

COUNCILLOR SAM AUSTIN DISTRICT 5 NEWSLETTER

Dartmouth Centre



HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

SPRING 2025



DEAR RESIDENTS,

Happy spring Dartmouth! Things have been busy at City Hall over the last few months. In October, the people of HRM elected a new Council. I have enjoyed getting to know all the new faces around the room. It's a strange feeling realizing that after just two terms, I'm a Council veteran! That wouldn't have been the case in the Council I joined in 2016! There has been a lot of turnover over the last eight years. The work is challenging, but there is a lot of satisfaction in being able to make things better. I'm thrilled and honoured to be able to continue working on your behalf to build a better Dartmouth and HRM.

In this print newsletter, you can find info on water fluoridation, the 2025 capital budget, the Lancaster/Micmac Boulevard roundabout project, and HRM's new anti-black racism grant program. There is a lag time for print so the best way to keep up to date is to sign up for my electronic newsletter at www.samaustin.ca. I'm always open to feedback, positive or negative, so reach out with any concerns or ideas.

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For assistance with municipal issues, you can also contact my Constituency Coordinator, Michelle Egan, by email at michelle.egan@halifax.ca or by calling 902.490.6982



FLUORIDE UPDATE

On March 6, Council's Environment Committee received a presentation from Halifax Water on fluoride. The fluoride system at Dartmouth's Lake Major plant has been offline since February 2020. Halifax Water did notify the Department of Environment about the shutdown, but neither Halifax Water or the Department of Environment notified health officials, and no one notified the general public. This was a mistake.

Whether you're for or against fluoridation, everyone should know what's in the drinking water. There is a fundamental trust at stake here. Halifax Water should have told the public about the extended fluoride shutdowns so that people could make informed decisions about their health. Halifax Water recognizes this and has reformed their communications approach to make sure it doesn't happen again.

HALIFAX



DISTRICT 5 NEWSLETTER

Spring 2025

In fairness to Halifax Water, the five-year fluoride absence in Dartmouth wasn't intentional. The utility had been planning to install a new fluoride tank at Lake Major in 2023, but then heavy rains that summer forced a change of plans. The heavy rains washed lots of material into Lake Major, causing Halifax Water to use much more Alum than ever before. Alum is a crucial part of the treatment process because it causes material in the water to clump together for easy removal. Halifax Water identified the need for a fourth Alum tank as a pressing priority and, unfortunately, the only space available was where the new fluoride tank was going to go. Fluoride is no use if the water itself isn't safe to drink so fluoride has had to make way for Alum!

Halifax Water's Plan B was to reinstall fluoride alongside major plant upgrades in 5-7 years. Waiting 5-7 years on top of the five years that have already gone by is an unacceptable timeline. For a kid born in 2020, that's most of their childhood! Halifax Water has heard that feedback and staff have identified a potential option that would repurpose space elsewhere in the Lake Major plant and allow for the return of fluoride in about two years. A seven year gap is still not great, but it's a heck of a lot better than 12 years! Halifax Water's Board will make a decision on how to proceed in the near future. I'm glad that a third option to address this issue ahead of major plant upgrades has been identified and hope the Board will back it.



BUDGET 2025

HRM's municipal budget process is grinding towards an April conclusion. The final budget hasn't been approved yet (at least at the time of writing this newsletter), but some of what is in store for District 5 is becoming clearer. Here is what to expect in terms of capital improvements this year:

Roads

Pinecrest Drive: Major repaving from Crystal Drive to Albro Lake Road

Farrell Street: Major repaving of Farrell Street including traffic calming and active transportation infrastructure

Thistle Street: Carryover work to repave Thistle Street between Beech Street and Crichton Park Road. Includes traffic calming (speed tables)

Alderney Drive Design: Continuation of the planning process for Alderney Drive

Portland Street Design: Continuation of the planning process for Portland Street

Road Safety

Leaman Drive: Traffic calming on Leaman Drive (speed tables)

Windmill Road at Best Street: Crosswalk upgrade to rapid flashing beacons

Victoria Road at Gladstone Avenue: Crosswalk upgrade to rapid flashing beacons

Prince Albert Road Guardrail: HRM is installing a guardrail along Prince Albert Road to ensure vehicles don't crash into the beach below

Active Transportation

Harbour Trail Parker Street – Old Ferry Road: This one is on the list, but HRM is still trying to secure the needed real estate deal with CN. There is risk that, like the last two years that this project has been included in the budget, that that won't happen in time for construction. Hope springs eternal that maybe this will be the year

Farrell Street: First phase of the Dartmouth North Active Transportation Project, with bike infrastructure on Farrell Street and through Farrell Park to Albro Lake Road

Albro Lake Road Sidewalk: Sidewalk replacement on Albro Lake Road between Victoria Road and Catherine Street



DISTRICT 5 NEWSLETTER

Spring 2025

Parks

Findlay Community Centre Park: HRM paving the pathway from Hawthorne Street through to the Community Centre and Elliot Street. Lighting will also be installed.

Lawnsdale Drive Park: HRM is planning to repave the pathway from Lawnsdale Drive to Susan Place. There is still discussions underway between Parks and Public Works and this work may end up delayed again to tie into the future work on Birchwood Terrace

Brownlow Park playground: Not technically in District 5, but still important to many District 5 residents. Brownlow Park is getting a new playground alongside drainage improvements and a possible shade structure.

Birch Cove: Birch Cove is getting a new dock

Brookdale Crescent: District 5 capital is being used to replace the wooden deck that was located alongside the Banook pathway

Lake Banook Dam: Design and rehabilitation work to the dam at the end of Nowlan Street

City Building Projects

Sawmill River: Phase 2.1 is already under construction. Prince Albert Road/Portland/Alderney intersection work down to King's Wharf, including the Dundas Street extension, new trail, road redesign, and daylighting. Halifax Water is leading the project and working closely with HRM. Phase 2.2 will tender this year, but construction may or may not get started.

Downtown Dartmouth Waterfront Plan: HRM has hired consultants to complete a new plan for the Dartmouth waterfront. Stay tuned for opportunities for public engagement

Other

Regional Museum Strategy: Continued work to complete the museum strategy



ANTI-BLACK RACISM GRANTS

HRM has awarded its first anti-Black racism grants. Anti-Black racism encompasses prejudice, discriminatory attitudes, negative beliefs, stereotyping and other forms of discrimination directed at people of African ancestry. This form of racism is rooted in the particular history of Black people which is informed by the legacies of enslavement and colonization. HRM launched its grant program to support community-led initiatives to combat anti-Black racism in 2024. HRM received 24 applicants and awarded \$104,000 to 13 organizations. I was pleased to see two Dartmouth organizations in the mix!

The Downtown Dartmouth Business Commission received \$6,000 to support the "Being Black and Beautiful" event, a celebration of black beauty, culture, fashion, and music. The African Nova Scotia Music Association, which is based out of the Sanctuary Arts Centre on Ochterloney Street, received \$6,000 for export development to give black artists more opportunities to market their talents to a wider national audience.

Congratulations to both and all the award recipients.



DISTRICT 5 NEWSLETTER

Spring 2025

LANCASTER/WOODLAND ROUNABOUT

The Province has released its 2025-2026 highway capital plan and the good news is that the planned Lancaster/Woodland Roundabout is once again on the list. The Lancaster/Woodland intersection has been a dangerous spot for a while. It has averaged one or two crashes a month and speeding is prevalent. The Province owns the Highway and Woodland Avenue while HRM owns Lancaster Drive and Micmac Boulevard, which means that any fix requires us to work together, and that takes time.

HRM and the Province undertook a joint design study, which recommended converting it to a roundabout. A roundabout has the advantage of eliminating dangerous left-hand turns across traffic and forcing everyone coming off the highway to slow down.

The roundabout project is being led by the Province and in 2024 the Province included it in their capital plan. Unfortunately, design work took longer than expected and work wasn't able to proceed in the 2024 construction season. The good news is the Province has again committed to this project and included the roundabout in their 2025-2026 capital plan. Fingers crossed for construction proceeding this year! Many thanks to the Province for their close cooperation with HRM on this project and their willingness to prioritize addressing this problematic intersection.

BEFORE YOU BURN

With the changing of the weather, we're coming into fire season. HRM has launched "Before You Burn" a new online tool that provides residents with up-to-date information on whether burning is allowed at their location.

Before starting an open-air fire, check beforeyouburn.halifax.ca/ to stay informed and ensure you're complying with municipal and provincial rules. The new website will clearly answer whether you're allowed to burn or not depending on conditions, what type of burning you're looking to do, and where you live. Check it out before you burn this season!

Current Conditions

Burning allowed between 2 p.m. and midnight



Municipal fire risk general index

Low	Moderate	High	Very high	Extreme
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Index represented is the highest fire potential within the municipality today; it may not represent all areas - Please use the Burning Map for decisions on burning

Secondary Unit Incentive Program

HRM, with help from funding from the federal government's Housing Accelerator Fund, has introduced a new grant program to help property owners create more housing options. The Second Unit Incentive Program offers financial grants to help offset costs associated with building new secondary units.

Eligible residents can receive up to \$12,000 to help reduce building expenses related to water and wastewater. Applications will be open until June 1, 2026, or until funding is fully allocated. More information on how to apply can be found on HRM's website, www.halifax.ca/about-halifax/regional-community-planning/housing-accelerator-fund/second-unit-incentive



Please recycle.

Delivery Note:

Due to the delivery routes followed by Canada Post, it is possible that some of these newsletters may appear in other Districts. If you receive it in error, I apologize for any confusion and hope you find its content useful.

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