

Development

1. HRMbyDesign is now five years old, do you feel it was successful? At this time what changes would you make moving forward?

Response from: Tom Martin

The Regional Plan was adopted by council in 2006. From the Regional Plan came the HRM by Design model and this has been extended to include the entire Regional Centre (inside the Circumferential HWY and Halifax) under the heading of the Centre Plan.

Overall yes, I do believe it has been very successful. It has included a substantial amount of public input and consultation which has been lacking in many other municipal projects. We have seen more developments within the Regional Centre than we have in a long time.

In moving forward we are scheduled to have the Centre Plan completed by 2015 and I believe all efforts should be made to meet that deadline. I also believe it is crucial for the mayor and council to ensure any and all development fall within the guidelines of these plans and policies.

Response from: Steve Mackie

No Response

Response from: Robert McCormack

No Response

Response from: Aaron Eisses

No, I do not feel it was successful, largely because the former administration failed to implement any of the policies.

If elected mayor, I would focus on meeting the goals set by HRMbyDesign, which I agree with. Educating the population on the benefits of sustainable growth and development would be a key feature. I would also implement timelines and metrics, so that we can effectively monitor progress.

Response from: Mike Savage

I support HRM by Design. We've seen progress since its adoption in 2009. It has helped establish a clear, timely and transparent process for development while preserving the city's heritage.

That is important because, while we're good at planning, we're not so good at the execution. We missed our growth targets in the Regional Plan. Strong leadership, adherence to accepted plans and good benchmarking, as outlined in my governance policy, will ensure that doesn't happen again.

Response from: Fred Connors

Yes I believe HRM by Design was successful. Could it have been more successful? Most definitely. The only way to make our communities strong is by having a plan, a good plan, a strong plan, and sticking to it. The biggest issue to date has been the tendency of some to fail to recognize that a plan must be followed to have any value.

1. What are your views on development in the downtown core?

Response from: Mike Savage

We need more development in the downtown core. We need more people, more businesses, more entrepreneurship, innovative use of spaces and more services.

Our city's core must be vibrant, an energetic and safe environment where people want to visit, live and where business gets done. As mayor I would work with council to bring all partners, both private and public, to the table to secure the \$50 million investment in the downtown proposed in the five year economic strategy. We can blend our city's historic waterfront charms with modern efficiencies like effective transportation systems. I want to bring the Bloomfield Master Plan to fruition, create tax and leasing incentives, and promote the creation of other such broadly supported community initiatives. I also want to engage the community in a discussion about the development of the Cogswell land, something that has the potential to serve as a model of excellence in the design of urban space.

Response from: Tom Marin

As we know today our taxes in HRM are assessment based. Tax Reform focuses on changing our taxation process to service based. I do support some form of Tax Reform that does take into account cost for services but I believe we also have to include location and lot size. As with my platform on Business another application could be adjustments of the Mill Rates which would assist in controlling expensive to service sprawl.

Council to date has refused to address Tax Reform and I believe to do so at this time is going to require input from many sources such as citizens, staff, local experts and economists, council and the mayor. At the end of the process council and the mayor, in my opinion will have to make a decision on this topic.

Response from: Robert McCormack

No Response

Response from: Aaron Eisses

The downtown needs focus and care to bring life back to the heart of the city. By increasing and improving transit to the downtown core from the rest of the city, people will gain access without the need to increase parking. By encouraging key businesses to locate to the downtown core, people will naturally gravitate to the area. Think of the benefit to Barrington Street if the new Mac Store had been located there.

Response from: Steve Mackie

No Response

Response from: Fred Connors

Development in the downtown core creates a heart and soul for a community. Communities without a core do not prosper to the same extent as those with a strong and vibrant core. However I firmly believe that development can be done so that it supports what the community and nation value about Halifax, which is a vibrant and livable city.