



Response from John Wesley Chisholm, PC Candidate

1. As the Quinpool Road Mainstreet Business District is an important part of Halifax Chebucto, what is your vision for Quinpool Road?

I believe Quinpool is the street most filled with opportunity and promise in Halifax. I believe it could be the city's "Main Street". I think we've all seen great streets.

Quinpool in its current form is kind of schizophrenic – it's a main street, business district, residential area, community centre, it's both run down and up and coming, it's a target of land speculators and developers, and, increasingly, it's a highway for thoroughfare commuters – impossibly wide and fast.

Here is an attempt to share some key elements that I researched, collected (cut and pasted) and experienced that I think can make Quinpool great:

1. *A superior pedestrian experience. Main Streets are for walking, browsing, lingering; while they should also be efficient for those looking for a particular item at, for example, a particular pharmacy or hardware store, they have to be highly walkable to succeed. This leads to a lot of potential design features, including ample sidewalks; convenient, well-highlighted crosswalks; vehicle traffic at calm speeds; entertaining, transparent storefronts abutting or very close to the sidewalk; relatively short block lengths; and plenty of easy road crossing and the pedestrian's convenience.*

Motor vehicle traffic is very, very important: I think some of it is actually helpful to the experience, particularly if it draws customers to the street's businesses and uses on-street parking, with the effect of buffering walkers from moving vehicles. Yet too much of it will kill the feel of the street for walkers. In particular, there should not be too many lanes of moving traffic so as to make street crossings inconveniently long; in most cases, two lanes of moving traffic, one in each direction, should be enough.

2. *Density, but at human scale. A Main Street won't be walkable without a significant minimum density. Yet it shouldn't be overwhelming, leading to both vehicular and pedestrian congestion, diminishing the pleasure of a leisurely stroll and blocking light. Victor Dover and John Massengale, in their epic and highly recommended book Street Design, write eloquently about the best ratios of building height to street width. Personally, I like a mixture of building heights ranging from two to about eight or so stories. It's all situational, of course: Fifth Avenue in New York City is a Main Street of sorts and can be terribly exciting for the pedestrian; but a two-story building would be way, way out of place there. But that's not what we're going for and the opposite is also true.*

3. *Viable local businesses. This one is tricky. So many macro- and micro-economic forces are stacked up against local businesses that I find it remarkable that some do, in fact, survive and thrive. Yet a "Main Street" with only chain stores and no locals (imagine the sort of "lifestyle centers," outdoor shopping*

malls, really, that were emerging in the last decade) won't feel sufficiently authentic to provide a rewarding experience. Some chains are fine, I think; it's not the 19th century anymore. But not too many.

And, while we're on the subject of locality and authenticity, I must add that the best Main Streets I tend to encounter are found in places that have a bit of history to them, and a local economy boosted at least in part by tourism.

4. Nature. In a Main Street district, a little bit of nature can go a long way. Cities need visible and functional nature. Without it Main Street would not feel nearly so pleasant and alive. Corning also has a small square and park at the heart of the shopping strip.

5. Community Connections. This is part of walkability, I suppose: A great Main Street needs to be connected to the community in a way that the pace doesn't slow down at the end of the business day - it picks up as people who live on the street and on the streets around it naturally make Main Street part of their everyday and every evening lifestyle.