



## COUNCILLOR KATHRYN MORSE

**DISTRICT 10**  
HALIFAX - BEDFORD BASIN WEST

### NEW SAFETY FEATURE ON FAIRVIEW OVERPASS



A pedestrian safety feature has been added recently to the Fairview Overpass, where the on ramp from Joseph Howe Drive connects to the Windsor Street Exchange. This is one of only two pedestrian links between District 10 and the peninsula.

If you've ever tried to sprint across here, you'll know it's a tricky spot because of the curve of the ramp, the two lanes of traffic, and the speed of the vehicles. It's still a tricky spot to cross, but it's safer now that the crosswalk has been painted and

marked with high visibility signs, along with solar-powered, pedestrian-activated flashing lights.

About two days after the flashing lights were installed, the one on the right was somehow knocked down. I'm pleased to see it was quickly repaired and is working again.

### NURSING HOME ON THE WAY IN DISTRICT 10

Land clearing has started behind Canary Crescent and next to Caritas, the Sisters of Charity residence near Mount Saint Vincent University. Trees are being cleared for a 144-bed nursing home announced by NS Seniors Minister Barbara Adams on November 20. According to the announcement, all the new rooms will be single rooms with private washrooms.

The nursing home will be operated by Shannex. There aren't many details available yet about the size of the building. The existing 5-story residence for the Sisters of Charity has 101 suites, so a 144-bed nursing home may be larger. Apparently, the site won't need much blasting.



### PROPERTY TAXES IN 2024

# Budget and Business Plan

2023/24



I have heard from a few constituents after the headlines appeared around a possible 9.7 per cent property tax hike next year. Council is a very long way from any decision that will affect property taxes. It's a regular part of the HRM budget process to start in November with an estimate of the next year's budget impact on tax bills, and then that number is revised (usually downward) through the winter as more details become available from property assessments and HRM departments. A decision and vote on the tax rate will be made in March after much discussion and a thorough review of spending.

While I expect the 2024 tax increase will be lower than 9.7 per cent, the zero percent increase some residents are asking would require a reduction in

services. Some of the biggest municipal expenditures are for policing, fire protection, and road paving, all of which are essential services. Costs for these and other services go up each year due to changes in wages and inflation, so there is not much flexibility in these budget items, especially as our population is growing.

One area where there is some flexibility is in the capital budget, and Council may decide to postpone some larger infrastructure projects to reduce taxes next year. This is also not ideal because it adds to an infrastructure deficit over time. A potential source of revenue for HRM is a fairer cost-sharing arrangement with other levels of government. At a recent Regional Council meeting, Mayor Savage highlighted the fact that municipalities own 60% of Canada's infrastructure, but only get a 10% share of Canada's taxes to maintain and upgrade that infrastructure.

The rapid population growth in HRM is adding to the city's costs but is not bringing in much new revenue to the municipality. The financial benefit of HRM's population growth is mainly going to the province, through an increase in revenue collected from income tax and provincial sales tax. Mayor Savage is working with other mayors to try to get better financial arrangements with the federal and provincial governments. The burden of building and maintaining infrastructure for our growing cities should not be falling so heavily on those paying municipal property taxes.

To learn more about the upcoming budget meetings, processes and how to provide your feedback, see our [website](#).





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### NOMINATE VOLUNTEERS BY JANUARY 11



Each year in April, the Mayor and Halifax Regional Council recognize the extraordinary contributions of volunteers in our communities. The annual HRM Volunteer Awards ceremony puts a spotlight on the amazing Haligonians who give their time and skills to others. If you know someone who is making a difference as a volunteer, please consider nominating them for HRM's 2024 Volunteer Awards.

There are three categories: Youth, Adult, or Group. You can download the form or nominate [online](#). Please select the appropriate form and return it to [volunteerhelp@halifax.ca](mailto:volunteerhelp@halifax.ca) by January 11, 2024.

### SNOW SEASON REMINDERS

Snow is on the way! Here's a brief reminder about how snow clearing is managed. HRM's snow clearing crews are responsible for clearing approximately 3,844 lane kilometers of streets and about 1,000 kilometers of sidewalks. Unfortunately, they can't all be cleared at the same time! HRM has service standards and the timing of clearing varies depending on the priority level of the street and sidewalks.

Commonly used streets, bus routes, and roads that provide access to hospitals and schools are given priority. When the snow stops, operators work to

have all the roads cleared within 24 hours and major roads and bus routes within 12 hours. When there are blizzard conditions or snowfalls greater than 30 centimeters, more time may be needed to complete clearing. The same exception may apply when there are rapidly changing weather conditions.

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The municipal overnight winter parking ban is in effect from December 15 to March 31. The ban is enforced from 1 a.m. to 6 a.m. during declared weather events and snow removal operations only. Sign up for [hfxALERT](#) notifications to receive important updates, including Winter Parking Ban notifications.

### BAYERS LAKE CLINIC NOW OPEN



The Bayers Lake Community Outpatient Centre opened in November at 420 Susie Lake Crescent. This center will provide eye care, orthopedic assessment, rehabilitation, diagnostic imaging, and dialysis services. Hours are 6:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. on weekdays and 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. on weekends.

The Centre can be accessed via Susie Lake Crescent (past Mission Mart) or Julius Boulevard (next to Marshalls). Halifax Transit Route 28 stops at the Outpatient Centre, and parking is available at \$2 per hour or \$8 per day.



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### CONGRATULATIONS FIRE GRADS



These are the faces of Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency's newest firefighters. The twelve graduates (eight men, four women) of HRFE's intense training program had big smiles as they were awarded their black helmets during the graduation ceremony in early December. The black helmets signify they are now full-fledged firefighters. Halifax has the oldest (and based on what I heard at the graduation, the proudest!) fire service in Canada, dating back to 1754.

One of the things HRFE is most proud of is that they train their own firefighters in-house. In many other cities training is provided through community colleges, but in HRM it's done by seasoned firefighters. Over the last decade or so, HRFE has successfully stepped-up efforts to encourage more diverse applicants to their firefighting training program. There is a huge demand for the training: these twelve firefighting grads were selected from 3,000 applicants.

### SENIORS CARD PARTY

All seniors in the community are welcome! Stop in to play bridge, crib, euchre and more on January 3 at the Rockingham United Church located at 12 Flamingo Drive, Halifax, NS.

For more information, call 902-443-2947 or email [church.office@rockinghamunited.org](mailto:church.office@rockinghamunited.org)

December 2023

### HRM RECOGNIZED AS THIRD CONSECUTIVE YEAR!



The municipality is proud to be recognized as one of Nova Scotia's Top Employers for

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2024. This is the third year in a row that the municipality has been honoured with this recognition on the Nova Scotia's Top Employers list.

Visit our [website](#) to see our latest career opportunities and learn more about what makes the Halifax Regional Municipality an employer of choice.

### REPORT IMPAIRED DRIVERS

As the festive season approaches, remember to plan ahead - use designated drivers, public transit, or stay over if you are consuming alcohol.

If you are on the roads, it's always important to stay alert to signs that other drivers may be impaired. Look for driving too fast, slow or at an inconsistent speed, drifting, tailgating or frequent lane changes, over shooting or stopping well before stop signs/lights, driving without headlights, windows open even in inclement weather and making exceptionally wide turns.

You can report impaired drivers by calling 911. You will be asked for the license plate number and a description of the vehicle.



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### REDUCE, RECYCLE PACKAGING WASTE

If you've ever spent a few hours picking up litter by the side of the road, you've no doubt wondered if there isn't a way to reduce the amount of trash out there. There is, and it's called EPR or Extended Producer Responsibility. It means major producers of waste get together to pay for the recycling and disposal of that waste.

In November at HRM's Environment and Sustainability Committee we took a step closer to having the companies producing packaging waste such as fast food wrappers taking over responsibility for managing it. Working with the Province of Nova Scotia, HRM will be transferring the costs of our blue bag program for paper and packaging to those who produce the paper and packaging waste. The change will take two years, and will save HRM about \$6 - 7 million a year.

Along with reducing costs for municipalities, other benefits of EPR for packaging are improved markets for recycled materials, diversion of waste from landfills, encouraging a switch to eco-friendly packaging, and reducing the amount of excess packaging used in the first place. It also helps consumers choose products with less packaging or recycled packaging.

### HRM WINS GLOBAL CLIMATE AWARD

The Halifax Regional Municipality has achieved an A grade from the [Carbon Disclosure Project \(CDP\)](#), an international charity that assesses environmental impact for investors, companies, and communities. The award means HRM is one of the top cities in the world showing "ambition, leadership and transparency on climate action".

The award honours HRM's commitment to climate action and environmental stewardship through our [HalifACT](#) climate plan.

### APPLY FOR COMMUNITY GRANTS

2024-2025

#### COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM

APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN

This program provides cash grants to registered non-profit organizations and charities.

HALIFAX

Halifax Regional Municipality's Community Grants Program application period opens on January 3, 2024. Deadline to apply is April 1. Grants are available for \$5000 and \$25,000 in a variety of categories.

The application form is available our [website](#), by stopping by our Customer Service Centre at 7071 Bayers Road, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, or by contacting [311](#). If you've got questions, email [nonprofitgrants@halifax.ca](mailto:nonprofitgrants@halifax.ca) or call 902.497.0479 to find out how your group could qualify.

### NEW HFXGO APP



For your convenience, use HFXGO, the new mobile transit payment app! Purchase and use tickets hassle-free from your smartphone. You can download for free on

the App Store or Google Play. For more information about the app please visit our [website](#).



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## HEATING ASSISTANCE REBATE PROGRAM

Application for the [Heating Assistance Rebate Program](#) is still ongoing, it aims to support low- and moderate-income households. This program offers rebates of \$600 for each household to help alleviate the burden of heating costs.

Don't forget, the application deadline for this program is March 31, 2024.

Seniors can also benefit from the [Seniors Care Grant](#), specifically aiding them with heating costs during the colder months. The process takes about 8 weeks, and updates on the application status are available online.

Spread the word and ensure everyone has a warm and comfortable winter ahead! Here is how to [start](#).

## CALL 311 - MUNICIPAL SERVICES AND INFORMATION

The 311 Municipal Contact Centre offers various ways to connect with vital municipal information and services, including property tax details, transit schedules, bylaw complaints, and more.

You can reach out through phone, [email](#), or in-person at three customer service center locations across Halifax. You can contact 311 by phone for various services, available Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., and weekends from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Visit our [website](#) for more information.

## VULNERABLE PERSONS REGISTRY

The Halifax Regional Municipality has launched the Voluntary Vulnerable Persons Registry (VVPR) designed to offer crucial support during emergencies to residents who may require additional assistance. The VVPR ensures that first responders, municipal staff, and volunteers have essential information to better prioritize responses to residents' needs. Applications are open to those seeking registration to be part of the VVPR or their legal representatives.

This registry is for individuals facing mobility, vision, or hearing impairment, developmental or cognitive disabilities, mental health conditions, or those reliant on electricity for life-sustaining equipment. When activated, the program sends warnings via hfxALERT, followed by potential phone calls or door-to-door checks by Emergency Management staff. Check-in communications are also provided post-event. To learn more, visit the municipality's [website](#).

## SNOW REMOVAL ASSISTANCE

The Senior Snow Removal program is a project to help seniors maintain safe pathways around their homes during snowy weather. Partnered with the Halifax Regional Municipality, the YMCA coordinates this program to clear front and back steps, walkways, ramps, and access to fuel tanks. Driveways are not covered.

Eligibility includes residing in a single dwelling, meeting income criteria, and not being a landlord. Spaces are limited on a first-come, first-serve basis.

For further details please click [here](#) or call 902-483-3678.





### HOLIDAY SHOPPING SAFETY TIPS

Holiday shopping season is in full swing. Whether you're going to stores or shopping online, Halifax Regional Police has a few simple tips for you to consider.

#### Online shopping:

- It is best to shop from your personal device at home on a trusted network.
- Consider using different user ID and passwords for different accounts and updating your passwords frequently.
- Verify secure connections and make sure you are on a secure website. Look for the padlock icon in the address bar and check for the valid certificate by clicking on the padlock icon.
- Unlike secure order forms on a websites, email and text messages are not private. Don't send confidential personal or financial information by email or text.
- Be cautious if an online deal looks too good to be true, then it probably is.
- Watch out for email scams. Be wary of clicking on links in an email message, even if the deal seems great.
- After making purchases it can be helpful to keep the receipt, confirmation number and postal tracking numbers in a safe accessible place.

If you are at an online store that you are unfamiliar with, read and understand the online shop's policies. It's always a good idea to check a site's reviews before making a purchase.

#### In-store shopping:

- Lock your vehicle and park in well-lit and busy areas.

- Would-be thieves will look for shoppers storing valuables in their vehicles. Consider locking your packages in the trunk and move your vehicle to another location in the parking lot.
- Thieves sometimes watch shoppers exiting a store. You may want to shop strategically and wait until the end of your shopping trip to make high-end purchases.
- Protect your PIN when using bank and debit machines. Cover the keypad to prevent someone from observing your keystrokes or from recording your PIN. Change your PIN frequently.
- After a day of shopping, remove parcels and valuables and lock the vehicle upon returning home. Even an empty shopping bag can create the appearance that there's something in your car worth stealing.

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### VIRTUAL PARTICIPATION IN MEETINGS

You now can engage in our Regional Council Chamber meetings virtually! You can join in and voice your opinions at any meeting with a public participation component, including Budget Committee sessions, through our new virtual participation feature.

This is in addition to the live streaming of all meetings, available on the municipality's [YouTube channel](#).

To engage virtually, kindly register by 4:30 p.m. the business day before the meeting. For more details and to register, visit our [website](#).



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## RECENT CHANGES AND PROGRESS IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING INITIATIVES

In a recent session on November 14, Regional Council introduced crucial advancements to enhance affordable housing across the municipality. Key decisions involved amendments to two administrative orders, enabling funds from the Interim Density Bonus Program to support affordable housing initiatives in suburban areas, expand partnerships between private businesses and Non-Profit Organizations (NPOs), and allocating \$200,000 from the Housing Accelerator Fund for suburban and rural housing projects in the 2023/2024 grant year. Additionally, a review of the Affordable Housing Grant Program is set for the 2024/25 grant year. For further details, access the full staff report [here](#).

## UPCOMING EVENTS



**December 21<sup>st</sup>**

Winter Solstice/Yule/Christmastide

**December 25<sup>th</sup>**

Christmas Day

**December 26<sup>th</sup>**

Kwanzaa/Boxing Day

**\*\*ADD HER CONTACT BOX HERE**

## FEDERAL/PROVINCIAL REPRESENTATIVES IN DISTRICT 10

Lena Metlege Diab, Member of Parliament

District government office

401-3845 Joseph Howe Dr

Halifax, Nova Scotia B3L 4H9

[lenametlege.diab@parl.gc.ca](mailto:lenametlege.diab@parl.gc.ca)

(902) 426-2217

Hon. Patricia Arab, MLA for Fairview-Clayton Park

District government office

3845 Joseph Howe Dr, Suite 203

Halifax, NS B3L 4H9

Email: [info@patriciaarab.ca](mailto:info@patriciaarab.ca)

(902) 329-8683

Rafah DiCostanzo, MLA for Clayton Park West

District government office

397 Bedford Hwy · Suite 201

Halifax, NS B3M 2L3

[Rafah@Rafahdicostanzo.com](mailto:Rafah@Rafahdicostanzo.com)

(902) 443-8318

## E-NEWSLETTER/SUBSCRIBE

I send this monthly e-newsletters to community members. If you'd like to keep up to date with District 10 and Regional Council news, please get in touch with my Council Constituency Coordinator [Sarah Edjemudiare](#).