



**“Third Places”:  
Sharing Our  
Stories**



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Chebucto Communities Development Association

Chebucto West Community Health Board

## **Funder:**

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“The trouble is, neither work nor family can possibly fill our need for novelty, for playful conversation with people whose thoughts are not already well-known to us, for talk that gives birth to new ideas, for undirected flowing chat that is not directed toward solving work and family goals.”

Third Place? *The Freeway website*. Available: [www.frwy.ca](http://www.frwy.ca)



# This Session

- Healthy Place framework
- Third places:
  - the literature
  - the Spryfield project
- **Small Group Activity: Sharing our stories**
- The Spryfield experience:
  - what we're hearing
  - community well-being
- **Group Brainstorming: Your ideas on third places and community well-being**



# Third Places

Why do this research?



[www.clra.ca/halifaxmarket.jpg](http://www.clra.ca/halifaxmarket.jpg)



[www3.sympatico.ca/taylormcgreal/streetparty.html](http://www3.sympatico.ca/taylormcgreal/streetparty.html)



# Determinants of Health

- **Physical environment**
- **Social supports in communities**
- **Social environments**
- **Culture**
- Personal health practices and  **coping skills**
- Education
- Employment and working conditions
- Income and social status
- Gender
- Healthy child development
- Biology and genetic endowment

Public Health Agency of Canada:<http://www.phacaspc.gc.ca/phsp/phdd/determinants/index.html#determinants>



# Determinants of Mental Health

- **Social support**
- Education
- Sex
- Childhood traumas
- Current stress
- Life events
- Age
- Physical health problems
- Restricted activity

*Thomas Stephens, Corinne Dulberg and Natacha Joubert. 2000. Mental Health of the Canadian Population: Comprehensive Analysis*



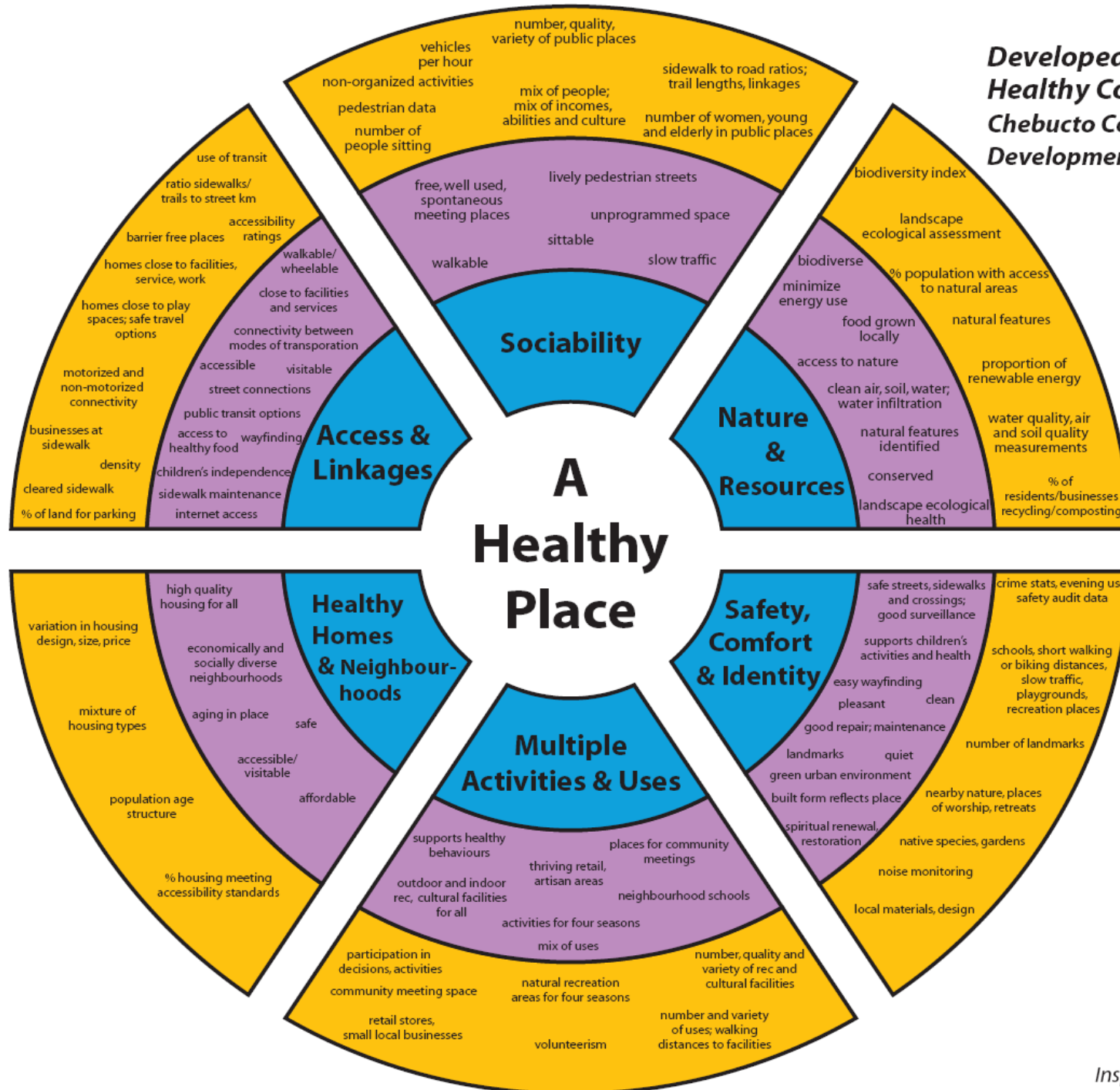
# Health and Neighbourhoods

Research areas specific to health and neighbourhood characteristics:

- **Social characteristics**
- **Physical environment characteristics**
- Access to services
- Transportation specific issues
- Socio-economic influences



**Developed by the Healthy Housing,  
Healthy Community Project  
Chebucto Communities  
Development Association**



- Attributes
- Characteristics
- Indicators

*Inspired by Project for Public Spaces*

## Coffee shops:

“At the Third Place Coffeehouse in Raleigh, North Carolina, owners...set out to create, in their own words, “not only a successful business but also a successful community gathering place where neighbours, friends, and individuals can meet , relax and enjoy themselves...”



[www.oneworldcafé.ca](http://www.oneworldcafé.ca)

Oldenburg, Ray. 1999. *The Great Good Place*. New York: Marlowe and Company.

## Barber Shop:

“There's no place like third place. I'm not talking about winning and losing here, or races or sports or politics, but something far more important: the simple art of living your life in the real world.”

Stephen Hunter.  
“Shear Gladness.”  
*Washington Post*.  
September 13, 2002





## Library:

“...by the very nature of what they do, libraries offer people a third place, a place different from home or work, a place where people can come to learn, think, explore, play, reflect and socialise.”

Harris, Cathryn. 2007 Libraries with lattes: the new third place. *Aplis* 20(4) December 2007.

## Dog Park:

“At ...Blue Dog Pond and other dog parks, people who know each other only as Spot’s Mom or Rover’s Dad end up exchanging keys for dog sitting or sharing emotions they know won’t get back to home or work.”

Third Places. *The Seattle Times*, October 24, 2004



Third Places: Sharing Our Stories



## Commuter Ferry:

“Pearlys of laughter rise off the back deck of the Bremerton ferry... A half-dozen women, from 25 to 62, settle in for what is essentially their weekday social life.

‘I feel I could ask any of them to do anything for me,’ [says] Gladys Storm. ‘And we don't even see each other outside of here.’ ”

Third Places. *The Seattle Times*, October 24, 2004



# Third Places: the literature

Topics explored: Third places; informal meeting places; hangouts; place and sociability; social capital and place...

## ■ Key authors:

- Oldenburg – *The Great Good Place*, the Third Place
- Putnam – *Bowling Alone*

## ■ Literature fields



# Third Places: the literature

## ■ Areas of study:

- place identity and place meaning
- social support
- social networks, place and health
- civic community/ democracy
- consequences of malls for society
- social capital
- virtual third places
- alternative culture and discourse
- group processes
- pedestrian activity
- built environment and mental health
- youth and the elderly





# Third Places: the literature

- Emerging themes of relevance to third places and community well-being:
  - contested spaces
  - health inequalities: youth and elderly
  - self-expression: social, emotional
  - discourse, civic participation and democratic process
  - buffers against stress and change
  - identification with places



# Third Places in Spryfield

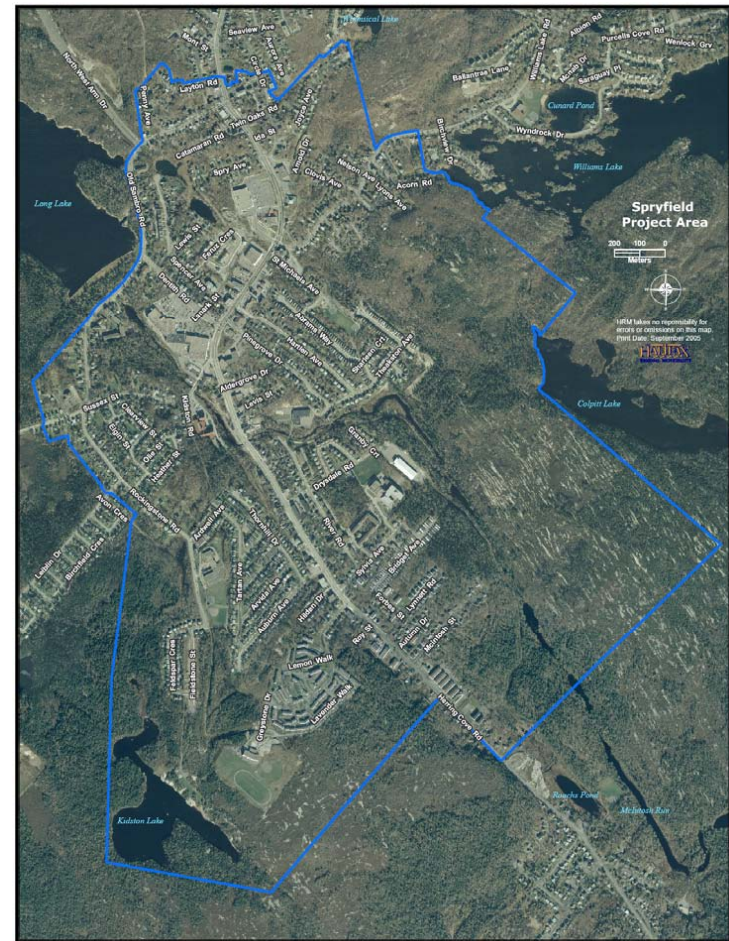
## Research question:

What is the role of the “third place” in community health and well being?

## Objectives:

- annotated bibliography on third places and social determinants and indicators of health and well being
- catalogue of third places in the Spryfield community
- method for a larger study:
  - if and how third places may be used as an environmental diagnostic tool for community health.
  - how we can ensure third places are considered in policy related to community design

# Third Places in Spryfield





# Third Places in Spryfield

## Method

- Review the literature on third places
- Assess the location, quantity and quality of third places in Spryfield through observation and focus groups with community members
  - 8 Focus Groups, 46 participants from pre-teens to senior adults
- Analyze data to operationalize definition of third places and to begin interpretation of its relevance to health and place



# Sharing Your Stories

**Small Group Activity – 25 minutes**

**We invite you to share your experience of third places in your personal life.**

# Third Places in Spryfield



Bowlarama, South  
Centre Mall

B. C. Silver School  
(set for demolition)





## **Community Places**

### **Corner Store**

It's got a fairly big parking lot. It's right at the end of the road by the high school. And it's near a bus stop. Everybody from Greystone would go there if they needed something from the corner store so it's really the only corner store close to that big neighbourhood.

### **Skating Rink**

The Friday night skate is hugely popular. There is only one public skate a week for all the kids in Spryfield. One hour and twenty minutes of skating. Everybody's there. People are coming and going from the ice to the bleachers and hanging out with friends, eating fries...



## Community Places – Events

C. And there's suppers.

A. Oh, suppers!

C. And we meet a lot of people at those suppers. People I haven't seen in years.

C. Yeah.

A. At the flea markets—the local flea markets and the yard sales.

C. Oh, yard sales! When I had a yard sale I met everybody under the sun.

B. Even though they're not in the same place all the time—some of them are—they can be good. There's things like Seedy Saturday and stuff like that that the Urban Farm puts on.

C. We have weeding parties. We go to weed and talk. Gossip.



## Adult Places

“ . . . Well, the bowling alley, I think is a really popular third place. Not for people our age but I think for older people it’s really popular.” [Teens commenting on adult places]

D. “There you go, Bowlarama, that’s a third place.”

*Do you use it?*

D. “I don’t.”

*It’s not like a regular thing that you would do?*

C. “I belong to a group and we did it once. It was fun.”

H. “I bowl there every Sunday.”





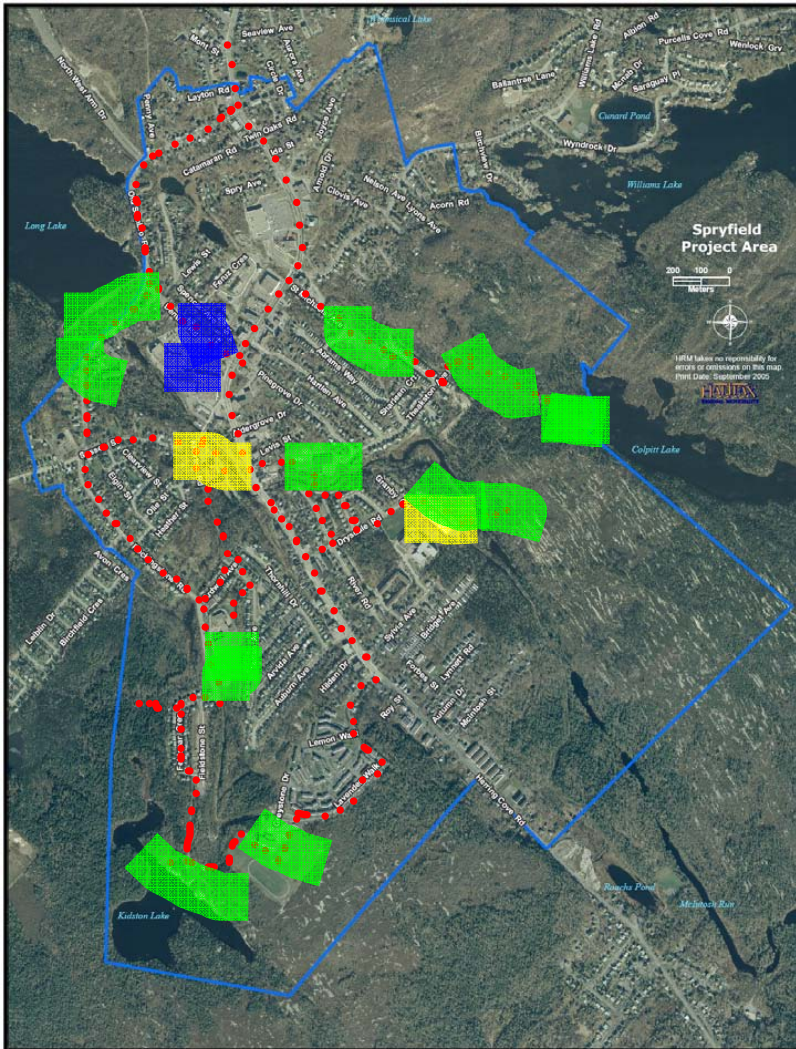
## Kids Places

“People hang out in front of St. Pauls [church] and play hockey... There are parking lots that nobody uses and people play street hockey. It’s pretty flat.”

“...that building belongs to Family S.O.S. and they have a location called Healthy Kidz. That’s an afterschool program for about twenty kids but there are always kids hanging out there.”

“There are always people coming and going from Healthy Kidz but even when there’s no programming, kids kind of congregate there. Little ones playing in the dirt with dinky cars...”

# Youth Places



[Senior teens on junior teens . . . ]

“... they wander a lot too. Like, they don’t stay in one place. They like to walk around with each other . . . It’s not like they just sit around outside places.

I find they’re more wanderers.

“They also hang out under the MacIntosh Run on Herring Cove Road . . . And in the woods there. . . There’s the paths . . . a lot of them have made a path across the water coming up through and they’ll hang out under the bridge.”

[Junior Teens confirming . . . ]

“We stop to take pit stops . . . Like, sit there and hang for like half an hour . . .”

“There’s a playground at the Lions Rink. . . We play games . . . We swing . . . Grounders! . . . Graffiti! . . . And most of the time we just sit there and talk.”



## Mobile Places

### Buses

“ . . . I, like, live on the bus. I’m on it, like, all the time.

*Do you know anyone that hangs out on the bus just for fun?*

“Oh yeah. Straight up.”

“ . . . my mother used to get on the bus up to Leiblin all the time-- they even celebrated each others’ birthdays on the buses. The same people would travel all the time on the buses and they would know all about each other . . . they didn’t visit each other in their homes or anything but they knew that on the bus they were friends. And there were dozens of them on that particular bus. I think that’s true of most things around people—that people are very friendly.”



## Support Places

A. “. . . and Saint Paul’s is another. They’ve got their food bank up there and they have. . .in the garden they have a food bank area . . . That goes to the food bank and I know on food bank day people stand there and chit chat. That’s another kind of meeting place, you know.”

*So the food bank?*

A. “And I think they serve muffins and coffee while you wait for your food bank up there. It gives people a chance to chat and stuff like that. So that’s good.”

## Natural Spaces

“Kidston Lake is a special places in Spryfield.”

“...I can't think of very many places where they go specifically to relax and see people except in the summer when they go to the lake or in the winter when we went to the frog pond. And it was really fun because you see people you hadn't seen in a while.”





## Chance

“. . .Mostly people would bump into each other when they're taking their kids to swimming lessons or they popping into the library or going to the grocery store or they're sitting watching a hockey game—watching their kids play . . .”



# Virtual places

“. . . For me, it was really big when I was not old enough to go out and hang out . . . Now that I have the kids . . ., through the winters especially, I spend five hours a day, bare minimum, on the computer.”

“. . . Because you might be home but you're not there. You're not cleaning your house; you're not doing your dishes. You're talking with other people but you're not out of your house. . . You might as well put a sign on the door. “Be back later.””

[Kids at the library]

C. “Go on the computers, read books.”

E. “Computers, books, magazines.”

[leader:] *What do you do on the computers?*

B. “Internet.”

A. “MSN.”

G. “MSN, Piczo, Facebook, MySpace, email!”





## One person's third place . . .

“. . . I think one place for me personally has been stores – grocery stores. I've met a lot of people that I've exchanged names and I've exchanged recipes with . . . and just great experiences just in shopping . . . You can meet interesting people and have really interesting conversations or experiences and that wasn't your point for going. . .”

B. “. . . I don't shop at the Superstore in Spryfield. I can't stand it; it drives me nuts. It's not organized.”

D. “Yeah, and you can't get your stroller through.”

B. “I know! There's poles in the middle of the aisle.”

D. “And then you get the stupid people that are standing in the aisles and just gossip. I hate that.”

# Losing Places

## The Mall

“They’re seeking community and it’s the only place they can find it. It’s shrinking. . .”



“... there used to be a food court in the mall and I was always amazed at how many people went there as part of their daily routine . . . I would always see people I knew, people getting together, people coming together and chatting. Then the Tim Horton’s closed and then people were still meeting there—there are benches—but they moved the benches to a smaller part of the mall. Sort of an allotment of benches, and people still go there. That’s a prime meeting spot in Spryfield. But there is no longer a sit-down coffee shop . . . . I mean people going there go over here [to the drive-through Tim Horton’s across the street] and buy their coffee and walk back and sit in the mall. It’s kind of sad.”

# Losing Places

## Coffee shops

[Closed HCR Tim's] "It was big enough for people to go in. It was pretty big. Go in, sit down. . . . A lot of people hung out there at night. Go get your coffee, sit on the edge there."

B.[About the drive-through] ". . . So finally they're re-doing that . . . you can't sit there. They've got two little tables . . ."

G. "You're lucky to fit two people in there anyways to wait for your coffee."

B. "You go to eat and the door is open with people lined up inside."

A. ". . . it's not really a walk-in."

B. "But even the new one up at Ultramar isn't a sit-in."



## Grey Places

“. . . It's a hangout for grafitti taggers, for anyone learning how to ride a bike. You know, it's a gathering place . . .”



**“BC Silver! Everybody hangs there!”**

“... Isn't that disgusting. That's heart breaking for us because that was our high school.”

“They also hang out under the MacIntosh Run on Herring Cove Road . . . And in the woods there. . . There's the paths . . . a lot of them have made a path across the water coming up through and they'll hang out under the bridge.”



## No Places

“. . . Spryfield is very limited. I tried to meet a friend just to touch base with for lunch and we wanted to sit outside . . . the only place I could think of is outside of Spryfield at Sir Sanford Fleming . . . there's not even a coffee shop that you could go and sit down in so we couldn't even go to a coffee shop and have a coffee . . .”

“I mean I know where people go but there aren't very many nice places where you can go to say I'll sit here for a while and see who shows up. I'm sure Spryfield probably had some places at one time . . .”

“Everybody goes downtown. . . .There's not enough stuff to do up here. And I just find downtown more fun than it is to be here.”



# Spryfield's Third Places

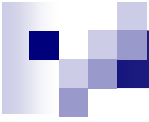
**Kids and younger teens – streets, sidewalks, parking lots, playgrounds, school yards, basketball courts, woods**

**Older teens – playgrounds, school yards, ball courts, but mostly too busy!**

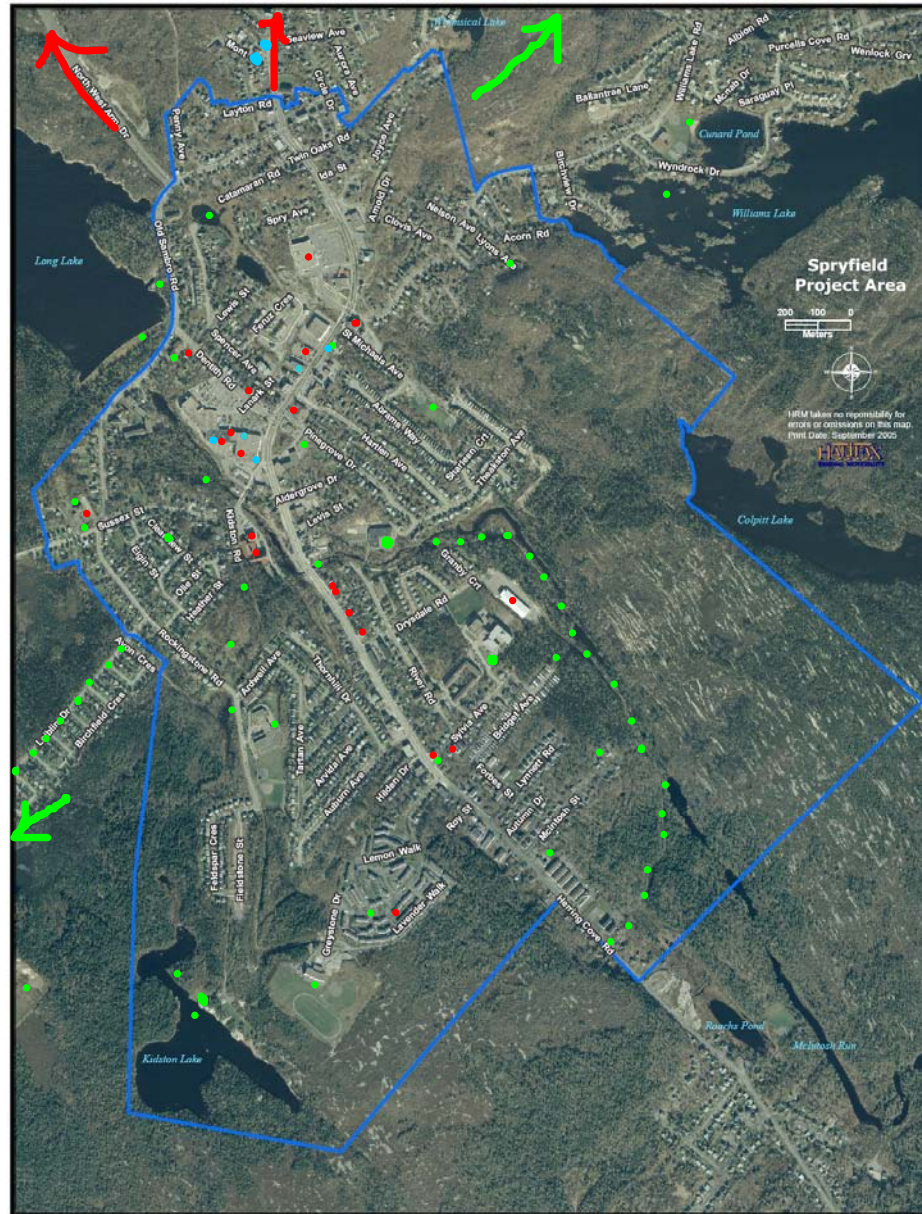
**Moms, dads and kids – playgrounds, parent-tot groups, parent resource centre, library, wave pool**

**Adults – social clubs, service groups, the Mall**

**Everyone – Kidston Lake, library, Lion's rink, Tim's (in Cowie Hill, not Spryfield), corner stores, ball games, community events, or go downtown.**



- Inside Places
- Outside Places
- Lost Places



Third Places: Sharing Our Stories



# Third Places in Spryfield

## Preliminary categories

- interior

- unstructured → very structured

- exterior

- natural → constructed

- public → private

- permanent, ephemeral, seasonal

- intended/not intended for social activities





# Third Places in Spryfield

## ■ Emerging themes:

- Control of space
- Community economic development
- Community social development
- Uses of space
  - Purpose – intended/unintended uses
  - Single vs multiple uses
- Users of space
- Ambiance
- Experience sought
- Evolution (change)
- Agenda (programming)
- Investment in the place



## Spryfield

### Third Places

- Great diversity of places: inside and outside, transient, mobile, linear, variation in scale
- People are resourceful in creating 3<sup>rd</sup> places
- Often socially segregated
- May not be “regulars” present
- Activities: play, conversation, gossip, “being”
- Trend is loss of 3<sup>rd</sup> places

## Literature

### Third Places

- Focus on parochial realm: “locally owned, independent, small scale establishments” (Oldenburg) – coffee shop, bar
- Almost exclusively inside
- Social “levelers”
- “regulars”
- Activities: play, conversation
- Trend toward planned 3<sup>rd</sup> places



	<b>Used in Spryfield</b>	<b>Identified in Literature</b>
<b>Community centres and facilities</b>	community centre, library, rink, gym	some libraries, gyms, saunas
<b>Social clubs</b>	Legion	clubs
<b>Businesses</b>	mall, grocery and convenience stores, pizzarias, fast food, coffee shops, Frenchies	locally owned coffee shops, bars, fast food, convenience stores, bookstores, laundromats, barbershops
<b>Community service organizations</b>	employment centre, food bank, community garden, youth clubs, resource centre	post office
<b>Churches</b>	occasional	self-identified
<b>Community events</b>	parades, church suppers, holiday events, yard sales	
<b>Streets</b>	street hockey, skateboarding	
<b>Sidewalks</b>	some streets, in front of some buildings	small town mainstreet sidewalks
<b>Transit</b>	bus stops, buses	ferries
<b>Parking lots</b>	skate boarding, hockey, apartment parking, church parking lots	
<b>Schoolyards</b>	basketball courts, fields, school doorways	
<b>Parks, playgrounds, courts</b>	playgrounds generally, lake and pond shorelines, beaches, lake skating	dog parks
<b>Trails</b>	most	
<b>Woods</b>	behind buildings	
<b>Grey places</b>	smoking areas, under bridges (youth)	
<b>Beyond community</b>	downtown malls	malls
<b>Virtual 3rd places</b>	CAP sites, Facebook	on-line games, chat rooms
<b>Lost 3rd places</b>	coffee shops, restaurants, theatres, mall lobby	



# Third Places in Spryfield

**Spryfield's third places are not 'Oldenburgesque' third places.**

**Very few are businesses.**

**Most are free spaces, outdoor spaces, natural spaces, service or community facilities or community events.**

**Spryfield residents largely create their own third places in ways and spaces that are not identified in the literature.**



# Third Places in Spryfield

**Participants uniformly reported dissatisfaction with the lack of amenities and general shabiness, and the practice of leaving Spryfield to find entertainment and amenity Services.**

**They don't leave to find 'community' and neighbourliness.**

**Participants reported fellowship, friendliness, rootedness and natural places (but not parks), as positive attributes of Spryfield.**

**People in Spryfield know one another.**



# Third Places in Spryfield

- What do Spryfield's third places and experiences tell us about community well-being?
- What are the lessons so far for planners and designers?

# Third Places - planning and design response

## ■ Place making

### □ Project for Public Spaces – PPS



The screenshot shows the PPS.org website's Training page. The header includes the PPS logo (Project for Public Spaces), contact information (700 Broadway, 4th Fl, New York, NY 10003, (212) 620-5660), and navigation links (About PPS, Where is PPS Working Today?, Planning and Design Services, Placemaking Training, Free Resources and Bookstore). The main content area features a banner image of two women sitting on a bench in a park, with a search bar and a quote by Fred Kent: "When you focus on place you do everything differently." Below this is a photo of a group of people in a meeting. The "Training" section describes PPS's training programs and provides a list of program areas: Parks, Transportation, Civic Centers, Public Markets, Downtowns, Mixed-use Development, Campuses, Squares, and Waterfronts. A sidebar on the right lists training programs, including "How to Turn a Place Around" and "How to Create Successful Markets". The footer includes contact information for Kathy Madden.

PPS  
PROJECT for  
PUBLIC SPACES  
700 Broadway, 4th Fl  
New York, NY 10003  
(212) 620-5660

PPS.org Home » Training [Log In/Register](#)

Google™ Custom Search

When you focus on place  
you do everything differently.  
Fred Kent

TRAINING

PPS's Training Programs

Training Project Experience

"How to Turn a Place Around" Training

"How to Create Successful Markets" Training

Speakers

Research

Conferences

For more information on **PPS's Training program**, contact:  
Kathy Madden

<http://www.pps.org/training/>

# Designer third places?



The screenshot shows the website for Just Us! Coffee Roasters Co-op. The left sidebar features the company logo, a search bar, and a news section titled 'JUST US! IN THE NEWS' with an article about 'Breaking the Silence Coffee'. The main content area has a navigation menu with links for 'ABOUT JUST US', 'PRODUCTS', 'ORDERING', 'ABOUT FAIR TRADE', and 'CONTACT US'. Below the menu is a breadcrumb trail: 'Home » [About Us](#) » [Cafés](#)'. The 'Cafés' section contains two paragraphs of text and a photograph of a coffee shop interior. The first paragraph describes the 'Third Place' concept, and the second paragraph highlights the staff and products. The photograph shows a well-lit coffee shop with a colorful mural on the wall and a counter area.

**just us!**  
COFFEE ROASTERS CO-OP

SEARCH  
Search...  
**Go!**  
Advanced Search  
Sitemap

**JUST US!  
IN THE NEWS**  
Article on Breaking the Silence Coffee

Visit our Coffee page to Order

ABOUT JUST US | PRODUCTS | ORDERING | ABOUT FAIR TRADE | CONTACT US  
Grand Pré | Wolfville | Halifax Barrington | Halifax Spring Garden | Toronto | Bakery

[Home](#) » [About Us](#) » [Cafés](#)

## Cafés

Just Us! desires to build cafés that are a 'Third Place' - a place that is neither work, nor home, but a familiar and comfortable place that acts as an incubator for the human relationships within the community. The cafés are where you can meet friends, exchange the news of the day, gear up, unwind or simply enjoy living. The concept of the Third Place is a throwback to bygone days of mixed-use urban spaces and seems to be a foundation for a healthy community.

Our cafés feature highly trained staff who are committed to preparing espresso, coffee and tea beverages in a manner that showcases the quality and care involved in the production of all Just Us! products. Alongside our selection of Fair Trade Certified coffees, teas, sugar and chocolate from co-ops around the world, our cafés serve light lunches, muffins and sweets produced in our own [bakery](#).

All of our cafés have wireless internet!





# Designing third places?



PLANNING BY DESIGN  
IN COMMUNITY:  
MAKING GREAT PLACES

| HEALTHY |  
| CARING |  
| INCLUSIVE |  
| & GREEN |

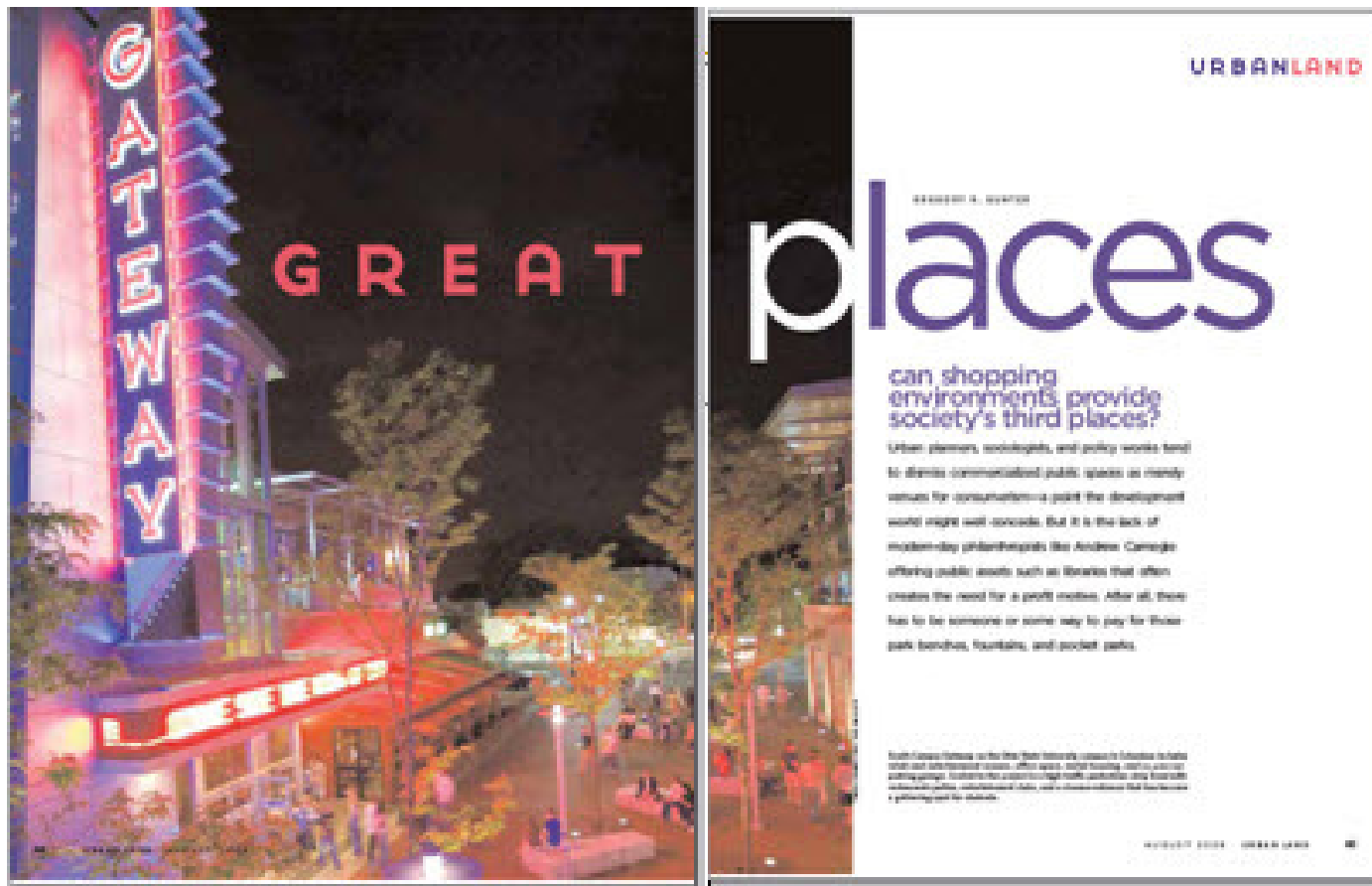
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13 -16 JULY 2008

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Winnipeg, Manitoba

# Designing third places?

Urban Land August 2006



Third Places: Sharing Our Stories