

## Council Candidate Responses to the Halifax Chamber of Commerce Municipal Election Questionnaire

Over the summer the Halifax Chamber of Commerce distributed questionnaires to *all* council candidates on issues and that matter to you, our members. Below are the responses from our newly elected councilors’.

Questions and Responses:

### Taxes

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

**Response from: Barry Dalrymple-Dist 1**

No Response

**Response from: David Hendsbee- Dist 2**

No Response

**Response from: Bill Karsten- Dist 3**

No Response

**Response from: Lorelei Nicoll- Dist 4**

I was one of ten councillors who voted to continue to explore moving off an assessment based property tax system, in January 2010. Although the motion was defeated, I continue to believe that further exploration is needed. I am supportive of tax reforms that make the tax system fairer and provides for a system that ensures that residents and businesses pay the real cost of the services they enjoy, yet which promote sustainable growth and economic development for the region. The recommendations put forward by the tax reform committee were a good starting point for moving in that

direction, but in my view there were some gaps. Whatever is decided upon will affect the city and its taxpayers for many years to come. We must get it right, so further scrutiny and ample deliberation and public engagement is required.

Related to tax reform is the issue of fiscal responsibility. The city cannot rely on escalating assessments to increase tax revenues. Under a 'cost-of-service' tax regime, we must ensure that we receive value for money and manage costs in a prudent manner. Further, we must make sure that the federal and provincial governments are paying their fair share.

**Response from: Gloria McCluskey-Distt 5**

No Response

**Response from: Darren Fisher-Dist 6**

No Response

**Response from: Wayne Mason- District 7**

I support reviewing how we are taxed to ensure fairness. Specifically:

1. The average tax paid per household must not go up faster than average income in HRM. This municipal cost driver index and CPI cannot be used to determine tax rates, we cannot have a higher and higher percentage of personal income going to fund the municipality.
2. Business tax rates must be competitive with other medium sized cities in Canada.
3. Runaway assessments should not mean runaway taxes. HRM should lower the residential and commercial urban tax base rate to compensate for assessment increase in the core.
4. Development charges need to be levied for new lots (residential and commercial) to ensure immediate and future cost of servicing those lots is covered by the development, not by the existing tax base.
5. Per foot of frontage could be considered as a variable when calculating the tax rate for some residential and commercial services costs and reflected in the tax paid – don't just base tax on property value.
6. Under the act HRM is to have an urban, suburban, and rural rate. HRM can use the many studies already produced to show cost of rural, suburban and urban service delivery and adjust the rates to be reflective of that. Some services would be cheaper per household to deliver in an urban environment and urban contribution to that expense should be correspondingly lower.

**Response from: Jennifer Watts- Dist 8**

I think it is important to examine the municipal tax system both for the commercial and residential sectors. I am interested in changes that can take place with the commercial tax rate so that businesses in the urban core are more competitive with suburban businesses. I also think that the huge jumps in assessments from year to year in the commercial sector need to be addressed. I support the initiation of the HRM/PVSC Assessment Taxation Working Group to address this issue.

I generally do not support a fee for service approach for residential taxes. Many services that we may not directly use have an overall benefit for our community as a whole. I am also concerned about the principle of equity which is based on residents paying tax according to their ability not the services that they receive. I support examining taxation models that are based on equity.

I am interested in examining whether a municipal tax system can influence residential growth patterns (i.e., support densification where existing infrastructure exists) and can support goals for greater environmental sustainability.

**Response from: Linda Mosher- Dist 9**

I am open to tax reform. During the tax reform process last time, we (Council) could not get agreement amongst 50% of residents either for or against despite the many public meetings and surveys conducted. Although that attempt was not successful, I remain open to consider other ways to conduct tax reform. It may be that any reform requires a stepped approach that would be implemented over many years so there is predictability.

One of the issues brought forward is that our commercial tax rate is higher than residential. In most cities businesses pay higher taxes. If we reduce the tax from business it will shift the burden to residential property owners. So we can look at reform but we have to be cognizant that the same amount of money is required so who is going to pay for this?

On a positive note, we eliminated Business Occupancy tax and during the last budget we reduced the tax rate and the tax bills for most went down.

One major way we could reduce property taxes is to eliminate the provincial government's share of property taxes. Currently the provincial government takes 25% of all taxes collected by HRM. If the province could be convinced to stop clawing back these taxes, HRM could reduce everyone's taxes by 25%!

**Response from: Russell Walker- Dist 10**

I believe HRM needs to find a different way to tax residents for the services they receive. This needs to be done so it will be fair and equitable to all tax payers. Residents should not see their taxes double or triple because of this reform.

**Response from: Steve Adams- Dist 11**

No Response

**Response from: Reg Rankin- Dist 12**

I certainly do support tax reform and was part of the movement to have council endorse some changes only to be defeated by a narrow vote of 12 to 10 against. With the new council this call for reform must be re-engaged. I suggest three areas for tax adjustments that may gain sufficient support: 1) the commercial sector needs to be protected from arbitrary political judgment by council agreeing to a maximum multiple rate of what council deems to be the resident rate. 2) Separate out of the general tax at least two property services that are measurable and direct relationship to a dwelling unit. 3) Recognizing that everyone pays their fair share taxes.

**Response from: Matt Whitman-Dist 13**

No Response

**Response from: Brad Johns-Dist 14**

No response

**Response from: Steve Craig- Dist 15**

I believe municipal tax reform and fair taxation is necessary in Halifax. Property taxes are more burdensome than other municipalities this is often cited from people and businesses relocating to HRM. Within HRM the disparity between rural, urban and suburban coverage - residential and commercial needs have been studied, reports made, much written and decisions delayed.

This complex and impactful area is one that I have yet to become responsibly knowledgeable about to state the reforms I am supportive of. As a new Council member, this is an area that I will quickly work on.

**Response from: Tim Outhit- Dist 16**

I believe that municipal tax reform/tax fairness is long overdue in Halifax. I am particularly supportive of new tax fairness or incentives for small business owners and condominium owners. The existing assessment only based system is particularly unfair to these two groups.

## Development

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

### **Response from: Barry Dalrymple- Dist 1**

No Response

### **Response from: David Hendsbee-Dist 2**

No Response

### **Response from: Bill Karsten- Dist 3**

No Response

### **Response from: Lorelei Nicoll- Dist 4**

HRMbyDesign was approved by Regional Council in June 2009. It is impossible to state whether HRMbyDesign is successful or not – measured against what, and in what context? What is clear is that HRM does need to have clear rules that are consistently applied if we are to introduce efficiencies in our development processes. HRMbyDesign is a step in this direction. I believe that strong planning and consistent implementation are essential to the effective functioning of our municipality. The major challenge at this time is to insure that HRMbyDesign is applied fairly and consistently.

### **Response from: Gloria McCluskey-Dist 5**

No Response

### **Response from: Darren Fisher- Dist 6**

No Response

### **Response from: Waye Mason- Dist 7**

I am a strong supporter of HRMbyDesign. There is more development underway in downtown right now than any time in recent history and HRMbD has a lot to do with that. The rapid approval of developments like the Citadel Hotel replacement, the E-space(Sam's) building and the TD Bank buildings (both the new branch on Spring Garden and the tower on Barrington) are due to this plan. The Sisters sites and the Tip Top

building are also great example of HRMBD working.

I think work needs to be done to refine the affect that HRMBD has had on development of small lots. It is troubling that the smallest lots, like the old Sub Shop space on Spring Garden that burned down and My Mothers Bloomers sit empty. Revision may be required to address concerns where a larger lot cannot be consolidated.

**Response from: Jennifer Watts- Dist 8**

I think it has allowed for development to proceed faster and with clearer regulations. The financial support for heritage protection has helped as well but could be increased. I think it is really important to stick to the agreed upon rules if the plan is to work.

I also believe that plans are living documents and must be reviewed and revised over time. Whenever there is a development application that deviates from an established plan, we must ask ourselves why and whether this is an indication of a deficiency in the plan. If an exception is warranted, then it may need to become the rule.

**Response from: Linda Mosher- Dist 9**

HRMbyDesign may be five years old but we are still involved in the planning and consultation phases. HRMbyDesign was adopted and has been implemented in three phases. Phase one was the establishment of the overall Regional Centre including a vision statement and key principles. Phase two involved the creation of a Downtown Halifax Plan. We are now involved in phase three, which is the Centre Plan. Collectively, all three phases will provide us with a 25-year vision for our Regional Centre. The Centre Plan is projected to be completed in 2015 with a new Regional Centre Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use Bylaw which will be based on the same principles as the downtown Halifax plan. We tried to respond to the development pressures by having a phase one of the Centre Plan and we requested legislative changes by the province. Unfortunately they were not approved and we are determining an alternative approach to be recommended by Planning Standing Committee. There are developments underway in downtown for the first time in a long time you can see cranes in the skyline. However, in order to meet the plan's goals of being a dense, prosperous, livable and vibrant centre, we need to have efficient processes and ensure that there are incentives to encourage more development in this area versus outlying areas. There have been recent growth opportunities and we need to focus on these opportunity sites while at the same time preserve existing neighbourhood characteristics.

**Response from: Russell Walker- Dist 10**

HRM by Design has been successful but development within the parameters of HRM by Design has not been as easy as was expected. This should be addressed.

**Response from: Steve Adams- Dist 11**

No Response

**Response from: Reg Rankin- Dist 12**

I believe that HRM by Design is successful in as much as there are new ground rules established areas downtown, and applications going forward, and applications going forward are vetted through an appointed professional body. This new modus operandi is only on the ground less than 3 years and I look forward to a review of the procedures to see if the municipality can further applications within the policy framework.

**Response from: Matt Whitman- Dist 13**

No Response

**Response from: Brad Johns-Dist 14**

No Response

**Response from: Steve Craig- Dist 15**

The five year review is a valuable exercise. I feel HRM by Design was successful in so much as there was a plan to help HRM grow. The largest issue is that a number of growth targets were missed. Why and what are we doing about it?

I believe one must always look at planning, feedback and critical self-evaluation. Maybe a balanced scorecard approach against specific, measureable, attainable, realistic goals is necessary to make progress.

**Response from: Tim Outhit- Dist 16**

Yes, I believe that HRMbyDesign has been successful, and a similar plan must be developed within other areas of our municipality. I believe that a 5 year review of HRM similar to 5 year review of the regional plan should include incentives to stimulate greater success of the plan.

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

**Response from: Barry Dalrymple-Dist 1**

No Response

**Response from: David Hendsbee-Dist 2**

No Response

**Response from: Bill Karsten- Dist 3**

No Response

**Response from: Lorelei Nicoll- Dist 4**

I believe that the downtown core is the heart of our city. The rules for development must be established, communicated, and applied fairly and consistently, and the HRM By Design process is moving us in that direction. I also believe that increasing the population of the downtown core will result in a more vibrant city. Density bonusing is one example of measures taken to increase the densification of the downtown core and in-fill the hollowed out areas of the downtown that has taken place over the years. The new central library and the Nova Centre are also examples of collaborative efforts among all levels of government and the private sector to revitalize the downtown core. Innovation and partnerships must continue. But we must manage this growth carefully and our plans must address potential unintended consequences of increasing population density, such as a stressed public transit system or higher crime rates.

We must also recognize that not everyone desires the lifestyle afforded by high density development, and we must allow for a diversity and choice of lifestyle in our region if we are to have a truly vibrant and livable city. Initiatives which are complementary to HRM By Design should be created to develop plans for outlying neighbourhoods, such as the Cole Harbour Basin Open Spaces Plan.

The Regional Plan is the single most important planning document for the whole of HRM, containing the long-range, region-wide plan outlining where, when and how future growth and development should take place in HRM. The Regional Plan is currently undergoing its mandated five year review. The issues being addressed by the five year review are intended to insure that the whole of HRM remains vibrant.

**Response from: Gloria McCluskey-Dist 5**

No Response

**Response from: Darren Fisher- Dist 6**

No Response

**Response from: Waye Mason- Dist 7**



There are rules governing development everywhere. You can't build higher than 120-150 feet in Tribeca in New York on Manhattan Island, one of the most expensive and high-density cities in the world. There are viewplanes all over Vancouver (see the graphic to left), a city often held up as having the kind of development we want to see in Halifax. They have even more viewplane and viewcone restrictions than we do! Yet these cities are building and growing.

One thing that is uniquely Halifax is that we have such a narrow definition of downtown. How is it going to kill the city if Barrington Street is a heritage district and we protect its historic character? I don't think it will.

We don't have to put office towers on Barrington or Argyle streets. Other cities have a historic district AND a separate financial core. Some examples are Bay Street vs. Queen West in Toronto, Whyte Ave vs. 101 St NW in Edmonton and St Laurent vs. Rene Levesque in Montreal.

Luckily for us, there is a site right downtown that allows 25-30-story towers. It is the Cogswell interchange. We can build business and residential towers without tearing down architectural heritage, or violating viewplanes. If we did this, we could enforce the highest standards for public space and street level integration. You would be able to walk from City Hall to the North End on living, active city streets.

I think the Centre Plan should go farther. There are areas along Kempt Road, Bayne Street, and along Barrington between the bridges that are crying for development. A mix of well-designed medium and high rise buildings could replace car dealerships and fast food establishments along Kempt Rd. We should use Centre Plan as a visioning tool to start long-term urban renewal rather than just responding to current developer interest.

**Response from: Jennifer Watts- Dist 8**

Development in the downtown core is very important. HRM by Design was a step forward but more needs so that the urban core sees priority development - either through more incentives (reduced tax rate, etc) or disincentives in the suburban areas. Sustainable transportation is also key; if it was easier to travel downtown then it would be more attractive for employers/employees.

Supporting residential densification closer to the downtown core will also help strengthen the core. I also believe that great public spaces and amenities attract employers and employees so investment in streetscaping projects, public art, parks, trails, libraries, cultural facilities, etc. are really important for the development of the downtown.

**Response from Linda Mosher- Dist 9**

The city needs to encourage development downtown for a myriad of reasons. Increased development downtown will encourage people to live closer to where they work and many people would not require having a car; this will lessen the downstream effects of traffic coming from outside the core onto the Peninsula. From a CPTED principle (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) increased population density downtown will decrease crime as there will be “natural surveillance”- more people will be walking in the area which minimizes crime as people are present. Development will add much needed vibrancy to downtown. As well, when more people that are living downtown, more investment in the downtown take place. This in turn attracts new businesses to locate downtown, which will not only benefit our economy but also provide employment opportunities for people to work where they live.

**Response from: Russell Walker- Dist 10**

Development in the downtown core is very important to HRM. The new convention centre is a good start and council should encourage more development to continue.

**Response from: Steve Adams- Dist 11**

No Response

**Response from: Reg Rankin- Dist 12**

My personal view on development in the downtown core is to fulfill the objectives of the original Regional Plan when I was part of its creation. The new council need to adopt development measures such as, density bonusing, shot term tax relief to accelerate the pace of development to 25% new growth.

**Response from: Matt Whitman- Dist 13**

No Response

**Response from: Brad Johns-Dist 14**

No Response

**Response from: Steve Craig- Dist 15**

I believe investment and development in the downtown core is critical for the future growth of HRM. Halifax needs to be the economic centre in Atlantic Canada – and seen as being so by citizens and business.

**Response from: Tim Outhit- Dist 16**

Development of our downtown core which is both sides of the harbour, is critical to the pride, vitality, and economic development of our entire municipality. Council must investigate implementing development, permit, and tax incentives to encourage and recognize development within our downtown core.

## Transportation

4. Do you think there is a need for a transportation authority which would combine Metro Transit, HRM transportation and the Bridge Commission?

**Response from: Barry Dalrymple- Dist 1**

No Response

**Response from: David Hendsbee-Dist 2**

No Response

**Response from: Bill Karsten- Dist 3**

No Response

**Response from: Lorelei Nicoll- Dist 4**

It makes sense to coordinate efforts, whether facilitated by an independent transportation authority or by some other mechanism. Effective coordination of transportation policy will depend on active cooperation from the municipality, the province, the federal government, the Bridge Commission, and many other potential stakeholders who may have something to offer, including the private sector. As councillor, I support the formation of such a body provided that it does not just add another layer of bureaucracy.

**Response from: Gloria McCluskey- Dist 5**

No Response

**Response from: Darren Fisher-Dist 6**

No Response

**Response from: Waye Mason- District 7**

No. The bridges work fine as they are. HRM already has a transportation functional plan. Council needs to be the final arbiter- all stakeholders and residents need to be consulted and the elected representatives preside over that process. There is no indication to me that a TA would in more money better implementation of existing or new plans.

Council should move to immediately re-create the provincially mandated "Traffic Authority" as a separate office, rather than vest that power in the senior civil servant in charge of the TRW. Our traffic and transportation problems are compounded by having a senior staffer who is statutorily empowered to say "No" to both council and senior staff, based on his/her interpretation of international traffic standards.

Transit needs to be considered in an urban transportation context. In the city, we have commuters taking cars, walking, biking, and taking transit to get to work.

At rush hour, a full bus has 50 people on it. A ferry has 300, A train has 200. That's a lot of cars taken off our roads.

Our transportation strategy must include bike lanes, paths and all the active transportation planning we have talking about since 2006. It needs to be funded and built. This will also help take pressure off the road system, but it's critical transit receive the funding it takes to build a system that is second to none.

When we talk about transit, a good year sees just \$25-35 million invested in infrastructure and vehicles. Contrast that with Ottawa spending \$2.1 billion on light rail. Edmonton: \$425. Vancouver is spending \$1.4 billion to expand existing systems. Even acknowledge our smaller population we just don't measure up.

Halifax needs to get in the game. And it needs leadership prepared to what it takes.

**Response from: Jennifer Watts- Dist 8**

I am not sure that a transportation authority is entirely needed – it could just add another layer of bureaucracy. I think there needs to be a clearer vision and integration but strong council leadership can really help move this. These groups meet already at a staff level but one of issue is that their discussions are not part of the public record; so direction is discussed but it is not through a process that is transparent. I think Council's Transportation Standing Committee needs to play a stronger role in directing and coordinating so that these discussions are part of the public record. There has been some discussion of having public representation on an authority but again the meetings and decision making process would need to be part of the public record.

**Response from: Linda Mosher- Dist 9**

Absolutely! Based on the success of Transportation Authority's in other areas, I have

brought this to Council on two occasions. My most recent motion that was approved by Regional Council on November 2, 2010 was "Regional Council move forward to establish a Regional Transportation Authority". Under the rationale for adding this to the agenda I added "For almost a decade, the Province and HRM have discussed setting up this body which would allow for more effective management, planning, and fiscal control of traffic and transportation systems within HRM". Outcome Sought: "Halifax Regional Municipality and the Province of Nova Scotia reactivate this proposal which has been the topic of at least one previous Provincial Bill and a number of Regional Council Motions. My original motion was approved by Council in February 19, 2009. Now is the ideal time to form an authority as the five year integrated transportation plan is almost over and we need a new plan and vision. Having an independent body would enable them to continually work on transportation priorities as one voice instead of separate mandates. As well, this type of independent body may be able to leverage external funds in ways that the individual organizations might not be able to access.

**Response from: Russell Walker- Dist 10**

I would want to see a business case for a proposed transportation authority as there are reasons for and against this proposal.

**Response from: Steve Adams-Dist 11**

No Response

**Response from: Reg Rankin- Dist 12**

Yes, I believe there is a considerable joint interest (Province and HRM) to establish a transportation authority- such as Vancouver has done. This new committee should be appointed as a competency based body.

**Response from: Matt Whitman- Dist 13**

No Response

**Response from: Brad Johns- Dist 14**

No Response

**Response from: Steve Craig- Dist 15**

At some point there needs to be a body that is solely focused on and responsible for ensuring the overall cost effective and efficient movement of citizens and commerce throughout HRM. A transportation authority is an option.

**Response from: Tim Outhit- Dist 16**

Yes, I would support this initiative.

**Competitiveness/Open for Business**

5. What is the most important thing that the next Mayor and Council can do to support economic growth in our city?

**Response from: Barry Dalrymple- Dist 1**

No Response

**Response from: David Hendsbee – Dist 2**

No Response

**Response from: Bill Karsten- Dist 3**

No Response

**Response from: Lorelei Nicoll- Dist 4**

We must encourage greater cooperation among all levels of government, academia, and the private sector.

**Response from: Gloria McKluskey- Dist 5**

No Response

**Response from: Darren Fisher- Dist 6**

No Response

**Response from: Waye Mason- Dist 7**

HRM has accepted the Greater Halifax Partnership Economic Strategy. Since this acceptance critical senior staff from HRM, including the CAO, have not attended important SUP meetings, and HRM Council continues to review and pass projects, budgets and bylaws without placing these reports in the context of “how does this action move us toward our strategic goals.”

Reports to council have a “budget implications” section. They should also have a “strategic goals” section that firmly places the action before council in the context – does this move us toward our goals, or does it move us away? Reviewing strategic plans once every five years will never achieve the results we desire.

Staff must be mandated to support the SUP and other coordinating bodies of the plan, to deeply commit HRM to working through that process.

Council needs to take ownership of a “Balanced Score Card” approach to measuring whether HRM is achieving its economic goals, and use that as a tool to align all of the HRMs operations to better support economic growth.

**Response from: Jennifer Watts- Dist 8**

Support an effective and well funded sustainable transportation system – public transit, ferries, bicycle lanes, etc. focus residential development in the urban core encourage incubator business and small business development have a vision for economic development that champions our local resources and talent

**Response from: Linda Mosher- Dist 9**

Council needs to ensure that the most recent Economic Strategy is followed and implemented by all stakeholders. As well all stakeholders need to be held accountable in moving forward the five-year Economic Strategy, “Planning for Prosperity-Together”. There are five goals that support economic stimulation: building a **Regional Centre, Business Climate, Talent, International Brand, and Maximize Growth Opportunities**. The strategy ensures that we are an international city that is diverse, vibrant and sustainable. A city that people want to live, work and grow a business and capitalize on our strengths. The Economic Strategy is a comprehensive plan for our economic future that is a result of the collaboration of many volunteer coming from all sectors including but not limited to NGO’s, government, business and the educational sector. It involved extensive consultation and stake holder by-in. We have the plan and must move forward more aggressively to achieve positive outcomes from the five areas.

We also need to ensure that the agencies that we have to promote Halifax have clear roles and responsibilities and work together and not duplicate efforts and maximize their resources. Examples are Greater Halifax, Nova Scotia Business Inc. and Destination Halifax.

**Response from: Russell Walker- Dist 10**

I believe it should be easier and quicker to put building applications and development agreements in place. HRM needs to look at hiring more staff to facilitate this.

**Response from: Steve Adams- Dist 11**

No Response

**Response from: Reg Rankin-Dist 12**

It would be of course to support the full implementation of the Regional Growth Policy. And with the growth of population downtown, it will produce the expected dynamic of a vibrant downtown city.

**Response from: Matt Whitman- Dist 13**

No Response

**Response from: Brad Johns- Dist 14**

No Response

**Response from: Steve Craig- Dist 15**

Be decisive in its application of policy and create a supportive “we welcome you climate” that says “we are open for business”.

**Response from: Tim Outhit- Dist 16**

Council must initiate policies, budgets, plan, and adopt a can do attitude to encourage economic growth. HRM just grow commercial tax base in order to fund new facilities and infrastructure and to reduce the overburden on present commercial and residential taxpayers.

**6. How are you going to ensure that Halifax is open for business?**

**Response from: Barry Dalrymple- Dist 1**

No response

**Response from: David Hendsbee- Dist 2**

No response

**Response from: Bill Karsten- Dist 3**



No Response

**Response from: Lorelei Nicoll- Dist 4**

The best way to provide a welcoming environment is to develop a strong economy with abundant employment opportunities. The barriers to attracting and retaining immigrants, keeping our youth at home, and supporting disadvantaged groups in our community are largely economic barriers, not social or cultural. We must continue to support our participation in the Greater Halifax Partnership and develop partnerships with business and industry. We must build on our strengths, such as our harbour and port, and our cultural and creative industries, and encourage the concept of clustering businesses, such as the Burnside Logistics Park.

**Response from: Gloria McCluskey- Dist 5**

No Response

**Response from: Darren Fisher- Dist 6**

No Response

**Response from: Waye Mason- Dist 7**

Council needs to impose customer service standards on HRM's operations. Residents and business should have expectations of reasonable timeframes for response. Staff need to be customer service focused, and often their hands are tied by arcane rules, policies, and contradictory bylaws. Red tape needs to be cut, processes made simple, public, transparent and predictable.

In the case of development, many other jurisdictions have implemented a "one window" philosophy for not just the application process, but the post approval permitting process. I hear time and again that the problems with speed at city hall continue after the approval or D/A are in place – that developers have to deliver 18 separate plans to separate parts of the government. One window means that a staffer acts as the communication point or nexus for the developer, representing the municipality, simplifying and smoothing the approval and permit process, ensuring the municipality has to resolve conflicts between different departments of the municipality before presenting the results to the developer.

**Response from Jennifer Watts- Dist 8**

Support the Greater Halifax Partnership and the Strategic Urban Partnership initiatives, support the BIDs particularly where they support small business development support our cultural community that provides creative capital and is a strong economic

contributor work for greater streamlining of administrative processes in HRM

**Response from: Linda Mosher- Dist 9**

We must be collectively positive about Halifax. This includes organization such as the Halifax Chamber, the media and citizens groups. People research Halifax when they are considering moving their family or their business to our area. The search results must be positive to encourage them to locate here. Years ago, The Business Voice's front page had a chalk line around a 'body. The implication was that we are being taxed to death. Can you imagine someone considering locating here and seeing this? The accompanying article un-necessarily inflated the issue with inappropriate comparisons. We are called a hub city by the Conference Board of Canada. Every dollar that is spent in Halifax not only benefits HRM, and the entire province of Nova Scotia, but all four Atlantic Canadian provinces. We need to act like a hub city and we need the key organizations in our city to work together to make Halifax the best option. Councillors could be invited to participate with the Chamber's Municipal Affairs Committee. As well, the new Mayor and Chief Administrative Officer should be working closely with the business community on making positive changes. I was on the hiring committee for the CAO. Each and every candidate that we interviewed mentioned how negative the media, organizations, and citizens are in Halifax. We need to work collectively to move our city forward. This will show that not only are we open for business but we are a city that is on the move and a prime location to be!

**Response from: Russell Walker- Dist 10**

By improving the planning process and making some changes to HRM by design.

**Response from: Steve Adams- Dist 11**

No Response

**Response from: Reg Rankin- Dist 12**

The recent HRM rhetoric is "red carpet" not "red tape" it seems to me, there is no real change without change which may require council to review the need of a layer of bureaucracy associated with planning and advocacy committees. Several areas of HRM do not have these, such as Timberlea which have not suffered for it but saved considerable time in the development process.

**Response from: Matt Whitman-Dist 13**

No Response

**Response from: Brad Johns- Dist 14**

No Response

**Response from: Steve Craig- Dist 15**

Council needs to be seen as working and partnering with business and business associations such as the Halifax Chamber of Commerce.

I truly don't know what the strength of business relationship is with HRM nor all the obstacles to business development.

There are many stories in the press and situations where development takes too long. An examination of how we now work with the business community to see what is really broken and what barriers really do exist, and how HRM and the business community can work together better is important.

There are many HRM and business organizations creating plans and generating discussion. Do we have an environment that focusses on consensus and priority setting? Are "we" collectively structured to best facilitate business growth and development?

**Response from: Tim Outhit- Dist 16**

A can do attitude, tax fairness, improved transportation and more empathy for the challenges and opportunities for our business community.

**Effective Council/Leadership/Governance/Vision**

7. As per Budget 2011-2012, council focus areas were: Maintain "flat" tax rates, reduce capital from operating and use \$3m of service efficiencies as needed. Other focus areas included: effect transportation strategies, the Multi-Year Financial Strategy, HRMbyDesign and infrastructure projects.

Specifically, what do you think should be Council's priority focus areas over the next council term?

**Response from: Barry Dalrymple- Dist 1**

No Response

**Response from: David Hendsbee – Dist 2**

No Response

**Response from: Bill Karsten- Dist 3**

No Response

**Response from: Lorelei Nicoll- Dist 4**

- a) Economic Development
- b) Regional Plan Review
- c) Governance Issues
- d) Transportation

**Response from: Gloria McCluskey- Dist 5**

No Response

**Response from: Darren Fisher- Dist 6**

No Response

**Response from: Waye Mason- Dist 7**

Fix Council:

- Make sure council meets in the open, follows policy and listens to citizens.
- Give more power to community councils.
- Make council follow its own rules and plans.

Grow Sustainably

- Support and invest in established residential areas like those in District 7.
- Restore investment in downtown and our main commercial areas.
- Invest in and support transit, active transportation, sports, the arts and recreation.
- Build better mixed-use, walkable neighbourhoods that are dense enough to support transit.

Spend Smarter

- Maintain and enhance existing community-based facilities. Don't build big box facilities unless there is a good business case to do so. Don't move them to industrial parks.
- Take time to talk to the people of Halifax and really read the budget each year rather than just ramming it through council in a week or two.
- Stop the tax grabs. Just because property values go up does not mean people are earning more money.

**Response from Jennifer Watts- Dist 8**

sustainable transportation  
appropriate development focused in the urban core to increase density  
recapitalization of our existing infrastructure  
excellent public spaces for residents that enhance quality of life – parks, trails, playgrounds, recreation facilities such as the Oval  
sustainable initiatives particularly in the area of renewable energy  
good governance that relies on public consultation and transparency

**Response from: Linda Mosher- Dist 9**

- **Transportation** – comprehensive strategy that will significantly increase the percentage of commuters that will opt to take public transportation.
- **Crime/Public Safety**
- **Infrastructure** – continue the focus on ‘state of good repair’.
- **Taxation**
- **Developing downtown** and providing new opportunities such as the tearing down of the Cogswell Street Interchange and potential redevelopment for housing and public amenities such as a Centre for the Arts.

**Response from: Russell Walker – Dist 10**

Areas that I believe Council should make priorities are transportation, infrastructure, safe communities and multi-year financial strategy.

**Response from: Steve Adams- Dist 11**

No Response

**Response from: Reg Rankin- Dist 12**

Strategic investments in the already 5 year transit capital plan so as to achieve an increase from the present 14% workers taking transit to 20% by 2020. To ensure through our plan that we attract sufficient investment in downtown Halifax to dramatically increase population. This type of investment will include high rise residential development along the waterfront.

**Response from: Matt Whitman- Dist 13**

No Response

**Response from: Brad Johns- Dist 14**

No Response

**Response from: Steve Craig- Dist 15**

Certainly the first one that comes to mind is ensuring that council members work together as one entity for the benefit of all HRM. We need a council that will move forward on the focus areas.

Increasing business development, improving transportation, comprehensive infrastructure (including Halifax Water) projects, HRM by Design progress, tax reform and multi-year financial strategy.

**Response from: Tim Outhit- Dist 16**

I continue to support all of the areas listed above and don't believe that they have been sufficiently addressed to date. I am specifically concerned over the need to maintain flat taxes vs. flat tax rate by identifying further service efficiencies plus improve public transportation in our community.

**8. A good councillor/mayor must be a strong community leader. When have you demonstrated strong community leadership in the past?**

**Response from: Barry Dalrymple- Dist 1**

No response

**Response from: David Hendsbee- Dist 2**

No response

**Response from: Bill Karsten- Dist 3**

No Response

**Response from: Lorelei Nicoll- Dist 4**

I have been a resident of Cole Harbour for 26 years, and active in our community for most of those years. I am a firm believer in personal involvement with my community. Over the years, I have assumed leadership roles in everything from Beaver Leader to Board Member. Some of my past and present community involvement includes:

- President, Colby Village Elementary PTO
- Chair, Colby Village Elementary School Advisory Council
- Member, Astral Drive Junior High SAC

- Chair, Auburn Drive High SAC
- Board Member, Cole Harbour Outdoor Pool and Tennis Complex
- Board Member, Cole Harbour Place
- Member, Block Parents and Neighbourhood Watch
- Producer, Cole Harbour Historical Revue
- Member, Cole Harbour Rural Heritage Society
- Member, Cole Harbour Parks and Trails Association
- Member, Black Cultural
- Founding member and Chair, Cole Harbour Harvest Festival Society

In 2008, I created and spearheaded the organization of Cole Harbour's first community festival, which just celebrated its 5<sup>th</sup> successful event.

During my term in council, I led our community through a number of issues, including the location of proposed high voltage transmission lines, cell phone towers, the district boundary review, and the Cole Harbour Basin Open Spaces Plan exercise.

I believe that the greatest accomplishments are achieved by interacting with one another and working together, and I am able to turn this philosophy into community action.

**Response from: Gloria McCluskey- Dist 5**

No Response

**Response from: Darren Fisher- Dist 6**

No Response

**Response from: Waye Mason- Dist 7**

I have over two decades of experience working in small business and the non-profit sector, where I have grown businesses, created jobs, and strengthened the community.

At 35 I won the job of launching the then new Music Business program at NSCC. Since 2007 this program has been lauded as the national best practice model for music industry education, and I have been recognized by Music Nova Scotia, the industry association, as the Educator of the Year for the last five years in a row. I've enjoyed playing a role in linking the institution, my students and graduates, my industry and my community, and feel the program has had a far reaching impact in all of those areas.

From 2006 to 2009, I was one of the leaders of a group of parents and other concerned citizens who fought against closure of community schools on the peninsula. I've been a

commentator on municipal politics, writing for Openfile.ca and on my website Halifax Politics dot ca. I have also appeared on CBC Radio One, Rogers News 95.7, Live 105, and have been published in Halifax Magazine, Haligonian and the Chronicle Herald.

I currently serve as a Board member of the Right to Know Coalition of Nova Scotia. I've also been involved with several community organizations, including the Gottingen Street Merchants Association, No Money Down/Khyber Arts Society, and as a Board member and past President of Music Nova Scotia. I spent several years organizing the North End Community Festival on Gottingen Street.

I founded and was Executive Director of the Halifax Pop Explosion Association from 2001 to 2010, leading the organization as it grew to an internationally known event that attracts tens of thousands of music fans to Halifax every year. During my time with the festival it grew from a \$25,000 budget to an almost \$300,000, with over 200 volunteers every year. I engineered the hiring of a full time festival Executive Director in 2010, and then served as Chair of the Board from 2010-2012.

#### **Response from Jennifer Watts- Dist 8**

I regularly communicate with residents so that they are informed of public consultations and upcoming decisions of council

I acted as a catalyst for strategic planning through the development of 5 Big Moves for Active Transportation and 5 Big Moves for Transit

I organized community meetings concerning local park development, proposed zoning changes, Bayers Rd. widening, and potential redevelopment of the former St Pat's High School

I advocate for affordable housing and renewable energy projects

I give up driving my car for one week each month so that I bike, walk, and take public transit. Understanding the realities of sustainable transportation helps me to make informed decisions and I believe it is important to participate in the change we are advocating for.

#### **Response from: Linda Mosher- Dist 9**

I have demonstrated that I provide strong community leadership with my stewardship role with Sir Sandford Fleming Park, "The Dingle". When I was first elected Councillor, I visited the Dingle and was dismayed to see this once beautiful park was in a state of disrepair. The Memorial Tower was closed due to water infiltration, the unsafe playground equipment had to be removed, there were no washrooms, the canteen roof had a hole through it, and the seawalls were crumbling.



In order to acknowledge both the historic significance of the tower and to obtain much need restoration funding, I brought forward a request to initiate the process to apply for National Historic Site Status. We were successful in obtaining the designation for the Memorial Tower and also in receiving funding for restoration. Over a two year period Council provided funding and we completely refurbished the tower, costing over \$2.2 million. We opened it to the public in time to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the Memorial Tower. The Mainland South Heritage Society partnered with HRM and held a ceremony as part of the 5<sup>th</sup> annual Dingle Natal Day Party that I started as a community festival. We conducted a sea level rise assessment and have started to rebuild the seawalls to last for another 100 years. The playground and other areas have been refurbished and we now have permanent washroom facilities. Over \$4 million has been invested in rejuvenating this historic park.

**Response from: Russell Walker- Dist 10**

I have held public meetings to ascertain neighbourhood wishes in regard to large developments in my district (old Halifax West High School site, Northcliffe property, St. Lawrence place)

I have held community meetings and brought in the police when residents had safety concerns.

**Response from: Steve Adams- Dist 11**

No Response

**Response from: Reg Rankin- Dis 12**

The Halifax Harbor Clean Up Challenge in the Spring of 1999 with Mayor Fitzgerald and Deputy Mayor Uteck. I founded the motion to begin the cleanup. Secondly, in the Spring of 1996 as the Councilor for Timberlea I made a compact with Council to get on with the best solid waste system in North America.

**Response from: Matt Whitman- Dist 13**

No Response

**Response from: Brad Johns- Dist 14**

No Response

**Response from: Steve Craig- Dist 15**

I've been and am leadership volunteer in many organizations and their committees for

thirty years: Canadian Cancer Society National and Nova Scotia Division board of directors; Cobequid Community Health Centre Foundation board of directors; Lake District Recreation Association; Sackville Community Development Association; Highway 101 Landfill Closeout Committee; CCS Relay for Life; Friends of First Lake; Second Lake Regional Park Association; Sackville Minor Baseball; Rotary Club; Knights of Columbus; Sackville Patriot Days and many others. Recipient of Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal; Sackville Volunteer of the Year; HRM Millennium Medallion.

**Response from: Tim Outhit- Dist 16**

I believe that I have demonstrated this regularly over the last 4 years as Councilor for Bedford. I was one of the most vocal and active supporters of tax fairness, a smaller regional council, adding empowerment to community council, increased transparency, and new facilities and infrastructure for Bedford and HRM.

**9. What do you see as the key role of Council?**

**Response from: Barry Dalymple- Dist 1**

No Response

**Response from: David Hendsbee- Dist 2**

No Response

**Response from: Bill Karsten-Dist 3**

No Response

**Response from: Lorelei Nicoll- Dist 4**

The key role of Council is to represent the will of the residents of the district, while working cooperatively with councillors from other districts for the common good of HRM as a whole.

Council must identify needs and provide direction to municipal staff, then review and approve policies which address those needs.

A competent municipal staff will research policy options and provide council with advice which can be relied upon. Once council has developed policy, it is up to municipal staff to apply them efficiently and consistently.

Councillors must be available to and work closely with municipal staff to ensure there is effective communication between all involved.

**Response from: Gloria McCluskey- Dist 5**

No Response

**Response from: Darren Fisher- Dist 6**

No Response

**Response from: Waye Mason- Dist 7**

Council's job is to make sure that the plans of HRM are aligned with the goals and aspirations of our municipality and its citizens, and that the operations of HRM are aligned with these plans. Council's job is to communicate, facilitate, mediate, encourage civic engagement, be transparent, be accountable, and ensure that all stakeholders and citizens have an opportunity to be heard and an clear understanding of why decisions are made. Council needs to make restoring public trust in our civic institutions a priority. Citizens need to feel that they are not wasting their time participating in public engagement processes that produce plans that are subsequently ignored by council and staff.

**Response from Jennifer Watts- Dist 8**

Identifying the vision and direction of the municipality at a regional level through the regional plan and ensuring its implementation good financial stewardship decision making that is transparent and informed and engages the public

**Response from: Linda Mosher- Dist 9**

- Policy direction
- Leadership & vision for the future of the city
- Open, transparent and accountable to tax payers/residents
- Financial stewardship of tax dollars
- Responding to resident concerns and bringing forward necessary legislative changes to ensure needs are met.
- Creating a positive economic climate.

**Response from: Russell Walker- Dist 10**

Council's role is to set policy and ensure that the budget is followed.

**Response from: Steve Adams- Dist 11**

No Response

**Response from: Reg Rankin-Dist 12**

The key rule is council and strategy with the mayor, who has the mandate of all HRM, to do all we can in the best interest of the citizens of HRM.

**Response from: Matt Whitman-Dist 13**

No Response

**Response from: Brad Johns- Dist 14**

No Response

**Response from: Steve Craig- Dist 15**

Providing good, responsible, governance and decisive leadership.  
Council is elected by the citizens, to work for the citizens in the best interest of their HRM. HRM staff need to know and feel that Council leadership guides and supports their work for the benefit of citizens.

**Response from: Tim Outhit-Dist 16**

Regional council sets the policies, strategies, vision, focus areas, and budget for the municipality. Its role is similar to the board of directors of an organization or a company during a council meeting. During the rest of the week we are advocates and ombudsman for our district and our residents.

**10. In what proportion of time do you view your responsibility to your local constituents vs. the whole of the city?**

**Response from: Barry Dalymple- Dist 1**

No Response

**Response from: David Hendsbee- Dist 2**

No Response

**Response from: Bill Karsten-Dist 3**

No Response

**Response from: Lorelei Nicoll- Dist 4**

There is no set proportion. As Councillor, you are always called upon to keep the best interests of the municipality in mind, and to represent the municipality in a professional and responsible manner. Responsibilities to local constituents tend to be more issue based and the time required to address and resolve depends upon the issue. Clearly however, the role of Councillor is a full time job and makes many demands on your time and your family life.

**Response from: Gloria McCluskey- Dist 5**

No Response

**Response from: Darren Fisher- Dist 6**

No Response

**Response from: Waye Mason- Dist 7**

A healthy city is critical to all district's well-being and success.

As a prospective representative for the downtown core, I think the issue for the District 7 councillor is more going to be helping the other councillors sell must needed investment in Quinpool, Spring Garden and downtown to their constituents as something that benefits the whole of HRM. The tax generated in these areas is a huge windfall to all of HRM, and the investment in these areas needs to reflect that.

It is critical to the peninsula and District 7 that benefits and investment in the district for residents be considered separately from investments in the downtown that benefit the whole city. Having the Metro Centre does not mean that the residents don't need community recreation opportunities!

**Response from Jennifer Watts- Dist 8**

This is hard to measure but I really work on effectively responding to local concerns while making sure I have the time to do the big picture thinking on regional direction and issues. Often both areas of work inform the other.

**Response from: Linda Mosher- Dist 9**

Issues raised by one individual are likely a concern to many residents in the local area, and possibly a much wider area in the municipality. We are elected to represent a particular district and residents within that district. However, often a resident will contact us about an issue that affects a much greater population. An example would be

when a resident contacted me about a concern with a baseball coach smoking in front of kids at baseball games. Instead of contacting the coach directly and asking him to stop smoking in front of the players, I felt that this issue was probably in other areas as well. As a result I lobbied many groups for support of a change, including but not limited to the Heart & Stroke Foundation, Sport Nova Scotia, Capital Health and the Lung Association. With the support of many of these groups I was able to bring the issue forward to council with community by in. We now have an approved policy and signage to back it up. No smoking is allowed in HRM park areas where children may be present. The time spent varies between representing the entire municipality on Standing Committees, Commissions and Regional Council to serving on local Community Councils and Business Commissions and committees such as rink boards. Our position continually switches back and forth from broad policy issues that affect the entire municipality to localized issues that may only affect one individual. Both interactions enable us to understand the issues and appropriately represent both our constituents and the entire municipality.

**Response from: Russell Walker- Dist 10**

With the downsizing of Council to sixteen and district ten now having over thirty thousand residents it is difficult to judge what amount of time will be spent on local issues versus the whole of the city. However Council always has to be aware of and address issues within the entire Municipality.

**Response from: Steve Adams- Dist 11**

No Response

**Response from: Reg Rankin- Dist 12**

My responsibility to HRM is to HRM which is my oath. On a practical basis, I will try to do my best to serve constituents needs while at the same time providing statesmanship on a council level.

**Response from: Matt Whitman-Dist 13**

No Response

**Response from: Brad Johns- Dist 14**

No Response

**Response from: Steve Craig- Dist 15**

I am retired and devote a great deal of time to community – near or far.

In the next years, I see the great majority of time being spent on the whole of the city as this is where HRM needs leadership to be demonstrated to help HRM grow and prosper. Time needs to be used to fully understand the environment, know and develop strong constructive working relationships with other councillors, mayor, and senior HRM staff. Citizens, staff, and business need to feel that there is a Council working together for the betterment of all. It is from city hall that all other areas are enabled and impacted.

Constituency work always will be there and so will I.

**Response from: Tim Outhit- Dist 16**

That is a difficult question to answer as each week brings forward new challenges and opportunities but constituent issues demand the majority of my attention.

**11. How will you manage situations where you will have to go against your local constituents for the greater good of the city?**

**Response from: Barry Dalymple- Dist 1**

No Response

**Response from: David Hendsbee- Dist 2**

No Response

**Response from: Bill Karsten-Dist 3**

No Response

**Response from: Lorelei Nicoll- Dist 4**

This scenario does occur. Communication with constituents is critical. They may not agree with your position, but they almost always appreciate your taking the time to explain your position and to listen to theirs. There is always a political price to be paid in these situations, but in the end you must do what you think is right. If you are honest and fair, chances are that a majority of your constituents will agree with you.

**Response from: Gloria McCluskey- Dist 5**

No Response

**Response from: Darren Fisher- Dist 6**

No Response

**Response from: Wayne Mason- Dist 7**

Hmmm, interesting question. I don't like the assumption that there has to be winners and losers. If it is good for the city it is good for your constituents, if you take a long view. This is not something the last few council's has been good at, taking the long view. They have focused on short term results that they can point at before the next election.

If you have well articulated plans for HRM that indicates accepted service standards you shouldn't need to compromise. For example, HRM is moving toward one Cat 1 Community center per 11,000 people. If there was a 10-25 year plan to achieve that standard throughout HRM, then as long as District 7 could see the eventually we would get one or two, it doesn't matter if Spryfield or Fall River gets one first. What matters is the decisions are made based on what area has the highest need of new facilities or renewal. Almost every decision, if made in a strategic and region wide context, can be explained or justified this way.

The critical part is a councilor needs to be able to point to the list and say "this is why the decision was made, and this is when we can expect our turn" AND the council has to stick to the plan so that residents trust there turn will come.

A great current example of that is how all the planning and citizen engagement has said that arena renewal needs to happen in Halifax peninsula first, but councilors are preparing to change the proposal to do Dartmouth first, for political rather than operational reasons. This kind of thing undermines confidence in HRM council.

**Response from Jennifer Watts- Dist 8**

I make decisions based on many factors – feedback from residents; staff recommendations; discussions at council with council colleagues; and my own values, experience, research and analysis. I try to be very clear and transparent as to why I have made a decision.

I think that access to information is a key factor when working for changes that may not be popular; creating opportunities for informed debate and discussion is very important.

**Response from: Linda Mosher- Dist 9**

A Councillor will never make 100% of the residents happy all the time. It is our role to make informed decisions, listen to both sides of the debate, and make an informed decision. If the vast majority of residents do not want something in my area, and then I would not vote against this position. Despite any perceived 'greater good' this would be the optimal decision.



**Response from: Russell Walker- Dist 10**

I will be holding Town Hall meetings to get residents input as a councillor however I always have to remember I am representing the views of the people in this district and need to vote accordingly.

**Response from: Steve Adams- Dist 11**

No Response

**Response from: Reg Rankin- Dist 12**

One has to take their own counsel from time to time in deciding the right cause; and to take hopeful consolation that a councilor is elected to respond with their best judgment- and at the end of the their term be accountable for the total record.

**Response from: Matt Whitman-Dist 13**

No Response

**Response from: Brad Johns- Dist 14**

No Response

**Response from: Steve Craig- Dist 15**

There will be times when this happens. I will manage these situations with open and honest communication.

**Response from: Tim Outhit- Dist 16**

I regularly consult with residents, staff, and council colleagues in addition to conducting my own research prior to forming an opinion on a given issue.

It is important to note that although we continually hear from the public, quite often it is not the general public, but from vocal minority, special interest type groups. It is incumbent upon the area Councillor to initiate the discussions and find ways to engage the greater community so that we do hear from a good proportion of the community in order to make informed decisions.

**12. How much pressure from your local constituents does it take for your opinion to change on a given issue?**

**Response from: Barry Dalrymple- Dist 1**

No Response

**Response from: David Hendsbee- Dist 2**

No Response

**Response from: Bill Karsten-Dist 3**

No Response

**Response from: Lorelei Nicoll- Dist 4**

It is important to listen to your constituents, and other stakeholders, on all sides of an issue, and to do your research before forming an opinion. Information, not pressure from constituents or peers, should be used to develop a position. If new information arises, then opinions may change.

**Response from: Gloria McCluskey- Dist 5**

No Response

**Response from: Darren Fisher- Dist 6**

No Response

**Response from: Wayne Mason- Dist 7**

I think councilors should always be trying to make decisions based on the best evidence available, rather than on polling data or volume of angry emails. That said, I'm not afraid to admit when I am wrong. Sometimes in business you make a decision based on the best information you have at the time, and then new information becomes available and you need to re-evaluate and change direction. If the residents have good arguments and data and can change my mind with that data, I'd always consider it.

**I think your questions throughout this questionnaire hint at the real problem but you don't address it outright –**

People are tired of a government that does not work for them. I've canvassed every

street in the district, talked to thousands of people, and most of them are disappointed or burned out by HRM government because it is worthy of their trust. Thousands of volunteer hours from thousands of people go into things like development agreements, HRMbD and the Active Transportation plan or the Regional Plan and then Council and staff keep acting in ways that are fundamentally against these plans.

The city has engaged the public and the business community. We have bylaws. We have a couple of excellent plans to work from – the economic plan, the regional plan, HRMbD, and more. Now we need to put the full weight of HRMs operation into delivering on these strategic goals and operational plans, rather than putting them on a shelf for five years. We need to follow the rules, and if the rules don't work, we need to have open processes to officially revise the rules so they do work. We have to be a government that leads, and that citizens believe does work for them.

**Response from Jennifer Watts- Dist 8**

As I stated above, I make decisions based on many factors – feedback from residents; staff recommendations; discussions at council with council colleagues; and my own values, experience, research and analysis.

Pressure on a particular issue can be very intense but I make decisions by listening very carefully to all sides in a debate and taking into consideration local concerns within the context of my mandate and responsibility as a regional councilor.

**Response from: Linda Mosher- Dist 9**

My decisions are made based on research and attempting to garner all information. If I make an informed decision that I feel is the best decision, unless some new information is brought forward that would cause me to re-think my opinion, pressure has no influence on me – regardless of the amount.

**Response from: Russell Walker- Dist 10**

I do not consider it pressure when the majority of residents inform me of their views as they expect me to represent their views at Council.

**Response from: Steve Adams- Dist 11**

No Response

**Response from: Reg Rankin- Dist 12**

If one thinks that a population can possess some principles as I do then the question of decision making should not be about pressure but rather the power of debate and

discussion.

**Response from: Matt Whitman-Dist 13**

No Response

**Response from: Brad Johns- Dist 14**

No Response

**Response from: Steve Craig- Dist 15**

I am always open to discuss differences of opinion. In some cases my opinion will change, perhaps the constituents' opinion will change, or we will agree to disagree.

I look at all aspects of an issue – timing, source, significance, cost benefit impact, enabling etc. – in formulating opinions. The key is that it is the responsibility and duty of an elected official to make informed decisions not only for the benefit of their district, but the whole of HRM.

**Response from Tim Outhit- Dist 16**

No Response