

Councillor Steve Craig
District 15
Lower Sackville



Dear Residents,

With budget deliberation presentations in full swing, Regional Council meet with HRM staff every Wednesday in Committee of the Whole meetings. These meetings are open to the public and members of the public can also comment on the high level budgets being presented. The sessions are also available to watch on Eastlink and online at www.halifax.ca/council. See in part how your municipality works to present to council their respective business units budget for discussion and approval. To find more info check out <http://shapeyourcityhalifax.ca/>

Sincerely,
Steve

Student Pedestrian Safety

For those of you who will be affected by the closure of Gertrude Parker Elementary and Sackville Centennial in September 2014, and the establishment of a Francophone school at the Gertrude Parker site, changes to the transportation needs of students to their new schools is a concern. For the walking students, there is a

need for clear communication from both the school boards and HRM to address the different aspects of student pedestrian safety and concerns.

In March of 2013, the Halifax Regional School Board approved recommendations that the schools in the Millwood High School and Sackville High School family of schools be reconfigured as follows: the high schools accommodate grades 9-12, the junior high schools become middle schools to accommodate grades 6-8, Cavalier Drive and the elementary schools accommodate grades P-5, Sackville Centennial and Gertrude Parker elementary schools close effective September 2014.

At the end of 2013, Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP), which is the Francophone school board, announced that it will open the sixth school in the metro area in the fall of 2014 by obtaining the Gertrude Parker Elementary School in Lower Sackville. Students will come from the area north of highway 101, and west of highway 102. This will mean an increase of vehicular traffic on Stokil Drive. Since the initial HRSB announcement and subsequent CSAP decision, I have been working with HRM staff to engage school boards

and their staff to help identify, analyze and address HRM responses with such issues as crosswalks, crosswalk crossing guards, sidewalks, signage and other factors related to pedestrian and vehicular travel.

In early February, I attended a meeting with staff from HRM and HRSB to discuss the concerns that these changes will bring, specifically the vehicular and pedestrian traffic changes. The safety of our students is paramount, and issues such as increased crossing guards and crosswalks in the area will be looked at. The Province of Nova Scotia is now consulting with the public and others on how to address future school boards decisions. My hope is that a system will be put in place to help ensure any HRM related issues can be reviewed and addressed in the beginning stages of change, so as to provide both levels of government time to work together to lessen the impacts on residents.

I am confident that HRM and HRSB staff who are involved in these changes are working together and the lines of communication are open. Our goal is that transition for the students and their parents are as smooth as possible.