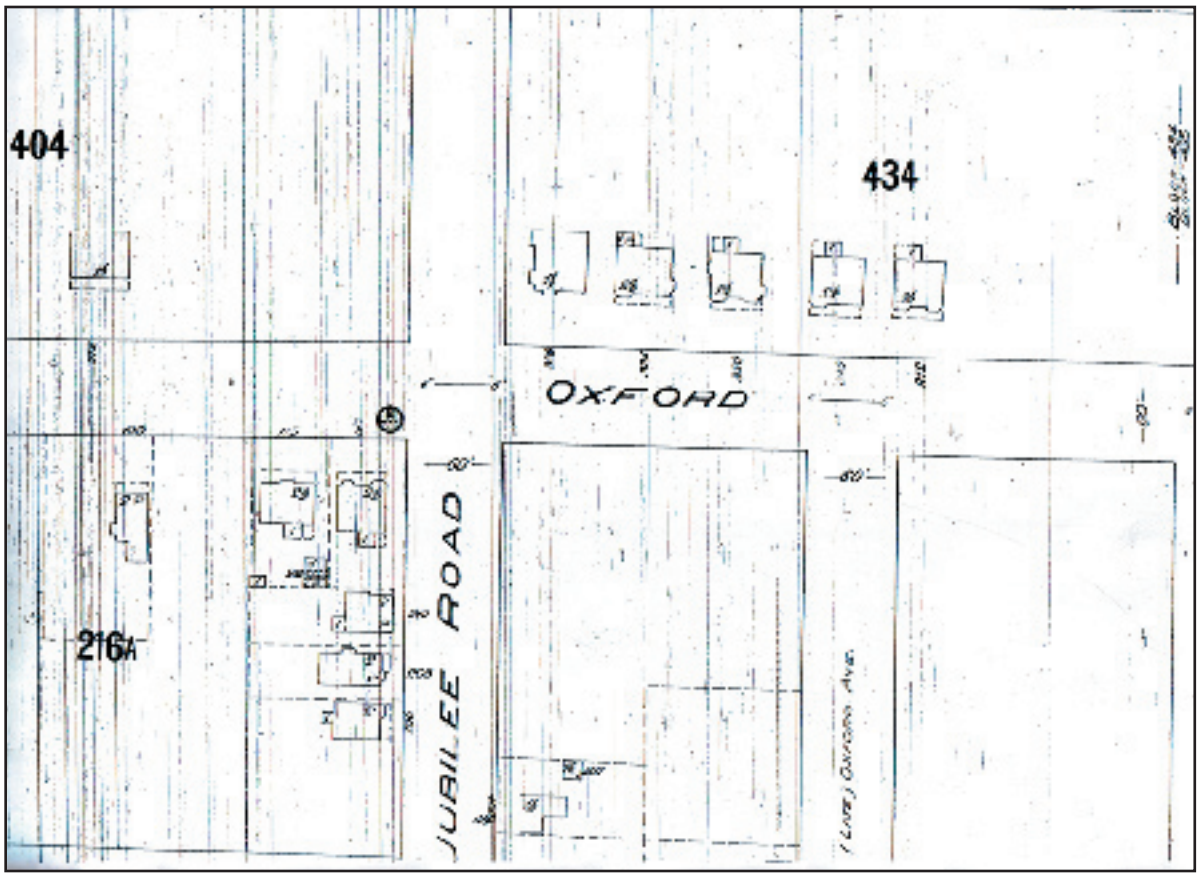

Figure 27. The corner of Oxford and Jubilee remained almost totally undeveloped in 1914, thirteen years after streetcar service commenced on Oxford St. (E. Goad, 1914, Insurance Plan of the City of Halifax)

uniform built form. Suburban housing was almost exclusively single family homes on small lots between three and five thousand square feet. Frontages were initially small, generally either 30 or 35 feet and lots ranged from 80 to 100 feet deep (Goad, 1914). The smallest lots and frontages are in older streetcar suburbs near Robie and Windsor streets. With such small frontages long, narrow houses were built close to the lot line (Fig. 28). Lot sizes increased slightly as the suburbs spread westwards and building styles changed to meet the fashion of the day (Fig. 29). Some lots on Oxford St. and streets further west had frontages of between 45 and 50 feet, significantly larger than the 30 foot frontages common in neighbourhoods near Robie and Windsor (ibid).

Regardless of whether the lots in streetcar suburbs were 3000 sq. ft. or 5000 sq. ft. they were almost always larger than lots in other parts of Halifax. In some older parts of Halifax lots were very small; on

Figure 28. These turn of the century houses on Allan St. are typical of early streetcar suburbs in Halifax. Narrow lots with frontages between 30 and 35 feet required long, narrow houses built tight to the property line.

Figure 29. 1920s suburban housing on Pepperell St., just south of Quinpool Rd.

the corner of Albion and Isleville lots were only 1300 sq. ft. and street frontages were only 18 ft. (Goad, 1914). Similar sized lots could be found on May St. near Robie; the buildings on these lots were attached row houses. Creighton and Maynard area also had small 20 ft. frontages and the majority of lots were around 1500 sq. ft. Frontages along Agricola were generally 25 feet wide, and most lots were between 2200 sq. ft. and 2500 sq. ft. (ibid). Very few lots in the Agricola area were larger than 2500 sq. ft. Lots in Schmidtville, just south of Spring Garden Rd., were some of the largest lots in Halifax not found in the streetcar suburbs or wealthy areas of the south end. Schmidtville lots were generally between 2700 and 3000 sq. ft., although frontages were generally small and most of the housing was attached. In the south end 22 ft. frontages and 2200 sq. foot lots were found on Lucknow St., although many lots were larger due to the wealth of the area (Goad, 1914).

Many of the areas with the smallest lot sizes had high densities well into the twentieth century; the neighbourhoods between Agricola and Gottingen had some areas with over 80 people per acre in 1941 (Fig. 21). By comparison only one section of the western streetcar suburbs had over 60 people per acre, the older neighbourhood near Allan and Lawrence streets. Most streetcar suburbs had under 40 people per acre. Halifax was primarily under 4 stories and the high densities in central parts of the city underscore the overcrowding which continued despite the expansion of the western suburbs.

Despite small scale development by a large number of builders setbacks, housing styles, and lot sizes remained quite consistent. Warner (1962) found a similar pattern in the streetcar suburbs of Boston, where the majority of suburban builders constructed less than forty houses. He suggested that market preferences of the middle class drove the housing market and their preferences created a narrow range of housing options in early suburbs (ibid). The middle class desired to leave the crowded inner-city and build their own home on a small plot of land. Builders in the streetcar suburbs gave the middle class the homes they desired and created a fairly predictable urban fabric in the process. In many Halifax neighbourhoods this urban fabric has survived long past the streetcar system to the present day. These neighbourhoods are still valued for their pedestrian friendliness, tree lined streets, lovely old homes, and proximity to downtown, universities and hospitals.

Discussion

Halifax's street railway network was established in 1866 as a modest horse-drawn system which carried people from the railway station into downtown. The horsecar, and later the electric streetcar, had a profound impact on urban form in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Over the next eighty years a number of other forces would revolution urban living in Halifax: the telephone, electricity, industrialization, and the automobile to name a few. The contribution of streetcars to new or altered urban forms must be considered in a broader context of rising personal wealth, technological improvement and a general rise in the standard of living.

New transportation modes create new urban structures, and alter existing settlement patterns. In Halifax streetcars helped transform a city over a hundred years old. Prior to the 1890s Halifax was a linear city with it's economic drivers located on or near the waterfront. Since transportation and communication technology were poor proximity to work and shopping was important. Housing, retailing and industrial uses generally mixed together freely in much of the city. The late Victorian city was cramped and dirty. Halifax was no exception and those with the means increasingly chose to live outside the central city in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The growth of disposable income and the desire for better housing were the driving forces behind streetcar suburbanization in Halifax. Electric streetcars provided the mode of transportation necessary for wide-spread middle class suburbanization.

Much of peninsular Halifax built up as streetcar suburbs. The streetcars' largest direct impacts were on the city's edge as Halifax expanded from a linear city hugging the harbour into a semi-circular city with significant residential suburbs and emerging peripheral retail nodes. The growth of these suburbs had many of the characteristics of urban sprawl; lower densities and larger lot sizes than the central city, leapfrogging growth, random patchworks of single family homes built among large tracts of undeveloped land, and a reliance on the streetcar network for transportation to employment in the central city. The superior housing and larger lots these neighbourhoods offered compared to central Halifax made them popular among middle class residents with the means to buy a home.

When completely built out Halifax's streetcar suburbs generally had quite uniform housing types, setbacks and lot sizes. The uniformity of post-war automobile suburbs is commonly denigrated, however, Halifax's streetcar suburbs developed in a similar fashion except around a different transportation mode. Although the streetcar began a process of decentralization and suburbanization that the automobile continued the neighbourhoods created by trolleys are now among the most popular in Halifax. Their small lots, walkability and proximity to downtown contribute to their perceived urbanity despite their origin as suburbs. The emergence of automobile oriented suburbs has changed our views on older streetcar suburbs, just as the streetcars changed perceptions about the central city by introducing suburban living to the middle class.

Streetcar suburbanization was largely a middle class phenomenon. Industrialization not only created significant wealth but technological advances, such as milled lumber and mass produced nails, replaced much of the skilled labour needed to construct housing (Latremouille, 1986). Housing prices dropped and the number of housing forms increased. Cheaper housing should have benefitted all Haligonians, however, as industrial manufacturing replaced skilled craftsmen working class wages dropped and many residents had less money to spend on shelter (ibid). Most working class Haligonians could not afford to own homes in streetcar suburbs and continued to live in extremely crowded and dilapidated neighbourhoods near the city's center. It was the middle class that benefited the most from streetcar suburbanization.

In many cities older streetcar suburbs declined in popularity among the middle class as newer suburbs were constructed. Although older suburban housing was divided into flats and rented to the working class suburban neighbourhoods remained economically segregated as the middle class continually migrated to newer streetcar suburbs that were beyond the means of the working class. Keating described the phenomenon in her work on suburbanization in Chicago, "The separation of work and home made possible through new industrial techniques and transportation advances fostered the separation of residential from industrial and commercial areas, as well as the creation of class-segregated neighbourhoods." (1988, p. 123).

Separating residential and commercial uses allowed downtown Halifax to evolve from a

densely populated mixed use neighbourhood towards a specialized central business district catering to office workers and associated comparison shopping on Barrington. Retail streets, such as Barrington, and the growth of white collar jobs in the central business district were both enhanced by the electric streetcar. Each day streetcars collected Halifax's upper and middle class residents from their suburban homes and transported them into the central city. In the first half of the twentieth century businesses had poor communications technology and commuters had few alternatives to streetcar service; proximity to clients, other offices, downtown services and the major streeetcar lines ensured that office space remained primarily in the downtown throughout the streetcar era. Although automobiles and buses have replaced the streetcar, and most businesses can locate almost anywhere in a city, the idea of downtown as a city's primary commercial and entertainment district still resonates in our minds.

Barrington, the city's premier retail street, depended on both the streetcar line and proximity to the central business district. The emergence of retail high streets on trolley lines such as Barrington, Gottingen, and later Spring Garden and Quinpool, represent a drastic change from Halifax's nineteenth century retail scene which was dominated by a plethora of small food vendors. Prior to industrialization disposable incomes were generally low and people had little money to spend on anything but necessities. A rise in prosperity coincided with the electrification of streetcars allowing the retail scene to expand rapidly as people were able to spend more on clothing and other consumer goods. A second retail market was created in parallel with the micro-retail market of grocers, butchers and bakers. Comparison shopping clustered on streetcar lines to capitalize on the accessibility offered by the dominant transportation mode. The micro-retailers were generally pushed off important commercial streets by the higher rents. Small grocers survived well into the streetcar era due to residents continued need for proximity to fresh produce on a daily basis; streetcars did not harm micro-retailing in Halifax because the transportation improvements that created downtown commercial streets were not the same technological improvements that allowed modern supermarkets.

The downtown core remained the dominant employment hub and retail district in Halifax during the streetcar era. By the 1920s, however, automobile use was threatening streetcar ridership. Peripheral

retail areas also emerged; Simpson's department store, a national chain, located on the periphery of the city over three kilometers from downtown. Other department stores, such as Eaton's and Zeller's located on Barrington St. Simpson's followed the lead of the growing middle class and built in the suburbs where land was cheaper. Although peripheral retail districts such as Simpson's were in competition with the retail high streets that were so important to the streetcar company's business, an extension to Simpson's was inevitable and also a sure way to increase streetcar patronage, at least in the short term.

One of the most intriguing aspects of the streetcar era is that while trolleys created urban shopping districts such as Barrington Street and Gottingen Street they also contributed to the decentralization which eventually lead to widespread urban decay in central Halifax as both businesses and residents increasingly located outside of downtown Halifax. The growth of peripheral shopping streets such as Quinpool and the expansion of streetcar service to Simpson's department store in 1928 began a long process of retail decentralization that would harm Halifax's foremost retail streets. The popularity of suburban living among the upper and middle class began a long process of suburban flight from the crowded and dilapidated core of Halifax. As the automobile grew more popular suburbanization accelerated and businesses, industry, residents and retailing were increasingly able to leave the central city. This trend has yet to be reversed, and widespread urban decay is still visible in many central neighbourhoods of Halifax.

One can only speculate how the city's suburbs and downtown core may have developed had growth in Halifax had not stalled several times in the first decade of the twentieth century. The growth of streetcar suburbs, and the development of the central business district, were both stalled by various economic slowdowns. In 1906 the British military withdrew significant portions of the Halifax garrison sending the local economy into a serious downturn. After World War I the city went into another prolonged depression which lasted until the outbreak of World War II. When the economy slowed so did construction. Although Barrington grew into the city's premier shopping district in the early twentieth century the transformation from a dense, gritty, mixed use downtown into a prosperous central business district was not fully realized; some old wood-frame buildings on Barrington which pre-date the streetcar era were not redeveloped into grander commercial buildings.

Suburban growth in Halifax stagnated after the Great War. In many cities streetcar expansions connected peripheral towns and village to the central city, however in Halifax streetcar lines never served peripheral villages such as Armdale or Fairview. Today Fairview is separated from the peninsula of Halifax by auto-centric development patterns and commercial strips along Joseph Howe Dr., Kempt Rd. and especially near suburban malls such as Bayer's Rd. and the Halifax Shopping Centre. It is intriguing to speculate how different this urban fabric might be today had streetcar expansion continued for a longer time at a faster pace. Had streetcar service expanded down Oxford Street and Bayer's Rd. towards Fairview, or into Armdale, an entirely different urban form would have developed in these areas.

Streetcar suburbanization represents an important era in Halifax's growth. Throughout the early part of the twentieth century the streetcars simultaneously strengthened the downtown core and created large suburban residential neighbourhoods. Both the central business district and the streetcar suburbs themselves are still valued areas in Halifax. The evolution of these areas, however, did not come without consequence. The separation of residential uses from the central business district left the downtown retail scene dependent on streetcar service, while the migration of the middle and upper classes from the central city produced vast working class slums that survived until the urban renewal projects of the 1960s. Streetcar suburbanization of the nineteenth and early twentieth century produced some of Halifax's most beloved streets and neighbourhoods, but also contributed to the urban decay and blight in the central city which has yet to be resolved.

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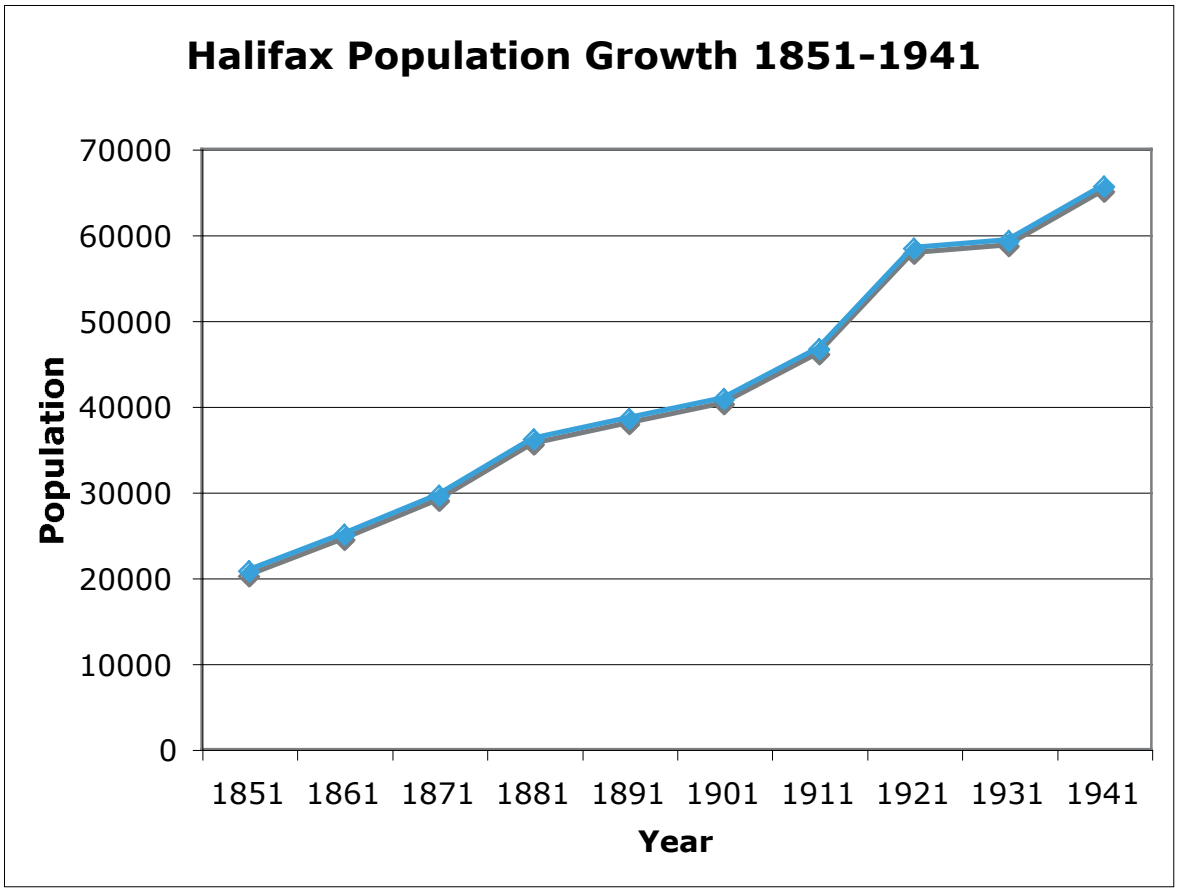
Appendix A

Halifax NS, Total Population, 1941. In Halifax Housing Atlas, 1941, p. 11

Appendix B

Compiled from the Canadian Census of Population, (1851-1941).



Appendix C

Compiled from the maps in Figures 13-18 and Figure 20. The area of Point Pleasant Park, the Halifax Citadel and the Halifax Commons are not included as these areas were never settled.