

Councillor Steve Craig
District 15
Lower Sackville



Dear Residents,

Spring weather is around the corner, despite Old Man Winter's last futile attempt to keep his grip on us. So as it always does, we can be sure that the milder weather will bring us out to enjoy the outdoors. With more people out on foot, it is fitting that I address what has been in the forefront of local media attention lately which is pedestrian safety. Although, the numbers of incidents this year alone are beyond tragic, be assured that the Police and HRM staff are continually working together and looking at ways to enhance and address all aspects of pedestrian safety.

Sincerely,
Steve

Pedestrian Safety Action Plan

As you may already be aware, one of my main focuses since being elected is that of pedestrian safety. After an increase in pedestrian/vehicular collisions 2012, I sought to bring together a comprehensive plan on how HRM can address this issue from different aspects i.e.: engineering, education, enforcement, and public engagement.

On January 29th 2013, I made the motion to HRM staff to develop and present for consideration by Halifax Regional Council, a long-term comprehensive pedestrian safety action plan to help ensure, and to be seen as ensuring, overall pedestrian safety for HRM residents based on:

- The analysis of factors which may be contributing to pedestrian accidents;
- Provides options considering both process and organization structure that focuses on engineering, education, enforcement, public engagement, such as a Crosswalk Safety Advisory Committee, overall evaluation, policy and legislation, interagency/departmental coordination and cooperation elements;
- Provides a mechanism for continuous reporting and evaluation of the foregoing; and
- Identifies ongoing budget impacts to the proposed action plan.

On Tuesday, March 18th, the action plan was presented to Council for approval. You can view document here: [Pedestrian Safety Action Plan and Report](#)

One of the highlights of having a Pedestrian Safety Action Plan is that it will be the primary document for reporting, evaluating and directing HRM's pedestrian safety programs. It will be updated annually and is intended to provide the mechanism for on-going monitoring and assessment of the issues that arise where pedestrians and vehicles interact.

The document will provide a report on progress achieved in the previous year and identify the plan for moving forward in the upcoming year. This, in my opinion is leaps and bounds further ahead than where we were one year ago in our efforts to enhance pedestrian safety as a collective initiative between HRM business units and the police.

Another stride made towards this initiative was on February 25th when Regional Council approved how HRM will mark some of its crosswalks. The plan is to re-paint them with bold stripes in an effort to improve safety and visibility in what is referred to as "zebra crosswalk markings" at all uncontrolled, (crosswalks without lights) marked crosswalks and budget accordingly for the upcoming crosswalk painting season.

Aside from the above mentioned action plan and report, Halifax Regional Police and the RCMP have been busy over the past few months with campaigns of their own to increase pedestrian safety awareness. In December, HRP and RCMP members along with their furry mascots *Blue* and *Safety Bear* brought their public awareness campaign to the streets and intersections of Halifax. Also, in March, HRP were at various intersections handing out reflective armbands to pedestrians. The hope was to have the pedestrians wear them to increase their visibility and decrease the rate of vehicle-pedestrian collisions. Approximately 5000 armbands were handed out.

I cannot stress enough the responsibility we all have to be aware of all safety factors when we are travelling, whether it is as a pedestrian or a driver. The information is out there, and I believe we all should take the opportunity to remind ourselves of what role we play in this. Please visit the [Distractions Kill](#) website for some eye opening facts/tips on keeping yourself and others safe on the road.

On Tuesday, April 1st Regional Council approved the 2014-2015 budget. In it there are explicit funds approved for the zebra stripes (\$155,000) and safety communications (\$170,000). Embedded in the budget are other initiatives, like new technology and process improvements that will help us report, analyze and take action to help reduce pedestrian – vehicular accidents.

This past weekend police, with the help of previous analysis, targeted intersections they believed to be at higher probability for collisions. The result is they ticketed seventeen drivers for inattentiveness through using mobile devices. Despite the bad weather, these numbers were concerning to police. Even with poor road conditions and weather drivers were still taking chances using cell phones.

Please, whether you are a pedestrian or a driver, pay attention to your surroundings and each other when entering a crosswalk or intersection. It could save your or another person's life or quality of life.

Open House

Please join me as I host an open house with the residents of Lower Sackville. I encourage anyone with municipal issues/questions to attend and speak with me directly. Any feedback or suggestions will be welcome. I hope to see you there.

Date: Wednesday, May 28th, 2014

Time: 6:30 -8:30 p.m.

Where: Fenerty Room – Sackville Public Library
636 Sackville Drive