



## COUNCILLOR SAM AUSTIN DISTRICT 5 - DARTMOUTH CENTRE

### DEAR RESIDENTS



Happy New Year! I can't believe how quickly time has flown. The first few months as your Regional Councillor have been exciting and challenging. Along with serving on Regional Council, I have been appointed to serve on the Active Transportation Advisory Committee, the Alderney Landing Board of Directors, the Appeals Standing Committee, the Community Design Advisory Committee, the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee, the Dartmouth Sportsplex Board of Directors, the Halifax Regional Library Board and the Shubenacadie Canal Commission.

During my campaign, I highlighted the following six themes as my priorities for the next four years:

#### Mobility

I am committed to building a safe and accessible transportation network that encourages active transportation and public transit and reduces traffic congestion and pollution.

#### Downtown Dartmouth

Downtown Dartmouth is thriving. As your Councillor, I want to encourage growth for our downtown by supporting smart planning and by providing the necessary amenities and services.

#### Planning

I intend to encourage a cooperative approach to planning so we can have well-planned development that complements our existing neighbourhoods.

#### Parks and Recreation

I believe that accessible recreation, eco-system protection and investing in parks will help to foster a healthy community.

#### Arts and Culture

Dartmouth is a unique place with its own history and strong community pride. It will be my priority to support the arts, promote our historic sites and celebrate our exceptional neighbourhoods.

#### Engagement

I commit to being responsive to your concerns and to fostering an engaged community by informing and involving residents in important initiatives.

By working with residents, staff and my council colleagues I am confident that we can advance these themes. I'm eager to hear your thoughts and ideas about how we can create an even greater Dartmouth, so please get in touch. I look forward to working with you!

#### CONTACT ME

902.579.6814  
sam.austin@halifax.ca  
halifax.ca/District05/

 sam.austin.501

 @SamAustinD5

Council Constituency Coordinator  
Laura Nooyen  
902.490.6982  
nooyela@halifax.ca



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### WINTER OPERATIONS

Winter found us early this year, and there are still several weeks of potential snow to come. With each weather event, our crews and contractors are responsible for approximately 3,800 lane kilometres of streets, about 1,000 kilometres of sidewalks and 2,295 bus stops across the region. Salt, brine and gravel are applied in advance of a storm, then municipal streets and sidewalks are cleared based on priority levels. You can find the priority level of your street by entering your address at [halifax.ca/snow/StreetPriorityFinder.php](http://halifax.ca/snow/StreetPriorityFinder.php) or by calling the 311 call centre.

Please assist our clearing crews by removing or marking anything that obstructs access and visibility. If you do incur property damage this winter, please contact 311 as soon as possible so it can be addressed when the weather improves.

Vehicles left in the street greatly hamper snow clearing. The Winter Parking Ban will be in place this season during declared weather events until March 31st 2017.

If you're a transit user, make sure to call 311 or check out @hfxtransit on twitter during inclement weather. 'Snow Plans' and detours may be in effect to maintain service levels and minimize interruptions to service by re-routing buses around areas consistently known as 'trouble sections' on a route during a winter weather event.

Visit our website at [halifax.ca/snow](http://halifax.ca/snow) for more information.



### ICE THICKNESS TESTING

Dartmouth is the City of Lakes, and we are fortunate to have many outdoor recreation opportunities on our lakes throughout the winter months.

Stay safe when skating or snowmobiling this winter by checking our ice thickness reports at [apps.halifax.ca/icethickness](http://apps.halifax.ca/icethickness) or by calling 902.490.3577. Ice should be at least 15 cm thick for walking or skating alone, 20 cm thick for skating parties or games and 25 cm thick for snow mobiles.

The Halifax Regional Municipality tests over 80 lakes across the municipality weekly, but ice conditions may vary over the entire surface of the lakes and are subject to change with weather conditions. If lake conditions aren't safe, you can still lace up your skates at the Findlay Centre Rink, a community led project that created an outdoor rink in the parking lot of the Findlay Community Centre.

### CENTRE PLAN

Our planning staff have been working hard to collect your feedback on the Centre Plan through various open houses, events and online. The Centre Plan will take outdated Municipal Planning Strategies and Land Use By-laws for the Regional Centre and update them into one combined policy and by-law set. This plan will impact the future development of Dartmouth inside the Circumferential Highway and the Halifax peninsula.

I am particularly excited about the Centre Plan's clear direction on where development should go and what form it should take. It's an exciting opportunity for District 5 and particularly Wyse Road which has been identified as a future growth centre.

The full draft plan is now available, along with information about our public consultations, background, timelines and lots more on our website. Stay tuned to [centreplan.ca](http://centreplan.ca) for more opportunities to get involved.

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### MUNICIPAL BUDGET

Regional Council is debating how to spend your tax dollars for the 2017-2018 fiscal year. At a series of Committee of the Whole meetings, Council will review presentations from each department and will provide direction for each budget.

You can find out more about how your tax dollars are spent and give your feedback on what our priorities should be moving forward by going to [shapeyourcityhalifax.ca/hfxtax2017](http://shapeyourcityhalifax.ca/hfxtax2017). This website has videos, breakdowns of different departmental budgets and allows you to use a budget allocator that will be included in a staff report during budget deliberations. You can also provide feedback for our budget deliberations by sending your comments to the Clerk's Office (PO Box 1749 Halifax, NS B3J 3A5 or [Clerks@halifax.ca](mailto:Clerks@halifax.ca)) or by attending the meetings and participating during the public comments section.

We have already discussed the Transit, Planning & Development, Operations Support, Parks & Recreation, Library, Administrative Services and Auditor General budgets. The remaining departmental budgets will be presented at Committee of the Whole meetings at City Hall:

#### Transportation and Public Works, Halifax Regional Police and Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency Services

February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017 9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

#### Fiscal & Consolidated Accounts

February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017 9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

#### Full Review of Final Budget

March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2017 9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

### SPORTSPLEX RENOVATIONS

Extensive renovations to the Dartmouth Sportsplex will begin this Spring and they hope to finish in the fall of 2018.

This \$23-million project includes a new double gymnasium, new front entrance, lobby and community spaces, refurbished racquetball courts, new fitness/cardio rooms, and extensive improvements to the swimming pool and slides. The updated facility will be more accessible, offer more free play opportunities and low-cost or no-cost recreation options. In order to complete renovations safely and efficiently, the Sportsplex will be closed for about 16 months. Only the arena will remain open during this time as it will not be affected by renovations. This is a case of short-term pain for long-term gain.

Local recreation centres like the Findlay Centre and Dartmouth North Community Centre will be offering extra fitness and recreation programs to accommodate for the service interruption. The Dartmouth Sportsplex will continue to offer all its recreation services and programming until construction begins. Visit [sportsplexevolution.ca](http://sportsplexevolution.ca) for more information.





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### DAYLIGHTING SAWMILL RIVER UPDATE

The Sawmill River flows from Sullivan's Pond to the Halifax Harbour. It is currently underground as part of a Halifax Water culvert system. As the Water Commission was preparing to execute storm sewer renewal in 2015, there was an unprecedented opportunity to daylight the river.

Daylighting Sawmill River will allow fish to migrate through the area, provide recreation opportunities, protect from flooding, contribute to beautification and is the lowest cost option for Halifax Water.

Construction of the first phase of the project, from Sullivan's Pond to approximately Irishtown Road, is expected to get underway in the spring of 2017 and will be substantially complete in the fall of 2017.

Stay tuned for more information on this exciting project and for details on a public meeting where you can learn more and provide your feedback.

### TRANSIT UPGRADES

There are some big changes coming to our transit service with the Moving Forward Together Plan. We have already started implementing some exciting technology upgrades that will make the service more accessible and reliable.

We have recently launched automated stop announcements. Automated stop announcements will allow riders to know exactly where they are in their commute and when they are approaching their desired stop. Audio and visual stop announcements are delivered through interior and exterior speakers, as well as on-board display screens. This service will greatly assist hearing and visually impaired transit users as well as visitors to our region.



Due to Canada Post distribution areas, some residences which are not in District 5 may receive this newsletter. I apologize for any confusion this may cause and hope you still find the information useful.

New GPS satellite technology is allowing us to provide more accurate arrival times with the new Departures Line. Transit users simply have to dial 902.480.8000 and enter the stop number listed at the bottom of each bus stop sign to find accurate departure times for each route. You can find out more about the Moving Forward Together Plan by visiting [maketransitbetter.ca](http://maketransitbetter.ca).

### PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING 2017-18

Councillors have access to \$94,000 in District Capital funding annually that can be used to support important community projects throughout the district.

District Capital Funding must be used for capital projects that will benefit the wider community, must be payable to a non-profit organization or to support an unbudgeted HRM initiative, and must be for projects under the municipal mandate.

In an effort to involve residents in how your tax dollars are spent, I am hoping to instate participatory budgeting in our district for a portion of this District Capital fund. Participatory budgeting allows citizens to identify, discuss, and prioritize public spending projects, and gives them the opportunity to provide feedback on how money is spent by voting on a list of pre-approved projects.

More information on this process for non-profit organizations and interested residents will be available in the next fiscal year. If you have any questions in advance, please contact my coordinator Laura Nooyen at 902.490.6982.

### 311

More than a telephone number, 311 is your direct connection to important municipal services and information. Our 311 Citizen Contact Centres include a call centre, five customer service centres, and a new resource for submitting online service requests. Whether you prefer to phone-in, walk-in (40 Alderney Drive, 2nd floor) or connect with us on-line, we can help!