

Spryfield - Halifax, Nova Scotia

Spryfield, a farming community since the 1770s, was annexed by the City of Halifax in 1969. It is in the Mainland South of Halifax, a diverse area of urban, suburban, and rural development. The road into Spryfield snakes through the often heavily-congested Armdale Rotary (traffic circle) at the head of Halifax's northwest arm, then travels up a steep hill onto the mainland. Residents have a sense of being separate from the rest of Halifax – the rotary acts as a traffic barrier and the hilly climb leaves the rest of the city 'down below'. There are still pockets of old farm land and large tracts of semi-wilderness near Spryfield: lakes to swim in during the summer and skate on in winter, and hundreds of acres of green space within walking distance. Boarded up businesses and abandoned homes dot the streets but some of these have been taken over by newer tenants, including the provincial Correctional Services Office, which occupies a former Canadian Tire outlet.

Just under half of Spryfield's 4,500 residents are non-migrants. Some 45.6 percent are descendants of the original settlers – more than in the general Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) population (29.5 percent). Spryfield renters tend to be highly mobile as a result of lower than HRM average monthly rental costs (\$497 versus \$657). Income figures show that 26 percent of renters spend more than 30 percent of their income on rent (13 percent do so in HRM). Household income averages of \$30,936 are lower than the rest of the municipality (\$56,366) and educational levels are also lower – 46.4 percent of people over 20 years of age have not completed high school, compared with 22.3 percent in the rest of HRM.

Spryfield's population is younger than average (33.5 years) and has more lone parent families (37.6 percent – more than double the HRM figure of 16.6 percent). There are proportionally more children (29.2 percent versus 26.7 percent) and more children at home (42.6 percent versus 36.9 percent). Spryfield has no day care facilities. Despite the fact that transit service to Spryfield is inadequate, many more use public transportation than in other parts of the regional municipality (25.4 percent versus 9.9 percent).