

Seniors Survey (2008.09.30)

Alex Handyside & Anne Corbin for Preventing Falls Together Coalition HRM,

Thank you for your email of September 19 and survey questions.

Name of Candidate: Cameron Ells
Candidate for District: 12 - Downtown Halifax

1. Seniors represent a significant and growing segment of the municipal population. In your opinion, what are the three most important issues of concern to seniors in your district?

In my opinion, the three most important issues of concern related to Halifax Regional Municipality services and activities are:

- safe, social, convenient, reliable and affordable housing options
- safe, reliable and affordable transportation
- cultural, social, mental, and physical recreation facilities and options

Downtown Halifax includes several housing options. Some of these are being used as polling locations on election day. It is reasonable to anticipate that there will be more of these in the future. HRM activities can encourage more housing options.

Downtown Halifax has a mix of public and private transportation options available. A greater level of service with respect to the public transit bus system is also reasonably anticipated - including connections to the Halifax (Stanfield) International Airport.

Downtown Halifax includes many cultural, social, mental and physical recreation facilities and options. Several, including provincial health and university facilities are not directly related to HRM activities and services. The soon to be built HRM library and the Centennial Pool renovations may be the most immediate area improvements in options.

2. Access to safe, reliable and affordable transportation was a key concern of seniors in the World Health Organization Age Friendly Communities Project. How does your district rate in providing such access? What is being done in your district to improve access to transportation among seniors?

Cameron Ells for Councillor - Downtown Halifax

Other HRM Districts perceive Downtown Halifax as being relatively well served by transportation options. There is room for improvement. The public transit system is developing better connections between Downtown Halifax and other Districts (ie. Metro Link). Over time, with more people living in the District, there will be a corresponding increase in bus routes and times, and rates of usage. Seniors Rates for tickets and passes should contribute to their affordable use. They may be much more affordable compared to the use, ownership and maintenance of a car, but the individual ticket price may well be perceived as being a bit much. One can imagine a rise in shuttle bus options over time within the District. The local taxi options have the potential to be more affordable through deregulation, but there may be a trade off regarding the level of comfort and safety associated with the cars being used.

3. Maintaining physical fitness (bone and muscle strength and balance) has been identified as an important factor in preventing fall-related injuries, hospitalizations, and deaths among seniors. What fitness/recreational facilities and programs exist for seniors in your district? Do you have suggestions or plans to increase such opportunities?

Within District 12, HRM Recreation programs for this winter include opportunities for Seniors to participate in badminton, women's basketball, fitness, dance, pottery, watercolours, and yoga. The waterfront, Public Gardens, and other parklands provide walking opportunities to all people. There are also locally available opportunities not directly associated with HRM that include Tai Chi, Shambala meditation, Centennial Pool, university facilities, private sector fitness clubs, and NGO social groups. There are also local opportunities with respect to art, music, education, walking, and volunteering.

There are already many opportunities, and these will increase in the future as seniors make up a larger proportion of a growing Downtown Halifax population. Perhaps the most useful roles as a Councillor with HRM would involve support for:

- maintaining recreational infrastructure (ie. Citadel Community Center and staff)
- safe, reliable, affordable transportation options (ie. Metro Transit and shuttle bus)
- easy to find internet based information on fitness and recreation opportunities
- quality of life atmosphere that encourages healthy universities, schools, and the public and private sector fitness and recreational facilities

4. Do you support the idea of courtesy parking spaces for seniors at retail outlets and other facilities frequented by seniors? Why or why not? (*These are similar to the "mother and child" spaces and are in addition to the handicapped spaces. A number of these spaces have been installed at MicMac Mall and Halifax Shopping Centre.*)

Cameron Ells for Councillor - Downtown Halifax

A valid business case can be made for seniors parking spaces at private sector retail outlets - including those where HRM public offices are present. A valid business case can be made for senior rates at a theatre, or a seniors section on a menu. The private sector property owners and business managers make such decisions. Local government does not have a role in such decision making.

However, on HRM owned property and streets, I do not currently see a reason why a senior who is not handicapped, should be given a parking preference over someone who is not a senior. Both are tax payers, and both pay the same rate for water and other similar goods and services. A business case can be made for a seniors rate on a public transit system or a recreation program which is seeking to concurrently accomplish a variety of goals.

5. Please share with us your ideas for making our municipality more age friendly, and any other general comments you wish to make.

A few suggestions for making our municipality more age friendly include:

- seeking more involvement by seniors as volunteers in HRM policy development, cultural activities (ie. Winter Canada Games), mentors, and welcoming visitors
- seek more justifications to expand the recreation program in senior specific ways
- increasing development in Downtown Halifax should also increase opportunities with respect to housing, safety, financial, transportation, and recreation options.

- Cameron Ells

HRM Regional Council Candidate for Downtown Halifax (District 12)

www.ExCELLS.ca

Halifax ExCELLS
with Cameron Ells

Cameron Ells for Councillor - Downtown Halifax

On Fri, 19 Sep 2008 10:17:17 -0300, Serving Seniors <weserve@serving seniors.info> wrote:

> Good Day:

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> Our group is very interested to hear what you have to say, and to find out

> where you stand, on safe communities and falls prevention strategies with

> regard to seniors & the disabled in our community.

> Please take time to complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it to

> us by fax or email before October 3. Your responses will be compiled and

> shared with other municipal candidates and elected officials, our Preventing

> Falls Together Coalition members, seniors groups, other advocates, community

> leaders and the media.

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> Thank you in advance for completing this at such a busy time.

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> Alex Handyside & Anne Corbin

> for

> Preventing Falls Together Coalition HRM

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> Phone 902-422-0914 * Fax 902-422-9322 * election2008

> <mailto:nfo@preventingfallstogether.ca> @preventingfallstogether.ca

Cameron Ells for Councillor - Downtown Halifax

Members of the HRM (Halifax Regional Municipality) Preventing Falls Together Coalition want to know your plans and opinions on how to make our community more age friendly and fall proof.

Please complete this questionnaire by October 3, 2008 and return it to us by
Fax 902-422-9322 or email to: election2008@preventingfallstogether.ca

Name of Candidate:

Candidate for District:

1. Seniors represent a significant and growing segment of the municipal population. In your opinion, what are the three most important issues of concern to seniors in your district?

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Please direct questions to:

Halifax Regional Municipality Preventing Falls Together Coalition, phone 902-422-0914