

Taxes

1. Do you believe municipal tax reform is necessary in Halifax? If yes, what reforms are you supportive of?

Response from: Tom Martin

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: Mike Savage

Yes I believe that tax reform is necessary. We need a more effective means of promoting growth. Taxes should help drive development and economic growth where it makes cost-effective sense. I would begin with reforming commercial tax. It is unfortunate that what began as a promising conversation a few years ago, with the creation of the Tax Reform Committee fell victim to a polarizing debate. We need to start talking to each other again and we need timely and accurate comparative data that will better inform the conversation. The mayor should take the lead in renewing that dialogue. I would support initiatives that help promote densification of the core as laid out in RP+5. Because it costs more to buy, build and pay taxes on a business in the core let's also examine the lifecycle benefits of development when it comes to permitting fees and other charges.

Response from: Fred Connors

Yes I believe tax reform is necessary. We are chasing business away from our growth centres, where infrastructure support costs are lowest, by the very high taxation burden imposed on business.

Response from: Aaron Eisses

The tax structure of a city should always be a fluid, adjusting to the changing needs of the city. I do believe tax reform is necessary.

Understanding that HRM is geographically a very large and diverse system, I am a proponent of a services-based tax system that offers transparency to the citizens. I also think that we could look at a land use tax in the urban areas of HRM. A resident in the downtown with very little lawn should not be taxed as much as a home in the suburbs with a much larger property.

The tax system can be a tool to encourage development in the downtown core and other higher density areas. I fully support tax systems based on consumption.

Response from: Robert McCormick

No Response

Response from: Steve Mackie

No Response