

# HOME ZONES: SHARED STREETS IN HALIFAX

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In recent years streets have become places solely for moving vehicles quickly, to the detriment of residential life. Home zones represent an opportunity to restore the role of the street as public space, to be used by pedestrians and cyclists as well as motorists. Paving right-of-ways at a single grade creates shared space, while vertical features and winding vehicle paths encourage reduced vehicle speeds. Improved aesthetics increase activity on the street, leading to improved community involvement and ownership. Literature and English case examples show the success of home zones in other countries. Analyzing local policy and regulations identifies necessary changes before home zones can be introduced in Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM). Interviews with various professionals identify local challenges to address prior to implementing home zones in Halifax.

The home zone concept originated in the Netherlands in the late 1960s before spreading to other countries in continental Europe. Nine pilot schemes starting in 1999 proved successful in England. Monitoring showed the approach improved safety within the schemes, as vehicle speeds and traffic flows decreased. Street aesthetics were improved, while providing increased opportunity for community involvement and interaction. Success of the pilot schemes led to significant government funding for future schemes, along with traffic guidelines to encourage appropriate design.

Local policy documents discussing the future of HRM suggest the home zone approach is suitable for Halifax. Interviews with professionals identify potential obstacles to implementation, all of which can be addressed through careful consultation and design. Research shows the concept is suitable in the local context. Amendments to the Regional Subdivision Bylaw allow the designation and construction of home zone streets. Pilot projects increase exposure, while adding to public awareness of the concept. A guide to the design and implementation process and a checklist for evaluating the suitability of streets for retrofits are also included.



Images: Wheeler et al (2005) Pilot Home Zone Schemes: Evaluation of Morice Town, Plymouth, England: TRL Limited.