Dalhousie Neighbourhood Conversation 2: Community Workshop and Boundary Ideas

On February 21, 2012, a group of approximately 50 people (neighbours, Dalhousie staff, faculty members, students, architects and planners) met to discuss ideas for the university/neighbourhood boundary along South Street. The evening was divided into two parts:

1. A **Community Workshop** to discuss issues identified by neighbours and opportunities for creating solutions

2. **Presentation about boundary ideas** followed by an opportunity for discussion and feedback

**OVERVIEW OF THE EVENING**

*Floyd Dykeman, Vice-President External and Chair of the Dalhousie University Community Committee (DUCC)*, welcomed guests and provided an overview of the evening and the process.

**PART ONE - COMMUNITY WORKSHOP**

Mr. Dykeman identified the importance of conversations between neighbours, HRM and Dalhousie to build positive relationships. Mr. Dykeman also highlighted some of the positive contributions made by the university through the work of the Dalhousie University Community Committee, including:

- Lobbying for and supporting HRM councillors in their efforts to change the land use bylaw, effectively stopping the conversion of single family dwellings to mega-rooming houses.
- Backing the UPass, a metro transit pass for students that has provided some relief to traffic and parking on streets surrounding the university
- Designating a Police Patrol, one of only two at a Canadian university
- Placement of waste receptacles on the perimeter of campus (on HRM property but emptied by Dalhousie FM staff) and select ‘hot spots’ on campus
- Creation of Living in the Halifax Community Calendar, distributed to over 5,000 homes near campus
- Designing the first set of Guiding Principles for Neighbourhood Relations at a University in Canada
- Snow shoveling program for seniors with HRM
- Appointment of a community member on all university building projects
- Increased communication between the university and the community

*Marc Braithwaite, Assistant Vice-President, Student Affairs*, discussed the concept of restorative justice (partnership between the Department of Justice, Correction Services, Halifax Regional Police, and Dalhousie University) as an approach to dealing with issues between neighbours and Dalhousie students and an alternative
to the traditional court system. Mr. Braithwaite discussed the launch of this program at Dalhousie (scheduled for May 1, 2012) and the fact that it would be the first of its kind at a Canadian University.

Mr. Braithwaite also identified the role of neighbours as facilitators and asked for interested volunteers to contact him directly through the Student Services office at 494-7077 or 494-7447.

Jeff Lamb, Assistant Vice-President, Facilities Management, spoke to the group and mentioned that there would be upcoming discussions about the arena, at a later date, and that there was no confirmed information available to share with the group at this time.

ATTENDEES WERE THEN ASKED TO BREAK INTO SMALLER GROUPS AND ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTION: What strategies could make the biggest difference in creating the campus-neighborhood relationship that we want?

The key strategies that surfaced from these conversations were:
(taken from notes submitted by groups)

- Smoking clean up - many receptacles
- Smoking issue - cessation, not pushing smokers to the edge
- Hosting and relationships - students meeting neighbors, direct connection
- Walks and clean up events – light walk is a great thing – coordinate similar walks for insight into other issues (garbage walk, smoking walk, etc)
- Communication and dialogue - with student about parties, with HRM around bylaws, with Dal around new development, Residence Assistants with police about viral invite parties
- Neighbourhood watch
- Student leaders - taking a further role in the community. When students leave the residence system, they should be encouraged to act as “role models” for good behavior in their new off-campus communities
- Engaged landlord award
- Playing classical music
PART TWO - PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION ABOUT BOUNDARY IDEAS

A presentation (see link below) was made by Trevor McIntyre, Director, IBI Group. The presentation was followed by an opportunity for group discussions and the following results were recorded and shared.

Comments from Drawings:

Drawing #1:

- Dal core needs to look more like a village and less like a business park, downtown core.
- Make the core a destination 24/7
- Street presence
- Dal buildings need street level/store front/store front facilities (coffee shops, bookstores)
- Bookstore should not be buried in the basement
- Wide sidewalks to accommodate groups (referring to University Ave.)
- Make centre off campus active at night with coffee shops. Meetings in street level rooms of academic buildings.
- Night time activities at street level University Ave.
- Encourage mixing of adults/students if faculty/staff rented townhouses:

Eyes on South  Adult students  To prevent congregating on South & Carteret & create a corridor behind Risley.
• Need police walking/biking a beat around Dal.
• A big gate

Gateway or decorative archway signifying entry to campus (i.e. behave this way on campus and behave this way on the family neighbourhood).

• Make University Avenue as busy & interesting as waterfront boardwalk.
• Long term create high density building/residences on University.
• Residence on University Avenue (Dal is built inside out) creates vibrancy & invites people to core as all times and keeps it out of the neighbourhood.
• Bring back Domus.
• More investments to outside of buildings (not just inside) e.g. bookstore as storefront (not in the basement)
• Transit up University and at late hours

Drawing #2:

• Think Jazz Festival (Spring Garden Rd) [comment is pointing to the north carriageway of University Ave)
• Outdoor Entertainment Kiosks [comment gave positions of kiosks along north carriageway of University Ave).
• Tim’s or StarBucks [Comment is pointing to north carriageway of University Ave]
• Market, Arcade, Food Vendors [comment pointing to north carriageway of University Ave.]
• ‘Tony’s Donair [comment pointing to north carriageway of University Ave.]
Drawing #3:

- Create University Ave as path for students last at night.
- Create University Ave as path for students last at night to Shirreff Hall.
- Inviting path for students from University Ave to LeMarchant St Mixed Use.
- Corridor and green space as per Trevor’s animation!
- Use art to suggest/encourage behaviors re: noise, e.g. maze/hopscotch, letters, etc.

Make this street space an invitation to the center of campus

corridor to encourage students away from South

Lots of receptacles for litter & butts with hopscotch/mazes and other creative/artistic ways to encourage use.
Zig-zaggy or free-form border using low walls & landscaping to create a vibrant visually pleasant edge- no straight lines. Art and benches. Like the slides in Trevor’s slideshow.
**Drawing #5:**

- Picturing a Route:
  - Statues along streets
  - Lighting posts with visual art banners
  - Festivals – sidewalk art
  - Increase presence
  - Townhouses for faculty/staff (affordable) – incentives/long-term lease
  - Sunlight
  - Engagement
  - Beautiful
  - Events
  - Vegetation
  - Tourist attraction
  - 24/7 life
  - Promote faculty/student interaction
  - Lighthouses on campus (similar to Toronto)

- Community art in the new plaza area.

- Chairs/gathering places along north side of University Ave. (pedestrian area). Lighting along the middle.
- SUB: Keep it open longer
- Events along University Ave.
- Sidewalk texture changes/variety on the sidewalk on the south side.
- Food Shop, coffee (glass diner & bus stop) at lower end of campus vs Killam/SUB
- Put something to look at along University Ave. Green space. Glass Display Kiosks to highlight work of Costume Studies, NSCAD Sculpture, Dal Depts. Would draw neighbours as well as students.
Drawing#6:
Drawing #7:

(couldn’t fit it all on one page, so it is in 2 sections)
COMMENTS ON OPTION TYPES

Like: 3  Don’t Like: 3  Note: One pink mark was unrecognizable so not included in the count.

Like: 7  Don’t Like: 1
Like: 6  Don’t Like: 1

Like: 3  Don’t Like: 4
Like:  5       Don’t Like:  3       Comment: ‘Ok’ except for the red

Like:  12      Don’t Like:  1       Comment: And Plant Material

Like:  1       Don’t Like:  5       Comment: Don’t like the red industrial look
Like:  5    Don’t Like:  2

Like:  7    Don’t Like:  1

Like:  3    Don’t Like:  3
Like: 3  Don’t Like: 2  Comments: Looks Scruffy; ‘Like’ except for the tombstone

Like: 4  Don’t Like: 3  Comment: Building is ugly
Like:  6  Don’t Like:  1

Like:  4  Don’t Like:  4  Comments:  One red mark was unrecognizable, therefore it is not included in the count.

Like:  4  Don’t Like:  3  Comments:  No water. Too dark overhead
Like: 9  Don’t Like:

Like: 6  Don’t Like: 1

Like: 6  Don’t Like:  
Comments: Include clusters of evergreens, large rhodos, etc.