

Hello again.

**I'd like to share** with you the optimism I feel for the future of downtown Halifax. My confidence stems from the number of major development opportunities on the drawing board as well as the potential for more to come.

From my window here at City Hall, I can see the site of what Regional Council and I anticipate will eventually be a key driver of the urban core's rejuvenation – the \$300-million Nova Centre.

The developer calls Nova Centre, “a tangible expression of confidence in the future of Halifax as the pre-eminent business centre in the Atlantic Region.”

The centre is earmarked for the sites of former Herald and Midtown buildings. Demolition crews are hard at work, clearing the area in anticipation of the new centre proceeding, once all necessary financing and permits are in place.

The developer's preliminary design includes commercial, retail and residential components, plus office and hotel towers. Anchoring the 1.25-million sq. ft. proposal is a major trade/convention centre. This would be a huge incentive in attracting large conferences and events from HRM, across Canada and abroad.

While the proposed Nova Centre is a key component in the downtown's future prosperity, it's by no means the only one. There are a number of other major proposals in the offing which add to my optimism. For example, the owner of the 18-storey TD building is planning to double the size of the complex to meet a growing demand for Class A office space.

Large new towers are also proposed for the site of the Discovery Centre and the Roy Building while new futures are being discussed for locations like the former home of Sam the Record Man and the Carsand-Mosher location.

Also last week, Regional Council sent for public hearing a proposed five-storey addition at the City Centre Atlantic site, a block from busy Spring Garden Road.

Council's new initiatives are incentives for making the urban core a good place to live and work, initiatives like HRMbyDesign, our landmark urban design plan, and the Barrington Street Heritage Conservation District Revitalization Plan, which encourages conservation, restoration and commercial revitalization of historic buildings, streetscapes and public spaces.

When these various projects and proposals become realities, they will add to the liveliness and prosperity of the downtown, causing spinoff benefits for the entire municipality.

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**It's not just** the big corporations and developers that inspire me with confidence about HRM's future infrastructure growth; it's also dedicated community organizations like the Cobequid Cultural Society.

Members of this non-profit group want to create a special centre for performing arts and culture, digital arts and cultural training for the area of HRM that includes Sackville, Beaverbank, Bedford, Timberlea, Hammonds Plains, Hubley, Mount Uniacke, Fall River, Waverley, Dutch Settlement and Windsor Junction.

The society proposes this centre be built in conjunction with the new high school which will replace C.P. Allen, sometime in the next couple of years. For the society, this would represent significant savings in terms of land costs, construction and maintenance expenses. In return, the new school would have access to a cultural arts facility.

Similar tandem developments already exist in New Glasgow, Mabou and at Halifax West High School. One is also in the construction process at Citadel High School..

I would encourage you to go to <http://www.cccas.ca/cccas-arts-centre.html> to learn more about the society's efforts to enrich our community and, while you are there, take part in a special online survey.

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**Just a reminder** that nominations for the 12<sup>th</sup> annual Mayor's Awards for Literary Achievement and Excellence in Book Illustration close March 19. You'll find details at [www.halifax.ca/council/mayor/mayors\\_awards.html](http://www.halifax.ca/council/mayor/mayors_awards.html).

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**And finally**, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you a very happy spring.

According to the calendar, the new season arrives this Saturday, March 20, at precisely 2.32 p.m. I can't wait to get my hands dirty in the garden!

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