

**TO:** Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

**SUBMITTED BY:**

  
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Dan English, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** May 31, 2004

**SUBJECT:** **Enhancements - New High School - Halifax Common**

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**ORIGIN**

This issue originated with an invitation from the Halifax Regional School Board (HRSB) for Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) to participate in the provision of enhancements to the new high school for peninsular Halifax, which will replace Queen Elizabeth (QE) and St. Patrick's High Schools (St. Pat's), proposed for opening in September 2006.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council request the NS Department of Education to direct approximately \$30,000 (plus HST, if applicable) of \$200,000, as a field improvement allocation to the Trollope Street Field (South Common) as part of the Province's new school construction program.

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## BACKGROUND

The Queen Elizabeth (QE) and St. Patrick's (St.Pat's) High Schools will soon be replaced by a single new school at the existing site of the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) - Bell Road Campus. The Department of Education's (DOEd) "new school program" (i.e., for construction of new schools) does not provide funding for certain facilities that have existed at QE and St.Pat's. For example, a new auditorium is not planned as part of the new-school construction program at the new school. HRM has, therefore, been requested to consider financial contributions to construct such amenities for mutual use (i.e., use by both, the community and school populations.)

HRM staff have therefore reviewed the request to fund enhancements to the new high school. Three enhancements were considered: 1) an auditorium, 2) a third gymnasium (over-and-above the double gym that is proposed for construction), and 3) improvements to the Trollope Street field (i.e., at Trollope Street) across from the existing NSCC campus.

The Provincial Department of Transportation and Public Works (T&PW), which is responsible for managing the demolition of the NSCC building, site preparation, and construction of the new high school on behalf of the DOEd, expects to select a design architect in June/July 2004, subsequent to completion of a design competition. Capital District and other staff of HRM continue to work with the Province and Halifax Regional School Board over site design elements (e.g., Bell Road street scape, Bengal Lancers, architectural considerations.)

## DISCUSSION

### **1. AUDITORIUM**

The proposal to fund the construction of an auditorium to be added to the new high school<sup>1</sup> is not recommended.

The request for construction of a new, 1,000-1,200 seat, dedicated-use auditorium was made in order to replace the two auditoria at QE and St.Pat's. Both existing high schools currently have 1,200-seat and 1,100-seat auditoria, respectively.

HRM does not currently have sufficient information upon which to recommend a commitment of funds for an auditorium since the level of need (i.e., from a community-use standpoint) has yet to be defined. Staff of Recreation, Tourism and Culture (RTC) is intent to develop a policy for cultural and performing arts facilities. RTC staff request Council's and the arts-and-culture community's patience leading up to impending recommendations over the proposed comprehensive assessment of needs and options/costs for performing arts, cultural, and studio spaces, including defining HRM's role therein.

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<sup>1</sup> see Attachment -A- Department of Education School Space Allocation

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The RTC Department is poised to release a request-for-proposals (RFP) solicitation for consulting services regarding “Cultural and Performing Arts Facilities Needs Assessment”. This is in order to determine the opportunities and challenges confronting the arts-and-culture community, which will assist HRM in determining what its role should be to assist with existing and anticipated shortcomings. The proposed study, however, is yet to be awarded, and is not anticipated to yield a policy until 2005.

Furthermore, discussions among members of the art-and-culture community, HRM staff (Capital District, RTC, RPAM), stakeholders, and other levels of government continue to take place around the need and feasibility of a new, modern 2,000+ seat performing arts hall as per the recommendation within the Capital District Public Facilities Needs & Opportunities Strategy<sup>2</sup>. This assessment will take some time and may be linked to other potential opportunities (e.g., locating close to restaurants and hotels.) These scenarios, associated costs, business models, funding, and location are all yet to be determined.

Another challenge facing the site - were a new auditorium to be built at NSCC - would be parking. The proposal for parking at the new school currently assumes approximately 150 parking spaces. Parking on streets surrounding the Common is understood to be of primary use by the staff and patrons of the Queen Elizabeth II health centre, as well as users of the surrounding Halifax Common open spaces and sport fields. Adding to parking demand in this area would exacerbate the parking congestion already experienced here (i.e., on Trollope Street, Ahern Avenue, among others.)

Finally, the Halifax Common is regarded as historic open space. Incremental construction of more buildings on the Common, is a concern for HRM’s park planning staff. A balance of public-use buildings and open space requires due consideration.

## 2. GYMNASIUM

The proposal to fund the construction of a community-use gymnasium - with an indicative cost of \$1.35 million - to be added to the new high school is not recommended.

Like most high school gymnasias, QE and St.Pat’s have not been readily accessible to the community due to heavy use by the highly active school population (i.e., in terms of league games, practices, and physical education classes). As a result, the impending loss of the two gyms will *not* represent a significant net loss to community-accessible gym time on peninsula Halifax. Also, assuming a new gym space *were* warranted, adding an extra community-use gym would offer more utility to the public if attached to a junior high, elementary school, or existing facility owned by HRM rather than adding to a high school, again for purposes of maximizing community-use time.

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<sup>2</sup> The Capital District Public Facilities Needs & Opportunities Strategy is a document inspired by the Capital District Vision. The Strategy is intended to provide leadership in public lands planning, and was before Council on May 18, 2004.

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The Indoor Recreational Facilities (IRF) Master Plan<sup>3</sup> identifies 20 recreational facilities (i.e., inclusive of two (2) university multi-sport facilities + 4 regional facilities within a 20-minute drive of the downtown area + 17 schools on the peninsula - please see Attachment -B-.) Combined, these indoor facilities provide sufficient opportunities to recreate for the community.

Prime-time demand continues to be high for indoor court access at reasonable cost to users, but a balance must be struck with overall non-peak supply. To do otherwise would be detrimental to the municipality's fiscal ability to maintain such spaces.

It is anticipated that an impending "service exchange agreement" with the Halifax Regional School Board will improve access to school gyms and other facilities. Future uses will be monitored closely as a result of the proposed agreement, but for now, it is recommended that this experience be considered in this decision.

Existing gym facilities are well-supported by the community (as per IRF Master Plan public consultations), but will require capital improvements. Construction of a new facility would compete for needed funding at other, existing public facilities. In addition, the public consultation process did not conclude an *immediate* need for additional gymnasium space on the peninsula.

Nevertheless, other options exist for expansion - should they be required - at other sites (e.g., St Andrew's, Needham Centre.) In so doing, an indicative cost of approximately \$1.35 million<sup>4</sup> plus (+) annual operating and maintenance costs for a new 8,400 square foot gym (i.e., minimum gym size) should be considered as funding that may be needed elsewhere in the near future. The IRF Master Plan, to be presented for Regional Council's review and approval, will review the need for such improvements.

### 3. TROLLOPE STREET FIELD

It is recommended that the Trollope Street (South Common) field be rehabilitated by an injection of up to \$30,000 (+ HST, if applicable) for an irrigation system and top dressing.

The Trollope Street (South Common) field is currently not in use from a booking standpoint. The field has deteriorated as a result of over-use since it was last rehabilitated, five (5) years ago, and is not sustainable in its present state other than for casual uses. The potential for rehabilitating this field with the installation of an irrigation system is an opportunity to

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<sup>3</sup> The IRF Master Plan intends to provide recommendations to Council regarding the strategic direction and operation of the development, acquisition, and retirement of indoor recreation facilities in HRM. The IRF Master Plan, now in its final draft, is to be presented to Council in the immediate future.

<sup>4</sup> Estimate based on Provincial figure of \$150/square foot for new gym construction. See also Alternative C for further explanation of costs for new gym.

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reintroduce the field as a Class B field<sup>5</sup> (i.e., an HRM field designation) for scheduled purposes (e.g., high school soccer games, football practices.)

It is proposed that the DOEd provide this capital funding as a result of anticipated increased uses by the new school population at this field, due to its close proximity to the future high school. Construction of new schools normally entails allocations of \$200,000 per school for field improvement purposes, and so it is proposed that the \$30,000 be used from this budgeted allocation. Some members of the School Steering Team (SST), however, had requested the School Board and/or Province to consider using the entire \$200,000 for interior school enhancements.

Reciprocally, RPAM staff would incorporate up to \$10,000 per year for annual maintenance (please see section on Budget Implications, below.) Such maintenance can be assumed as part of ongoing operations at the Common.

An option to the proposed irrigation installation is to consider construction of an artificial turf. Such artificial turf would, however, cost an estimated \$1.0 - 1.2 million. In light of recent additions to the artificial field program in the region<sup>6</sup> and the considerable cost therefore, it is recommended that from a financial standpoint, it would not be prudent to pursue another artificial surface at this time. It is the intent of Staff to monitor artificial turf usage and the associated financial model (i.e., revenues versus costs), before making further incremental recommendations for new artificial turf construction.

As a result of a physical condition assessment of the field, it was deemed that rehabilitation of the field, would be the most efficient, cost-effective means by which to program the field for school and community uses. This would entail a new irrigation system, top-dressing, and keeping the field off-limits for approximately one year to provide the grass an opportunity to grow and establish a healthy root structure.

Were this field rehabilitated, school bookings would continue, as they do now, to be circulated among the other Halifax Common fields, though to a lesser degree. HRM shall also be redeveloping the Wanderers' Grounds as a premier natural turf field for such major events as high school football and soccer, among other community users.

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<sup>5</sup>According to HRM Service Levels, maintenance at Class B standard includes: Grass cutting, line marking, litter pick-up, repair of players benches (if provided), repair of bleachers (if provided), repair of fencing (if provided), aeration of turf, over-seeding, liming, fertilizing, weed spraying according to By-Law P-800, layout survey check, sodding in worn areas, water costs for irrigation, annual goal post installation and repair, programming/scheduling field use times, and park patrol/enforcement.

<sup>6</sup> two (2) Mainland Common; two (2) for construction in 2004 at Burnside Drive, Dartmouth; one (1) St. Mary's University; one (1) Dalhousie University (to be resurfaced); one (1) at Wier Field, Upper Sackville.

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## BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

The following budget implications are related to the recommendations proposed above.

### **Trollope Street Field - Natural Turf Maintenance**

It is proposed that a rehabilitated and irrigated natural turf would require an estimated **\$10,000 per annum** for a designated Class B field. This cost would be incorporated by Real Property and Asset Management as part of Real Property Operations' annual maintenance budget, pending capital improvements as per the staff recommendation.

## FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

## ALTERNATIVES

- A. **Auditorium** - Regional Council may approve the construction of a new, dedicated 1,200-seat auditorium at \$3,000,000 (indicative costs.) This is not recommended in light of the fact that it would be premature to commit to such significant funding, the decision of which would be made out-of-context, that is prior to Regional Council having adopted a cultural and performing arts policy.
- B. **Auditorium** - Another option as proposed by the SST was to retain a portion of the existing QE school, specifically the auditorium. This option cannot be assessed and recommended as a viable option without undertaking engineering and feasibility studies to determine the feasibility and costs of such action, as per the recommendation of the Capital District Public Facilities Needs & Opportunities Strategy<sup>7</sup>. It is also unclear, at this point, what the business plan might be in terms of supporting future adaptive reuse of the building and site versus complete demolition and subsequent site uses.
- C. **Gymnasium** - to build a minimum 8,400 square foot gymnasium, complete with complimentary floor markings and amenities (e.g., basketball, volleyball standard, storage space, dressing rooms over-and-above high school needs, separate access to promote appropriate traffic flow and security, time clock.) At an indicative \$150/sf, the shell, lighting, and flooring would cost approximately \$1,260,000. Additional expenses for the amenities listed above would be in the order of \$80-100,000. This is not recommended as a result of the above discussion.

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<sup>7</sup> The Capital District Public Facilities Needs & Opportunities Strategy is a document inspired by the Capital District Vision. The Strategy is intended to provide leadership in public lands planning, and was before Council on May 18, 2004.

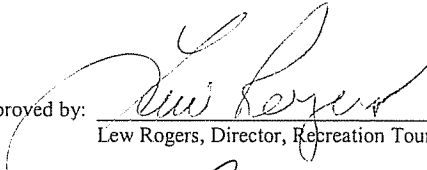
- D. **Trollope Street Field** - As discussed, an artificial turf may be built to supply all-weather play, approximately 10-12 hours/day (unlit) and up to 16 hours/day (with lighting) at an approximate cost of \$1.0 - 1.2 million. This is not recommended as a result of the other artificial and natural turf opportunities on the peninsula, as per the aforesaid discussion.


**ATTACHMENTS**

- A- Department of Education School Space Allocation - New High School
- B- Halifax Regional Municipality - Recreation Facilities - Peninsula

Additional copies of this report, and information on its status, can be obtained by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

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**Attachment -A-**

**Department of Education School Space Allocation  
New High School**



Department of Education  
Facilities Management

School Space Allocation

School Name

St Pats/Queen Elizabeth

St Pats/Queen Elizabeth EST. STUDENT POP. 1'200

Space	Area	QT	Total Area	Total Square feet	Comparison
<b>Classrooms</b>				<b>40,200</b>	
Classrooms Elem	900	0	0		
Classrooms Secondary	900	41	36,900		
language	900	1	900		
General Science	1200	2	2,400		
<b>Total Classrooms</b>		<b>44</b>			
<b>Support Areas</b>				<b>4,540</b>	
small group areas/storage	100	22	2,200		
learning support Classroom	formula	distributed	2100		
assistive care washroom	120	2	240		
learning recovery programming	120	0	0		
<b>Library/Resource</b>				<b>3,600</b>	
general library/storage	3000	1	3,000		
seminar	600	1	600		
<b>Laboratory Rooms</b>				<b>10,550</b>	
chemistry lab	1200	2	2,400		
preparation room	150	1	150		
physics lab	1200	2	2,400		
biology lab	1200	2	2,400		
info technology/CRS/Business	1000	2	2,000		
Comm Tech lab	1200	1	1,200		
<b>Arts Room</b>				<b>7,600</b>	
visual arts	1000	2	2,000		
storage	100	1	100		
music / storage	1600	2	3,200		
practice rooms	200	1	200		
drama / stage (raised)	Formula	2	2,100		
<p>→ NOT SUPPORTED BY GOV'T POLICY, BUT ELEVATE ARTS SPACE TO MEET EXPECTATIONS/NEEDS - PLACED ADJACENT TO GYM</p>					
<b>Technology/Ed</b>				<b>3,900</b>	
technology	1000	1	1,000		
production areas	1400	1	1,400		
Alternate Education area	1500	1	1,500		
<p>→ TRANSITION FROM WOODWORKING TO COMPUTER TRAVELLING FORESTRY, MECHANICS, BUT ACADEMIC ROOM, NOT GARAGE</p>					
<b>Family Studies</b>				<b>2,250</b>	
nutrition/textiles LAB	1350	1	1,350		

School Space Allocation

St Pats/Queen Elizabeth

Space	Area	QT	Total Area	Total Square feet	Comparison
technology	900	1	900		
<b>Gymnasium</b>				11,700	
gym → <i>SAME AS HFX. WEST → 10'000</i>	8400	1	8,400	→ TO BE INCREASED TO 10'500	
change rooms	2@300,2@500	4	1,600		
office	100	2	200		
storage	800	1	800		
multi-purpose • BLEACHER SEATING @ <del>250</del> 250	700	1	700		
<b>Cafeteria</b>				5,450	
cafeteria (1200 STUDENTS X 40% SITTING)	4800	1	4,800		
kitchen	500	1	500		
storage	150	1	150		
<b>Administration</b>				4,304	
general office	1200	1	1,200		
staff room	1104	1	1,104		
student services	800	1	800		
teen health	600	1	600		
itinerant rooms - POLICE, PHYSIO, ETC. VISITORS	100	3	300		
student council	100	3	300		
<b>Storage</b>				1,150	
general	1000	1	1,000		
outside equipment storage	150	1	150		
<b>TOTAL NET SQUARE FOOTAGE</b>			95,244	95,244	
<b>ESTIMATED GROSS SQUARE FOOTAGE</b>			140,009		
↳ COMMON SPACE, SUPPORT/SANIT., WALL THICKNESS					

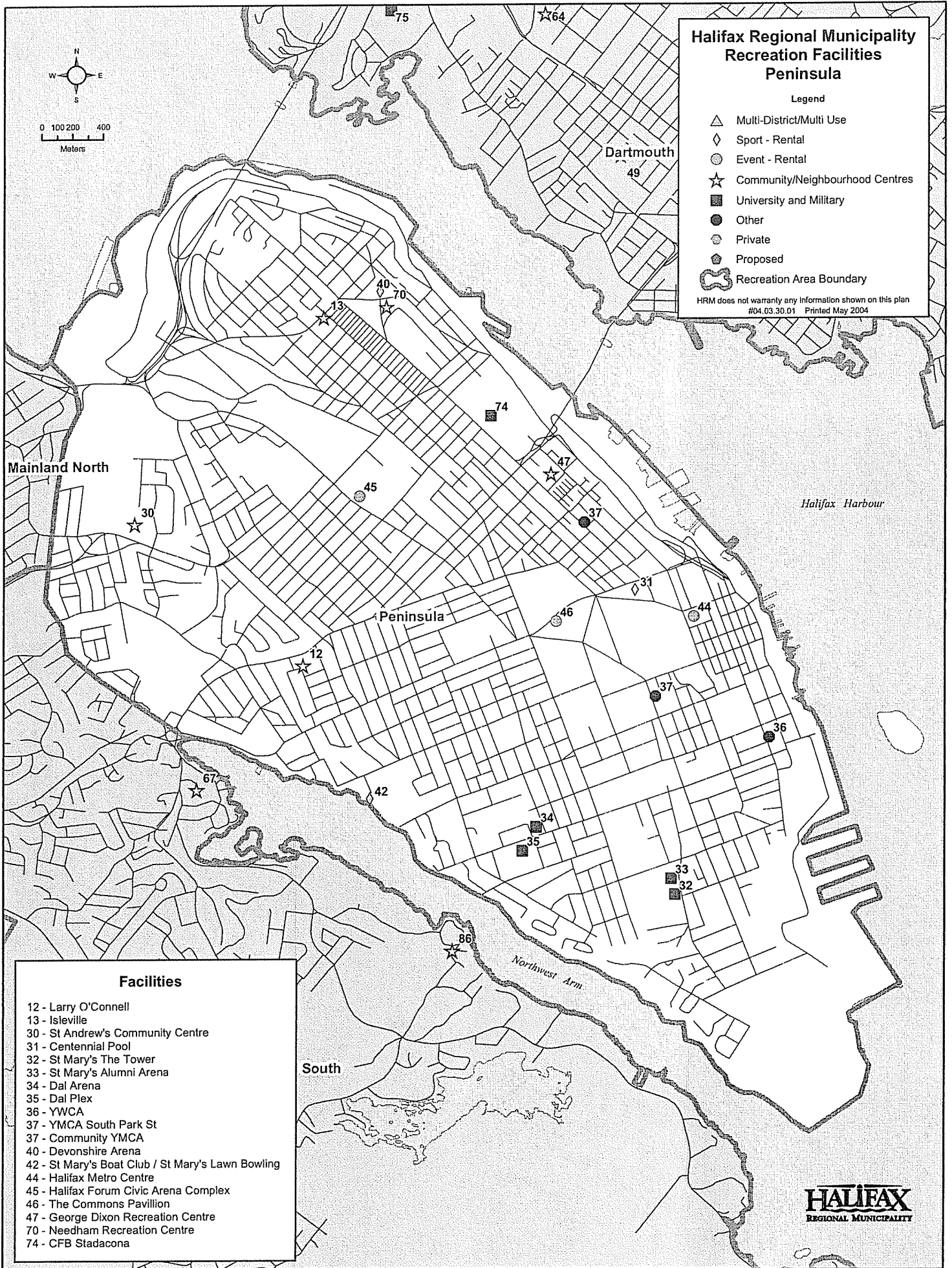
Gross Square foot per student 116.7  
Total teaching spaces 67

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Director of Facilities Mangement

## **Attachment -B-**

### **Halifax Regional Municipality**

#### **Recreation Facilities Peninsula**

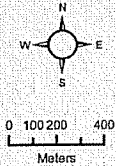


# Halifax Regional Municipality Recreation Facilities Peninsula

## Legend

- △ Multi-District/Multi Use
- ◇ Sport - Rental
- Event - Rental
- ☆ Community/Neighbourhood Centres
- University and Military
- Other
- Private
- ⬢ Proposed
- ⬢ Recreation Area Boundary

HRM does not warrant any information shown on this plan  
#04.03.30.01 Printed May 2004



Mainland North

Dartmouth

Halifax Harbour

Peninsula

South

Northwest Arm

- Facilities**
- 12 - Larry O'Connell
  - 13 - Isleville
  - 30 - St Andrew's Community Centre
  - 31 - Centennial Pool
  - 32 - St Mary's The Tower
  - 33 - St Mary's Alumni Arena
  - 34 - Dal Arena
  - 35 - Dal Plex
  - 36 - YWCA
  - 37 - YMCA South Park St
  - 37 - Community YMCA
  - 40 - Devonshire Arena
  - 42 - St Mary's Boat Club / St Mary's Lawn Bowling
  - 44 - Halifax Metro Centre
  - 45 - Halifax Forum Civic Arena Complex
  - 46 - The Commons Pavillion
  - 47 - George Dixon Recreation Centre
  - 70 - Needham Recreation Centre
  - 74 - CFB Stadacona