



HALIFAX ELECTION 2016

*RESPONSES FROM MUNICIPAL CANDIDATES TO
CHAMBER ELECTION QUESTIONNAIRE*

October 4, 2016

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Disclaimer: The following questionnaires were sent to all Mayoral and Council candidates on September 14th and their responses were due by September 27th. This document will continue to be updated until election day however, as further responses to the questionnaires are received.

Candidate responses have not been edited, however formatting adjustments were made to ensure consistency (paragraph spacing, bolding, creating numbered lists, etc.)

Questionnaire Sent to Mayoral Candidates

Note: Please send your completed questionnaire to policy@halifaxchamber.com by September 27th so that your responses can be shared with our membership.

Name:

District:

1. *Does the commercial tax system in Halifax need reform? If so, what would you like to change?*
2. *How will you reduce red tape for businesses in Halifax?*
3. *What are your thoughts on development in Halifax?*
4. *Do you support the Regional Centre Plan?*
5. *Effective transit is an important issue for businesses, what will you do to improve Halifax's transit system?*
6. *What are your thoughts on increasing immigration to Halifax?*
7. *What do you think Council's primary focus should be over the next term?*
8. *How will you ensure Halifax has an open for business culture?*
9. *What is the most important thing Council can do to grow Halifax's economy?*
10. *How do you plan to lead the city?*

Lil MacPherson – Mayor Candidate

No response received to date.

Mike Savage – Mayoral Candidate

1. Does the commercial tax system in Halifax need reform? If so, what would you like to change?

Yes, it does. The assessment-based tax system is riddled with incongruities, but it is the only system we have in Nova Scotia. Under current provincial legislation, our municipality can levy urban, suburban and rural rates based on assessments determined by Property Valuation Services, which we do not run. I am proud of our Council for keeping pressure on our rates to help offset spikes in assessment, but we need to do more. Council has sought legislative amendments from the Province to allow the municipality to have more flexibility within the commercial rate structure. This would allow us to incent in areas where it is needed and to protect small independent business owners from unpredictable tax increases.

2. How will you reduce red tape for businesses in Halifax?

I want to work with the province to identify provincial and municipal obstacles to doing business and in collaboration with the province, develop a red tape reduction strategy

Specifically, people should know how long it will take to do business with the municipality. We can establish timelines for building permits, planning applications, and inspections that residents and businesses can rely on. As well, our 5 Year Economic Growth Plan encourages entrepreneurship and start up culture, but starting a business is hard work and can be difficult to navigate. We should establish an open door policy for new businesses to ensure their questions are answered and to help them get to opening day without surprises.

3. What are your thoughts on development in Halifax?

Four years ago no one was talking about development pressures because there was very little happening, especially in downtown Halifax-Dartmouth. We are experiencing a significant boom in development, work that has helped make us one of the fastest growing urban economies in the country.

Yes, issues accompany this much building in any city and we have to find new means of mitigating disruption and impact to existing businesses. But, we also need to be mindful that every time a new building gets underway it means people are working: from the development companies, to architects, engineers, and scores of skilled tradespeople, not to mention employees of financial institutions, law firms, accountants and others who have a role in seeing a project from proposal to completion.

4. Do you support the Regional Centre Plan?

Yes, we have waited too long for the Centre Plan, an important policy initiative to better define what can be built and where in the neighbourhoods and corridors closest to the urban core. Good plans make for more cohesive communities that are easier and more cost effective to serve and, ultimately, better places to live. The Centre Plan will be an important piece in ongoing efforts to streamline business process within all parts of our municipal operations.

5. Effective transit is an important issue for businesses, what will you do to improve Halifax's transit system?

In 2013, Regional Council initiated the development of a new five year strategic planning framework for our transit system, called Moving Forward Together. This led to the most diverse and comprehensive consultation strategy ever undertaken by the municipality, using our website, popup events, a Twitter town hall, surveys and written submissions.

Based on feedback, the following four principles were developed, and unanimously endorsed by Regional Council:

1. Increase the proportion of resources allocated towards high ridership services.
2. Build a simplified transfer based system.
3. Invest in service quality and reliability
4. Give transit increased priority in the transportation network

The first service changes are small, but have already been implemented.

Regional Council requested some changes to be looked at in the Plan. Once adopted Moving Forward Together will be implemented over the coming years.

Other changes that have already been implemented including replacing GoTime with a Departures Line that gives passengers live information on bus routes, and terminals in Dartmouth, Highfield Park and Lacewood.

6. What are your thoughts on increasing immigration to Halifax?

One of the long term goals of our economic growth plan is to grow our population to 550,000 by 2031. It's an ambitious goal, and one that I support. One of the ways we can get there is by increasing immigration. I'm pleased that in 2016 Nova Scotia is poised to set a new record for immigration, but there's more we can do. That's why I led a charge to let permanent residents to

have the right to vote in municipal elections. Permanent residents contribute much to our city. Giving them the right to vote may be one tangible way to help us attract and retain the 7,000 new immigrants a year the Ivany Report says we need.

When the Syrian refugee crisis came to the world's attention last year, I wrote to the federal and provincial ministers of immigration to express our openness to refugees. Yes, we need more economic immigrants, but I also believe that we have a moral obligation to come to the aid of those who are. On top of being the right thing to do, there's a good that many of these refugees may one day employ our sons and daughters.

7. What do you think Council's primary focus should be over the next term?

I would like to see Council focus on making life easier for people who own a business or are looking to start a business. Measures like an open door policy for new entrepreneurs and timelines for permits and inspections can make a big difference. At the same time, I think Council needs to focus on giving some of our more vulnerable residents a leg up. That's why if re-elected, I will bring declare 2017 as the Year of Inclusion, and establish an anti-poverty strategy.

8. How will you ensure Halifax has an open for business culture?

I have committed to reducing red tape, streamlining approval processes for planning applications and building permits, and moving more of our services online to help make life easier for small business. We have also been more aggressive on residential and commercial tax rates generally, so people have more money in their pockets and businesses have more financial certainty. We will continue to push the Province for legislative amendments to give us more control over setting commercial tax rates that better respond to the challenges and opportunities in the business community.

9. What is the most important thing Council can do to grow Halifax's economy?

Manage our expenses wisely, without losing sight of the need to invest in our public realm to make us a strong, welcoming and connected community.

Be guided by a common desire to be a municipality where everyone has access to libraries, recreation programs, parks, healthy food, and efficient public transportation.

Work to ensure all communities - regardless of socioeconomic status – are safe places to raise children and to recognize see the potential for all residents to make a meaningful contribution to civic life.

10. How do you plan to lead the city?

Collaboratively, ethically and with a great passion for the job.

Questionnaire Sent to Council Candidates

Note: Please send your completed questionnaire to policy@halifaxchamber.com by September 27th so that your responses can be shared with our membership.

Name:

District:

1. *Does the commercial tax system in Halifax need reform? If so, what would you like to change?*
2. *How will you reduce red tape for businesses in Halifax?*
3. *What are your thoughts on development in Halifax?*
4. *Do you support the Regional Centre Plan?*
5. *Effective transit is an important issue for businesses, what will you do to improve Halifax's transit system?*
6. *What are your thoughts on increasing immigration to Halifax?*
7. *What do you think Council's primary focus should be over the next term?*
8. *How will you ensure Halifax has an open for business culture?*
9. *What is the most important thing Council can do to grow Halifax's economy?*
10. *How do you plan to be a leader in the city?*

Colin Castle – District 1

1. Does the commercial tax system in Halifax need reform? If so, what would you like to change?

The commercial tax system as well as the residential tax system needs to be changed. As it stands right now, there is supposed to be three distinct tax rates - urban, suburban and rural – unfortunately, these rates are not distinct. If elected, I would work on realigning these rates to more accurately reflect the level of services provided to each area. On top of that, I think we all understand entrepreneurs are the core to success here in Nova Scotia. One of the biggest challenges facing entrepreneurs is paying the high leases for storefronts which in part is comprised of taxes. If we want our downtown core and business parks to be economic driving forces for our municipality, then we need to be competitive. So if and when we realign the commercial taxes, we should also be cutting the rates to attract more small business and entrepreneurs to our city. Just as an example, our urban general rate is \$2.895 / \$100 of assessed value. East Hants is collecting \$2.71 / \$100 assessed value. They're undercutting us by 18.5 cents per \$100 assessed value. It is little wonder East Hants' business park and corridor are thriving because they're open for business! We have the opportunity to revitalize our downtown. Let's make it happen.

2. How will you reduce red tape for businesses in Halifax?

Red tape is a problem for everyone. We lose businesses, developers and residents to surrounding municipalities because they're easier to do business with while Halifax is costly and difficult. I feel HRM needs to have a comprehensive review of rules, regulations and policies to streamline the processes. Until we have the initial honest review of how and why of some of these practices, then we will continue to be bogged down by the bureaucratic nightmare of red tape in City Hall. I have spoken to thousands of residents in my district, several of which whom are architects, engineers, and small business owners who have to deal with city staff on a regular basis. Some of the processes are simply prohibitive and near impossible to move a project along in a timely fashion. Some have even received emails that could be interpreted as threatening for trying to negotiate common sense approaches at an impasse. Government shouldn't be the enemy. We should be working together for business to thrive.

3. What are your thoughts on development in Halifax?

Development is a necessary component to the growth and sustainability of any major city center. With that being said, there is a right way and wrong way to develop. For the longest time, it appeared Halifax was doing nothing and becoming stagnant then all of a sudden we have cranes

popping up all over downtown and throughout the west end. It went rapidly from one extreme to the other. As a real estate salesperson, I kept up with statistics from CREA, NSAR as well as PVSC and CMHC. These organizations paint a different picture than what all the cranes in the sky may suggest. In terms of real estate sales, NSAR and CREA suggest Halifax is stalled and has been for a long time now. Sales numbers have plateaued and there is no suggestion there will be a change from the strong buyer's market we are in right now. CMHC numbers suggest new home starts are down and aren't expecting to jump anytime soon because of the lack of first time buyer's entering the market allowing the older home owners to move up and onward. Meanwhile, CMHC says new apartment construction is up with 85% + of the new buildings going up being apartment buildings versus condominiums. I think we should be mindful of the type of developments being proposed and the impact it will have on our marketplace. We're building all these buildings but we don't have the influx of new people to sustain them, at least that is what the statistics are indicating. I think for the short term, we should look at slowing the rate of new development until we get data back showing what we have already is sustainable.

Another part of development to be mindful of as well is how new development fits into the existing community. People are losing faith in the public hearing process because they voice their concerns and they fall on deaf ears. A very recent example was Council approving an additional 9 stories on a 20 storey proposal on/near Quinpool. The people who would be most impacted by this new structure made it clear they didn't want a 29 floor tower but Council approved the change anyway. We should be listening to the community and respecting their wishes otherwise, what's the point of these public hearings? Developers have been taking advantage of this current Council because the rules aren't being strictly enforced.

4. Do you support the Regional Centre Plan?

Yes. Our current land use by-laws are out of date. The Regional Center Plan will provide a blueprint going forward for meaningful and sustainable development in our core areas. The key to the Center Plan going forward is once it is in place, we as Council follow the guidelines and strictly enforce the updated LUB therein.

5. Effective transit is an important issue for businesses, what will you do to improve Halifax's transit system?

Halifax's transit system is adequate but there is certainly room for improvement. Anyone who relies on transit to get to and from work will tell you it is unreliable and they either have to show up very early to their shift or show up a few minutes late. If we want to see an increase in ridership, I believe we should work on maximizing efficiency of the transit routes. We should be creating multiple shorter routes and offering unlimited daily transfers for convenience of

connecting to get across town. In theory crosstown routes are a great idea but in practice they're very impractical. An accident in the Armdale roundabout shouldn't have any bearing on someone being picked up in Portland Estates but this is a real possibility with the routes as they are now. I would also support the creation and implementation of HOV lanes during rush hours utilizing existing streets and infrastructure. Other cities have had this same problem and figured out a solutions. Let's look to them and learn their solutions to make them work here. We shouldn't have to reinvent the wheel every time we face a problem. Finally, if elected, I will work towards expanding transit through the underserved areas in Waverley and Fall River. I have talked to thousands of residents and transit came up time and time again. Residents want to use transit in these areas but it's not enough or simply just not there. The more people using our transit system, the better it is for our downtown. Less cars on the road means more parking for those who absolutely need to drive, less congestions during rush hours and reduced carbon emissions.

6. What are your thoughts on increasing immigration to Halifax?

It is no secret our population is aging and young adults are leaving. Immigration therefore is going to be integral to the survival of our province and our municipality. Unfortunately for Nova Scotia, many of the traditionalists still believe our waning population and economy can be solved by couples getting down to business and procreating. This may have worked at one point but it's just not viable now. With the urbanization of our populous, we are now seeing the death of our rural communities. Families are no longer having ten or twelve children to work the farm and sustain the community. We now see families of all kinds having one or two children and in many cases not having children at all. If we aren't making our own then we really need to focus on bringing people from all over the world to live, work and contribute to our city and province. There is also a misconception out there with many Nova Scotians about immigrants. Many use the term interchangeably with refugee. Refugees appear to be a real sore spot with many because people feel they are a drain on our economy. This couldn't be further from the truth. Refugees are people who come from areas in which they have been displaced by war or natural disaster or one of many other factors. These are people in need of our help. While we establish them in our communities, they will in time give back to us in the way of entrepreneurs, homeowners, students, workers, and more. Immigrants are people who are choosing to give up their homeland to come live in our country. I fully support bringing in more immigrants who want to establish roots here in our municipality. I also support extending voting rights at the municipal level to permanent residents. These people are living here, working here, paying taxes, and contributing to our economy just as much as any Canadian citizen.

7. What do you think Council's primary focus should be over the next term?

Over the next four years, Council should focus on how to become a greener city. Climate change is an **undeniable scientific fact** of our lives now. In the coming years, it will shape how we live our lives and how we do business. We have the opportunity now to be global leaders in green technology. HRM is small enough in terms of population but large enough in land mass to really maximize opportunities to capitalize on the changes ahead. Through realigning commercial tax rates, cutting the red tape, and shifting our by-laws and policies to be more eco-focused, we can attract business globally and locally to produce green technologies. This will be the saving grace of our floundering economy. Brick and mortar retail are closing up every day, manufacturing is practically non-existent here and our natural resources are strictly regulated by government. If we want to succeed in the future, we need to start leading the way now. We also have the opportunity to reduce our dependence on the combustion engine. Halifax can become a bike friendly city and if we maximize the efficiency of our transit systems, more people will leave their car at home.

8. How will you ensure Halifax has an open for business culture?

Having talked to many frustrated residents about their interactions with City Hall and the various departments, one of the first things I would push for is a change in how City Hall interacts with residents and business owners especially on major projects. If a business owner is developing a site and it requires interacting with multiple departments, then there should be a single source point of contact for that person to communicate with and that contact relays to the various departments. This will make it more efficient and less frustrating to deal with City Hall. We also need to have a comprehensive review of by-laws and policies which would affect permitting of a new business. It's not easy or cheap to get started here and some of the hoops would be entrepreneurs have to jump through are just ridiculous. Sailor Bups is a fine current example. They are in court fighting HRM because by-law enforcement showed up to check on a sign they applied for and installed. In the course of checking on the permit for the sign it came out they didn't have an occupancy permit or so the story goes. Regardless, rather than threaten to shut down a reputable business and take them to court, why not work with the owners to rectify the mistakes and carry on. They're doing more good providing their services and operating in our city than harm by not having proper paperwork completed. This is an example of bureaucracy running amok. If we want to be open for business then we need to work together to find solutions. Same with this class action lawsuit launched by the businesses on Argyle Street. This should never have reached the point to which the city has to be sued. But rather than work with the owners whose business is hurting as a direct result of development on the street, or take some of the funds from the developers to help offset the loss in business, City Hall would rather battle business owners in court. We need to work together rather than fight each other.

9. What is the most important thing Council can do to grow Halifax's economy?

The single most important Council can do right now to grow our local economy is to cut taxes. I understand this means a reduction in services in certain areas but right now, Nova Scotians and in turn Haligonians don't have money. If we want a vibrant and robust economy then the residents need disposable income. Until we have a level of government who will stop thinking about winning the next election and truly thinking about what is best for us, then our economy is going to remain flat. Nova Scotia is overtaxed as it is already. I have always lived by the old adage, less is more. Do without in the short term and prosper in the long term. This is the attitude we need to adopt going forward.

10. How do you plan to be a leader in the city?

Our rural portions of the municipality have much to offer but we don't have any real representation in Council. I will be an unwavering advocate for our interests and bring a common sense approach to City Hall. In turn, I hope other councilors will see my approach is effective and practical. We have many good ideas that are going unheard. I want to be the voice for rural HRM.

Cathy Deagle-Gammon – District 1

No response received to date.

Trevor Lawson – District 1

1. Does the commercial tax system in Halifax need reform? If so, what would you like to change?

Compared to similar regional centres, nearby counties, and the other provincial capitals, the commercial taxes in HRM are too high. There is an imbalance between commercial and residential taxes in HRM which puts local businesses at a disadvantage when compared to many other jurisdictions. If we genuinely want Halifax to have a competitive edge and continue to be the economic engine of Atlantic Canada we need to be aware of this imbalance and determine ways to effectively reduce it.

2. How will you reduce red tape for businesses in Halifax?

The first step in reducing red tape in business development is to identify residents and business owners as customers, much in the same fashion a small business might. Ask the question, “Who am I here to serve?” and empower staff to routinely evaluate and offer input on ways to improve service provision to clients. The overarching consideration should be, how do we continually improve the way we serve our clients? If we strive to serve businesses, and have satisfied customers, we’ll have set the stage for opportunity and will all benefit.

3. What are your thoughts on development in Halifax?

Smart, targeted, and inclusive development benefits the business environment, communities, and HRM as a whole. We need to encourage growth that accentuates our best features here in HRM; the diverse communities, determination, and astounding natural beauty.

4. Do you support the Regional Centre Plan?

As a candidate for one of the Districts outside of the area covered by the Regional Centre Plan, I have two thoughts:

1. I’m excited to see the level of public interest in the Centre Plan, as a process like this allows residents to develop a deeper connection with HRM and the processes that are directing its growth.
2. I’m interested in seeing how the experience gained in the process of developing the Centre Plan can be utilized for those parts of HRM outside the core. As in my previous answer, smart, targeted, and inclusive development benefits us all.

5. Effective transit is an important issue for businesses, what will you do to improve Halifax's transit system?

I live in Carroll's Corner, well outside of the area of focus for the majority of HRMs transit system. From Waverley to Carroll's Corner to Middle Musquodoboit, I think the District 1 councillor is uniquely positioned to bring a voice to Council regarding how the transit system can grow as we continue to build an amazing Municipality.

As for the transit system as a whole, I'm excited to hear new ideas on how we can solve the problems of traffic congestion and long commutes. I've been saying throughout my campaign that I'm here to listen, and some of the public feedback on transit can prove particularly informative when looking to build an effective system.

6. What are your thoughts on increasing immigration to Halifax?

Nova Scotia has one of the longest histories of immigration on this continent. We have always been a place that has benefitted from the enthusiasm and hard work of each wave of immigration that has come to our shores. There are resounding success stories all around us; look no further than the Manitoba model and more recently our local Nova Scotia community efforts.

I'm very proud of the local efforts made recently to bring refugees into HRM and across Nova Scotia. We've shown our capacity to welcome newcomers and have a developing reputation as a place that you can come to, be yourself, and join a community. We can increase immigration by keeping our arms open wide and making sure that HRM is positioned to not only enthusiastically take in newcomers but provide the structure needed for them to thrive.

7. What do you think Council's primary focus should be over the next term?

It seems like there is a lot of frustration and a growing divide between rural and urban HRM. I believe that Council needs to get back to basics and ensure that our government is structured in a way that rationally deals with the important issues facing us without driving a wedge in between any of the groups that make our municipality such an incredible place to live.

8. How will you ensure Halifax has an open for business culture?

We need to ensure that our tax structure is adjusted to be more competitive with the neighbouring parts of the Province, across Canada and internationally. We also need to make sure that if residents are interested in starting a business that the municipality is there to encourage them and direct them to any supports they may need. Groups like the Downtown Dartmouth

Business Commission and Waterfront Development Corporation, as well as associations like the Fall River and Area Business Association and the Halifax Chamber of Commerce are crucial partners in facilitating small business growth into a vibrant business and investment environment.

9. What is the most important thing Council can do to grow Halifax’s economy?

We need to incorporate more voices into decision-making here in HRM. Whether that’s reflected in the people representing each district or those providing input into the process. Every new and diverse voice that we can bring to the table makes us stronger as a whole.

10. How do you plan to be a leader in the city?

I’m a simple guy who genuinely cares about his community. I plan to make caring the baseline for every aspect of my job as District 1 Councillor. I want to help create a culture where decision makers routinely ask “who will this decision affect?”; cooperation and consideration of others will always lead to better decisions. The time has come for us to work together to make HRM a model of growth, inclusion, and innovation. I am very proud of my track record in business, remaining client focused and providing an outstanding service has allowed me to continue to grow my practice and develop strong relationships with people from all over Nova Scotia. These are the things we need to remain focused on, caring about people and service, and we can make our municipality one of the best places in Canada to live and do business.

Alison McNair – District 1

No response received to date.

Steve Sinnott – District 1

1. Does the commercial tax system in Halifax need reform? If so, what would you like to change?

The Commercial Tax System does not need to be reform, but adjustments can be looked at and any loop holes can be bridged together.

2. How will you reduce red tape for businesses in Halifax?

By streamlining the processes around business to eliminate / reduce the amount of permits and input by City Officials and also help reduce the amount duplication in the process.

3. What are your thoughts on development in Halifax?

I encourage development opportunities with HRM. Development brings economic spin offs for the City and will help with revenue. I believe there should be more development opportunities outside of Downtown Halifax and Dartmouth, especially in the Suburban areas.

4. Do you support the Regional Centre Plan?

I do support the Regional Centre Plan, but a minor changes needs to be addressed as all communities within HRM need to be included and benefit from the plan.

5. Effective transit is an important issue for businesses, what will you do to improve Halifax's transit system?

At the doors of my residents in District #1, Transit is a big issue. A part of the District does not have any or very little transit service. Business in the area would like to see Transit as it will allow residents to shop locally and support our community businesses.

6. What are your thoughts on increasing immigration to Halifax?

I believe immigration is good for the City, and all for increasing immigration as long as there is a solid implementation plan.

7. What do you think Council's primary focus should be over the next term?

The primary focus for the next term of Municipal Councillors is to review and include all communities within the Regional Centre Plan.

8. How will you ensure Halifax has an open for business culture?

By working with our partners within the HRM such as the Greater Halifax Partnership group and the Halifax Chamber of Commerce to help promote and encourage business to locate into our communities.

9. What is the most important thing Council can do to grow Halifax's economy?

The economy of Halifax has grown over the last few years, I believe we don't need to change anything. Halifax is in great economic shape, continue to build upon our current success plan and to execute the plan.

10. How do you plan to be a leader in the city?

I will be committed to advocating for all residents, and dedicated to representing all communities in the area equally and fairly.

Steve Streach – District 1

No response received to date.

Shelley Fashan – District 2

No response received to date.

David Hendsbee – District 2

No response received to date.

Sydnee L. McKay – District 2

No response received to date.

Gail McQuarrie – District 2

No response received to date.

Bill Karsten – District 3 (Acclaimed)

No response received to date.

Lorelei Nicoll – District 4 (Acclaimed)

No response received to date.

Sam Austin – District 5

1. Does the commercial tax system in Halifax need reform? If so, what would you like to change?

The commercial tax system places a heavy burden on small business in areas of the city with high land value. Small businesses in the core pay much more per square foot than suburban big box stores. I believe we need a small business tax rate. I also support phasing in assessment increases to lessen the shock from year-to-year.

2. How will you reduce red tape for businesses in Halifax?

I believe the creation of a small business office in HRM could help make working with the city easier and is worth exploring. It would provide business with an advocate within the bureaucracy.

3. What are your thoughts on development in Halifax?

We're at an exciting juncture right now. After years of little activity in the urban core, there are many new cranes. Development has added a lot to our community, but it has also gotten a little ahead of the planning process. I'm hopeful the Centre Plan will be able to direct growth towards key opportunity sites, such as Dartmouth's Wyse Road, while providing stability to our existing residential neighbourhoods.

4. Do you support the Regional Centre Plan?

A draft of the Centre Plan hasn't been provided yet, but I'm in support of the general trend. I support the direction of getting to a place of certainty where both residents and developers should know what to expect. I believe it's likely that we will need to undertake some secondary planning for the major growth areas.

5. Effective transit is an important issue for businesses, what will you do to improve Halifax's transit system?

We need to implement more transit priority measures to give the bus an edge in traffic. It's very hard to get people onto public transit when the trip takes twice as long as driving if not more. The emphasis needs to be on increasing the speed and frequency of key corridor routes.

6. What are your thoughts on increasing immigration to Halifax?

New immigrants are an asset to our community. They bring diverse perspectives and often create businesses. Our challenge is providing a welcoming environment and opportunities to ensure that the immigrants that we do receive stay here for the long-term and don't later migrate to Canada's big cities.

7. What do you think Council's primary focus should be over the next term?

There is never one primary focus. Government is the art of doing many things at once. That said, getting the Centre Plan and Integrated Mobility Plan right are probably the two biggest and interrelated items. We need to get these fundamental elements right.

8. How will you ensure Halifax has an open for business culture?

Work with the BIDS, Chamber and other private-sector partners. The municipal government's role is to setup the environment for success in terms of the quality of life offered to citizens, taxation, transportation etc.

9. What is the most important thing Council can do to grow Halifax's economy?

Invest in planning so that developers and residents know what to expect in their neighbourhoods.

10. How do you plan to be a leader in the city?

I will be open, accessible and transparent. At matters before council, I will be open as to how I'm voting and why. I will be accessible to my constituents and other members of the community in my district and beyond. Most of all, I will approach the role of councilor with an open-mind.

Adam Bowes – District 5

No response received to date.

Gabriel Enxuga – District 5

No response received to date.

Ned Milburn – District 5

No response received to date.

Tim Rissesco – District 5

No response received to date.

Derek Vallis – District 5

No response received to date.

Kate Watson – District 5

1. Does the commercial tax system in Halifax need reform? If so, what would you like to change?

Our assessment-based tax system places a heavy burden on small businesses in the urban core. Land sales and redevelopment are driving up property values –a great thing on paper, but the reality is both owner-operated businesses and small business tenants are left with higher tax bills that make it hard (or impossible) to stay in business. At the same time that we are talking about the need for complete communities where people can easily access the services they need, the city is encouraging retail in places like Bayers Lake and Dartmouth Crossing where the assessment-based system means they pay much less tax.

Changes are needed to HRM’s charter so that the City has the ability to set differentiated tax rates that will give immediate relief to small businesses

2. How will you reduce red tape for businesses in Halifax?

Complex rules, regulations and bureaucratic procedures make doing business in HRM costly and slow which stifles business growth and economic development. To correct that, we need to: -- --

Identify regulatory barriers

-Reduce, streamline and eliminate the barriers

- Increase staff levels in the Planning and Development Business Unit

-Update and consolidate municipal planning by-laws

-Create a small business ombudsman office to reduce and resolve conflict

3. What are your thoughts on development in Halifax?

Development was stagnant in the urban core for some time. Now it’s booming, which is great for the tax base. However, I believe that council needs to take a more thoughtful, pragmatic approach to development than they are currently showing. We need development that builds on the existing character of our neighbourhoods, not development that destroys or overshadows that character.

4. Do you support the Regional Centre Plan?

Yes. It is a much needed update that will unify the planning rules for peninsular Halifax and Dartmouth and will bring certainty and consistency to the development process.

5. Effective transit is an important issue for businesses, what will you do to improve Halifax's transit system?

I support the Moving Forward Together Plan Principals. Now we need to see them enacted!

- Increase the proportion of resources allocated towards high ridership services
- Build a simplified, transfer-based network
- Invest in service quality and reliability
- Give transit increased priority in the transportation network

6. What are your thoughts on increasing immigration to Halifax?

I believe we need to attract and welcome more immigrants to Halifax. More immigrants mean increased economic development, increased jobs and a more vibrant, diverse city.

7. What do you think Council's primary focus should be over the next term?

HRM is setting growth targets that could see an extra 50,000 people in the region by 2021, with a majority of them located in the Regional Centre and urban communities. I believe we are going to need to see some significant investment in our aging infrastructure to make this possible.

8. How will you ensure Halifax has an open for business culture?

We need to welcome entrepreneurs and businesses to our city. The municipality needs to work with other levels of government to simplify the bureaucratic process of opening a business. We need to get the message out that HRM will help streamline the process of starting a new business.

9. What is the most important thing Council can do to grow Halifax's economy?

I think that the best way to grow Halifax's economy is to attract and retain talent. Council can support this goal by strategic investments in things like transit, arts/culture and green space that make Halifax a more desirable place to live.

10. How do you plan to be a leader in the city?

I plan to be a leader who listens and is accessible to the citizens of HRM. I will lead by example, incorporating transit into the way I get around.

Warren Wesson – District 5

No response received to date.

Carlos Beals – District 6

No response received to date.

Tony Mancini – District 6

No response received to date.

Dominick Desjardins – District 7

No response received to date.

Waye Mason – District 7

1. Does the commercial tax system in Halifax need reform? If so, what would you like to change?

Yes, which is why I drafted our approach to reform, the requests we made from to the Province to move the burden off of over taxed small businesses on small lots and start looking at other options for some of the tax we collect, like foot of frontage or lot size. Assessment is an especially poor tool for business tax.

2. How will you reduce red tape for businesses in Halifax?

I have supported participation in the provincial process to reduce red tape and have worked as Chair of CPED the last 2 years to help simplify processes and modernize bylaws to bring them in line with modern expectations.

3. What are your thoughts on development in Halifax?

It is amazing how much has changed in 4 years. 2012 we were still wondering if we would get development started, now there are concerns it is to much. I am all for good development in the right place, but not all development is good, and tall buildings can be very damaging when placed in low rise neighbourhoods of single family homes and duplexes. The Centre Plan will put development on key hubs and corridors while protecting these residential neighbourhoods.

4. Do you support the Regional Centre Plan?

With all my heart.

5. Effective transit is an important issue for businesses, what will you do to improve Halifax's transit system?

The Moving Forward plan is a good start. Technology (GPS and new fare technology) which we approved will make the user experience so much better, and make transit easier to use. We need to expand our rapid transit options, so rail, BRT and the two new ferries we just announced buying are key.

6. What are your thoughts on increasing immigration to Halifax?

We have done a great job of presenting the city as friendly and excited to welcome newcomers. We did an amazing job as a community with the Syrian refugee settlement, the city contributed through recreation, transit, and library programs, and we want to let permanent residents vote, which would send a huge signal that Halifax values immigrants.

7. What do you think Council's primary focus should be over the next term?

Completing the Centre Plan, with a focus in it on affordable housing, and moving on the updating the suburban and rural plans.

8. How will you ensure Halifax has an open for business culture?

Cultural change is the hardest change but I think we need to more clearly communicate what the rules are, and why they are there, and be open to changing them when they don't make sense. Political leaders like myself and the Mayor have been available and supportive of efforts to recruit and retain business.

9. What is the most important thing Council can do to grow Halifax's economy?

I think that the Sell Halifax program is a critical turning point, that Halifax Partnership and HRM now have a well-articulated value proposition for attracting business, and we need to ruthlessly execute this sale!

10. How do you plan to be a leader in the city?

I am proud to have provided leadership these last four years, being a compelling voice for a great future for Halifax while working hard to represent my district. About a third of all the motions, policies and reports that have gone through the last 4 years were started by me, or have my fingerprints on them in a big way. I am proud of how much we have changed the municipality for the better in four years but we have so much more work to do, and I look forward to bringing more progressive ideas to the Council table.

Sue Uteck – District 7

No response received to date.

Irvine Carvery – District 8

No response received to date.

Martin Farrell – District 8

No response received to date.

Anthony Kawalski – District 8

1. Does the commercial tax system in Halifax need reform? If so, what would you like to change?

Absolutely! Root and branch to be more flexible and adaptive to the rapidly changing Global, National, Provincial and City economies through the movement of capital, technological changes, consumer sophistication, online shopping, social media transformations, taxes need be adaptive and relevant.

2. How will you reduce red tape for businesses in Halifax?

Work to see the bureaucracy unravelled, to become technologically reactive, to make the business environment encouraging and enticing, to provide a true crucible for entrepreneurial growth. Supportive, not restricting.

3. What are your thoughts on development in Halifax?

The more the better! Good design, good planning, great architecture that is inclusive to those who live here and attractive enough to invite newcomers from across Canada and the Globe. Dense urban core, not sprawling suburbs, walkable, liveable.

4. Do you support the Regional Centre Plan?

Yes! Provided it has a viable affordability component for housing, both social and private, with a 'fit for purpose' component as the bedrock. With guarantees that it will not languish for months or years in the dogma or minutiae of debate in Council, or be used as horse traded totem filibustered by councillors, i.e. Rural vs Urban.

5. Effective transit is an important issue for businesses, what will you do to improve Halifax's transit system?

Create Commuter rail as a spine, with growth hubs around the stations that create communities linked by sidewalks, trails, bike lanes, park and ride.

Bus lanes, priority lanes, free for seniors, reduce dominance of the car.

Do away with the 'right' to park at the door of your store to buy a pack of cigarettes.

Integrated and effective plus attractive to new riders who see mass transit as a true alternative to the car, which should be penalised for single occupancy and by congestion charges.

6. What are your thoughts on increasing immigration to Halifax?

We need and can double the population of the Province, comfortably. Drawing fresh minds, entrepreneurship, tax base and new citizens to counter the ageing demographic timebomb. To fill the new towers rising and the ones that will empty as tenants 'block hop.'
To prevent new towers being half finished if the developers suffer a confidence or 'cash flow' crisis.

7. What do you think Council's primary focus should be over the next term?

Social justice, inclusion, diversity as we grow through the Centre Plan, along with building consensus across HRM, rural/urban, Halifax/Dartmouth. Bring us to where we should already be as we prepare for where we can and will be.

8. How will you ensure Halifax has an open for business culture?

Drawing in the best minds, innovators, entrepreneurs to a SMART City that retains graduates and the young, by being a City that it is 'Easy' to live in and 'Easy' to start and do business. Free from red tape, restrictions and the culture of 'No!' Market ourselves effectively!!!

9. What is the most important thing Council can do to grow Halifax's economy?

Bring immigrants! Retain graduates! Become a crucible for new businesses and innovators!!

10. How do you plan to be a leader in the city?

My huge experience of the World and life beyond here, my entrepreneurial spirit, my leadership skills, my creative vision, will be put to full use. Building a rural/urban consensus. Having lived the rural and urban life I can provide a great contribution to the conversation beyond where it has languished for so long.

As a newcomer I bring the promise of pioneer zeal to become a Canadian, Nova Scotian and Haligonian.

That energy will be free from the baggage of negativity, despair and despondence.

I will get the wheel turning, not reinvent it!

Patrick Murphy – District 8

No response received to date.

Chris Poole – District 8

1. Does the commercial tax system in Halifax need reform? If so, what would you like to change?

Yes, the system does need to be looked at, currently a big box store in Bayers Lake pays far less tax per square foot than a location on the peninsula. If the goal of the centre plan is to increase population by 30,000 on the peninsula, one of the steps we will have to take is to make it more attractive for business to setup shop on the peninsula and not further and further out from the core.

2. How will you reduce red tape for businesses in Halifax?

I would meet with organizations like the Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Business Commission, North End Business Commission, etc.. to review the current processes that businesses have to follow and try and streamline the system. Make it simpler. Once a feasible plan has been designed, then it would be my task to bring this to council to make it happen.

3. What are your thoughts on development in Halifax?

Development is good. It is essential. As long as it is smart and enhances the community and its residents. I look forward to seeing the centre plan finally come to fruition so Halifax can have an up to date and solid strategy for the foreseeable future.

4. Do you support the Regional Centre Plan?

Yes

5. Effective transit is an important issue for businesses, what will you do to improve Halifax's transit system?

This requires communication between, HRM, businesses and respective organizations, seniors, cyclists, motorists, pedestrians and residents in general. Transportation affects us all and we all need to step up, be responsible, and have a voice at the table to ensure it works.

6. What are your thoughts on increasing immigration to Halifax?

I think it is great as long as we have the proper support to educate both our own citizens and our new immigrants. To be truly successful with immigration, it requires all levels of government (HRS, HRM, Provincial & Federal) to work together with and within the communities.

7. What do you think Council's primary focus should be over the next term?

The next 4 years, is going to be a critical time for the Urban Core of HRM. We need to focus on ensuring the centre plan is a solid workable strategy that can be implemented! We need to focus on good governance such as reviewing old out of date policies to make sure situations like Homes Not Hondas can't happen again. We also need to really take a close look at affordable housing, transportation, efficiency program and property taxes.

8. How will you ensure Halifax has an open for business culture?

In partnership with local business owners and associations, we will need to review the current system and ensure that it is streamlined; it needs to be economical, efficient for businesses to startup, and there needs to be an atmosphere that is open and encouraging to innovative ways of thinking and doing business. We definitely need to realign the tax system so that businesses are given tax incentives to come to the peninsula.

9. What is the most important thing Council can do to grow Halifax's economy?

Not be afraid of change and look to other areas of the world to see what and how they are succeeding. If someone else already has success that could potentially work for us, we don't have to recreate the wheel, we can just make it better.

10. How do you plan to be a leader in the city?

Ask the difficult questions of staff, not be satisfied with the status quo, be inclusive of all our citizens by listening and hearing what the businesses and residents of HRM have to say. People don't just come with problems, many have great solutions which just never get heard. I will be their voice and will work hard to make life better for all the residents in a city that I love.

Lindell Smith – District 8

1. Does the commercial tax system in Halifax need reform? If so, what would you like to change?

My goal is to support a thriving and growing business community in District 8, and I will do this taking into account the area's unique history and diversity. We have an entrepreneurial spirit here and great local businesses. People come here to enjoy them from other parts of the city, and they are a reason why people enjoy living here. Our small businesses are critical to the economy. However, our commercial tax policies do require some reforms. I agree that changes to the tax regime should not increase costs for business. In our district, one of the biggest concerns is that real estate developments are driving property taxes up. This does not help our businesses to grow and in fact could threaten them. Our businesses are what attract people to this area and support their decision to live in Halifax's West End & North End, including to purchase the homes that are being built.

We also want to continue to encourage entrepreneurship for youth, immigrants and people who are newly entering the workforce or are seeking employment -- that means there needs to continue to be affordable housing options available, as well. Ultimately the right property tax solution will be a win-win for both developers, businesses and the community at large. Our constituents have also told us that they want a tax strategy that aligns with the regional strategy. This is one that encourages desirable and fiscally responsible development and promotes the creation of "complete" communities. This means that we would like a tax system that supports a community where people can live, work and play while conveniently accessing goods and services. I am prepared to work with Council to help find viable solutions.

2. How will you reduce red tape for businesses in Halifax?

With the establishment of the provincial Office of Regulatory Affairs and Service Effectiveness, the province has taken an important step to work toward eliminating barriers on new and existing regulations. There will be a designate for this office within the Halifax Regional Municipality. This provides a perfect opportunity for me as candidate to advocate on behalf of businesses operating in District 8 that will help inspire positive change in the form of increased economic opportunity and sustainable growth.

I will support measures that are effective in reducing red tape and promote their timely implementation. To do this, I plan to continue to consult and engage with District 8 businesses, with the North End Business Association and the Halifax Chamber of Commerce in order to advocate for positive change in this area in Council.

3. What are your thoughts on development in Halifax?

Development in Halifax is important -- to create jobs, provide housing and infrastructure and to attract and support new investment as well as new residents and visitors. With this in mind, it is important to strike a balance and make sure that sufficient affordable housing options continue to be available. Possible solutions that have been suggested to me by constituents are density bonusing or home ownership programs. I also want to make sure the city is well-designed through building guidelines and maintains its character. Finally, I will support the creation of higher environmental standards for new buildings so our city is cleaner, greener and more sustainable. Economic growth does not have to come at the expense of the environment and supporting the environment does not have to increase costs for businesses.

4. Do you support the Regional Centre Plan?

I am happy that residents have been consulted in the development of the Centre Plan. This plan is a real opportunity for Halifax to shape its future as a vibrant city. I have reviewed the initial policy paper – and its objectives are comprehensive and have vision - it addresses key areas such as infrastructure, the environment and the economy, as well as social aspects. As it will be used to advise Council, I am really looking forward to seeing the various aspects of the plan as they are rolled out. If elected, I look forward to supporting the plan's implementation and to addressing any concerns brought forward by residents.

5. Effective transit is an important issue for businesses, what will you do to improve Halifax's transit system?

I support Halifax Metro Transit's efforts to improve our transit system, with residents and businesses in mind. I will support the Moving Forward Transit Plan. We need to modernize our transportation system while keeping it affordable. An effective transit system is essential to doing business in Halifax, but we also want to consider other options to reduce congestion in our roadways, to encouraging car sharing, and to create safe spaces for cyclists. If elected, I look forward to exploring different options with residents and with Council.

6. What are your thoughts on increasing immigration to Halifax?

You only need to look at the One Nova Scotia report: Shaping our Economy Together to understand that immigrants are critical to Halifax's future. The report says it clearly: "After a decade of slow economic growth, and with an aging and shrinking population, Nova Scotia is on the verge of a significant and prolonged decline in our standard of living, in the quality of our public services and in amenities, and in our population base..." The report is really a call to action to help improve the economic situation in this province and people are at the core of this. The report says that we need to achieve significantly higher rates of attraction and retention of both inter-provincial and international immigrants to grow the population overall, increase the number of entrepreneurs and renew the labour force. So I am quoting a report, but these are facts. Halifax

needs immigrants and we benefit greatly from having more diversity and talent not only in the city, but in the province.

7. What do you think Council's primary focus should be over the next term?

Council's primary focus should be implementing the Centre Plan, and improving our transportation system, which includes our active transportation network.

8. How will you ensure Halifax has an open for business culture?

Positive steps are being taken by the Province to reduce red tape for businesses, and no doubt the city could benefit from the tax reforms that I mentioned. We also need to better support our small and medium sized businesses. Our people must see that prosperity is available to them based on their own creativity and initiative. Therefore, collectively, I want to help encourage people in my community – which is incredibly diverse – to embrace a culture of entrepreneurship. Education and skills training are important foundations for this, and I plan to promote this aspect, as well.

9. What is the most important thing Council can do to grow Halifax's economy?

The most important thing that Council can do is to take measures that support the growth and development of small and medium enterprises in Halifax. I would look forward to using my office to help create a business culture where entrepreneurs can thrive; one that creates jobs, and that considers diversity and inclusion in helping to build a prosperous city. It is essential that our economic growth be inclusive and that this be taken into account so that the benefits can be available to all – men and women, the African Nova Scotian community, Aboriginal groups, youth, and new immigrants and residents to the city. Everyone. I will promote this kind of thinking in Council.

10. How do you plan to be a leader in the city?

I have taken on leadership roles in within various organizations throughout the city. I have also stepped up and advocated on issues such as community engagement and supporting young people living in the municipality. Using this past experience, and using the new knowledge I have gained while running a campaign, I plan on continuing advocating for residents and also building meaningful relationships with staff within our system.

Brenden Sommerhalder – District 8

No response received to date.

Shawn Cleary – District 9

1. Does the commercial tax system in Halifax need reform? If so, what would you like to change?

Yes, our current commercial property tax system is draining the life from our local, small businesses on our main streets and downtowns. It isn't fair when a business on Quinpool Road is paying 5 times more tax per square foot than a big box store in a business park. Council needs to convince the Provincial government to get complete authority over its taxation. Halifax then needs to analyze the different business districts and zones around HRM to come up with fair mill rates for these areas.

2. How will you reduce red tape for businesses in Halifax?

I would advocate for the city to initiate an office of regulatory affairs and service effectiveness, similar to what the Province has set up. We need to ensure that unnecessary or burdensome regulations are not strangling our small businesses. As an entrepreneur and a professor of management, I want Halifax to be the best city in Canada to start and grow your business!

3. What are your thoughts on development in Halifax?

Halifax needs development but it has to smart, sustainable growth. HRM already has enough serviced land to absorb forecasted population growth for the next 30 years. We need to ensure new development is located where we already have roads, services, transit, etc. If we can increase our population in these areas, the per capita cost of providing services will decrease at the same time the tax base is increasing. This will put Halifax on a financially sustainable path and allow HRM to make much-needed infrastructure and program investments in the future.

4. Do you support the Regional Centre Plan?

I fully support the Centre Plan. We need to bring our zoning and land-use bylaws up to date and ensure that growth is sustainable. We need to have complete communities that are livable, walkable, bikeable, healthy, and vibrant. Study after study has shown these kinds of cities are economically more dynamic and vigorous.

5. Effective transit is an important issue for businesses, what will you do to improve Halifax's transit system?

I've heard too many people talk about Transit as a service that has to be provided to those who can't afford other transportation options. Building a great Transit system is an economic development strategy. When residents have access to better public transit, they have more options for employment, more options to access services, more options for recreation. When we have a better transit system, businesses have bigger pools of potential employees to draw from.

I believe HRM should pilot the Via commuter rail project. We should invest in a number of Bus Rapid Transit routes. We need technology-enabled buses and bus stops that give riders valuable information about location, capacity, bike rack availability, etc., and that can prioritize traffic signals. Halifax needs to have a great transit system that provides a better alternative to single-occupant vehicle commuter trips.

6. What are your thoughts on increasing immigration to Halifax?

We need more immigrants in Halifax. Our birth rates are declining and there are fewer people living on the Halifax peninsula now than in the 1960s. We need more families, more skilled labour, more entrepreneurs. HRM has had an Immigration Action Plan for more than a decade but it hasn't been very effective and really only addresses newcomers when they have already arrived in Halifax. HRM needs to work more closely with the provincial immigration office and the federal department of immigration and partner with local settlement and community groups to ensure Halifax can reach its full potential as a modern, cosmopolitan, capital city.

7. What do you think Council's primary focus should be over the next term?

Council needs to implement the Centre Plan, allow for smart growth, create the Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes Regional Park, invest in great transit, and create an environment where anyone who wants to start and grow their small business can do so here Halifax.

8. How will you ensure Halifax has an open for business culture?

Through better, more streamlined regulation, fair commercial property taxation, better alignment of policies and effort, and strengthening Halifax's national and international brand, we can make sure Halifax has an open for business culture.

9. What is the most important thing Council can do to grow Halifax's economy?

By working closely with organizations such as the Halifax Chamber of Commerce, Halifax Partnership, our universities, and by celebrating entrepreneurship, we can bring together the people and resources necessary to start and grow great businesses here in Halifax.

10. How do you plan to be a leader in the city?

A leader listens and consults, and then prioritizes the issues important to our city. A leader brings people together, marshals the resources necessary to make change happen, and makes that vision a tangible reality. That is my leadership approach.

Linda Mosher – District 9

1. Does the commercial tax system in Halifax need reform? If so, what would you like to change?

As the Councillor that represents the Quinpool Road Business Improvement District and part of the Spryfield Business Improvement District, I am a strong supporter of commercial tax reform. That's why I supported Regional Council's request of the Province of Nova Scotia to amend the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter to give the municipality legal authority to provide targeted commercial tax relief to help small businesses. I support the creation of a reduced tax rate for small business. Any commercial tax reform, however, must be undertaken in a way that doesn't unduly shift the burden on residential ratepayers.

2. How will you reduce red tape for businesses in Halifax?

We must work closely with citizens and business organizations (such as the business improvement district associations, Halifax Chamber and Canadian Federation of Independent Business) to prioritize which ideas to reduce tap can be quickly implemented.

After meeting with the Board of Directors of the Construction Association of Nova Scotia, I brought the issue of red tape forward to Council. A report was prepared to ensure that HRM is advancing the award of projects and payments in a timely and appropriate manner. Regional Council will be discussing this at a future Committee of the Whole meeting. See link to the report, <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/documents/160802ca1421.pdf>

Should you wish to provide feedback, please email the Clerk's Office: clerks@halifax.ca

On October 4, 2016, Regional Council will be discussing the following motion, which I support:

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council: 1. authorize the CAO to commit a staff resource, reporting to the CAO, to work with the Nova Scotia Office of Regulatory Affairs and Service Effectiveness on red tape reduction for a period of six months with the possibility of extension of up to three years; 2. approve funding in the amount of up to \$65,000 in 2016/17 to be allocated to the project, as per the Financial Implications section of this report; and, 3. have staff report to Regional Council on progress in six months.

3. What are your thoughts on development in Halifax?

I favour responsible development in Halifax, consistent with the Regional Plan, the future Centre Plan and input from citizens. The best developments follow the rules, reflect the views of citizens and help meet the Regional Plan's goal of urban densification.

Although we have a Regional Plan which was implemented after considerable public consultation and analysis, our community plans are decades old. We need to update these plans to reflect today's values and realities.

4. Do you support the Regional Centre Plan?

Yes.

5. Effective transit is an important issue for businesses, what will you do to improve Halifax's transit system?

We need to do more to strengthen and expand public transit options than what is currently in the Moving Forward Together transit plan. As well the approved bus routes must reflect residents' input in order to be successful.

I will continue to pursue a new Halifax Transit terminal for Mumford Road. I will continue to champion citizen and business input into transit system improvements. I will continue to oppose widening Bayers Road, as the considerable dollars required for such a change would be better invested in public transit to increase ridership. Some people may say the Bayers Road widening would be great for a dedicated bus lane. While I support dedicated bus lanes, you must consider where the buses are coming from. If the buses originate in areas with no room for dedicated bus lanes the buses will sit in traffic queues along with the cars until they get to the dedicated lanes. Thus HRM may not attract new riders as transit would not provide significant benefit compared to how residents are currently travelling.

We must have a global focus on public transportation that will reduce the downstream effects of traffic. Solutions must attract many passengers such as high speed ferries, commuter rail, dedicated bus lanes, and express transit. I will also push for prompt implementation and appropriate funding for the new traffic calming guidelines that my colleagues and I requested to ensure our residential communities are safe for residents and encourage active transportation.

6. What are your thoughts on increasing immigration to Halifax?

I support greater immigration to Halifax. I voted in favour of Council's request to extend voting rights to permanent residents to build a greater connection between our community and future citizens. Immigration not only brings diversity to our communities it also supports and sustains economic growth. Immigrants boost our population, especially in the younger demographics which comprises a significant portion of the labour force, and the associated taxation revenue and purchasing strength. We also need to develop a strategy to both integrate and retain immigrants and students in our municipality.

7. What do you think Council's primary focus should be over the next term?

Supporting policies that will keep Halifax's economy growing and improve the quality of life for our neighbourhoods and communities, without compromising our strong financial position or increasing taxes on citizens and small businesses.

8. How will you ensure Halifax has an open for business culture?

Council has a responsibility to hold our new Chief Administrative Officer accountable for implementing changes at the staff level to be more responsive and accountable to citizens and businesses that communicate with the municipality.

9. What is the most important thing Council can do to grow Halifax's economy?

We need commercial tax reform that supports small businesses, without shifting the burden to residential ratepayers. We need to ensure our red tape reduction strategies work in the near term. All stakeholders need to follow, implement, and be accountable for our Economic Strategy.

10. How do you plan to be a leader in the city?

Be a champion for good ideas, seek support from the Mayor and council on initiatives that make sense, listen and respond to citizens, and be open and accountable for the decisions I make. Perform extensive research to ensure I make informed decisions.

Continue to bring unique perspectives before council and work hard on behalf of residents to get results. As a leader I will continue to pursue strategic initiatives, while also resolving individual issues. I will consult with residents and keep them informed.

Kyle Woodbury – District 9

No response received to date.

Andrew Curran – District 10

1. Does the commercial tax system in Halifax need reform? If so, what would you like to change?

It's time for an objective review of the whole commercial tax system . Downtown businesses have been getting a raw deal for years , both in the assessment process & the rates charged . In order to have a vibrant downtown / Regional Center it's important that businesses are taxed fairly, competitively & consistently. They also need appropriate service levels & support. There is a lot of infrastructure that need 'refreshing' in the downtown, after all the recent development there are sidewalks, crosswalks etc that need work.

2. How will you reduce red tape for businesses in Halifax?

The easy answer is to streamline the process . Having said that ... there should be serious consideration given to all components that affect the 'wait time' involved . The solution would likely involve upgrading technology, possibly adding staff and maybe modifying the whole process. One area that has to be reviewed is the regulations themselves , is there duplication that can be eliminated?

3. What are your thoughts on development in Halifax?

Development has to meet community needs & any good developer has learned to start the community consultation process early. The new library set the standard for all future development. If all projects followed that process everyone would be happy.

4. Do you support the Regional Centre Plan?

Yes! This is the core of Halifax... always was ... always will be . With the relatively restricted land involved in the area included it's crucial that the city control what happens within this region. Halifax has always been known as the city of trees. It's crucial that there are guidelines for the future use & development of our city core.

5. Effective transit is an important issue for businesses, what will you do to improve Halifax's transit system?

Halifax transit needs to speed up the implementation of the planned overhaul of routes & schedules . The biggest issue with Transit is we are still working within a route system that has developed by default over the years. It's not efficient & the hours of operation need to be

expanded . Yes the addition of bus only lanes would help dramatically but they are not an easy fix. Overhaul the system first & then build in bus lanes as the region expands.

6. What are your thoughts on increasing immigration to Halifax?

Halifax already has a good start on becoming a cosmopolitan city . The more diverse our demographics the more vibrant our city becomes .

7. What do you think Council's primary focus should be over the next term?

Key Focus Areas:

1. Effective traffic planning is crucial to address the daily bottlenecks of the Fairview overpass, BiHi , Armdale Rotary etc.....
2. Continued effort to make all communities within HRM safe, walkable, growing & friendly.

8. How will you ensure Halifax has an open for business culture?

Business of all sizes thrive on population growth and prosperity. I will do everything I can to encourage business to locate in Halifax and within my district.

9. What is the most important thing Council can do to grow Halifax's economy?

Halifax has come through more than ten [10] years of sustained growth. We need a steady hand on the wheel that looks forward and addresses the infrastructure issues required to make growth a realistic possibility . We have to proactively promote Halifax as the place to be ... the capital of the Maritimes .

10. How do you plan to be a leader in the city?

My plan is to be part of every aspect of life in my community, my city & to be a resource for people, business, groups & organizations .

Mohammad Ehsan – District 10

No response received to date.

Russell Walker – District 10

No response received to date.

Steve Adams – District 11

1. Does the commercial tax system in Halifax need reform? If so, what would you like to change?

The commercial tax system needs to be stabilized. And, all businesses should be taxed in a similar manner. I didn't support the special tax arrangement for Irving, as other businesses will have to make up the difference. One problem I see with lowering taxes for small businesses is that the lost revenues have to come from another source; that being, the residential taxpayer. Creating an environment to increase business could help reduce taxes, as they would be spread over a broader base.

2. How will you reduce red tape for businesses in Halifax?

We are presently addressing this issue. I have suggested we use the Calgary model .

3. What are your thoughts on development in Halifax?

I am generally supportive of development, as long as it is appropriate for the area. I utilize a number of factors to determine if I feel it is suitable. In circumstances whereby amendments are required, I compare the development allowed (as-of-right) to the proposal and use this information to help make a decision.

4. Do you support the Regional Centre Plan?

I support a Regional Plan; not necessarily the one being proposed.

5. Effective transit is an important issue for businesses, what will you do to improve Halifax's transit system?

This issue will be before Council on November 22. I will support recommendations which will provide access to the greater number of residents.

6. What are your thoughts on increasing immigration to Halifax?

Increasing immigration will help our economy and increase diversity. However, we should also concentrate on keeping local residents here, by providing a future for them at home.

7. *What do you think Council's primary focus should be over the next term?*

Improving our planning processes to get the proposals before Council in a timely manner; not necessarily for approval, but for a decision.

8. *How will you ensure Halifax has an open for business culture?*

See #7

9. *What is the most important thing Council can do to grow Halifax's economy?*

See #7

10. *How do you plan to be a leader in the city?*

I will work to streamline our planning processes. See #7.

Dawn E. Penney – District 11

1. Does the commercial tax system in Halifax need reform? If so, what would you like to change?

Yes the commercial tax system needs reform to better help small and medium businesses get their entrepreneurial footing and rates that reflect operating a business in a rural, suburban or urban area.

2. How will you reduce red tape for businesses in Halifax?

I will reduce red tape for businesses in all of HRM by ensuring bylaws are updated to reflect 2016.

3. What are your thoughts on development in Halifax?

I think development is positive in so long as it takes its' environmental and societal impact into consideration in a way that minimises damages to existing natural landscapes and current and future inhabitants.

4. Do you support the Regional Centre Plan?

I am not confident that the regional centre plan is truly taking a path that creates something for the entire municipality when the entire municipality is not yet connected by public transit and bike lanes.

5. Effective transit is an important issue for businesses, what will you do to improve Halifax's transit system?

As someone who TAKES public transit I think something as simple as adding shared bus and carpool lanes would reward and benefit eco-minded commuters by getting them to work and home from work faster.

6. What are your thoughts on increasing immigration to Halifax?

I acknowledge that we live in a nation that was built on immigration and so increasing immigration to attract people to settle here in HRM with skill sets and desires to be things like medical doctors, nurses, entrepreneurs, and labourers is important. It is also important to retain these individuals so that they plant their roots in this region, raise their families here, and become an active part of our communities.

7. What do you think Council's primary focus should be over the next term?

I think council's primary focus should be to eliminate homelessness in HRM, especially during the brutal winter months, because only when we care enough to establish permanent solutions for our most vulnerable friends and neighbours can we move forward to help those next in the most in need line.

8. How will you ensure Halifax has an open for business culture?

I will ensure HRM has an open for business culture by rewarding businesses that want to attract, inspire, and retain the talent they hire and that creates solutions for the population they surround. Like offering a start up tax rate to a grocer, for example, who opens its' doors in a community whose members would otherwise have to travel to access local, healthy and affordable food outside their community.

9. What is the most important thing Council can do to grow Halifax's economy?

I think the most important thing council can do to grow HRM's economy is to update its' business bylaws, taxes and to be open to creative ideas to support our LOCAL economy as opposed to the global economy.

10. How do you plan to be a leader in the city?

I plan to be a leader in this municipality by taking actions on issues and tabling motions that benefit the greater societal and environmental good. I care about the earth and all the animals that inhabit it and in my mind our health and well being will always be more important than a financial bottom line or profit.

John Bignell – District 12

No response received to date.

Scott Guthrie – District 12

1. Does the commercial tax system in Halifax need reform? If so, what would you like to change?

I believe it does. We clear definition that can distinguish the difference between a small business, large business. Perhaps even one that again identifies multi-national or conglomerate businesses. Specific tax breaks need to be in place that help benefit start-ups and small businesses to help with their growth and success. Currently the municipality appears to favor larger businesses and makes it very difficult for small business to thrive.

2. How will you reduce red tape for businesses in Halifax?

This process is already underway in council. It is obvious that the red tape currently in place slows economic growth, stalls development and makes it incredibly difficult to effect change and grow. I look forward to seeing the recommendations already being worked on and hope to help remove the red tape in this city on many levels, without taking away the protections of the residents that must be observed.

3. What are your thoughts on development in Halifax?

We need to grow up, not out. Reduction in urban sprawl, more densification in the core of the city. that being said trying to find the delicate balance that ensures the growth follows, within reason, the regional plan and the (to be approved) center plan.

4. Do you support the Regional Centre Plan?

The regional “Center” plan is still being worked on. At the 40000’ level yes, but until the plan is complete and returns to council I can not support what is not yet written. I do support the concept and high level goals. Details are yet to be determined and will decide when it comes back to council how much of it I can and will support.

5. Effective transit is an important issue for businesses, what will you do to improve Halifax’s transit system?

There are so many ideas in the mix on this subject right now. Not any one of which will solve our transit issues. One thing is for certain, we have a lot of work to do. I like many of the ideas currently in play like rail, express routes, dedicated bus lanes. However we need to look very closely and find ways to increase ridership prior to going to deep into the coffers to implement plans that may not work. One thing I do not like is articulating busses in the downtown core.

They create more issues than they fix. I feel they should be restricted to express routes and avoid the narrow streets of downtown. Also a key issue is better accessibility transit and proper restraint systems for wheelchair enable riders. the new lap belt systems on the new busses are not adequate or safe for the riders.

6. What are your thoughts on increasing immigration to Halifax?

We need it and welcome it with arms wide open.

7. What do you think Council’s primary focus should be over the next term?

Getting back to basics :

Parks and Recreation	Responsible Development	Solid Waste management
Road Maintenance	Active Transportation	Affordable Housing
Public Transit	Snow & Ice Removal	Crosswalk Safety
Accessibility	Inclusion	Line Painting

8. How will you ensure Halifax has an open for business culture?

By making sure the commercial tax structure is attractive and putting a face on Halifax that is welcoming to our youth, immigrants and seniors who return. We need a city that is fun and affordable, with a vision of future.

9. What is the most important thing Council can do to grow Halifax’s economy?

Removing red tape, addressing tax issues and making Halifax an attractive and fun city to work, live and play. Not an easy task but with new innovative minds at the council table, we can do it.

10. How do you plan to be a leader in the city?

I have been a community leader for as long as I can remember, I was a leader in my military career. Both were possible by listening, hearing what people have to say and making fact based decisions. It is also necessary to be able to accept disagreement, look closer at your own views and be willing to put the betterment of the residents and the greater municipality ahead for one's own perception of what is best.

Bruce Holland – District 12

No response received to date.

Bruce Smith – District 12

1. Does the commercial tax system in Halifax need reform? If so, what would you like to change?

As a candidate in the 2012 Halifax Civic Election, in District 12, I am not new to this issue. Clearly, small business is over taxed. Many small business owners not only are burdened with a business tax, they also much pay a residential tax from the same pocket. I will need to investigate this subject in depth before making recommendations.

2. How will you reduce red tape for businesses in Halifax?

Potentially being a new Councillor, I will need to investigate this subject in depth before making recommendations. I never make recommendations without first knowing all the facts.

3. What are your thoughts on development in Halifax?

The present developments in the City Core, along with the Centre Plan, will make the Core a vibrant, exciting and busy place. Long overdue! This is what the City needs to be successful. However, with success comes congestion. As a potential Councilor for Mainland North, I am concerned about future access for the residents I hope to represent.

4. Do you support the Regional Centre Plan?

Answered in Q4

5. Effective transit is an important issue for businesses, what will you do to improve Halifax's transit system?

I support the Integrated Mobility Plan presenting in the works with city staff. I am also working on such a plan for District 12 with a young urban planner who has volunteered his time. This plan will address our presently failing public transit system. I believe we require a web type system of routes connecting to the terminals and dedicated bus lanes -some of which exist, we just need to make them work.

With CN now onboard, or nearly so, I can support the rail system concept.

6. What are your thoughts on increasing immigration to Halifax?

This past Monday, I attended the Eid Paryer at the BMO Soccer Centre in Clayton Park West. Although I did not participate, I observed several thousand Canadian citizens and immigrants,

socializing after the prayer, in a way we all need to. Our families were all immigrates/settlers at some point in our history.

We need to encourage professionals and support refugees to immigrate to Nova Scotia, while providing opportunities for those who want to return to their home province.

7. What do you think Council's primary focus should be over the next term?

Complete the Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes Regional Park with land purchases.

Revitalize the Public Transit System with dedicated bus lanes, web type system and small buses for low ridership and community routes.

Review and revise the issuing of building and demolition permits to protect community and historic buildings. Revise planning procedures in general.

Identify community, social and educational needs while providing the support to accomplish the objectives.

Create a City spirit focused on improving our access to Arts and Culture.

Encourage the development of a Business Campus for the remaining 192 acres in Bayers Lake. No more Big Box Stores.

Encourage the Provincial Government to move forward with new community-based hospitals.

8. How will you ensure Halifax has an open for business culture?

Eliminate HRM's purchasing practice of accepting the lowest bid. Purchases should be based on 'Best Value'.

9. What is the most important thing Council can do to grow Halifax's economy?

Take a global view of what makes a city great!

10. How do you plan to be a leader in the city?

As a candidate with Proven Leadership experience in District 12, I will lead with the primary focus on the issues outlined in Q7, above.

Iona Stoddard – District 12

No response received to date.

Richard Zurawski – District 12

No response received to date.

Pamela Lovelace – District 13

1. Does the commercial tax system in Halifax need reform? If so, what would you like to change?

Yes, I am in favour of reforming the commercial tax system. Small business owners need appropriate tax rates to foster growth. This allows them to expand, hire staff, and develop new markets. Tax rates should be fair and reflect value for service.

2. How will you reduce red tape for businesses in Halifax?

I support the red tape reduction strategy for Halifax Regional Municipality. I would argue that the speed of the implementation must be increased. Red tape has been a long standing problem restricting business growth and job creation in HRM. If elected, I would call for immediate action. Talk is cheap, action is necessary.

3. What are your thoughts on development in Halifax?

In order for thoughtful, quality development to take place in our communities, community involvement must play a central role in determining the vision for our communities. Public engagement and education on development initiatives are key factors for collaborative community development.

If you look at recent commercial development in District 13, we have business plazas that have been more than half vacant for a few years. The increase in supply of commercial space with low demand pushes down price. This is good for some businesses; but bad for others who have invested in real estate. It also leaves the impression that the local economy is struggling when business districts are half empty. Careful incremental development that matches demand is required. It is simple economics. I think the last four years have seen overdevelopment in some areas, which negatively impact property sales and values. We can do better.

4. Do you support the Regional Centre Plan?

Yes, we need to update our planning strategy in order to plan for our future effectively. Increasing density is essential in order for the urban area to thrive, which in turn will encourage growth in the rural areas.

5. Effective transit is an important issue for businesses, what will you do to improve Halifax's transit system?

I support exploring commuter rail options and growing alternative transportation, including community transit, and use of the trails system.

6. What are your thoughts on increasing immigration to Halifax?

I support immigration policy that grows our population, encourages entrepreneurship, and supports diversity.

7. What do you think Council's primary focus should be over the next term?

Increase transparency, reduce red tape and support entrepreneurship.

8. How will you ensure Halifax has an open for business culture?

We will attract and grow business through appropriate taxation models that provide value and support to business. We also need to market the strengths of our community including our lifestyle, landscape, and safe neighborhoods. We need to reduce barriers and red tape, and provide a voice to business. Further, we need to develop a vision for growth that carries our businesses to 2050 and beyond. In addition, we must maintain open communication and adapt to markets and other economic pressures that will develop from time to time.

9. What is the most important thing Council can do to grow Halifax's economy?

Implement appropriate taxation models that provide value and support to business, reduce red tape and increase public transit options in order to make it easier for businesses to thrive.

10. How do you plan to be a leader in the city?

I will provide real representation for District 13 by actually taking action. It is one thing to develop policies and strategies; it is another to make it happen. We have had four years of talk and our district has experienced downward pressures on property values and real estate in general. It is time for a better district manager who can lead on economic development, projects, and turn ideas into reality. I would communicate effectively with business and residents to ensure those who are impacted by policy decisions are aware of them prior to implementation. If elected, within 60 days of election I would hold roundtable community discussions with business

leaders in our district to hear how HRM can support them to grow their business. I will then turn those ideas into reality. Businesses need a real voice.

Harry Ward – District 13

No response received to date.

Matt Whitman – District 13

No response received to date.

Lisa Blackburn – District 14

No response received to date.

Kevin Copley – District 14

No response received to date.

Brad Johns – District 14

No response received to date.

Steve Craig – District 15 (Acclaimed)

No response received to date.

Tim Outhit – District 16 (Acclaimed)

No response received to date.