

Fall Fun for the Family – GOCIO Trail Challenge

You may not realize that the majority of trails in the HRM were developed and are being maintained by community volunteers! Because of their hard work, we have numerous trails for hiking, biking and walking all over the municipality. What better family activity could you find this time of year than spending time along a trail admiring the beautiful fall colours!

Here is a little more of an incentive for you and your family to come out and explore HRM trails – the GOCIO Trail Challenge is running from October 1st to 31st. During the month of October, I encourage you, your family, friends, community group or school, to walk, hike, and bike trails in HRM and participate in the Get Out... Check it Out October Trail Challenge.

You will find easy to use trail maps for your neighbourhood, and other areas of HRM, by visiting www.halifax.ca/trails. Just chose a trail, or two, take a hike, bike ride or walk then visit the above website to enter your name in a random draw for one of the following prizes: individual or family prize of \$100 for recreation programming at your local HRM Community Center; community groups and schools may win \$250 towards physical activity initiatives; backpacks; Earth Adventures booklets; Halifax Region trail books; and pedometers.

For more information on the Halifax Regional Trails Association, visit:
www.halifax.ca/trails

The Urban Forest Master Plan Takes Root: Eastern Passage's Fall Tree Planting Program

On Tuesday, Sept. 25, 2012, Halifax Regional Council approved HRM's urban forest master plan (UFMP). HRM's urban forest consists of all trees within the urban core, including street trees, park trees, and trees on private and public land. The goal of the plan is to ensure a sustainable future for our urban forest and to create awareness about environmental stewardship. The plan was developed in cooperation with Dalhousie University's School for Resource and Environmental Studies (SRES) after many years of research, public engagement, workshops and reports.

This year, five neighbourhood areas have been selected to take part in a pilot program to significantly increase the number of street trees planted. The areas are Colby Village, Connaught/Quinpool, Eastern Passage, Fairview and North End Halifax. The pilot program will include improved tree planting and maintenance programs, as well as opportunities for volunteers to get involved.

This spring one hundred and forty-one new street trees were planted in the Eastern Passage urban forest neighbourhood. Within a few weeks the fall planting season will begin. Seventy-six new street trees will be planted along Oceanview School Road, Redoubt Way and Ridding Road. In years to come these trees will beautify the neighbourhood and grow tall to form a protective canopy cover. Fall planting starts in mid-October and will continue until the end of November.

The UFMP website will be updated on a regular basis to help you stay informed about upcoming planting schedules and volunteer opportunities in your neighbourhood. Visit the website at: www.halifax.ca/RealPropertyPlanning/UFMP

Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM)

I am pleased to serve as one of four provincial representatives on the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Board on which our Municipality has a permanent seat. More than 100 municipal leaders from across Canada sit on FCM's Board of Directors and Standing Committees, representing more than 2,000 member communities across the country.

During the week of September 4th to 7th, I attended the FCM conference in St. John's, NL where we discussed, among other topics, the issue of new infrastructure programs meeting the needs of all communities. Strengthening Canada's local economic foundations must be the top priority for federal, provincial and territorial governments as they prepare to design a new generation of cost-shared funding programs this fall.

HRM needs a fair and predictable share of new federal funding in order to address our growing infrastructure challenges. The federal budget promised longer-term investments in the local roads, transit, water and wastewater systems that support our national economy, and now it's time to turn that promise into reality.

In order to meet the Budget 2013 commitment to ensure that new programs will be up and running before next year's construction season, FCM board members agreed that governments must act quickly to set priorities and sign funding agreements for the new 10-year, \$14 billion Building Canada Fund.

We, the FCM board members, also emphasized the importance of taking action to strengthen Canada's housing system. At a time when new home construction has tailed off, and fewer Canadians are able to enter the housing market, Ottawa can create jobs and support growth by working with cities and communities to jump-start rental housing

construction across the country. The federal government must also follow through on its pledge to work with FCM on the design of new affordable housing programs.

While in St. John's, we also endorsed national recommendations for improving rail safety in the wake of the Lac Mégantic disaster, and called for closer collaboration with local governments. I concur with FCM president Claude Dauphin's statement that governments working together should be the rule, not the exception. It's time to expand cooperation among all orders of government so that we can strengthen our economy, keep our communities safe, and prepare our country for the future.

It continues to be an honour to represent you and work on your behalf. Please do not hesitate to contact me, if I can help with municipal issues in any way.

E-Newsletter

A District 3 electronic newsletter is in the works, so if you would like to receive it, please send an email to Chris.Newson@halifax.ca with Newsletter in the subject line. Your email address will not be shared with anyone for any purpose.

Contact Me

As always, I am available to address your concerns. My phone numbers are 490-7032 or 476-1855, and my email is bill.karsten@halifax.ca. I will always respond as quickly as possible, but if you need to contact someone more immediately, please contact my Council Constituency Coordinator Chris Newson at 490-7184 or by email at: chris.newson@halifax.ca. Outside of regular business hours, please contact the HRM Call Centre at 3-1-1.