



## An independent project on the Halifax Planning and Design Centre

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### BRIEF:

The Cities and Environment Unit (CEU), at Dalhousie University, currently incubates a concept for a planning and design centre (PDC).

Advancing this concept into reality has proven challenging. After six years supporting the idea the CEU should consider next steps for the PDC.

### Report Objectives:

#### Objective 1:

Further understand how Planning and Design Centres can function

#### Objective 2:

Determine important operational areas from comparable centres that can be used to inform future organizational decisions of the PDC

### Objective 3:

Better understand how community planning has evolved to engage citizens through the planning and design centre concept

### Findings:

This report discovered that there is a long legacy of public involvement in the planning and design process of Halifax. This

is made apparent through the Community Planning Association of Canada (CPAC), Nova Scotia Chapter. This legacy is important for the CEU to understand when considering what is next for the PDC.

### Case Study Web Sites:

CDCP

[www.cdcp.org](http://www.cdcp.org)

ETCDC

[www.etcdc.org](http://www.etcdc.org)

CUDC

[www.cudc.kent.edu](http://www.cudc.kent.edu)

PDC

<http://pdcentre.ca>



# Planning & Design

Planning and design take into consideration the drama of life and transcribe it into the physical form of the city (Bacon 1974). The more emphasis placed on improving planning and design the better and more relevant a place will become. This is simply because people are always changing, as Rees suggests, "Planning agencies - or any other social institutions that cannot adapt to changing conditions - are doomed to extinction or, even worse, irrelevance" (Rees 1981: 141). As the CEU believe, "change is inevitable. Standing still is not a choice. The moment is always passing. A community can be pushed by the constant current of local pressures and global forces or it can take control over its own destiny" (CCBP 2003: 1). Due to how interconnected planning and design is in our everyday lives as citizens'

*Great projects require great planning ... We can't have architects on one side, planners on another and engineers and public works in another corner. We have to work together, and I think that our design studio's role is to be a convener, to bring those people together"*

(Hundt 2000: 77).

communities look to enhance the quality of debate, discussion, and ideas around issues of planning and design. One method for enhancing the debate and discussion is through the implementation of a centre devoted to planning and design issues.

The activities and actions involved in

making the PDC and others like it functional is broad collaboration between a range of parties: planners, architects, citizens, and engineers. The result of this collaboration is a planning profession that is more educated on the public interest.

By looking to organizations both locally and else where that have successful engaged in project based community planning and design illustrates that this idea is possible, but only with the appropriate attention.

Advancing the idea of a PDC will take time, all of the interviews illustrate that engaging the community and working to enhance the planning and design of a region takes time and patience. In today's real time world we often expect things to be immediate. This is not the case with planning and design centres. The PDC concept must serve its time, it must build community trust and respect, if this does not happen the PDC in Halifax will become irrelevant, as opposed to being a uniting and collaborative idea, it may divide professionals and the public.