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Halifax Regional Council
May 2, 2006

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: 
Carol Macomber, Acting Director, CCED

DATE: April 19, 2006

SUBJECT: Regional Arena Facility

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

At the Halifax Regional Council meeting on March 7, 2006, Item 10.3.2, Councilor Snow requested that staff provide a report, referencing the Burke Oliver Study, on the possibility of including in this year's capital budget, the construction of a regional rink facility.

BACKGROUND

The subject of new arena facilities in HRM has been addressed in the Arena Capacity Study as well as the Indoor Recreation Facility Master Plan. The documents recommend that the next Arena Facility be built in the Bedford area. There have been requests from residents and community organizations to build arenas in the following areas: Bedford, Fall River/Waverley, Eastern Shore (Musquodoboit Harbour and Sheet Harbour), Prospect, and Eastern Passage. Along with these requests for facilities, there have been verbal and written concerns from operators of existing arenas on the potential financial impact on their facilities if new construction were to proceed. These facilities include Sackville Sports Stadium, Halifax Forum, Centennial Arena, and Sackville Lake District Arena. In addition, HRM has recently taken ownership of the Musquodoboit Harbour Arena and the Spryfield Lions Arena due to financial problems encountered by the community groups operating these facilities.

The existing HRM operated arenas - Bedford LeBrun, Devonshire Arena, Grey Arena, and Bowles Arena - are at different levels of physical condition. A life cycle analysis on each HRM arena facility needs to be done to determine its future as an ice arena or its potential to be converted to another non ice facility or demolished. The life cycle analysis on the four HRM arenas would cost a total of \$200,000.

DISCUSSION

The Burke Oliver Report identified a number of recreation facility deficiencies, including one ice surface for Bedford. The requirement was further substantiated in a subsequent Arena Capacity Study undertaken by HRM in November 2001. Furthermore, the Indoor Recreation Facility Master Plan did acknowledge the need in one of the recommendations as follows:

‘It is recommended that should the tri-pad facility not move forward in Bedford, HRM initiate the development of an additional ice surface for the Bedford area.’

With the planned construction of the Mainland Common Recreation Facility, and recent completion of the additional ice surface at St. Margaret’s Centre, the only facility deficiency remaining from the Burke Oliver Report is the additional ice surface in Bedford.

A number of major facilities with ice surfaces have expressed concern about the potential impact of the 3 pad ice surface facility in Bedford on their existing operations. They are concerned it may impact their shoulder hours and summer programs. Feedback during public consultation sessions that were part of the development process of the IRFMP indicated there is a significant amount of additional demand in the community, including updated information obtained from the original author of the Burke Oliver Report. Much of that demand was for more available peak hours of usage.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

The addition of too many arenas in HRM would have a negative financial impact on existing community arenas and, as a result, HRM may be requested to provide financial assistance to their operations. The \$200,000 for life cycle analysis cannot be accommodated due to current budget capacity.

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


Regional Council could approve the construction of a regional arena facility in the 06/07 budget at a cost of approximately \$5 million. This is not recommended.

ATTACHMENTS

None

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.html> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

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