

In order to gain insight into the opinions of the 57 candidates that ran in this municipal election, the Chamber posed questions to the candidates. Below is a summary of the winning candidates' answers to key questions.

Transportation Question: The \$27 million dollar Metro Transit Expansion Plan includes improvement and additions to bus routes. What do you think should be the priority areas for increased transit service?

District 3 David Hendsbee – “First of we need the capacity to serve an increased fleet of buses, therefore a second transit garage would be needed. This will also cut down on ancillary operational costs such as Fuel consumption because of all the dead-head runs of buses returning to the one depot in Burnside. A second location on the western side of the Harbour will cut the mileage, as well as prepare us for any emergency if and when the bridges become inoperable either by accident or severe weather event.”

District 4 Lorelei Nicoll “Further develop the Metro Link - improve service to business and retail parks - increase frequency of service, later at night in the downtown - improved service within District 4.”

District 6 Andrew Younger – “The first priority for transit expansion must be on existing routes where people are now left behind as buses are full....The next priority should be shuttle services, preferably free, in Burnside and Downtown Halifax.”

District 11 Jerry Blumenthal – “You can visibly see high-traffic areas in HRM. We need to focus on increasing transit routes in these areas. In my district, we have issues with bus #3. This bus mainly facilitates seniors at the various manors in District 11.... If we create more Park and Ride areas in places like St. Margaret’s Bay or Herring Cove we can help traffic congestion in HRM.”

District 12 Dawn Sloane – “As the current Councillor for District 12 Downtown Halifax, I believe the fast transit and the transit within the urban centres needs to be priority. ...Moreover, ... having a free frequent service within the downtown core will also aid with the mobility of business persons, students and residents around the downtown, which again will aid in the change of society’s reliance on vehicles.”

District 13 Sue Uteck –..”the Airport, Eastern Passage, Tantallon, Timberlea Prospect and the Sambro loop area.

District 14 Jennifer Watts – “...expanding Metrolink service to areas off the peninsula, increased service on existing routes where people are left behind due to full buses, and late night bus services in the downtown. ...”

District 18 Stephen Adams – “Priority areas should be those that receive no transit service, and have no alternatives. Rural areas, such as Beaver Bank, The Prestons, part of Eastern Passage, Waverly and

especially The Sambro Loop. When these are addressed, we can look at enhancing present service.”

District 21 Tim Outhit – “We must fast-track the new satellite garage because we have no place to house or maintain additional buses to meet even our short-term needs. The five-year goal of our transit service should be 24-7 service at 15-minute intervals during the daytime across all routes in HRM. “

District 22 Reg Rankin – “I would support the resolution to have a transit service to and from the airport - providing that the promise (as provided for in the regional plan approved by council) first delivers on transit service to prospect rd (whites lake) eastern shore (musquadobit) and fall river) rural collectors. ..”

Governance Question 2: What do you see as the key role of Council?

District 3 David Hendsbee – “The key role of Council is to debate issues and decide upon policy matters and to provide directives and establish priorities for municipal services and budgets. As well be an advocate Federal & Provincial governments for programs and initiatives that will enhance Municipal operations.”

District 4 Lorelei Nicoll –“ ...to represent the will of the residents of the district, while working cooperatively with councillors from other districts for the common good of HRM”

District 6 Andrew Younger – “The role of council is to develop and implement policy (policy, by-law, etc) and ensure that policies are followed. The role of those policies should be to move the municipality forward.”

District 11 Jerry Blumenthal – “The role of Council is to intelligently and effectively create and implement strong policies.”

District 12 Dawn Sloane – “The role of Council is to request and adopt policy introduced by staff and to be the representative of our District at Council. Our role is that of decision maker and we must not get into the minutiae of daily operations.”

District 13 Sue Uteck – “Council is the body that asks the questions, sets the direction of Council, and who are the “front line” at the municipal level. Council is the facilitator between the policy and the action, the staff and the public. The key role of council is to make decisions.”

District 14 Jennifer Watts – “Council’s role is to set priorities and develop policy. Council also has an important role to create a vision for the municipality that is forward-looking and guides priorities and policy. Councillors need to respond to the concerns of residents in their districts and to the overall direction of the municipality.”

District 18 Stephen Adams - “Council develops policies and staff implements these policies.”

District 21 Tim Outhit “...Councillors must be mindful that we represent **all** residents in HRM, not just special interest groups, certain cliques, the old boys’ network, or selected families. Council’s role is to set policy, approve budgets, and advocate for resident’s needs and issues. A Councillor is the conduit between City Council, HRM staff and the residents of their district and two-way communication on all

issues is key....”

District 22 Reg Rankin – “..to operate as a team... And that may mean to determine broad objectives for HRM as a council directed agenda "before we get into chambers" . This will in part require in my view a council of no more that 17 councillors.”

HRMbyDesign Question: ...Are you supportive of HRMbyDesign?

District 3 David Hendsbee – supportive of HRMbyDesign

District 4 Jennifer Watts – “...There are many exciting ideas in the current HRM by Design proposal for the downtown area. I do, though, have concerns about several aspects of the proposal. I do not support the limitation of public involvement in decision making on development matters and therefore I am concerned about the move to reduce this involvement in the HRM by Design proposal.... I think that the HRM by Design proposal needs to be strengthened in this area. “

District 6 Andrew Younger – supportive – “HRMbyDesign is an important initiative to try and bring some clarity to development in downtown Halifax and ultimately throughout the capital district.”

District 11 Jerry Blumenthal –“Halifax is a city experiencing major growth and influx. It is important that we have a strong plan to go forward so that we protect the integrity of the city while allowing it to modernize. We have to plan for Halifax’s future and not just for the present.”

District 12 Dawn Sloane – supportive of HRMbyDesign

District 13 Sue Uteck – Yes, supportive of HRMbyDesign

District 14 Lorelei Nicoll – Did not state her position. Her answer: “The main purpose of HRM by Design is to set clear guidelines for development, to communicate them effectively and to apply them fairly and consistently.”

District 18 Stephen Adams – supportive of HRMbyDesign

District 21 Tim Outhit – supportive of HRMbyDesign

District 22 Reg Rankin – supportive of HRMbyDesign

Tax Reform Question: Do you believe that municipal tax reform is necessary now

in HRM?

District 3 David Hendsbee – “Yes, municipal taxation totally based solely on property assessments is unfair. People often correlate taxation to services. Being taxed on the value of one's home seems to getting outrageous. The only problem using this methodology has been the only taxation procedure practiced by of all municipalities. Any new proposed taxation regime will be a fundamental shift.”

District 4 Lorelei Nicoll – “Yes.”

District 6 Andrew Younger – “Tax reform is absolutely necessary....”

District 11 Jerry Blumenthal – “Tax reform is necessary in HRM due to the fact that it spans urban, suburban and rural areas.”

District 12 Dawn Sloane – “Yes.”

District 13 Sue Uteck – “Yes, tax reform is necessary and our most recent survey shows that 71% of residents within the HRM support some type of tax reform.”

District 14 Jennifer Watts – “Yes.”

District 18 Stephen Adams – “Absolutely.”

District 21 Tim Outhit – “Yes, it is long overdue.”

District 22 Reg Rankin – “Tax reform will be coming forward no later than next spring of 09. I believe it necessary.”

Tax Reform Question:...Do you support the reforms currently proposed by the

Municipal Tax Reform Committee?

District 3 David Hendsbee - "As a member of the Tax Reform Committee, yes, I am aware of their debates to date and the various proposals and options that have been explored thus far."

District 4 Lorelei Nicoll - "The current proposal is a good starting point for discussion...requires further scrutiny."

District 6 Andrew Younger - "I am on the tax reform committee and it should be noted that following the latest round of public submissions the proposals of the committee are being modified and fine tuned to reflect the very valuable input the committee has received. Thus with no final proposal on the table by the committee it is impossible to say whether the final proposal will be one I would support."

District 11 Jerry Blumenthal - "More focus, surveying and input is required for the Municipal Tax Reform Committee to properly go forward with the issue of Municipal Tax Reform."

District 12 Dawn Sloane - "Yes, I am aware of the reforms and I am very concerned with the proposal. I do not support the current proposal. "

District 13 Sue Uteck - "We have had many an argument but we have come to what I believe is a fair balance on the residential tax side. It will take a collective will and good leadership at the top to see us through."

District 14 Jennifer Watts - "I have attended several events on the proposed tax reform and have read the documentation. I am not in favour of the current reforms proposed by the Municipal Tax Reform Committee. I think there needs to be further discussion about the implications of a move from a property assessment-based tax to a user-pay, flat tax. A move in this direction would mean a significant increase in taxes paid by owners of moderately assessed homes. Certainly changes are needed to the current assessment-based system to increase fairness and equity (particularly for those living on fixed incomes). But, we need to consider other options for reforming our tax system which could include a combination of property assessment and fee for service. We also need to carefully assess and evaluate where tax dollars are going now to minimize future tax increases."

District 18 Stephen Adams - "No."

District 21 Tim Outhit - "Do I support tax reform? Yes. But I also understand the current proposal is a work in progress and I will strive to ensure the final result is beneficial to all regions, all income levels, and all businesses in HRM. "

District 22 Reg Rankin - "As a member of the tax reform committee what I can and want to say is the status quo is not acceptable...That notwithstanding, the businesses should expect more discipline in how council traditionally sets a tax rate (that is, to end the arbitrary decision of council) based objectively on an agreed multiplier of the residential rate."

