

Hello again. Last week, I shared some comments on the recent violence in our community. Let me add a few more:

- I met recently, in company with Police Chief Frank Beazley and RCMP Superintendent Darrell Beaton, with Provincial Justice Minister Ross Landry and federal and provincial law-enforcement officials, to discuss ways to make our streets safer. Mr. Landry has indicated that he's prepared to see other community groups involved in this effort and we will all be meeting again soon to continue the dialogue. Suffice to say any additional crime-fighting initiatives by senior government are welcome.
- What we need to keep in focus is that the vast majority of residents are law-abiding citizens, especially our young people. In fact, Halifax Regional Police and the RCMP make it a priority to engage with schools, parents and teachers to promote healthy lifestyles for families. Officers are also working continually with parents to help them communicate better with their teens and keep them safe.
- Law-enforcement agencies in HRM continue to employ multi-approaches to fighting crime, including: focusing resources on areas where crimes have been occurring; Quick Response and Street Crime Units which target violent

individuals; and monitoring chronic offenders and those released on court-imposed conditions.

- Along with the mayors of Canada's other major cities, I continue to pressure Ottawa to implement a national strategy on the issues of guns, gangs and violence. We are demanding decisive action to limit access to handguns - including stricter border controls - and harsher penalties for anyone who uses a gun to commit a violent crime.
- Police in Halifax have removed approximately 100 guns from the street since January. Coming in the wake of the last gun amnesty (Pixels for Pistols) when more than 1,000 guns were turned in, this is very good news.
- And speaking of guns, the majority of weapons used for crimes in HRM have been traced back to legal owners in Nova Scotia. Police records show that they've been stolen during break-ins at homes.
- Despite their best efforts, police can only do so much to keep us all safe. Sometimes, when a serious crime has occurred, they receive little or no cooperation from victims or witnesses. Individuals *must* step forward if they have helpful information, especially when violence is involved. One way is by phoning Crimestoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477); calls are anonymous, unmonitored and untraceable.
- To sum things up on the positive side, a recent survey by a local newspaper found that most HRM residents feel safe when they're in the downtown area. This echoes the finding of a previous survey and also of the latest research by

Statistics Canada, which shows rates of violence are declining in metro as a whole.

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And finally, to end on a green note, I'm still hoping to get my vegetable/herb garden planted at City Hall – if the rain and drizzle ever let up!

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