

COUNCILLOR KATHRYN MORSE DISTRICT 10 NEWSLETTER

Serving the Communities of Fairview,
Clayton Park & Rockingham



HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

WINTER 2024

TACKLING THE HOUSING SHORTAGE

As one of Canada's fastest growing cities, we need to find ways to urgently address the housing shortage in Halifax. This spring, Regional Council will vote on a package of zoning changes aimed at speeding up construction across the municipality and providing a greater variety of housing options. Dozens of potential sites are being considered. Priority will be given to proposed multi-unit housing projects on bus routes, near universities and near existing services. The five sites being proposed for redevelopment in District 10 are:

- 70 Lacewood Drive (Clayton Park Plaza); a proposed redevelopment of an older strip mall into mixed use housing and commercial; nine storeys is recommended by HRM staff;
- 167 Willett Street; proposed redevelopment of Saint Mena's church site to include a multi-unit residential building; 7 storeys recommended by HRM staff;
- 127/141 Harlington Crescent (behind Clayton Park Shoppers Drug Mart); proposed development of vacant land into highrise residential; 14 storeys is recommended by HRM staff;
- 1 Lodge Drive/544 Bedford Highway (near Hemlock Ravine Park); proposed redevelopment of house and vacant lot into residential multi-unit; 7 storeys is recommended by HRM staff;
- 44-48 Main Ave; proposed multi-unit housing; maximum 7 storeys recommended by HRM staff

If approved, these five projects would receive new zoning as part of HRM's agreement with the federal government under the Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF). The HAF agreement will enable the municipality to hire staff to support faster planning approvals of housing projects and to help address the estimated shortfall of 20,000 housing units.

Also being proposed under the HAF agreement:

- increased height permitted in the downtown core, possibly up to 40 storeys;
- planning amendments to encourage conversions of office space to housing;
- 4 housing units permitted per suburban lot, up from 3 units currently permitted;
- housing affordability measures

More details are available on the municipality's website under the heading Housing Accelerator Fund. Regional Council will vote on this package of planning changes in March or April, and there will be a public hearing at that time. A date is still to be determined. In the meantime, I welcome your comments and questions.



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CONNECT ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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



Kathryn Morse Councillor District 10
Halifax-Bedford Basin West

CONTACT MY OFFICE & SIGN UP FOR MY E-NEWSLETTER

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Coordinator

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HALIFAX



DISTRICT 10 NEWSLETTER

Halifax - Bedford Basin West

IMPROVING ROAD SAFETY

A number of road safety features have been installed in District 10 over the past six months:

- turning arrows at Lacewood and Dunbrack;
- speed humps on several streets in Fairview and Clayton Park;
- new sections of sidewalk on Main Avenue and Flamingo Drive;
- crosswalks on Wentworth Avenue and on the Fairview Overpass ramp;
- reduced speed limit on sections of the Bedford Highway, and;
- RRFBs (flashing crosswalk beacons) on Clayton Park Drive and Main Avenue

Some of these traffic safety improvements were suggested to me by constituents. I take many suggestions to HRM staff but the ones that get approved are those supported by evidence and those that fit best with HRM's Strategic Road Safety Framework.

The Framework started in 2018 and is aimed at making HRM's roads safer for all road users: drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians. The Strategic Road Safety Framework uses data and evidence to prioritize improvements. Over the last five years the Framework has helped reduce traffic-related fatalities, as well as the overall number of collisions in HRM (about 800 fewer).

HRM's Road Safety Framework is based on the Vision Zero approach introduced in Europe in 1994. Vision Zero has proven effective in reducing traffic-related injuries and deaths. Versions of the Vision Zero approach are being implemented in HRM and in cities around the world.

We're making progress in HRM but there is still much more to be done. In our district there will be more traffic calming measures installed over the next year. Later in 2024, Regional Council will approve the next 5-year Road Safety Framework. HRM is also in ongoing discussions with the Province of Nova Scotia about introducing photo radar speed enforcement, one of the most effective ways to reduce speeding. The final decision rests with the Province. Please continue to reach out with any questions or ideas about road safety.

KESHEN GOODMAN LIBRARY UPDATE

Keshen Goodman Library is in the final phase of renovations. The addition to the building is complete, and the interior renovation is underway. A small section of the library reopened in early February for holds pick up and other services, while the rest of the library remains under construction.

The renovations include the addition of a soundproofed area for computer games, a refresh for the children's section, and energy efficiency upgrades. Keshen Goodman is the second most well-used library in HRM, after Halifax Central Library. With the population growth in Fairview, Clayton Park and Rockingham over the last few years, this renovation was badly needed. The fully revamped library is expected to open in late spring.



BLUE MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS ADDED TO DISTRICT 10

Every eight years HRM is required by provincial law to review district electoral boundaries. The boundary review aims to adjust districts so they remain roughly equal in population and residents have relatively equal access to their elected representatives.

Results of the recent electoral boundary review came out in January. No new streets were added, but District 10 has grown considerably in area. The old boundary was just west of Kearney Lake. The new boundary extends further west and includes Susie's Lake, Quarry Lake, Ash Lake and other wilderness areas included in the Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes proposed National Urban Park. These boundary changes will go into effect after the next municipal election in October 2024.



DISTRICT 10 NEWSLETTER

Halifax - Bedford Basin West

SUPPORTING COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Municipal councillors have District Capital Funds that we use to support community-led projects. I have contributed to dozens of projects including the Fairview Heights school mural, installed by artist Michael Burt last summer.

I've also used District Capital funds to support community gardens, picnic tables for parks, a refrigerator for a school food program, indoor risers for Rockingham Elementary, an outdoor rink, an addition at Fairview Resource Centre, school playground equipment, and a custom canoe - still under construction - for Maskwa Aquatic Club. Please contact me if your team or community organization is seeking funds for a project.



APPLY FOR AN HRM COMMUNITY GRANT

Every spring, the Halifax Regional Municipality awards community grants to non-profit groups for a variety of worthy projects. There are two categories: grants of \$5000 and grants of \$25,000. The grants are typically awarded for building renovations or equipment purchases but a variety of projects can qualify. If you have questions about how to apply, please contact me or check out the details online. The deadline to apply is April 1.

PROTECT YOUR LOVED ONES IN AN EMERGENCY

The Voluntary Vulnerable Persons Registry is a new service for HRM residents who may require extra support in an emergency. The Registry provides vital information to first responders and emergency managers during power outages, wildfires, hurricanes, and severe storms. During an emergency, people who have signed up to the VVPR list will be contacted by police or volunteers, based on their personal risk level.

Anyone who does not have 24-hour support and has difficulties such as mobility issues, vision or hearing impairment, mental health conditions, as well as any resident who requires electricity for oxygen or dialysis should consider registering.

The registry was approved by Regional Council as a response to the increase in extreme weather events and other emergencies. It's one of the first in Canada. To register, call 311 or complete the VVPR form available through HRM's website.

UPDATING HRM'S SUBURBAN PLAN

There are updates underway for all suburban areas of HRM, including Fairview, Clayton Park and Rockingham. The existing suburban zoning and planning rules haven't changed much since the 1980's. With the recent rapid growth in HRM's population, an updated and modernized Suburban Plan is needed to guide future development.

Given the housing crisis, HRM planners are working on ways to encourage housing development in suburban areas. One of the guiding principles is to add more housing near major transit routes. "Transit-oriented development" is considered the best way to reduce transportation costs for residents, reduce traffic congestion, and reduce overall infrastructure costs for the municipality and taxpayers.

Briefly, here's how it will work: denser, and often taller, housing will be permitted near transit terminals and transit corridors, such as the planned Bus Rapid Transit Routes (shown in the graphic). There are two Bus Rapid Transit routes planned in District 10: The Purple Line along Dunbrack-Willett-Main and The Green Line along Lacewood - Main - Joseph Howe.

Visit the link below to access the image of the Rapid Transit Routes Map graphic: www.halifax.ca/transportation/transportation-projects/transforming-transit/rapid-transit-strategy.



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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Halifax - Bedford Basin West

SUBURBAN PLAN CONTINUED

The Suburban Plan will also encourage underused shopping malls and parking lots to be redeveloped for housing and mixed uses such as offices and medical clinics. Neighbourhoods that are within walking distance (800 m) to grocery stores, schools, services, and places of employment will be encouraged to get denser through zoning changes.

The first draft of HRM's Suburban Plan is underway and a plan will go to Regional Council in mid-2024.

DISTRICT 10 PLAYGROUNDS

Three playgrounds in District 10 will be replaced or improved in 2024/25. The municipality replaces playgrounds every 15-20 years, depending on the condition of the equipment. The playground at Duc d'Anville Elementary will be fully replaced, and the playgrounds at Burton Ettinger Elementary and DJ Butler Park will have new equipment added and some older equipment removed.

Whenever HRM playgrounds are being replaced they are upgraded to be more accessible. It's all about making parks and playgrounds as inclusive as possible.



DUTCH VILLAGE ROAD REVAMP

Detailed designs are complete, the land has been acquired, and the Dutch Village Road reconstruction project is scheduled to start later this year. The project will add a number of safety features, including a sidewalk on the west side and separated bike lanes. The nose-in parking will be replaced with safer parallel parking. The project is expected to take two years.

REGISTER HOUSING RENTALS BY APRIL 1

Last year Regional Council approved R-400, a by-law that requires all rental housing in the Halifax Regional Municipality to be registered. The purpose of the registry is to improve safety and living conditions for renters and to help the municipality plan ahead for our growing population.

Through this registry, city staff will have a clearer picture of how many rental units the municipality has, where they are, and what condition they are in. This information will help staff identify housing gaps and housing needs going forward.

The Residential Rental Registry is free and applications are available online. After April 1, 2024 owners of unregistered rental properties may face fines. For more information, please visit <https://www.halifax.ca/business/doing-business-halifax/residential-rental-registry>.

CULTURE AND HERITAGE PLAN

HRM's new Sharing Our Stories plan will interest anyone involved in the arts or heritage protection. The key goals of the plan are to strengthen citizens' sense of belonging; to uphold the principles of Truth and Reconciliation; to support artists and performers; to care for HRM's rich heritage and cultural resources; and to celebrate and promote our diverse cultures.

Sharing Our Stories provides direction to help community partners and interested citizens work together on arts and culture-related events, festivals, facilities, programs and services.

You can find the Sharing Our Stories report and its 44 recommended actions on the municipality's Shape Your City website: www.shapeyourcityhalifax.ca/sharingourstories.

HFXALERT NOTIFICATIONS

hfxALERT is the municipality's mass notification system for informing residents about emergencies and operations updates. hfxALERT will send urgent and non-urgent notifications from Halifax Regional Police, Halifax Fire & Emergency's Emergency Management Division, as well as municipal winter parking ban notices. Residents can sign up for notifications via the website at www.halifax.ca/hfxalert.