

The Need

Voted in 2017 as People’s Choice Public Space, Spring Garden Road/Schmidville is a dynamic and vibrant neighbourhood in the heart of Halifax. It serves as a central place to live, work, and play for all Haligonians. With a rich diversity of retail, restaurants, and commercial spaces, the area is also home to a growing residential population with recent apartment and condo developments. It also close to major hospitals and university campuses, the Halifax Commons, and the waterfront. The area is home to major tourist destinations such as the Public Gardens, Halifax Central Public Library, and Citadel Hill. Its shops, restaurants, and cafes attract numerous residents, students, office and retail workers, and tourists.

Many of these residents and visitors to the community have difficulty navigating the area though, both with active transportation options and public and private transit. There is a need for better signage identifying business locations, public attractions, and available off-street parking in the area. This will increase the ease of access to local attractions for residents and visitors.

There are two distinct but interrelated needs for wayfinding in the Spring Garden area. One is the location of public attractions and situating visitors and residents to their location in context of the larger downtown core. This wayfinding would be the responsibility of the HRM to install and maintain. The other is a managed district commercial signage system (business wayfinding) and the location of off-street parking, the former of which is the responsibility of the Spring Garden Area Business Association (SGABA) to install and maintain.

The next steps of the Spring Garden Road streetscaping project is the completion of a schematic design, with the aim for construction to begin in 2020. As part of this process, HRM has asked SGABA to brainstorm business wayfinding options would meet the needs of SGABA members, as well as residents, and visitors to the area.

Local businesses have expressed a need for individual business signage in the area to help navigate customers to their locations. This is especially important for those businesses located on the side streets and in the urban malls without street frontage. There is also a desire from both the public and SGABA members to clean up the area of unpermitted sandwich board advertising, which often clutters the sidewalks.

Individual business signage will increase visibility, but it will not entirely eliminate the use of sandwich boards, as many are used to advertise daily specials. A full replacement for sandwich boards would need to serve some of the functions they currently fulfill – branding, displaying offers, changeable messaging for specials, sales etc. Combined with greater enforcement of the by-laws, individual business wayfinding signage will alleviate some of the problems that arise from an excessive amount of sandwich boards in the public space that are unpermitted e.g., pedestrians and cars being hit; crowded sidewalks.

Who is the audience in the Spring Garden area?

Spring Garden is a diverse community – it is a commercial and retail district with many office workers and a growing residential population. Only a few minutes from the waterfront and downtown Halifax, it is bordered by the Public Gardens, Halifax Central Public Library, and Citadel Hill. This makes it a busy destination for many tourists.

Examples from Other Cities

WalkNYC is a program of pedestrian maps introduced by the New York City Department of Transportation that are designed to make it easier to navigate city streets. Place on a system of dedicated kiosks throughout the city, the maps are designed to encourage people to walk, bike, and use public transit, and help guide them to major landmarks and subway and bus stations.



The kiosks present two maps, one of the local streets and the other of the area in relation to a larger section of the city. The map uses a heads-up orientation in which the compass directions are rotated to correspond with the direction the user is facing.



The Bristol Legible City on-street pedestrian wayfinding system is presented in a care hierarchy of the city, neighbourhood, street/space making it easy for the user to locate themselves in relationship to the

city's major destinations and walking routes. Map units are located at key decision points supported by linking fingerposts showing key destinations.



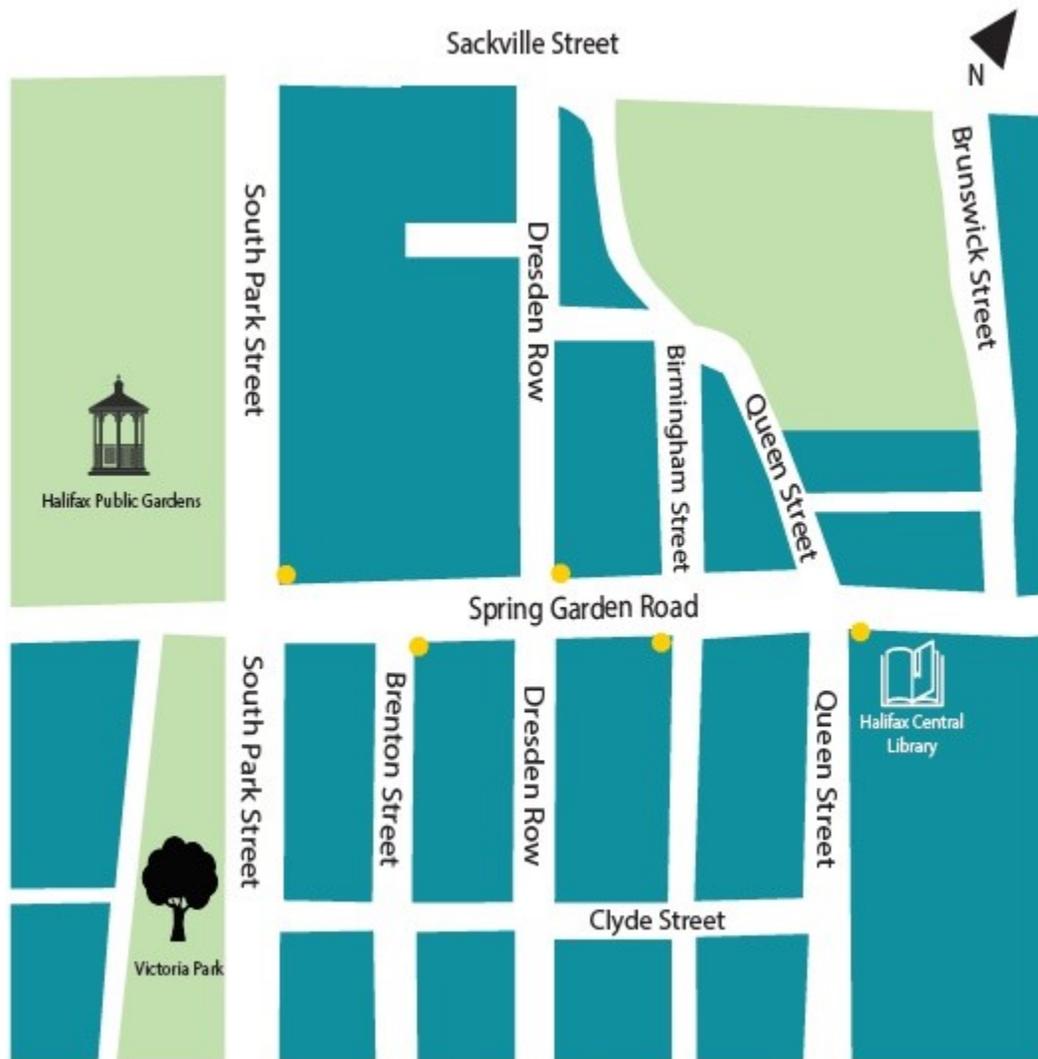
The North Sydney Business Develop and Improvement Association wanted to encourage visitors to ferry terminal to let visitors know that they were within walking distance of a vibrant downtown. The wayfinding and information sign system developed includes welcome and directional signage outside the terminal for travellers, and an orientation plaza with reconfigurable businesses directory and map of the town, and associated landscaping. The business directory and map are easily adaptable for changes.

Wayfinding for Spring Garden Road

Key features of wayfinding are continuity; connectivity; consistency; and accessibility. Wayfinding for the Spring Garden area should position the area in the context of the larger downtown core of Halifax. It should highlight key public and private destinations in the area, drawing people along Spring Garden Road and the surrounding side streets. Wayfinding on the SGR should highlight the features of the area, including the Public Gardens, the Halifax Central Library.

Business wayfinding would be a non-digital and updatable “pay to play” managed commercial signage system, administered by SGABA but part of a larger wayfinding system for Spring Garden. We are proposing HRM and SGABA share the wayfinding system, incorporating business wayfinding with public. Wayfinding would include business directories, but they would also identify public attractions, and situate the Spring Garden area within the larger downtown core.

Wayfinding signs would be compact kiosks located on the side streets directly off SGR (on the corners), and a variant for use in front of the urban malls of Spring Garden Place, Park Lane, and the Bond Building. The below map shows the locations for business wayfinding signs in yellow,



Wayfinding signs are to be placed at the north east corner of South Park Street and Spring Garden Road; the east corner of Breton Street; the north east corner of Dresden Row; the south east corner of Birmingham Street; and in the south east corner of Queen street, in front of the Halifax Central Public Library.

Signs should be accessible for all users – this includes being in accessible locations and heights for people using wheelchairs and other assistive devices; written in plain language; and produced in high contrasts and with Braille.