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Info Item No. 1

Community Planning & Economic Development Standing Committee – June 5, 2014 Halifax & West Community Council – June 17, 2014

TO: Chair and Members of the Community Planning & Economic Development Standing Committee

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed
Brad Anguish, Director, Community & Recreation Services

DATE: May 2, 2014

SUBJECT: Gymnasia Analysis – Peninsula Halifax

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

May 14, 2012 Peninsula Community Council motion:
That staff provide “a report on the status of the Peninsula gym requirements in light of the closure of the St. Pat’s Alexandra School and the pending implications resulting from the planned closure of St. Pat’s High School and the redevelopment of Bloomfield.” (Item 9.3.1).

August 13, 2012 Peninsula Community Council request:
That staff provide “an update on the status of the strategy in regard to the smaller community based facilities like the George Dixon Centre and St Andrews Centre.” (Item 12.1).

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, Section 79(1) including
(k) recreational programs; and
(x) lands and buildings required for a municipal purpose

BACKGROUND

In May 2012, the recent and pending closures of three Peninsula school gymnasiums (St. Pat's Alexandra School, Quinpool Education Centre, and Bloomfield Gymnasium) prompted Peninsula Community Council to request information on how gym users might be impacted by the closures. Since that request, the YMCA also announced the temporary closure of their facility, which includes a gymnasium, on South Park Street.

This report provides general information about the impact of those closures on the respective users, and specifically addresses potential planning for alternate usage where necessary.

At the writing of this report, the relevant closure dates are:

Closed	June 2011	St. Pat's Alexandra School
Closed	June 2013	Quinpool Education Centre (St. Pats High)
Pending	May 30, 2014	YMCA Peninsula
Pending	June 30, 2014	Bloomfield Gymnasium

As well, on August 13, 2012, Peninsula Community Council requested an update on the various upgrades to peninsula recreation facilities which were outlined in the "Peninsula Recreation Facilities and Services Review" report which was presented to Regional Council on April 5, 2011. At that meeting, Regional Council received an update on the various strategic studies undertaken as part of the Community Facility Master Plan. The relevant projects outlined in the "Peninsula Recreation Facilities and Services Review" include:

- St. Andrew's Centre
- Needham Centre
- George Dixon Centre
- Citadel Community Centre
- Bloomfield Gymnasium

This report provides information in response to both requests.

DISCUSSION

In accordance with Community Council's direction, a gymnasium analysis for Peninsula Halifax has been completed and is provided as Attachment 1. The analysis is summarized below.

Current Situation

There are 31 gyms on the peninsula. These include four owned by HRM, 15 owned by Halifax Regional School Board (HRSB), 10 owned by the Universities, and two owned by Department of National Defence (DND). Detailed information on the gymnasium is included in Attachment 1.

As noted, the previous and pending closure of peninsula gyms has created concern for user groups. The first closure was the St. Pat's Alexandra School. Since that date, the Quinpool

Education Centre (St. Pat's High School) has also closed. The Bloomfield Centre gym will be closed at the end of June, 2014, and the YMCA has indicated that its South Park Street facility will temporarily close on May 30, 2014 to allow for construction of their new facility which is expected to open in 2017.

Displacements

As a result of the closures, the following displacements have occurred:

- A) When the St. Pats Alexandra School closed in June 2011, the gymnasium users were effectively absorbed into the existing inventory available. There has been no significant feedback or commentary from citizens who lost gym time or access.
- B) All of the gym user groups at the Quinpool Education Centre have also been accommodated in other Peninsula gymnasium facilities.
- C) To date, in anticipation of the pending closure of the Bloomfield Centre, five of the twelve current user groups have been accommodated at alternative locations on the Peninsula. The seven groups not yet accommodated on a long-term basis are: two ball hockey groups, one indoor field hockey group, one cricket group, one soccer group, and two badminton groups. Some accommodations have been found for the groups for the short term summer months, with the exception of cricket which does not need summer access. Staff are exploring options for long term accommodations.
- D) The South Park YMCA closure will also result in the displacement of gymnasium groups currently at that location. The YMCA has provided a list of 19 facility user groups which will be impacted by the closure of the gym; 18 of which are non-profit organisations that offer various services to the community. The YMCA is currently working on a transition plan for their users.

New Regional Gymnasium Update

The recent approval and construction of new gymnasium in other areas of HRM is relevant as some of the user groups currently accessing peninsula gymnasium are not located in the peninsula area. The opening of new gymnasium provides opportunities to relocate some users to those new facilities in order to assist in the overall transition and reduce challenges specific to the closure of peninsula gymnasium. The new facilities include:

Bedford Hammonds Plains: In 2010, the Province announced the construction of a replacement high school for the Charles P Allen (CPA) High School in Bedford. Regional Council approved the construction of a 10,500 sf gym as part of a large new community centre, attached to that school, which opened in September 2013.

The new gym, which is of sufficient size that it can be divided into two gyms, and the pending Joint Use Agreement at the school that will allow for community access to the new school gym, provides the equivalent of four new gyms. In addition, the old CPA School was converted to a

Junior High School and will provide additional weekend access to that gym. Previously, there was no public access to the CPA gym, so this change will provide increased usage. As a result, there will be community access to the equivalent of five new gymnasias.

Cole Harbour & Eastern Passage: In January 2013, Regional Council approved the enhancement of two new high school gyms – Cole Harbour District High School, and the new Eastern Passage High School. Each of these gyms will be enhanced from 8,400 sf to 10,500 sf in order to create the ability to divide it into two, thereby enabling additional access to gyms in both communities. The Cole Harbour gym will open in 2014 with Eastern Passage at a later date, still to be confirmed.

Dartmouth: Regional Council approved a renewal project for the Dartmouth Sportsplex on April 15, 2014. This renewal plan includes the construction of a 10,500 sf gymnasium, which will be able to be divided into two gymnasias. The timing of the construction will be confirmed when the Audit and Finance Standing Committee considers funding options.

St. Patrick's Alexandra – On May 13, 2014, Regional Council directed the sale of the St. Patrick's Alexandra site to the North Central Community Council Association (NCCC), pending the outcome of ongoing legal action and a public hearing on the sale. The NCCC's proposal includes the rental of the existing gymnasium on that site. While not a new gymnasium, if the transfer of the St. Patrick's Alexandra property to NCCC proceeds, the reopening of the St. Patrick's Alexandra gymnasium would provide additional gymnasium capacity.

Upon the opening of all of these facilities, HRM residents will benefit from accessing the equivalent of nine new gymnasias and two re-opened gymnasias. However, the timing is such that all of the facilities will open with differing schedules. With the permanent closure of two facilities on the peninsula, residents will have access to a net new seven gymnasias once the above noted facilities are completed. If the St. Patrick's Alexandra site is sold to the NCCC, the number of available gyms would further increase when that gym re-opens. All of these new gymnasias provide opportunities for increased usage in their respective communities. In addition, they allow for the reallocation of usage from other facilities, thereby balancing the usage across the network.

In addition to these projects, new school projects have also recently been announced for Peninsula Halifax, Dartmouth and Sheet Harbour. HRM is often provided the opportunity to enhance new schools with community space, with gym space being the most common enhancement. While this analysis has determined that additional gym space is not required on the peninsula, the new school will contain a gymnasium which should be able to be available for some community use under the updated Service Exchange Agreement between HRSB and HRM. In terms of the other announced schools, the approval of the Dartmouth Sportsplex project which includes a new gymnasium along with the data outlined in the CFMP indicates that an enhancement to the Dartmouth school is not required. Staff are currently completing analysis related to the Sheet Harbour school project.

Regional Analysis

While the attached analysis relates to gymnasias needs in the Peninsula area of HRM, a broader and regional assessment of all gymnasium facilities in HRM is required to properly determine the overall community needs for this asset type. The current approach for infrastructure assessments as outlined in the Community Facility Master Plan 2008 (CFMP) is to review recreation needs on a regional basis. A Regional assessment is particularly important when considering the potential competition impact from HRM’s gymnasium projects upon the operational sustainability of not for profit organizations such as the YMCA. The request to examine only one geographic area in HRM and the service delivery impact to those residents is not consistent with the CFMP and, as a result, does not provide a complete and optimal assessment of gymnasium inventory. However, this document outlines the findings of the assessment for the Peninsula geographic area in order to be able to provide Council with an initial assessment.

As approved by Regional Council in the 14/15 budget, staff will undertake an update to the CFMP which will provide an assessment of recreation infrastructure requirements on a regional basis. As a key component of recreation service delivery, gymnasium will be one of the major assets included in that work. The work will include an assessment of requirements, distributions, best practices and service standards.

Peninsula Gymnasium Analysis

The detailed Peninsula gymnasium analysis provided in Attachment 1 includes a district profile, inventory of gymnasium, review of relevant documents, data from user groups, impact of pending closures and development of key findings.

Available Usage

As noted in Attachment 1, there are 31 gyms on the peninsula. The majority of these gyms are owned by HRSB with a few owned by HRM. This results in approximately 836 prime time hours each week available for community access in HRSB and HRM gyms. This total does not include hours available at the university and DND facilities, which also contribute to the overall access and availability of gymnasium facilities.

Table 1 provides information on the peninsula gymnasium including the availability of hours and the current usage.

Table 1: Gymnasium Availability

Public Gyms				
Type of Gym	No. of gym	Total “Prime Time” hours available weekly	Total “Prime Time” hours booked weekly	Total “Prime Time” hours <u>Not</u> booked weekly
HRSB School Gyms	15*	44 hours per week x 15 gyms = 660 hours/week	235	425

HRM Gyms	4	44 hours per week x 4 gyms = 176 hours/week	140	36
Total	19	836 hours/week	375	461
“Prime Time” is generally defined as weekdays from 6 pm to 10 pm and weekends from 8am to 8pm				
Private Gyms				
Facility Name	No. of gyms	Usage Information		
Dalhousie University	8	Studley, Daltech, and Dalplex with 6 gyms are all available to the public, and provide varying levels of community access.		
Saint Mary’s University	1	Homburg Centre provides limited access to public.		
Department of National Defense	2	DND Stadacona and DND Dockyard Gyms are both heavily used by public.		

*One of the HRSB gyms is not available for use, reducing the total number.

Since several of the gymnasiums noted above are located in schools, they are used for educational purposes during weekday hours. As a result, the analysis was completed for “Prime Time” hours only. Some of the facilities listed, specifically those owned by HRM and privately owned, offer non-prime time usage, which is over and above the usage determined through the analysis. As noted in Table 1, the analysis determined that there are approximately 461 prime time hours currently not utilized each week on the Peninsula.

With the pending closure of the Bloomfield gym, current users will be required to relocate to alternate locations. Staff has been working with the groups to determine alternatives. As noted, some of the groups have been relocated for the long-term and others for the short term. Overall, the user groups may be required to alternate hours or days, but the analysis has determined that there is space available to book on the Peninsula. As the new gyms are completed and opened elsewhere in the Region, Peninsula availability may be enhanced as user groups from other geographic areas may relocate closer to their communities.

The current availability of prime time hours in gyms in the region indicates that there is not a requirement for additional gymnasium inventory on the Peninsula at the present time. However, there may be a requirement for a more effective model or mechanism for scheduling and allocating gym time to better utilize the total available hours for citizens. Further, the cost of HRSB schools has been raised as a concern for some groups. Both of these aspects are currently related to other work being done by staff related to the CFMP update and review of the HRSB agreement for the use of schools.

Some gymnasium user groups, such as five of the seven Bloomfield user groups not yet accommodated, have a more difficult time than others achieving access to gymnasium. These groups, predominately floor/ball hockey, indoor field hockey and cricket, are harder on the floors than other groups because of the equipment they use. As a result, this type of use is not permitted in all facilities. Due to this restriction in some facilities, these user groups have fewer options than others. Therefore, regardless of a better scheduling or access system as noted above, these groups are likely to have continued challenges unless policies can be changed. As part of the ongoing work with HRSB, acceptable usage by these types of sports will be explored.

Key Findings

Based on staff’s analysis, key findings are as follows:

1. Regional approach through the update of the CFMP will identify the gymnasia needs of all HRM citizens and provide recommendations to address any deficiencies;
2. Based on the current demand and usage of Peninsula gymnasia, there appears to be no immediate need for construction of additional gymnasia inventory for the purposes of traditional court uses. There is over 200 hours of prime time gym space available and, as noted, more rental opportunities will be available as user groups relocate to the new facilities being constructed throughout the Region;
3. There should be consideration given to a long-term solution for gym space for groups of primarily adult floor/ball hockey and indoor field hockey users. This type of use is not permitted in all facilities as a result of the equipment used; and
4. Although the current availability of prime time hours in gyms in the region identifies that there is not an overall requirement for additional gymnasia inventory on the Peninsula at the present time, there is a requirement for a more effective model or mechanism for accessing, scheduling and allocating gym time to better utilize the total available hours. This will be explored through the update of the CFMP and as part of staff’s review of the HRSB Service Exchange Agreement.

Update regarding Peninsula Recreation Facilities

Community Council also requested an update on the status of the projects outlined in the “Peninsula Recreation Facilities and Service Review”. Updated information related to the projects outlined in the Peninsula Recreation Facilities and Service Review is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Updated Peninsula Facilities Projects

Facility	Project Description	Approved Budget	Comments
St. Andrew’s Centre	Facility Retrofit	\$3.8 M in 2015/16	20-25years additional lifespan for the centre
Needham Centre	Replacement	\$250K in 2014/15; \$250K in 2015/16; and \$7M in 2016/17	Purpose-built replacement centre; Identified community needs; Enhanced service delivery; Overall operational efficiencies
George Dixon Centre	Program & services enhancements; facility recapitalization	\$40K in 2015/16; and \$600k in 2016/17	Reinvestment in Capital repairs

Citadel Community Centre	Design changes	\$300k in 2013/14 for consulting work on this and other buildings to determine requirements for completion	Review requirements for required changes to complete final components
Bloomfield Gymnasium	Disposal	N/A	Facility to be closed and sold

Next Steps

It is acknowledged that the pending closure of the Bloomfield gym has created a perception of a lack of adequate gymnasium facilities on the peninsula. There is available space at some of the other peninsula gymnasiums. Further, some of the users may be able to be relocated to gyms in other areas. Staff will continue to work with user groups to attempt to accommodate their programs in other available facilities.

Upon closure of both the YMCA and Bloomfield gymnasiums, staff will monitor the impact to other facilities and user groups. This will provide valuable data for the work on the CFMP as it relates to gymnasiums. Recreation needs related to gymnasiums is a key component of the scope of the CFMP. Stakeholder consultation will also provide important information on the future needs related to gymnasium facilities, programs and operations.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There is no financial implication associated with this report.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Data and feedback was collected from several user groups in assembling this report. Further stakeholder consultation will form part of the CFMP work, and consultation processes will be developed specific to each capital project as it comes forward.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

None identified.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Gymnasium Needs Assessment – Peninsula Halifax

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/SCcped/> 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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Original Signed

Report Approved by:

Denise Schofield, Manager, Regional Recreation & Culture, 490-6252



Gymnasia Analysis - Peninsula Halifax

Attachment 1

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Introduction

On May 14, 2012, Peninsula Community Council requested a report on the status of the Peninsula gym requirements in light of the closure of the St. Pat's Alexandra School, and the pending implications resulting from the planned closure of St. Pat's High School (Quinpool Education Centre), and the Bloomfield Centre gym. Since that time, the YMCA has also announced the temporary closure of their South Park Street facility, which also includes a gymnasium. Figure 1 outlines the two Peninsula gym closures since 2011 and the pending closure of the Bloomfield and YMCA South Park Street gym, at the time of writing of this report.

Figure 1: Peninsula Gymnasium Closures

Peninsula Gym Closures		
Closed	June 2011	St. Pat's Alexandra School
Closed	June 2013	Quinpool Education Centre (St. Pat's High)
Pending	May 30, 2014	YMCA South Park Street
Pending	June 30, 2014	Bloomfield Gymnasium

This document is an analysis of available data in order to determine the need for additional gymnasia inventory in this geographical location, potential relocations and the impact of the closures.

Data Analysis - CFMP

The Community Facility Master Plan (CFMP) was approved in principle in May of 2008 and is scheduled to be updated during the current fiscal year. The CFMP provides regional strategic direction for maintaining, enhancing, and revamping current facility infrastructure and building new infrastructure. It is integrated with all relevant HRM plans and strategies, includes socio-demographic research, best practices research, identified trends, and reflects a substantive community consultation component.

The CFMP presents guiding principles, implementation models for making decisions about existing and future facilities, and site-specific recommendations. It was built on several key themes:

- Integrated Planning – to serve the needs of the citizens the work is done collaboratively with the community, Council, and other HRM Business Units
- Distribution of Facilities – facility planning and development that takes into account the needs of the population and its distribution within HRM
- Activity Coverage – provision of a range of recreation opportunities for HRM residents and design facilities that promote participation
- Community Based Arts and Culture – ensure program opportunities are built into facilities whenever feasible
- Communities Building through Asset Management – evaluate models other than municipally operated recreation facilities

- Balance New Assets against Lifecycle Obligations – balance between investing in new assets and existing facilities

The CFMP outlines that the most effective approach for infrastructure assessments is to review recreation needs on a regional basis. The request to examine only one geographic area in HRM and the service delivery impact to those specific residents is not consistent with the CFMP and, as a result, does not provide a complete and optimal assessment of gymnasia inventory. However, this document outlines the findings of the assessment on the one geographic area in order to be able to provide Council with an initial assessment. A complete assessment of gymnasia facilities will be undertaken as part of the review of the CFMP in order to provide Regional Council with complete and appropriate data to make an informed decision on the future requirements for gymnasia service delivery.

Framework and Methodology

As a result of the motion of Peninsula Community Council, staff have reviewed gymnasium needs on the Peninsula. Specifically, this information is related to potential displacement of user groups as a result of the closure and pending closure of three gymnasiums on the Peninsula. The work was carried out in order to determine the following:

- whether current gymnasia user groups would be impacted negatively as a result of the closures;
- whether appropriate access for all of the current user groups could be created by reviewing and making potential changes to schedules and types of users in gyms; and
- whether a recommendation of planning should take place for construction of additional gym inventory on Peninsula Halifax.

The Gymnasia Needs Assessment was a data-driven analysis. The following key information was collected:

- number of gyms on the peninsula;
- types and sizes of gyms;
- types and numbers of user groups; and
- level of current usage of gyms on the peninsula.

Demographic and key stakeholder information included:

1. Demographic Information
 - a. Total HRM demographics including population numbers and ages;
 - b. Peninsula demographics including population number and ages;
2. Inventory of facilities
 - a. Identification of existing inventory;
 - b. Usage rates for typical weekly usage year-round; and
3. Regional New Gymnasia Update
 - a. Information related to several new gyms recently approved by Regional Council.

4. Interviews with gymnasia scheduling staff to obtain inventory and understanding of level of usage at existing facilities including: Inventory and:
 - a. Number of hours per week; and
 - b. Evidence related to whether there is capacity in the community to provide appropriate service delivery for HRM mandate requirements.

Background Documents

The following documents and resources were used to retrieve data for the analysis:

- Community Counts Statistical Information;
- Proposed Regional Plan (RP+5);
- Facility booking data;
- Community Facility Master Plan; and
- Peninsula Recreation Facility and Services Review.

Peninsula Region Community Profile and Context

Districts included in the Peninsula Region for the purpose of discussion in this report include:

- District 7 Halifax South Downtown
- District 8 Halifax Peninsula North
- District 9 Halifax West Armdale

The communities located on Peninsula Halifax are diverse. Defined by three municipal electoral boundaries, each district represents approximately 1/3 of the total population of the overall Peninsula. While public transit and active transportation play key roles in traffic flow for residents on the Peninsula, there is also a high degree of vehicular access to the Peninsula by citizens who travel from suburban and rural areas to work, visit or study on a daily basis.

Based on 2011 Census data, the population and dwelling counts along with their respective percentages are outlined in Figure 2.

Figure 2: District Populations

District	Population	Dwelling Units	% of total HRM population	% of total HRM dwelling units
7	23,910	16,183	6.1%	8.4%
8	25,111	14,616	6.4%	7.6%
9	27,173	13,545	6.9%	7%

Overall, the Peninsula Region represents 19.4% of the overall population, and 23% of the dwelling units in HRM.

Figure 3 provides a visual depiction of the total age group breakdown for the Peninsula Region.

Figure 3: Age Groupings

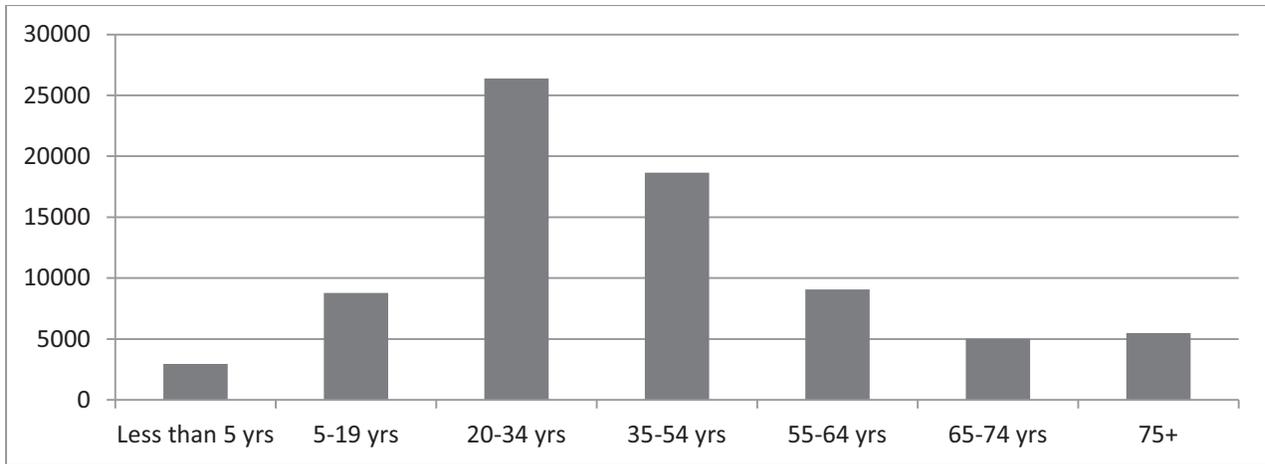
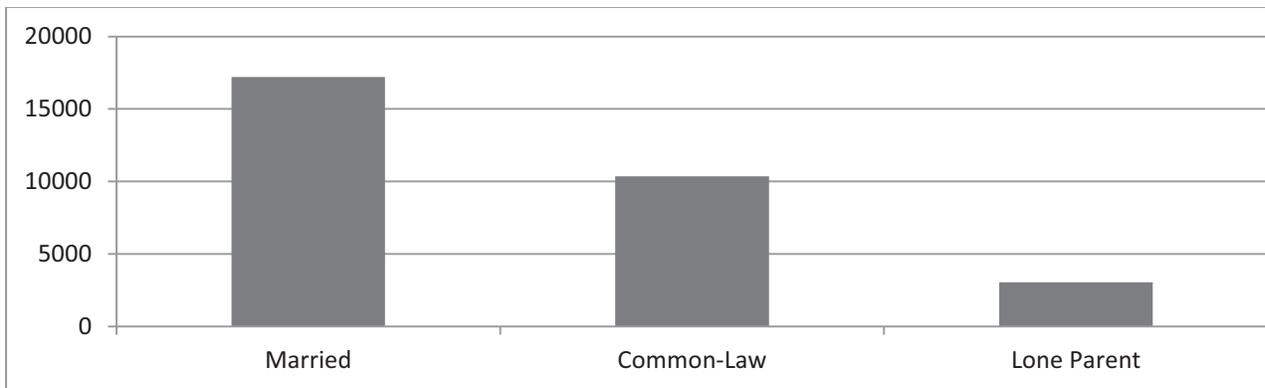


Figure 4 shows the family structure as broken down by married, common-law and single parent within the Peninsula Region.

Figure 4: Family Structure



Although Peninsula Halifax is the specific geographical area under review, not all user groups are based in that particular geographic neighbourhood. As a result, consideration was also given to new gyms recently approved by Council and new schools the province as they will have an impact on citizen user groups overall, including Peninsula Halifax gym users.

Current Peninsula Gymnasia Inventory

Currently, there are 31 gyms available for public access rentals on the Peninsula. Of the 31 gyms on the Peninsula, 4 are owned by HRM, 15 are owned by the Halifax Regional School Board (HRSB), 10 are owned by Universities, and 2 are owned by Department of National Defence (DND). All of the HRSB gyms (except Citadel High and Citadel Community Centre) are scheduled by HRM Facility Scheduling staff, and gyms located in HRM community centres

are scheduled by each individual community centre. The Universities and DND schedule their own facilities. Figure 5 provides the listing of these gyms.

Figure 5: Current Inventory

Name of Facility	Size (square feet)	Ownership
Needham Centre	4280	HRM
George Dixon Centre	3375	HRM
St. Andrews Centre	5100	HRM
Citadel Community Centre	8400	HRM
St Mary's Elementary*	2706	HRSB
Sir Charles Tupper Elementary	2623	HRSB
St Agnes Junior High	5919	HRSB
St Catherine's Elementary	2580	HRSB
St Joseph A McKay Elementary	2626	HRSB
St Stephen's Elementary	3902	HRSB
Cornwallis Junior High	4675	HRSB
Gorsebrook Junior High	5605	HRSB
Highland Park Junior High	2626	HRSB
Inglis Street Elementary	4100	HRSB
Joseph Howe Elementary	4150	HRSB
LeMarchant St Thomas Elementary	2501	HRSB
Oxford school	4109	HRSB
Westmount Elementary	5251	HRSB
Citadel High School	10,500	HRSB
SMU Homburg Centre (2gyms)	16,046 (2 gyms)	St. Mary's
Dalhousie Dalplex (6 gyms)	50,000 (total fieldhouse)	Dalhousie
Dalhousie Studley Gym	4300	Dalhousie
Dalhousie Daltech Gym	Not confirmed	Dalhousie
DND Stadacona Gym	Not confirmed	DND
DND Dockyard Gym	Not confirmed	DND

*Not utilized due to absence of caretaker

The analysis excludes the three gyms that were the catalyst for Peninsula Community Council's motion. Further, the YMCA Peninsula gym has not been included in the analysis due to the announcement of its pending temporary closure. The YMCA has been examining their programs and developing an interim programming strategy for their user groups, so it is difficult to determine the impact at this time.

The 31 gyms included in this analysis provide an overall per-capita (all ages) service provision on Peninsula Halifax, of one gymnasium for every 2458 citizens. When the same per-capita calculations are reviewed based on ages 0-54 years, the per-capita service provision on Peninsula Halifax increases to one gymnasium for every 1828 citizens.

These service rates are somewhat similar to the overall service provision of gymnasia in HRM, of one gymnasium for every 2065 citizens overall (all ages), or one gymnasium for every 1524 citizens ages 0-54 years. This information is assessed using Stats Canada age groupings. Since the Statistics Canada data includes areas that are outside the Peninsula (i.e. Fairview, Armdale, etc.), ratios of gym service provision have also been determined using the draft RP+5 population analysis. Since the RP+5 population specifically represents the Peninsula proper, assessment using that population provides gymnasia ratios specific to the boundary outlined for the Peninsula Community Council.

Using the draft RP+5 population, the provision of gyms to citizens is one gymnasium for every 2032 citizens (all ages). This is comparable to the overall HRM distribution of one gymnasium for 2065 residents. While the ratio for the 0-34 year category is not as close to the HRM range as the other ratios, the population distribution on the peninsula in this age category tends to be weighted towards the higher end of the population with a larger portion of young adults than youth residing on the peninsula. The mobility of this group, along with the prevalence of transit, walkability of neighbourhoods, and close proximity between facilities means that it is generally easier for users on the peninsula to access gyms than it is for users in more rural or suburban areas. In less dense areas, the distance between facilities can be significant often making it necessary for users to drive to facilities. As a result of these factors, gymnasia on the peninsula can be considered easier to reach and therefore more accessible for users. While the data shows similar ratios in some categories, those categories in which the ratios are lower than HRM overall are not as problematic on the peninsula as they would be in other areas due to the prevalence of density, proximity, transit and sidewalks which allow for easier access to these facilities than in other areas.

Figure 6 outlines all of the various gymnasium service provision per-capita ratios.

Figure 6: Per-capita Gymnasium Service Provision

Gymnasia Supply Comparison: Per Capita							
	Stats Can 2011		Total HRM Gyms	HRM Gyms Per Citizen	Peninsula Population**	Total Peninsula Gyms	Peninsula Gyms per Citizen
HRM Population	Total	390,308	189*	1:2065	76,194	31*	1:2458
	0-34 years	168,992		1:894	0-34 yrs	38,134	1:1230
	0-54 yrs	288,029		1:1524	0-54 yrs	56,685	1:1828
Proposed RP+5 Peninsula Population	Total	62,998					1:2032

*Does not include 23 small HRBS gyms, church gyms, Quinpool Education Centre gym, or Bloomfield gym.

**Stats Canada census information for Peninsula as indicated in the following areas:

a) Peninsula South-Downtown; b) Peninsula North; and c) Peninsula West – Armdale.

Peninsula Gymnasia Usage

While supply comparison throughout the region speaks to regional equity, the primary determinant of future need should rely upon facility availability (i.e. usage). Within the 31 Peninsula gyms included in the analysis, there are in total 44 hours of prime time available for usage, each week. Due to the variations on ownership and usage of the 31 gymnasia, there is no consistent usage in all facilities. As several of the gymnasia are located in schools, they are used for educational purposes during daytime hours, so daytime community access is limited. However, other facilities such as municipal, DND, and military inventory is available for various levels of public usage during the non-prime time hours. The available usage varies across the facilities but all offer prime time access. For this reason, and the fact that prime time usage is the highest demand usage, “prime time” access was used as the basis of the analysis.

Prime time for this analysis is defined as:

Monday to Friday 6:00pm – 10:00pm
 Saturday 8:00am – 8:00pm
 Sunday 8:00am – 8:00pm

It should be noted that currently the definition of prime time is not consistent across all gymnasium owners and schedulers. The definition of Prime Time above is a best practice, and is used for analysis purposes. Using this definition, Figure 7 provides a summary of the usage hours for the peninsula gymnasia.

Figure 7: Current Gymnasia Usage Summary

Public Gyms				
Type of Gym	Number of gyms	Total “Prime Time” hours available weekly	Total “Prime Time” hours booked weekly	Total “Prime Time” hours NOT booked weekly
HRBS School Gyms	15*	44 hours per week x 15 gyms = 660 hours/week	235	425
HRM Gyms	4	44 hours per week x 4 gyms = 176 hours/week	140	36
Total	19	836 hours/week	375	461

“Prime Time” is generally defined as weekdays from 6 pm to 10 pm and weekends from 8 am to 8 pm

Private Gyms		
Facility Name	Number of gyms	Usage Information
Dalhousie University	8	Studley, Daltech, and Dalplex with 6 gyms are all available to the public, and provide various levels of community access.
Saint Mary's University	1	Homburg Centre provides limited access to public.
Department of National Defense	2	DND Stadacona and DND Dockyard Gyms are both heavily used by public.

*One of the HRSB gyms is not available for use, reducing the total number.

Rental Fees

Figure 7 is an illustration of the amount of available prime time usage, as well as unused gymnasia inventory on the peninsula. For the most part, the inventory that is not used during prime time includes school gyms that do not normally have custodial staff coverage during those times. Approximately 230 of the weekly available prime time hours are on Saturdays and Sundays. The remaining hours are during weekday evenings. While these hours are available, due to the lack of custodial staffing, there is an increased cost to user groups to book them. Generally, user groups have indicated that the vacancies exist due to the additional costs required by the HRSB staffing models. Figure 8 outlines the HRSB rental fees (effective 2013).

Figure 8: Halifax Regional School Board Rental Rates

Not-for Profit Youth	Adult	Corporate or For-Profit
\$0.00/hour	\$44.00/hour	\$74.00/hour
Additional fees	Additional fees	Additional fees
Operations Rate: \$60.00/hour Door Monitor Rate: \$13.00/hour Open/Close Rate: \$90.00/hour	Operations Rate: \$60.00/hour Door Monitor Rate: \$13.00/hour Open/Close Rate: \$90.00/hour	Operations Rate: \$60.00/hour Door Monitor Rate: \$13.00/hour Open/Close Rate: \$90.00/hour

By comparison, rental rates for HRM gymnasia range from \$0.00 to \$104 per hour, depending on factors such as day of week, time of day, age of group and profit versus not-for profit status. Due to the staffing models in HRM facilities, the additional fees outlined in the HRSB rates are not required for HRM gym rentals. As a result, while the hourly rates between HRM and HRSB gyms are comparable, there is a significant difference caused by the additional fees charged associated from custodial and/or door monitor staff for the usage of HRSB gyms, particularly during the weekend hours when the open rate is charged. Since the majority of HRSB gym rentals during the week are not-for profit youth and the rental fee is waived, the impact of the additional fees tends not to be as prohibitive as it is for other groups.

While the costs for the usage of HRSB can be a deterrent, HRM and HRSB have a Service Exchange Agreement (SEA) which provides free access to 10,000 hours at HRSB gymnasia for HRM to provide recreation programming for the community. While the SEA outlines the access to the HRSB gyms, the SEA has not been consistently administered across all HRSB schools and

as a result, HRM has not been successful in being able to consistently access all schools, resulting in challenges for HRM to fully use the hours provided. The current SEA has been in place for several years and needs to be updated in order to better need both HRM and HRSB needs. HRM is currently reviewing the SEA along with community needs in preparation for negotiation of a new agreement with HRSB.

User Groups

Figure 9 identifies the groups usage hours in the HRSB gymnasiums

Figure 9: HRSB Gym User Groups

HRSB School Name	User Group	2013 – 2014 Weekly Usage (Hours)
Gorsebrook Junior High	Osprey Basketball	9
	Halifax Sport and Social Club	1
	Norwood Knights Basketball	4
Halifax Central Jr. High (Cornwallis)	Osprey Basketball	10
Highland Park Junior High	Special Olympics	3 (Jan – April)
Inglis Street Elementary	Canadian Martyrs Basketball	21.5
	Norwood Knights Basketball	3
	Real Life Church	5
Joseph Howe Elementary	Starlite Strutters	2
	Community YMCA Basketball	13.5
	West End Steelers Basketball	4
	Halifax Sport and Social Club	3
	Halifax Assoc for Community Living Sports	2
LeMarchant – St. Thomas Elementary	Canadian Martyrs Basketball	13
	Osprey Basketball	1.5
Oxford School	Canadian Martyrs Basketball	4
	Starlite Majorettes	2
	Osprey Basketball	3.5
	Special Olympics	2
Sir Charles Tupper Elementary	Osprey Basketball	9
	Norwood Knights Basketball	4
	Free access to users	3
St. Agnes Junior High	West End Steelers Basketball	16
St. Catherine’s Elementary	Free access to users	12
	West End Steelers Basketball	3
	Atlantic Stars Academy	2

HRSB School Name	User Group	2013 – 2014 Weekly Usage (Hours)
St. Joseph’s – Alexander McKay Elementary	Community YMCA Basketball Softball N.S.	3 3.5 (Jan – June) 12
	Free access to users	
St. Stephen’s Elementary	West End Steelers Basketball	5.5
	Halifax Sport and Social Club	1
	Canadian Martyrs Basketball	2
	HRM Programming	3
	Adult Recreation Basketball	1.5
	N.S. Female Lacrosse Provincial Team Training	2 (Bi-weekly)
Westmount Elementary	West End Steelers Basketball	12
	Westmount Basketball	3.5
	Special Olympics	2
	Metro Basketball	Weekends: Sat: 9-5 Sun: 9-6

As noted above, Saint Mary’s gym is not available for community access. The gymnasia at Citadel High School include both a school gym and a community gym. The data usage for Citadel High School and the HRM owned gymnasia are listed in the next 4 tables. Figure 10 includes hourly usage of the Citadel gyms.

Figure 10: Citadel School and Community Gym Usage

Gym – School Year	User Group	2013 – 2014 Weekly Usage - Hourly
Bob Douglas (Community Centre)	Citadel High School	40
	Hfx City Soccer	12
	Cdn Maryters Basketball	2
	Sackville Badminton Club	1.5
	Hfx South Soccer	4
	Inner City League	3
	Ultimate Frisbee	2
	Tigers volleyball	2
	Youth Basketball	2
	RCMP	8

Gym – School Year	User Group	2013 – 2014 Weekly Usage - Hourly
Bob Douglas A	HRM Programs	4.5
	Men’s Basketball	1.25
	Sackville Badminton Club	2
	Cdn Maryters Basketball	1.5
	Adult Wheelchair Basketball	3.5
Bob Douglas B	Bdm Club – Edmund Tan	4
	Cdn Maryters Basketball	4.5
Wilson Gym (School)	Citadel High School	60
	HRM Programs	11
Bob Douglas (Community Centre)	HRM Summer Camps	40
	Basketball Rental	1.5
	Men’s Basketball Rental	1.5
	Basketball Rental	1.5
	Thunder Selects	2
	Mr. D. athletic group	2.5
Wilson Gym (School)	Summer Basketball League	2
	HRM Summer Camps	40

Figure 11 shows the gym usage of groups at the George Dixon Centre and Needham Centre.

Figure 11: George Dixon and Needham User Groups

User Group Name	2013 – 2014 Weekly Usage (Hours)
George Dixon Centre:	
Chris Ryan Floor Hockey	2
Kevin Banfield Basketball	2
Halifax Sport and Social Club	2.5
FUTSAL	1.5
Clear Picture Basketball	2
Night Hoops	6
Wes Johnson Soccer	1.5
Floor Hockey	2.5
Open Gym	4.5
Blindsport	7.5
Church Group	3
Needham Centre:	
Basketball	1
Night Hoops	9.5
Floor Hockey	4
Jeff Winship Floor Hockey	2

Lynes Seeley Floor Hockey	3.5
Halifax Sport and Social Club	1
Zumba Class	2
Fitness Class	1

Figure 12 shows the annual usage in hours for the St. Andrews's Centre. As this gym is often used for special events by the diverse community it services, hourly usage at this facility tends to vary from other gyms.

Figure 12: St. Andrews User Groups

User Group	Usage Type	Total Annual Usage in Hours
Susan Clarke	Basketball	6
Leni Vanderjagt	Basketball	35
Canadian Martyers	Basketball	14
Ali Duale	Basketball	96
Kiyani Sobhani	Basketball	44
Halifax Independent School	Sports	230
Melba League	Basketball	20
Bayers Westwood Daycare	Sports	39
Thursday Night B-Ball	Basketball	72
Jeremy Parent	Basketball	76
HRM Recreation	Basketball	100
Bayer Westwood day care	Sports	60
Glen Macdonald	Soccer	6
Joseph Mitchell	Soccer	42
YMCA Newcomers	Sport	40
Canadian Paraplegic Ass.	Bocce	120
Charmaine Dymond	Gym activities	37
Bayers Westwood Family Resource	Sports	22.50
Maritime Muslim Academy	Sports	3
Super Nova Isis	Special event	24
Filipino	Basketball	36
George Beatty	Soccer	1
Roy Sree	Soccer	1
Hfx Shopping Centre	Sports	1.5
Isis Health & Wellness Fair	Special event	8.5
Suzy Hansen	Basketball	10
Free Believers in Christ	Sports	12
Special Olympics	Sports	6
Ben Good Speed	Badminton	18
Chris Wade	Basketball	10
Vener Quizone	Basketball	90

User Group	Usage Type	Total Annual Usage in Hours
Bahia	Special event	1
Community Rental	Special event/sports	86
Sri Lankan Assoc	Special event	10
Halifax Voice	Special event	7.5
CIBC Run for the Cure	Special event	2
Seedling Productions	film	15
Donna Lahmar	Basketball	6
Ham Radio	Special event	15
West End Steelers	Basketball	21
Election Canada	event	15
Joseph Dembogaj	Soccer	2
Halifax City Soccer	Soccer	32
Heart and Stroke Club	Special event	2.5
Edi Uriol	Soccer	14
St.Margarets Bay Slam	Basketball	1.5
Christopher Whitt League	Frisbee	2
Peter Sampang	Soccer	2
John Hartley	Basketball	2

Gymnasium Usage Types

Currently, there are many user groups, and many different types of activities that take place in municipal gymnasia. In most cases, the activities are sports such as badminton, basketball, volleyball and others, which require hard surface court for their field of play. Indoor soccer takes place in gymnasia as well, but would perform better on indoor turf. Currently, Soccer NS provides access to groups for indoor turf at their Mainland Common facility. Some non-sport activities also take place in gymnasia, but can also be accommodated in other non-gym locations.

While there are no official wait lists for user groups looking for gym rental space, at the beginning of each season, staff provide alternate rental opportunities to new groups and to historic groups requesting additional time and one-time events (adult and youth) that are unable to rent their desired gym times and/or locations.

Indoor ball/floor hockey and indoor field hockey are played in several gyms throughout HRM. These sports are recreational and primarily adult male. Because of the type of equipment required for play, many of the newer gymnasia in the municipality such as the Canada Games Centre, Bedford Hammonds Plains Community Centre, and Citadel Community Centre do not allow floor or ball hockey in their gyms as the equipment can damage or impact the floors. This is an important point as it relates to the impending closure of the Bloomfield Gymnasium. Due to the age and condition of the Bloomfield gym, these uses are permitted. Currently, there are 2 floor hockey groups and an indoor field hockey group at the Bloomfield gymnasium for which access to alternative locations / times is challenging because of the type of activity. HRM staff

will continue to work with HRSB and other facilities to attempt to accommodate these user groups.

New Regional Gymnasia Update

It is recognized that not all peninsula users will want or be able to transition to new gymnasia in other areas of the municipality. However, not all groups currently using the peninsula facilities are based on the peninsula. Therefore, there are some groups that may want to relocate to other facilities, especially those user groups that consist of participants that live off the peninsula. In these cases, the new regional inventory will assist in the overall transition and challenges specific to the closure of peninsula gym.

In recent years, Regional Council has approved the construction of or partnership on new facilities that include gymnasia which, when completed, will provide additional inventory for gym users in HRM. These include:

Bedford Hammonds Plains: In 2010, the Province announced the construction of a replacement high school for the Charles P Allen (CPA) High School in Bedford. Regional Council approved the construction of a 10,500 sf gym as part of a large new community centre, attached to that school, which opened in September 2013.

The new gym which is of sufficient size that it can be divided into two gyms, and the pending Joint Use Agreement at the school which will allow for community access to the new school gym, provides the equivalent of four new gyms. In addition, the old CPA School was converted to a Junior High School and will provide additional weekend access to that gym. Previously, there was no public access to the CPA gym, so this change will provide increased usage. As a result, there will be community access to the equivalent of five new gymnasia.

Cole Harbour & Eastern Passage: In January 2013, Regional Council approved the enhancement of two new high school gyms – Cole Harbour District High School, and the new Eastern Passage High School. Each of these gyms will be enhanced from 8400 sf to 10,500 sf in order to create the ability to divide it into two, thereby enabling additional access to gyms in both communities. The Cole Harbour gym will open in 2014 with Eastern Passage at a later date, still to be confirmed.

Dartmouth: Regional Council approved a renewal project for the Dartmouth Sportsplex on April 15, 2014. This renewal plan includes the construction of a 10,500 sf gymnasium, which will be able to be divided into two gymnasia. The timing of the construction will be confirmed when Audit and Finance Standing Committee considers funding options later this year.

St. Patrick's Alexandra – On May 13, 2014, Regional Council directed the sale of the St. Patrick's Alexandra site to the North Central Community Council Association (NCCC), pending the outcome of ongoing legal action and a public hearing on the sale. The NCCC's proposal includes the rental of the existing gymnasium on that site. While not a new gymnasium, if the transfer of the St. Patrick's Alexandra property to NCCC proceeds, the reopening of the St. Patrick's Alexandra gymnasium would provide additional gymnasia capacity.

Upon the opening of all of these facilities, HRM residents will benefit from accessing the equivalent of nine new gymnasia and two re-opened gymnasia. However, the timing is such that all of the facilities will open with differing schedules. With the permanent closure of two facilities on the peninsula, residents will have access to a net new seven gymnasia once the above noted facilities are completed. If the St. Patrick's Alexandra site is sold to the NCCC, the number of available gyms would further increase when that gym re-opened. All of these new gymnasia provide opportunities for increased usage in their respective communities. In addition, they allow for the reallocation of usage from other facilities, thereby balancing the usage across the network.

In addition to these projects, new school projects have also recently been announced for Peninsula Halifax, Dartmouth and Sheet Harbour. HRM is often provided the opportunity to enhance new schools with community space, with gym space being the most common enhancement. While this analysis has determined that additional gym space is not required on the peninsula, the new school will contain a gymnasium which should be able to be available for some community use under the updated Service Exchange Agreement between HRSB and HRM. In terms of the other announced schools, the approval of the Dartmouth Sportsplex project which includes a new gymnasium along with the data outlined in the CFMP indicates that an enhancement to the Dartmouth school is not required. Staff are currently completing analysis related to the Sheet Harbour school project.

Pending Displacements

As noted earlier, user groups from both the previously closed St. Pat's Alexandra and Saint Patrick's High schools have been successfully relocated to other facilities. Staff have reviewed usage at the Bloomfield Centre gym, and have been able to make arrangements at other locations to accommodate five of the twelve groups upon its closure. Long-term alternative locations have not yet been achieved for the remaining seven groups based on their preferred times and locations. Although alternatives have been discussed with all groups, some of the groups have determined that the alternatives do not meet their needs specific to preferred times or cost of the alternative space. Therefore, at this time, some user groups have chosen not to secure alternative locations. As outlined, alternative options are possible given the amount of prime time available on the peninsula, however, the alternatives may require changes to schedules or costs. For floor hockey and field hockey usage, determination of alternatives is more challenging on the peninsula, but relocation of some user groups to newly constructed facilities and other existing facilities, may result in options for these groups.

The seven groups not accommodated on a long-term basis are: two ball hockey groups, one indoor field hockey group, one cricket group, one soccer group, and two badminton groups. Some accommodations have been found for the groups for the short term summer months, with the exception of cricket which does not need summer access. For the reasons outlined, the groups with the largest challenges are floor hockey and indoor field hockey. Staff will continue to work with the gym users to attempt to achieve alternative locations and times prior to the commencement of 2014 fall season.

Regional Approach

While the attached analysis completed relates to gymnasia needs in the Peninsula area of HRM, a broader and regional assessment of all gymnasia facilities in HRM is required to properly determine the overall community needs of this asset. The current approach for infrastructure assessments as outlined in the Community Facility Master Plan 2008 (CFMP) is to review recreation needs on a regional basis. A Regional assessment is particularly important when considering the potential competition impact from HRM's gymnasia upon the operational sustainability of not for profit organizations. The request to examine only one geographic area in HRM and the service delivery impact to those residents is not consistent with the CFMP and, as a result, does not provide a complete and optimal assessment of gymnasia inventory.

A regional approach is the best means of providing optimum gymnasia service delivery through partnerships with HRSB, cooperation versus competition, enhancing access by alleviating barriers, and ensuring the financial sustainability. The CFMP update will provide staff and Regional Council with a renewed iteration of a strategic methodology and recommendations for the provision of recreation facilities and service delivery related to purpose-built recreation, sport, and leisure facilities. The proposed scope of the CFMP renewal includes analysis of what is working well and areas for improvement such as a transition from the current booking methodology to centralized booking to allow better access to all user groups as well as recommendations for improving the HRSB/HRM facility rental arrangement.

The updated CFMP will highlight partnership opportunities, identify the needs of all HRM citizens and how to best address these needs, and explore ways to remove barriers to allow recreational access to HRM facilities.

Key Findings

Based on staff's analysis, key findings are as follows:

1. Regional approach through the update of the CFMP will identify the gymnasia needs of all HRM citizens and provide recommendations to address any deficiencies;
2. Based on the current demand and usage of Peninsula gymnasia, there appears to be no immediate need for construction of additional gymnasia inventory for the purposes of traditional court uses. There is over 200 hours of prime time gym space available and, as noted, more rental opportunities will be available as user groups relocate to the new facilities being constructed throughout the Region;
3. There should be consideration given to a long-term solution for gym space for groups of primarily adult floor/ball hockey and indoor field hockey users. This type of use is not permitted in all facilities as a result of the equipment used; and
4. Although the current availability of prime time hours in gyms in the region identifies that there is not an overall requirement for additional gymnasia inventory on the Peninsula at the present time,

there is a requirement for a more effective model or mechanism for accessing, scheduling and allocating gym time to better utilize the total available hours. This will be explored through the update of the CFMP and as part of staff's review of the HRSB Service Exchange Agreement.

Conclusion

There are the equivalent of eight new additional gymnasiums in HRM, either newly opening (Bedford, Hammonds Plains - 4), approved for construction (Cole Harbour and Eastern Passage - 2), or pending Council approval (DSP - 2). In addition, the old CPA gym will be available for community usage, making a total equivalent of nine new gyms. With the permanent closure of two gyms on the peninsula, there will be a net of seven new gyms to access in the HRM, after the reopening of the YMCA facility. If the St. Patrick's Alexandra site is sold to the NCCC, the number of available gyms would further increase when that gym re-opened. The additional gymnasiums, combined with the fact that there are currently 461 prime time hours available for usage on the peninsula, is sufficient evidence to conclude that there is no requirement for further new gymnasia on the peninsula at this time. It should also be noted that in preliminary discussions, the YMCA has indicated those uses which are often not permitted in other gyms, such as floor hockey, would likely be welcome in the YMCA gymnasium.

Pending completion of the CFMP, the current and future gymnasia inventory appears to be sufficient to provide the appropriate service levels to the citizens of HRM. User groups that will be displaced as a result of the upcoming closure at the Bloomfield Centre and at the South Street YMCA have options to remain on the peninsula for their recreational gym usage. They may not, however, be able to secure the same times or pricing for their activities. The upcoming review of the Community Facility Master Plan will provide further opportunity to review and verify the service delivery requirements of citizens regarding this inventory type through both data analysis and direct consultation with user groups, sport representatives, and general members of the public. This analysis, completed on a regional basis, will provide a more optimal assessment of gymnasia inventory.