

Hello once again. I hope you are enjoying July.

**Did you** manage to catch a glimpse of The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh while they were in town recently? I do hope so.

I was privileged to be in their presence several times during their three-day visit, including the occasion of a special tree-planting.

It took place on their last day, in the grounds of Government House. Using a gold-coloured shovel, The Queen planted a sturdy English oak sapling as a legacy gift of her visit. Coincidentally, her father, King George VI, planted one during his visit here, in 1939.

“I’ve done my part,” Her Majesty told us with a smile. “I don’t have a green thumb so I hope others will take care of it.”

At the airport later that morning, I had the opportunity to say farewell to the Royal Couple on behalf of Regional Council and the residents of HRM. The Queen informed me that she had enjoyed her visit to our city very much.

“You are welcome any time, Your Majesty,” I replied, “and we look forward to your next visit.”

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**You may remember** that, earlier this year, Regional Council authorized an analysis of three different transit scenarios, each with the potential to provide a fast commuter link between the Bedford area and downtown.

Bedford has been flagged as the one of the next transit priorities, due to the growth anticipated there by 2015. We have already introduced new transit corridors to the core plus upgraded existing ones from growth areas like Lower Sackville, Herring Cove, Cole Harbour and Tantallon. We are also looking at transit expansions to places like Middle Musquodoboit and the airport.

The three scenarios involved in the Bedford evaluation are: An expansion of the ferry system; an express bus service routed along the Bicentennial Highway from a park-and-ride facility in Bedford; and a commuter rail connection.

Essentially, the question to be answered by the analysis is this: which *if any* of these three, should be given priority?

The comparative analysis of all the financial and operational implications involved is being done by HRM staff plus an outside consulting firm. I'm pleased to report that the effort is about three-quarters complete and that a draft report should be ready for review by the end of summer.

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**Have you visited** our world-famous Halifax Public Gardens recently?

No? Well, here's a suggestion for a lazy Sunday afternoon this summer – come and listen to a concert in the park.

Each Sunday from 2-4 p.m. until September 12, there are free public concerts scheduled, weather permitting. (This is Nova Scotia, after all...)

The concerts feature a variety of bands throughout the summer and the event on August 1 will be extra special because it coincides with my annual Natal Day Tea Party.

So come along one Sunday afternoon, buy a cool one (an ice cream) and listen to the band!

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**And finally**, some personal news: I'm getting out of town - sort of!

With Regional Council on its break, I'm hitting the road, hoping to attend as many of the summer events happening in HRM's 196 communities as I can. (This is one large municipality!)

As I travel throughout the region, I'm looking forward to meeting as many of you as possible and learning what's on your mind. I think it's really important that every voice be heard in our HRF (Halifax Regional Family).

So watch for me showing up at your local event this summer. And if I make it, there's something you need to know: I'm really partial to a cup of green tea and cookies! And any kind of seafood! (How's *that* for a subtle hint!)

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