

Dartmouth-Cole Harbour Edition

Hello, and thank you so much for inviting me in.

This is the first of what I hope will become a regular get-together when we can chat about life here in Halifax Regional Municipality.

It's a chance for me, as mayor, to share some ideas and give you an overview of what's happening in our municipality. This is also my personal invitation for you to chat back to me. (More about that later.)

Let's start with two stories illustrating how residents around HRM are cooperating with Halifax Regional Police and the RCMP to make our community a safer place.

A series of well-publicized police road checks called Operation Impact wrapped-up over the Thanksgiving Weekend and officers were pleased by what they *didn't* find!

Not only were there not as many crashes on our streets that weekend, but fewer drivers were drinking and driving or ignoring the seat-belt law.

Perhaps the crucial message about road safety is being heard after all.

My second story of citizen cooperation involves a shooting that happened in a metro neighbourhood during that same weekend.

A suspect was charged less than 12 hours after the crime, thanks to a combination of speedy police work and citizen involvement.

I find it really heartening that residents are now stepping forward to help police keep their neighbourhoods safe.

This trust says much about the efforts of the men and women known as community response officers. There are eight of them based in various metro neighbourhoods and they spend their shifts there, earning the trust of residents.

These officers don't just patrol, they actually attend neighbourhood meetings; help organize community gardens; and even sit on local boards. This police investment in caring is paying dividends because crime rates in some areas are falling.

I'll tell you more about these officers in future columns.

If you take the bus, you'll be happy to learn that expansion plans to eliminate congestion at the Metro Transit terminal at the Dartmouth Sportsplex are moving ahead.

The terminal serves 18 routes and some 17,000 passengers daily, making it one of the busiest transfer points in HRM, hence the need for a major expansion.

Another transit terminal slated for expansion is the one in Highfield Park. Both projects should be completed by late spring or early summer next year.

And still on the topic of commuting, I thought you'd like to know that Metro Transit has finished installing surveillance cameras on all its buses and has begun putting them into the ferry terminals.

These devices should provide everyone, including transit staff, with greater security.

Well, there you have it. Thank you so much for the visit and I look forward to seeing you again, soon.

[] Now it's your turn. What's on your mind? As mayor, I'd really like to hear from you. You can reach me here at City Hall at kellyp@halifax.ca or by phoning me at 490-4010.