



# Bedford Civics

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## Local Councilor Has High Hope for His Community

By Katie Reid

The growth occurring in Bedford is undeniable. You need only look out your window when driving down the Bicentennial Highway to see the construction of the new 102 interchange, which includes two roundabouts and will service the new site development for the Bedford West subdivision. It's no wonder then, that much of the priorities on Bedford councilor Tim Outhit's mind deal with supporting the growth of his community. With facilities, infrastructure, traffic and public transportation at the top of his list, Mr. Outhit recognizes the demand and the need to underpin the projected growth of Bedford – by 2026 about 17,000 people are expected to be living in the Bedford West community. This will essentially double the population of Bedford.

Councilor Outhit has many new ideas he's pushing for Bedford, in addition to current developments he's supporting. He'd like to see the Bedford Waterfront Development Plan come to life, bringing a mix of residential and commercial development to the basin and developing more open space, boardwalks and small businesses along the waterfront. He's also in favour of the sale of the Bedford Teachery for use as a hospice with heritage status and the sale of the old Bedford Fire Hall for restoration and communal meeting and event space.

Councilor Outhit is also vying for express bus service to Bedford and the park & ride facility slated for the new 4-Pad arena, which was recently denied funding by the federal Conservatives – monies HRM council was counting on for the much-needed facility to service the community. Mr. Outhit now hopes the provincial NDP government will find a way to implement the support stated by the previous government and help fund the arenas. In light of the massive deficit announced by the NDP, this may prove difficult to say the least.

One of the more novel concepts Mr. Outhit wants HRM to look at is the proposed hovercraft ferry that will transport workers from Bedford to Halifax. Since the progress on the fast ferry has stalled, this privately-run, commuter service may be a more efficient option for residents. The hovercraft ferry, which is more widely known in Europe and has been used successfully in Eng-

land for more than four decades, needs less capital for terminals and it would be ready sooner. Not to mention it would lessen the travel time for commuters, clocking a five-to-six minute ride into Halifax versus the minimum of fifteen minutes the fast ferry proposes.

Other projects where councilor Outhit would like to see progress made are the inclusion of performing arts, basketball and soccer facilities in the new high school, designated space for the newly in-filled area of the waterfront to house a public library or community facility, repair and expansion of the outdoor pool in Lions Park and improvements on the tennis court on Spring Street.

All of these initiatives would mean great things for the community and impact the lives of residents of all ages for the better, but one hot topic in HRM council that would undoubtedly impact seniors, in particular, is tax reform. It's no secret that seniors are often condo and apartment owners. Although providing services to these complexes, including sewer, water, bus service, police and fire services, are much less expensive to provide than, say, a new subdivision of single family dwellings in suburban or rural areas, the current property system tax system in HRM does not reflect this differentiation. This is something councilor Outhit is concerned about. There is nothing being realized and passed down to condo owners. There is no inclusion of one's ability to pay, which is especially significant to seniors who are often on low or fixed incomes. And there is no type of tax incentive to encourage this greener, more cost-effective style of living. Residents can look to councilor Outhit and councilor Sue Uteck, as well, to address these issues in council.

New developments, novel ideas and infrastructure challenges aside, councilor Outhit is generally happy with the progress being made in his community and is especially happy to be representing the residents of Bedford and making an impact wherever possible. And he's quick to acknowledge how extremely generous Bedford residents are at saying thanks, even for the little things that he tries to do each day to help improve the neighbourhoods of his community.