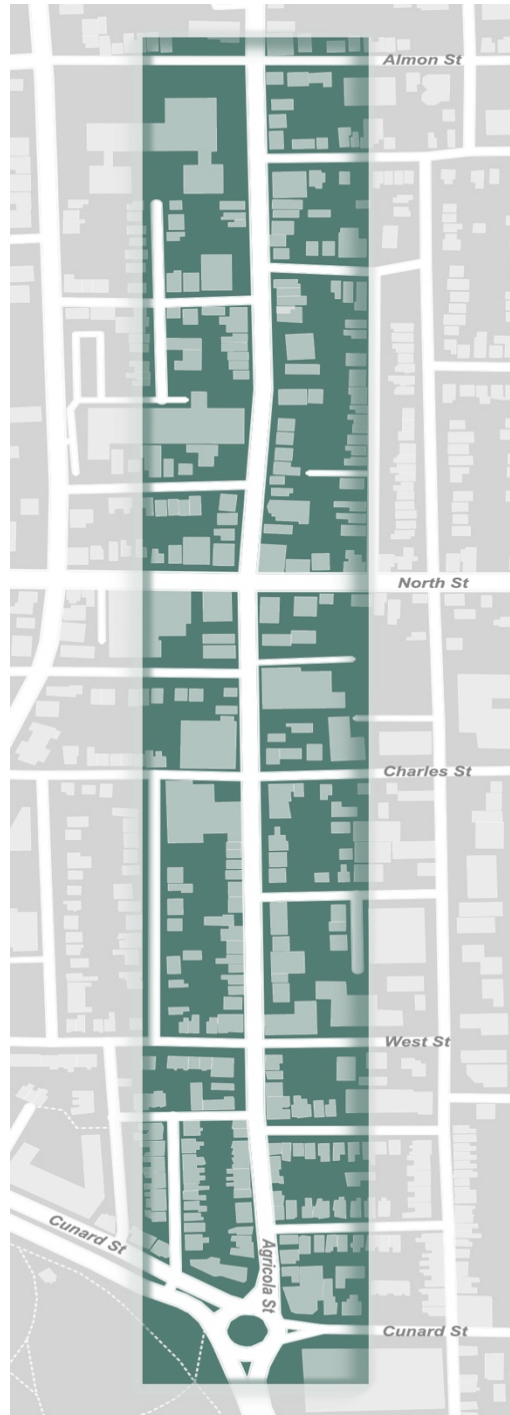


AGRICOLA STREET ENHANCEMENT
WORKSHOP WITH GARY TOTH

MAY 17, 2017



By Jiajing Chen

n^orthend
BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

1. Introduction

The Agricola Street Enhancement (ASE) project was organized by North End Business Association (NEBA) and Halifax Cycling Coalition (HCC), to develop a plan to improve the existing streetscape. The study area runs along Agricola Street from Cunard Street to Young Street through a mixed-use corridor in North End Halifax that includes residential, commercial and institutional uses (Figure 1).

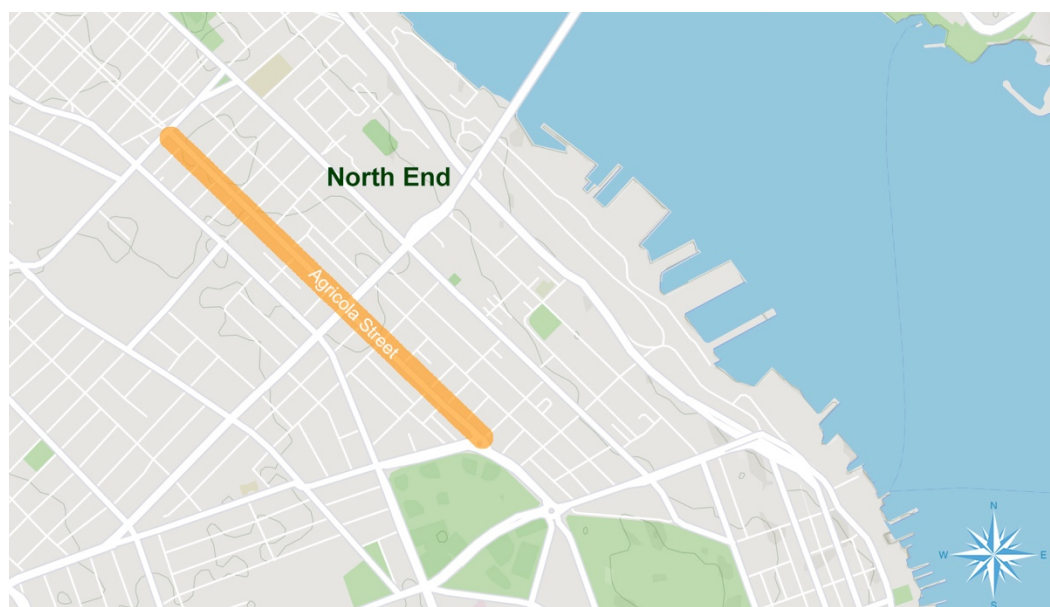


Figure 1. Agricola Street, North End Halifax.

As shown in the project timeline (Figure 2), the ASE project was launched in Spring 2015. HCC and NEBA have held several meetings with HRM staff and community stake holders to discuss Agricola streetscaping improvements. The project aims to beautify the street and calm traffic, which would benefit residents, businesses, pedestrians, cyclists, and those who visit the area.

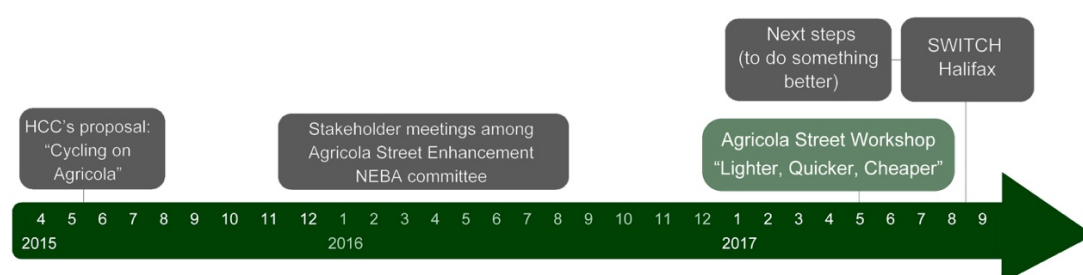


Figure 2. The ASE Project Timeline.

To bring ideas and information together as a part of the on-going discussion and work on this initiative, NEBA and HCC, in cooperation with the Licensed Professional Planners Association of Nova Scotia, held a workshop featuring Gary Toth. Gary Toth is the Senior Director of Project for Public Spaces, specializing in planning, design and education to help individuals and governments create and sustain public spaces that build

Project for Public Spaces (PPS)

“PPS is the central hub of the global Place-making movement, connecting people to ideas, expertise, and partners who share a passion for creating vital places.”

Work: Place-making Plans; City-wide Strategic Plans; Training, Conferences & Presentations; Public Spaces; Public Markets; and Transportation.



Retrieved from PPS website:
<http://www.pps.org>

stronger communities. Gary has hosted hundreds of workshops and community meetings all over North America.

The Agricola Street workshop brought together a dedicated group of stakeholders including representatives of HRM, HCC, NEBA, Agricola Street businesses, and local residents. The intent of the workshop was to inspire everyone to think out of the box and beyond their own perspective or area of expertise. The goal of the session was to discuss the key elements that shape the Agricola Street right-a-way (street and sidewalk), develop a shared vision for the street, and identify the next steps that will advance this important project.

Student volunteers captured community perspectives on note pads and maps, which were used to record the workshop and develop a blueprint of ideas for streetscape improvements along the Agricola Street corridor.

This report provides a brief recap of the two-hour workshop and lists the priorities for streetscape improvements as discussed by the workshop participants.

“If we can get the land use right, it is easier for the transportation to do right. It is about place making.”

“Place making for a destination in a region creates cluster on the street. People and destinations can slow vehicles down.”

“This doesn’t mean the whole street needs to be a destination. It can just be a few blocks”

“The quickest way to activate a space is to spill indoor activities out onto the streets.”

“Everything in New York is temporary.”

“If it isn’t working make changes, remain flexible.”

...

-- Gary Toth

2. Workshop Recap

The workshop was held on Wednesday May 17th from 6pm to 8pm, downstairs at The Bridge with twenty-five participants (List of participants can be found in Appendix A). Hanita Koblents, from HRM urban design, started the workshop by talking HRM’s vision for complete streets and the Integrated Mobility Plan. She pointed out that a complete street should be safe, comfortable, and sustainable, and that requirements for bike lanes are getting higher. An appropriate mix of roadways, transit networks, and land uses can create a system that establishes a street hierarchy that supports adjacent building uses. Now, recognizing the fact that Halifax is still vehicle oriented, HRM respects the current road network and searches for an integrated approach.



Figure 3. Gary Toth is Speaking at the Agricola Street Workshop

The keynote speaker Gary Toth’s definition of a complete street is a street that is safe and comfortable to use for all ages. He illustrated that place-making is the maximum use of space, but our current urban environment is designed by individual professions that creates silos resulting in few great public places. He explained four types of street development:

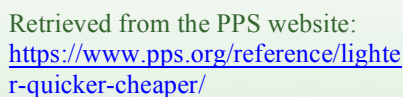
- **Destination street:** destination streets are places that attract lots of people, that results in slowing down traffic.
- **Shared street:** a street blurs the lines between streets and public space, promoting the free flow of pedestrians throughout the row.
- **Flexible street:** flexible streets are sometimes used for public space, sometimes for vehicles, such as Chinatown in Portland.
- **Bike boulevard:** a bike boulevard is a low-speed street which has been designed to give priority to cyclists. Compared to a bike path, a bicycle boulevard is a relatively low-cost approach to appealing to a broader cycling demographic.

“places thrive when users have a range of reasons (10+) to be there”

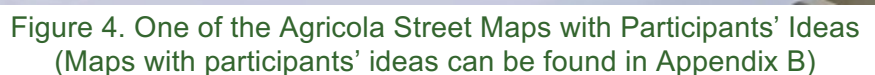
Retrieved from PPS website:
<https://www.pps.org/reference/the-power-of-10/>

“the simple, short-term, and low-cost solutions that have remarkable impacts on the shaping of neighborhoods and cities”

“a creative, locally-powered alternative to the capital-heavy and top-down planning processes”



After Gary's Presentation, participants broke into three groups and gathered around maps of the Agricola Street corridor. Participants first talked about photos and stories of their favorite streets. Then they were asked to mark where their interests (residence, business, bike lane, parking, property, etc.) were and what the opportunities and challenges exist on the corridor.



“It is possible to set temporary street market on the intersection between Charles street and Agricola Street.”

“Adding more benches offers enough siting opportunities on the street, and the benches can be combined with bike racks.”

“Encourage small business come back to Agricola Street.”

...

-- **Participants**

As shown in Figure 4, Participants added what they would like to see on the maps:

- greenspace,
- improved sidewalks and crosswalks,
- better lighting,
- improved traffic flow,
- additional street furniture and bike racks, and
- improvements to pedestrian safety.



Figure 5. Table Discussion of the Agricola Street Workshop

During the table discussion (Figure 5), Gary walked around to listen to people’s ideas, answer questions, and give advice on their thoughts. The blueprint of ideas for streetscape improvements came from the table discussion.

“we can develop experiment sections at the street section between Charles Street and North Street.”

“Make incremental changes over a series of street festivals, events on Agricola Street throughout the summer.”

“Keep Bloomfield parking lot and the existing parking space before RBC Bank.”

“Agricola Street could become the experimental street.”

“More clustered points should be developed in the community”

“Add lighting to enhance the experience of the Agricola Street corridor at night.”

...

-- Participants

3. The Blueprint: Agricola Street Corridor Streetscape Priorities

Based on the maps, notes, and discussions from the workshop participants, the following list of considerations for Agricola Street emerged.

1) Parklets & Bike Racks

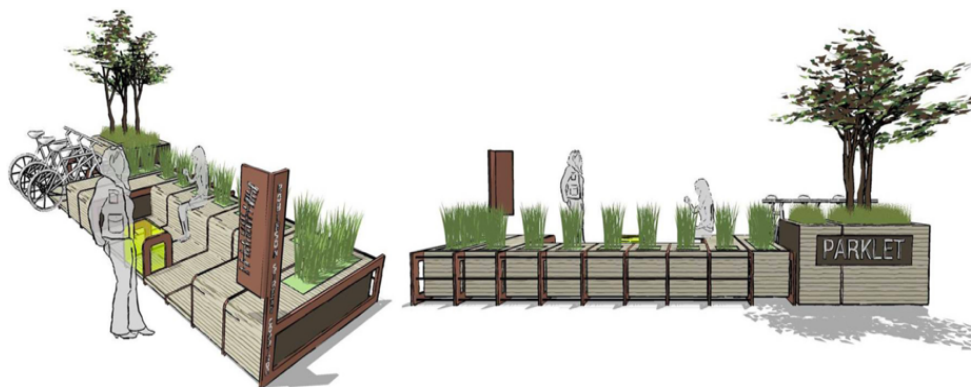


Figure 6. An Example of a Parklet and Bike Racks. Taken from: https://robinsonstreetrva.files.wordpress.com/2012/01/robinson-street_final-report.pdf

Design experimental parklets and install bike racks (Figure 6) to enhance beauty, calm traffic, and encourage public leisure along Agricola Street. Parklets and bike racks can be temporary or permanent. Also, parklets can be either private cafe patios on sidewalks and parking spaces, or publicly installed to encourage pedestrian activity.

2) Greenery



Figure 7. Street Greenery. Taken from: <http://www.coreytempletonphotography.com/portlandmainesummer/h1B3076D0>

As shown in figure 7, place planters, street trees, green-walls, and partnerships with business for landscape improvements on the Agricola Street corridor can make it more green and vivid.

“We can add more hanging plants on the telephone poles.”

“There could be more bus stops and crosswalks on Agricola Street.”

“It is possible to take over the street space near intersection to make a patio. Patio can increase the use of the curb bump-outs. Also, it will not influence parking that much.”

“Why people do not enjoy riding on Agricola Street is because of the sandwich effect, which means cyclists would feel uncomfortable biking between vehicle traffic and parking.”

“Create something curious on the street to set a ‘mental speed bump’ to ‘distract’ drivers and they would drive slow.”

...

-- Participants

3) Street Arts & Wayfinding



Figure 8. Street Arts and Wayfinding. Taken from:

<http://media.uniq.pl/informacje-prasowe/press/322966/powstaly-pierwsze-instalacje-w-ramach-unika-art-lodz>.

<https://www.dwell.com/collection/how-new-york-city-developed-its-wayfinding-signage-812a8ae3>.

<http://icreated.com/2014/09/26-street-arts-nature.html/>

Use characteristic elements like cultural sculpture to distinguish corridors and enhance the sense of place (Figure 8). Add signage and wayfinding to guide people to Agricola Street. Include driving, biking and walking times on wayfinding signs to help first-time visitors navigate the corridor. It can be cooperated with the gateway project on Gottingen Street.

4) Temporary Street Market



Figure 9. Street Greenery.

Taken from: <http://www.visithelsinki.fi/zh/stay-and-enjoy/eat>

As shown in Figure 9, create an atmosphere where local makers and artists can connect with customers. People come together to support each other and shop at local small businesses on the Agricola Street, which would make the street more vibrant. Also, it is easy to construct and transform back.

5) Curb Bump-outs



Figure 10. Curb Bump-outs. Taken from:

<https://nacto.org/publication/urban-street-design-guide/street-design-elements/curb-extensions>

Take advantage of curb bump-outs (Figure 10) to improve safety by increasing visibility, decreasing crossing distance, and reducing speeds through visually narrowing the street. Curb bump-outs can also provide safe on-street parking spaces. In addition, make crosswalks painted or accentuated with brick, or materials could allow Agricola Street to further identify as a corridor.

6) Lighting & Belisha Beacon



Figure 11. Belisha Beacons.

Taken from: <http://citytransport.info/Zebra.htm>

Lighting on the street provides street-level illumination to enhance pedestrian visibility and safety. It is recommended to use consistent fixtures in North End. Belisha beacons provide additional visibility to zebra crossings which are designated for pedestrians (Figure 11).

Specifically, some participants suggested that we can do experimental section on Agricola Street between Charles Street and North Street. Other considerations include:

- try to do at least one side protected with bike lane,
- have a giant coffee shop at the intersection of Agricola street and North Street instead of having too many small businesses, and add installations at the intersection of Agricola Street and Charles Street.

Challenges are:

- how to design for the completely different street atmosphere in the daytime and at night, and
- how can we encourage a more multi-cultural and comfortable space for all ages?

4. Next Steps

At the end of the workshop, people were asked about their on-going interest in being involving in the next steps of the ASE project. Interested participants left their name tags on the wall (Figure 12). People who identified themselves as interested in continuing to work on this are: Kate MacLennan (HRM), Shawn Cleary (Councilor), Kelsey Lane(HCC), Eliza Jackson (HCC), Eric Rapaport(HCC), Patricia Cuttell Busby (NEBA), Tasso Dikaio (NEBA), Frank Evans (NEBA), Sue Sirrs (NEBA), Jamie Clarke (NEBA), TJ Maguire (Waterfront Development Corp), and Evan Carroll (Resident).



Figure 12. The Wall with Participants' Name Pads

- Step 1 NEBA and HCC will organize public engagement sessions to move buy-in and support local companies in North End.
- Step 2 Continued dialogue between NEBA, HCC and HRM is going to develop a plan for Agricola Street in anticipation of upcoming repaving of street.
- Step 3 The “Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper” approach will be applied to the upcoming SWITCH Halifax event. NEBA, in collaboration with SWITCH, will work on a “Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper” project to demonstrate street improvements.
- Step 4 A street improvement plan will be developed to detail the next steps of Agricola Street, especially the bike corral and parkette projects for summer.

...

Appendix A – Participants List

Name	Group
Patricia Cuttall Busby	NEBA
Jiajing Chen	NEBA
Sue Sirrs	NEBA
Jamie Clarke	NEBA
Frank Evans	NEBA
Sean Gallagher	NEBA
Andrew Feenstra	NEBA
Tasso Dikaio	NEBA
Evyeneia Manolakos	NEBA
Kelsey Lane	HCC
Ben Wedge	HCC
Eliza Jackson	HCC
Eric Rapaport	HCC
Lindell Smith	Councilor
Shawn Cleary	Councilor
Kate MacLennan	HRM
Hanita Koblents	HRM
Tanya Davis	HRM
Elora Wilkinson	HRM
David MacIsaac	HRM
TJ Maguire	Waterfront Development Corp
Charlie Bourne	Resident
Dave Espeseth	Volunteer
Harry Zhu	Volunteer
April Liang	Volunteer

Appendix B – Maps with Participants' Ideas

