



P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

Item No. 1
Committee of the Whole
February 8, 2017

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed

Amanda Whitewood, Director of Finance & ICT/CFO

DATE: January 30, 2017

SUBJECT: Shape Your City, Shape Your Budget 2017 – Preliminary Public Consultation Results

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

The 2017-18 Multi-year Budget Process and Consultation Plan was outlined in Information Report No 5 on November 22, 2016.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Charter, section 35 (1) The Chief Administrative Officer shall (b) ensure that an annual budget is prepared and submitted to the Council.

BACKGROUND

For the last several years Council has provided an on-line budget tool to the public, which allows the public to better understand the municipal budget process and provides an opportunity to provide input for Council consideration in the budget process. As Council is working towards a two year budget, the results of the allocator will be useful not only for 2017-18 but also 2018-19.

DISCUSSION

This is the fourth year for the public consultation on the Budget, where residents of HRM were invited to contribute to the 2017 Budget consultation by sharing their thoughts on service priorities and how they would like to see their municipal tax dollars allocated.

In order to engage as many people as possible, the consultation was promoted in electronic ads, through social media and Halifax.ca. The consultation will cost approximately \$8,000 in advertising. Staff were able to utilize the current software contract without any additional expense.

The consultation process began on November 24, 2016 and continues during the Budget presentations to Committee of the Whole.

The public engagement strategy included the following elements:

- Utilizing the Budget Allocator, an on-line Budget Tool
- Public participation at Committee of the Whole

The on-line information included services that the public encounters or utilizes on a day to day basis, as well as the Administrative costs of Governance and Support Services. These services cost \$433.9 million in the 2016-17 budget, which included:

1. Protective Services
 - a. Police
 - b. RCMP
 - c. Fire
 - d. Emergency Services
2. Community & Recreation Services
 - a. Recreation (Arenas, Aquatics, Programs, Community Centres, etc.)
 - b. Sports fields and Playgrounds
 - c. Parks, Trails & Open Green Space
 - d. Municipal Compliance / By-Law Enforcement
 - e. Libraries
 - f. Culture/Heritage/Events
 - g. Customer Service Centres & 311 Call Centre
 - h. Transit
3. Infrastructure
 - a. Roadway Maintenance
 - b. Right of Way and Traffic Management (including Streetlights)
 - c. Snow Removal & Ice Control
 - d. Solid Waste
4. Planning & Property Development
 - a. Regional & Community Planning, Urban Design and Transportation Planning
 - b. Development Approvals, Permits and Inspections
 - c. Economic Development
5. Governance and Support Services

The Budget Allocator provides the opportunity to re-balance the budget of \$433.9 million, based on an individual's priorities. Each service showed the Budget allocated for the 2016-17 year, with the choice and impact for the following options:

1. to maintain the current budget
2. to increase the budget by 5%
3. to increase the budget by 10%
4. to decrease the budget by 5%
5. to decrease the budget by 10%

The percent amounts used were limited by the consultation software. The 5% or 10% options should be interpreted as adding or removing funding, thus indicating spending reductions.

Consultation Findings

This was an open invitation to all citizens of HRM. Current analysis of the Budget Allocation Tool shows that participation to date is significantly below the final results for 2015. Staff recently added additional advertising during Council’s budget debates, with the hope of increasing participation. As of January 31, 130 participants have completed the budget allocation tool compared to 582 in 2015. This creates a margin of error of +/-9%.

For the 2018-19 and future budgets, staff intends to review options for a wider consultative process. The Budget Allocator is likely to remain an important part of that process but needs to be strengthened through the addition of new tools and means of attracting additional input.

The information found below summarizes participation in the engagement process:

- 635 visitors to the Shape your City engagement site
- 211 views of the on-line information video
- 130 participants completed the Budget Allocator
- 39,337,287 views on Facebook

Summary of citizen participation in the Budget Consultation:

Citizen participation	Budget Consultation		
	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Visitors to the Shape your City engagement site	5,939	882	635
Views of the on-line information videos*	2,081	632	211
Views of the FAQ’s – additional statistics posted to inform the public	375	230	n/a
Number of citizens completing Budget Allocator	434	582	130
Percent of visitors, who completed Budget Allocator	7%	66%	100%

1. The average budget calculated was \$432.5m; \$1.3m less than the 2016-17 budget of \$433.9m for these services.
2. The citizens varied on decreasing and increasing the budget for current services.
 - a. 65.4% completed their budget priorities below the current spend vs 51.5% and 65% from previous years;
 - b. with none maintaining the current entire budget vs. 0.5% and 1% from previous years.
 - c. 34.6% were willing to increase the budget vs. 48% and 34% from previous years. This was voiced in many of the comments as well.

The priorities for the Budget Distribution are shown in Appendix 1. Road maintenance (60%) and transit (52%) had more than 50% of respondents wishing to see an increased budget. Support for increased “Recreation (Arenas, Aquatics, Programs, Community Centres)” (48%) was almost at 50%. In addition,

“Parks, Trails and Open Green Space” (45%) and “Sportsfields and Playgrounds” (43%) had significant support for increased budgets. Most other services had less than 35% support for an increase.

Increase Summary				Total		
Category	Department	Increase/Decrease/Maintain	Total Responses	%	Average %	
Community & Recreation Services	Culture/Heritage/Events	Increase budget by 10%	16	12.31		
	Customer Service Centres & 311 Call Centre	Increase budget by 10%	2	1.54		
	Libraries	Increase budget by 10%	12	9.23		
	Municipal Compliance / By-Law Enforcement	Increase budget by 10%	4	3.08		
	Parks, Trails & Open Green Space	Increase budget by 10%	23	17.83		
	Recreation (Arenas, Aquatics, Programs, Community Centre, etc.)	Increase budget by 10%	25	19.23		
	Sports Fields & Playgrounds	Increase budget by 10%	20	15.38		
	Transit	Increase budget by 10%	28	21.54	12.52	
	Mayor, Council, Chief Admin Office, Communications, HR, Finance, IT, Legal and Auditor General's Office	Increase budget by 10%	1	0.77	0.77	
	Infrastructure	Right of Way and Traffic Management (including Streetlights)	Increase budget by 10%	9	6.92	
Road Maintenance		Increase budget by 10%	29	22.31		
Snow Removal & Ice Control		Increase budget by 10%	16	12.31		
Solid Waste		Increase budget by 10%	0	0.00	10.39	
Planning & Property Development	Development Approvals, Permits and Inspections	Increase budget by 10%	7	5.38		
	Economic Development	Increase budget by 10%	19	14.62		
	Regional & Community Planning, Urban Design, and Transportation Planning	Increase budget by 10%	10	7.69	9.23	
Protective Services	Emergency Measures	Increase budget by 10%	13	10.16		
	Fire	Increase budget by 10%	8	6.15		
	Police	Increase budget by 10%	2	1.55		
	RCMP	Increase budget by 10%	8	6.15	6.00	

Increase Summary				Total		
Category	Department	Increase/Decrease/Maintain	Total Responses	%	Average %	
Community & Recreation Services	Culture/Heritage/Events	Increase budget by 5%	21	16.15		
	Customer Service Centres & 311 Call Centre	Increase budget by 5%	10	7.69		
	Libraries	Increase budget by 5%	32	24.62		
	Municipal Compliance / By-Law Enforcement	Increase budget by 5%	8	6.15		
	Parks, Trails & Open Green Space	Increase budget by 5%	36	27.91		
	Recreation (Arenas, Aquatics, Programs, Community Centre, etc.)	Increase budget by 5%	37	28.46		
	Sports Fields & Playgrounds	Increase budget by 5%	36	27.69		
	Transit	Increase budget by 5%	40	30.77	21.18	
	Mayor, Council, Chief Admin Office, Communications, HR, Finance, IT, Legal and Auditor General's Office	Increase budget by 5%	1	0.77	0.77	
	Infrastructure	Right of Way and Traffic Management (including Streetlights)	Increase budget by 5%	17	13.08	
Road Maintenance		Increase budget by 5%	49	37.69		
Snow Removal & Ice Control		Increase budget by 5%	28	21.54		
Solid Waste		Increase budget by 5%	13	10.00	20.58	
Planning & Property Development	Development Approvals, Permits and Inspections	Increase budget by 5%	12	9.23		
	Economic Development	Increase budget by 5%	29	22.31		
	Regional & Community Planning, Urban Design, and Transportation Planning	Increase budget by 5%	16	12.31	14.62	
Protective Services	Emergency Measures	Increase budget by 5%	15	11.72		
	Fire	Increase budget by 5%	34	26.15		
	Police	Increase budget by 5%	20	15.50		
	RCMP	Increase budget by 5%	9	6.92	15.07	

Support for decreasing the budget was strongest amongst Governance and Support Services (66%), Municipal Compliance (43%) and “Development Approvals, Permits and Inspections” (43%).

Decrease Summary				Total		
Category	Department	Increase/Decrease/Maintain	Total Responses	%	Average %	
Community & Recreation Services	Culture/Heritage/Events	Decrease budget by 10%	13	10.00		
	Customer Service Centres & 311 Call Centre	Decrease budget by 10%	15	11.54		
	Libraries	Decrease budget by 10%	13	10.00		
	Municipal Compliance / By-Law Enforcement	Decrease budget by 10%	23	17.69		
	Parks, Trails & Open Green Space	Decrease budget by 10%	8	6.20		
	Recreation (Arenas, Aquatics, Programs, Community Centre, etc.)	Decrease budget by 10%	7	5.38		
	Sports Fields & Playgrounds	Decrease budget by 10%	12	9.23		
	Transit	Decrease budget by 10%	14	10.77	10.10	
	Mayor, Council, Chief Admin Office, Communications, HR, Finance, IT, Legal and Auditor General's Office	Decrease budget by 10%	48	36.92	36.92	
	Infrastructure	Right of Way and Traffic Management (including Streetlights)	Decrease budget by 10%	11	8.46	
Road Maintenance		Decrease budget by 10%	6	4.62		
Snow Removal & Ice Control		Decrease budget by 10%	3	2.31		
Solid Waste		Decrease budget by 10%	16	12.31	6.93	
Planning & Property Development	Development Approvals, Permits and Inspections	Decrease budget by 10%	28	21.54		
	Economic Development	Decrease budget by 10%	21	16.15		
	Regional & Community Planning, Urban Design, and Transportation Planning	Decrease budget by 10%	22	16.92	18.20	
Protective Services	Emergency Measures	Decrease budget by 10%	11	8.59		
	Fire	Decrease budget by 10%	6	4.62		
	Police	Decrease budget by 10%	17	13.18		
	RCMP	Decrease budget by 10%	16	12.31	9.68	

Decrease Summary					
Category	Department	Increase/Decrease/Maintain	Total		
			Total Responses	%	Average %
Community & Recreation Services	Culture/Heritage/Events	Decrease budget by 5%	29	22.31	
	Customer Service Centres & 311 Call Centre	Decrease budget by 5%	26	20.00	
	Libraries	Decrease budget by 5%	16	12.31	
	Municipal Compliance / By-Law Enforcement	Decrease budget by 5%	33	25.38	
	Parks, Trails & Open Green Space	Decrease budget by 5%	20	15.50	
	Recreation (Arenas, Aquatics, Programs, Community Centre, etc.)	Decrease budget by 5%	24	18.46	
	Sports Fields & Playgrounds	Decrease budget by 5%	16	12.31	
	Transit	Decrease budget by 5%	10	7.69	16.75
	Mayor, Council, Chief Admin Office, Communications, HR, Finance, IT, Legal and Auditor General's Office	Decrease budget by 5%	38	29.23	29.23
	Infrastructure	Right of Way and Traffic Management (including Streetlights)	Decrease budget by 5%	24	18.46
Road Maintenance		Decrease budget by 5%	5	3.85	
Snow Removal & Ice Control		Decrease budget by 5%	14	10.77	
Solid Waste		Decrease budget by 5%	22	16.92	12.50
Development Approvals, Permits and Inspections		Decrease budget by 5%	28	21.54	
Planning & Property Development	Economic Development	Decrease budget by 5%	19	14.62	
	Regional & Community Planning, Urban Design, and Transportation Planning	Decrease budget by 5%	22	16.92	17.69
	Emergency Measures	Decrease budget by 5%	10	7.81	
Protective Services	Fire	Decrease budget by 5%	15	11.54	
	Police	Decrease budget by 5%	14	10.85	
	RCMP	Decrease budget by 5%	19	14.62	11.21

Generally, many respondents supported maintaining the level of budget support.

Maintain Summary					
Category	Department	Increase/Decrease/Maintain	Total		
			Total Responses	%	Average %
Community & Recreation Services	Culture/Heritage/Events	Maintain existing budget	51	39.23	
	Customer Service Centres & 311 Call Centre	Maintain existing budget	77	59.23	
	Libraries	Maintain existing budget	57	43.85	
	Municipal Compliance / By-Law Enforcement	Maintain existing budget	62	47.69	
	Parks, Trails & Open Green Space	Maintain existing budget	42	32.56	
	Recreation (Arenas, Aquatics, Programs, Community Centre, etc.)	Maintain existing budget	37	28.46	
	Sports Fields & Playgrounds	Maintain existing budget	46	35.38	
	Transit	Maintain existing budget	38	29.23	39.45
	Mayor, Council, Chief Admin Office, Communications, HR, Finance, IT, Legal and Auditor General's Office	Maintain existing budget	42	32.31	32.31
	Infrastructure	Right of Way and Traffic Management (including Streetlights)	Maintain existing budget	69	53.08
Road Maintenance		Maintain existing budget	41	31.54	
Snow Removal & Ice Control		Maintain existing budget	69	53.08	
Solid Waste		Maintain existing budget	79	60.77	49.62
Development Approvals, Permits and Inspections		Maintain existing budget	55	42.31	
Planning & Property Development	Economic Development	Maintain existing budget	42	32.31	
	Regional & Community Planning, Urban Design, and Transportation Planning	Maintain existing budget	60	46.15	40.26
	Emergency Measures	Maintain existing budget	79	61.72	
Protective Services	Fire	Maintain existing budget	67	51.54	
	Police	Maintain existing budget	76	58.91	
	RCMP	Maintain existing budget	78	60.00	58.04

Along with balancing the Budget, participants were invited to provide general comments on HRM's budget, as well as comment on why they made their choice. These comments are included in Attachment 2.

There were numerous comments and replies provided on-line by participants on four significant questions. The replies are included as Attachment 3:

1. Future Services - Would you be willing to pay more taxes for enhanced or improved services? If so, which services?
2. Revenues Fees - Revenue fees (not including Transit) account for \$39m or 4.4% of revenues received by the municipality. This includes everything from recreation fees, permit fees for parking and facility rentals. Do you support increasing these fees and/or creating additional user fees to maintain a lower tax rate or provide additional services? Please provide your comment.
3. Capital projects - Currently the municipality is spending \$198 million on the rehabilitation and replacement of existing assets, expansion and/or the addition of new assets. Where would you like to see your capital dollars spent?
 - a. Roads
 - b. Sidewalks
 - c. Recreation Facilities
 - d. Buildings/Infrastructure
 - e. Other venues, facilities, projects?

4. Municipal Infrastructure - Given the current infrastructure in the municipality, do you feel it is more important to maintain our existing infrastructure or to build new infrastructure? Please provide your comment.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no immediate financial implications from this Report. The information in this report will inform Council in the development of a Proposed Multi Year Budget 2017-18 and 2018-19. The broader financial implications will be discussed and debated as the budget is developed in more detail.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As outlined in the Discussion section above, the budget consultation included a number of ways to engage citizens to provide insight and direction into the priorities for the 2017-18 Budget.

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix 1 – Budget Allocator – Budget Distribution
Appendix 2 – Budget Allocator – Comments
Appendix 3 – Shape Your City – Municipal Budget

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.php> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210, or Fax 902.490.4208.

Report Prepared by: Sandra Billings, Budget Analyst, 902-490-6493; Barb Palmeter, Sr. Financial Consultant, 902-490-7221

Original Signed

Report Approved by: _____
Bruce Fisher, Manager, Financial Policy & Planning, 902-490-4493

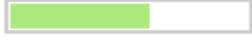
Budgets

This report includes data from unverified budget submissions

Default Category Protective Services

Respondents: 130

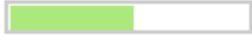
Police

Increase budget by 10%	2	1.55 %	
Increase budget by 5%	20	15.50 %	
Maintain existing budget	76	58.91 %	
Decrease budget by 5%	14	10.85 %	
Decrease budget by 10%	17	13.18 %	

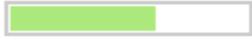
RCMP

Increase budget by 10%	8	6.15 %	
Increase budget by 5%	9	6.92 %	
Maintain existing budget	78	60.00 %	
Decrease budget by 5%	19	14.62 %	
Decrease budget by 10%	16	12.31 %	

Fire

Increase budget by 10%	8	6.15 %	
Increase budget by 5%	34	26.15 %	
Maintain existing budget	67	51.54 %	
Decrease budget by 5%	15	11.54 %	
Decrease budget by 10%	6	4.62 %	

Emergency Measures

Increase budget by 10%	13	10.16 %	
Increase budget by 5%	15	11.72 %	
Maintain existing budget	79	61.72 %	
Decrease budget by 5%	10	7.81 %	
Decrease budget by 10%	11	8.59 %	

Community & Recreation Services

Recreation (Arenas, Aquatics, Programs, Community Centre, etc.)

Increase budget by 10%	25	19.23 %	
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Increase budget by 5%	37	28.46 %	
Maintain existing budget	37	28.46 %	
Decrease budget by 5%	24	18.46 %	
Decrease budget by 10%	7	5.38 %	

Sports Fields & Playgrounds

Increase budget by 10%	20	15.38 %	
Increase budget by 5%	36	27.69 %	
Maintain existing budget	46	35.38 %	
Decrease budget by 5%	16	12.31 %	
Decrease budget by 10%	12	9.23 %	

Parks, Trails & Open Green Space

Increase budget by 10%	23	17.83 %	
Increase budget by 5%	36	27.91 %	
Maintain existing budget	42	32.56 %	
Decrease budget by 5%	20	15.50 %	
Decrease budget by 10%	8	6.20 %	

Municipal Compliance / By-Law Enforcement

Increase budget by 10%	4	3.08 %	
Increase budget by 5%	8	6.15 %	
Maintain existing budget	62	47.69 %	
Decrease budget by 5%	33	25.38 %	
Decrease budget by 10%	23	17.69 %	

Libraries

Increase budget by 10%	12	9.23 %	
Increase budget by 5%	32	24.62 %	
Maintain existing budget	57	43.85 %	
Decrease budget by 5%	16	12.31 %	
Decrease budget by 10%	13	10.00 %	

Culture/Heritage/Events

Increase budget by 10%	16	12.31 %	
Increase budget by 5%	21	16.15 %	

Maintain existing budget	51	39.23 %	
Decrease budget by 5%	29	22.31 %	
Decrease budget by 10%	13	10.00 %	

Customer Service Centres & 311 Call Centre

Increase budget by 10%	2	1.54 %	
Increase budget by 5%	10	7.69 %	
Maintain existing budget	77	59.23 %	
Decrease budget by 5%	26	20.00 %	
Decrease budget by 10%	15	11.54 %	

Transit

Increase budget by 10%	28	21.54 %	
Increase budget by 5%	40	30.77 %	
Maintain existing budget	38	29.23 %	
Decrease budget by 5%	10	7.69 %	
Decrease budget by 10%	14	10.77 %	

InFrastructure

Road Maintenance

Increase budget by 10%	29	22.31 %	
Increase budget 5%	49	37.69 %	
Maintain existing budget	41	31.54 %	
Decrease budget by 5%	5	3.85 %	
Decrease budget by 10%	6	4.62 %	

Right of Way and Traffic Management (including Streetlights)

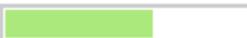
Increase budget by 10%	9	6.92 %	
Increase budget by 5%	17	13.08 %	
Maintain existing budget	69	53.08 %	
Decrease budget by 5%	24	18.46 %	
Decrease budget by 10%	11	8.46 %	

Snow Removal & Ice Control

Increase budget by 10%	16	12.31 %	
Increase budget by 5%	28	21.54 %	

Maintain existing budget	69	53.08 %	
Decrease budget by 5%	14	10.77 %	
Decrease budget by 10%	3	2.31 %	

Solid Waste

Increase budget by 10%	0	0.00 %	
Increase budget by 5%	13	10.00 %	
Maintain existing budget	79	60.77 %	
Decrease budget by 5%	22	16.92 %	
Decrease budget by 10%	16	12.31 %	

Planning & Property Development

Regional & Community Planning, Urban Design, and Transportation Planning

Increase budget by 10%	10	7.69 %	
Increase budget by 5%	16	12.31 %	
Maintain existing budget	60	46.15 %	
Decrease budget by 5%	22	16.92 %	
Decrease budget by 10%	22	16.92 %	

Development Approvals, Permits and Inspections

Increase budget by 10%	7	5.38 %	
Increase budget by 5%	12	9.23 %	
Maintain existing budget	55	42.31 %	
Decrease Budget by 5%	28	21.54 %	
Decrease budget by 10%	28	21.54 %	

Economic Development

Increase budget by 10%	19	14.62 %	
Increase budget by 5%	29	22.31 %	
Maintain existing budget	42	32.31 %	
Decrease budget by 5%	19	14.62 %	
Decrease budget by 10%	21	16.15 %	

Governance & Support Services

Mayor, Council, Chief Admin Office, Communications, HR, Finance, IT, Legal and Auditor General's Office

Increase budget by 10%	1	0.77 %	
Increase budget by 5%	1	0.77 %	
Maintain existing budget	42	32.31 %	
Decrease budget by 5%	38	29.23 %	
Decrease budget by 10%	48	36.92 %	

Attachment 2
Budget Allocator Comments

1	I believe improved resources for law enforcement and improved transit should be the focus of the budget. I disagree that expanding existing programs in these fields are a good use of taxpayer funds, rather, innovative programs should be undertaken (transit: rail lines, dedicated bus lanes, law enforcement: proactive surveillance)
2	Investments in planning and development enforcement will result in greater fiscal efficiency across the board. Investments in social and economic development will help with youth retention and immigration.
3	The time has come that all levels of Government start to live within their means...if this means reduce services to balance a budget then those are the choices we must make. There is only one tax payer to payback the debt incurred by the governments. You can not tax a society into prosperity. The cost of living increases daily but the take home pay does not. Be responsible with public purse
4	Give transit more money so we can have world class service, and replace HRP with RCMP.
5	Public transportation needs to include more than just buses. Our bus system does not work. Take a large portion of their budget (as shown in my allocation) and put towards alternate public transit, specifically commuter rail.
6	Reducing the size of council was not a listed option toward the end of the survey and should be. We are over represented.
7	Reduce council to 13.
8	Great tool for people to learn more about the process.
9	Need to get spending under control. Transit is a great example of inefficient planning (multiple routes with significant duplications) and lack of hub and spoke.
10	The City should adopt a zero based budgeting program. Spending has been increased at a rate significantly greater than inflation and the City prides itself by stating it is not increasing tax rates. This is disingenuous because tax REVENUE has been increasing as a result of an increased assessment base. This is a nuance not publically discussed. Growth necessitates some increase in services but spending in Halifax has been out of control for some time. There is a significant lack of accountability at both the political and staff levels and the failure to openly discuss this is unacceptable. The bias is even reflected in the budget allocator tool in that one cannot reduce expenses by more than 10%. There are a number of areas overdue for significant belt tightening and eventually this lack of financial discipline will have significant impact. We are a small provincial capital and if we want to attract new business and citizens the only real differentiator would be effective governance and more competitive taxrates.
11	Give me a call if you need me to sort out the budget :-)
12	I would be more than happy to accept a modest tax increase of one or two percent if that would result in improvements to municipal support for the arts & culture sector, improvements to public spaces (e.g. parks, playgrounds, public art), libraries and snow removal service standards.
13	As a university student who works multiple jobs, transit is very important to me. Also, here in Nova Scotia our lifeguards and swimming instructors are significantly underpaid for the work that they do. We are the lowest paid lifeguards in Canada which is shameful since we value our beaches, lakes and oceans. I am a lifeguard, instructor, and supervisor for Halifax Recreation and our turnover rate is ridiculous which results in less safe pools and a reduction in the quality of swimming lessons. Even though minimum wage has gone up significantly, lifeguard salary's have not changed in many years. Here our maximum pay after 2 years of service is \$11.75 in other provinces pay is between \$15-\$20 an hour. This signals a need for an increase in spending across HRM recreation to provide better compensation and further professional development for staff.
14	We were doing fine with clearing sidewalks ourselves. Now there is so much salt on the sidewalks I can barely walk my dog. Halifax development planning processes are really problematic right now, too many big buildings being built for a town which does not have the population to fill them. We have planning in place which is being repeatedly stretched and broken by exemptions for buildings which are ruining the character of neighbourhoods for no real purpose. With the exception of transport, missing from this whole discussion is any initiatives toward sustainability. So the best I could do was quality of life but that is not the same.
15	we need to re-evaluate the way the HRM conducts business. As a taxpayer the annual increases in taxes and no visible improvement from government is telling me that support costs are rising and no improvement in basic services are being done. special committees, consultants, etc... need to be reconsidered. Take control of these expenses, hold people accountable for what is required in their job performance/expectations with consequences for their non compliance.
16	any savings from any budget cuts should be used to offset the existing deficit thereby reducing future needs for taxation increases.
17	Please don't be afraid to over-budget or put a cap on our spending. I would happily pay \$4.50 more per month to increase the availability of services, and streamline or reduced wait times on matters that are important for residents and the private sector. It is a small price to pay for a big impact.
18	I really liked seeing the budget options and where the money goes per percentage increase and decrease. I feel more informed and participatory! My choices leaned to a more liveable city with a focus on our youth and culture. While investing in safety and infrastructure. I would like to improve our transit system and approve light rail. Thank you for the opportunity to contribute an opinion. Yours sincerely, [REDACTED]
19	I would like to see a significant reduction in the mayor and councillors wages.
20	Transit is over funded. Drivers overpaid sometimes paid for sitting around. Revamp transit workers.
	I would support strategic and value-driven initiatives that will improve live-ability in the region. The goal would be to attract people to the region, drive economic development and increase the tax base. My support is conditional on a reasonable expectation of return-on-investment over 5-10 years.

21	I have lived in the HRM all my life, I have seen the city make od decision based on budgets and inferstructor. The city has far to many problems with NS power, Halifax Water, Snow Removal, Over Paid Teachers, Parking, Roads and Sidewalks. There needs to be a new approach to how we do business. I don't have the answers but I appreciate the opportunity to voice my opinion and I truly think that if we can push our that if a totally new approach to these problems could fix the issues could be addressed. Green technologies, renewable energy, the removal of controlling big business. We can become a stronger unified player on the world stage.
22	I think is obviously a LOT more to this than just allocating dollars as improvements can also be made without spending money such as encouraging business by reducing red tape and not bowing down to every person who has an objection. Thanks
23	Fires budget is not used properly and over spent on not needed wages in the upper management and truck purchased. Better administration decisions would also get it's spending on track
24	There is absolutely no need for streetlights in rural HRM. There is no benefit. Reduce urban lighting by 2/3. Convert all public vehicles to electric and save money. Introduce photo-radar to help with policing and increase revenues. MetroX to Musquodoboit Harbour. Piped services for the core of Musquodoboit Harbour. Solar panels or green roofs on all municipally owned buildings.
25	The rising costs of living and the lack of income increases is putting a major strain on the halifax areas residents.
26	A reduction in governance does not necessarily reduce number of staff. Seventeen councilors is a large number for such a small city.
27	Your budget alloctaor is a joke. It doesn't enable any real changes, just like the structure of this illegitimate amalgamation called "Halifax". Every heard of participatory budgeting? Of course you haven't. That would mean you were interested in accountability, and interested in the people having a say.
28	I pay \$4200 a yr in property taxes...and I live on the peninsula. I would like the Downtown to stop subsidizing developers making money by paying for new roads, sewers, power, etc to these new subdivisions that use MORE services, but pay less taxes. My taxes should reflect the services I receive, and HOW MUCH those ACTUALLY cost to deliver.
29	I have to admit, this was very cool and interactive! Please keep doing things like this!
30	The council should implement cost reduction measures that the employees of the will share in, if they reduce spending within their department. for example if the department has \$100 to spend in their budget and they spend \$90, \$5 is saved and the other \$5 is split between all the workers within that department, excluding managers. Including managers will lead to decisions that will impact services, only reward first line workers, their savings will be from preventing waste.
31	Let's revisit the heavy reliance on private contractors for snow and ice removal in the winter and solid waste year-round. Not to mention, grass cutting, graveyards, etc.
32	Spend less on government. Reduce the number of councillors and waste in this city. Stop trying to be Toronto and come to grips that we are a small a city with unique values.
33	Never spend more than you have.
34	Transit transit transit! if we are going to be developing at the rate we have been, and bringing more residents into growth centres, (particularly into the downtown and peninsula), there needs to be a transit system that gives us better, faster, and more direct routes than what is currently in place. Also needs to be attractive enough to convince residents to keep their cars at home. Needs to be convenient, comfortable, and affordable. Admitably difficult to do in any city, but if we want to continue to build the way we have been, having a well run transit system is a must!! Investigate: -Light rail -more express and direct bus routes -dedicated bus only lanes -increased frequency of trips - implementing a better system to see where your bus is and how far away it is from your stop (via transportation app). Example: Rocketman app for the TTC. People don't want to call and listen to where their bus is, they want to open an app and see where it is for themselves.
35	Its 18\$ per person. It can't be that bad.
36	Wasn't it promised that the arts grants funding from the municipality would increase each year? It's so awesome that it exists right now and an increase is sorely needed!
37	we need to make the city more welcoming and stop wasting money on overbearing and unnecessary governance and red tape.
38	Does it really matter what I or anyone else thinks. Copious amounts of money will be spent on people not on things. And by people I mean government employees. I know they are needed but are some of the outrageous salaries needed. But like I said it doesn't matter. There are things every city needs and things no city needs but for me I don't really care because nova Scotia is a hole and like every one else my age am moving somewhere where there is better opportunity better money and just an overall better experience. At this rate nova Scotia is going to die just like a small community does.
39	Transit absolutely needs to be improved. I want buses that operate on a schedule that meets my needs - not just a 9-5 worker. Evening buses so I can get to work and dinner and grocery shop and go see a movie or a concert without needing a car. Police and fire officers are paid well - aka overpaid. We need fewer officers driving around, wasting gas and making racist police checks. Reduce the speed limits and add design features that slow down cars.
40	more money should be spent on parks and other things for kids to do like youth programs. it will lower the crime in an area allowing the cops to do more with less. also if the cops have left over money to get more cameras and other useless stuff instead of feet on the ground they dont need more money. same goes for that stupid gun by back program. the money should have been spent on helping kids not taking in guns that will never be used in a crime.

41	The only thing lacking here is how you arrived at your numbers. I'd like to know if you factored in things like creating new jobs which would result in an increased tax revenue. If you did, then my numbers stand, if not, then I would have to adjust things. Additionally, why the particular things listed is what would be cut or added makes me curious. For example, more bylaw enforcement could be supplemented by increased ticket revenue for infractions which would result in fewer infractions once people caught on, then a reduction in staff would be an option therefore the change would not have to be permanent.
42	This was an interesting exercise, however the screen was difficult to control up and down unlike many commercial ones.
43	I would like my municipal government to be mindful of the social determinants of health when allocating budget dollars. There is an opportunity to improve the health and well being of its citizens particularly through recreational programming. The budget allocation tool is an interesting and valuable tool, but why can't budgets be modified in one percent increments as opposed to 5 percent? That obviously would allow for more flexibility.
44	Having lived in HRM since 1950, I welcome this opportunity to provide input to the budget process. Thank you.
45	I am over budget to properly invest in new job oportuties and growing out infrastructure.
46	Efficiencies are to be found within. There are many living in suburban communities -taxed at an urban mil rate- that are not receiving the published services of the urban rate. Sidewalks as an example. Fifteen minute service delivery to infrastructure, etc. The mil rate should not be applied to the higher level until the services are in place. My well is dry. Between a combination of higher assessment, and higher mil rate, you will soon be forcing me to relocate to another county and commute to the city to work. This doesn't make sense, but it is the reality when I have not received a pay raise in six years!
47	In the case of the Mayor and Councillors I feel that their wage changes should be in keeping with the current economic situation in our province. When the average Joe hasn't seen a raise in years it is a kick in the teeth to see the Mayor and Councillors awarding themselves hefty raises.
48	This government really needs to look at longterm improvement to the city while working within available funds.
49	I recommended reductions in funding for pretty much everything because there is no mention of quality of service. For example there is garbage collection 26 times per year. Large items like beds are taken and then we must wait two weeks later for the box spring to be taken. You will note there is no option to zero fund an item like Development that impinges on traffic because it is poorly managed. Give me a survey that makes sense please.

Municipal Budget 2016
Shape Your City Comments
(Taken directly from shapeyourcityhalifax.ca.)

Future Services

Would you be willing to pay more taxes for enhanced or improved services? If so, which services?

#1

Considering what counselors waste money on, absolutely not.

#2

Bicycle Lanes

#3

Bicycle Lanes

#4

Yes lets enhance our municipality to attract new jobs and keep our youth here

#5

Yes. I would pay a small amount more in taxes to enhance public transit, and the preservation of parks and green spaces. I would like to be able to scrutinize the expense accounts of ALL public sector and municipal government people. We need to look into any areas of wastefulness. Cancel lavish parties on the public purse. I love the new Library, and the fact that we have a world class symphony and Art Gallery.

I am proud of our Recycle and Waste Management programs.

I would like to see more care for the homeless, and for those with mental and addiction needs.

#6

In response to: Considering what counselors waste money on, absolutely not.

Please be specific.

What do you consider a waste of money?

#7

I want to pay less taxes and receive less services. Services are provided by Unionized employees who are not as efficient as Non-unionized workers. Also, Unionized workers are typically overpaid and have excessively high benefits.

#8

Time to trim some excess. Cut some internal spending. Also, cut some services that aren't used or wasteful. I want rider numbers for buses. We have new buses, new paint, new GPS, and no one rides the things. And they cost us more than Policing? Time to trim that. Ferries run empty on weekends. And sidewalk clearing has to go. There are many more examples of waste.

#9

No more taxes. Transit is over spending on frivolous items, including new buildings, etc. Too much overtime for police and fire. Police do not need a new building. The current one is only 25 years old.

#10

I would for rail transit around the basin and for parks.

#11

In response to: Yes. I would pay a small amount more in taxes to enhance public transit, and the preservation of parks and green spaces. I would like to be able to scrutinize the expense accounts of ALL public sector and municipal government people. We need to look into any areas of wastefulness. Cancel lavish parties on the public purse. I love the new Library, and the fact that we have a world class symphony and Art Gallery.

I am proud of our Recycle and Waste Management programs.

I would like to see more care for the homeless, and for those with mental and addiction needs.

Completely agree on your points.

#12

I believe our taxes in Halifax, and in NS, are high enough as-is. I would support more taxes on big businesses or wealthy families, but not on the general population. I would also support putting some of the money spent on convention centers and celebrations toward things like homelessness, mental health, green spaces, public transport.

#13

NO! Some of us already pay the share of three or four others. Avg cost to service a residence is \$3000 . most peopel dont pay that much. But I pay > \$8,500.00 EVERY freaking YEAR just to live here in my house, getting the same services as they do.

Change the municipal taxation structure instead , or at least cap a single residence tax bill at \$4000, and spread the pain more evenly before you raise my property taxes any more. Jeeze.

#14

Transit services are still lacking, buses need to be more environmentally friendly and less noisy, also the city should invest in more bus shelters in the regional center. Snow clearing contractors need to be better equipped to leave the sidewalks completely clear of snow instead of a sheet of compacted ice. The bobcat alone is just not cutting it, they need a sweeper or something more effective.

#15

Rather than enhance taxes I would call for a redistribution by looking at priorities, and where there is an actual need that is helping to maintain and improve quality of life, rather than frivolous grander plans unrooted in greater long term vision.

#16

In response to:

Please be specific.

What do you consider a waste of money?

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/ferry-yarmouth-maine-numbers-1.3505846>

<https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2016/03/03/price-tag-for-bluenose-ii-rebuild-pushes-past-25-million.html>

#17

Acquisition of lands for parks and protected areas in Blue Mountain/Birch Cove Lakes and Purcell's Cove Backlands

#18

Access to transit

#19

Acquisition of lands for parks and protected areas in Blue Mountain/Birch Cove Lakes and Purcell's Cove Backlands

#20

High frequency transit service, including keeping the shuttle between Scotia Square and the Bridge Terminal after the Big Lift

#21

Yes I would if it was for the purpose of beginning the acquisition of the public lands that need to be added to what the city now owns to complete the Blue Mountain Birch Cove Wilderness area.

#22

I think it would be helpful to have a city fund created, and have the city budget for a substantial deposit routinely each year so as to have funds available to purchase land for parks and recreation or to preserve heritage lands. I am very appreciative of the city's use of the other ways to acquire park lands. I would like to see this option added please.

In particular, I would hope to see more land acquired around Sandy Lake, Bedford, soon before it is too late to preserve this beautiful place for future generations.

#23

In response to:

Yes I would if it was for the purpose of beginning the acquisition of the public lands that need to be added to what the city now owns to complete the Blue Mountain Birch Cove Wilderness area.

It should read PRIVATE lands. Sorry for that.

#24

In order to pay for future services, let alone existing ones (without increasing taxes), I would say any additional monies received (or savings found) go towards reducing our debt. The cost of servicing our debt will start climbing when interest rates go up, and then we will be faced with very difficult decisions on where to cut.

#25

Raising taxes should never be considered as the first option. The budget process should always be about considering the value to be achieved for the resources to be spent for each individual activity; whether that is existing or new or improved services. Value is based on the personal perceptions of the members of Council and the municipal taxpayers.

I cannot simply give blanket support to increasing taxes for unspecified enhanced or improved services. Funding for enhanced or improved services should first be considered through a re-allocation of current resources. If such re-allocation is not feasible in terms of the potential value lost, then increased taxation might be considered.

#26

I would not support a blanket raise of taxes for the masses but if you have to raise taxes then I would support better transit options and improvements to Halifax Transit.

#27

Possibly

#28

I would pay more taxes for activities which relate to preservation of the environment - that includes active transportation solutions, development of ways to reduce the municipality's reliance on fossil fuels and increase use of alternative energy sources, and the purchase and preservation of open spaces.

#29

narrower car lanes to reduce speed. fewer multilane roads. remove lanes. widen sidewalks. add protected bike lanes. stop studying it. stop trying to reinvent the wheel. look at cities in europe.

#30

We need a network of protected bicycle lanes that connect all communities in urban core, and good, paved, and winter-maintained greenway trails that connect our rural communities to each other & the core. While there is a significant upfront investment to get this done (on the order of a 4-pad arena), the long term benefit in terms of health, savings on road maintenance, and housing affordability are well established. We are falling behind our peers due to underinvestment in proper cycling infrastructure.

#31

In response to:

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/ferry-yarmouth-maine-numbers-1.3505846>

<https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2016/03/03/price-tag-for-bluenose-ii-rebuild-pushes-past-25-million.html>

Those are examples of provincial decisions, not municipal.

Revenue Fees

Revenue fees (not including Transit) account for \$39m or 4.4% of revenues received by the municipality. This includes everything from recreation fees, permit fees for parking and facility rentals. Do you support increasing these fees and/or creating additional user fees to maintain a lower tax rate or provide additional services? Please provide your comment.

#1

Yes some of fees like parking should be increased

#2

If these fees are for services that are optional, i agree to increase the fees. I will not use these services so it won't impact me.

#3

No more increases. If you want more money get it from government or start cutting. We have people leaving here because it's too expensive...taxing the remainder even more will not make that problem better. Learn how to manage money better.

#4

No increase to fees, i.e., taxes. Reduce services, pay to commissions, etc. Water commission is out of control.

#5

I do not agree with raising the fees for transit, parking, or recreational programs. If there are other, less essential fees that are more optional, those could be raised. However I believe other areas should be trimmed first for spending.

#6

Increased fee's are OK if they mean that the services provided will actually be better and will see improvements that the citizens have requested not just use the added fee's to handle regular maintenance.

#7

I am definitely in favour higher charges for parking as a means of encouraging people to take public transit rather than driving their personal vehicles.

#8

I support user fees for facilities that are more of a 'deluxe' service. There should not be fees for basic services that benefit everyone (more so for those who can least afford them). Parking is a good example. There is a transit system (albeit lacking), and people need to be discouraged from taking there vehicles everywhere (especially into the downtown core at peak periods). parking meter fees should be in force even in the evenings (more so in the summertime), but kept free on weekends when traffic is light to aid the businesses.

#9

Charging and handling fees creates bureaucratic overhead that eats up parts of the intended revenue. So avoid fees and focus on a simple but fair tax system instead.

#10

I would support higher fees for higher end services, but would prefer to see a fairer tax system to leverage against fees for more basic services.

Capital Projects

Currently the municipality is spending \$198 million on the rehabilitation and replacement of existing assets, expansion and/or the addition of new assets. Where would you like to see your capital dollars spent?

1. Roads
2. Sidewalks
3. Recreation Facilities
4. Buildings/Infrastructure
5. Other venues, facilities, projects?

Please provide comments

#1

Protected bicycle lanes!

#2

The Roads, Sidewalks,. Recreation Facilities and other Buildings/Infrastructure need repair and upgrading forget about stuff like logos ,name games etc, which a total waste of resources

#3

Would love to see additional protected bike lanes and recreation areas infused with public art.

#4

#3 Parks and Recreation...Hiking and walking are some of the top activities as determined by a recent survey by Participaction....common Wayfinding and Signage of existing Trails all over HRM and the creation of new recreation and active transportation trails will only help to save stretched health dollars...we want a Healthy Community. Indeed, our environment lends itself to helping with mental health concerns as well.....the academics call it forest bathing...a walk in the woods helps us wash away some of our stresses of life!!

#5

These projects are typically run poorly and over budget. I would recommend Council review past projects that were over-budget and devise a way to prevent this from occurring before they start future projects.

#6

The roads and sidewalks here are some of the worst in the country but we could really use more recreation facilities also. I like the previous comment...whatever you do at least learn from past mistakes.

#7

We would like to see more pickleball outdoor and indoor facilities. Would like to see outdoor courts near the Woodlawn United Church (Morash) - it is unused tennis courts, that could be converted into 4 Pickleball courts.. encouraging seniors, young adults and children to play together.

#8

In response to #3

Great reply!

#3 Parks and Recreation...Hiking and walking are some of the top activities as determined by a recent survey by Participaction....common Wayfinding and Signage of existing Trails all over HRM and the creation of new recreation and active transportation trails will only help to save stretched health dollars...we want a Healthy Community. Indeed, our environment lends itself to helping with mental health concerns as well.....the academics call it forest bathing...a walk in the woods helps us wash away some of our stresses of life!!

#9

5. Other venues, facilities, projects - please take a break from this one!! With the big lift and the new convention center, those are two huge projects for now and I think we could use a bit of a break, especially with talks of putting in a stadium in the not so distant future. I support money going toward roads and sidewalks, and upgrading them if need be. Some roads in HRM are always full of potholes (Hammonds Plains Road comes to mind among many). Not sure where it would fall but if we could give employers incentives to give employees incentives to carpool, that could help our roads, traffic, and parking a lot. Employees get an extra \$200-300/year if they carpool 75% or more of the time. Maybe

more if there are more people in 1 car, or less if there are only 2. Could make our road maintenance go a lot further.

#10

The city needs to begin using these funds to transform arterial roads into the city into "complete streets" so roads and sidewalks are very important. Also the city needs to invest in more electric car charging facilities through HRM, we fall behind other cities in Canada.

#11

HRM is in dire need of a new 50m pool. Our current facilities are well-used and aging. From competitive swimmers of all ages, divers and synchronized swimmers; from recreational swimmers, kids learning to swim and seniors in an aquacize class – we all make good use of the aquatic facilities we have. Recent unfortunate incidents have shone the spotlight on the very real need for a new aquatic facility to service the HRM sooner rather than later. Dalplex (opened in 1979) has been closed since December 13 due to as-yet-to-be-found (and fixed) leak; date of reopening is uncertain. Sackville Sports Stadium was closed for a month or so due to a fire. Centennial Pool (opened in 1967) has a limited life span remaining. Dartmouth Sportsplex (opened 1982) will be closed for 18 months starting in May for its revitalization project. When one facility closes, pressure is put on the other facilities to accommodate the displaced swimmers. Swimming is a life-long sport. We need council to commit to building a much-needed aquatic facility now.

#12

Parks and recreation! Urban forests, gardens to grow food (food security issue), and opportunities to connect with nature, art and water especially, more readily. Please invest in a good accessible plan and make the Blue Mountain Birch Cove Regional Park happen sooner than later! Also focus more on structures and facilities in neighbourhoods rather than large scale complexes and facilities that are less accessible to get to due to our transportation system, and for those who don't have vehicles. For instance it would be better to have more smaller scale facilities and buildings in neighbourhoods for community health and recreation projects and initiatives. This also creates a sense of place and belonging where one inhabits. We need warming centers run on renewable energy, as a vulnerable region affected by storms, and climate change.

#13

Acquiring the land necessary to complete the Blue Mountain Birch Cove Regional Park

#14

In response to:

Parks and recreation! Urban forests, gardens to grow food (food security issue), and opportunities to connect with nature, art and water especially, more readily. Please invest in a good accessible plan and make the Blue Mountain Birch Cove Regional Park happen sooner than later! Also focus more on structures and facilities in neighbourhoods rather than large scale complexes and facilities that are less accessible to get to due to our transportation system, and for those who don't have vehicles. For instance it would be better to have more smaller scale facilities and buildings in neighbourhoods for community health and recreation projects and initiatives. This also creates a sense of place and belonging where one inhabits. We need warming centers run on renewable energy, as a vulnerable region affected by storms, and climate change.

HRM Rec Programming needs a major review....a recent HRM Report on Facilities does not really touch on programmes that can be used by residents of all ages and mobility. It would be interesting to have a postal code survey of participants.....how may bus rides to reach a mini basketball team or a drop in

facility, if there is a school open after hours for senior drop ins, classes for Spanish, quilting or woodworking or other 'life long learning' offerings. My District currently does not have any HRM programming on the schedule, I may have missed it! Neither are there any fun, drop in family events that might peak interest in a new offering or other idea.....lets be creativephysical, social, mental health...all part of needs of a healthier community.

#15

I do not believe in spending more money to build NEW roads. Adjusting existing thoroughfares to reducing idling time, providing dedicated bus lanes (more so at peak periods though), and perhaps looking at an amber signal change to green for long red light periods for some to turn their cars off. Paying for for-profit commercial endeavours, even partially, should not be allowed (unless the municipality is getting a royalty, not just a promise of increased business) - if they can't make it alone, they don't have a good business case. The one exception might be a land grant or lease in certain circumstances. A few more parkades downtown & in other key areas would be nice, like near hospitals. Any near a hospital should have a validation method to allow for free or reduced rate parking for those visiting or getting care.

We have enough parks, for goodness sake; many of them barely used to half capacity. If we need anything it's ways to reduce costs to the municipality & province (like LED light retrofits - done when a bulb burns out, not before, or heat pumps & solar panels).

Sidewalks in key areas would be great, but remember the cost of maintaining them in the winter. Burnside could use a few more sidewalks, as could Bayer's Lake area.

A nice project would be additional parking zones (free) for mass transit hubs.

#16

In response to:

Parks and recreation! Urban forests, gardens to grow food (food security issue), and opportunities to connect with nature, art and water especially, more readily. Please invest in a good accessible plan and make the Blue Mountain Birch Cove Regional Park happen sooner than later! Also focus more on structures and facilities in neighbourhoods rather than large scale complexes and facilities that are less accessible to get to due to our transportation system, and for those who don't have vehicles. For instance it would be better to have more smaller scale facilities and buildings in neighbourhoods for community health and recreation projects and initiatives. This also creates a sense of place and belonging where one inhabits. We need warming centers run on renewable energy, as a vulnerable region affected by storms, and climate change.

I think it would be great to invest in Blue Mountain-Birch Cove and make that a new regional park. The Annapolis Group is threatening to sue the city but they do not have a leg to stand on. The area cannot be developed for another 14 years and the municipality can easily renew it as a no-development area. Environmental lawyer David Donnelly has written a legal opinion on the matter for EAC. The city should also invest in the backlands, near Purcell's Cove and William's Lake.

#17

Recreation Facilities. HRM currently has no recognized mountain bike trails. While many other jurisdictions in the maritimes have sustainable single track mountain bike trails available to the public, HRM still has nothing in place. Its unfortunate that HRM is lagging behind areas such as the Annapolis Valley and Anitgonish in the establishment of sustainable single track trails for mountain bike use. Mountain biking is a growing sport and with HRM's unique geography, has the potential to add a tourism opportunity to the city while providing a much needed resource to its residents.

#18

Connecting Seniors to Active Living Project – Final Report 2007, states that, "Active living and physical activity are paramount to seniors' health and well-being. Numerous studies maintain the relationship between the use of regular physical activity and improvement in overall quality of aging and health.

An active lifestyle has been linked to the prevention or delay of many chronic diseases and disabilities. Despite the benefits, only 30% of Nova Scotia citizens over the age of 65 years are moderately active (i.e. 30-15 plus minutes of exercise a day). This percentage continues to decline with age and, as a result, older adults face increased risk of mobility loss, functional capacity and, most importantly, independence.”

Pickleball, is one of the fastest growing, age-friendly, sports in North America. Fast-paced, easy-to-learn and inexpensive to play, Pickleball has gained enthusiasts of all ages and skill levels since it was invented in 1965. It's smaller courts, underhand strokes and slower balls are finding favor among baby boomers - keeping them active and competitive, despite any limitations they may have. We have players with Parkinson's, MS, or sport related injuries, playing this sport successfully around Nova Scotia. The average age of Pickleball players in Canada is 62.

There is a high level of evidence that suggests that less active older adults are more likely to fall. As such, Pickleball specifically works on balance and agility while offering the same benefits of other regular exercise. Exercise improves muscle strength and reaction time and contributes to the reduction of sway when peripheral sensation and ankle support are challenged. Physical activities like Pickleball can make an important contribution to stability.

Pickleball may have a funny name, but as you can see, its' health benefits are nothing to laugh at. Pickleball is a game that anyone can play for a lifetime of fun and health. One doctor wrote, that one key element defined most of his success when trying to get a patient physically active. Getting the person to choose an activity that offered them a good mixture of enjoyment, social interaction, and movement patterns that they are able to perform safely and confidently. PICKLEBALL, encompasses them all.

That is why we need to promote PICKLEBALL NOW.... please provide us with better outdoor and indoor court access. With 300 under-utilized tennis courts in the HRM, surely we can open up some courts dedicated to this sport. We also are having a hard time finding gym space - affordable as well. We need space. We need gyms and recreational centres to start including pickleball court lines when refinishing floors.

#19

We have the highest aging population per capita in Canada , we have an unfit population both kids and adults, pickleball may sound like a crazy name but the health benefits are high and game is easy to play for all ages and families. We need HRM to provide us with outdoor and indoor court access. as stated earlier in another post, "With 300 under-utilized tennis courts in the HRM, surely we can open up some courts dedicated to this sport". We can resurface already existing non used tennis courts, one tennis court can make three pickleball courts , this game is bursting in the USA, look it up, google it, its here too but we need more access. The city needs these facilities which helps active living and healthily lifestyles for everyone . Currently,there is one pickleball court by larry'Connell field and a 2 repainted courts in Dartmouth. Even one resurfaced tennis court in each area of Halifax , Dartmouth and Bedford /Sackville would be awesome to start. Tennis has the Daniel nestor center and recently received huge financial support, there are used beach volleyball courts in burnside, new hockey areas being built .Pickleball is for everyone, give it a try contact PickleballNS or eastcoast pickleball . We also are having a hard time finding gym space - affordable as well. We need space. We need gyms and recreational centres to start including pickleball court lines when refinishing floors, municipal councilors who represent each of our areas, we will be calling on you, small amount of financial dollars to resurface outdoor tennis courts will go a long way to benefit the city and its and the health benefits of our community. Sports & Fitness Industry Association reported pickleball currently has 2.46 million players. This game is growing in NS and in Canada, municipal councilors we need your support!!! this game needs facilities that will benefit our communities and our citizens , . The research is out there , our demographics, aging population, health impacts and healthy living, the cost are small , the benefits are high. for all nova scotians. I realize there are lots of issues in HRM ,this is one small amount that can have a big impact on healthy living in our community

#20

It's time - really - to purchase the Birch Cove Lakes-Blue Mountain wilderness area and create the regional park as outlined in the 2006 Halifax Regional Plan. The monetary gains that Annapolis Group Inc. and Susie Lake Development seek absolutely do not outweigh the public good that will come of protecting this culturally and ecologically significant area. We should be encouraging urban density, tourism prospects, healthy living, and environmental sustainability, not unnecessary urban sprawl in an area the city will be forced to spend more money to maintain. I have written more on this topic; it's in the stack of over 1,400 letters you received in July.

Here's a great article about the flaws in Annapolis Group's ridiculous lawsuit against the city. Shame on them for expecting \$119 million of taxpayer money meant to be spent on all our well-beings.
<http://www.metronews.ca/views/halifax/halifax-matters/2017/01/23/tristan-cleveland-fact-check-blue-mountain-birch-cove.html>

Thank you for listening.

#21

I want to see the city invest in mixed-use parkland, such as could be done with the Birch Cove Lakes - Blue Mountain wilderness area. Green spaces with opportunity for many levels of recreation (walking, dog areas, biking, camping, paddling, birding, etc) are vital to a city's quality of life.

#22

I want to see the city invest and approve developments and recreational facilities that will differentiate us from every other boring concrete box developments every other city in North America does because it's cheaper to build. We need parklands like Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes to give young (and old) people a reason to stay in Halifax and not move out west for work. Recreational opportunities like this improve quality of life for everyone. Cookie cutter subdivisions and boring high rise concrete boxes that block the sun from city streets and create wind tunnels downtown instead of beautiful and distinct historical architecture are never going to improve quality of life here but just line the pockets of people who purchase land with one zoning at a price fair for that zoning and then expect rules to be changed just for them and ignore all of the zoning compliant neighbors. Spend money on things to differentiate us and we will see improved tourism and and retention of residents.

#23

Our venues & buildings need to be located in the centres of our existing communities, not in business parks. They need to be built in ways that can be reached without a car, in ways that the majority of the population can easily access recreation options.

We need to stop building new roads. Our roads budget keeps climbing, but we clearly aren't spending enough money keeping potholes at bay, and generally improving the state of our streets. Until we can maintain what we have, we can't add lane kilometres.

Municipal Infrastructure

Given the current infrastructure in the municipality, do you feel it is more important to maintain our existing infrastructure or to build new infrastructure? Please provide your comment.

#1

Build new recreational infrastructure, trails and cultural assets.

#2

Protected bicycle lanes

#3

It's important to maintain our existing infrastructure or to build new infrastructure or we become a third world municipality like Detroit

#4

Priority number one should be to acquire the lands necessary to establish the Birch Cove Blue Mountain Regional Park exactly as envisioned in the 2006 Regional Plan. Another priority should be to work with the province in getting a proper trail system and associated amenities within Long Lake Provincial Park. Part of that includes establishing another parking lot to get the cars off the side of the St. Margaret's Bay Road - if the Province doesn't have the money - Halifax should pay for it as it is the citizens of Halifax that are the users. Where the transit riders are saying with their feet that the investment in transit does not meet their needs, with those same feet, people are demonstrating the crying need for investment in Long Lake Provincial Park. There needs to be more investment in bicycle lanes. Why is there no bicycle lane from the Rotary to Sambro and around the Sambro loop for example? Bicycle lanes create economic development benefits and not just recreational options. A bicycle lane would help bring business to Sambro as a collateral benefit for example.

#5

Maintain existing infrastructure and find ways to improve efficiency of existing Infrastructure (installing Solar Panels on Roof, switch to LED lighting, etc.). Don't waste Taxpayers \$\$ on Megaprojects (like the new downtown Library or Convention Center).

#6

We really need to stop wasting so much money on transit that isn't working. Mass transit and bike lanes would be good. And a third bridge. Also any chance of getting the bridge fee reduced or cancelled now that the bridges are paid for?

#7

Take a break from the mega projects (convention center, the bridge lift), put that toward thorough maintenance of existing infrastructure. Finish off the cogswell exchange fiasco. If you must dump money into a project of some sort, put it toward protecting natural parks and land, and turning that into trails and paths. Building new parking lots where they're most needed. I'm fine with a 10-20m walk if I have guaranteed parking in a lot near where I'm going.

#8

Maintaining current infrastructure should be the norm regardless. But new infrastructure is needed urgently. The peninsula has only a handful of entry points and they are all becoming massive bottlenecks year after year. The city either needs to find ways to get people to use transit (the hard way) or build more entry points for vehicles into and out of the city because the bi-hi, Armdale rotary, bridges and Windsor exchange are constantly clogged, and every year we find a band-aid solution to these but they are not a complete solution.

#9

Maintain existing infrastructure, but increase funding for things like mass transit and bike lanes

#10

Existing infrastructure should always be properly maintained to ensure that its life-cycle is at its maximum potential. The cost of new infrastructure becomes ever more costly each year, so unless that infrastructure has reached its capacity limit, or exceeded it, it needs to be kept.

#11

Please invest serious time, effort and funds to make the Bedford - Fairview - Downtown Halifax commuter rail happen soon.

#12

Please acquire the lands necessary to establish the Birch Cove Blue Mountain Regional Park exactly as envisioned in the 2006 Regional Plan.

#13

I believe in investing in existing infrastructure that makes sense and fits well into the future growth strategy. I also believe in balancing that with investment in new infrastructure, so long as again, it fits in to the overall strategic plan.

#14

We need to focus on maintenance (including replacement) rather than expansion. Most housing starts in recent years are on the peninsula, and our road networks are full of potholes and cracks that we clearly can't afford to repair. Why would we build more roads and facilities in far-flung communities if the population outside of the core is stagnant or shrinking? So, let's focus on maintenance, and replacing facilities where it makes sense, but no net-new roads or infrastructure should be built.