

City at a Critical Juncture: Halifax's Town Planning Board at the End of the Progressive
Era, 1911-1924

By:

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Abstract

S. William Robinson-Mushkat

City at a Critical Juncture: Halifax's Town Planning Board at the End of the Progressive Era, 1911-1924

During its initial manifestation, from 1916 to 1922, Halifax's Town Planning Board reflected both a strong Progressive spirit, infused throughout much of the citizenry, and a desire to modernize and transform the city. The Town Planning Board enhanced regulations on property ownership, the construction and maintenance of structures, and the zoning of residential, commercial, and industrial properties while the Board sought to create and foster a city-wide plan to normalize and sustain the Halifax's physical growth over the twentieth century. Despite its altruistic mandate, the Board was hampered by an inability to collaborate effectively with other like-minded organizations in Halifax. Coupled with the effect of the 1917 Explosion, the end of the First World War, and a decline in the economy, the failure of the Board was a result of its incapability to effectively manage changing needs for planning and a larger reflection on the shifting attitudes of Progressives.

25 November 2010

INTRODUCTION

The early twentieth century was a time of growth and radical transition for cities across Canada. Many urban areas developed in an unchecked and haphazard manner throughout the nineteenth century, reaching a crisis point around the turn of the century as various cities featured slums full of vice, squalor, violence, and crime. Urban planning emerged as a means to combat many of the social ills plaguing cities at the time, and to enable superior planning in the future.¹ The initial incarnation of Halifax's Town Planning Board, from 1916 to 1922, was a further reflection of the efforts on the part of many citizens of Halifax to modernize, enhance, and standardize a short term response to the needs of a small, developing city while at the same time fostering a long term overall vision for the city's stable, natural growth. The establishment of the Town Planning Board was a critical step taken by the municipality to ensure a controlled expansion of Halifax's physical area while helping regulate the continuing development of existing lands and properties.

The Town Planning Board itself showed ambition creating several visionary planning schemes and its members were longtime advocates of urban reform and the implementation of proper urban planning. However, the Board failed to meet most of its goals and became a victim of a combination of exceptional circumstances as well as a grim economic reality and future. Shortly after the Board's formation the Halifax Explosion occurred, prompting the creation of the Halifax Relief Commission, an organization tasked with objectives that were similar in nature to the Town Planning

¹ David Ward, "The Progressives and the Urban Question: British and American Responses to the Inner City Slums, 1880-1920" *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (1984), pp. 300-1.

Board.² Following the conclusion of the First World War, Halifax entered a prolonged economic downturn lasting throughout the next decade. Finally, so-called progressive attitudes and organizations, of which the Town Planning Board was emblematic, lost momentum after World War I and throughout the early 1920s.³ Though not officially dissolved in November of 1922, a prolonged hiatus lasting until well into the 1930s effectively signaled the demise of the Town Planning Board in its original state and intended form.

In its growth and development the city of Halifax followed some patterns akin to other cities across Canada, and also forged unique and specific pathways of its own, making the examination of the city's history an interesting prospect for urban historians. Halifax's age, two hundred and sixty one years, distinguishes it from many other cities in Canada. Its location on the eastern periphery of Canada has forced Halifax to compete with both the hub of Central Canada and Western expansion throughout Canada's establishment and development.⁴ During the Progressive era Halifax was at a critical juncture in its development and growth.⁵ With a citizenry eager to face the challenges being hoisted upon them the spirit and idealism of the era manifested itself throughout various forms within the city. For approximately fifteen years urban planning became one of the most visible and critical manifestations of the Progressive movement in Halifax. The creation of the Town Planning Board was a culmination of a primarily grassroots

² John C. Weaver, "Reconstruction of the Richmond District in Halifax: A Canadian Episode in Public Housing and Town Planning, 1918-1921" *Plan Canada*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (March 1976), pp. 36-47.

³ Ian McKay, "The 1910s: The Stillborn Triumph of Progressive Reform" *The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), pp. 222, 228.

⁴ L.D. McCann, "Staples and the New Industrialism in the Growth of Post-Colonial Halifax" *Acadiensis*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (Spring 1979), p. 79.

⁵ The term 'Progressive Era' is used throughout the thesis to signify a particular period in the history of Halifax and Nova Scotia. Problems associated with the definition and use of the term is examined in Chapter One.

effort to institute urban planning as a responsibility of the municipal government. In this thesis I will argue that although the Town Planning Board was altruistic in nature and succeeded in creating plans for the city, its sudden demise was ultimately a result of both its own poor execution and a sudden change in the fortunes of the city and the larger Maritime region.

Historian Gilbert Stelter has aptly remarked that the role of the urban historian is to give to cities “a special sense of time and place.”⁶ In examining early twentieth-century Halifax, I have attempted to do just that. I aim to show that Halifax was a city that was not just a national, but in fact a global, leader in urban planning for a small to mid-sized “Western” city during the first twenty-five years of the twentieth century. For a generation, the elite of the city was preoccupied with the issue of developing a comprehensive scheme to enable a steady and healthy infrastructure and population growth well into the twentieth century. Through the development and application of a proper city plan, civic leaders believed that Halifax’s urban growth could be purposefully guided to emerge as one of Canada’s premier urban areas.

Nineteenth-century urban Halifax has been the focus of a number of examinations, due to the city’s role as a prominent commercial, political, and military centre during the nineteenth century. Examinations of Halifax’s twentieth century urban history, by contrast, have been fewer in number and have largely been dominated by the

⁶ Gilbert Stelter, “A Sense of Time and Place: The Historian’s Approach to the Urban Past” *Urban History Review*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (October 1973), p. 20.

effects and repercussions of the Explosion of December 1917.⁷ This disaster has become a topic of considerable public interest and one that has received a great degree of academic examination as well.⁸ However, the study of the 1917 Explosion has shed some much-needed light on urban planning that occurred as a direct result of the disaster, as well as on the demolition, salvaging, construction, and administration of the Hydrostone district, which was at the time the largest public housing project in Canada.⁹

The post-1945 era witnessed the rapid expansion of both urban and suburban areas and the development of an urban society within Canada cities, distinct in characteristics from rural Canada. By the mid 1960s, the growth of Canadian cities in terms of population, physical size, alteration to the natural environment and culture had created the need for serious academic examination of urban and suburban areas across Canada.¹⁰ As with many other sub-fields of historical examination, the late 1960s and early 1970s witnessed a spike in the number of publications examining urban areas in Canada, as well as the emergence of a number of academics, including Gilbert Stelter, Alan Artibise, and John Weaver, who identified themselves as ‘urban’ historians.

Gilbert Stelter and Alan Artibise have been at the forefront of Canadian urban history for the past thirty years and have identified three types of examinations within this

⁷ See: David Sutherland, “Halifax 1815-1914: Colony to Colony” *Urban History Review*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (June 1975), pp. 7-11.; Susan Buggey, “Building Halifax, 1841-1871” *Acadiensis*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (Autumn 1980), pp. 90-112.

⁸ For examples of academic examinations regarding planning and housing as a result of the Explosion of 1917, see: Weaver, “Reconstruction of the Richmond District in Halifax” pp. 36-47.; Suzanne Morton, “The Halifax Relief Commission and Labour Relations during the Reconstruction of Halifax, 1917-1919” *Workers and the State in Twentieth Century Nova Scotia*. Ed. Michael Earle (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1989), pp. 47-67.; Alan Ruffman and Colin D. Howell, Eds., *Ground Zero: A Reassessment of the 1917 Explosion in the Halifax Harbour* (Halifax: Nimbus 1994).; Suzanne Morton, *Ideal Surroundings: Domestic Life in a Working Class Suburb in the 1920s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995).

⁹ Ernest Clarke, “The Hydrostone Phoenix: Garden City Planning and the Reconstruction of Halifax, 1917-21” *Ground Zero*, Eds., Ruffman and Howell (Halifax: Nimbus Publishing Ltd, 1994), p. 406.

¹⁰ Fredrick H. Armstrong, “Urban History in Canada: Present State and Future Prospects” *Urban History Review*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (June 1972), p. 11.

field. The first is classified as *urban as entity*, studies which aim to explain the formation and growth of an urban area in terms of both its place and the people who occupy it. The second is *urban as process*, whereby the urban environment becomes an independent variable, affecting people and events within its boundaries. Finally there is *urban as setting*, where the town or city is the location for examinations of class, politics, economic development and labour and gender relations.¹¹ For the purpose of my own research, Stelter and Artibise's comments on *urban as entity* are the most pertinent. This concept defines 'urban area' as an entity, whose course is shaped by both large-scale social, political, and economic trends, as well by the decisions made by thousands of individuals. In this thesis, I will show how individuals were the driving force behind the efforts and actions of the Halifax's Town Planning Board. Stelter and Artibise emphasize that *who* made decisions regarding the planning of a city has become an important theme within Canadian urban history. Halifax's 'planning' effort was also ultimately susceptible to larger socio-economic and political trends. Stelter and Artibiste note that a sense of "place" is paramount to studies of *urban as entity* because it emphasizes the unique facets of an urban area, versus a rural area. This encompasses recognition of both the changes to the natural environment as a result of the development of an urban area, as well as the dynamics of the population living within the urban setting.¹²

¹¹ Gilbert A. Stelter and Alan F.J. Artibise, Eds. *Shaping the Urban Landscape: Aspects of the Canadian City-Building Process* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1982), pp. 2-3.

¹² Alan F.J. Artibise and Gilbert A. Stelter, *Canada's Urban Past: A Bibliography to 1980 and Guide to Canadian Urban Studies* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1981), p. xvii.

The immediate success of scientific management¹³ techniques amongst western countries enabled the emergence of a class and generation that believed these techniques could be applied to many more aspects of society, in particular to the urban realm. In his critical work, American urban planning historian Stanley Shultz referred to this as a belief in the “triumph of technology” and associated “techniques” that enabled the development of the profession of urban planning.¹⁴ The emergence of urban planning during the Progressive Era was a result of the impact of the scientific management principles and techniques that had permeated into the socio-economic consciousness of Western society through their use in industrial, commercial, and academic settings. Efficiency experts, most notably Fredrick W. Taylor, sought to utilize scientific management to restructure production in order to raise output thereby increasing wages and profits, satisfying the interests of both labour and capital.¹⁵ Though Taylorism did enable advancements in productivity through mass-production, it also led to the further decline of artisan and small-scale production.¹⁶

Largely due to the triumph of mass production and the attendant vision of limitless abundance, the principals of scientific management had a wide and profound influence in the Progressive Era.... Key among these attitudes were the perception of political conflict as irrational, a skepticism about the competence of the average citizen, and a faith in the reforming power of technical expertise and managerial skill.¹⁷

¹³ The term “scientific management” was coined by Louis Brandeis and first used by Fredrick W. Taylor in his 1911 book, see: Fredrick W. Taylor, *The Principals of Scientific Management* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1911).

¹⁴ Stanley K. Shultz, *Constructing Urban Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), pp.6-8.

¹⁵ John D. Fairfield, “The Scientific Management of Urban Space: Professional City Planning and the Legacy of Progressive Reform” *Journal of Urban History*, Vol. 20, No 2 (February 1994), p. 179.

¹⁶ For examples of examinations and analysis of the development and impact of scientific management and techniques, most notably by Fredrick W. Taylor see: Samuel Haber, *Efficiency and Uplift: Scientific Management in the Progressive Era 1899-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964).; For a labour history analysis of Taylorism, see: Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974).

¹⁷ Fairfield, “The Scientific Management of Urban Space” p. 179.

Historical geographer Richard Harris notes that during the 1930s sociologist Louis Wirth explained that the definitive urban experience was that of anonymity and this state grows with the expansion of the city. A sentiment of anonymity enables more freedom for urbanites, forcing towns and cities to enact rules to govern daily life and to create the necessary institutions to enforce them.¹⁸ Samuel P. Hays examines why people, particularly those in elite positions with certain ideas as to how society should function, have advocated for urban planning since the late nineteenth century. Hays notes that planning is a part of a means for social control; planning occurs because at least one person (though likely many others with likeminded views) want the future to evolve in a particular manner that would not be possible without planning. Since planning is a result of a desire for greater social control, values and goals are an integral aspect. Control is desired for a purpose, whether altruistic or otherwise, not just for its own sake. As a result of the link between planning and control, planning cannot be severed from institutional power. In Hays' rather cynical view, although planning and planners may emphasize goals of elegance and efficiency, the ultimate objective of planning is to maintain institutional power through attempting to shape and form the future. This is evident in urban planning where newly emerging areas of towns and cities are designated for certain functions, thereby influencing where businesses and people reside.

Hays feels that the growth and development of urban planning within North America was "intimately bound up with changes in the scale of social organization."¹⁹ Since the development of the modern urban area, the historical precedent within cities has been to replace small-scale organizations with larger ones, to incorporate and merge

¹⁸ Richard Harris, *Creeping Conformity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), p. 50.

¹⁹ Samuel P. Hays, *Explorations in Environmental History* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998), pp. 24-7.

various institutions with one another. Hays cites the institutionalization of health and education in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as prime examples of institutions which were originally organized at neighborhood and community levels, but by the turn of the century were being run at municipal or even state or provincial levels. The development of cities increasingly had to adapt to the acceleration of social change occurring within them. Individuals who spearheaded the evolution of social services were also at the forefront of ensuring towns and cities had both short and long-term aspirations for growth and development.²⁰ Fairfield deftly remarks that: “Democratic rhetoric notwithstanding, many of the Progressive Era reforms, including the professionalization of city planning, owed a great deal to a view of politics as essentially a process of social control and social management.”²¹

Stephen Bocking’s “Constructing Urban Expertise,” directly examines the role that professional and political authority played in urban planning within Toronto during the middle of the twentieth century. Though the time period examined in his article post-dates the era under examination in this thesis, the theories reviewed in Bocking’s article are nevertheless applicable. The author recognizes that some urban historians have come to regard planners as professionals who all too often “sketch utopian visions unrelated to the problems of city living,” while other historians conclude that professional planners have principally served to justify the goals of powerful political and economic interests.²²

Cities today can, indeed, be characterized as products, in part, of the exercise of experts’ knowledge and perspectives and of the political and economic authority that both derives from and reinforces their influence. It is thus of particular interest to understand how, historically, expertise has

²⁰ Ibid, pp. 28-9.

²¹ Fairfield, “The Scientific Management of Urban Space” p. 189.

²² Stephen Bocking, “Constructing Urban Expertise: Professional and Political Authority in Toronto, 1940-1970” *Journal of Urban History*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (November 2006), p. 51.

acted within the urban context, including its relation to other forms of authority. Expert ideas about the urban environments have been generated within a variety of professions and scientific disciplines, shaped by evolving political and economic priorities, within a natural environment that itself has influenced the range of possibilities.²³

In his 2004 book *Creeping Conformity*, Richard Harris notes the only level of government in Canada which enacted lasting planning and housing codes was that of the municipal.

It was only at the municipal level that governments played a significant and growing role in the way that suburbs developed. By 1914 the governments of the larger Canadian cities had instituted controls over development within city limits. Building regulations were devised in response to the threat of fire, but as reformers raised concerns about public health, by-laws also regulated ventilation, waste disposal, and noise. Cities outlawed privies and mandated the use of piped water and sewers. By the 1910s they were actually enforcing legislation.²⁴

A critical disagreement exists as to whether the motivations behind radical reformations of municipal governments were to increase efficiency and decrease patronage, or if they were aimed at strengthening bureaucratic control and restricting certain groups, such as immigrants and working-class citizens from participating in local governments.²⁵

Two essays contained in *The Canadian City: Essays in Urban and Social History* poignantly highlight the difference in opinion of urban historians regarding the role of greater reforms and controls on the part of municipal, provincial, and federal governments in the development and control of urban areas. The first essay, “Tomorrow’s Metropolis,” details the growth of municipal government during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The influence and grip of the “big city” was suddenly, according to Paul Rutherford, felt across the country as urban areas rapidly

²³ Ibid, pp. 51-2.

²⁴ Harris, *Creeping Conformity*. p.108-9.

²⁵ Alan F.J. Artibise and Gilbert A. Stelter, *Canada’s Urban Past*. p. xxiv.

expanded. The impression cities left was not a favourable one. While fast becoming the economic engine of the Canadian economy, they stimulated poverty, squalor, and vice, contributing to the deterioration of Canada's social fabric.²⁶ Public alarm was first raised over the living conditions of the working class; services such as water and electricity were needed to improve conditions for all citizens, but especially the poor. According to Rutherford, urban planning rose in prominence due to its ability to enhance the aesthetic features of a city, and more importantly because of its ability to promote sustained growth, enhanced services, and improved living conditions for all classes. A larger role for management by various levels of government was seen as a vehicle for greater control and maintenance of the increasingly dynamic needs of the rapidly growing population living within Canada's cities.²⁷

Unlike Rutherford, John Weaver, in the second article, does not take a positive attitude to the upward spike in the role of the public sector in governing urban areas during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. According to Weaver, reform measures were not always rooted in a moralistic concern for the well-being of the masses. Through enhanced planning and regulation of municipalities, the governing elite sought to control the growth and behavior of the population using the guise of improved collective morals as an excuse to enact wide-ranging reforms.

Among the long-term considerations that appeared in the implementation of reforms, the striving after ever greater growth, the erosion of personal liberty in favour of regulatory powers (weighing heavily on newcomers

²⁶ Paul Rutherford, "Tomorrow's Metropolis: The Urban Reform Movement in Canada, 1880-1920" *The Canadian City: Essays in Urban and Social History*. Eds., Gilbert A. Stelter and Alan F.J. Artibise (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1984), p. 435.

²⁷ Ibid, p. 448.

and the poor), and government by the haphazard expansion of civic bureaucracies are most prominent.²⁸

Ultimately advancements in urban areas were meant to improve the living standards of middle and upper class citizens while adding a greater degree of control over the working class by the elite.²⁹

Weaver points to housing as a prime example of elite interests ignoring the needs of the majority population in favour of their own. Publicly funded and administered housing was a means to address the lack of affordable housing for a rapidly expanding population as well as a way to improve slum conditions within cities; it appeared to be a natural fit with the moral justification for involvement. Moreover, the majority of the utilities and services found in Canadian cities were provided through the public sector, either by the municipal or provincial governments.³⁰ Unlike other utilities and services, public housing was more expensive in comparison to privately funded housing ventures. The economic benefits from private enterprise housing resulted in greater profits for land speculators, developers, construction companies, and realtors; it also resulted in much higher housing costs than many lower class Canadians could afford. Only in cases of extreme circumstances, such as the Halifax Explosion of 1917, was the government compelled to undertake public housing as the principal financial backer and employer. In most other cases, private interests were either completely responsible for housing in urban areas, or at least held a considerable degree of control.³¹ Both Weaver and Thomas

²⁸ John Weaver, "Tomorrow's Metropolis Revisited: A Critical Assessment of Urban Reform in Canada, 1890-1920" *The Canadian City: Essays in Urban and Social History*. Eds, Gilbert A. Stelter and Alan F.J. Artibise (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1984), p. 457.

²⁹ Ibid, p. 474.

³⁰ Ibid, p. 459.

³¹ John Weaver, *Shaping the Canadian City: Essays on Urban Politics and Policy, 1890-1920* (Toronto: The Institute of Public Affairs Canada, 1977), p. 38.

Gunton cite the contradiction between private and public interests in urban planning as a critical issue for urban historians of twentieth century Canada to consider.³²

Halifax was not alone amongst cities in Canada facing considerable challenges in a rapidly changing society. All over the country towns and cities faced changes as a result of urbanization and industrialization. In 1881, only Montréal had a population greater than one-hundred thousand; by 1921 seven cities had populations over one-hundred thousand, a result of immigration from foreign lands and rural Canada. Cities such as Montréal, Toronto, and Winnipeg, centrally located within Canada and serving as regional hubs, experienced the sharpest population surges during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. During the Progressive Era, Montréal experienced an acute housing shortage that continued well into the 1920s. Like other cities across Canada, Montréal's municipal government was not willing to finance public housing, preferring to continue to let private enterprise run its course.³³ Montréal also faced a crisis in public health during this time period, as it had the distinction of the highest infant mortality rate in North America. The public health issue was a result of weak provincial legislation that did not compel municipalities to enforce public health measures.³⁴

Toronto experienced a flurry of growth in both economic output and population; manufacturing and industrial sectors in the city experienced an influx of capital and matched it with a spike in production output³⁵ and a surge of one-hundred eighty

³² Ibid p. 38.; Thomas Gunton, *The Evolution of Urban and Regional Planning in Canada, 1900-1960* (PhD Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1981), pp. 9-15.

³³ Terry Copp, *The Anatomy of Poverty: The Conditions of the Working Class in Montréal* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, Ltd. 1974), pp. 70-3, 84.

³⁴ Ibid, pp. 92-3.

³⁵ Michael J. Piva, *The Conditions of the Working Class in Toronto – 1900-1921* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1979), p. 4.

thousand people during the opening decade of the twentieth century.³⁶ This was partially a result of an expansion of the municipal borders, but nevertheless presented an incredible challenge to the city to expand municipal services and authority.³⁷ Though not as severe as Montréal, housing and public health were again serious issues the municipal government needed to consider. Toronto proved to be more proactive; legislation allowed the city to guarantee the bonds of the Toronto Housing Company that in turn produced a series of housing projects. Through this system the municipal government was able to distance itself from housing concerns as the city experienced an economic downturn in the 1910s.³⁸ The city was the first in Canada to experiment with an innovative form of municipal government known as a Board of Control, with its establishment in 1896.³⁹ Toronto also attempted to manage its rapid acceleration in growth through the use of urban planning. This was met with decidedly mixed results, according to James Lemon, as the municipal political culture soured genuine attempts to implement reform.⁴⁰

Western Canada rapidly expanded during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, thanks to shifting immigration patterns and the wheat boom,. In 1871 the region's population was under seventy-five thousand and almost exclusively rural, yet by 1911 the population was well over a million people and major urban centres had been established in each province. The cities of Western Canada acted as stations for the rural network stretching across the expansive territory, providing a growing number of

³⁶ Gunton, *The Evolution of Urban and Regional Planning in Canada, 1900-1960*. pp. 5, 8.

³⁷ James Lemon, "Plans for Early Twentieth Century Toronto: Lost in Management," *Urban History Review*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (June 1989), p. 11.

³⁸ Michael J. Piva, *The Conditions of the Working Class in Toronto*. pp. 131-7.

³⁹ H.V. Nelles and Christopher Armstrong, "The Great Fight For Clean Government," *Urban History Review*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (October 1976), p. 53.

⁴⁰ Lemon, "Plans for Early Twentieth Century Toronto," p. 11.

professional services, manufactured goods, and skilled and unskilled labour.⁴¹ Most cities in Canada faced challenges in accommodating and integrating the massive influx of immigrants from outside of Canada.⁴² Winnipeg in particular was a hub for people recently arrived to Canada, as it served as the gateway to the Prairies. Between 1900 and 1913 the city swelled from a population under fifty thousand to over one-hundred fifty thousand, ranking behind only Montréal and Toronto. According to Artibise the primary concern for Winnipeg was assimilating foreign immigrants through measures such as education and social services; however the city's governing elite was focused on maintaining Winnipeg's rapid growth and did not want to finance projects that did not yield a measurable return, leading to increased tensions amongst the various ethnicities within the city.⁴³

To establish greater order and better design throughout Halifax, as it continued to expand much like Toronto and Winnipeg, the city's Progressive-leaning elite sought to reform and improve upon the existing system of municipal government. The creation of the Town Planning Board was a further manifestation of this desire on the part of the city's elite to further advance the development and expansion of the city. The minute book of the Town Planning Board provides a body of evidence upon which the activities of the Board can be assessed. An analysis of the minute book raises several key questions central to understanding the actions of the Town Planning Board itself, as well as urban

⁴¹ Alan F.J. Artibise, "Introduction" and "Boosterism and the Development of Prairie Cities, 1871-1913" *Town and City: Aspects of Western Canadian Urban Development*. Ed., Alan F.J. Artibise (Regina: University of Regina, Canadian Plains Research Centre, 1981), pp. 205-6, 209.

⁴² For greater analysis of the role of immigrants in Toronto and Winnipeg, see: Murray Nicolson, "The Other Toronto: Irish Catholics in a Victorian City, 1850-1900" *The Canadian City: Essays in Urban and Social History*. Eds., Gilbert A. Stelter and Alan F.J. Artibise (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1984), pp. 328-59.; and Alan F.J. Artibise, "Divided City: The Immigrant in Winnipeg Society, 1874-1921" *The Canadian City*. Eds., Gilbert A. Stelter and Alan F.J. Artibise pp. 360-91.

⁴³ Artibise, "Divided City" pp. 369, 379.

growth and development in Halifax overall, and the nature of municipal planning and the challenges it faced in Canada during the early twentieth century. Did the length of time it took the Town Planning Board to develop, create, and win both public approval and authorization from the Provincial government limit the effectiveness of the Board? Second, in the wake of the Explosion of 1917 did the creation of the Halifax Relief Commission to oversee the reconstruction and administration of a large portion of the City of Halifax negatively impact the authority and effectiveness of the Town Planning Board? Third, did requests on the part of the Board to vary the regulations imposed upon all municipal boards affect the authority of the Board and cast it in a negative light? Fourth, did the criticism generated by the scope of the Board's plans for the City of Halifax not only cause significant alterations in the schemes of the Board, but also create an ineffective and weak municipal organization, contributing to the Board's extended hiatus? Does the evidence contained in the minute-book of the Town Planning Board suggest that a prolonged downward shift in the economy forced a change in the focus of planning and the abandonment of the original scheme for the city?

In order to fully utilize the potential of this important source, it is critical to be cognizant of the minute book's limitations. The minute book of Halifax's Town Planning Board contains a detailed account of the resolutions put forth and the outcomes of the votes, as well as the financial accounts of the Board. It does not provide a great degree of background into the social and political climate of the time. Therefore, it is necessary to draw from other sources to gain a clearer perspective on what would have been the primary motivations for the Town Planning Board's decisions and actions. During the time of the Town Planning Board, Halifax's media was dominated by two separate and

distinct newspaper firms. The *Halifax Herald* and *Evening Mail* were owned by William Dennis and reflected a strong desire to institute civic reform, while the rival *Morning Chronicle* and *Echo* were oriented towards the commercial interests of the city.⁴⁴

Historians have also come to examine and reappraise many aspects of the history of Halifax due to the city's prominent role in World War I, the Explosion of 1917, the shift from the Progressive era to the inter-war era, and the Maritime Rights Movement.

This thesis will examine the growth and decline of Progressive era urban planning in Halifax, of which the fate of the Town Planning Board is a critical component, in five chapters. The Board's membership, process of its creation, outlined objectives, actual undertakings, and swift decline are all illustrative of a larger social transition. The first chapter summarizes Halifax's growth and examines how gradual changes in social order and the permeation of outside ideas, along with an economy undergoing rapid transition allowed for the emergence of a climate enabling rapid implementation of newly established urban planning principals. The second chapter establishes the role that the Federal Government would play throughout the decade, aiding in the creation of a comprehensive plan for Halifax through the employment of planning experts, but also dampening the appetite of many citizens for further disruption. The third analyses the Nova Scotia Town Planning Act of 1915, the key piece of legislation in the creation of the Board, and appraises the Board's membership and initial efforts. The fourth chapter analyses the role the Explosion and subsequent re-construction had in altering the course of the Town Planning Board. The final chapter examines the end of the Town Planning

⁴⁴ For additional information regarding newspapers in Halifax, see: William March, *Red Line: The Chronicle-Herald and the Mail-Star 1875-1954* (Halifax: Chebucto Agencies, 1986).

Board during the Progressive era and its potential legacy had many of its plans not been jettisoned.

In analyzing the failure of the Town Planning Board it is interesting to consider that for the majority of the past century, the people and culture of the city of Halifax and the province of Nova Scotia have been painted with a perception of being “anti-modern” due to a mythology surrounding the people of Nova Scotia and the greater Maritime region. The concept of the anti modern tradition in Nova Scotia has been shown by historians, most notably Ian McKay, to be largely fabricated and sensationalized during the mid twentieth century by many of the region’s journalists, tourists, even politicians and governments.⁴⁵ However, during the preceding generations, the actions and attitudes of many within the Province appear to have been anything but anti modern.

Though his comment was directed at the overall region, David Alexander explained: “Maritime consciousness of economic stagnation and relative decline within the Dominion of Canada only assumed the stature of certainty and reality during the 1920s.”⁴⁶ Though Halifax, Nova Scotia, and the greater Maritime region had been in a decline relative to the rest of Canada since the 1870s it took a full fifty years for the realization of that decline to sink into the greater consciousness of the population. It will be shown that prior to the 1920s the attitude of the people of the Maritimes, and of

⁴⁵ See: Ian McKay, “Tartanism Triumphant: The Construction of Scottishness in Nova Scotia, 1933-1954” *Acadiensis*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (Spring 1992), pp. 5-47; Ian McKay, *The Quest of the Folk: Anti-Modernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1994).; Ian McKay, “History and the Tourists Gaze, Politics and Commemoration in Nova Scotia, 1935-1964” *Acadiensis*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Spring 1993), pp. 102-38; Ian McKay and Robin Bates, *In the Province of Making History: The Making of Public Past in Twentieth Century Nova Scotia* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2010).

⁴⁶ David Alexander, “Economic Growth in the Atlantic Region, 1880 to 1940” *Acadiensis*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (Autumn 1978), p.48.

Halifax specifically, appears to have been one that was willing to confront a changing economy and the modernization of infrastructure necessary to compete in the marketplace of the twentieth century. Halifax's Town Planning Board was a notable manifestation of this outlook.

In 1914, the city of Halifax was at a critical crossroads in its history. Two events occurring within a span of one year, one international and the other provincial, would have a profound effect on the growth and development of the city for over a generation. The first was the outbreak of the First World War in August of 1914. Halifax profited immensely but only temporarily from the influx of soldiers, sailors, goods, and raw materials into and then out of the ports of the city, helping to create a socio-economic state within Halifax that would deflate when the War was completed, contributing to plunging the city into a sustained period of stagnation.⁴⁷ The second event that occurred the following year, 1915, would also have a critical effect on changing the city's development. This was the implementation of the 1915 Town Planning Act for the province of Nova Scotia. At the time of its passage, it was arguably one of the most advanced pieces of legislation regarding town planning in the Western world.⁴⁸ Its adoption placed a spotlight on town planning in Halifax from around the globe.⁴⁹

These two events are seemingly unrelated. One was a global conflict unparalleled in terms of cost and destruction while the other was a local, principally domestic affair of the province. The appearance of both within a year of one another, and more importantly the response to each from the people of Halifax and Nova Scotia overall, brought the

⁴⁷ Ian McKay, "The 1910s: The Stillborn Triumph of Progressive Reform," p. 205.

⁴⁸ Thomas Adams, "Housing and Town Planning in Canada" *The Town Planning Review*. Vol. 6, No. 1 (July 1915), pp. 20-6.

⁴⁹ For requests for copies of Halifax's Town Plans from foreign cities, see: Correspondence of City Clerk's Office, Halifax, 1907-1924. HRM Archives, RG 35-102.

province firmly into the twentieth century and once again drew Halifax into the international realm. The question of how Halifax specifically, and Nova Scotia overall, arrived at this critical juncture must be addressed and analyzed in order to then examine the passage and specific details of the 1915 Nova Scotia Town Planning Act, and the subsequent formation and impact of the Town Planning Board of Halifax during the late 1910s and early 1920s.

CHAPTER ONE

The Growth of Halifax – The “Progressive Era”.

The terminology “Progressive Era” has increasingly become a perplexing one for historians to employ. Originally the term was coined to denote a period in which multiple progressive institutions were established, tackling a wide-range of problems which caused social, political, and economic ills within Western society. In both the United States and Canada, issues such as conservation, public-health, housing, governmental and electoral reform, advancements in medical treatment, education, and of course, planning, were examined and improved upon during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁵⁰ However, reappraisals of Progressive Era history do not always reinforce the notion that the intentions of either the actors, or the reforms undertaken, were indeed progressive. What may have been intended as social welfare at the time could easily be interpreted by historians as a form of social manipulation.⁵¹ American historian Steven J. Diner goes so far as to offer a disclaimer when introducing the term Progressive Era: “I do not mean to imply that reform dominated all aspects of life in these years or that

⁵⁰ The Progressive era is a subject for which a voluminous amount of historical studies exist covering a range of topics and events that were central to the time period, and offering reassessment of the tenor and advancements that occurred during the era. Some of the most notable are: Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to FDR* (New York: Vintage Books, 1960).; Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967).; James G. Burrows, *Organized Medicine in the Progressive Era: The Move Towards a Monopoly* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977).; Donald K. Gorrell, *The Age of Social Responsibility: The Social Gospel in the Progressive Era, 1900-1920* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1988).

⁵¹ Elisabeth Israels Perry, “The Changing Meaning of the Progressive Era”, *OAH Magazine of History*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (Spring 1999), p. 3.

everything that happened in the period, or for that matter everything done under the banner of reform, constituted positive change.”⁵²

Another difficulty in defining the Progressive Era is establishing the beginning and end of the time period. The forces of the Progressive movement were fluid; they did not automatically start and end at the same time across both Canada and the United States. The forces and trends of the Progressive movement affected different cities and regions in different ways and at different times throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Furthermore, the social, economic, and political climate of an area played a critical role in the impact of progressive forces and the implementation of progressive measures. Broadly stroked, the Progressive Era in Canada began in the final two decades of the nineteenth century and concluded with the onset of the Great Depression. In Maritime Canada, however, the Progressive Era lasted from the beginning of the 1880s, when the region underwent considerable and rapid industrialization, until the beginning of de-industrialization and sustained economic depression in the middle of the 1920s.⁵³

Historians Arthur Link and Richard L. McCormick’s 1983 book, *Progressivism*, demonstrated that the era’s general spirit stemmed from a core ideology that informed a number of social and political causes.⁵⁴ When examining, analyzing, and interpreting the Progressive Era, the reform movements and measures that accompanied and defined the era, the central theme that links them together is a belief in change. In the words of Perry,

⁵² Steven J. Diner, “Linking Politics and People: The Historiography of the Progressive Era”, *OAH Magazine of History*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (Spring 1999), p. 5.

⁵³ These dates presuppose a reflection of economic trends as benchmarks for the beginning and ending of the Progressive era in the Maritimes provinces and Canada.

⁵⁴ Arthur Link and Richard L. McCormick, *Progressivism* (Arlington Heights, IL: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1983), p. 9.

“During this period the forces for changing the way government related to society were stronger than the forces for maintaining the status quo.”⁵⁵ For better or for worse, change across all strata of society occurred in some measure throughout the period. The Progressive movement attempted to marry the aspirations of urban North American society’s many different strata, uniting them together in a common movement to support one another for the common goal of creating a better and more equitable society.⁵⁶ Whether it was a result of technological advancements, measures of reform, improvements in bureaucratic systems, or a combination of these factors, North American society was largely transformed into what we have come to identify as “twentieth-century” by the beginning of the Great Depression. Comprehending the history of the Progressive Era is to understand and acknowledge a critical transformation in North American and indeed Western society.

Though generalizing about the Progressive Era in a North American or Canadian context is a daunting exercise, the history of Progressive Era Nova Scotia and its capital and largest city, Halifax, is defined enough to describe and evaluate. At the beginning of the Progressive Era, the city of Halifax was a leading metropolitan centre within Canada, yet by the end of the era the economic and political clout of Halifax and the overall region had plummeted in comparison to the rest of Canada. This thesis will contend, however, that the overall economic and political decline experienced within Halifax and beyond was not a result of a lack of Progressive attitudes and spirit. Although the opposite may be true – that economic decline dampened appetite for novelty and change, the organizations and the individual actors that existed in Halifax during this period

⁵⁵ Elisabeth Israels Perry, “The Changing Meaning of the Progressive Era” p. 4.

⁵⁶ Colin Howell, “The 1900’s: Industry, Urbanization, and Reform,” *The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation*. Eds., E.R. Forbes and D.A. Muise (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), pp. 155-7.

embodied many of the traits that have come to define and symbolize the meaning “Progressive,” and a considerable degree of change and reform was enacted during this period. Support for Progressive reform within Halifax stemmed from the established middle and upper classes, members of the newly emerging professional class as well as advocates of the working class and poor, allied with traditional advocates of reform, such as church groups, social organizations, and humanitarian societies. Though an important element of the Progressive movement, urban planning was by no means the first, only, or main focus of Progressive reformers. The confident tone and promising outlook of the province encouraged the Progressive movement that swept through Nova Scotia and manifested itself in a number of different areas, including education, medicine, and social morals.⁵⁷

One explanation for the strong Progressive spirit that characterized Halifax in the final years of the nineteenth century can be found in the city’s development. During the first one hundred and sixty-five years of its existence, the city of Halifax had undergone a transformation, from a community established around a military outpost and garrison, to a dynamic, highly commercial metropolis and the leading city in Maritime Canada. A consensus has been formed amongst historians of Halifax that the nineteenth century was

⁵⁷ A number of historians have examined Halifax and the greater region during the Progressive era. For notable examples of Progressive Era reform in Halifax and the region see works of: Janet Guildford, “Coping with De-Industrialization: The Nova Scotia Department of Technical Education, 1907-1930” *Acadiensis*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Spring 1987), pp. 70-84.; Henry Roper, “The Halifax Board of Control: The Failure of Municipal Reform, 1906-1919,” *Acadiensis*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (Spring 1985), pp.47-65.; Colin Howell, “Reform and the Monopolistic Impulse: The Professionalization of Medicine in the Maritimes” *Acadiensis*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Autumn 1981), pp. 3-22.; and *Northern Sandlots: A Social History of Maritime Baseball* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995).; L.D. McCann, “Staples and the New Industrialism in the Growth of Post-Colonial Halifax” pp. 47-79.; Judith Fingard, “The Prevention of Cruelty, Marriage Breakdown and the Rights of Wives in Nova Scotia, 1880-1900” *Acadiensis*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Spring 1993), pp. 84-101.; and “From Sea to Rail: Black Transportation Workers and Their Families in Halifax, c. 1870-1916” *Acadiensis*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (Spring 1995), pp. 49-64.

one of overall growth and prosperity for the city.⁵⁸ The development of the city of Halifax can be viewed in three distinct periods: The first lasted from the city's founding in 1749 as a military outpost and garrison community until the incorporation of the town in 1841. The second period lasted roughly from 1841 to 1879; in less than forty years Halifax grew from a relatively small commercial centre along the Atlantic seaboard to become an internationally important commercial and military port. The third period, from 1879 to 1914 was again one of further commercial growth and expansion for Halifax. However, these twenty-five years were beset with new challenges and ideas for the city to incorporate into the realm of civic responsibility. Despite the recent struggles of the region, at the end of *Pax Britannia* Halifax appeared to be a city emerging on the modern stage.

Halifax was founded in 1749 as a result of two important factors, one rooted in ideological ambition, the other in practicality. During the mid eighteenth century, George II was keen to expand the global reach of the British Empire. In many places at this time, particularly in North America, this meant directly challenging France's imperial ambitions. The establishment of a garrison and town along the Atlantic coast of Nova Scotia was another manifestation of the Imperial ambition of Britain.⁵⁹ The establishment of Halifax also served practical purposes for the British in Nova Scotia. Louisbourg had been returned to France the previous year. Colonists in New England feared an attack

⁵⁸ Buggey "Building Halifax, 1841-1871" pp. 90-102.; Sutherland "Halifax 1815-1914: Colony to Colony" pp.7-11.; and "The Personnel and Policies of the Halifax Board of Trade, 1890-1914" *The Enterprising Canadians: Entrepreneurs and Economic Development in Eastern Canada, 1820-1914*. Eds. L.R. Fisher and E.W. Sager (St. John's: Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1979), pp. 203-30.

⁵⁹ Stephen E. Patterson, "1744-1763: Colonial Wars and Aboriginal Peoples" *The Atlantic Region to Confederation*. Eds., Phillip A. Bucker and John G. Reid (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), p. 127.

from the French stronghold and a port along Nova Scotia's Atlantic coast would provide a counter balance and a critical staging ground to attack the French.⁶⁰ As head of the Board of Trade and Plantations, George Montagu Dunk, Lord Halifax, successfully lobbied the King for a grant to establish a Garrison town at Chebucto Harbor. The original site for Halifax was selected because the harbor was deep and did not freeze in wintertime. Selected to command the expedition was Edward Cornwallis, a well connected and career military officer. On 14 July 1749, Cornwallis took the oath as Governor of the colony of Halifax, overseeing a civil government of six councilors.⁶¹

The city, then, was planned from its inception, British Military Engineer, Captain Charles Morris completing the original layout of the town using a simple grid pattern containing blocks that were three hundred and twenty feet long and one hundred and twenty feet wide. The town square, located directly in the centre of Morris' layout, was set aside for a church and a courthouse. The town on Morris' plan was surrounded by five blockhouses linked together by a palisade. This was unsurprising given that the town had been founded to serve a military purpose and the colonists feared attack from the French and Mi'kmaq who inhabited the surrounding areas.⁶² Settlers also cleared areas outside of the fortifications as well as thoroughfares in order to facilitate the transport of goods in and out of the town. Supplies for building, such as processed timber and nails, came from New England along with provisions for the colonists. Thousands of German settlers arrived in 1750 and 1751; the colonial British government welcomed their presence to

⁶⁰ Stephen E. Patterson, "Indian-White Relations in Nova Scotia, 1749-61: A Study in Political Interaction," *Acadiensis*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (Autumn 1993), p. 29.

⁶¹ Patterson, "1744-1763: Colonial Wars and Aboriginal Peoples" p. 127.

⁶² Elizabeth Pacey, *Georgian Halifax* (Hansport: Lancelot Press, 1987), p.16.

provide a balance against the Catholic, Acadian population. By autumn, Halifax was estimated to have approximately four thousands residents.⁶³

Following the conclusion of the Seven-Years War in 1763, Halifax settled into a period of relative stability, interrupted only by the effects of the America Revolution. During the 1780s over ten thousand Loyalist refugees arrived from the United States. Though most vacated Halifax for other locations throughout Nova Scotia and beyond, Halifax experienced a commercial boom during the period of Loyalist migration.⁶⁴ Soon after the Loyalist migration had ended, the Napoleonic Wars began. Though the fighting was an ocean away, the ripple effect of a militarized society could easily be felt in Halifax, as the port became a vital station during the conflicts. Prince Edward, the fourth son of George III, was stationed in Halifax for six years, an important indication of the Crown's interest in the military post.⁶⁵ The high degree of activity surrounding the military stationed in Halifax during the latter-half of the eighteenth century again had an extremely positive effect on the local economy. As a direct result of the military presence, and the need for members of the military to be supplied, a burgeoning commercial trade sector developed in Halifax during the late eighteenth and early

⁶³ Thomas B. Akins, *History of Halifax City* (Halifax: Brook House Press, 2002), p. 36. This work was originally published in 1895 by the Nova Scotia Historical Society.

⁶⁴ The Loyalist migration to the Maritime region was complex and extensive, effecting different areas within the region. A number of different works have been produced by historians of this region analyzing various aspects of Loyalist history. For additional information pertaining to the Loyalist Migration to Nova Scotia, see: Neil MacKinnon, *This Unfriendly Soil: The Loyalist Experience in Nova Scotia, 1773-1791* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1986); W.S. McNutt, "The Loyalists: A Sympathetic View," *Acadiensis*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (Autumn 1976), pp. 3-20; Neil MacKinnon, "The Changing Attitudes of the Nova Scotian Loyalists towards the United States, 1783-1791," *Acadiensis*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Spring, 1973), pp. 43-54; Carole W. Troxler, "A Loyalist Life: John Bond of South Carolina and Nova Scotia," *Acadiensis*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (Spring 1990), pp. 72-91.

⁶⁵ Pacey, *Georgian Halifax*. p. 19.

nineteenth century, forcing changes in the layout of the city as it expanded over its first half century.⁶⁶

Halifax served as the British naval headquarters during the war of 1812, a period in which the critical relationship between the military and the commercial sector of Halifax would be strengthened. The most lucrative trade to arise as a result of the War of 1812 was privateering in the name of the British Crown. Auctions of captured goods were held along the Halifax waterfront, with many trading firms purchasing pirated goods for re-sale.⁶⁷ The Treaty of Ghent in 1815 ended the conflict and returned Halifax to a less booming, slower growing community with a much smaller influx of migrants entering and exiting the town. Unlike during previous wanes in Halifax's economic fortunes, after the War of 1812 the population grew to over fifteen thousand and the town continued to expand. Fort George, located atop Citadel Hill, was constantly undergoing renovations and in 1828 construction began on the fourth and largest Citadel. By the 1830s, farmlands south of Spring Garden Road were beginning to be expropriated and developed into distinct neighborhoods, such as Schmidville.⁶⁸

Incorporated as a town in 1841, Halifax would see an incredible amount of growth and development over the remaining decades of the nineteenth century. Halifax's growth was spurred in large part by a commercial economy based on seafaring trade, and a burgeoning banking sector, itself a product of the high volume of commerce occurring in Halifax. In addition to private interests contributing to development of Halifax, an expanding public sector at both the municipal, colonial, and later the provincial level

⁶⁶ Allen B. Robertson, "City Upon A Hill: Architecture and Identity in Colonial Halifax" *Journal of the Royal Nova Scotia Historical Society*, Vol. 2 (1999), p. 156.

⁶⁷ Akins, *History of Halifax City*, p. 166.

⁶⁸ Peter McGuigan, *Historic South End Halifax* (Halifax: Nimbus Publishing, 2007), pp. 24-30.

enabled further expansion of the city. The government constructed a number of institutions over the course of the mid-nineteenth century, ranging from courthouses and prisons to medical and educational facilities. The role of the ever-present British Military cannot be overlooked as well; the construction of the Citadel proved to be the single largest construction project undertaken to date in Halifax. A generation later, the building of the Wellington Barracks in the North End enabled further expansion for the city and cemented the British military's presence throughout the Victorian and Edwardian Eras.⁶⁹ Reconstruction and redevelopment also occurred in the downtown core and along the waterfront. Wooden buildings, which had overwhelmingly dominated the streetscape of Halifax since its founding, were slowly replaced by stone construction.⁷⁰ This further enhanced the image of Halifax as a leading commercial metropolis amongst the British colonies, and later within the Dominion of Canada.

It comes as little surprise that the first part of Halifax to develop a commercial sector was the harbor-front of the city, a result of the city's role as a commercial port. As Halifax's growth outpaced other Nova Scotian communities along the Atlantic coast, trade along Halifax's waterfront flourished. Of the merchants who grew wealthy along the shores of Halifax Harbour, the most noteworthy was Enos Collins. As the owner of privateering vessels, Collins accumulated a vast fortune during wartime. However, he made shrewd investments during peacetime and continued to expand his trading companies, in 1825 establishing the Halifax Banking Company. It was the first of many

⁶⁹ Cameron Pulsifer, "'Something More Durable...': The British Military's Building of Wellington Barracks and Brick Construction in 19th-Century Halifax" *Acadiensis*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (Autumn 2002), pp. 50-3.

⁷⁰ Bugey, "Building Halifax 1841-1871," p. 90.

banks to be chartered in the city.⁷¹ Subsequently, the mid-nineteenth century saw the establishment of a number of banks in Halifax that would go on to become some of the largest in Canada. The Bank of Nova Scotia was established in 1832, followed by the Union Bank of Halifax and the Merchant's Bank of Halifax in 1856 and 1864 respectively.⁷² Granville Street, located three blocks west of the Waterfront and well within the original core of the city, became the commercial heart of Halifax during the Victorian Era. The aforementioned banks established their head offices along the street or on a surrounding one. However, the development of the Granville Street commercial sector also owed itself to a number of fires that occurred during the late 1850s and 1860s, destroying wooden buildings and leading to their replacement with stone and brick, as mandated by the city council. The fires allowed a redevelopment of the city's commercial core and the implementation of unified streetscapes. The buildings that formed the streetscapes were at least three or four stories in height, a reflection of the confidence of the emerging city.⁷³ Halifax's banking sector would go on to play a critical role in Canada's economic future later in the nineteenth century.

As the Victorian era progressed and urban areas expanded, a social consciousness began to emerge that was increasingly concerned with the quality of urban life. This resulted in greater construction of government-run institutions, such as hospitals and schools.⁷⁴ Notable examples found in Halifax were an asylum for the insane, a hospital,

⁷¹ For Additional Information on Enos Collins, see: C. Bruce Fergusson, Ed., *Letters and Papers of Enos Collins* (Halifax: Public Archives of Nova Scotia, 1959).

⁷² Thomas H. Raddall, *Halifax: Warden of the North* (Halifax: Nimbus, 1993), p. 198.

⁷³ Buggey, "Building Halifax 1841-1871," pp. 92-3.

⁷⁴ For more information regarding hospitals for both the physically and mentally challenged, see: Stephanie McKinstry, *The Provincial and City Hospital in Halifax: A Victorian Refuge for the Poor and Destitute*. (Halifax: Mount Saint Vincent University, Honours Thesis, 1998).

and an educational institution for the blind in the 1850s.⁷⁵ This growing urbanite social consciousness went beyond a desire to develop institutions for the socially disadvantaged as greater judicial and punitive authority by the government was gradually accepted during the nineteenth century.⁷⁶ In Halifax, this resulted in the construction of a new county court house in 1858, and two penal institutions, Rockhead Prison and the county jail, constructed in 1857 and 1863 respectively. Institutional construction not only provided employment for builders, but also the need to purchase and survey land, as well as the acquisition of supplies, all of which benefitted the local economy. A firm owned by Robert Davis constructed many of the government institutions mentioned above. In a time when financing a development project was a precarious endeavor, government projects were seen as a safe option for construction firms. Fees collected from the government for the construction of public buildings were used to finance privately owned projects by construction firms.⁷⁷

Despite the thriving commercial and banking sectors, and the expanded role of government at both a municipal and colonial level, the military remained the largest single institution in the city. Construction on Fort George, atop Citadel Hill, began in 1828 and lasted over twenty-five years at an expense of over a quarter-million pounds.⁷⁸ While the construction of Fort George was an important symbol of the continued military importance of Halifax, the construction of the Wellington Barracks in the North End of the city proved to be a much more critical development in the growth of the city. A site

⁷⁵ Buggey, "Building Halifax 1841-1871," p. 90.

⁷⁶ An excellent overview of the development of professional policing in Canada during the Victorian Era is: Allan Greer, "The Birth of Police in Canada," in *Colonial Leviathan: State Formation in Mid-Nineteenth Century Canada*. Eds., Allan Greer and Ian Radforth (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), pp. 17-49.

⁷⁷ Buggey, "Building Halifax 1841-1871," pp. 90-3, 107.

⁷⁸ John Joseph Greenough, "The Halifax Citadel, 1825-60: A Narrative and Structural History," *Canadian Historic Sites*, Vol. 17 (Ottawa: Parks Canada, 1977), p. 9.

for the new barracks was selected in the Northern section of Halifax, off Gottingen Street. This was away from the downtown core but along a major thoroughfare to ensure rapid and easy access for the military personnel. Military garrisons moved into the barracks in 1860.⁷⁹

The legacy of the Wellington Barracks was not just that its construction and development were located north of the majority of the city, thereby leading to expansion in that direction; the surplus of materials also contributed to the growth and continuing redevelopment of the city. Pulsifer remarks that over the course of the construction of the Wellington Barracks many areas in other parts of Halifax, such as Granville Street and Spring Garden Road, were being redeveloped with brick buildings. The majority of the bricks used in the construction of the Wellington Barracks originated from the Eastern Shore across the harbor and a surplus of close to two million bricks became available to developers in Halifax.⁸⁰ Two of the owners of the contracting firm that built the Wellington Barracks, Henry Peters and George Blaicklock, remained in Halifax and became “master-builders.” The Wellington Barracks cemented both men’s reputation for quality in construction. Both were able to gain financial backing for privately funded projects such as houses and flats that were then sold to the public. Many of the private enterprise construction sites were located in the fashionable South end of the city, while the working class were increasingly concentrated and marginalized in the North end due to the prohibitive cost of living in other areas of the city.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Pulsifer, ““Something More Durable...”” pp. 54-6.

⁸⁰ Ibid, pp. 64-5.

⁸¹ Buggey, “Building Halifax 1841-1871,” pp. 108-10.

In the thirty years since the incorporation of Halifax, the population had doubled to over thirty thousand residents.⁸² Though the population of the city would continue to grow into the next century the economic fortunes of Halifax, Nova Scotia, and the overall Maritime region began to dwindle in comparison to other regions in Canada. The Maritime region's economic decline was not a one-dimensional downward spike, but rather a complex decline in economic prowess vis-à-vis Central and Western Canada that took place over a number of decades. As a result of the multifaceted economic transition faced by the region, the root causes and the point in time when the Maritime economic climate had permanently soured has become a point of contention amongst many historians examining the region.

Following Confederation in 1867 the strategic position of Halifax, geographically and economically, began to wane versus the rest of Canada. For decades the common perception was that industries which dominated the economy of the city, province, and region during the mid-nineteenth century, such as wooden-shipbuilding and fishing, struggled to find new markets for their products as demand from Britain collapsed.⁸³ However, historians such as Eric Sager, Lewis R. Fischer, and Rosemary Ommer have revealed that the shift, then gradual decline, in the overall Maritime economy was not as simplistic as this long-held notion. Seaward economic opportunities, such as shipbuilding and ownership, had been deeply entrenched in the Maritime economic landscape for a century and rested upon linkages throughout the North Atlantic, not just Britain.

⁸² Ibid, p. 90.

⁸³ Lewis R. Fischer, Eric W. Sager, and Rosemary E. Ommer, "Landward and Seaward Opportunities in Canada's Age of Sail" *Merchant Shipping and the Economic Development in Atlantic Canada: Proceedings of the Fifth Conference of the Atlantic Canada Shipping Project, June 25-June 27, 1981*. Eds., Lewis R. Fisher and Eric W. Sager (St. John's: Maritime History Group, University of Newfoundland, 1982), pp. 9-10.

Sager and Fischer point out these economies developed and operated independent of one another, usually controlled by a small elite within one community.⁸⁴ During the late nineteenth century, the elites of individual Maritime economies began to look inward for further opportunities, a result of the National Policy.⁸⁵

In response to the rocky Canadian economy over the course of the middle and late 1870s, in 1879 the Government of Sir John A. MacDonald instituted the National Policy for the economy. This policy was designed to add a degree of protectionism and foster growth amongst Canada's land-based economies, placing added tariffs on the importation of materials which could be procured within Canada. T.W. Acheson has argued that this policy was largely responsible for the rapid industrialization and advancement in infrastructure that occurred throughout the Maritimes during the late 1870s and early 1880s, noting that industry began to develop in areas where little or none had existed prior to the policy.⁸⁶ Halifax was able to adjust itself with relative ease into a smaller economic role than it had previously enjoyed. A considerable degree of capitalization occurred in the 1870s and 1880s, resulting in growth of the industrial and manufacturing sector of the economy. The Nova Scotia Sugar Refinery, capitalized in 1879, had a production facility constructed in the North End of Halifax.⁸⁷ Other manufacturing facilities were successful due to product specialization, such as Starr's Company in Dartmouth.⁸⁸ As a result of the high degree of industrialization, Nova Scotia's industrial

⁸⁴ Lewis Fischer, Eric Sager, and Rosemary Ommer, "Landward and Seaward Opportunities in Canada's Age of Sail," p. 10.; Eric W. Sager and Lewis R. Fischer, "Patterns of Industries of Atlantic Canada, 1820-1900" *Acadiensis*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Autumn 1979), p. 33.

⁸⁵ Lewis R. Fischer, Eric Sager, and Rosemary Ommer, "Landward and Seaward Opportunities in Canada's Age of Sail," p. 27.

⁸⁶ T.W. Acheson, "The Maritimes and 'Empire Canada'" *Canada and the Burden of Unity*. Ed., David Jay Bercuson (Toronto: MacMillan, 1977), pp.88-93.

⁸⁷ L.D. McCann, "Staples and the New Industrialism in the Growth of Post-Confederation Halifax," p. 60.

⁸⁸ Fingard, Guildford, and Sutherland, *Halifax*. p. 95.

growth exceeded all other Eastern provinces of Canada between 1881 and 1891.

However, Acheson also contends that the industrial growth spurred by the National Policy was tempered by the lack of a regional metropolis and support from within that metropolis. By the time financiers in Halifax were willing to invest within the Maritimes, Montreal had become the principal metropolis for industries located within the Maritime region.⁸⁹

Acheson's assessment of the structure of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Maritime economy has been challenged by Kris Inwood who argues that the capitalization of these industries was inadequate because the modern industries of the region, chiefly coal and steel, were unable to provide a return worthy of significant capitalization, steering investors to other options outside the region.⁹⁰ The scholarship of James Frost in his work "The "Nationalization" of the Bank of Nova Scotia, 1880-1910," seems to provide a link between the two historians' contrasting opinions. During the early 1880s the Bank of Nova Scotia provided working capital to emerging manufacturing and industrial companies in order to foster the growth of local industry. The bank invested heavily in the Nova Scotia Cotton Company, based in Halifax, as well as other companies throughout Nova Scotia and the Maritimes.⁹¹ Despite the initial optimism and investment from Halifax's banks, such as the Bank of Nova Scotia, the region's manufacturing sector struggled compared to the rest of Canada. During the early 1880s the region suffered an economic downturn, and the banking sector specifically felt pinched by a lack of cash on

⁸⁹ T.W. Acheson, "The National Policy and the Industrialization of the Maritimes, 1890-1910," *Acadiensis*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Spring 1972), pp. 3, 27.

⁹⁰ Kris Inwood, "Maritime Industrialization from 1870 to 1910: A Review of the Evidence and its Interpretation," *Farm, Factory, and Fortune: New Studies of the Economic History of the Maritime Provinces*. Ed., Kris Inwood (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1993), p. 160-1.

⁹¹ James D. Frost, "The "Nationalization" of the Bank of Nova Scotia, 1880-1910" *Acadiensis*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (Autumn 1982), p. 7.

hand, a result of “permanent investment” in industry, a growing number of commercial failures, and a lack of protection from the government in the form of an insolvency act. Following this economic crisis the Maritime banking institutions began to shift their investment and business focus to the National stage.

To take just one example, over ninety-five percent of the deposits made to the Bank of Nova Scotia in 1891 came from the Maritimes, but by 1900 that number had shrunk to a little under fifty percent. The drop in deposits corresponded to a drop in investment from the bank in the region, from two thirds to one-third of total lending by the bank.⁹² Thus while a considerable degree of industrial growth did occur during the late 1880s, the lack of capitalization from local financiers due to the poor return on investment in comparison with opportunities outside the Maritimes led to a decline in the overall economic fortunes of the region.

A considerable degree of class-segregation was visible throughout Halifax during the latter-half of the nineteenth century. While working-class neighborhoods had existed in the South end, and elegant town-houses could be found in the North end along Brunswick and Gottingen Streets, increasingly these areas became marginalized during the final decades of the Victorian Era. The lands along the western shore of the Peninsula largely remained as retreats for Halifax’s wealthy residents, meant to emulate estates surrounding cities in the English countryside.⁹³ During the final decades of the nineteenth century and the opening decade of the twentieth, Halifax’s growth pattern began to shift westward. Dalhousie University benefitted from several endowments, and an intense desire upon the part of the Board of Governors to expand the scope and stature of the

⁹² Ibid, pp. 9, 15.

⁹³ Murray B. Hodgins, *A City Transformed? Urban Development and the Role of Canadian Railway Policy in Halifax, Nova Scotia 1900-1920* (Master of Arts thesis, Dalhousie University, 1992), pp. 22-3.

institution. The establishment of a permanent and expansive campus in 1886 on the south-west corner of the peninsula spurred further development on the Western half of the peninsula.⁹⁴

The need for further space on the peninsula exposed the expansive private estates that had been established throughout the century along the Western shore of the Peninsula, extending from Point Pleasant Park to the end of the North West Arm, to the threat of development. A number of wealthy and prominent citizens of Halifax invested in the development of the “new south-end.” Despite drawing on diverse political, employment, and spiritual roots the majority of investors “held onto ideals which spun from a reinvention in modern terms of values from an earlier age.”⁹⁵ Residents aimed to create a highly fashionable residential district in the city, complete with the hallmarks of an elite community such as a set of iron gates donated by former premier Sir William Young that adorned the entrance to Point Pleasant Park. Young Avenue, as it was subsequently renamed, became protected by a provincial act in 1896, restricting the area to private residences and imposing restrictions including a minimum cost of five thousand dollars and a stipulation that dwellings had to be professionally designed.⁹⁶ The implementation of this legislation was likely done at the behest of residents in the neighborhood.⁹⁷ The establishment of the “new south-end,” and particularly Young Avenue, was a manifestation of the influence of the American-born “City Beautiful” movement. This style of planning sought to recreate cities through the elimination of

⁹⁴ Ibid.; Raddall, “Warden of the North,” p. 213.

⁹⁵ Janet E. Chute, “Halifax’s New South End, the North West Arm Land Company and a Parkland Legacy,” *Journal of the Royal Nova Scotia Historical Society*, Vol. 3 (2000), pp. 34.

⁹⁶ *An Act Respecting Young Avenue and the Miller Property*. S.N.S., 1896. Cap. 28.

⁹⁷ Hodgins, *A City Transformed?*, p. 27.

unsightly architecture and streets, replacing them with tasteful architecture, widened streets, and more parks and trees.⁹⁸

However, new neighborhoods west of the Public Commons were being occupied and needed to be included in any comprehensive plans for the growth of Halifax. The arrival of electric street-cars in Halifax in 1896 made areas along the shores of the North West Arm increasingly accessible from (and to) the downtown core of the city, encouraging commuting.⁹⁹ Haligonians from other neighborhoods would frequently venture to the shores of the Arm on weekends and holidays, as described in John W. Reagan's 1908 book, *Sketches and Traditions of the North West Arm*.¹⁰⁰ During this period, athletic and recreational clubs developed throughout the city and the most prominent, such as the Waegwoltic, were located along the North West Arm.¹⁰¹

Halifax was a city evolving during the years around the turn of the century, its population growing at a steady pace and reaching over forty-six thousand by 1911.¹⁰² However, all towns and cities within the Maritime region experienced spikes in population during this time period, as the region's urban population rose from less than fifteen percent to almost half of the Maritimes population. This change was most pronounced in Nova Scotia, the closest province to mirroring the Canadian average in terms of urban growth, as places such as Halifax and Sydney drew upon the rural

⁹⁸ For additional information on the City Beautiful movement, see: Walter Van Nus, "The Fate of City Beautiful Thought in Canada 1893-1930" in *The Canadian City* Eds., Gilbert A. Stelter and Alan F.J. Artibise (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1984), pp. 167-86.

⁹⁹ Don Cunningham and Don Artz, *The Halifax Street Railway: 1866-1949* (Halifax: Nimbus Publishing, 2009), p. 17.

¹⁰⁰ John W. Reagan, *Sketches and Traditions of the North West Arm* (Halifax: Phillips and Marshall, 1908).

¹⁰¹ Judith Fingard, Janet Guildford, and David Sutherland, *Halifax: The First 250 Years*. (Formac Publishing: 1999) p. 128.

¹⁰² Andrew Nicholson, *Dreaming of 'The Perfect City': The Halifax Civic Improvement League, 1905-1949* (Master of Arts thesis, Saint Mary's University, 2000), p. 18.

populations to support burgeoning industries.¹⁰³ Halifax's population growth over the late nineteenth and early twentieth century is tempered by the fact the city's population rank versus other urban centres in Canada dropped from fifth in 1871, to eleventh in 1921.

L. D. McCann has offered the explanation that within ten years of its introduction, the National Policy had contributed greatly to the growth of new industries and manufacturing in Halifax. However, the city could not claim superiority as the industrial and manufacturing centre of the region, as other towns and cities in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick challenged its dominance. Furthermore Halifax's role as a national economic centre diminished versus other urban areas in Canada. Of fifty-five Canadian cities with populations of over ten-thousand people, forty-eight had experienced higher rates of industrial growth than Halifax in a twenty year span between 1890 and 1910.¹⁰⁴

The process of industrialization in Halifax down to the eve of World War I thus presents a paradox. On the one hand, boosters could point to the substantial number of newly established firms and to the sizable gains in output, and could boast of the role of manufacturing as the city's leading employer. On the other, they might comment on the diminished relative importance of Halifax as a national manufacturing centre.¹⁰⁵

At the turn of the twentieth century Halifax was clearly a city whose economic fortunes had not yet been fully set. With an expanding population and an economy tepidly developing while facing rapid developments in technology and production, it was a city whose fortunes would in part depend on the spirit of its citizens to lead Halifax through the challenges facing its growth.

¹⁰³ The Carleton University History Collaborative, *Urban and Community Development in Atlantic Canada, 1867-1991* (Hull: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1993), pp. 28, 31.

¹⁰⁴ McCann, "Staples and the New Industrialism in the Growth of Post-Confederation Canada," pp. 52, 60.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

Concurrent with the larger national and international trend, the late-nineteenth century saw the emergence of a spirit of reform within Halifax. Examples of Progressivism dotted the social landscape of the city. In some cities and regions, even those close to Halifax, aspects of the Progressive movement were firmly rooted at the proletariat level with the emergence of trade unions and strikes.¹⁰⁶ In other towns and cities, Halifax included, the Progressive spirit and movement was primarily a middle-class reaction to the negative consequences of the industrial revolution including substantially higher and uncontrolled rates of immigration, rapid population growth and urbanization, rising inequality between rich and poor, deplorable housing conditions, poor working conditions and lax or non-existent safety standards, excessive liquor consumption, and ill health amongst the working classes.¹⁰⁷

Halifax had rightly earned a reputation throughout its history as a rough community with a substantial underclass and high degree of vice, fueled by the soldiers and sailors of the British military and navy. For much of the nineteenth century, many of the middle and upper class residents of the city preferred to turn a blind eye to the vice and squalor that permeated throughout much of the community.¹⁰⁸ During the middle of the nineteenth century, however, Christian morality became an issue that increasingly preoccupied a greater segment of Victorian society and this slowly began to seep into the

¹⁰⁶ For examples of Nova Scotian Progressive Era labour-history, see: Nolan Reilly, "The General Strike in Amherst, Nova Scotia, 1919" *Acadiensis*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (Spring 1980), pp. 56-77.; David Frank, "The Rise and Fall of the British Empire Steel Corporation" *Acadiensis*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (Autumn 1977), pp. 3-34.; Ian MacKay, "'By Wisdom, Wile, and War:' The Provincial Workmen's Association and the Struggle for Working-Class Independence in Nova Scotia, 1879-1897" *Labour/Le Travail*, Vol. 18 (Fall 1986), pp. 13-62.; Ian MacKay, "The Realm of Uncertainty: The Experience of Work in the Cumberland Coal Mines, 1873-1927" *Acadiensis*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (Fall 1986), pp. 3-57.

¹⁰⁷ A plethora of material is available on the subject of various, specific aspects of the Progressive movement in different cities across Canada, including: Esyllt W. Jones, *Influenza 1918: Disease, Death, and Struggle in Winnipeg*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007).; Copp, *The Anatomy of Poverty*.; Piva, *The Condition of the Working Class in Toronto*.; Lewis H. Thomas, "Saskatoon, 1883-1920: The Formative Years" in *Town and City*, Ed., Alan F.J. Artibise, pp. 237-258.

¹⁰⁸ Judith Fingard, *The Dark Side of Life in Victorian Halifax*. (Pottersfield Press, 1989), pp. 96-7.

civic consciousness of Halifax's citizenry. Organizations such as the Presbyterian Halifax City Mission, founded in 1852, exposed the depravity that existed throughout the Victorian underclass. The Halifax City Mission aided in the 1863 establishment of the Halifax Industrial School, a reformatory for wayward boys that eventually became an alternative to Rockhead prison. A Catholic counterpart, St. Patrick's Industrial School was founded in 1885.¹⁰⁹ The foundations of these institutions are early examples of civic reform that was progressive in nature.

Increasingly towards the end of the century some of the gravest of social plagues were beginning to be addressed throughout Halifax. In 1876, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty was formed to protect animals; four years later its mandate expanded to include women and children. In many cases cited by the SPC, alcohol was a contributing factor.¹¹⁰ This added credence to the burgeoning temperance and prohibition movement. The early efforts of the SPC to protect vulnerable women failed to attract a large degree of support from Halifax's middle classes that tended to focus their efforts on the welfare of children and animals. The SPC achieved early success in advocating for Provincial legislation to enable a greater degree of protection over children. Yet throughout the decade the organization was hampered by difficulty in securing funding from the province. While children were afforded a greater degree of protection through legislation, women did not receive a greater degree of protection until 1889.¹¹¹ The plight

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., pp. 126-7.

¹¹⁰ Judith Fingard, "The Prevention of Cruelty, Marriage Breakdown and the Rights of Wives in Nova Scotia" *Acadiensis*. Vol. 22, No. 2 (Spring 1993), p. 84.

¹¹¹ Fingard, *The Dark Side of Life in Victorian Halifax*. pp. 172-5.

of battered wives became a stronger rallying point for the temperance and fledgling women's rights movements.¹¹²

During the Progressive era the role played by women in society was permanently transformed through social organization and an increase in employment opportunities.¹¹³ This is not to imply that women no longer faced discrimination and marginalization following the era. In many cases, including Halifax's Town Planning Board, women were excluded from formal participation despite the prominent role women's organizations played in mobilizing support for Progressive minded reform. Yet women's advocacy organizations were central to establishing a political voice for women in Nova Scotia, a key facet of the Progressive era, and their continuation beyond the era reinforces their significance.¹¹⁴ Briefly examining the extent of the agency achieved by women's organizations in Halifax during the Progressive era provides a useful perspective on the social climate of the city, further enhancing the Progressive credentials of some of Halifax's elite, while exposing a degree of conservatism and reactionary tendencies amongst others.

One of the most notable examples of Progressive era reform found in many cities across Canada was the Women's Christian Temperance Union. E.R. Forbes has noted how the efforts of the WCTU also spurred the emergence of early feminism in Canada; as early as 1890, then WCTU president Mrs. W.W. Turnbull of Saint John stated: "men and women should stand side by side." By the middle of the 1890s Halifax had become a

¹¹² Fingard, "The Prevention of Cruelty, Marriage Breakdown and the Rights of Wives in Nova Scotia" p. 87.

¹¹³ One example analyzing the expanded role of women's employment in the region is, Shirley Tillotson, "The Operators along the Coast: A Case Study of the Link between Gender, Skilled Labour, and Social Power, 1900-1930" *Acadiensis*. Vol. 20, No. 1 (Autumn 1990), pp. 72-88.

¹¹⁴ Judith Fingard, "Women's Organizations: The Heart and Soul of Women's Activism" *Mothers of the Municipality: Women, Work, and Social Policy in post-1945 Halifax*. Eds., Judith Fingard and Janet Guildford (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), p.26.

hotbed of early-feminist reform, a common thread between cities during the Progressive Era. The efforts of the Halifax chapter of the WCTU led by Edith Archibald and a membership that included Amelia Richie, the widow of Justice Richie, and author Anna Leonowens, at first advocated for increased rights and recognition for women in society including suffrage. Their advocacy nearly succeeded in securing provincial legislation in 1893, but the bill was scuttled by the attorney general at the end of the legislative session.¹¹⁵ For their supposed deviance, the chapter experienced fierce criticism from the Roman Catholic Church in Halifax.¹¹⁶ This exposed both the increasingly active role women were forging within Haligonian society, but also the fragmentation that still remained, despite the Progressive achievements of the time.

As a result of the backlash against the overt efforts of local women to expand their rights, Archibald and company organized into a group separate from the WCTU and established the Local Council of Women in 1894. Rather than focusing exclusively on women's rights, the organization attempted to promote them under the guise of the role of mothers and through the rights of children. As feminist sentiment rose again in the opening decade of the twentieth century the Local Council of Women increasingly advocated for public health reforms. The organization pointed to the high rate of infant mortality and tuberculosis in Halifax, going so far as hiring extra nurses to care for people suffering from the disease. The Local Council of Women advocated for more space for public recreation and children's playgrounds, in addition to championing

¹¹⁵ McCann, "The 1890s" p. 152.

¹¹⁶ E.R. Forbes, "Battles in Another War: Edith Archibald and the Halifax Feminist Movement" *Challenging the Regional Stereotype: Essays on the 20th Century Maritimes* (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1989), pp. 70-1.

standard Progressive era causes such as prohibition, improved care for the sick and disabled, and the eradication of tenement housing.¹¹⁷

In addition to the growing strength of women through their active involvement in organizations such as the WCTU and the Local Council, another key facet of the Progressive era was the establishment of higher education. In Nova Scotia, this was reflected in the expansion of Dalhousie and the foundation of the Victoria College of Art and Design¹¹⁸; however in terms of the advancement of urban planning, the most significant move was the creation of the Nova Scotia Technical College. Generating engineers within the province was viewed as critical to maintaining the industrial base of Nova Scotia, still relatively robust at the time of the school's creation in 1907. The school was helmed by Fredrick H. Sexton, an American educated at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, adherent to progressive reforms including scientific management and improved education for labourers, who set the Department of Technical Education on a course as he "translated his belief in the social value of technical education into practical programs."¹¹⁹

In addition to the transforming role of women in society and the increasing recognition of the importance of access to higher education within Nova Scotia, a distinct class of professionally trained "experts" emerged during the final decades of the nineteenth century. Of the new professional class, doctors became one of the most prominent and visible groups throughout Maritime society. "Obviously, doctors considered it time for the public to follow the advice of its medical priesthood." Public health was a primary cause for the recognition of doctors as medical experts, and an issue

¹¹⁷ Ibid, pp. 76-7.

¹¹⁸ Fingard, Guildford, and Sutherland, *Halifax: The First 250 Years* p. 101

¹¹⁹ Guildford, "Coping with De-Industrialization" pp. 71-5.

doctors in the region seized upon to exemplify the importance of their advice throughout society. Increasingly, municipal and civic authorities were worried about providing clean water, proper sewage facilities, heat and electricity, and maintaining standards of sanitary conditions throughout homes and businesses to combat the worst excesses of the industrial age.¹²⁰ The concerns of Progressives over the state of public health are critical to the establishment of urban planning in the early twentieth century across Canada. Planning development, and redevelopment, particularly in urban areas, was gradually being considered a viable means of combating poor public health.

The conditions experienced in urban areas as a result of industrialization led to the reformation of municipal government and bureaucracy emerging as a key facet of the Progressive era in cities across Canada and the United States by the turn of the century. The need for municipalities to expand upon the services provided to their citizens became a driving force behind calls for reforming civic government across North America.¹²¹ The recent acceptance of utilizing scientific approaches and of applying expert consultation to government and bureaucratic systems was gaining momentum, particularly with members of the emerging professional class. In Halifax, the group primarily responsible for advocacy for both reforms in municipal affairs and to the expansion of public awareness of the importance of town planning was the Civic Improvement League. This local organization was part of a greater trend in cities across Canada. Groups of educated, professional, men (and more rarely women) were organizing themselves at the municipal level with the intention of improving the quality of life in urban areas through electoral and civic reform and the redevelopment of cities and towns through urban planning to

¹²⁰ Howell, "Reform and the Monopolistic Impulse", p. 4.

¹²¹ Rutherford, "Tomorrow's Metropolis," pp. 435-55.

incorporate more pockets of recreation and leisure space, while enabling the steady and continuous growth of industry and commerce.¹²²

With its relatively young and Progressive-leaning attitude, Halifax's Board of Trade had achieved a prominent and significant position within the community by the end of the nineteenth century.¹²³ Spurred by accounts of "City Beautiful," members of the Board of Trade were advocating for a greater role in civic improvement. On 8 November 1905, the Civic Improvement League was formed by the Board of Trade to assist with and promote the civic beautification of Halifax.¹²⁴ Though the Civic Improvement League had no legislated power at the time of its formation, it was hoped the members of the business community who served on the Civic Improvement League would be able to advocate for a progressive agenda. Members of the League were prominent professionals of Halifax, including publisher and journalist Robert Hattie, who would go on to play vital roles in the establishment of the Town Planning Board, Fredrick Sexton, Dalhousie professor D. H. Murray, noted lawyer and champion of reform Reginald V. Harris, architects Herbert Gates and Andrew Cobb, and C.F. Fraser, principal of the school for the blind.¹²⁵ Both Roper and Nicholson contend that the effort of the Board of Trade to create an organization whose specific mandate was to campaign for urban planning reform and civic beautification was a critical step to the enactment of planning legislation and the creation of the Town Planning Board.¹²⁶

¹²² Roper, "The Halifax Board of Control," pp. 46-7.

¹²³ Sutherland, "The Personnel and Policies of the Halifax Board of Trade, 1890-1914," pp. 203-30.

¹²⁴ Nicholson, *Dreaming of 'The Perfect City'*, p. 23. Andrew Nicholson's thesis provides an extensive and comprehensive examination of Halifax's Civic Improvement League.

¹²⁵ Ibid, pp. 23-4.

¹²⁶ Roper, "The Halifax Board of Control"; Nicholson, *Dreaming of 'The Perfect City'*.

Ultimately, Progressive era Halifax was not unlike many other cities across Canada and the United States that had endured a considerable degree of social hardship throughout the final decades of the Victorian era and sought to rectify some of the grossest indignities to the human condition that had been experienced. The emergence of advocacy organizations for the poor, disabled, and abused, women's rights groups, a strong and vocal professional class, public demand for better education, medicine, social service, and planning, occurred across the country. What set Halifax apart from other towns and cities was the unique, fragile, and tenuous position it held within the economic fabric of Canada, and the response from what was perceived as a traditionally conservative middle and upper class population. In a multitude of different areas the Progressive spirit fully manifested itself throughout the social fabric of Halifax's middle and upper class citizens, begging the question as to why the welfare of the majority suddenly became a critical concern. Town Planning would prove to be one of the most significant concerns for the city, producing a decidedly mixed legacy.

CHAPTER TWO

Local Enthusiasm for Urban Planning and the Needs of the Dominion, 1911-1914.

The Progressive era began with organizations such as the local chapter of the Women's Christian Temperance Union and, later, the Local Council of Women attempting to create immediate impacts to improve the moral and public health of society. The rise in a social class of "professionals" also fostered a greater public awareness and emphasis on improving society through the implementation of scientifically-tested techniques for managing business and government. Proponents of Progressive reform believed that in order to maintain and build upon their visible achievements, foresight was vital to improve society as it evolved in order to create a better future. Though members of Halifax's elite had embraced aspects of the "City Beautiful" planning trend, these techniques were used to segregate various classes of population. Gradually though, urban planning was increasingly viewed as a means to combat the gravest of social problems and achieve a greater degree of control over the proper growth and development of towns and cities.

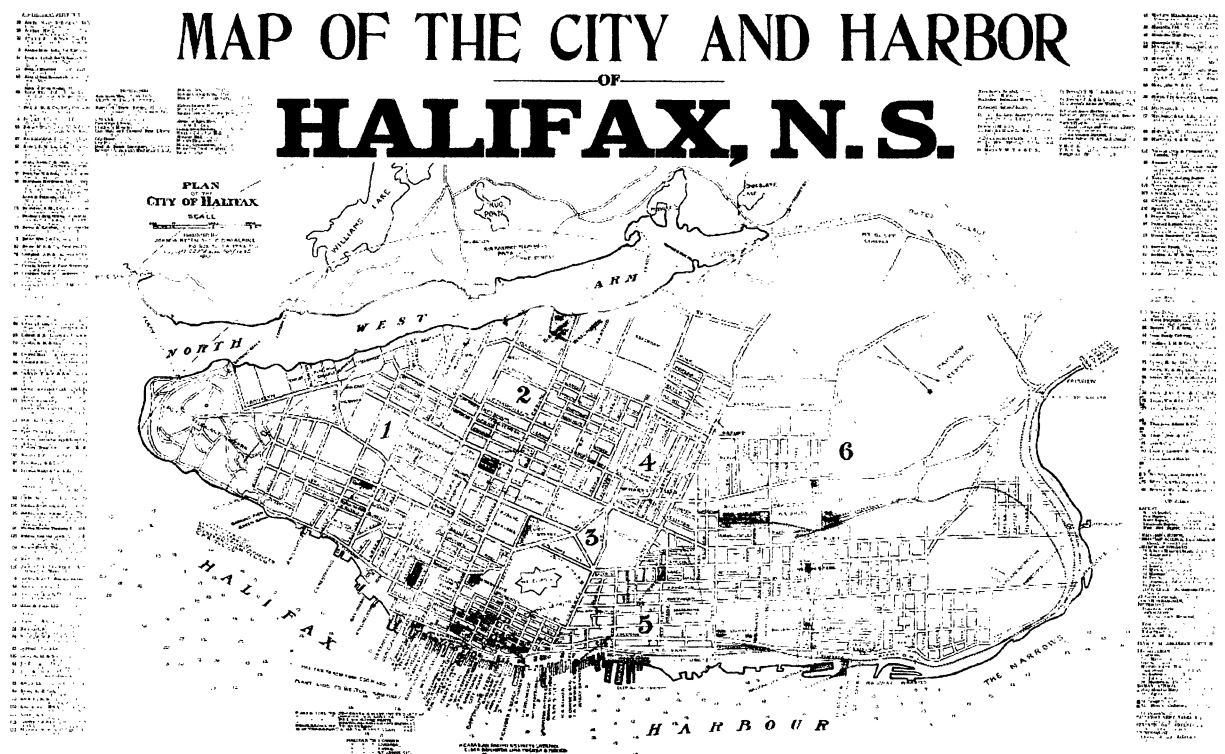
The decade of the 1910s saw some of the most dramatic advancements in urban planning within Canada. Given the overall duress residents of the city faced in regards to housing, public health, vice, crime, and immigration, both foreign and domestic, and the willingness of middle and upper class Haligonians to actively address these issues, Halifax was a city at the forefront of many advancements in urban planning during the decade.¹²⁷ Grassroots efforts to develop urban planning within Halifax had existed at the

¹²⁷ Nicholson, *Dreaming of 'The Perfect City'* p. 19.

community level since the turn of the century, while the creation of the Civic Improvement League solidified support amongst the city's elites. Through the examination of maps of the city, the changes that would occur primarily over the course of the next decade are starkly evident.

Figure One: Map – City of Halifax, 1910

The maps of the City of Halifax published by Halifax cartographers John W. Alsan and C.W. McAlpine provide a stark reflection of the changes which the city was to undergo. The 1910 map of Halifax shows a city still centered on the traditional downtown core. The various privately-owned port and dock facilities stretched from the southern end of Lower Water to Cornwallis Street in Halifax's North End, where the Royal Navy's Dockyards were situated. Barrington Street, then known as Pleasant Street, extended along the shoreline of the Halifax Harbour to Point Pleasant Park. The area upon which Dalhousie University currently sits was not indicated on the 1910 map. Far fewer streets exist in Halifax's South End. A large number of estates could be found in the South End and running along the North West Arm of Halifax Harbour, such as Rosebank, Fairfield, Belmont, The Oaklands, Maplewood, and Fernwood.



By the beginning of the 1910s, urban planning had become the primary area of concern for Halifax's Civic Improvement League. It was perceived that urban planning was the most effective means to combat the public-health problems plaguing the urban area at the time and foster a more beautiful and efficient city. In 1910, the Civic Improvement League began to sponsor lectures in Halifax, delivered by leading authorities at the time. In September of that year New England planner John Nolen gave the first lecture in Halifax. After touring the city, Nolen discussed the need for a civic "awakening." In response to this, the Civic Improvement League hosted a "Civic Revival" campaign in March 1911. Over the period of a week the League, in conjunction with other like-minded organizations such as the Local Council of Women, held public lectures on a various topics, such as public health, youth, housing, women, organized labour, civic beautification, and municipal government, all geared towards improving Halifax and linking the issues together as part of the larger Progressive movement.¹²⁸

A notable trend surrounding Halifax's "Civic Revival" was the authority placed in experts who came from outside the region. John Sewall, another notable planner who had contributed to Boston's Progressive Era "Boston 1915," plan to re-make the city by 1915, came to speak.¹²⁹ Another outside expert to speak in Halifax was Henry Harvey Vivian. A November 1911 article in the *Halifax Mail* noted that the Civic Improvement League had arranged a well-received lecture delivered by the British town planning expert. Vivian commented that Halifax had originally been planned by military engineers to serve the needs of the British forces stationed there, resulting in the haphazard design for the city one-hundred fifty years later. This trend, coupled with the growth of industrial

¹²⁸ Nicholson, *Dreaming of 'The Perfect City'* pp. 44-5.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

and manufacturing sectors, and the absence of legislation protecting the citizens of the province, had resulted in the emergence of working-class neighborhoods located adjacent to heavy industry. Rather than focusing on improving existing areas, the article called for ensuring future developments did not make the same mistakes.¹³⁰

Some members of the Civic Improvement League such as Robert M. Hattie had been avidly campaigning for a more active role in urban planning for some time. Born in Westville, Pictou County, in 1876, Hattie moved to Halifax to attend Dalhousie University and upon graduation began a career in journalism. After working for the *Atlantic Weekly* and *The Halifax Chronicle*, Hattie established *The Maritime Merchant* in 1900 and worked as its editor in some capacity for fifty years. His obituary highlights his service as a City Councilor in 1912 and 1913 and claims “for many years he was a driving force for town planning in the city of Halifax.”¹³¹

A 1912 article in the *Halifax Herald* offers an example of Robert Hattie’s dedication to civic improvement and beautification. At his own expense Hattie, whom the paper referred to as the “father of the Civic Improvement League,” paved the sidewalk outside his house on Henry Street, rendering a “splendid service to his fellow citizens in his efforts to beautify the city and to urge others to do the same.” The tone of the article is very supportive of Hattie’s actions in regards to his own property, but even more so for progressive reform and civic improvement and beautification.

Every man and woman and boy and girl should have a natural pride in making Halifax more beautiful and helping to keep it so. And every respectable and thoughtful citizen should resent the destruction of the public grass and the sidewalks by the more thoughtless or malicious just as

¹³⁰ “Talk of Town Planning in Halifax, There Has Been None Since 1749,” *Halifax Mail*, 17 November 1911, p. 8.

¹³¹ “R.M. Hattie Passes Away,” *Halifax Mail-Star*, 7 April 1953, pp. 1, 6.

they would represent the destruction of their own personal property. Let us generate a civic spirit.¹³²

The article even calls for vandals to be taught good citizenship through “the strong arm of the law.”¹³³

One particular and important outcome stemming from the discussions and lectures that occurred as part of “Civic Revival” week was the desire to infuse a strong degree of Progressive reforms into Halifax’s system of municipal government. Since its incorporation Halifax had been governed by an aldermanic system of government and mayor, elected annually by the rate payers. However by the 1910s many of Halifax’s business elite were becoming increasingly dissatisfied with perceived ineffectiveness within the municipal government and its bureaucratic systems, due to an inability to encourage commercial growth and adapt to modern systems of government and bureaucracy. A “Board of Control” was perceived to be the most acceptable solution to the problems surrounding municipal government; this was a form of municipal government whereby a handful of professionally-designated, paid municipal servants were elected bi-annually to work alongside the regular City Council to ensure an efficiently managed municipality.¹³⁴ The Board of Control would replace the twenty-some committees such as the Board of Works and the police commission with their directives.¹³⁵ The creation of the Board of Control was an example of Halifax’s Progressive elite looking outside the region for innovative solutions, as the system was

¹³² “Object Lesson in Beautifying the Streets Given by Public Spirited Citizens,” *The Halifax Herald*, 5 September 1912, p. 2.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ For additional information on the history of Halifax’s experiment with a Board of Control, see: Roper, “The Halifax Board of Control,” pp. 46-65.

¹³⁵ Nicholson, *Dreaming of ‘The Perfect City’*, pp. 70-1.

first utilized in Toronto.¹³⁶ Much like the Civic Improvement League, the Board of Control had been championed by members of the Board of Trade, most notably Robert Hattie and Reginald Harris, who ran for City Council in 1911 and 1912 respectively, in part to ensure the council would accept a Board of Control. A campaign advocating for the implementation of a Board of Control began in 1910 and legislation was passed in 1912, although it was not until elections the following year that the Board was implemented.¹³⁷

Though it would pale in comparison to the landmark legislation which would arrive a few years later, the 1912 Nova Scotia Town Planning Act was still a notable achievement and one worthy of some further discussion. The Nova Scotia Planning Act of 1912 was similar to one enacted in Britain three years before. Though it did not make the establishment of town planning boards mandatory for incorporated municipalities, it offered the possibility for municipalities and private landowners to take advantage of planning regulations if they so desired.¹³⁸ Furthermore, the legislation was not retroactive, meaning it did not apply to existing structures. Were a town to create a planning board, however it enabled the boards to take a more active approach in the management of properties, both vacant and occupied.¹³⁹ Halifax quickly embraced this option, a measure that at the time was described by the influential Commission of Conservation as the first of its kind by a Canadian municipality.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ For a general examination of attempts to reform municipal government throughout Canada, see: Nelles and Armstrong, "The Great Fight for Clean Government," pp. 50-66.

¹³⁷ Roper, "The Halifax Board of Control," p. 47.

¹³⁸ *An Act Respecting Town Planning*. S.N.S. 1912. Cap. 2. Sec. 1.

¹³⁹ *An Act Respecting Town Planning*. S.N.S. 1912. Cap. 4.

¹⁴⁰ Commission of Conservation of Canada, "The First Canadian Town Planning Regulations" *Conservation of Life*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (August 1914), p. 14.

The following year, Robert Hattie delivered a paper under the auspices of the Civic Improvement League to the Nova Scotia Technical College. Entitled “A Comprehensive Plan: The First Step to Civic Improvement,” this paper was aimed at the emerging professional class of Halifax, urging the importance of urban planning that would naturally lead to a more beautiful and harmonious city. Halifax, according to Hattie and the Civic Improvement League, was at the optimal point in its growth for city planning, with a population fewer than one-hundred thousand. “When the development of each section proceeds independently, with no general scheme and no regulations of any sort,” Hattie argued, “the result is that confusion with which we are all so familiar – of which sufficient instances are to be found in our city.”¹⁴¹ Rightly predicting that Halifax would eventually expand beyond the Northwest Arm, Hattie argued that the North End would benefit the most from a comprehensive city plan and he strongly emphasized the role that the newly-legislated Nova Scotia Town Planning Act could play in the continued growth of the city.¹⁴²

While calls for urban planning were occurring on a localized scale by the beginning of the 1910s, it took a few more years and an indirect route for the Government of Canada to begin to examine urban planning on a national scale. The founding of the Commission of Conservation of Canada was a landmark step taken by the Liberal government of Sir Wilfred Laurier in 1909 to establish an organization that would make recommendations on the management and conservation of both the natural and

¹⁴¹ Robert M. Hattie, “A Comprehensive Plan: The First Step in Civic Improvement” Presented to: Civic Improvement League, Assembly Hall at Nova Scotia Technical College, 7 January 1913, p. 1. NSARM, V/F 114, No. 3.

¹⁴² Ibid, p. 8.

human environments.¹⁴³ Founded at the height of the Progressive era, the Commission of Conservation took a multi-faceted approach to the maintenance of the natural environment through better management of the forestry industry, the promotion of public health initiatives in cities, and the hiring of outside consultants for planning in both urban and rural settings. The establishment of the Commission was a rarity in politics, firmly supported by both the Liberal and Conservative parties.¹⁴⁴ This was a result of the inability of the Commission to make binding recommendations due to the powers of the individual provinces.¹⁴⁵

Laurier selected Clifford Sifton to head the Commission of Conservation. Born in Ontario, Sifton was raised in Manitoba where he first served as an M.L.A. prior to being elected M.P. in 1896. That same year he was appointed Minister of the Interior by Laurier, a position he would hold until 1905. His reputation as a staunch supporter of conservation efforts, experience in both domestic and international conservation affairs, and overall appeal to those of varying political stripes made his selection a logical choice for Laurier.¹⁴⁶ At the time of the Commission's foundation, those who advocated protecting the natural environment did so not for preservation, preserving nature for its own sake and for future generations; rather, they were concerned with conservation, promoting efficient use and development of natural resources for economic gain.¹⁴⁷ Sifton felt that environmental conservation and economic growth in Canada were

¹⁴³ Alan H. Armstrong, "Thomas Adams and the Commission of Conservation" in *Planning the Canadian Environment*, Ed., L.O. Gertler (Montréal: Harvest House, 1968), p. 18.

¹⁴⁴ R. Peter Gillis and Thomas R. Roach, "The American Influence on Conservation in Canada: 1899-1911," *Journal of Forest History* Vol. 30, No. 4 (October, 1986), p. 173.

¹⁴⁵ D. J. Hall, *Clifford Sifton, Volume 2: A Lonely Eminence* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1981), p. 239.

¹⁴⁶ R. Peter Gillis and Thomas Roach, "The American Influence on Conservation in Canada," p. 173.

¹⁴⁷ Hall, *Clifford Sifton*, p. 237.

intrinsically linked to one another.¹⁴⁸ He also felt strongly that conservation of the natural environment was also viewed as key to enabling a better urban environment.

By application of utilitarian theory, scientific research, some government regulation, and moral suasion, it was thought that the machinery of society and government could be cleansed and renewed, while corruption, slums, greed, and waste were controlled or eliminated. A clean, productive, natural environment was essential for the proper functioning of the social-particularly the urban-environment.¹⁴⁹

Though the Commission of Conservation had originally been established to manage the natural resources of Canada, such as forests and minerals, the mandate of the Commission soon expanded to include the human and urban environments. Sifton selected Dr. Charles A. Hodgetts, a member of the Ontario Board of Health, to chair the Commission's efforts to improve public health across Canada.¹⁵⁰ Having been a former health inspector during the late nineteenth century, Hodgetts had encountered first-hand some of the deplorable conditions found in late nineteenth and early twentieth century urban Canada.¹⁵¹ During his tenure with the Commission he was a crusader against the proliferation of slums, declaring: "The slums should be attacked and abolished because they are the great enemy to the home, which is the foundation of the State."¹⁵² Furthermore he also felt it was the responsibility of the Government of Canada to ensure that a strong, uniform public health code existed across Canada.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁸ Thomas L. Burton, *Natural Resource Policy in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, Ltd. 1972), p. 31.

¹⁴⁹ Hall, *Clifford Sifton*, p. 237.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ For more examples on living conditions amongst the poor in late Victorian era urban Canada, see: Piva, *The Condition of the Working Class in Toronto, 1900-1921*; Copp, *The Anatomy of Poverty*; Fingard, *The Dark-Side of Victorian Halifax*.

¹⁵² Charles A. Hodgetts, "Unsanitary Housing," *Commission of Conservation Canada: Second Annual Report* (Montréal: John Lovell and Son, Ltd., 1911), p. 51.

¹⁵³ Ibid, p. 66.

Hodgetts believed a strong link existed between speculative and haphazard land use, and the proliferation of slums. He was the first leader of the Commission of Conservation to emphasize that planning, in rural, town, and urban settings, could be utilized to combat the creation and abundance of slums, thereby dramatically improving public health.

Going a step or two further, I would say no government can justify its existence unless it carefully considers this important question and places upon the statute book a law with ample and adequate regulations for dealing with unsanitary houses of all classes of the community and for conferring power on city, town, and village municipalities whereby they may not only control, but in a measure direct town and suburb planning.¹⁵⁴

Hodgetts' zeal for town planning as a cure for social ills influenced Sifton to lobby Scottish-born, internationally-acclaimed town planner Thomas Adams to accept an advisory role with the Commission. Born in Edinburgh in 1871, Adams rose to prominence working as Secretary for First Garden City Ltd., which founded the English "Garden City" of Letchworth in 1903.¹⁵⁵ In 1914, after prolonged negotiations, Adams agreed to serve as an advisor to the Commission of Conservation, a position he would hold until the Commission's demise in 1921.¹⁵⁶ Serving in an advisory capacity as an urban-planning expert for the Commission of Conservation, Adams is perhaps best recognized for his work in planning the 'Hydrostone' district in Halifax, immediately following the 1917 Explosion.¹⁵⁷ However, the scope of his influence on the direction of

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, p. 54.

¹⁵⁵ For a comprehensive examination of the life and work of Thomas Adams, see: Michael Simpson, *Thomas Adams and the Modern Planning Movement*, (New York: Mansell Press, 1985). For more in depth focus examining the "Garden City" movement, see: Stanley Buder, *Visionaries and Planners: The Garden City Movement and the Modern Community*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).; Standish Meacham, *Regaining Paradise*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).; and Peter Batchelor, "The Origin of the Garden City Concept of Urban Form" *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*. Vol. 28, No. 3 (October 1969), pp. 184-200.

¹⁵⁶ Hall, *Clifford Sifton*, p. 257.

¹⁵⁷ Weaver, "Reconstruction of the Richmond District in Halifax," pp. 36-47.

urban planning in Halifax during the 1910s predated the Explosion and would stretch far beyond this one, localized project.

The contracting of Thomas Adams for urban planning in various towns and cities across Canada by the Commission of Conservation can be seen as a turning point in the growth of urban planning in Canada. Thomas Gunton wrote that Adams held that “the application of scientific management involved firm government intervention to protect the public good against individual greed.”¹⁵⁸ Adams believed that Canada’s vast physical territory was the country’s most neglected yet greatest natural resource. He advocated not only for urban planning, but also for rural “planning” emphasizing the special relationship between the two and for comprehensive planning and cooperation at all levels of government.¹⁵⁹ In order to enable proper planning of cities, towns, and rural areas, Adams staunchly championed the elimination of land speculation. Lax controls on the sale and development of land by the government in the past had led to absentee landlords, inflated land and home values, overcrowding, poor living conditions, and poor public health.¹⁶⁰ At the time of his hiring, the recent efforts in fostering the development of a planning culture in Halifax and the introduction of provincial legislation addressing town planning in 1912 had impressed Adams, who emphasized in *The Town Planning Review* “[that] the powers given under the provincial act and the Halifax City Charter provide, together form the most advanced legislation in the Dominion.”¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁸ Gunton, *The Evolution of Urban and Regional Planning in Canada, 1900-1960*, p. 104.

¹⁵⁹ Thomas Adams, *Rural Planning and Development: A Study of Rural Conditions and Problems in Canada* (Ottawa: Commission of Conservation, 1917).

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, pp. 104-115.

¹⁶¹ Thomas Adams, “Town Planning in Canada,” *The Town Planning Review*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (July 1915.), p. 20.

The biggest man-made, intentional, physical alteration to the Halifax peninsula during the early twentieth century was the construction of the railway cut through the city's South End, an event that would trigger the first signs of hostility towards urban planning by a handful of Halifax's residents. The rail cut was engineered to transport freight to and from the new Ocean Terminals Seaport facilities located at the southern edge of the peninsula, bordering Point Pleasant Park. Though the rail cut was absolutely necessary for the new facilities and supported by the majority of the population, it was disliked by many of the residents west of Robie Street who would be subjected to the noise and pollution caused by trains each day.¹⁶² Plans for the new port were originally unveiled by the Liberal Government of Sir Wilfred Laurier in 1911, and a considerable degree of funding was announced by the Conservative Government of Robert L. Borden the following year.¹⁶³

Borden was a native of Grand Pré, Nova Scotia and longtime Member of Parliament for Halifax, prior to becoming Prime Minister. The city had served as the site for the unveiling of the Conservative Party's "Halifax Platform" in 1907, a number of highly progressive policies intended to set Borden's Conservatives apart from the Laurier's Liberal Party, as well as counter the chief issue of the day, reciprocity,¹⁶⁴ with a considerable investment in the modernization of the infrastructure of the Canadian

¹⁶² For an extensive examination of the effect of the Canadian Railway Policies of the Federal Government of Canada and their effect shaping the urban development of Halifax, see: Murray B. Hodgins, *A City Transformed? Urban Development and the Role of Canadian Railway Policy in Halifax, Nova Scotia 1900-1920* (Master of Arts thesis, Dalhousie University, 1992).

¹⁶³ "Facts About the New Pier No. 2," *The Nova Scotian*, 5 September 1913, p. 12.

¹⁶⁴ Promoted by the Liberals as an alternative to the National Policy of John A. MacDonald's Conservatives during the late nineteenth century, reciprocity would have banned tariffs on natural resources exchanged between Canada and the United States. In theory, this would open up larger markets for Canadian exporters and allow for cheaper importation of American goods. Reciprocity remained a consistent economic policy issue in Federal elections well into the twentieth century. For a detailed account the reciprocity issue and Canadian economic trade, see: Michael Hart, "Reciprocity and Preferences: Early Nationhood" in *A Trading Nation: Canadian Trade Policy from Colonialism to Globalization* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2002), pp. 45-84.

economy. The Halifax Platform contained, amongst other policies, one specifically aimed at the development of port facilities, urging: “The development and improvement of our national waterways, the equipment of national ports, the improvement of transportation facilities and consequent reduction of freight rates between the place of production and the market, whether at home or abroad, and the establishment of a thorough system of cold storage.”¹⁶⁵ Though Borden lost the federal election of 1908 to Laurier, the Conservatives defeated the Liberals in the following election held in September of 1911. This set in motion not only the construction of new port facilities in Halifax, but considerable investment at the federal level of government.

In October of 1912, Frank Cochrane, Minister of Railways, arrived in Halifax to meet with local officials regarding Halifax’s port facilities.¹⁶⁶ His presence in the city was an indication of the importance of the project to the Borden Government. On 31 October 1912, *The Halifax Herald* reported Cochrane’s funding announcement for the new facilities. The Borden Government was committing thirty million dollars to the construction of the seaport and railway. In his speech, which was reprinted by the newspaper, Cochrane emphasized the need for improved port facilities to enable better exporting and importing of goods. The site that was selected for the facilities was deemed the only one acceptable in the harbour, due to the protection of Point Pleasant Park, its accessibility, and central location.¹⁶⁷ The Member of the Legislative Assembly for King’s County felt the construction of the new facilities would directly benefit all areas of the province, citing the apple industry in his home riding. In response, echoing Cochrane’s

¹⁶⁵ Robert Laird Borden, *Robert Laird Borden: His Memoirs, Volume I: 1854-1915*, Ed. Henry Borden (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, Ltd. 1969), p. 84.

¹⁶⁶ “Hon. Frank Cochrane in Halifax to Inspect Railway and Ocean Terminals,” *The Halifax Herald*, 29 October 1912, p. 1.

¹⁶⁷ “Hon. Mr. Cochrane’s Announcement,” *The Halifax Herald*, 31 October 1912, p. 1.

belief that the facilities would improve transportation and shipping, Member of Parliament F.B. McCurdy thanked the minister for the funding announcement, pledging that the new port and railway would return Halifax and Nova Scotia to the economic heyday of Samuel Cunard and Enos Collins.¹⁶⁸

Cochrane closed with a statement intended to galvanize the business community in Halifax to rally around the development of the new facilities stating,

I am persuaded that every citizen of Halifax, after giving careful consideration to the proposed plans and recognizing the engineering difficulties, will conclude that we have dealt with the problem in a wise and courageous way. Halifax must share in the marvelous growth of Canada. The Government has shown faith in its future and has undertaken its share of the burden necessary to expansion. The enterprising businessmen of this city will now be encouraged and will not shrink from doing their share.¹⁶⁹

It is telling that the Minister of Railways alludes to the difficulty in selecting a site that would best suit the needs of business and industry, without permanently changing the character of the city. The newspaper notes that a number of properties along Pleasant Street (now Barrington) would have portions of, if not the entire lot, expropriated to make way for the facility.¹⁷⁰ Though the route of the railway was mentioned, the newspaper did not write of any property expropriation regarding its construction until a few days after the major announcement, on the 4th of November, 1912. *The Halifax Herald* reported that the government had purchased property south of Jubilee Road to accommodate the new railway cut and would be developing several acres beyond the necessary work for the implementation of the railway line.¹⁷¹ Sensing the apprehensions of many property

¹⁶⁸ "Hon. R. L. Borden's Splendid Work For Halifax," *The Halifax Herald*, 31 October 1912, p. 2.

¹⁶⁹ "Hon. Mr. Cochrane's Announcement," p. 1.

¹⁷⁰ "The Civic Assessment on the Properties Affected by the Terminals," *The Halifax Herald*, 31 October 1912, p. 2.

¹⁷¹ "The Route of the New Terminal Line," *The Halifax Herald*, 4 November 1912, p. 2.

owners along the Arm the newspaper reported that, "Every precaution will be observed in construction and operation along the Arm slope to preserve the natural beauty and quiet of this residential section. Extensive railway and shunting yards have been acquired in the South End."¹⁷²

Soon after Cochrane's announcement, the effect of the new facilities on the city's make-up became a highly contested topic within the city. The majority of letters sent to *The Halifax Herald* appear to be in favour of the new facilities, claiming that the economic future of Halifax is dependent on their construction and their operation would offer benefit to all Haligonians. "The future of the city depends to a very great extent upon the question of transportation by sea and land, and in this connection of course our railway terminals and shipping facilities are of paramount importance."¹⁷³ However, this is not to imply that no opposition existed to the construction of the seaport and railway line. Many did not wish to see the scenic beauty of the North West Arm disrupted by the seaport and railway. One reader wrote, "The quietude of the staid south end should not be marred even to meet the demands of modern commerce."¹⁷⁴

In September of 1913, *The Nova Scotian* published a detailed article exalting the features and importance of the new Pier to Halifax, Nova Scotia, and Canada overall. Construction had begun on the 2nd of January, 1913 and by September of that year over sixty percent of the facility had been completed.¹⁷⁵ The newspaper reported that the facility was the largest in Canada, east of Montreal. Furthermore, it was one of the most

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ "The Development of Transportation in Halifax Helps All Round," *The Halifax Herald*, 18 November 1912, p. 3.

¹⁷⁴ "Why Disturb Those Who Slumber in Peace? Other Places Good as Halifax for Terminals," *The Halifax Herald*, 17 November 1912, p. 3.

¹⁷⁵ "Facts About the New Pier No. 2," *The Nova Scotian*, 5 September 1913, p. 12.

advanced facilities in North America and would enable Nova Scotia to compete for trade with other, larger cities along the Eastern Seaboard, specifically Boston. However, the new facility was not intended solely for commercial interests. An immigration shed was being constructed, with a capacity to process up to three thousand people at a time seeking entry into Canada. Echoing the confident tone found in many of the articles in *The Halifax Herald*, an attempt to emphasize the benefits of the new facilities is evident in the article found in *The Nova Scotian*.¹⁷⁶

While the initial tone regarding the construction of the Seaport facilities and railway line was positive, once construction began the reaction of residents was mixed. Just over one year after construction had commenced, residents were already petitioning the Board of Control and City Council for relief from the construction. An article in the March 25th, 1914 edition of *The Morning Chronicle* described the disruptions residents in the South End faced while the installation of the facilities was underway. City Engineer F.W.W. Doane reported that an interruption in residents' water service would be unavoidable, though he suggested a pipe laid on the surface would be able to provide water during periods when construction, including blasting through the bedrock, was not occurring.¹⁷⁷ Furthermore, residents of Young Avenue were using the construction of the facilities as a means to petition the city for a sidewalk as a means of improving the street and raising property values. Two residents, W. A. Black and Michael Dwyer, argued that the construction of the facilities had a detrimental effect on their property values, in addition to many property owners losing land to expropriation, and disruptions caused by

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ "Young Avenue Property Values Have Depreciated," *The Morning Chronicle*. 25 March 1914, p. 4.

the project.¹⁷⁸ This article is significant because it shows not all residents were pleased with the railway cut and many regarded it as a disruption and hindrance to their property values, a harbinger of the resistance urban planners and civic officials would face to further development in Halifax's South End.

The tone and demeanor of Hodgins' analysis of the impact of the railway cut through the South End reinforces the comments and concerns voiced by citizens in the local dailies. Business interests in Halifax had been advocating for decades that the government needed to upgrade the transportation infrastructure of Halifax in order for the city to remain competitive with other port cities along the Atlantic coast. With the introduction of Borden's National Policy, the desire for much needed upgrades for Halifax's port was tempered by the sacrifice that would be required by constructing the railway cut.¹⁷⁹ The implementation of the railway cut alongside the shores of the North West Arm opened the area to further development and modernization. This occurred during a precise window of a mere few years when the aspirations of citizens and civic officials, the legislative efforts of the provincial government, the funding of the federal government, and the patronage of international experts combined to produce a startling plan for the growth and development of Halifax. While it was principally a project funded and managed by the Government of Canada, the railway cut did provide the first major, physical transformation of the city's South End in the twentieth century. This project provided an important degree of credence to calls for radical changes to the urban design of Halifax's South End and the city overall.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Hodgins, "*A City Transformed?*," p. 149.

CHAPTER THREE

The Zenith of Urban Planning in Halifax, 1915-1917.

When the Town Planning Board of Halifax was first created, a direct result of the enforceable measures contained in the 1915 Nova Scotia Town Planning Act, the movement to foster urban planning within Halifax had already reached a crescendo. No longer was “urban planning” a concept only familiar to academics, engineers, and architects. Urban Planning had received widespread attention throughout the city, whether through newspaper articles, outside experts, or public lectures. It was a concept that had been embraced and harnessed by members of Halifax’s business community, politicians, and citizens concerned with the overall health of Halifax’s population. The practice of Urban Planning, its implementation, was quite a different process from merely hypothesizing what could be done with the realization of a plan. Halifax’s governing elite, so concerned with the potential that an urban plan offered the city, would soon encounter why other cities, such as Toronto, experienced difficulty in implementing urban plans.¹⁸⁰

Extensive plans for the urban development of Halifax predate the formation of the Town Planning Board by one year. The official civic plan from 1915 captures Halifax on the cusp of its development. The railway cut is prominently marked on the map, however Connaught Avenue does not appear, and many of the large lots along the North West Arm appear still to be intact.

¹⁸⁰ Lemon, “Plans for Early Twentieth Century Toronto,” p. 11.

Figure Two: Plan – City of Halifax, 1915



HRM Archives. RG-35-102 Ser. 1B, No. 88.

As early as March of 1915, public consultation between property owners and the municipality had begun regarding the establishment of residential areas.¹⁸¹ This was a central issue to urban planners during the early twentieth century, and one that concerned Thomas Adams in his position as a consultant for the City of Halifax. In March of 1915, in a detailed letter addressed to the Board of Control, Board of Trade, and Civic Improvement League, Adams addressed the need to strike a balance between residential zones and those of commercial and industrial, or mixed use.¹⁸²

Having attended meetings between officials and viewed the site himself, Adams believed the pressing, localized issue to be whether to zone the portion of land between Quinpool Road and Chebucto Road as residential. As he reported, “I am of the opinion that if an area is to be restructured it should at least include the land between Quinpool and Chebucto as this forms a very fine residential district overlooked by many cities on which good residences have already been erected. These houses and others which are likely to be erected could be greatly depreciated if a factory or factories of any kind were to be erected in the amphitheatre round the head of the Arm.” Adams also states that, despite this recommendation, he does not want to impede or limit commercial and industrial interests.¹⁸³ Later in the decade, under the express authority of the Town Planning Board, this area of the city would become a planned subdivision known as Westmount.

¹⁸¹ Advertisement - Re: Town Planning, 16 March. 1915. HRM Archives. RG 35-102 Ser. 1B, No. 89.

¹⁸² Thomas Adams. Letter to Board of Trade, Board of Control, and Civic Improvement League, c/o R.M. Hattie, 6 March 1915. HRM Archives. RG 35-102 Ser. 1B, No. 87.

¹⁸³ Thomas Adams. “Town Planning - Residential District” 4 March 1915. HRM Archives. RG 35-102 Ser. 1B, No. 87.

Figure Three: Proposed Residential District – Thomas Adams, 1915

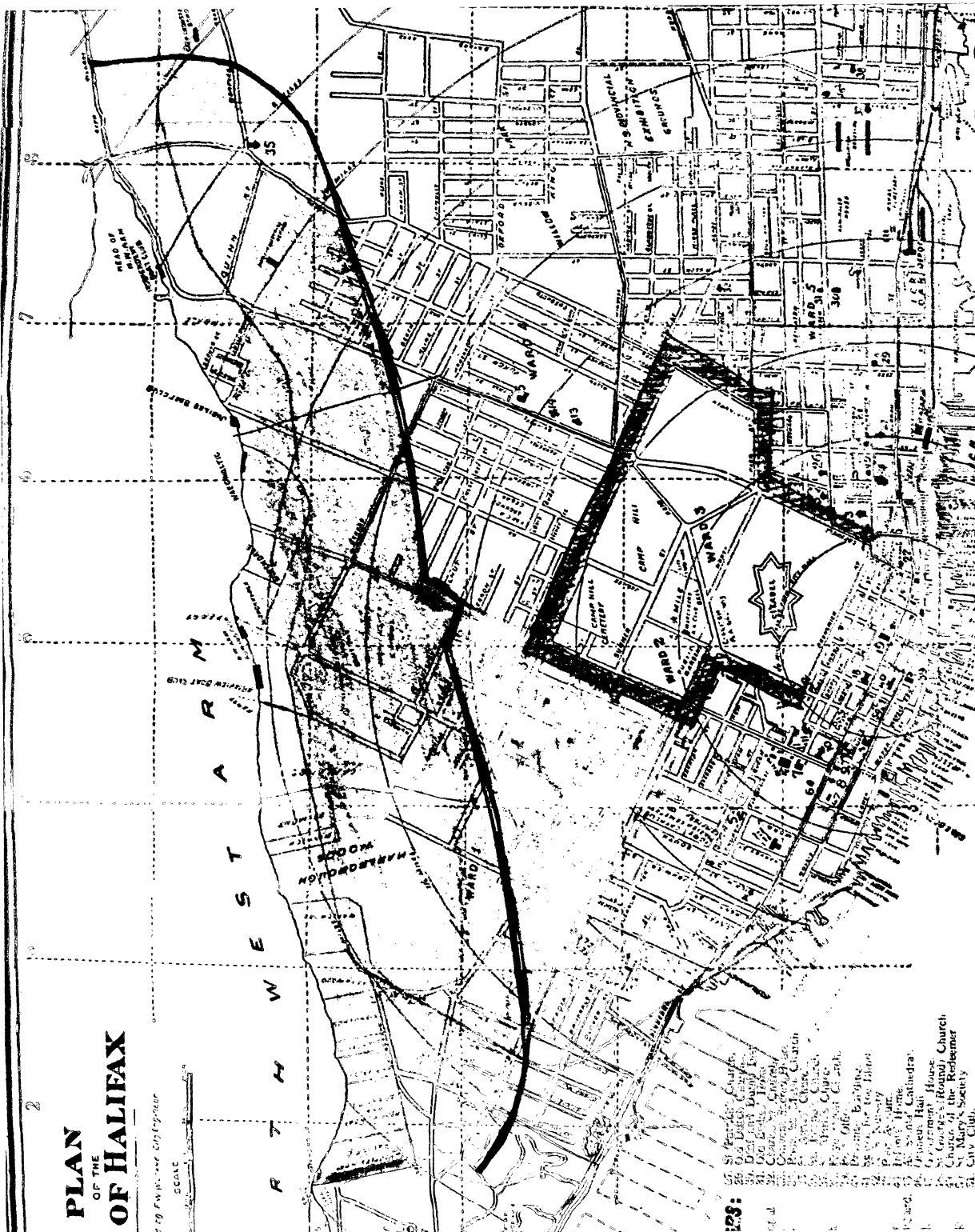


Figure Three is a map that accompanied a letter sent from Thomas Adams to Robert M. Hattie concerning the zoning of residential areas along the shore of the North West Arm. Adams recognized the importance in maintaining the shoreline as a purely residential area, as well as the band around Citadel Hill. The area coloured in yellow was to be considered for residential designation. It is interesting that even prior to the creation of the Town Planning Board, Adams' services were being utilized by members. With the accompanying colour-coded plan, Adams proposed a scheme to limit certain areas in the city to purely residential spaces. The only businesses that would be able to operate in these zones would be those that were typically housed in a person's residence, such as "doctors, architects, music teachers, and the like." The area alongside the North West Arm, extending easterly by twenty-four hundred feet, was deemed residential, as was the land immediately bordering Citadel Hill, the Public Commons, the Public Gardens, and Camp Hill. Adams would not go as so far as to expressly recommend linking the two areas via a third residential section that included the site of the golf course and other public buildings without directly consulting the public, but he felt it should be seriously considered as well. Adams felt that outside of the area he recommended be deemed residential, if three-fourths of property owners on a street desired residential zoning, they could petition the City of Halifax for that status. However, he also mentions the need for the city to include a process to appeal the petition.¹⁸⁴

Though the province had passed landmark legislation concerning the regulation of urban planning three years before that had been recognized as some of the most advanced

¹⁸⁴ Thomas Adams. "Town Planning - Residential District" 4 March 1915. HRM Archives. RG 35-102 Ser. 1B, No. 87.

in the world, the deficiencies in the legislation were almost immediately evident. The Nova Scotia Town Planning Act of 1915 represented a culmination of sentiment felt throughout Halifax and other communities in Nova Scotia over the preceding decade. Calls had been made for planning legislation that would improve public health and promote the development of scientific and efficient planning. The Town Planning Board of the City of Halifax was created directly as a result of the Province of Nova Scotia's Town Planning Act of 1915. The 1915 Act contained enforceable measures that were absent in the 1912 Act; it instituted and mandated the continuance of a hierarchy of planning within the province, holding municipalities accountable for the controlled growth and development of their lands. Town Planning Boards across Nova Scotia, not just in Halifax, would be incorporated ventures.¹⁸⁵ This would enable Boards to buy, sell, and rent property. The Commissioner of Public Works and Mines was the provincial authority that local planning boards would have to seek approval from for their plans. According to the 1915 Act, the Commissioner was accountable to the provincial legislature; and was to submit reports to the legislature detailing the decisions and actions taken by municipal boards under the authority of the Town Planning Act of 1915.¹⁸⁶ Accountable to the Commissioner of Public Works and Mines were the local municipal planning boards.

The make-up of the various planning boards that were to be created in all incorporated towns and cities across Nova Scotia as a result of the Act was to reflect a mixture of private, public and professional membership. This mixture was mandated by the Town Planning Act of 1915 as it called for each board to have a Controller who was

¹⁸⁵ *An Act Respecting Town Planning*. S.N.S. 1915. Cap. 3. Sec. 3 (3) and (3a).

¹⁸⁶ *An Act Respecting Town Planning*. S.N.S. 1915. Cap. 3. Sec. 3 (1).

to be an engineer or architect. The Controller would be responsible for reporting to the Commissioner of Public Works and Mines and, subject to approval by the Governor-in-Council, could assume some of the responsibilities of the Commissioner of Public Works and Mines.¹⁸⁷ This clause is a clear signal of the growing importance being placed on the role of individuals with professional designation to impartially recommend the best possible course of action for developing towns and cities in Nova Scotia. However, it may also be a reflection on the wide-scope of the Commissioner of Public Works and Mines and the department. At the time of the passage of the Town Planning Act the Department of Public Works and Mines, led by an appointed Commissioner and later, after 1921, Minister, was one of the largest departments of the Provincial Government, responsible for Nova Scotia's lucrative mining sector in addition to provincial buildings, highways and bridges. The province's tourism department even fell under the Public Works and Mines umbrella until 1926, and mining did not become its own department until well into the 1930s.¹⁸⁸ The autonomy awarded to the controller of the Board may have been written into the legislation to avoid a greater role than the Commissioner of Public Works and Mines, or his department, wanted to play in Planning in Nova Scotia's towns and cities.

The Act states that "Every Local Authority shall create a Local Board consisting of the Mayor or Warden and two other members of Council (*ex officio*), and not less than two ratepayers to be appointed by the Local Authority for the term of three years."¹⁸⁹ Though creation of a planning board was now mandatory under the auspices of the Act,

¹⁸⁷ *An Act Respecting Town Planning*. S.N.S. 1915. Cap. 3. Sec. 3 (2) and (3b).

¹⁸⁸ For records of the Commissioner of Public Works and Mines, See: *Records of Commissioner of Public Works and Mines*. NSARM. RG 21, Series 106.

¹⁸⁹ *An Act Respecting Town Planning*. S.N.S. 1915. Cap. 3. Sec. 3 (3).

the power of any local planning board still rested with the governing body of a municipality through appointments. It would be unfair to characterize board membership as anything but an elite and privileged activity. Local boards were to be incorporated in order to have the power to buy, receive, lease, hold, and dispose of property.¹⁹⁰ This was a critical component of the legislation as town planning boards were able to become active participants in property ownership and development. The growth of municipalities was no longer contingent on the role of private interest.

Given that Halifax was by far the largest municipality within Nova Scotia, the municipal government of the provincial capital was quick to establish a local board under the authority granted by the Town Planning Act of 1915. Membership consisted of Halifax's mayor at the time, Peter F. Martin, and two of the city's aldermen, Edward J. Kelly who represented Ward Three and Robert B. Colwell who represented Ward Two. Colwell had served for many years on Halifax's Board of Trade, becoming Vice-President prior to serving on City Council for ten years.¹⁹¹ Two private citizens, George A. McKenzie and Robert M. Hattie were also appointed to the Town Planning Board. Both McKenzie and Hattie, who was also the Board's secretary, were longtime advocates of urban planning in Halifax, former Aldermen, as well as members of the Civic Improvement League. Given that the City Council consisted of a Mayor and six aldermen at the time of the Town Planning Board, the officials serving were well known to one another.

Serving as Executive Officer was the City's acting engineer at the time, Henry W. Johnston, who had assumed the duties of Major Francis W.W. Doane while he was

¹⁹⁰ *An Act Respecting Town Planning*. S.N.S. 1915. Cap. 3. Sec. 3 (3a).

¹⁹¹ "Funeral of R. B. Colwell Will Be Held on Monday," *The Halifax Mail-Star*, 12 January 1957, p. 6.

overseas.¹⁹² Doane had served as City Engineer from 1891, a position he would hold until 1924, watching the City transform from a town moved by horse and buggy to the modern city of street cars and automobiles.¹⁹³ While not an official member of the Board, the City Solicitor was to provide consultation to the Board in regards to legal issues that might arise as a result of its work.¹⁹⁴ The authority of the Executive Officer was codified in a meeting held on the 26th of June, 1918. Due to the regulations set forth in the 1915 Act, the Executive Officer of the Board was now able to rule as to whether private citizens could plan roads and erect or demolish buildings.¹⁹⁵ This gave the Town Planning Board a greater degree of authority. Though a request to establish the board was submitted on the 21 January 1916 it was not until the 16 February that the Town Planning Board of the City of Halifax was fully established.¹⁹⁶ Though membership of the Town Planning Board consisted of the mayor and other city council members, and the Board's authority rested with the city council according to the 1915 Act,¹⁹⁷ approval still needed to be sought from the Board of Control. A report detailing the Board of Control's recommendations for membership to Halifax's Town Planning Board was presented to a meeting of City Council in order to create the Board.¹⁹⁸

The creation of the Town Planning Board was recorded with little fanfare in the minutes of Halifax City Council on the 21 January 1916, which simply stated the board was being formed as a result of the 1915 Town Planning Act and containing the Board of

¹⁹² *Minutes of Halifax Town Planning Board 1916-1949*, 16 February 1916. HRM Archives, 102-40.1, p. 1.

¹⁹³ "Final Rites Monday for F. W. W. Doane," *The Halifax Mail-Star*, 19 April 1958, p. 3.

¹⁹⁴ *Minutes of Halifax Town Planning Board 1916-1949*, 1 March 1918. HRM Archives, 102-40.1, p. 11.

¹⁹⁵ *Minutes of Halifax Town Planning Board 1916-1949*, 26 July 1918. HRM Archives, 102-40.1, p. 17.

¹⁹⁶ *Minutes of Halifax Town Planning Board 1916-1949*, 21 January 1918. HRM Archives, 102-40.1, p. 2.

¹⁹⁷ *An Act Respecting Town Planning*. S.N.S. 1915. Cap. 3. Sec. 3 (3).

¹⁹⁸ *Minutes of Halifax Town Planning Board 1916-1949*, 16 February 1918. HRM Archives, 102-40.1, p.1.

Control's recommendations for members.¹⁹⁹ In contrast, the formation of the Town Planning Board in Halifax was front page news in the days immediately after the first meeting. A story published in *The Daily Echo* on the 11 May 1916, highlights the role which the new board was to play. The article also notes the presence of Thomas Adams at the meeting of the Town Planning Board. The newspaper reported that Adams "thinks Halifax lucky in the open public spaces it contains and their relative locations in the view of the possibility of connecting them up."²⁰⁰ While Adams was only in Halifax for a short period of time, according to the *Echo* he was making the most of his trip by holding a series of meetings and lectures with various groups such as the Longshoreman's Association and the housing committee of the Civic Improvement League.²⁰¹ The paper reported that he was to return to Halifax in the autumn of 1916 for several weeks. During the summer months, the Town Planning Board was to consult with residents to ensure the views of Haligonians would not be omitted from any final planning schemes.

In the next day's edition of *The Daily Echo*, the paper had an extensive interview with Adams regarding the state of urban life in Halifax. According to Adams, the biggest challenge that faced the City of Halifax was its housing crisis. "The housing problem here is most serious. The war is not an excuse for not dealing with the problem. It is a reason for dealing with it. The problem is going to be worse before it is better, because everything shows that the Trade of Halifax is going to largely increase."²⁰² According to Adams, the rates of rent had increased dramatically in Eastern Canada, while remaining low in rapidly expanding Western Canada. A rebounding and robust economic outlook

¹⁹⁹ *Halifax City Council Minutes, 1915-1916*. 21 January 1916. HRM Archives, p. 415.

²⁰⁰ "Town Planning Committee Has Been Organized," *The Daily Echo*, 11 May 1916, p.1.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² "Bill Providing For Reform of City's Taxation System Finally Passed Upon Today," *The Daily Echo*, 12 May 1916, p. 1.

for Halifax was a welcome change from the uncertainty which had plagued the city for the past generation. Yet the rapid rise in the cost of renting a dwelling was hindering the working-class of Halifax.

There are two questions involved. If they are settled there is no doubt that the scheme can be made to pay. The first question is that of getting the necessary capital and the second is that of getting the necessary site. In regard to the first question there should be no difficulty in raising from two to three hundred thousand dollars for the scheme, as the city has the power, under the new Provincial Act to encourage housing accommodation to guarantee eighty-five percent of that amount. In regard to the second question, it should be possible to obtain a site of twenty to thirty acres, which would be sufficient for an experiment. This would not solve the housing problem but would relieve it by withdrawing some of the pressure from the centre, and then, and not till then, could the City begin to deal with the sanitary situation. It may appear a sort of roundabout way of dealing with the problem but it is the most effective.²⁰³

Admiration for the passage of the Nova Scotia Town Planning Act in 1915 was not merely limited to kudos from civic officials and the local papers. Since the recognition of planning as an extension of public health, members of the Commission of Conservation had lobbied for the introduction of planning legislation as a means of mandating change. In his annual report to the Commission of Conservation Thomas Adams, who credits a great deal of the Town Planning Act to his own initiatives, states: "If town planning fails in Nova Scotia it will not be for want of intelligent appreciation of its advantages on the part of members of the Legislature."²⁰⁴ Echoes of congratulations and calls for copies of the 1915 Town Planning Act arrived over the next few years. The records of the correspondence of the City Clerk contain requests for a copy of the Town Planning Act from as far a distance as Adelaide, Australia.²⁰⁵

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Thomas Adams, "Town Planning, Housing, and Public Health," *Report of the Seventh Annual Meeting, Commission of Conservation, Canada* (Montréal: The Federated Press Ltd., 1916), p. 124.

²⁰⁵ *Correspondence of City Clerk's Office Halifax, 1907-1924, Town Planning*. HRM Archives. RG35-102.

One of the most notable characteristics of the minute books of the Town Planning Board is the length of time it took for progress to be made by the Board in developing plans for the urban development of Halifax. While the Town Planning Board was officially created on the 16 February 1916 the first meeting of the Board was not held until 10 May. This was partly due to the fact that little could be done until professional advice regarding urban planning was provided to the Board, which helps to explain why Thomas Adams attended the Board's 10 May meeting. Adams suggested that the Board draft a town planning scheme, laying out its priorities and attempt to meet the needs of private owners who would be affected. Adams was due to return in Autumn 1916 to lend further assistance²⁰⁶, but his return to Britain delayed his appearance until the following year.²⁰⁷ As a result, the Town Planning Board did not meet for another nineteen months, the longest period the Town Planning Board went without a meeting from its inception in 1916 to its end in 1922. The reason listed in the minute book was that nothing definite in respect to a planning scheme had been formulated and though meetings had been called, they were postponed as a result of Thomas Adams' absence.²⁰⁸

In the meantime, conflict developed between the Department of Railways and the municipal government in regards to the construction of Connaught Avenue that was to run parallel along the North West Arm. The railway cut created a path allowing the boulevard to run alongside the tracks from the end of the North West Arm to Point Pleasant Park. However, in May of 1917, *The Halifax Herald* reported a serious issue between the railways and the City of Halifax. A provision had been inserted into City Bill

²⁰⁶ *Minutes of Halifax Town Planning Board 1916-1949*, 10 May 1916. HRM Archives, 102-40.1, p. 3.

²⁰⁷ Simpson, *Thomas Adams*, p. 89.

²⁰⁸ *Minutes of Halifax Town Planning Board 1916-1949*, 17 December 1917. HRM Archives, 102-40.1, p. 4.

No. 54 stating that if the Department of Railways did not fund the construction of a bridge at Coburg Road for the railway cut within three years, Connaught Avenue would be struck from the official city plan. The newspaper quoted acting engineer H.L. Seymour as saying,

We are using our best endeavors to compel the railway department to build a bridge to take care of the avenue at the point, or to pay a portion of the additional cost that would be involved in diverting the avenue to the eastward of the railway company. Whether or not we will be successful in this or not, is at present uncertain, but it is anticipated that eventually the avenue will be opened, built upon and used, so that a bridge or diversion will have to be made.²⁰⁹

The City of Halifax claimed that property owners had purchased lots that faced what was to become Connaught Avenue under the impression that it would be a grand boulevard running from one end of Halifax to the other. Were this not to occur, the values of their properties would be devalued accordingly, leaving the owners with little recourse for compensation. Framed in this manner, the city was emphasizing to the Department of Railways that Connaught Avenue was too important to the growth of Halifax to be removed from the official plan. Furthermore, the City of Halifax could be viewed as implying that the Department of Railways was responsible for financing the construction of a bridge or diversion as a result of the expropriation of property for the railway cut. "It is not that there can be any dispute as to the advantages of a well-considered and comprehensive plan for any growing city, such as has been authorized by the legislature, but the whole object aimed at will be done away with if such changes as are proposed in the bill are carried out."²¹⁰

²⁰⁹ "City May Have to Buy Land of No Use," *The Halifax Herald*, 5 May 1917, p. 5.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

An article from the following week appeared on the 11 May 1917, describing citizens and property owners complaining of the City's threat to remove Connaught Avenue from the official city plan if the bridge at Coburg Road was not completed within three years. Furthermore, the paper reported that citizens did not want the City of Halifax to abandon claims against the Department of Railways in favour of a one-time financial settlement of seventy-two thousand dollars.²¹¹ Some property owners and advocates of urban planning within the city felt that the construction of Connaught Avenue was vital to the growth and development of Halifax.

The citizens pressing for the amendment were actuated by the desire to see Connaught Avenue completed and the city's original pledge to the property owners carried out. The city says that it is the intention to put this avenue thru, and there can, therefore, be no reasonable objection to the amendment referred to, for it is precisely far better to have this matter settled now than to have it hung up for twenty to thirty years, tying up property from one end of the city to the other in such a way that the owners do not know what they will be able to do with it. The city should carry thru this splendid avenue and now is the time to give the property owners affected an unconditional guarantee that it will be done within a reasonable length of time. It seems to me this amendment referred to is as good a way of doing this as any.²¹²

At this juncture the calls for action to be taken and plans to reach fruition were reaching a peak. Despite the preoccupation that the First World War provided Halifax, the previous years had seen a huge spike in the public's awareness of urban planning and its potential to transform and modernize the city. Expert advice had been consulted and recommendations had been implemented. The municipal government was in favour of using planning to divide, transform and alter neighborhoods within Halifax in order to meet the needs of the rapid advancements in technology and transport, such as the

²¹¹ "Legislation does not Effect Rosebank," *The Halifax Herald*. 11 May 1917, p. 5.

²¹² *Ibid.*

growing proliferation of the automobile, and enable stable growth of the city in the future. Overall, the demeanor of the public was supportive of further and more comprehensive planning, though aspects of the railway cut grew to distress a segment of Halifax's population. It would be the unforeseen events of December 1917 that would impact and understandably force an adjustment of the plans that advocates of progressive urban reform wished to enact over the coming years.

CHAPTER FOUR

Explosion and Aftermath – Shifting the Direction of Planning, 1918-1921

The Explosion that occurred on the 6 December 1917 devastated the city and destroyed or damaged beyond repair almost the entire North End of Halifax. It resulted in the death of almost two-thousand persons, injuries to several thousand more, millions of dollars in damage, and years of disruption for the city. At the time, it was one of the largest man-made explosions in history, and certainly the most violent to have occurred in a populated setting. Despite the tragic nature of the situation, from almost the start many viewed this as an opportunity for Halifax's modernization and development that would never again be repeated. For a city that, prior to the calamity of the explosion, was in a period of socio-economic transition and growth the explosion presented a unique set of problems, but it was projected that if navigated successfully, Halifax could rebound with a comprehensive redevelopment and modernization readying the city for the twentieth century. In the first regular council session following the Explosion, convened only a week after the disaster, H.W. Johnson said:

I beg to suggest that there is at present an opportunity for re-planning an improvement of the district devastated by the recent explosion and fire. The layout of this part of the City was entirely haphazard, and capable of great improvement. The devastation has been so great that not only the work of re-building, but even ascertaining the original lots, will be very difficult. Time is too brief to expand my ideas of this in detail, but I would suggest that you take into immediate consideration the idea of the City acquiring the whole of the devastated district, and re-planning and rebuilding in accordance with modern ideas of town planning and construction.²¹³

²¹³ *Halifax City Council Minutes, 1916-1917*. 12 December 1917. HRM Archives, p.286.

Were it not for the Halifax Explosion, the Town Planning Board would not have reconvened so hastily, having not met since May of 1916. It was explained that “No meeting of the Board had been held since the organizational meeting, because there has been nothing definite to place before the Board with respect to a scheme; but that Mr. Adams had given the question considerable study and that it would soon be possible to decide upon that should be done.”²¹⁴ It was originally thought that Adams would have been available to return to Halifax in the fall, as was recorded in the minutes and reported in the newspaper.²¹⁵ This had not occurred because Adams returned to England upon the expiration of his initial three-year contract with the Commission of Conservation, though Clifford Sifton and the Commission of Conservation were keen to retain his services for an additional three years. The period of renegotiation delayed his return to Halifax.²¹⁶

As a result of the Explosion, speculation rose amongst the board members of the creation of a Commission for the reconstruction of the city. Evidence from the minute book of the Town Planning Board indicates that members envisioned the Board playing a role in re-planning, but not in redeveloping the North End of Halifax, though at the time of the initial meeting of the Town Planning Board following the explosion, even this was unclear to board members.

In view of the prospective appointment of a Commission in connection with the reconstruction of the devastated portion of the city, it was not clear how planning could best be carried out in the district, whether by the Board or by the Commissions but in any case, pending the appointment of the Commission and the determination of its duties, it would be able for this board to do any preliminary work that could be done.²¹⁷

²¹⁴ *Minutes of Halifax Town Planning Board 1916-1949*, 17 December 1917. HRM Archives, 102-40.1, p. 4.

²¹⁵ *Minutes of Halifax Town Planning Board 1916-1949*, 10 May 1917. HRM Archives, 102-40.1, p. 3.

²¹⁶ Simpson, *Thomas Adams*, p. 114

²¹⁷ *Minutes of Halifax Town Planning Board 1916-1949*, 17 December 1917. HRM Archives, 102-40.1, p. 4.

Despite plans at this point being unclear, the Board quickly and unanimously passed a resolution authorizing: “the collection of data for the preparation of a Town Planning Scheme for the City of Halifax.”²¹⁸ In a letter from Hattie to Thomas Adams, dated 24 January 1918, Hattie states, “It seems to me that the local Town Planning Board may yet be used as the machinery in connection with the planning that must be done in relation to the reconstruction, and as that is an activity quite apart from the actual reconstruction.”²¹⁹ It appears that members of the Board recognized the imperative need for collecting the information necessary to plan and redevelop the North End of the city quickly and successfully. This desire was not only due to the tragic situation brought on by the Explosion, but also a result of the impending return of veterans from overseas. Though the war was not yet won many, including Thomas Adams, felt the end would be achieved sooner rather than later and foresaw housing as an impending crisis for cities across Canada, and expressed his sentiments in an address to the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities in 1918.²²⁰

The Halifax Relief Commission (HRC) was formed out of a desire to ensure that support for the victims of the Explosion and the redevelopment of the city would not wane after the initial period of relief. The organizational structure and authority awarded to the Halifax Relief Commission was a reflection of Progressive beliefs about the need to synthesize bureaucratic administration and professional development. Only an elite organization comprised of professionals wielding widespread power and resources would

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ R.M. Hattie. Letter to Thomas Adams, 24 January 1918. NSARM: MG 1, Vol. 2899, No. 29.

²²⁰ Thomas Adams, “Community Development and Reconstruction in Nova Scotia,” *Proceedings of Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities, 1918*. NSARM: JS UN 3, Micro No. 3878, p.79.

be able to ensure that a long-term solution would be implemented to enable Halifax to recover and continue to grow and prosper. For the purposes of this study, it is critical to be aware of the authority awarded to the Halifax Relief Commission. The primary responsibility granted to the Halifax Relief Commission in its founding charter, which proved to have an impact in the work of the Town Planning Board, was to oversee the reconstruction of the entire Devastated Area. The HRC was in charge of all aspects of salvaging, demolition, planning, rebuilding, and administration of the Devastated Area including details that accompanied this task, such as security, labour, materials, finances, and employment. The degree of power and control that was conferred upon the executive of the HRC was remarkably expansive, but perhaps not unexpected in an era and in a city that seemed to favour appointing small boards of professionals.

At a meeting held 20 February 1918, H.W. Johnston was instructed to arrange a conference between the Town Planning Board and the newly formed Halifax Relief Commission. The purpose of the conference was to inform the Commission of the Board's intention to apply for the authority to create a scheme, to assure the Commission that no conflict would arise between the Board and the Commission in regards to the Devastated Area, and finally to see if any cooperation between the two organizations could be arranged.²²¹ It was reported in the Town Planning Board's minutes on 1 March 1918 that the conference between the two bodies had occurred to the satisfaction of both organizations. The Commission saw no foreseeable problem with the Board's decision to apply for the authority to prepare a scheme and believed cooperation was likely.

²²¹ *Minutes of Halifax Town Planning Board 1916-1949*, 20 February 1918. HRM Archives, 102-40.1, p. 8.

However, it is important to note that at this time the power and authority of the HRC was still being worked out.²²²

By the 23 May 1918, evidence in the minute book points to the sweeping control awarded to the HRC in the aftermath of the Explosion. The application being submitted to the Commissioner of Public Works and Mines specifically mentions that the area of Halifax known as the Devastated Area would not be a part of the Town Planning Board's scheme.²²³ Curiously though, Thomas Adams, who was advising both the Town Planning Board and the HRC through his role with the Commission of Conservation, had indicated through correspondence that he did not think it was necessary to exclude the Devastated Area from the Town Planning Board's work.²²⁴ In June of 1918, T.S. Rogers, in a statement outlining the HRC's intentions for the redevelopment of the Devastated Area to the Halifax City Council, stated that,

The City no doubt will place in the hands of the Commission the lands known as Mulgrave Park, Acadia Square, and other city property in that vicinity in exchange for other public property devoted to streets and parks. The Commission's work in this respect is City work, and no differences are anticipated and even if so they must prove easy of adjustment.²²⁵

The Commissioner's approval of the Town Planning Board's first scheme encompassing the entire Peninsula of Halifax dated 4 November 1918, specifically excluded the Devastated Area.²²⁶ This marked the beginning of a trend in which it appears the Town Planning Board and the Halifax Relief Commission had very little interaction with one another. A letter from Thomas Adams dated 12 December 1918 was

²²² *Minutes of Halifax Town Planning Board 1916-1949*, 1 March 1918. HRM Archives, 102-40.1, p. 11.

²²³ *Minutes of Halifax Town Planning Board 1916-1949*, 23 May 1918. HRM Archives, 102-40.1, p. 15.

²²⁴ *Minutes of Halifax Town Planning Board 1916-1949*, 18 June 1918. HRM Archives, 102-40.1, p. 16.

²²⁵ *Halifax City Council Minutes, 1918-1919*. T.S. Rogers, "Outline of Statement to City Hall," 4 June 1918, HRM Archives, p. 58.

²²⁶ *Minutes of Halifax Town Planning Board 1916-1949*, 26 July 1918. HRM Archives, 102-40.1, p. 20.

sent to the Town Planning Board, urging the Board to cooperate with the HRC in securing the services of Adams' assistant, H.L. Seymour, in preparing planning schemes for both organizations. The Board's response was lukewarm, willing to consider the proposition on the grounds that the costs of Seymour's services were known in advance; only after receiving assurances from Adams himself ensuring the cost would be incurred by the Commission of Conservation, provided the city of Halifax supplied professional engineering assistance, did the Town Planning Board agree to utilize Seymour's expertise.²²⁷ Little else is mentioned in the minute book regarding the Board's interaction with the Halifax Relief Commission, save for a note refuting a board member's suggestion, made in December of 1920, that the Devastated Area could be included in the Board's scheme for Halifax.²²⁸ At a meeting held just over a year later a letter was read detailing an accompanying copy of the proposed scheme for the Devastated Area as submitted by the Halifax Relief Commission to the Commissioner of Public Works and Mines.²²⁹ The lack of any significant mention of the HRC in the minute book most likely indicates a well-defined and rigid relationship between the two organizations, one that saw the power and authority of the HRC supersede that of the Town Planning Board.

In the years following the explosion until his departure, Thomas Adams was chiefly concerned with the redevelopment of the Devastated Area, and the construction of what was to become known as the 'Hydrostone' neighborhood in the North End of Halifax. It is important to note that not only did the HRC not appear to have enjoyed

²²⁷ *Minutes of Halifax Town Planning Board 1916-1949*, 18 December 1918 and 21 July 1919. HRM Archives, 102-40.1, pp. 24, 35.

²²⁸ *Minutes of Halifax Town Planning Board 1916-1949*, 9 December 1920. HRM Archives, 102-40.1, p. 47.

²²⁹ *Minutes of Halifax Town Planning Board 1916-1949*, 21 December 1921. HRM Archives, 102-40.1, p. 55.

warm relations with the Town Planning Board, the relationships between the HRC and their employees, some tenants, and Thomas Adams all had deteriorated or ended by the early 1920s. This may have been a factor in shifting the attitudes of the citizens of Halifax, particularly those of the working classes, away from further urban planning reform. The occurrence of the Halifax Explosion, coupled with the impending return of Canadian forces from Europe, significantly altered the conditions under which labour was to operate during Halifax's reconstruction. A number of factors contributed to the conflicts in labour relations which existed during the reconstruction. The contract for salvaging the Devastated Area was awarded to a railroad contracting firm that brought in transient labourers from Quebec who spoke little or no English and lived separately from the Nova Scotian workers. Migrant workers had no families with them to support and thus had a greater amount of disposable income to spend, further aggravating the relations amongst the workers reconstructing Richmond.²³⁰

The HRC's power as a land-lord and land broker was also called into question, and not only by working class tenants. Expropriating land from the city after the Explosion through the powers outlined in its charter, and constructing houses upon it, the HRC sold the buildings back to the city including the cost of the land, originally owned by the city, and in the sale of the properties generated a profit. In the minutes of the Halifax City Council it was noted that this was an action of the HRC legally allowed through its charter.²³¹ Actions such as this sale were emblematic of the true nature of the Halifax Relief Commission's mandate, to ensure that its funding would enable the long-term sustainability of its pensioners.

²³⁰ Morton, "The Halifax Relief Commission and Labour Relations during the Reconstruction of Halifax, 1917-1919" pp. 49, 53.

²³¹ *Halifax City Council Minutes, 1921-1922*. 20 July 1921, HRM Archives, p. 279.

Thomas Adams's conflicts with the HRC and his eventual disappointment with aspects of the North End's redevelopment after the Explosion can be attributed to the HRC's unwillingness to accept Adams' greater vision for the entire city. Adams, under the auspices of the Commission of Conservation, lobbied the Dominion government to expand the HRC's authority and award the Commission as much control over the redevelopment process as possible. This was done to ensure that Adams would direct and have final authority over the re-planning of the Devastated Area and the implementation of his plans. Initially, Adams drew up plans for the entire North End of the Peninsula.²³² Furthermore, he developed a scheme to incorporate town planning for all of Halifax, Dartmouth, and Bedford. Correctly, Adams foresaw a permanent coexistence between all three communities.²³³ Adams' plans for the land north of the Devastated Area did not conform to the pre-existing street pattern, and he incorporated the streets into the natural, steep topography of the tip of the Peninsula. Adams regarded this portion of the Devastated Area to have the most potential and considered it more critical than the Hydrostone, but the HRC was unwilling to commit any finances to developing lands prior to completing the redevelopment of the Devastated Area.²³⁴ Ultimately, Adams was disappointed by the reconstruction efforts in North End Halifax, regarding them as partially complete.²³⁵ The redevelopment certainly did accomplish the immediate goal of rebuilding a working and lasting public housing project but what was actually realized was far from Adams' grand vision of redevelopment for the whole city of Halifax.²³⁶

²³² Weaver, "Reconstruction of the Richmond District in Halifax," p. 42.

²³³ Adams, "Planning the Greater Halifax," *Conservation of Life*. Vol. 4, No. 2 (1918), pp. 82-3.

²³⁴ Weaver, "Reconstruction of the Richmond District in Halifax," p. 42.

²³⁵ Clarke, "The Hydrostone Phoenix," pp. 405-6.

²³⁶ For an in-depth analysis of the domestic life of the residents of the newly developed Hydrostone neighborhood, see: Morton, *Ideal Surroundings*.

Given the power and control awarded to the HRC to redevelop the North End of the city, it comes as little surprise that the Town Planning Board elected to focus its immediate attention on the southern end of the city of Halifax. As discussed earlier, a large, modern port facility was constructed between 1913 and 1919 in the South End of the city, located near Point Pleasant Park.²³⁷ The Town Planning Board envisioned the “Ocean Terminals Railway Station” becoming a focal point for the city, in addition to being a major centre of commerce and traffic.²³⁸ The area the scheme encompassed was estimated at one-hundred and eighteen acres. The northern face ran down Sackville Street to meet the harbour, while the southern side ran down South Street. The western front ran from Sackville and Queen Street to the other end of Queen Street, adjoining South Street. The Board reported that the area within the proposed scheme was already developed, save for the centre. It was in this area that the Board saw the greatest potential, proposing a diagonally running street from the corner of Queen and Spring Garden Road, to Barrington and Morris Street; they also proposed to widen Barrington Street to accommodate the increased traffic flow.²³⁹ Though minute books generally offer little insight into the attitudes of those who are involved in their creation, a telling passage reveals something of the Town Planning Board’s attitudes towards both the development of the South End and their specific role in the development:

Besides, the area is likely to undergo great changes in character as a consequence of changes in the stream of traffic, and it is important to control these changes so that they will not be to the detriment of the neighborhood. Certain developments are in prospect which should be related to the plan of

²³⁷ David A. Sutherland, “The Personnel and Policies of the Halifax Board of Trade, 1890-1914,” *The Enterprising Canadians*. pp. 216-7.

²³⁸ *Minutes of Halifax Town Planning Board 1916-1949*, 26 September 1918. HRM Archives, 102-40.1, p. 18.

²³⁹ *Minutes of Halifax Town Planning Board 1916-1949*, 26 September 1918. HRM Archives, 102-40.1, p. 22.

the City in such a way as to avoid unnecessary alterations and in this way to avoid waste and conserve values.²⁴⁰

Complaints soon arose over the proposed scheme, principally the widening of Barrington Street. On the 29 January 1919 the Navy League of Canada registered its grievance with the Town Planning Board, claiming the proposed widening would create insufficient room for the construction of a driveway, rendering the building used by the Navy League of Canada unable to accommodate all of the League's members and patrons in Halifax. The request by the Navy League of Canada for the Board to modify its scheme fell on deaf ears, and the Town Planning Board rejected the request at the following meeting, where the authorization to prepare the plan by the Commissioner of Public Works and Mines was announced.²⁴¹

The reaction of the Town Planning Board to proposals for both construction of individual buildings and development of subdivisions was mixed. Numerous examples from the minutebook can be cited showing citizens winning approval from the Board, and others of rejection. In some cases development schemes were rejected, but changes necessary to win approval were suggested; others were rejected outright.²⁴² It is a fair claim, though, that many of the approvals on the part of the Town Planning Board came with requirements. One example was the application of G.E. Hagen to construct a garage on his corner lot. He won approval, but on the condition that the Board approve his

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ *Minutes of Halifax Town Planning Board 1916-1949*, 29 January 1919. HRM Archives, 102-40.1, pp. 26-7.

²⁴² *Minutes of Halifax Town Planning Board 1916-1949*, 1 April 1921. HRM Archives, 102-40.1, p. 49.

architect's design. In another case the approval of the construction of a bank at the corner of Windsor and North Streets was made subject to the building line being approved.²⁴³

The Town Planning Board did act in the interest of protecting and reinforcing improved standards of public health, and a notable example is the Board's refusal to allow Scotia Pure Milk Company from building a dairy plant in the South End. Though the dairy plant did not conflict with the Board's planning scheme, concerns on the part of area residents prompted the Board to advise against construction.²⁴⁴ The stipulations that the Town Planning Board placed on builders and home-owners reflected the growing intent of municipal bodies to control multiple aspects of development on an increasingly smaller scale. Increasingly regulations were meant to bring order to already developed areas whilst controlling future growth and development of infrastructure. At the same time, the municipality sought through regulation to improve the quality of life for all. A form of social equality, in a sense, was slowly being advanced, as planning regulations were becoming increasingly applicable to all citizens.

Figure Four: Map – City of Halifax, 1920

A map of Halifax drawn by D.A. McDonald and published by C.W. McAlpine in 1920 shows a radically transformed and expanded Halifax. New facilities or those under construction at the time expanded commercial and military use of the harbour in both a North and Southward direction. At the southern end of the peninsula, next to Point Pleasant Park, the massive project to construct the Halifax Ocean Terminals leading to greatly expanded shipping in Halifax had just been completed. This facility stretched from the southern end of Lower Water Street to Point Pleasant Park. As a result of the Halifax Explosion, Richmond, the residential section of Halifax's North End, had been radically redeveloped with two thoroughfares, Devonshire Street and Dartmouth Street extending diagonally up from Campbell Road. The portion of the city which was to become known as "the Hydrostone" was under construction, and other areas of the North End that had been extensively damaged by the Explosion were being rebuilt.

²⁴³ *Minutes of Halifax Town Planning Board 1916-1949*, 16 June 1919 and 21 July 1919. HRM Archives, 102-40.1, pp. 32, 35.

²⁴⁴ *Minutes of Halifax Town Planning Board 1916-1949*, 1 February 1919. HRM Archives, 102-40.1, p. 27.

The zoning on D.A. McDonald's 1920 map [Figure Four] appears largely to have conformed to the suggestions made by Thomas Adams over the previous five or so years that his services as an urban planning consultant had been available to the city. A plainly evident example lies in the Westmount subdivision that is marked on the map as a residential area rather than being included as a part of the large industrial North End. In fact, no specific zoning for industry existed on the 1910 edition; the separation and designation of residence and industry is significant. The shape of the industrial zone is odd, and shows the areas of the city that were expanding as residential neighborhoods. Specifically, the "Richmond" neighborhood being redeveloped following the explosion was creating an expansion northward, and the "west end" of Halifax was also growing as a residential zone.

The most notable and dramatic change found on the 1920 map appears along the shore of the North West Arm. Gone are many of the large "named" estates that dotted the 1910 edition of the McAlpine map [Figure One]. The previous edition depicts estates, such as Belmont and the Oaklands, in a transitory state, with new roads being constructed through them, whereas on the 1920 map, these large parcels of private land have mostly disappeared. Similarly, the area where Dalhousie is presently located was not indicated on the 1910 Map but is noted on the 1920 map, including a marking of the Arts and Administration Building. The most notable area to be transformed over the decade was the property known as Rosebank, lying between Jubilee and Quinpool Roads, and bounded by Oxford Street and the North West Arm on the 1910 map. Not only was it unmarked on the new map, a number of residential streets had been developed on the property, drawing it into the urban realm of Halifax. Cutting through many of the

properties that had been estates was the railway track running to the Halifax Oceans Railway Terminal, a track that remains in use today for both passenger and freight locomotives. The most striking feature found on this map is the Connaught Avenue thoroughfare running alongside the western edge of the peninsula which was never fully constructed as originally envisioned and planned. From the entrance of the city at Fairview, alongside the shores of the Bedford Basin, running Southward along the side of the North West Arm, parallel to the Railway tracks, eventually joining the Southern End of Robie Street, Connaught Avenue was intended to be one of the signature boulevards in Halifax, serving a variety of different purposes. Practically, Connaught Avenue could provide rapid and direct access to the Halifax Ocean Terminals. Symbolically Connaught Avenue was intended to be much more.²⁴⁵

It is most curious, though perhaps unsurprising given the evidence already examined, that on this map Connaught Avenue is shown as it was primarily planned, with the exception of its extension to Franklyn Street. In this case it was shown linking up with the southern end of Robie Street, where Saint Mary's University is currently located. Clearly, this was a sign that the construction and extension of Connaught Avenue deep into the south end of the peninsula was imminent. With the arrival of the Seaport and the railway cut, the creation of a boulevard running alongside had made logical sense. Plans for the construction of Connaught Avenue had been in existence for close to a decade at this point and the citizens of Halifax were well aware of this, enough for it to appear on this City map. Though the construction and development of Connaught Avenue was not specifically mentioned in the minutes of the City Council of Halifax, requests were made to the Federal Government for funding for various costs associated with the construction

²⁴⁵ Map - City of Halifax, 1920. HRM Archives. KK-7-9056.

and development along the North West Arm, including ninety thousand for a principal sewer to run the length of the Arm, five thousand for street widening, ten thousand for sidewalks, and forty-four thousand for street paving.²⁴⁶

Though the Town Planning Board was denied a role in planning and reconstructing the North End of Halifax, in the years following the Board's creation it served as a guide for private and public development throughout Halifax. With the crucial advice of Thomas Adams, the Board had zoned the future development throughout much of the peninsula. The Board took to overseeing and regulating private development in order to better safeguard the general public and improve public health throughout Halifax. Cognizant of the changes occurring to Halifax's physical character, the Town Planning Board also attempted to draft a vision of Halifax's potential future through planning. The aim of the Board in this regard was to draw people and traffic to what were envisioned to be the new focal points of the city. The success or failure of the Board's vision rested largely with the Board itself, and it was the implementation and execution of the Board's plans that would partially undo its good intentions.

²⁴⁶ *Halifax City Council Minutes, 1918-1919*. 1 June 1918. HRM Archives, p. 103.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Collapse of Urban Planning, 1922-1924

When examined in a cohesive manner, evidence suggests that the tipping point for the zeal behind urban planning in Halifax occurred in 1922. The Progressive Era of the early twentieth century was waning and the end of the Commission of Conservation the previous year severed Thomas Adams' services as a consultant to both the Town Planning Board and the HRC. Longtime advocate of urban planning and Town Planning Board member Robert Hattie resigned in October of 1921 due to reported health issues.²⁴⁷ Not only did the Town Planning Board cease operations in November of 1922, but a number of ambitious ventures the city had intentions of completing had to be removed from the official city plan for a number of different reasons. Chief among these was the removal of Connaught Avenue in the form originally envisioned. In the South End, concerned citizens rallied to have a large portion of the plan removed. Though a section of the street was completed in its intended form, it was a far cry from what had been initially mapped out. In the North End of the city, plans to purchase an estate for the purpose of creating a grandiose entrance to the city and a large public park were also abandoned due to financial disagreements. The remaining large estates were also sold off during this period, marking the end of an era for the North West Arm.

One of the most surprising trends found amongst the minutes of the Town Planning Board are requests the Board made to the Commissioner of Public Works and Mines to vary the regulations placed upon the Board by the 1915 Town Planning Act. In

²⁴⁷ *Minutes of Halifax Town Planning Board 1916-1949*, 12 October 1921. HRM Archives, 102-40.1, p. 54

the first instance, the request made to vary the regulations was due to the fact that a large number of property owners lived within an area that was to be affected by the Board's scheme. Board members lamented that it would have been extremely difficult and time consuming for each individual property owner to be notified of the Board's actions as demanded by the Act. Instead, they requested to utilize the local newspapers to notify the public of their affairs.²⁴⁸

As the Board's plans progressed, they made requests of greater magnitude to the Commissioner of Public Works and Mines. At a meeting held on the 18th of April, 1921 the Board made a resolution asking the Commissioner to vary a number of regulations found in the 1915 Town Planning Act. The first two requests dealt with changes in the manner in which the schemes were to be presented, asking permission to show both schemes on the same map. The second request was to change the scale of the scheme, from twenty-four inches to the mile to one inch for every three-hundred feet. These requests were not extraordinary, a result of the general guidelines found in the Town Planning Act not meeting the specifics of the project. However the third and fourth requests again focused on the need to skirt individually informing all property owners of impending changes. Instead notices would be inserted into local newspapers to inform residents who would be affected by the Town Planning Board's largest scheme at that time.²⁴⁹ The Board was aware of the difficulty it faced in informing property owners months before the formal request to the Commissioner was made, as the subject was

²⁴⁸ *Minutes of Halifax Town Planning Board 1916-1949*, 25 January 1921. HRM Archives, 102-40.1, p. 48.

²⁴⁹ *Minutes of Halifax Town Planning Board 1916-1949*, 18 April 1921. HRM Archives, 102-40.1, p. 50.

addressed at a meeting held in January of 1921 and it was decided then to make a request to vary the regulations.²⁵⁰

In June of 1921, Alderman John Murphy questioned the City Solicitor about the degree of power invested in the Town Planning Board versus that of the City Council.²⁵¹ At the next session of the City Council of Halifax, City Solicitor F. H. Bell offered this explanation to the council of the Town Planning Board's powers.

In reply to Alderman Murphy's question in the above, I beg to say that the City Council has no direct control over the bringing into force of a Town Planning Scheme or Town Planning By-Laws.

The local Board by whom such a scheme or set of By-Laws are prepared, is created by the City Council after which the functions of the Council cease. The local Board is required to give notice of its intentions to apply for the approval of the Commissioner of a scheme to the Council and also to other persons affected and by advertisements, and the Council has a right to make objections in the manner prescribed by the Act and Regulations, but apparently it has no further right in this respect than any other person or authority affected by the proposed scheme.²⁵²

This response was likely to have alarmed Aldermen who did not hold a position on the Town Planning Board. Since the City Council at the time consisted of six aldermen and the Mayor, and the Town Planning Board was limited to the membership of two Aldermen and the Mayor, a majority of Halifax's aldermen were effectively shut-out of the city's urban planning process. The power awarded to the Town Planning Board, interpreted through the response given by the City Solicitor, enabled a considerable degree of management by only five individuals. At the time, John Murphy was representing Ward Four through which a portion of Connaught Avenue had already been constructed. Any further intrusive construction through Murphy's Ward would have been a contentious issue for many residents.

²⁵⁰ *Minutes of Halifax Town Planning Board 1916-1949*, 25 January 1921. HRM Archives, 102-40.1, p. 48.

²⁵¹ *Halifax City Council Minutes, 1921-1922*. 9 June 1921. HRM Archives, p. 119.

²⁵² *Halifax City Council Minutes, 1921-1922*. 13 June 1921. HRM Archives. p. 122.

Over the course of the 1910s and into the 1920s, the construction of Connaught Avenue had been a polarizing issue of urban planning, pitting the interests of affected private property holders against the vision of many of Halifax's politicians and the wider community. By stretching the length of the peninsula and being an extremely wide boulevard with a grass divider separating the Northward and Southward directions of the road, its construction would cause severe disruptions to areas of the city that were already developed, as well as permanently shifting the flow of traffic entering and exiting the city. The Town Planning Board, following the recommendation of Thomas Adams, believed that a main thoroughfare running the length of the peninsula would streamline the flow of commercial and residential traffic, as well as beautifying the urban environment.

The sections of the road that caused the highest degree of criticism were in areas that had already been settled and developed for residential and recreational uses for several generations.²⁵³ Residents viewed the disruption to the area as a blemish on a once pristine section of the peninsula. As can be seen on the official city plan proposing the construction of Connaught Avenue, and other maps produced in the years leading up to 1922, the street was proposed to run from the entrance of the city at Fairview to the edge of Point Pleasant Park. The key area in question, however, was the section that appears in black on the official city plan that had remained undeveloped because of its proximity to the North West Arm and the property owners who would be affected by its construction.

²⁵³Reagan, *Sketches and Traditions of the North West Arm*.

Figure Five: Plan of Proposed Connaught Avenue from Waegwoltic to South Street, 1922

Connaught Avenue was not a completely new street upon its construction; it was comprised of new streets that linked existing streets. Pine Street, running parallel to Poplar Street, was incorporated as a section of Connaught Avenue during the early and mid 1910s. Furthermore, the Connaught Avenue that exists today, significantly modified and reduced from its original conception in the 1910s, was not fully completed until after the Second World War, a result of Halifax's lack of development during the inter-war period. The proposed layout to Connaught Avenue as seen here shows the most extensive plan developed for the boulevard.



HRM Archives. Z-4625.

Though owners had been made aware of the plan for several years, many people had purchased lots along Connaught Avenue under the assumption the boulevard would be built, and it had widespread support throughout the city, construction was still vehemently opposed by many existing property owners.²⁵⁴ Property owners had little ability to stop the construction of the railway when it was occurring during the 1910s as it was the Federal government that controlled the affairs of the railway and access to the seaport via rail was obviously imperative to the continued growth of Halifax, both physically and economically. The benefits of the construction of Connaught Avenue were not so clear. The proposed southward extension [see Figure Five] though linking the heart of the South End with the remainder of the peninsula, would not have directly run to the seaport and would have increased traffic alongside the North West Arm. Property owners who would be most affected by the Connaught Avenue extension had resources available to them to fight the Board's plans. As wealthy and influential property owners they were able to lobby many of the officials who were in charge of the plan as some Board members resided in the South End neighborhoods.²⁵⁵ This made it easier to oppose the construction of Connaught Avenue than the railway cut, preventing further disruption to the area and preserving its character.

Despite the requests to vary the regulations requiring the Town Planning Board to give notice of their schemes to individual property owners, the Town Planning Board's preparations for the scheme did not go unnoticed by those who would be affected. The Board held a meeting on 14 March 1922 to address a number of complaints raised by

²⁵⁴ *Halifax City Council Minutes, 1916-1917*. 4 March 1917. HRM Archives, p. 436.

²⁵⁵ F.W.W. Doane was a long-time resident of Young Avenue and Robert M. Hattie lived on Henry Street. Hodgins, *A City Transformed?*, p. 106; "Object Lesson in Beautifying the Streets Given by Public Spirited Citizens," p. 2.

private citizens regarding the proposal to have Connaught Avenue run parallel with the railway along the eastern shore of the North West Arm, from Quinpool Road to Franklyn Street. "It is the opinion of this meeting that the construction of this driveway would be inadvisable on account of its expense being practically prohibitive and further that it would ruin some of the City's most beautiful Residences, Clubs, and other properties without any compensating benefits to the Citizens of Halifax."²⁵⁶

Sixteen property owners asked to have the thoroughfare along the shore removed from the official plan. This was a united front on the part of the property owners. While the area itself was fairly homogenous in terms of the wealth and social standing of its residents, the group protesting included estates and social clubs, in addition to private citizens.²⁵⁷ Although some streets were laid out and developed in the southwestern portion of the city, most notably a small portion of Connaught Avenue south of Quinpool Road that stretched to Jubilee Road, protests on the part of private citizens directly contributed to the removal of the thoroughfare in question. This aided in the preservation of the shoreline of the North-West Arm for the residences and recreational activities of the upper-classes well into the twentieth century. It is somewhat of a surprise that so many of the property owners along the North-West Arm were dissatisfied with the Board's proposal and fault appears to lie with the Town Planning Board. In August of 1920, Thomas Adams recommended that the Board focus on securing reservations along the Arm and consulting with private property owners.²⁵⁸ This would have provided the Board with an opportunity to try and convince the residents who lived along the Arm of

²⁵⁶ *Minutes of Halifax Town Planning Board 1916-1949*, 14 March 1922. HRM Archives, 102-40.1, p. 56.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁸ *Minutes of Halifax Town Planning Board 1916-1949*, 31 August 1920. HRM Archives, 102-40.1, p. 46.

the importance of the Board's plan and to gauge the resistance that would be faced. However, it appears that the Board was somewhat blindsided with the request to remove the proposed extension of Connaught Avenue. Within two years, the advice of a world-recognized expert had fallen by the wayside.

In the minute book of the Town Planning Board, discussions surrounding the fate of properties and streets that would be affected by the extension of Connaught Avenue are frequently discussed. The most notable property was the estate of the late W.A. Hendry between Windsor Street and Kempt Road. At the time the Northwest entrance to Halifax lay at the intersection of Kempt and Dutch Village Roads and the Board planned to turn the property into a public park. They offered the Hendry estate \$2500 to purchase the land, but the overseers rejected it, preferring instead to meet with an arbitrator to negotiate a settlement. The Town Planning Board refused to cooperate and the plan for the park at the entrance to the city was scuttled.²⁵⁹

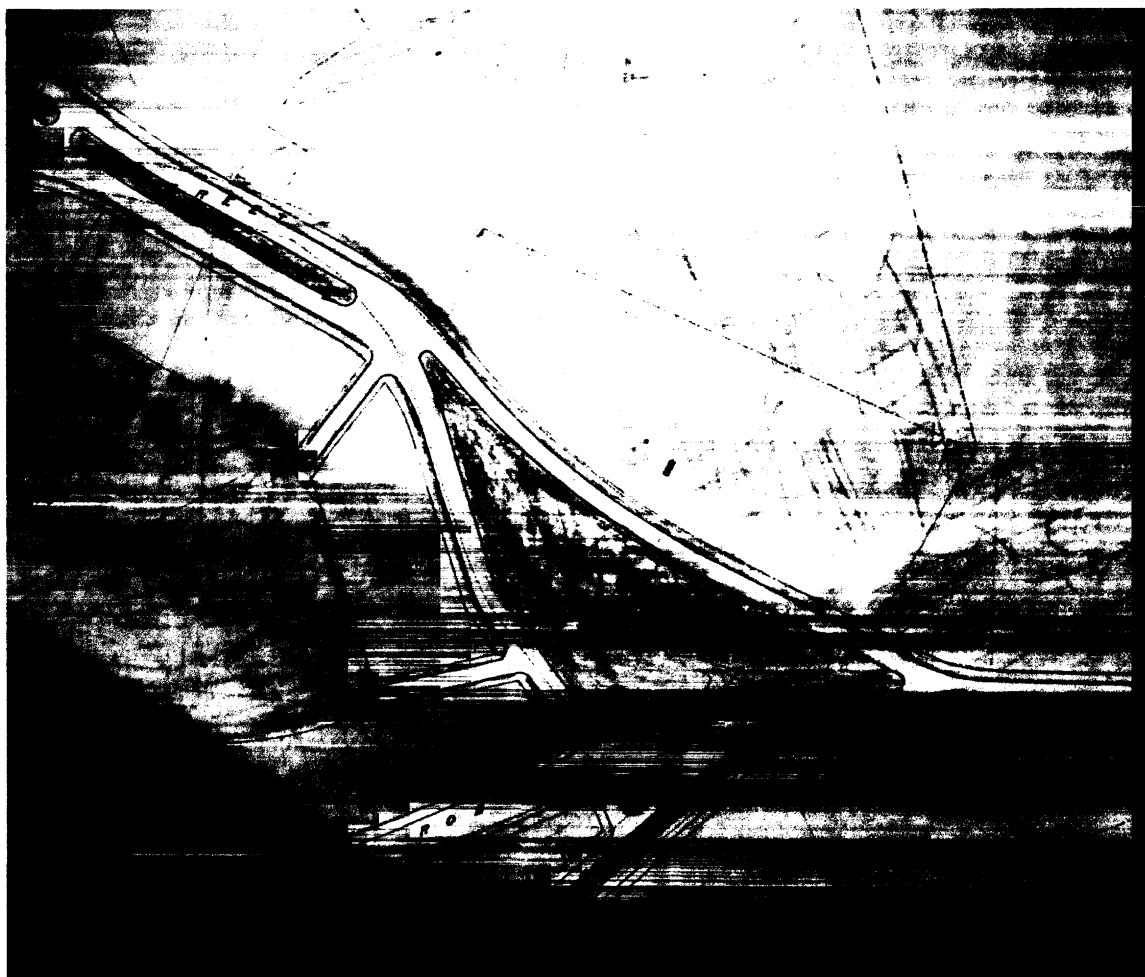
The following day, *The Morning Chronicle* reported the outcome of this meeting and provided details of the negotiations. According to the paper, C.J. Creighton, the Hendry estates' representative, had countered the Town Planning Board's offer of \$2500 with a demand for five cents per square foot, which would roughly equate to \$20 000. Despite the scale of this inflated figure the paper noted some members of the Board were disappointed that it was in fact a fairly low price given the land's value on the open

²⁵⁹ *Minutes of Halifax Town Planning Board 1916-1949*, 23 March 1922. HRM Archives, 102-40.1, p. 60-1.

market.²⁶⁰ The paper also reported on the “strenuous” efforts of the residents living along the North West Arm to eliminate the proposed extension of Connaught Avenue.²⁶¹

Figure Six: Plan of Entrances to City at Fairview, 1922

This was the plan developed for the entrance to Halifax at Fairview. Connaught Avenue and Windsor Street were to have merged into one as the boulevard that was to have run the length of the peninsula from Point Pleasant Park to this entrance would have ended with a large green island in the middle of the incoming and outgoing traffic lanes. The areas lightly shaded in green and brown surrounding the roadways were to be parkland for the citizens of Halifax from the Hendry Estate. This intersection is now where Windsor Street and Kempt Road meet the beginning of the Bedford Highway.



HRM Archives. DD-7-5644.

²⁶⁰ “Armview Drive Eliminated,” *The Morning Chronicle*, 15 March 1922, p. 2.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*

It is clear from analyzing this plan for the Hendry estate [Figure Six] that had the city purchased the land and created a grand entrance to the city, with an accompanying park, this would have significantly altered the whole make-up of the Northwest tip of the peninsula. The plans for Connaught Avenue would have streamlined access from the North End of the city to the South End, while purchasing the estate and creating the parkland would have put a large green-space and recreational area in the heart of the Industrial zone of the city. Residents and labourers who worked in the area could have enjoyed a space free of commercial and industrial uses, similar to those available in other areas of Halifax. As other areas that were once utilized for commercial and industrial uses were gradually phased out in favour of more residential areas, this portion of the city became the only place for industry to grow on the peninsula, a trend that began in the 1910s.²⁶²

The question arises as to why the city did not purchase the land from the Hendry estate. It is clear that money was the principal deterrent. Though evidence points to the offer of the Hendry estate being a reasonable one, the city was not prepared to pay tens of thousands of dollars for this land. The offer of \$2500 was clearly not one that the estate could seriously entertain. The eagerness of the Hendry estate to fix a sale price through the process of arbitration indicates that the representatives of the estate felt they were justified in their asking price of five cents per square foot.²⁶³

On 11 April 1922 the Town Planning Board, under authority granted by the Commissioner of Public Works and Mines, announced the creation of the largest and most comprehensive planning scheme to that date [Appendix]. This plan was adopted as

²⁶² Fingard, Guildford, and Sutherland, *Halifax: The First 250 Years*, p.119

²⁶³ "Armview Drive Eliminated," *The Morning Chronicle*, 15 March 1922, p. 2.

the official Town Planning Scheme for the city, enabling the Board to zone and regulate further development.²⁶⁴ The physical area contained within the planning scheme consisted of the overwhelming majority of what were then the boundaries of the City of Halifax. The only notable area within the City of Halifax that the plan did not encompass was the HRC administered Devastated Area, which was specifically excluded in a note accompanying the written description of the area encompassed. Other lands that did not fall under the jurisdiction of the Town Planning Board in the scheme were properties owned by the Dominion government, such as the Wellington Barracks and the new Seaport, as well as Point Pleasant Park.²⁶⁵ With the submission of the scheme for Halifax by the Town Planning Board came yet another request to vary the regulations of the 1915 Town Planning Act. However, this request went far beyond any previous requests on the part of the Board:

Further Resolved that the Commissioner be requested to vary the Nova Scotia Town Planning Scheme Procedure Regulations, 1915, to such an extent that if the Scheme and Map are approved by him, either as submitted or with any modifications thereof, all the requirements of the said Procedure Regulations shall be deemed to have been complied with, any omission or irregularity notwithstanding, and the said Scheme and Map so approved, shall be deemed to be of full force and effect under the Town Planning Act, 1915.²⁶⁶

This was an unprecedented request on the part of the Town Planning Board; no longer was the Board aiming to have specific articles in the 1915 Act varied to suit their needs. If anything out of place were to be found within the Halifax Town Planning Board's scheme, it would still meet the requirements of the Town Planning Act, essentially giving the board the power to cover for their own mistakes and omissions.

²⁶⁴ *Minutes of Halifax Town Planning Board 1916-1949*, 11 April 1922. HRM Archives, 102-40.1, p. 62.

²⁶⁵ *Minutes of Halifax Town Planning Board 1916-1949*, 11 April 1922. HRM Archives, 102-40.1, pp. 62-3.

²⁶⁶ *Minutes of Halifax Town Planning Board 1916-1949*, 11 April 1922. HRM Archives, 102-40.1, p. 64.

Presumably this power would not deter a professional board from their objective, but it would provide a mechanism for unforeseen issues to be handled without input from beyond the Town Planning Board.

It is clear the members of the Town Planning Board saw themselves as suitable arbitrators for the development of land within the area designated by their planning scheme. What is most notable regarding this plan was the lack of information that succeeded it. Only four meetings of the Town Planning Board were held following the Board's major announcement and unprecedented request for an exemption from the regulations contained within the Act. The minutes of these final meetings of 1922 do not further address the comprehensive scheme that had been outlined in such detail at the meeting of the Town Planning Board on 11 April 1922. Instead they focus on requests from private citizens concerning smaller developments, though the developments fell within the boundaries of the Town Planning Board's comprehensive scheme announced in April of 1922.²⁶⁷ Though the plan was adopted according to the Town Planning Board's minutes, nothing else appears to have been implemented as a result of the newly created scheme.

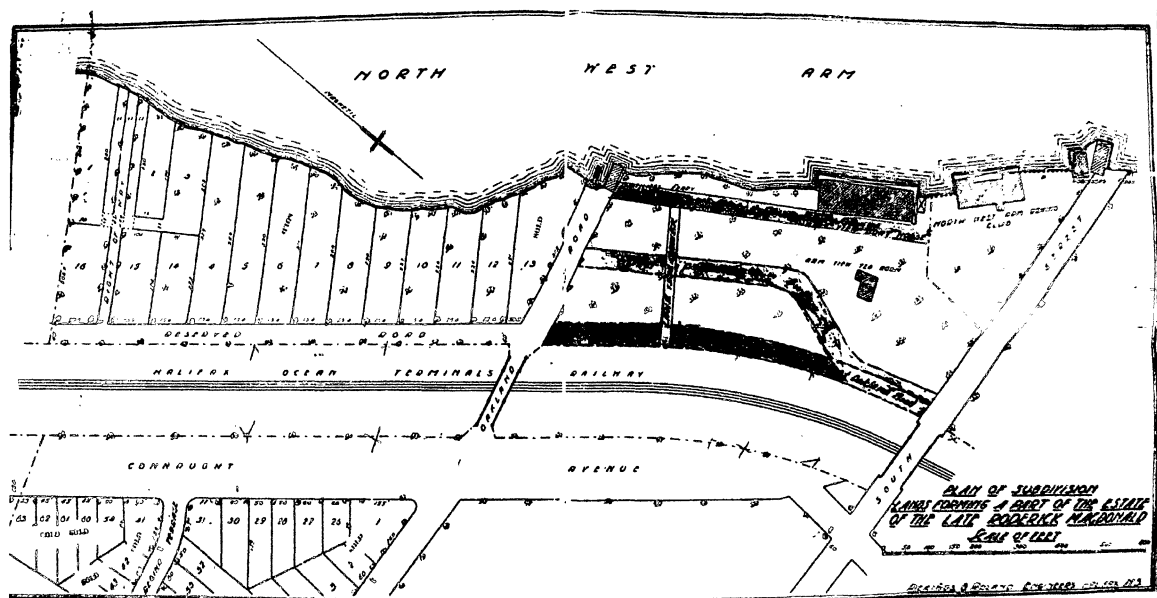
Fittingly, the final entries in the minute book of the Town Planning Board during its initial existence, concern the division of one of Halifax's most prominent estates. Known as the "Oaklands", the history of the estate was recounted in a mid-twentieth century article in the *Halifax Mail-Star*. William Cunard, son of shipping magnate Sir Samuel Cunard, purchased the property in 1861, later purchasing additional land from John W. Richie. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries portions of the

²⁶⁷ *Minutes of Halifax Town Planning Board 1916-1949*, 11 April 1922. HRM Archives, 102-40.1, pp. 65-8.

estate were subdivided into lots. In 1904, Roderick MacDonald purchased the largest single portion of the estate, with the Northern portion of the estate donated to the Halifax Amateur Boat Club.²⁶⁸ Soon after MacDonald's death in the early 1920s, the representatives of his estate opted to sell his main holding. This piece of property lay on the North West Arm, located at the end of Oakland Road, which had been the thoroughway through the original estate. It was the further continuation of a trend of subdividing large parcels of land that had been a part of the city's network of estates along the North West Arm during the nineteenth century.

Figure Seven: Plan of the Subdivision of Part of the Roderick MacDonald Estate, 1922

This is the plan of the subdivision of the property of Roderick MacDonald, and the creating of a new city street Rockcliffe. The new streets are outlined in black on the plan. It is interesting to note that the area on the left-hand side of the MacDonald Estate has already been subdivided for construction.



HRM Archives. DD-1-5455.

On 13 November, 1922, in what would prove to be the final meeting of the Town Planning Board for well over a decade, a private developer discussed the construction of

²⁶⁸ "Modern Homes Crowd Site of Once-Famed 'Oaklands'," *The Halifax Mail-Star*. 21 April 1952. p. 14.

a new street that was to run through what had been the private property of Roderick MacDonald [see Figure Seven]. This street was to be named Rockcliffe and would allow for development on either side. Though it is noted that the plan was approved, it does not mention when construction would begin.²⁶⁹ Though the area would remain elite in character, through the implementation of the railway cut, roadways, and public transport, the area along the shore of the North West Arm had lost a considerable degree of its exclusiveness.

No explanation is found in the minute book that accounts for this significant gap in the work of the Town Planning Board. The possibility exists that the minutes were either lost or not recorded, but this is unlikely given what is recorded in the minute book for the meeting in 1931;

A discussion took place on the present status of the Town Planning Scheme and Plan, it was moved by Alderman Redmond, seconded by Alderman Smeltzer and passed, that the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, City Engineer, and Mr. Hattie be a sub-committee to interview the premier regarding the matter of approval of the Town Planning Scheme and Plan with amendments thereto, and the City Engineer was instructed to write him giving the history of the movement up to date and asking for his cooperation in the matter of securing a Scheme and Plan for the City of Halifax.²⁷⁰

At the end of the meeting, the Board instructed the city engineer to provide a copy of the scheme proposed and drafted in 1922 for each member of the board.²⁷¹ This was a clear indication that the Board had not met since 1922 and members needed to familiarize or re-familiarize themselves with the project. Curiously, a hint of an explanation is found a few years later. Between 1931 and 1937 a total of four meetings were held. At a meeting

²⁶⁹ *Minutes of Halifax Town Planning Board 1916-1949*, 27 June 1922, 27 July 1922, 10 November 1922, and 13 November 1922, HRM Archives, 102-40.1, p. 65-8.

²⁷⁰ *Minutes of Halifax Town Planning Board 1916-1949*, 29 June 1931, HRM Archives, 102-40.1, p. 69.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*

held on 2 July 1937, it was reported that on the 18th of June, 1937 the secretary of the Town Planning Board had received the Town Planning Scheme and Map from the Minister of Public Works and Mines that was sent to the Commissioner of Public Works and Mines on 11 April 1922.²⁷²

The inevitable question that arises as a result of this sudden conclusion of the affairs of the Town Planning Board is what caused this abrupt end. No single definite cause can be identified, nor does one likely exist; the Board still technically existed, and the hiatus came without warning. The City Council minutes from 1922, for example, contain a list of who was to be nominated to fill vacancies on the Town Planning Board beginning the following year. Aldermen Caldwell and Kelly were to remain on the board, along with the mayor. However, all of the other positions were to be filled by new members, John B. Douglas in 1924 and Richard Power in 1925.²⁷³ Given that these were individuals who were not affiliated with the Board previously it is a strong indication of the continued operation of the Town Planning Board.

A cursory survey of the Maritime Provinces after the First World War points to a number of factors that contributed to a social, economic, and political environment within the city of Halifax that was not conducive to the work of a Progressive institution like the Town Planning Board. The optimistic climate that existed within both Halifax and the greater overall Maritime region during the first two decades of the twentieth century had largely disappeared by the 1920s, replaced with one of social pessimism and economic despair. The post-Confederation trend of declining political representation for the region

²⁷² *Minutes of Halifax Town Planning Board 1916-1949*, 2 July 1937. HRM Archives, 102-40.1, p. 75.

²⁷³ *Halifax City Council Minutes, 1922-1923*. 8 June 1922. HRM Archives. p. 96.

in Ottawa continued unabated.²⁷⁴ The effect of the loss of seats in Parliament versus the rest of Canada paled in comparison to the effect of a 1918 order to have the management of the Intercolonial Railway overseen by Canadian Northern, headquartered in Toronto.

Canadian Northern raised the cost of exporting both raw materials and finished goods from the region, severely crippling an already feeble economic structure. What was already a subject of scorn from the region due to a perception of the rail system benefiting companies based in Ontario and Québec over those in the Maritimes became a focal point for the region's dissatisfaction throughout the 1920s.²⁷⁵ Halifax did not suffer as acutely as rural areas reliant on the production and export of primary goods, but the increased cost in transporting raw goods did affect the city as significantly less shipping occurred. By 1923, the Port of Halifax's percentage of Canadian shipping had declined from around twenty percent to just over ten percent in less than five years. Another critical factor in the decline of Halifax's seaport was the acquisition of the Grand Trunk railroad in the Northeastern United States by the Dominion government. This opened up the city of Portland as a chief competitor to Halifax, which already had a regional rival in Saint John.²⁷⁶

Some historians have raised dissenting opinions about both the significance of the effect of the changes in the rate structure to the Intercolonial railway, and the importance of the Intercolonial railway itself. Ken Cruikshank was of the opinion that the business model itself was flawed, resulting in a change to the freight-rate structure. The Intercolonial primarily serviced small communities within the Maritimes; few goods were

²⁷⁴ E. R. Forbes, *Maritime Rights: The Maritime Rights Movement, 1919-1927* (Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 1979), p. 13-4.

²⁷⁵ David Frank, "The 1920s: Class and Region, Resistance and Accommodation," *The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation*, Eds., E.R. Forbes and D.A. Muise (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), p. 228.

²⁷⁶ Forbes, *Maritime Rights*, p. 26.

shipped beyond the Intercolonial system; local traffic on the Intercolonial sharply declined during and following World War I, resulting in an increasing lack of feasibility for the service.²⁷⁷ Meanwhile, other historians have championed the importance of the Intercolonial to the industrialization that occurred in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and regard the loss of control over the railway network as a significant turning point in the Maritime region's deindustrialization.²⁷⁸ In response to the argument put forth principally by Cruikshank, Forbes revisited his original research and found that, indeed, the argument that he originally put forth still held a considerable degree of merit.²⁷⁹ While debate amongst historians regarding the significance of the Intercolonial Railway's change in management and rate fares is important to acknowledge, for the purpose of this thesis it is the effect of the changes that is key to further discussions.

Another drain on Halifax's economic fortunes was the conclusion of the First World War itself. As the primary seaport for the British Empire in North America, Halifax had been the main staging ground for the naval convoys bound for Europe. Thousands of people passed through Halifax as part of the war effort, creating a huge, though artificial, economic windfall for the city. When the First World War ended in late 1918, the positive economic effects soon disappeared. The war had provided a boon to the staples economy as demand rose for fish, agricultural, and forestry products, both at home and abroad. With World War I concluded, the Nova Scotian market suffered as

²⁷⁷ Ken Cruikshank, "The Intercolonial Railway, Freight Rates, and the Maritime Economy," *Acadiensis*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (Autumn 1992), p. 110.

²⁷⁸ James Bickerton, *Nova Scotia, Ottawa, and the Politics of Regional Development*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), p. 45.

²⁷⁹ E.R. Forbes, "The Intercolonial Railway and the Decline of the Maritime Provinces Revisited," and Ken Cruikshank, "With Apologies to James: A Response to E.R. Forbes," *Acadiensis*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (Autumn 1994), pp. 3-34.

many Europeans were again able to harvest primary goods, and the number of personnel passing through the province dissipated.²⁸⁰ The rate of unemployment rose sharply and housing construction, which during the First World War managed to generate millions of dollars of spending within Halifax, collapsed to under a half-million annually during the early 1920s.²⁸¹

Though the Town Planning Board may have gone on a semi-permanent hiatus during November of 1922, examining the minutes of the City Council in the few years following the extended-hiatus of the Town Planning Board provides a clearer picture of the crises faced by the municipal government of Halifax as well as a shift in the tone and demeanor of that government. Perhaps the most striking feature of the City Council's minute books from the year of the Town Planning Board's hiatus, 1922, are a number of temporary loans that the city withdrew from the Royal Bank of Canada relatively close to the beginning of the municipal calendar in May of 1922. Two were for upgrades to municipal roadways in the amounts of \$6157.50 and \$4725.36; the other two were much more significant.²⁸² The first loan was for the amount of \$100 000.00. The reasoning behind the loan was that the City Council was granted the authority, under changes to the City Charter made the year previous, "to borrow from time to time on Resolution of Council, an amount not exceeding one-hundred thousand dollars, in anticipation of the water rates for any year...".²⁸³ It was intended that the loan, granted at a rate of six percent interest, would be repaid through the collection of water rates.²⁸⁴ Even more striking was a loan taken out by the City of Halifax against unpaid taxes. Under Section

²⁸⁰ Guildford, "Coping with De-industrialization," p. 80.

²⁸¹ Forbes, *Maritime Rights*, pp. 56, 63.

²⁸² *Halifax City Council Minutes, 1922-1923*. 16 May 1922. HRM Archives, p. 28.

²⁸³ *Halifax City Council Minutes, 1922-1923*. 16 May 1922. HRM Archives, p. 27.

²⁸⁴ *Halifax City Council Minutes, 1922-1923*. 16 May 1922. HRM Archives, p. 27.

310 of the City Charter, the City of Halifax could borrow up to thirty percent of the total amount of municipal taxes collected during the current year. “The City of Halifax do forthwith borrow from the Royal Bank of Canada, the sum of \$576 900.00 to be applied to defraying expenditures for which the taxes of the current year, would if now collected, be applied, to be repaid to the said Bank out of the said taxes when collected...”.²⁸⁵

Other loans that were being withdrawn by the City of Halifax provide further indication as to the direction the municipal government was aiming to push Halifax towards in terms of urban development. Loans were being withdrawn for the expansion of water, sewer, and electrical services. These loans were for amounts well into the hundreds of thousands of dollars, with one loan totaling \$164 400.00 and the other \$226 300.00. The authority for the City Council to submit tenders for both loans had only recently been authorized through an Act passed in City Council inclusive from 1918 to 1922. Both were to be repaid at a rate of five percent per annum, repayable in thirty years’ time, beginning on 1 July 1952.²⁸⁶ The minutes of the City Council indicate that the focus on the part of the municipality appeared to be shifting from expanding and radically altering the geographical footprint of Halifax, to one of upgrading the infrastructure of the city.

The evidence found in the minutes is supported by the article in *The Halifax Herald* that characterized the loan as one that was necessary in order to further advance the infrastructure of Halifax’s existing roadways and continue to expand the tramway system in the city. Though the *Herald* did report that council members expended a considerable time discussing the loan, the decision to borrow the money was unanimous,

²⁸⁵ *Halifax City Council Minutes, 1922-1923*. 16 May 1922. HRM Archives, pp. 27-8.

²⁸⁶ *Halifax City Council Minutes, 1922-1923*. 2 June 1922. HRM Archives, pp. 61-2.

an indication of Council's eagerness to update infrastructure.²⁸⁷ Council's authorization of applications for loans pertaining to roadway infrastructure was in step with the province's priority of constructing a network of modern highways. Despite declining revenues, the provincial government sharply increased the roadways portion of the budget from just fewer than fifteen percent in 1916 to nearly one third of the entire budget in 1926.²⁸⁸

Another loan totaling \$73 755.90 "for various purposes," authorized under changes to the City Council in 1922, was withdrawn from the Royal Bank of Canada on the 2nd of June, 1922. This loan was borrowed against future revenue to be collected by the City of Halifax. The accounts submitted to the City Council reported various municipal functions this loan was to be spent upon including maintenance for the public gardens, schools, and committees. Perhaps the most interesting expenditure in the accounts for this loan was an ear-marking of \$10 000.00 for the Halifax Unemployment Relief Committee. This money was for "the unemployment problem" which existed in Halifax, though it was noted that the expenditures regarding unemployment were less than anticipated, and the majority of the \$10 000.00 would not be necessary until the winter months.²⁸⁹

Unemployment throughout Halifax was a major concern of the City Council towards the end of 1922. On 9 November 1922 the mayor requested that the City Council appoint a special committee of three members, separate from the Halifax Unemployment Relief Committee to address the growing unemployment problem.²⁹⁰ However, the

²⁸⁷ "City Will Borrow \$390 700," *Halifax Herald*, 3 June 1922, p. 3.

²⁸⁸ Guildford, "Coping with De-industrialization," p. 80.

²⁸⁹ *Halifax City Council Minutes, 1922-1923*. 2 June 1922. HRM Archives, pp. 63-5.

²⁹⁰ *Halifax City Council Minutes, 1922-1923*. 9 November 1922. HRM Archives, p. 292.

establishment of another committee to examine the city's unemployment problem was not satisfactory from the point of view of The Unemployed Association, an independent body comprised of out-of-work members of the laboring class. At a meeting of the City Council on 7 December 1922, the Unemployed Association submitted a strongly-worded letter to the City Council admonishing their efforts to combat the problem of unemployment in Halifax.

We the members of the Unemployed Association of this City, wish to draw to your attention the serious situation of affairs that is being caused thru the increase of unemployment throughout the City and outside points, and also to the seeming lack of attention of the City Council and governments in trying to cope with the situation. We, therefore, feel it is our duty as law abiding (sic) of this City to ask your Council to take some immediate steps definite action in this very serious matter, which we consider is of greatest importance to the City and port of Halifax, as we are of the opinion that the City Council has had plenth (sic) of time during the summer and fall months to have devised some definite ways and means of dealing with the question, and up to the present, we cannot get any satisfactory answer of anything that has been done.

We would also ask your Worship and Members of the City Council how do you think it is possible for a man and his family to exist on the sum of \$2.50 – Two dollars and fifty cents, (this amount we are given to understand as being the weekly allowance paid out by the Civic Welfare Bureau) when the Dominion Government Bureau states definitely that it costs \$20.80 to keep a man and his family?...

...Your Worship and Gentlemen, we may state that we at present are able to produce substantial evidence of several special cases which so far as we can ascertain are worthy of attention, together with the manner in which they have been dealt with by some of the Workers to whose attention they have been brought. Copies of this letter are being sent to His Honour Lieutenant Governor Grant, the Public Press, the Trades and Labour Council, and the Clergy, asking for their co-operation with you for action in the matter.²⁹¹

The intention of this letter is pertinently clear, to show that the efforts on the part of Halifax's City Council to combat the unemployment situation within the city were not

²⁹¹ "Letter from the Unemployed Association to Halifax City Council," *Halifax City Council Minutes, 1922-1923*. 7 December 1922. HRM Archives, pp. 319-20.

effective. The allowance being provided to unemployed labourers was not enough to sustain one man, let alone one with a family. Just as had been predicted during the summer months, the loan for \$10 000.00 was spent by early 1923. At a meeting of the Council on 8 February 1923, the Halifax Unemployment Relief Committee asked the Council for a further \$10 000.00 to support the efforts of the Committee for the remainder of the fiscal year, until 1 May 1923.²⁹²

Despite the fact that all evidence points towards no meetings occurring, under the appointments section of the minutes of the City Council from the year 1 May 1923 to 30 April 1924, the Town Planning Board and its members for that year are listed. Mayor Murphy was reappointed along with Aldermen Colwell, Drysdale, and Ex-Alderman Kelly. Two private citizens, J. B. Douglas and Richard Power Sr. were also appointed members.²⁹³ Given the strongly worded letter addressed to the City Council the year before, it is somewhat surprising that the minutes do not mention the unemployment situation to the same degree that the previous year's minutes had. In fact, only one entry concerning Halifax's unemployment situation are found in the minute book for that year, with the mayor reporting that the City's Works Department had purchased a large quantity of stone with the intention of opening up a stone shed to help relieve the employment crisis.²⁹⁴

Just as had been done the previous fiscal year, the City Council again withdrew loans in anticipation of funds to be collected through the water rates and taxes over the course of the coming year. Again, the loan in anticipation of the water rates totaled \$100 000.00, the loan taken out in anticipation of the collection of taxes was again made for

²⁹² *Halifax City Council Minutes, 1922-1923*. 8 February 1923. HRM Archives, p. 379.

²⁹³ *Halifax City Council Minutes, 1923-1924*. 10 May 1923. HRM Archives, p. 23.

²⁹⁴ *Halifax City Council Minutes, 1923-1924*. 10 January 1924. HRM Archives, p. 398.

thirty percent of the amount of taxes collected for the current year, in this case \$591 450.00.²⁹⁵ Though these loans were not specifically called into question, the finances of the City of Halifax, along with the system of municipal government, were called into question via an independent audit conducted by Price, Waterhouse, and Company in regards to specific policies and methods of various departments. Submitted to the Council by the Mayor on 22 February 1924, the conclusions of this audit called for sweeping changes to the City of Halifax's accounting practices. Though the report contained a dozen recommendations, the most significant were: to modernize the system by employing a local firm of Chartered Accountants, transfer some of the authority of the City Treasurer to the City Auditor or Comptroller, to have regular independent audits of the City's finances, collect unpaid taxes, and to seek a new banking arrangement for the City of Halifax.²⁹⁶ Of these recommendations, the final two merit further discussion as they point to a fiscal crisis affecting the city.

According to the Mayor, the report assessed the amount of unpaid taxes at \$2 416 282.00, including the current year, with some unpaid taxes stretching back several years. In many cases the city had the authority to sell the properties for which taxes had been unpaid, however at the time the housing market was so terrible that this was not considered a viable option;

These properties can only be disposed of at a tremendous sacrifice, for the reason that at the present time there is little, if any, demand for real estate. To sell these properties under conditions now obtaining would seem to me both unwise and disastrous. It is necessary at this time that we exercise sound common sense. We must realize that over a long period of years conditions were permitted to grow up under which the necessity of prompt

²⁹⁵ *Halifax City Council Minutes, 1923-1924*. 10 May 1923. HRM Archives, p. 16.

²⁹⁶ *Halifax City Council Minutes, 1923-1924*. 22 February 1924. HRM Archives. pp. 448-55.

payment of taxes was not specifically brought home to our City and it is impossible overnight to remedy this situation.²⁹⁷

In order for the city to recover its unpaid taxes, while avoiding the pitfalls of entering the real estate market, the Mayor proposed four steps to create a solution. The first was to extend the City's lien. The second was to directly negotiate a payment plan and dates with the rate-payers whose accounts were in arrears. The third was for the city to accept second mortgages or another satisfactory form of security from rate-payers until their debts to the City were paid. The fourth and final recommendation was to place the property for sale if no arrangements or other forms of security could be obtained; clearly this was the least palatable option for all parties involved.²⁹⁸

As a result of a high level of unpaid taxes over the previous several years, the City of Halifax was forced to withdraw loans at the beginning of the fiscal year to cover expenses until tax dollars from the current fiscal year began to be deposited in the City's accounts. The repayment agreement made between the City and the Royal Bank of Canada several years before would only allow the loan to be repaid in full. Money which was for loan repayment was placed on deposit with the bank, not applied to the cost of repaying the loan; as a result of the City of Halifax being unable to collect all of the back taxes owed, advances from the bank could not be repaid.²⁹⁹ Given the financial predicament the City of Halifax was in, renegotiation of the City's financial arrangements with the bank was necessary. The following day, news of the municipal reforms being put in place by the current council was found on the front page of *The Halifax Herald*, with an entire transcription of Mayor Murphy's address to Council reprinted. The paper

²⁹⁷ *Halifax City Council Minutes, 1923-1924*. 22 February 1924. HRM Archives. p. 450.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 451.

²⁹⁹ *Halifax City Council Minutes, 1923-1924*. 22 February 1924, p. 452.

reported that the entire Council accepted the proposal, though some animosity existed between councilors. It was even reported that one councilor had cast his vote in favour of the adoption of the recommendations only to avoid being smeared by the local newspapers.³⁰⁰

However, perhaps the strongest evidence linking the effects of a budgetary crisis and unemployment problems as a drain on the talent and energy of progressively-minded members of the municipal government is found when examining F.W.W. Doane's letter of resignation from his position as City Engineer in April of 1924.

The policy of reduction in pay of City employees adopted by the Council, as you are aware, increases my income tax by \$500.00 if I stay in city service.

If the policy decided upon affected all taxpayers in the same proportion, I would cheerfully bear my share of the common sacrifice, but as it is a special tax imposed on one class of taxpayers only, I feel justified in transferring to the preferred class.

I have worked for years for a salary considerably smaller than Canadian Engineers estimate the service to be worth, but in justice to my family and profession I must respectfully decline to accept a further cut, and must seek other employment.³⁰¹

In this letter, F.W.W. Doane plainly states the cause of his departure was the measure adopted by City Council in an effort to combat the financial crisis Halifax was facing. Doane's years of service to the City of Halifax were invaluable to the promotion of urban planning within Halifax; he had overseen the expansion and transformation of the city over a generation.

In his opening address to the City Council for the beginning of the municipal year, 1924-25, Mayor John Murphy addressed the changing role of the City Council for

³⁰⁰ "Council Endorses Mayor's Plan For City Hall Reform," *The Halifax Herald*. 23 February 1924, p. 1.

³⁰¹ *Halifax City Council Minutes, 1923-1924*. 10 April 1924. HRM Archives, p. 656.

the people of Halifax in regards to the budgetary and unemployment problems that the city had faced in the previous years.

No Council of the past nor is it likely any Council for many years to come, will have the opportunity which now confronts us to render the city a great and lasting service. Due to a combination of circumstances, we now have a chance in whole or in part to re-organize several important departments and in my judgment depends largely on the manner in which we deal with this situation as to what benefits the rate-payers will receive for the expenses and trouble to which they have gone during the last year.³⁰²

Though Doane's long-time assistant H.W. Johnston was promoted to City Engineer, the department was restructured and significantly reduced at the beginning of the following legislative year in May of 1924. No new assistant was appointed, as it was deemed to be a further burden to the rate-payers, and the role of the City Engineer was recast as a manager of the personnel within the engineering department of the city.³⁰³

Doane's resignation and the Mayor's address to the Council provide evidence in the words of those who were directly facing the effects of the financial and budgetary problems the city was being forced to cope with. For a civil servant such as Doane, the easiest option also proved to be the most lucrative: to walk away from public service and enter private enterprise. For Mayor Murphy and the City Council, changes in the structure and role of the municipality were the most effective means of alleviating the city's multiple problems. The focus of the role of the municipal government was no longer in expanding the City of Halifax; rather it was on maintaining the already-existing city and sheltering Halifax from the worst of a prolonged economic depression that was gripping the entire Maritime region. Given that the evidence found in the minute book of the Town Planning Board points to an organization that aimed to dramatically recast

³⁰² *Halifax City Council Minutes, 1924-1925*. 8 May 1924. HRM Archives, p. 6.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*

areas of Halifax that had already been developed and to expand future urban areas of the city, it is unsurprising that the efforts of the Town Planning Board fell by the wayside during the 1920s.

CONCLUSION

Urban Planning in Halifax – Reflection of a City and an Era.

Though the Town Planning Board of Halifax reemerged in the 1930s, it was not until a generation after the initial formative years, in the post-Second World War era, that the Board was once again relevant as the city began to expand at a steady pace once more. When examined by itself, the initial flurry of activity surrounding the Town Planning Board's existence, from 1915 to 1922, enables the study of a small progressive organization during a specific and important period in the development of Canadian urban history. However, when examined and interpreted as a piece of the greater history of the city, province, and region, the fate of the Town Planning Board encapsulates many of the characteristics that have come to define an extremely critical juncture in the history of Halifax and Nova Scotia. The Progressive Era Town Planning Board of Halifax was in many ways a victim of its bold intentions, over reliance on professional, expert advice, unforeseen circumstances, a rapid shift in economic fortunes and public temperament, and poor timing. Its examination highlights the exceptional difficulty in linking genuine action to accompany the landmark legislation and the groundswell of public support already achieved prior to the Town Planning Board's formation.

The work and legacy of Halifax's Town Planning Board during its initial inception is a manifestation of the lofty aspirations of advocates of Progressivism. Members of the Board felt that their goal to redesign and expand Halifax through instituting a plan based on the consultation of experts was an altruistic one. They sought to reform and improve Halifax through the utilization of planning principals based on

scientific reason and forethought of the needs of tomorrow's city, while preserving key portions of the city through zoning and regulation. In doing so, the Town Planning Board would avoid the pitfalls of appearing to pander to the wants of one particular ward or community within the city. Yet the reality soon became apparent upon execution of the plans set forth: viable urban planning conducted at a municipal level was not feasible through merely consulting with professionals. The wants and needs of the citizens for whom the plan was intended, and of the Progressive groups and institutions that had advocated the need for planning in the first place, also needed to be considered.

For all the rhetoric regarding "planning for tomorrow," it is surprising that the Town Planning Board failed in its foresight to recognize and address the planning concerns of the public. The Halifax Explosion was a disaster of such magnitude that the powers invested in the Halifax Relief Commission effectively prevented the Town Planning Board from planning much of the working class, North End of the city. Members of the Board resided within the area that would be most affected by their plans, and interacted with members of the community on a regular basis.³⁰⁴ The homes that were to be disrupted by the construction of Connaught Avenue, arguably the most striking change, were middle and upper class. Despite his overly-confident attitude to Halifax's ability to accept his planning concepts, Thomas Adams had in fact warned the Town Planning Board that public consultation was necessary.³⁰⁵

The timing of the creation of the Town Planning Board was both a blessing and a curse for its efforts during the Progressive Era. It was created as a result of a high-water mark for Progressive Era legislation in Nova Scotia and was ushered in at a peak in the

³⁰⁴ Hodgins, "A City Transformed?" p. 65.

³⁰⁵ *Minutes of Halifax Town Planning Board 1916-1949*, 31 August 1920. HRM Archives, 102-40.1, p. 46.

momentum of the Progressive movement. However, the tenor and tone of the city, and in fact the country, would shift with the taxing burden of World War I. Though many prominent aspects of the Progressive Era would remain, such as the application of scientific management in bureaucratic systems and business models, many of the experimental and radical changes that were implemented during the era did not survive. One particular harbinger of the demise of the Town Planning Board was the end of Halifax's Board of Control in 1919, a result of its inability to accomplish the goals set forth upon its inception and the maintenance of municipal governing systems that had existed prior to its creation.³⁰⁶ Another stark signal of the shifting mood came with the demise of the Commission of Conservation in 1921. Prime Minister Arthur Meighen justified the repeal of the Act creating the Commission because it had no authority and could only be temporary in character.³⁰⁷

The creation of the railway cut and the new Seaport facilities only a few years before had left both a figurative and literal scar on much of the South End. Upgrades to the city's transportation infrastructure had long been in demand by Halifax's business community. South End residents knew this, and at times were advocates for improvements themselves. The inflexibility of the Borden Government's design that permanently altered the historic and pristine landscape of the South End, however, would cast a huge shadow on future planning endeavors.³⁰⁸ Although the railway cut had succeeded in providing the necessary infrastructure, in doing so its implementation had exhausted much of the resident's goodwill towards urban planning, a sentiment that the members of the Town Planning Board perhaps should have predicted.

³⁰⁶ Roper, "The Halifax Board of Control," p. 64.

³⁰⁷ Armstrong, "Thomas Adams," p. 33.

³⁰⁸ Hodgins, *A City Transformed?*, pp. 74, 81, 103.

Despite the poor execution of the Town Planning Board's designs for the city, disappointment amongst some for the railway cut, and the shifting priorities as a result of World War I and the effects of the 1917 Explosion, urban planning in Halifax suffered a tremendous setback in the early 1920s that was unlike other cities. While many aspects of Progressive movement planning did not outlast the era, and the noted spirit of the era's champions was tempered, it was during the Progressive era that urban planning was finally established as an integral part of a city or town's growth and development in both the short and long term. Urban planning existed during the inter-war period as a practical application to issues within the municipal realm such as public housing, utilities, and road construction and repair.³⁰⁹ Hallmarks of urban planning disappeared; members of the business and political elite were no longer concerned with Halifax's expansion or the construction of grand boulevards and entrances and expanses of urban parkland.

Upon first glance, this is unsurprising given the economic and employment tribulations that Halifax was facing. Why would the municipal government invest in the city's physical expansion when growth in population was literally stagnant? The abrupt halt to what had been a prominent and vocal desire for a strong, progressive urban planning agenda can be linked to the greater sentiment of a return to a more conservative and traditional perspective which accompanied the widespread de-industrialization that occurred throughout the region in the 1920s and 1930s. The designs put forth by the Town Planning Board during the late 1910s and early 1920s were visionary indeed, but they were presumptuous in their assumption that Halifax would continue, or even accelerate, in its expansion. Perhaps if the plans of the Board had been styled towards

³⁰⁹ John Bacher, "From Study to Reality: The Establishment of Public Housing in Halifax, 1930-1953," *Acadiensis*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (Autumn 1988), pp. 120-135

functionality and flexibility, due to a volatile and uncertain future, the Town Planning Board would have continued to have an impact.

The most successful Progressive era institutions to weather these changes were those which served the most necessary of functions. The Department of Technical Education was modernized and adapted to cope with the lack of demand for professional engineers in the province.³¹⁰ The medical profession thrived in part thanks to the efforts of philanthropic organizations; both the Rockefeller and Carnegie Foundations contributed to Dalhousie's medical school as well as the establishment of the Massachusetts-Halifax Health Commission following the 1917 Explosion.³¹¹ It helped that both the Department of Technical Education and the Medical communities had strong internal leadership, something the Town Planning Board had lacked since the departure of Robert Hattie. The most recognizable example, in that it remained a generational institution throughout much of the twentieth century, was the Halifax Relief Commission. It continued to maintain ownership of the Hydrostone until after the Second World War and issued pensions to survivors well into the 1970s. Still a distinctly working class neighbourhood following the Explosion and redevelopment, the administration of the HRC compelled residents to maintain a standard in upkeep and conformity.³¹²

The Town Planning Board's over-reliance on a core group of men whose membership stemmed from either a professional credential or their status as a champion of codifying planning in Halifax exposes the narrowness of the base of the Board. The

³¹⁰ Guildford, "Coping with De-industrialization," p. 81.

³¹¹ John G. Reid, "Health, Education, Economy: Philanthropic Foundations in the Atlantic Region in the 1920s and 1930s," *Acadiensis*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (Autumn 1984), p. 68.

³¹² Morton, *Ideal Surroundings*.

resulting tendency not to consult with other bodies in the community, such as the Council of Women whose members had been central to creating the conditions that allowed for the Board's creation, proved a critical limitation. While well-intentioned, the members of the Planning Board appear from their actions to have become increasingly inward looking and aloof as the years progressed, cutting themselves off from the citizens they sought to benefit and from the Progressive institutions and groups that could have supported them politically and aided them in their setting of a lasting agenda of reform. The handful of men on the Planning Board increasingly thought they knew best, and they must bear a significant share of the responsibility for the failure of their visions to become reality.

The 1920s and 1930s became a period in which Nova Scotians, as a result of the sustained economic stagnation and decline in political influence, began to look into the past as a source of inspiration and empowerment. The government in turn used the sentiment being expressed by the people to manifest and propagate a larger myth of anti-modernism surrounding the province and its people, one that has an enduring legacy.³¹³ The progressive nature of the people of Halifax and Nova Scotia was suppressed through a combination of economic depression, lack of growth, and a sense of attachment to the past and tradition that was reinforced by the government and exported beyond the province. As a field of Progressivism, urban planning was hampered by leadership that was certainly noble and altruistic in their intent, yet overly optimistic and at times arrogant. In approaching the implementation of an urban planning design within Halifax, the Town Planning Board failed to account for the changes that were rapidly occurring as a result of factors both on a local and larger scale.

³¹³ MacKay, "Tartan Triumphant: The Construction of Scottishness in Nova Scotia, 1933-1954," pp.8-9.

Appendix

Description of Area Enclosed within Town Planning Board's Plan for the City of Halifax,
11 April 1922

The Board makes the following order:-

WHEREAS the City of Halifax Town Planning Board has, under permission from the Commissioner of Works and Mines, prepared a Town Planning Scheme for the portion of the City of Halifax comprised within the following boundaries, viz:-

Beginning at the shore of the North West Arm where the same is intersected by the north boundary line of Point Pleasant Park; thence in a northwesterly direction by the shore of the North West Arm to the North West Arm Bridge; thence northerly and easterly by the centre line of the Dutch Village Road to the shore of Bedford Basin following the boundary line dividing the City of Halifax from the Municipality of Halifax thence easterly, northerly and southerly by the shore of Bedford Basin and the Harbor of Halifax to a point formed by the intersection of the said shore with the extension into the Harbor of the north line of the Wellington Barracks, so called; thence in a southwesterly direction by the said extension of the north line of the said Wellington Barracks property and the north line of the said property to the east line of Gottingen Street; thence in a southeasterly direction by the said east line of Gottingen Street to the south line of North Street; thence in a southwesterly direction by the said south line of North Street to the east line of Robie Street; thence southerly by the east line of Robie Street to them north line of South Street; thence easterly by the north line of South Street to the west line of Queen Street; thence northerly 'by the said west line of Queen Street and a line in prolongation thereof to the north line of Sackville Street; thence easterly by the said north line of Sackville Street and a line in prolongation thereof to the western shore of Halifax Harbor; thence southerly by the said western shore of Halifax Harbor to the north boundary line of property acquired 'by the Dominion Government to the Halifax Ocean Terminals Railway; thence westerly by the various courses of the boundary line of the said property acquired by the Halifax Ocean Terminals Railway to the east' line of Hollis Street; thence southerly 'by the said east line of Hollis Street to the south line of South Street; thence westerly 'by the said south line of South Street to the west line of Barrington Street; thence southerly by the said west line of Barrington Street to the north line of property recently acquired by the Dominion Government for the purposes of the Halifax Ocean Terminals Railway; thence westerly, southerly and westerly by the various courses of the boundary line of said Dominion Government property to the east line of South Bland Street; thence southerly by the said east line of South Bland Street to the south line of Atlantic Street; thence westerly by the said south line of Atlantic Street to the east line of McLean Street; thence southerly by the said east line of McLean street to the south line of Owen Street; thence easterly by the south line of Owen Street to the east

line of Young Avenue; thence southerly by the said east line of Young Avenue to the north line of Clarence Street; thence easterly by the north line of Clarence Street and by the boundary of the above mentioned Dominion Government property to the boundary of Point Pleasant Park, so called; thence southerly by the said Point Pleasant Park boundary to the south line of Miller Street; thence westerly by the said south line of Miller Street to the east line of Franklyn Street; thence south easterly by the east line of Franklyn to the north boundary line of Point Pleasant Park; thence southwesterly by the said boundary line of Point Pleasant Park to the place of beginning."

Excepting and reserving however out of the said area all that lot and parcel of land, known as the "Devastated Area" as defined by the Halifax Relief Commission, pursuant to the provisions of Section 38 the Act to incorporate the Halifax Relief Commission and particularly bounded and described as follows:-

"Commencing on the east side of Campbell Road at a point formed by the intersection of the said east side of Campbell Road and the northern boundary of the Military property known as Wellington Barracks; thence westerly. Along the northern line of the said Military property until it comes to the east line of Gottingen Street; thence northerly along the said east line of Gottingen Street until it comes to Russell St.; thence westwardly following the south line of Russell St., extension till it comes to the east line of Robie Street; thence northerly along the east line of Robie Street until it comes to the north line of Leeds Street thence eastwardly following the north line of Leeds Street until it comes to the Intercolonial Railway property; thence southerly along the Intercolonial property and following the eastwardly side of Campbell Road to the place of beginning."

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