

COUNCILLOR KATHRYN MORSE DISTRICT 10 NEWSLETTER

Serving the Communities of Fairview,
Clayton Park & Rockingham



HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

SUMMER 2023

CONSTRUCTION AHEAD

District 10 residents will be seeing a number of road construction and traffic calming projects over the next few months. These measures are designed to improve safety for all road users, especially pedestrians.

In Rockingham, the upper section of Flamingo Drive will be rebuilt and narrowed. Narrowing is a proven way to reduce the volume and speed of vehicles. A sidewalk will be installed along the playground side of Flamingo and a third crosswalk will be painted at the intersection with Meadowlark. A digital speed display sign has been installed at the bottom of Flamingo in advance of the crosswalk there. In Clayton Park, Glenforest Drive will be getting three speed tables (the wider flatter ones) and a raised crosswalk will be installed at Glenforest and Plateau. Raised crosswalks were trialed in Dartmouth last year and have been working well.

In Fairview, a section of sidewalk is being installed on the south side of Main Avenue to improve safety for pedestrians and bus users on this busy transit route. Speed tables will be installed on Willett, Sunnybrae, Central and Melrose. Frederick Avenue and Coronation Avenue will be getting speed humps (narrower than speed tables) in the blocks just below Willett. The largest project is on the upper end of Melrose Avenue and has been coordinated with Halifax Water. Once planned water main work is done, four speed tables will be installed on Melrose. The walkway between Gesner and School Avenue will also be repaved.

I have been advocating for road improvements and traffic calming throughout our district for two years and am very pleased to see these projects moving forward. The types and locations of traffic calming features are determined by HRM's experts in road safety. Decisions

and priorities are based on pedestrian volume, 311 complaints, collision statistics and data collected through traffic studies. I'm hopeful these projects will help make neighbourhoods safer and I will continue working to get similar measures for other locations across our district.



CONTACT ME

Email: kathryn.morse@halifax.ca
Phone: 902.497.7278
Mailing address: PO Box 1749
Halifax, NS B3J 3A5

CONNECT ON SOCIAL MEDIA

I do a weekly Facebook update for District 10 and invite you to follow me there:



Kathryn Morse Councillor District 10
Halifax-Bedford Basin West

CONTACT MY OFFICE

Ken Benoit, District 10 Constituency Coordinator
Email: ken.benoit@halifax.ca
Phone: 902.490.7184 or call 311 for municipal matters

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MURAL MAKEOVER FOR FAIRVIEW HEIGHTS

The main entrance to Fairview Heights Elementary will get a makeover this summer with a massive, multi-coloured mural. The artist is Michael Burt, owner of Trakside Studios. Michael organized last year's successful Quinpool Road Mural Festival, which brought international artists to the city and left a lasting legacy of street art. Michael grew up in District 10 and says he is very happy to work on the Fairview Heights project, initiated by Principal Amy Hunt. The principal and students have asked for a mural that reflects the school's diversity. I was delighted to support this school mural through my District Capital Fund and look forward to working on more projects like this one.

SUPPORTING COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Councillors have District Capital Funds that can be used to support non-profit groups and community projects. A wide variety of projects can qualify for funding. Please contact me if your group has a great idea that needs some help getting off the ground. So far this year I have provided financial support to:

- *Fairview Heights Elementary for a mural
- *Duc d'Anville Elementary for a sign
- *Birdland Community Garden for deer fencing
- *Centennial Arena for hockey nets
- *Saint Benedict Parish for a washer/dryer and a generator
- *Fairview Resource Centre for a renovation
- *Meals on Wheels for office equipment

NEW DEVELOPMENTS NOW CONTRIBUTING TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING GRANTS

Suburban housing developments in HRM are now required to contribute to the municipality's affordable housing grant program. Until recently, developments in suburban areas did not have to provide community benefits because they were located outside the Halifax Peninsula and downtown Dartmouth in areas where planning rules have not been updated for many years. The first two buildings to be required to contribute to HRM's housing grants program are in District 10: one on Westerwald Street and the other at the corner of Main Avenue and Titus.

In the spring of 2023, Regional Council passed the Interim Density Bonusing Program as the result of a motion I brought forward. Interim Density Bonusing will require new suburban developments that result from the plan amendment process to contribute funds to HRM's housing reserve which will then be granted to non-profit organizations like the NS Housing Trust.

Essentially, contributions from for-profit housing will support construction and renovation of deeply-affordable, below-market housing. The amount of the required contribution is based on the floor area of the building and the value of real estate in the neighbourhood of the development.

Interim Density Bonusing will raise funds for HRM's affordable housing grant program. Without this interim program, HRM would have missed out on the suburban building boom and related community benefits because it will likely take a few more years for HRM's Suburban Plan and related by-laws to be updated. Regional Council is also working on Inclusionary Zoning, which may require affordable units to be included in new housing developments, however that important change is at least a year away.

CELEBRATING VOLUNTEERS IN OUR COMMUNITY

The municipality's 2023 Volunteer Awards in April was the biggest-ever, with 200 people attending and close to 100 awards given out. District 10 was well represented in both the individual awards and the group category. Congratulations and a huge thank you to all the award-winning volunteers – you put the heart in our community:

- Josh Brown – Halifax Regional Police Youth Program
- Erin Clements – Birdland Community Garden
- Khalieha Cunningham – Life Beyond the Hurt
- Dr Margaret Bateman Ellison – Diocese of NS
- Emily Fougere – Centennial Arena
- Ju He – Chinese Society of NS
- Nicole Mauger – Blue Nose Marathon
- Jacob Rafuse – The Youth Project, Make a Wish, AIDS Coalition of NS
- Steven MacLeod – The Youth Project, Make a Wish, AIDS Coalition of NS
- Miranda Pike – Little Princess Parties



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Congratulations also to District 10's youth award winners, who volunteer with churches, kids' sports teams, Halifax Public Libraries and Halifax Recreation: Benjamin Amusan, Andrew Brooks, Jane Garnier and Casey McDonald.

And a special shout out to volunteers with the Halifax West Ecumenical Food Bank – one of only three winners in HRM's group category. These dedicated volunteers devote 500 hours a month supplying and running the food bank, based out of the Salvation Army's Fairview Citadel (50 Gesner). The food bank started thirty years ago and now serves more than 300 individuals and families each month, many of them newcomers to Canada. Along with Mayor Savage, I was pleased to present the 2023 award to two of the food bank's faithful volunteers, Harold and Marian Smith.



CITIZENSHIP AWARD WINNERS IN DISTRICT 10

Congratulations to District 10's Citizenship Award winners Sivakami Bharanidharan from Clayton Park Junior High and Chanelle Rodriguez-Cooper from Fairview Junior High. The Citizenship Award goes to outstanding grade nine students in HRM.

HELP SHAPE YOUR CITY: PLANNING FOR ONE MILLION HALIGONIANS

The blueprint for how our city grows is the Regional Plan. The Regional Plan is updated every five years and overhauled every decade. This is an overhaul year and an opportunity for you to have a say about how HRM grows. Assuming the high growth rate of the last few years continues, HRM is on track to double its current population to approximately one million in the next 25

to 30 years. Planners are asking: what will HRM look like as home to one million people? And how can our next Regional Plan support healthy, complete and sustainable neighbourhoods and communities?

There is a growing consensus that modern cities should encourage denser housing along major transit routes and near existing shopping areas, schools, parks and public spaces. This way more residents will be able to meet more of their daily needs closer to home. In compact cities, infrastructure is less expensive, which helps to keep property taxes lower. A city that grows up instead of sprawling out is more economically and environmentally sustainable.

Citizens and community groups have already had an impact on HRM by helping to develop previous plans for protecting natural areas and wildlife habitats (Green Network Plan), celebrating heritage and culture (Sharing Our Stories), moving more efficiently (Integrated Mobility Plan), and developing a sustainable economy (People, Planet, Prosperity). These plans are about ensuring a good quality of life now and in the future. These plans will be included in the Draft Regional Plan, now available online.

Regional Council and municipal planners want to hear from you about the Draft Regional Plan. Starting on July 12, and over the next four months, you are invited to share your perspective through Shape Your City, HRM's public engagement webpage. You can also participate in person, by phone or by contacting me. I hope you will stay informed and get involved.

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

In April Regional Council approved the 2023/24 municipal budget of \$1.2 billion. This includes an operating budget of \$980 million plus a mandatory contribution of \$192 million to the Province of Nova Scotia. Council also approved a \$333 million capital plan, much of which will be spent on road repairs and transportation infrastructure. In spite of rising labour, fuel, interest and other costs, Regional Council was able to keep the average tax increase to \$128 this year, while still making the necessary investments in infrastructure and services our growing city needs.

Because there were so many extra pressures on the budget this year, I only put forward two additional items



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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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for consideration. Both items passed. I asked Regional Council to approve a \$3 million increase to the sidewalk budget which will double the number of new sidewalks built each year (from about 10 to about 20). Unfortunately it will still take many years to build the 120+ high priority sidewalks needed across the municipality but at least with this budget increase we will make progress.

I also asked Council to approve funding to hire a coordinator to implement HRM's Green Network Plan approved in 2018. This plan involved a great deal of community and stakeholder participation and took years of work. The plan hadn't advanced very far because dedicated staff resources were not approved to implement it.

Now that Regional Council has approved the funding, the municipality will have a full-time staff coordinator for the Green Network Plan. I'm hopeful this will provide the leadership necessary to protect HRM's wildlife habitats and special natural areas at a time when development pressures are at an all-time high.

OTHER NEW ITEMS PASSED IN THE 2023/24 BUDGET:

- \$40 million for a fire station in West Bedford that will provide additional support for Rockingham
- Staff increase for the new Public Safety Office;
- A psychologist and occupational health staff for Halifax Regional Police;
- An increase to the Affordable Access program for recreation;
- Staff increase to provide extra security for Lacewood Transit Terminal and other transit facilities;
- An additional \$300,000 for library books and materials to try to get closer to national standards;
- Expanded supports for the homeless;
- More staff for HalifACT, to implement HRM's climate plan.

SUMMER WEEKLY GREEN CART SERVICE IS BACK

HRM has returned to weekly green cart collection as of July 3. Green carts will be collected weekly throughout July, August and September. Collection can begin as early as 7 a.m., so please place your cart at the curb the evening before collection day. You can check the collection schedule for your address on HRM's website. If your green bin is not picked up, call 311 to confirm the next pickup date (usually the next day). Bi-weekly green cart collection resumes on Monday, October 2.

IMPORTANT STEP FORWARD FOR NATIONAL URBAN PARK

In May at Maskwa Aquatic Club, Member of Parliament Lena Diab and Parks Canada announced \$2.1 million to fund the next step in creating a National Urban Park in Halifax. It's a milestone for the municipality, which has been working toward this goal for several years, supported by Regional Council. It's also a big milestone for Friends of Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes, CPAWS, the Nova Scotia Nature Trust and other groups that have worked for more than a decade toward this dream. Although Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes has not been designated a national park yet, this project now moves from the study phase into the planning phase.

Led by Parks Canada, a park plan will be developed in collaboration with partners, which include HRM, Nova Scotia Nature Trust, the Province of Nova Scotia, Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia (KMK), and Sipekne'katik First Nation. The goals of the park will be to conserve nature, connect people with nature, and advance reconciliation with First Nations.

Park boundaries are still being determined, however about 2,300 hectares have already been purchased and protected by HRM and others, between Bayers Lake and Tantallon. Once designated, this park will provide access to wilderness recreation right in our backyard. It may even become a model for similar urban parks across Canada. To be part of it, consider joining Friends of Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes.

