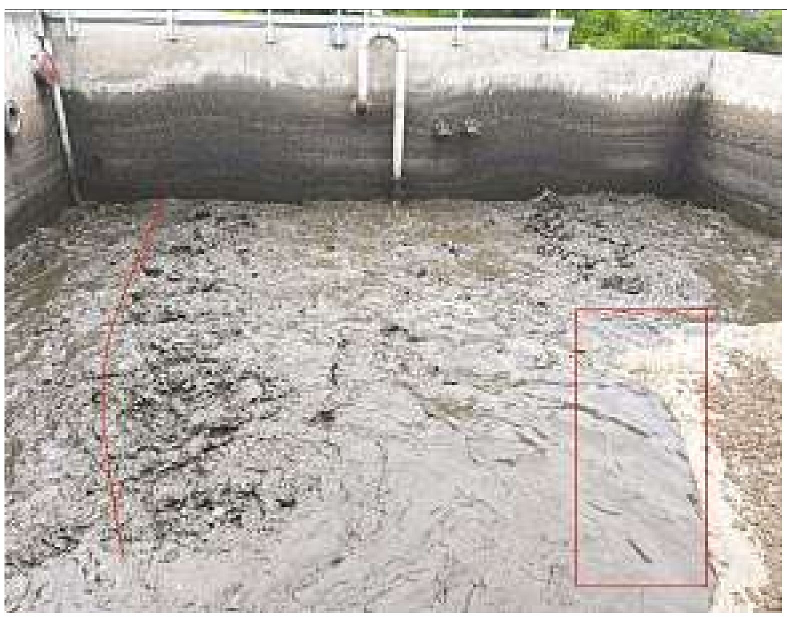


Todd Richard, the director of West Hants' public works department, showed this image to council Sept. 9 while describing the issue currently plaguing the Falmouth Wastewater Treatment Plant. *SUPPLIED*

# Sewer desludging a necessary expense

## West Hants looking to prevent system failure, stench at Falmouth facility

CAROLE MORRIS-UNDERHILL

To prevent risking a "catastrophic failure" and noxious sewer stench, West Hants council has given the green light to desludge the Falmouth Wastewater Treatment Plant.

During the municipality's committee of the whole meeting Sept. 9, public works director Todd Richard brought forward an emergency funding recommendation for $63,000 plus applicable taxes.

"It's a critical repair needed at the Falmouth Wastewater Treatment Plant," he said.

Richard's report outlined the technical process of treating wastewater and how staff feel there is an issue or breakage with the aeration equipment.

"So without the aeration, this sludge blanket will become anaerobic and start to generate a fair bit of odours and a fair bit of upset. So we need to get rid of this sludge," Richard told council.

"(It's) no easy feat because we don't have a sludge-drawing mechanism at any of our plants, other than geotubes and all of our geotubes are full."

The plan is to have Loomers Pumping Service Ltd. haul the 700,000 litres of wet sludge away for disposal.

The public works department sought quotes for the work, with Loomers being the lowest bidder.

> *You can imagine, we don't want to be working in that to try to fix this system. So, we need to clean that tank up before our operators can go down and do the work needed.*
>
> Coun. John Smith

### ABOUT THE PROCESS

Richard's report notes when wastewater is treated, "sludge is removed from the clarifier and sent to a sludge digester, where it is aerated to promote further breakdown of the solids."

The clear product, called supernatant, is then returned to the treatment process while sludge remains in the digester.

"Over time, when supernatant is no longer produced, the sludge is then pumped to on-site geotextile bags where the sludge naturally dewaters over time and is then ultimately disposed of."

Richard showed an image depicting where staff believe the issue is located. They won't know for sure until staff can gain access.

His report notes staff are unable to run the blowers at the required standard cubic feet per minute (SCFM).

"We are currently at 10 SCFM however 30 to 40 SCFM is required to agitate and aerate the sludge effectively."

### IN-HOUSE REPAIR

Coun. Scott McLean asked if the municipality's new vacuum truck could handle the job. Richard said it's too much to do.

"We have done some of that just to buy us some time. We've transported some of this to our other facility, but there's 700,000 litres of sludge, so that's a lot of trips in our little vacuum truck," he said.

Coun. John Smith asked what happens if the system requires more repairs than predicted.

"We have millwrights, we have very skilled staff that can do this work in house, so we don't see that as a big issue," Richard replied, noting it is imperative to remove the sludge to access the mechanical system.

"You can imagine, we don't want to be working in that to try to fix this system. So, we need to clean that tank up before our operators can go down and do the work needed."

Once the sludge is removed, it will grant access to the "floor mount hardware that holds the four-inch stainless steel header pipes that appear to be broken/rusted off."

The report notes that "once the digester is emptied, the necessary repairs to the supports that hold the header pipes can be repaired, and the broken stainless steel flexible and rigid couplings holding the header pipes together can be replaced. This will also provide an opportunity to service the 36 coarse bubble diffusers that are attached to the two header pipes. These diffusers haven't been serviced since the plant was commissioned."

The plant was built in 2010.

At the Sept. 23 council meeting, councillors approved the emergency pumping and transportation of about 700,000 litres of sludge from the Falmouth Wastewater Treatment Plant digesters to allow critical emergency repairs to the aeration system. The project is to be funded through the sewer reserves, which is estimated to have $376,999 remaining as of March 31, 2026. There was no indication when the work would be completed.

*Valley Journal-Advertiser*

# Woman dead after vehicle hits tree in Dartmouth

IAN FAIRCLOUGH

One woman is dead after a crash in Dartmouth on Thursday night.

Halifax Regional Police say that just after 11:15 p.m., they were called to reports of a vehicle striking a tree on School Street.

The woman was pronounced deceased on scene by EHS. Two men were taken to hospital with serious injuries.

The area was closed to vehicle and pedestrian traffic for several hours while HRP's collision reconstruction unit worked at the scene.

The investigation is ongoing.

People stand outside the Halifax Shopping Centre on March 2, 2022, while police search for robbery suspects in the mall. One of the suspects arrested in the robbery of a Halifax jewelry store and a Lower Sackville pawnshop has been granted day parole. *TIM KROCHAK*

# Robber who hid in mall granted day parole

## Convictions stem from 2022 incidents in Halifax, Lower Sackville

*IAN FAIRCLOUGH*

A man who robbed two business in the Halifax region more than three years ago has been granted day parole but denied full parole.

The Parole Board of Canada issued its decision earlier this month regarding the parole application from Daniel Christian Anthony Johnson, granting him six months of day parole at a halfway house when a spot opens up.

Johnson was sentenced to five years and six weeks in jail for robbery, forcible confinement, assault with a weapon and other charges after he and two accomplices committed two robberies with a firearm on March 1, 2022, in Halifax and Lower Sackville.

They went into a Quinpool Road jewelry store and tried to rob it but fled empty-handed after an employee called police.

They later robbed a pawnshop on Sackville Drive in Lower Sackville, making off with $30,000 in jewelry in an incident in which the shop owner struggled with an armed accomplice of Johnson and a shotgun discharged into the floor.

The pair were later spotted and pursued to the Halifax Shopping Centre, where they attempted to flee on foot but were arrested.

The parole board panel said that the offences didn't meet the Correctional Service of Canada criteria for serious harm, but it was concerned with the escalation of Johnson's crime cycle, the use of a firearm and the impact on a business.

"As such, it sees your index offence as aggravating to your risk to reoffend," the decision read.

The board said some of Johnson's conduct in prison was concerning, with four incidents on his file, including testing positive for THC and retrieving a drone that contained drugs. At those times, he denied using marijuana and said he picked up the drone under threat of violence by another inmate.

"While your institutional behaviour has recently improved, the board believes that your overall behaviour indicates an aggravated risk to reoffend and a continued need for structure and rules promoting a gradual rehabilitation as a law-abiding citizen," the decision said.

The panel noted that Johnson has "demonstrated meaningful progress through program completion, cultural engagement, and sustained sobriety. Your ability to identify personal risk factors, such as substance use and negative associations, reflects increased insight and commitment to your healing journey."

It also said that he has remained incident-free since completing an in-prison program and has shown a willingness to follow structured guidance, including understanding the rationale behind his parole officer's recommendation for release to a halfway house instead of full parole

As part of his release conditions, Johnson can't use or possess alcohol or non-prescribed drugs, must follow treatment plans arranged by his parole officer for substance abuse or mental health issues, and not associate with anyone who he knows, or would be reasonably expected to know, has a criminal record.

# Ex-youth swim instructor still trying to finalize lawyer

*IAN FAIRCLOUGH*

A former swim instructor at the Waterville youth jail in Kings County is still trying to secure legal representation on 66 alleged sex offences involving 30 complainants, and the matter has been adjourned for another month.

Duty counsel Lauran Haas told Judge Angela Caseley on Tuesday in Kentville provincial court that Donald Douglas Williams is still in the application process for representation by Nova Scotia Legal Aid. However, it is taking some time to finalize that process through her office and she asked for an adjournment.

Crown attorney Rob Kennedy said there was no issue with the delay.

Because there are so many complainants, Legal Aid has to make sure that any potential lawyers taking on Williams's case are not in a conflict because of previous representation of any of the alleged victims.

RCMP announced last month that they had charged Williams, 75, with 32 counts of sexual exploitation, 28 counts of sexual assault, three counts of sexual assault causing bodily harm and single counts of sexual interference, invitation to sexual touching and assault. The charges followed a



The Nova Scotia Youth Centre opened in 1988 in Waterville, Kings County. *JASON MALLOY*

seven-year investigation.

Williams, who now lives in Dartmouth, was the swim instructor at the Nova Scotia Youth Centre in Waterville from 1988 to 2017.

Kennedy said last month at Williams's arraignment that the case is one of the largest, if not the largest, sexual abuse investigations in the province's history.

Police allege Williams may have assaulted as many as 300 people between the ages of 12 and 18 over 30 years, but some of the more than 100 people interviewed by police and who have given statements about what happened to them have opted not to proceed through the criminal process.

Williams will return to court Nov. 18.

RCMP have said that more charges are possible in the case.

Nova Scotia Energy Board

# NOVA SCOTIA ENERGY BOARD AMENDED NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

**NOVA SCOTIA POWER INCORPORATED (NS Power)** has applied to the Board for rate changes by customer class as follows (amounts in brackets means a decrease):

| | January 1, 2026 | January 1, 2027 |
|---|---|---|
| **Domestic Service Tariff** | | |
| Total | 3.8% | 4.1% |
| **Small General Tariff** | | |
| Total | 3.7% | 4.0% |
| **General Tariff** | | |
| Total | (0.1)% | 0.5% |
| **Large General Tariff** | | |
| Total | (4.4)% | (3.2)% |
| **Small Industrial Tariff** | | |
| Total | (0.4)% | 0.3% |
| **Medium Industrial Tariff** | | |
| Total | (6.4)% | (4.8)% |
| **Large Industrial Tariff*** | | |
| Total | (6.9)% | (4.7)% |
| **Municipal Class** | | |
| Total | 1.7% | 3.0% |
| **Unmetered Class** | | |
| Total | 7.9% | 7.3% |
| **Total FAM Classes** | | |
| Total | 1.8% | 2.4% |

* For a breakdown of individual Large Industrial Tariff classes, refer to the application (Exhibit N-3, p.17).

The Fuel Adjustment Mechanism (FAM) and the Actual Adjustments (AA) or Balancing Adjustments (BA) is proposed to continue to operate in the normal course during 2026 and 2027, with new Base Cost of Fuel (BCF) amounts set for 2026 and 2027.

The Demand Side Management Rider is proposed to continue with changes to the way it is calculated.

NS Power is also proposing:

1. To maintain its current return on common equity of 9.0%, with an earnings band of 8.75% to 9.25%. The common equity ratio would also remain at 40%.
2. The BCF amounts attributable to FAM customers be set at $927.3 million for 2026 and $850.9 million for 2027, which represent the smoothed amounts over the two years.
3. Non-substantive amendments that are administrative in nature to the FAM Plan of Administration and the Hedging Plan of the Fuel Manual.
4. Deferral of costs for the completed Cost of Service Study, Line Loss Study, and Climate Change Adaptation Plan to be collected as a regulatory asset as previously approved in the 2023-2024 General Rate Application decision.
5. NS Power states it is working with the Province to develop a securitization approach that, if finalized, could save up to $90 million over 2026-2027 by financing the unrecovered net book value of thermal (i.e., coal) generation assets in the Decarbonization Deferral Account at lower-cost debt. The application proposes that if the securitization is delayed and cannot be completed by January 1, 2026, that depreciation expense and financing costs of these assets be deferred at the weighted average cost of capital (WACC) on an interim basis.
6. A potential "excessive interest and financing expenses limitation" deferral, related to an anticipated change in federal income tax rules limiting net interest and financing expense deductions, if regulated utilities are not exempted.
7. A Port Hawkesbury Paper deferral, to reflect revenue variances between a new above-the-line tariff for PHP that will be requested later in 2025 and the assumptions included in the cost of service study used in the general rate application.
8. An updated depreciation study that does not update the depreciation rates for Point Aconi, Trenton Unit 5 and 6, Point Tupper Marine Terminal, Sydney International Coal Pier, and Steam General Assets. Also, the depreciation study reflects only partial decommissioning costs for hydro generation plants and excludes decommissioning costs for the Wreck Cove, Tusket and the Mersey generating stations. The Application also proposes to adopt amortization accounting for general plant accounts.
9. Approval of the updated Cost-of-Service Study.
10. Continuation of the Storm Cost Recovery Rider pilot in 2026 and 2027, but on a symmetrical basis so that unspent forecast Level 3 and 4 storm costs are refunded to customers.
11. Changes to the Miscellaneous Charges set out in the Schedule of Charges within NS Power's Regulations which include:
    i. The establishment of an Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) Opt-out Fee, including revisions to Regulations 1.1 and 5.1 (Meter Reading) and changes to the fees and charges in Regulation 7.1;
    ii. Changes to the fees and charges in Regulation 7.3 for "Recovery of Installation and Operational Charges"; and
    iii. To continue the annual 2% increase to the Pole Attachment Fee.

This matter will be considered in a public hearing as follows:

**Hearing starts:** **Wednesday, January 7, 2026 • 9:00 a.m.**
**(Continuing Thursday, January 8 to Friday, January 16, 2026, if necessary)**

**Evening Session:** **Thursday, January 8, 2026 • 6:30 p.m.**

**Hearing Location:** **Office of the Board Summit Place, 3rd Floor**
**1601 Lower Water Street Halifax, Nova Scotia**

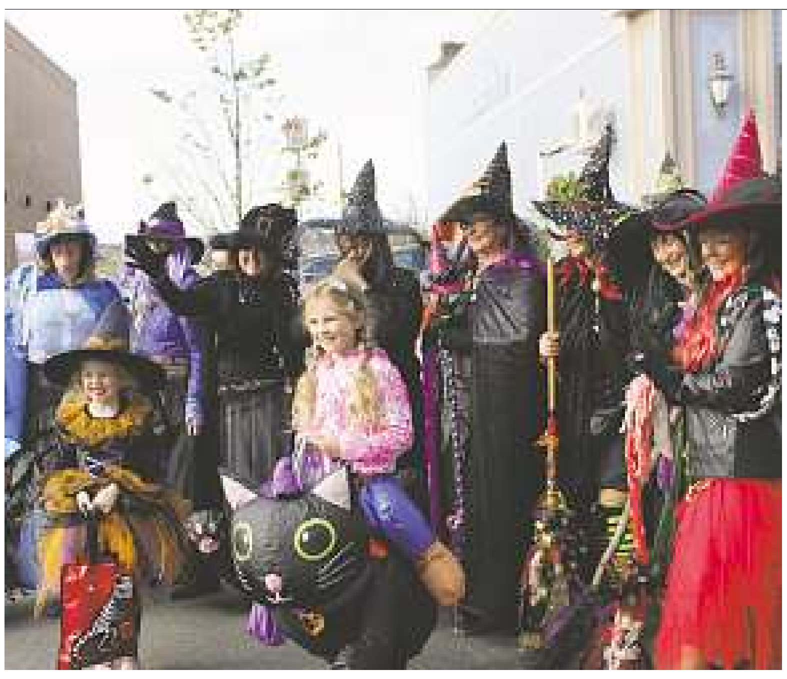
**Depending on the circumstances, this public hearing may be held by video conference.**

**Board Hearings are open to the public and you may participate as follows:**

- You may listen to the live hearing by visiting the Board's website at https://nserbt.ca/nseb and selecting the "Listen to Live Hearings" option. This will enable you to see the electronic document display as well as hear the audio of the proceeding.
- You may speak at the hearing. You must notify the Board by **Thursday, November 27, 2025**
- You may make written comments by sending a letter to the Clerk of the Board at P.O. Box 1692, Unit "M", Halifax, NS B3J 3S3, or by email at: board@novascotia.ca or by fax at (902) 424-3919 by **Thursday, November 27, 2025**
- You may request formal standing as an Intervenor, subject to Board approval. This will allow you to present evidence or cross-examine witnesses. Your request must be received by the Board by **Thursday, October 30, 2025,** and a copy of your written evidence by **Tuesday, December 2, 2025**

A copy of the Application and any timetable applying to this matter may be viewed on the Board's website at https://nserbt.ca/nseb, by clicking on "Matters & Evidence", and in the "Go Directly to Matter" search box, enter Matter No. **M12451**, and on NS Power's website at www.nspower.ca.

**To assist the Board in using correct forms of address and pronouns in our hearings and decisions, we invite all parties, lawyers, and all other participants to share their pronouns and titles with the Board and each other if they are comfortable doing so. There is no requirement to provide this information.**



Sisters Emme and Abbie Gillis, foreground, are photographed with the Halloween-themed Celtic Witches of the Cape on Charlotte Street in Sydney in 2024. Hundreds more – children and adult alike – visited downtown Sydney to receive candy from local businesses and take in spooky festivities. The event returns Saturday. *LUKE DYMENT/CAPE BRETON POST*

# Halloween in Downtown Sydney scheduled for Oct. 25

*CAPE BRETON POST STAFF*

Attention trick or treaters and candy enthusiasts: Halloween in Downtown Sydney is set for Oct. 25.

The event is slated for 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. or while quantities last. Over 40 businesses will participate as trick or treat locations. The day includes music by DJ Majestic, some performances, and a costume contest.

"Previous years have seen a few thousand people participate, and we're excited to welcome all the ghosts and goblins again this year," said Philippa Bryden, executive director of the Sydney Downtown Development Association.

Charlotte Street will be closed to vehicular traffic from Dorchester Street to Townsend Street for the festivities. A rain date is scheduled for Oct. 26.

# CBU assistant professor nominated for Accessibility Trailblazer Award

*ROSEMARY GODIN*
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

An assistant professor of political science at Cape Breton University is one of four finalists for the Accessibility Trailblazer Award at the inaugural Accessibility Confident Employers Awards to be held in Halifax on Oct. 23.

Tammy Bernasky teaches in the discipline of political science in the department of L'nu, political and social studies at CBU.

She is the author of disability research works, including her book: Working to End Gender-Based Violence in the Disability Community: International Perspectives. Other articles she has been involved in writing include: Qualitative Visual Methods in Research with Girls and Women with Disabilities in the Global South; and Co-Designing Peer Support for Women Labelled With Intellectual Disabilities Who Have Experienced Sexual Violence.

Bernasky has a PhD in critical disability studies from York University. Using an intersectional approach (recognition that multiple social factors, like race, gender, class, and ability, intersect to create unique experiences of discrimination and privilege for individuals), her research focuses on understanding the impacts of oppression and developing pathways to empowerment. She specializes in addressing gender-based violence in the disability community.

"I'm very honoured that I've been nominated as one of four finalists for the Accessibility Confident Employers (ACE) Awards," said Bernasky in a press release issued by CBU.

"The ACE Awards celebrate individuals and organizations across Nova Scotia who are advancing accessibility, inclusion and belonging in their workplaces and communities.

"Thank you to Sea Change CoLab and the ACE Project for this nomination, and congratulations to all the nominees."

The ACE project, led by Sea Change CoLab and funded by the federal government's Opportunities Fund, is a provincewide initiative that helps employers across Nova Scotia remove barriers to the recruitment, hiring, retention and advancement of people with disabilities. ACE provides training, events and employer engagement opportunities to support workplaces in becoming accessible and inclusive.

Sea Change CoLab is a Halifax-based, women-owned, values-driven consultancy business that helps leaders, teams, and organizations navigate change with clarity, equity, and impact.

Bernasky's work reflects her long-standing dedication to accessibility, equity, and inclusion within and beyond the post-secondary environment, according to a press release issued by CBU. Her efforts align with CBU's ongoing commitment to fostering a campus community where all people – students, employees and visitors alike – feel supported and empowered to thrive.

"Being part of this conversation about accessibility means recognizing that inclusion is everyone's responsibility," Bernasky said. "It's about ensuring that people with disabilities are not only included but have opportunities to lead and shape the environments we all share."

The award will be presented at The Daily Grind in Halifax, with a hybrid viewing option available via Zoom.

*Rosemary Godin is the Local Journalism Initiative reporter for the Cape Breton Post, a position funded by the federal government.*

## IN BRIEF

### Man suffers life-threatening injuries after motorcycle hits moose

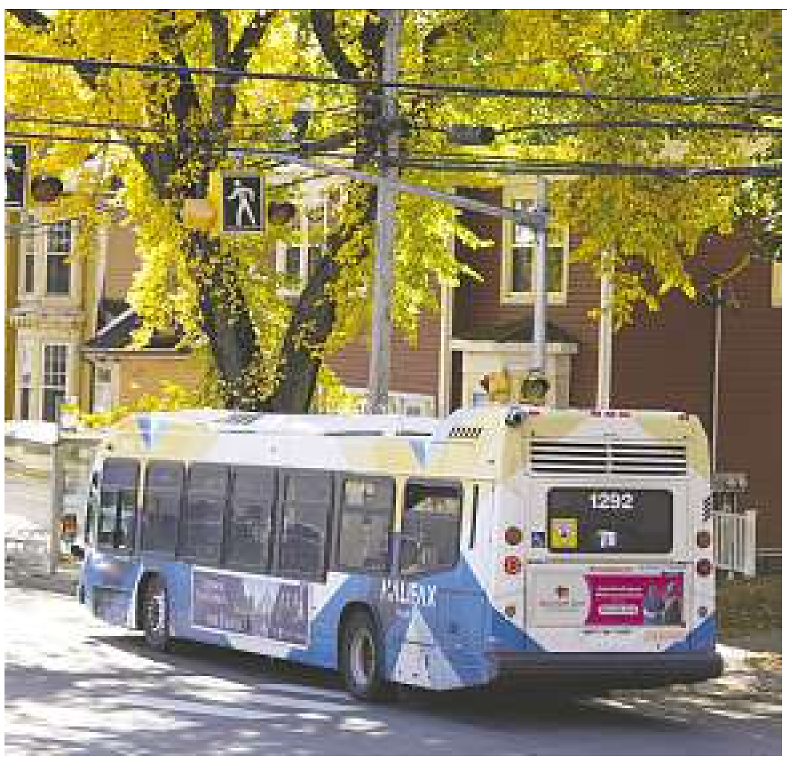
A 47-year-old We'koqoma'q man was transported to hospital with life-threatening injuries after the motorcycle he was driving collided with a moose on Saturday morning.

The accident happened around 5:15 a.m., on Highway 105 near Aberdeen, Inverness County, according to Inverness County District RCMP.

Along with the RCMP, Emergency Health Services and fire services responded to the scene. The moose was found deceased upon arrival.

An RCMP collision reconstructionist attended the scene of the crash, and the investigation is ongoing.

The highway was closed for several hours and has since re-opened to motorists.




A Halifax Transit bus passes down Robie Street. Third-party applications for municipal heritage status were filed for properties on the street.
*RYAN TAPLIN*

# Appeal shot down to fast-track heritage status

## Community group tried to save homes from bus lane construction

*JEN TAPLIN*

It was an attempt to move downtown Halifax homes in the path of demolition for bus lanes to the front of the line to be considered for heritage status.

But it didn't work.

Friends of the Halifax Common sent in third-party applications for municipal heritage status for several Halifax homes. Three properties are on Robie Street and another is on North Street, a next-door neighbour to the heritage home of Halifax's first Black doctor who saved many lives there during the Halifax Explosion.

They are in the path of the Robie Street corridor, which is planned to be a "vital north-south link on the peninsula and is expected to serve two of four proposed Bus Rapid Transit lines," according to the municipality. It would also be the route for any potential light rail transit in the future.

A motion to skip the line and fast-track these properties for heritage consideration was brought to the Heritage Advisory Committee on Wednesday. There are around 20 other applications in line before these.

Tyler Brothers, chair of the committee, said there was a strong community demand to protect these properties.

"I don't want to have a case where a property doesn't get the opportunity to be reviewed for its heritage value before there's an irreversible change made or (it's) demolished."

The Friends of the Halifax Common have been campaigning to save the old Robie neighbourhood, which has affordable housing, from the construction with flyers, petitions and letters to council.

But it didn't fly with the councillors on the committee Wednesday night, who overwhelmingly voted down the motion to fast-track these applications.

Peggy Cameron with the Halifax Common group said Thursday that the municipality should have done a deeper dive on the impact of the bus lane corridor on the affordable homes and the heritage of the neighbourhood.

"When other cities are using different solutions such as signalized lane changes or transit priority signals to achieve a better outcome, data shows that widening roads for public transportation does not reduce traffic or congestion."

"This is a municipally approved corridor for the bus rapid transit for Robie Street. We knew these properties were going to be involved for widening the roads for bus lanes," said Coun. David Hendsbee (Lawrencetown-The Lakes-Chezzetcook-Eastern Shore).

"This would put our heritage advisory committee in conflict with municipal planning for that corridor, so these third-party applications, in my opinion, should be tossed out in regards that it's somebody who is trying to circumvent the process to try and delay a municipal project that's in progress."

Since the province (under the Department of Public Works) owns three of the Robie Street properties, it would be a hard stop there, Hendsbee said.

"Plus, I believe any surplus lands left over after the corridor has been created are going to go for public housing opportunities," he added.

The other Robie Street address – 2494 – is owned by St. Paul's Home, and the house at 5816 North St. is owned by Maxwell Properties Ltd.

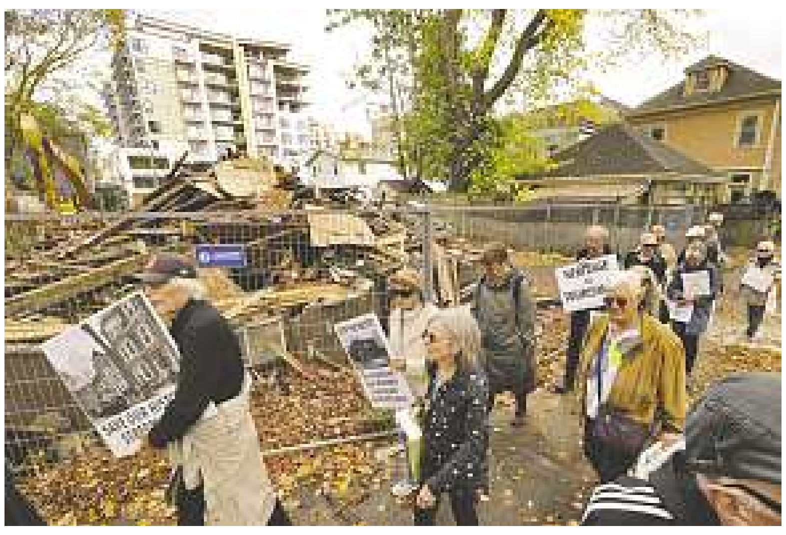
Committee member Meghan Chadwick said she's worried about the precedent this would set by asking staff to prioritize certain third-party applications.

She said she thinks it's a waste of staff time, especially considering they don't have any information as to why these properties should be prioritized.

It's not a good use of resources and "not a wise investment," considering the applications aren't coming from the owners, argued Coun. Nancy Hartling (Prospect Rd.-St. Margarets).

"As much as I really, really do appreciate what you're trying to achieve here, I don't think that this idea has legs."

Even if the sites are registered as municipal heritage properties, that doesn't mean they would be safe from demolition forever. Under the Municipal Heritage Act, property owners just have to wait three years.



About two dozen people take part in a march that wound its way from the Halifax Commons through Robie Street side streets and eventually to the Grand Parade in Halifax on Tuesday. The Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia group stopped for a time on Williams Street, where a home was recently demolished. *TIM KROCHAK*

# N.S. to explore nuclear technology with Ontario

*AARON BESWICK*

Premier Tim Houston announced an agreement to work with Ontario to explore small modular reactor technology.

But don't expect nuclear power to be generated in Nova Scotia in the foreseeable future.

The memorandum of understanding signed Thursday by Houston and Ontario Energy Minister Stephen Lecce in Halifax is limited to the exchange of knowledge and mutual promises to lobby the federal government, but it doesn't involve any money or firm obligations on either side.

"Nova Scotia is open to exploring the full range of clean energy options that can help meet our province's future energy needs, build grid resilience and protect ratepayers," said Houston, who named himself the province's energy minister Tuesday.

"We have an opportunity to learn from Ontario's experience deploying nuclear technology, and I see great value in this partnership to inform system planning and best practices for Nova Scotia."

Nova Scotia's plan to green its grid relies heavily on renewables like wind and solar. However, those forms of generation only work when it's windy or sunny.

The benefit that's been pitched for nuclear is that it provides consistent electricity.

Asked for a potential timeline on small modular reactors in this province, Houston said, "It's not a near-term thing, for sure."

He pointed to the timeline in Ontario, which in May began construction on what will be the first small modular reactor in North America.

The memorandum on constructing the Darlington reactor was signed in 2019. The first of the four reactors being built is scheduled to come online in 2029 and the final by 2035. Combined, they are projected to have a 1,200-megawatt generation capacity, enough to power 1.2 million homes.

The $20-billion project got a $2-billion cash infusion from Ottawa and another $1 billion from the Ontario provincial government as Prime Minister Mark Carney and Premier Doug Ford were visiting the construction site. The rest of the cost of that project will ultimately come from ratepayers.

"This is the first-of-its-kind technology in the world," said Lecce.

"So we will have first-mover advantage.

"We're doing it, taking on that risk, with the recognition of the huge economic opportunity that comes from that."

# Collision data goes wrong way

*JEN TAPLIN*

Fatal and serious injury collision statistics were high in Halifax last year — they are even higher so far this year.

"In 2025, we've seen the highest number of fatalities in many years, with over 20 lives lost," explained Sam Trask, HRM's supervisor of road safety and transportation, as she delivered the latest road safety report to the transportation committee on Thursday.

"Preliminary reports suggest nearly half of these incidents may have involved aggressive driving behaviours, which underscores the urgent need for continued focus on road safety."

***DEEPLY CONCERNING***

Last year, there were 11 fatal and 142 serious injury collisions reported on municipal and provincial roads within the HRM. According to the road safety report, "these figures represent an increasing trend in both the overall number of fatal and serious injury collisions and the rate of these severe collisions."

Trask said it's deeply concerning.

"The numbers we see today represent real lives and communities impacted by tragedy, reminding us why road safety must remain a top priority."

***MOST ARE PEDESTRIAN***

Halifax Regional Police Superintendent Greg Robertson provided more specifics on the fatality collisions in their jurisdiction. He said the most so far in 2025 are from collisions with pedestrians at four, motorcycle accidents at three, and there was one single-vehicle accident in which two people died. That's a total of nine for HRP for 2025. Halifax District RCMP covers a much larger geographical area of HRM.

There were 179 collisions on public roads between vehicles and pedestrians in 2024, and 89 with micromobility users (bicycles, scooters, etc.).

It's frustrating that the trends are concerning, but there's not a lot of information on what they should do about it, said Coun. Sam Austin (Dartmouth Centre).

"It's very clearly not going in the direction we need it to, and this coming year, if I'm understanding things correctly, it's likely to increase further," he said. The report will be headed to Halifax regional council for further discussion.

"I don't know if we can call this a statistical blip; it is now a four-year trend line going in the wrong direction." In her presentation, Trask pointed out several projects happening now and in the near future to improve road safety. Several times, staff pointed out that getting collision analysis software online will better pinpoint hot spots to identify priorities and provide a better analysis of what is causing these accidents.

Some of the projects in the works include:

- Traffic signal upgrades of two out of 10 priority intersections
- Protective left-only turns at five signalized intersections
- 47 traffic calming projects in the 2025-26 fiscal year
- Ten applications to the province for 40 km/h speed limits
- Upgrade or installation of 38 crosswalks and upgraded pedestrian signals at six intersections
- Six school zone traffic-calming projects
- An update on photo radar

Earlier this year, the province initiated legislative changes that could enable photo radar in Nova Scotia.

Roddy MacIntyre, HRM's director of traffic and parking management, said the province is consulting on the regulations, and the legislation hasn't been proclaimed yet. Plus, they would need other changes before HRM could start any program.

"At this point, we're still in a holding pattern when it comes to photo enforcement," he said.

***ENFORCEMENT AND TICKETS***

Police are writing about half the number of tickets they did in 2016 and Coun. Kathryn Morse (Halifax - Bedford Basin West) wanted to know why.

"It sounds like tickets were down by half if we're going back to 2016 and our population has grown a lot since then. So to me, it seems like there is less enforcement," she said.

Robertson pulled out some stats. He said from January to June in 2024, HRP issued 4,894 tickets, and this year, for that same period, it was 5,030 (a three per cent increase). In 2024, they issued 11,011 tickets and the year before it was 10,000.

"The numbers are there, the enforcement is happening."

But back in 2016, HRP handed out around 21,000 tickets, compared to 11,000 in 2024. Robertson pointed to recruitment challenges with getting officers hired and replacing vacant positions, "and we can throw in COVID there as well."

He said the traffic unit of six to nine members issues almost 35-50 per cent of all the tickets.

***SOME POSITIVE TRENDS AND SURVEY RESULTS***

Trask pointed out a few numbers that are headed in the right direction:

Fatal and serious pedestrian collisions were down last year — to 21 from 33 in 2023 — and there were fewer pedestrian collisions at signalized intersections (50 down from 61 in 2023).

There were 42 fatal and serious collisions at municipal intersections, down from 57 in 2023. She said that Halifax is in the lower range of fatal and injury collisions compared to other major cities across Canada.

Trask also showed the results of a public survey on road safety, where 48 per cent said they feel the road network is safe. People said they felt safest riding transit and least safe on bikes and motorcycles.