

**Community Planning & Economic Development Standing Committee
March 20, 2014**

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

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed

Brad Anguish, Director of Community & Recreation Services

DATE: February 10, 2014

SUBJECT: Aquatic Needs Assessment – Eastern Region

ORIGIN

October 30, 2012, Regional Council: MOVED by Councillor Fisher seconded by Councillor Lund that Regional Council request a staff report for a pool needs assessment for the East Region of HRM. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

- *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*, Section 79(1) including
 - (k) recreational programs; and
 - (x) lands and buildings required for a municipal purpose
- Community Facility Master Plan approved by Regional Council on May 27, 2008

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Community Planning & Economic Development Standing Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council:

1. Direct staff to work with the YMCA and municipal pool operators to attempt to accommodate the aquatics programming that will be lost due to the expected closure of the NSCC Akerley Campus pool; and
2. Direct staff to further explore the regional need for additional aquatic facilities as part of the Community Facility Master Plan update, subject to approval of the 2014/15 budget and business plan by Regional Council.

BACKGROUND

Direction for the development and operations of pools in the HRM over the past ten years has been primarily provided by three strategic reports:

1. 2004 - Indoor Recreation Facility Master Plan (IRFMP)
2. 2007 - Mainland Common 50 Metre Pool Study
3. 2008 - Community Facility Master Plan (CFMP)

All three documents offer specific commentary on aquatic centres and services in HRM.

Over the years, pool inventory has been relatively stable in HRM. However, in the past few years, there have been changes to the total recreation indoor pool inventory. In 2011, the Canada Games Centre which includes aquatic assets opened to the public along with the concurrent closure of the Northcliffe pool. Also in 2011, the pool located at the Nova Scotia Rehabilitation Centre was closed. Then, in 2012, the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) provided notice that the portion of the building housing the pool at the Akerley campus site was required for educational requirements and as a result the agreement with the YMCA for use of the pool for recreation programming would expire in 2014. Due to financial challenges at the same time, the YMCA requested financial support from HRM for the two year period. On March 19, 2013, Regional Council approved funding in the amount of \$140,000 to be paid over the two remaining two years of operation of the NSCC Akerley Campus pool. At the time of writing this report, the expiry of the agreement for the use of the NSCC Akerley pool resulting in the impending closure is still expected to occur at the end of 2014. Finally, in late 2013, structural concerns with the state of the pool area caused safety concerns and resulted in Dalhousie University restricting spectator access during swim meets.

Two of the pools impacted by the past closure and impending closure are located in the eastern region of the municipality. As the result of concerns related to this inventory reduction, Council requested a staff report on a needs assessment for aquatic inventory in the eastern region.

DISCUSSION

Current Situation

Currently, there are fifteen indoor and outdoor recreation pools in HRM. Of these, ten are HRM owned and are operated directly by HRM or by volunteer community groups. Geographically, the eastern region is broadly defined to include all communities east of the Halifax Harbour. Located within that broad area are five of the region's fifteen pools:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Dartmouth Sportsplex | HRM owned/community operated |
| 2. Cole Harbour Place | HRM owned/community operated |
| 3. Shearwater DND Pool | Government of Canada owned & operated |
| 4. Cole Harbour Outdoor Pool | HRM owned/community operated |
| 5. Nova Scotia Community College Akerley Pool | Nova Scotia Government owned/YMCA operated |

The remaining pools are located in the western and central regions and include:

6. Sackville Sports Stadium	HRM owned & operated
7. Canada Games Centre	HRM owned/community operated
8. Captain William Spry Centre Pool	HRM owned & operated
9. Centennial Pool	HRM owned/community operated
10. Halifax Commons Pool	HRM owned & operated
11. Needham Centre Pool	HRM owned & operated
12. Dalplex University Pool	Dalhousie owned & operated
13. YMCA Pool Peninsula	YMCA owned & operated
14. Stadplex at CFB Halifax	Government of Canada owned & operated
15. Bedford Outdoor Pool	HRM owned & operated

In addition to these pools, there are other privately owned pools that offer limited public access in addition to their regular users. Some examples of these include several hotels and the Waegwoltic Club. In addition to the facilities listed above, outdoor seasonal swim lessons and supervised swimming is provided by the Municipality at 25 beaches. Of these outdoor sites, 12 are located in the eastern region.

Regional Analysis

While the attached analysis completed relates to aquatic needs in the eastern region of HRM, municipal aquatic facilities are regional in nature, meaning that a broader and regional assessment of all aquatic facilities in HRM is required to properly determine the overall community needs of this asset. As regional facilities, consideration of partnership opportunities and facility requirements may extend beyond the boundaries and operation of HRM. As an example of facility issues that impact citizens regardless of the ownership of those facilities, Dalplex has implemented new safety policies and procedures related to spectator capacity in their pool and viewing areas. This is impacting competitive events traditionally hosted at that facility. A regional analysis will also ensure a complete assessment of potential opportunities for aquatic facilities and partnerships both across HRM and beyond typical municipal boundaries. Currently, the Municipality of East Hants is also exploring aquatic requirements so a regional approach would also ensure that external factors are appropriately considered.

The operation of the Akerley Pool was not sustainable. This was evidenced through the requirement by the YMCA for a subsidy from HRM for the continued operation of the pool during the final two year window. Extensive operating costs required by pools and competition from other facilities impacts the sustainability of these assets. Further, proper regional analysis to determine need for the inventory and appropriate siting are necessary for any future decisions on potential new pool infrastructure to ensure an oversupply of pool inventory is not provided. Oversupply and competition between facilities further erodes the sustainability of other recreation pool facilities, including those owned by HRM and those owned by other levels of government, universities and not for profit agencies. A balance of facilities across HRM is necessary to ensure the financial viability of the overall system that allows individual facilities to be sustainable.

Another aspect that has impacted the sustainability of pool inventory that needs to be assessed on a regional basis is the change in demographics and resident's life style choices. Healthier life style choices are being built into multi-unit residential buildings as well as office towers. These changes provide more options to HRM residents and are starting to impact the way residents recreate. As a result, they may also impact the overall recreation needs across HRM and should be factored into the CFMP update.

The strategic policy document that provides regional direction on HRM's recreation assets is the CFMP which was approved by Regional Council in 2008. This document is due to be updated during the current fiscal period and the current draft of the Community & Recreation Services business plan includes a deliverable for that work. As a result, it is recommended that strategic direction for aquatics be included in the updating of this policy document in order to outline the HRM service delivery requirements based on both recreation service delivery and competitive sport perspectives.

Recreation vs Sport Programming

It is recognized that there has been many variables that have in the past and currently frustrate groups such as Swim Nova Scotia, Synchro Nova Scotia and Dive Nova Scotia. The closure of Centennial pool during renovations and the safety requirements at the Dalplex have exasperated their challenges to host events, get adequate pool usage time and promote growth within their respective sports. While the analysis identifies that the existing inventory meets HRM recreation needs, competitive sport user groups have expressed concern with the availability of facilities for competitive and sport training purposes. Currently, competitive sports teams in all sectors (diving, synchro, swimming) have indicated that membership numbers could be increased if additional inventory was available. While municipal mandate does not directly cover competitive sports, competitive sports provide an enhancement to residents and the overall community. The process for the updating of the CFMP will be able to examine these frustrations and challenges such that, if appropriate, recommended strategies can be included.

Pool Analysis

In accordance with Council's direction, an aquatic analysis specific to the eastern region of HRM was completed. The detailed analysis (Attachment A) includes a district profile, inventory of pools, review of relevant documents, data from aquatic sport clubs, impact of potential pool closure and development of key findings.

The key findings are as follows:

- The pool located at NSCC Akerley Campus is expected to be closed effective December 31, 2014.
- Based on CFMP criteria and benchmark analysis, HRM's total aquatic inventory adequately meets the recreation needs of its residents.
- The Eastern Region is home to approximately one third of the total indoor pool inventory, one of three outdoor HRM pools, and just under half of the HRM supervised

beach locations. Further, Central Dartmouth is served by a total of 11 indoor pools within the CFMP drive time criteria of 20 minutes.

- A relocation plan for the users of the Akerley Pool should be developed and it has been indicated by all of the regional facilities that include pools that there is capacity to host even more participants, but that there are certainly some times, dates or days are limited.
- Competition exists in aquatic facilities between recreation programming and competition programming in all aquatic categories. This competition, along with the shifting not for profit and institutional landscape, creates a perceived or real shortfall in competitive aquatic access.
- Oversupply of aquatic inventory erodes the sustainability of the overall operation of all facilities, adversely impacting their financial viability.
- HRM is not mandated to meet competition aquatic needs, but does play a partnership role with other levels of government and private sector members.
- A Regional Approach is the best means of providing optimum aquatic service delivery through partnerships, cooperation versus competition, enhancing access by alleviating barriers, and ensuring the financial sustainability.

Based upon review of the data and CFMP criteria, the eastern region appears to be well served in terms of access to aquatic facilities and municipal mandated service delivery. When CFMP criteria is considered, residents of Central Dartmouth (for example) have access to the following indoor aquatic facilities within a 20 minute drive-time:

1. Dartmouth Sportsplex (DSP) (Central Dartmouth)
2. CFB Halifax Stadacona Pool (2.4 km away from DSP)
3. Centennial Pool (3.3 km away from DSP)
4. Needham Centre (3.6 km away from DSP)
5. YMCA Pool Peninsula (5 km away from DSP)
6. Dalplex University Pool (5.3 km away from DSP)
7. Cole Harbour Place (7 km away from DSP)
8. Shearwater DND Pool (7.5 km away from DSP)
9. Captain William Spry Centre (9 km away from DSP)
10. Canada Games Centre (10.5 km away from DSP)
11. Sackville Sports Stadium (14.5 km away from DSP)

Overall, the current indoor aquatic facilities, along with HRM's natural waterfront locations, appear to meet the recreational service delivery mandate of HRM to offer recreational swim activities, learn to swim programs, specialized aquatic programming such as diving, synchro, rehabilitation programming and exercise classes. In addition, the aquatic centres facilitate the skills and leadership development of a large population segment of motivated youth who volunteer and are employed in the delivery of the services as swim instructors and life guards.

However, a complete HRM analysis is necessary to fully assess the overall provision and distribution of aquatic services including the balance between recreational swim requirements and competitive aquatic needs. Consideration related to potential partnerships, alternate service delivery models to enable more citizens' participation in pool activities and the development of a scheduling system that would best balance facility needs of both recreational users, and competitive aquatic clubs should all form part of the analysis on a regional basis in order for HRM to ensure all HRM aquatic needs are being adequately and equitably addressed.

Next Steps

It is acknowledged that the expected pending closure of the NSCC Akerley Campus pool has added a perceived level of potential inadequate aquatic facilities in this geographic area. Even if a regional assessment of aquatic inventory had previously indicated the need for additional pool inventory, new inventory could not have been approved and constructed within the two year window outlined for the closure. As a result, the focus has been on relocation of the users to other aquatic facilities.

There is availability in alternate locations to accommodate many of these users. Both the Dartmouth Sportsplex and Cole Harbour Place have available times to accommodate many of their users. Further, there is also some opportunity for relocation of the users to other facilities in other areas of HRM. Staff will work with the YMCA to attempt to accommodate the aquatics programming that will be lost due to the expected closure of the NSCC Akerley Campus pool. The relocation of the programming to alternate locations will also provide a revenue boost to other facilities and fill currently underused or unused times.

Upon closure of the Akerley Pool and transition of the users, HRM will monitor the impact of the changes to other pools in HRM as well as the user groups. This will provide valuable data for the work on the CFMP as it relates to aquatic infrastructure needs. The scope of the upcoming review of the CFMP will be broadened to include specific analysis related to aquatic facilities in order to assess the delivery of aquatic services across the entire municipality. In addition, specific aquatic stakeholders across HRM will be included in the consultation process which will be undertaken in 2014 for the updating of the CFMP.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable at this time. Any assistance provided towards the current YMCA program relocation will be staff time only.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The following key stake-holder groups were engaged:

Swim Nova Scotia
Nova Scotia Amateur Diving Association
Synchro Nova Scotia

Dartmouth Sportsplex
Cole Harbour Place
NSCC Akerley Campus
Dartmouth YMCA
CFB Shearwater

Additional consultation will be undertaken as part of the update of the Community Facility Master Plan.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

None identified

ALTERNATIVES

The Community Planning & Economic Development Standing Committee could recommend that Halifax Regional Council:

Alternative 1: Not direct staff to work with the YMCA and municipal pool operators to attempt to accommodate lost aquatic programming. This is not recommended as relocation of as much programming as possible is beneficial to both the user groups and municipal pools.

Alternative 2: Direct staff to explore construction of a pool in the eastern region. This is not recommended as the analysis completed indicates that an additional pool is not required for municipal mandated recreation programming in the eastern region and a regional assessment of aquatic inventory should be completed as part of the CFMP update prior to any future decisions on aquatic inventory.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Eastern Region – Aquatic Centres Analysis

A copy of this report can be obtained online at [http:// www.halifax.ca/boardscom/SCcped/](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.

Report Prepared by: Cathy Nearing, Strategic Facility Analyst, Community & Recreation Services, 490-6542

Report Approved by:

Original Signed

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



Eastern Region: Aquatics Centres Analysis

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Introduction

Following the closure of the Nova Scotia Rehabilitation Centre pool in 2011 and the expected pending closure of the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) Akerley Campus pool in December 2014, Regional Council passed a motion on October 30, 2012 requesting a staff report for a pool needs assessment for the Eastern Region.

This document is an analysis of available data including commentary and feedback from user groups in order to determine the need for additional aquatic inventory in this geographical location, and the impact of potential recommendations.

Purpose and Rationale of the Data Analysis

The Community Facility Master Plan (CFMP) was approved in principle in May of 2008 and is scheduled to be updated during the upcoming 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 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 approach for infrastructure assessments outlined in the CFMP is to review recreation needs on a regional basis, in particular for those assets that are regional in nature. As aquatic centres are considered regional assets, 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 aquatic 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 aquatic facilities would more effectively 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 aquatics service delivery.

Framework and Methodology of the Analysis

The focus of the Data Analysis is to investigate how effective and efficient the provision of HRM mandated services are delivered at the various aquatic facilities, assess risks and develop a strategy for the immediate future. The geographical area under review is based on the eastern region, broadly defined as the area of the municipality east of the Halifax Harbour. The following tasks were completed to develop the contents of this Data Analysis:

1. Community Profile and Context
 - a. District populations and percentage profile
 - b. Dwelling unit counts and percentages
 - c. Age and family distributions
2. Inventory of facilities
 - a. Identification of existing community / private recreation / multi-district facilities in community
3. Consultation and data collection from the following key stake-holder groups:
 - a. Swim Nova Scotia and Swim Canada
 - b. Nova Scotia Amateur Diving Association and Dive Canada
 - c. Synchro Nova Scotia and Synchro Canada
 - d. Dartmouth Sportsplex
 - e. Cole Harbour Place
 - f. NSCC Akerley Campus
 - g. Dartmouth YMCA
 - h. CFB Shearwater

Background Documents

The following documents were also used as background:

- Indoor Recreation Facility Master Plan 2004
- Mainland Common 50 Metre Pool Study 2007
- Community Facilities Master Plan 2008
- HRM Regional Plan
- HRM Recreation Blueprint
- Extension Agreement between YMCA and NSCC 2013
- Community Counts Statistical Information

Eastern Region Community Profile and Context

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

- District 1 Waverly, Fall River, Musquodoboit Valley
- District 2 Preston, Chezzetcook, Eastern Shore
- District 3 Dartmouth South, Eastern Passage
- District 4 Cole Harbour, Westphal

- District 5 Dartmouth Centre
- District 6 Harbourview, Burnside, Dartmouth East

Based on 2011 Census data, the population and dwelling counts along with their respective percentages are outlined in Figure 1.

Figure 1: District Populations

District	Population	Dwelling Units	Percentage of Total HRM Population	Percentage of Total HRM Dwelling Units
1	20,756	8,922	5.3%	4.7%
2	25,960	12,978	6.7%	6.8%
3	27,439	12,172	7.0%	6.4%
4	25,109	9,634	6.4%	5.0%
5	26,412	14,949	6.8%	7.8%
6	24,699	12,799	6.3%	6.7%

Overall, the Eastern Region represents 38.5% of the overall population and 37.4% of the dwelling units in HRM.

Figure 2 provides a visual depiction of the total age group breakdown for the Eastern Region.

Figure 2: Age Groupings

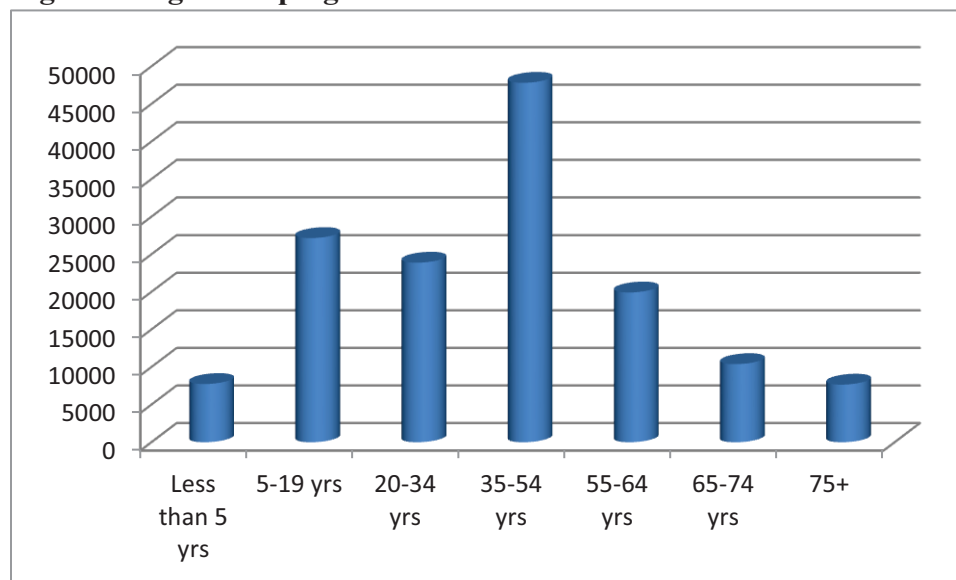
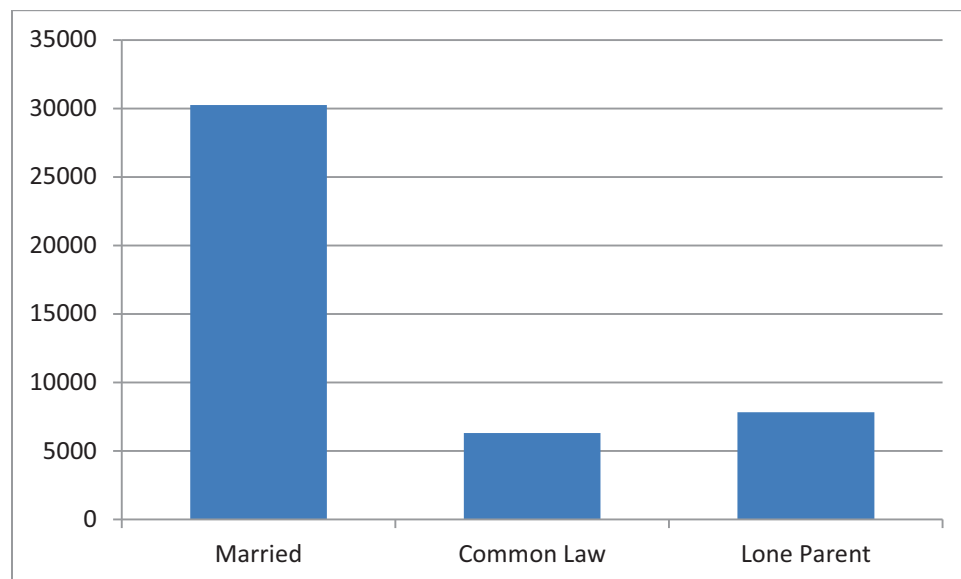


Figure 3 shows the family structure as broken down by married, common-law and lone parent within the Eastern Region.

Figure 3: Family Structure



Current HRM Aquatic Facilities

Figure 4 identifies the fifteen indoor and outdoor public entity owned and/or operated (University, Government or Community) recreation pools in HRM.

Figure 4: Aquatic Facilities

	Facility Name	Size	Ownership/Operation
1	Dartmouth Sportsplex	25 metres - 8 lanes Warmer training pool	HRM Owned/Community Operated
2	Cole Harbour Place	25 metres - 5 lanes Leisure pool	HRM Owned/Community Operated
3	Cole Harbour Outdoor Pool	25 metres - 6 lanes	HRM Owned/ Community Operated
4	Halifax Commons Outdoor Pool	Capacity for 60 people	HRM Owned and Operated
5	Sackville Sports Stadium	25 metres - 6 lanes	HRM Owned and Operated
6	Canada Games Centre	25 metres - 8 lanes Toddler pool	HRM Owned Community Operated
7	Captain William Spry Centre	25 metres - 4 lanes	HRM Owned and Operated
8	Centennial Pool	50 metres – 6 lanes	HRM Owned Community Operated
9	Needham Centre	20 metres – 5 lanes	HRM Owned and Operated

10	Bedford Outdoor Pool	25 metres	HRM Owned/ Community Operated
11	YMCA Pool Peninsula	18 metres 3 lanes to be upgraded to 25 metres 6 lane pool in 2016	YMCA Owned and Operated
12	CFB Halifax Stadacona Pool	27 metres – 4 lanes	Government of Canada Owned and Operated
13	Shearwater DND Pool	25 metres – 6 lanes	Government of Canada Owned and Operated
14	NSCC Akerley Pool	25 metres - 3 lanes	Nova Scotia Government Owned /YMCA Operated
15	Dalplex University Pool	50 metres – 8 lanes 1 and 3 metre diving boards 5 metre diving tower	Dalhousie University Owned and Operated

In addition to the pools listed above, there are private pools within HRM that offer additional aquatic access to citizens through memberships such as various hotels and the Waegwoltic Club and Pool.

HRM’s natural environment also provides numerous opportunities for swimming and water activities. HRM supervises swimming at many of these locations during the summer months which are accessible to all residents for recreation purposes and free swim lessons. HRM supervised beaches are noted in Figure 5.

Figure 5: HRM Beaches

Beach	Location
Albro Beach	Albro Lake, Dartmouth
Birch Cove Beach	Lake Banook, Dartmouth
Black Rock Beach	Point Pleasant Park, Halifax
Campbell Point Beach	Hatchet Lake, Halifax
Chocolate Beach	Chocolate Lake, Halifax
Cunard Beach	William’s Lake Road, Halifax
Dingle Beach	Fleming Park, Halifax
Government Wharf	Musquodoboit Harbour, Eastern Shore
Kearney Beach	Kearney Lake, Halifax
Kidston Beach	Kidston Lake, Halifax
Kinap Beach	Porters Lake
Kinsman Beach	First Lake, Sackville
Lake Echo Beach	Lake Echo, Eastern Shore
Long Pond Beach	Long Pond, Halifax
Malay Falls	Sheet Harbour, Eastern Shore
Oakfield Beach	Grand Lake, Oakfield
Penhorn Beach	Penhorn Lake, Dartmouth

Pleasant Drive Beach	Petpeswick Beach, Eastern Shore
Sandy Lake Beach	Sandy Lake, Bedford
Saunders Beach	Paper Mill Lake, Bedford
Shubie Beach	Lake Charles, Shubie Park, Dartmouth
Silversides Beach	Waverly Road, Dartmouth
Springfield Beach	Springfield Lake, Sackville
Webbers Beach	Lake Charlotte, Eastern Shore

Eastern Region Inventory

The eastern region is large and diverse, encompassing several districts as noted. Of the existing indoor pool inventory in HRM, five of the pools are geographically located within the eastern region. In addition, some areas of the region fall into the catchment area of those pools located in more central areas of HRM. For example, some areas of District 1 are within a 20 minute drive to the Sackville Sports Stadium and the Bedford Outdoor Pool whereas other areas within the region would not fall within this parameter. Therefore, the eastern region is served by a range of 5-7 pools depending on the specific location within the vast region. In terms of beaches, twelve (12) of the sites that HRM provides supervision are located within the Eastern Region.

HRM Aquatic Needs Criteria

The Community Facility Master Plan (CFMP) outlines criteria for the provision of regional recreation facilities in both urban and rural areas. The CFMP does not support the provision of aquatic facilities in individual community centres, but rather recommends they be located within facilities with multiple other recreation assets in order to maximize recreation service delivery to residents.

The criteria for aquatic service delivery in the urban areas of HRM are:

- 20 minute drive time or
- 15 minute public transit if applicable
- population base (draw area) of between 60,000 – 80,000

In terms of rural areas, the CFMP notes “ The rural areas are defined as all areas of the municipality that are not part of the urban, suburban, or rural commuter shed service areas. Rural areas typically have the lowest population density and the largest lot sizes, thereby resulting in significantly different indoor and outdoor recreation needs for their residents. While efforts should be made to create a strong sense of community in rural areas, the same scale of accommodation cannot be provided due to economics and reasonable forecasted use of the asset.”

Utilizing the CFMP criteria, overall regional HRM indoor aquatic inventory should total between five and six pools for optimum access for citizens. Upon upcoming closure of the NSCC Akerley pool, the regional inventory of indoor pools will be eleven, with seven pools owned by HRM. In terms of the eastern region, the area is home to approximately one third of the indoor pool inventory, one of three outdoor HRM pools and just under half of the HRM supervised beach locations. This is generally comparable to the distribution of the population and dwelling

units in the eastern region of HRM.

When CFMP criteria is considered, residents of Central Dartmouth (for example) have access to the following indoor aquatic facilities within a 20 minute drive-time:

1. Dartmouth Sportsplex (DSP) (Central Dartmouth)
2. CFB Halifax Stadacona Pool (2.4 km away from DSP)
3. Centennial Pool (3.3 km away from DSP)
4. Needham Centre (3.6 km away from DSP)
5. YMCA Pool Peninsula (5 km away from DSP)
6. Dalplex University Pool (5.3 km away from DSP)
7. Cole Harbour Place (7 km away from DSP)
8. Shearwater DND Pool (7.5 km away from DSP)
9. Captain William Spry Centre (9 km away from DSP)
10. Canada Games Centre (10.5 km away from DSP)
11. Sackville Sports Stadium (14.5 km away from DSP)

For rural residents, drive distances are longer to indoor aquatic facilities. Due to the variety of rural locations in the eastern region, indicative distances are more challenging to capture. Outdoor summer waterfront programming is provided by HRM at some sites in the rural areas, including:

1. Government Wharf, Musquodoboit Harbour
2. Kinap Beach, Porters Lake
3. Lake Echo Beach, Lake Echo
4. Malay Falls, Sheet Harbour
5. Oakfield Park, Grand Lake
6. Pleasant Drive Beach, East Petpeswick Lake
7. Webber's Lake, Lake Charlotte

Nova Scotia Community College Akerley Campus Pool

On December 31, 2012, the NSCC, HRM and YMCA concluded a 5 year contract in which NSCC provided the YMCA with access to the Akerley campus aquatic facility at no rental charge and HRM provided a subsidy to support affordable community access. The Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) then provided notice that the portion of the building housing the pool at the Akerley campus site was required for educational requirements and as a result the agreement with the YMCA for use of the pool for recreation programming would not be possible past 2014. On May 2, 2013, an Extension Agreement was signed for the use of the pool that will expire on December 31, 2014. The YMCA stated mission for this pool is to positively impact the health and wellbeing of citizens of all ages, abilities, social and economic background with a focus on serving the children and youth who live and go to school in the Dartmouth East area and may face social, financial and transportation barriers to accessing alternate HRM swimming pool facilities.

Since the NSCC can no longer provide use of the pool space, the pool is expected to be closed in December 2014. Even if the NSCC did not require the space, the pool facility is not sustainable and there is no realistic opportunity to increase revenues and contain the capital costs to the point where breakeven capability is achievable.

Figure 6 shows the Annual usage data of the Akerley Pool:

Figure 6: Akerley Pool Annual Usage by Individual Participants

Annual Number of Participants enrolled in Aquatic Instructional Sessions	
Preschool	105
School Age	433
Adult	29
Total	567
Number of Subsidized Aquatic Participants	
Preschool	18
School Age	310
Adult	6
Total	334
Aquafit Participants	1,675
Adult Lane Swim	1,698
Private Swim Lessons	432
Children, Youth & Adults Open Swim	13,800
NS Life Saving Society Swim To Survive	154
Total	17,759
Total Number of Annual Visits	18,660

This usage does not include usage of the NSCC Akerley pool by rental groups including the Manta Ray Swim Club. Figure 7 lists the NSCC Akerley Pool user rental groups.

Figure 7: Akerley Pool Rental Groups

Group Name	Pool Usage
Manta Rays Swim Club	9.5 hours weekly (September to June)
Mic Mac Aquatic Clubs	3 hours weekly (November to March)
Banook Canoe Club	3 hours weekly (November to March)
East Dartmouth Boys and Girls Club	1 hour weekly (September to June)
Cole Harbour Boys and Girls Club	1 hour weekly (January to April)
NS Special Olympics	1 hour weekly (September to June)
Synchro NS	9 hours annually (plus random rentals)
Growing Places Day Care	9 hours annually (July & August)
Bosom Buddies of NS	8 hours annually
Northwood Community Centre	9 hours annually (July & August)
Main Street Children's Centre	10 hours annually (July & August)
NS Life Saving Society	Random (January to December)
Kinderville Day Care	Random (July & August)
NSCC	Random (January to December)
Cole Harbour Hurricanes	Random (January to December)
Senobe	Random (January to December)
Abenaki	Random (January to December)
Community Resident Birthday Parties	4 hours weekly (January to December)

Relocation Opportunities

There are two HRM multi-use facilities (Dartmouth Sportsplex and Cole Harbour Place) that expect to be able to accommodate the needs for all the current user groups of this pool. While large aquatic centres such as Dartmouth Sportsplex have significantly more visits than that of the NSCC Akerley pool as outlined in Figure 8, they also offer more amenities, municipal mandated services and varied aquatic facilities resulting in more flexibility to accommodate additional users than stand-alone facilities.

Figure 8: Dartmouth Sportsplex Annual Individual Usage

Number of Participants enrolled in Aquatic programs annually from Sept 1 – Aug 31, 2013	
Preschool	1183
School Age	1524
Adult	121

Leadership Programs	224
Annual Number NS Life Saving Society Swim To Survive Participants	152
Total	3204
Number of Special Group Aquatic Program Participants per year ie Helping, Encouraging, Mentoring Serving classes & Daycares	
Participants	272
Total	3476
Used week average from Nov 1-7 2013	
Annual Number of Adult Swim Participants	68 224
Annual Number of Children and Youth Swim Participants	21 632
Total	89 856
Total number of Annual Visits	93 332

The following rentals are not included in Figure 8:

- 410 party groups utilized the pool space from April 1-March 31, 2013.
- 26 user groups utilized the pool space monthly from April 1-March 31, 2013.
- In addition to these groups, the Dartmouth Whalers swim 10 months of the year with 65 Adult participants swimming 3 practices a week.
- The Dartmouth Crusaders with 123 youth participants swim on average 6 times per week.

The Dartmouth Sportsplex and Cole Harbour Place are located 5.5 km and 4.4 km, respectively, from the NSCC Akerley site. As a result, both Dartmouth Sportsplex and Cole Harbour Place can be considered eastern region alternatives for the current users of the YMCA programs at the NSCC Akerley campus. In addition, at 3.3 km away, Centennial Pool is also a potential alternative. While Dartmouth Sportsplex could be considered a more convenient option as a result of a direct 9 minute transit route to NSCC Akerley, Cole Harbour Place is also accessible by transit from the NSCC Akerley location. Both Dartmouth Sportsplex and Cole Harbour Place have the capacity to accommodate the users of the Akerley Pool aquatic instructional sessions, birthday party rentals, aquafit classes, lane swims and open swims. The multi-district facilities are able to offer these services through the addition of program time slots, filling existing

openings and hiring more staff to supervise more users. Further, the relocation of users to these two facilities will provide additional revenue as well as a more viable and effective use of existing inventory through the filling of currently vacant capacity. In addition, the recent re-opening of the Centennial pool will provide additional capacity for the many sport teams, Not for Profit groups and community members who have relocated to these facilities for interim use during the renovation. As a result, the transition back to Centennial Pool will re-open capacity at both Dartmouth Sportsplex and Cole Harbour Place.

It should be noted that all the NSCC rental groups can also be fully accommodated in a relocation plan when the pool closes in 2014, with the exception of the Manta Rays swim club members. The membership capacity of the existing swim teams at the multi-district facilities and the Shearwater Pool does not appear to allow for the entire swim club to transition as a separate club to a new facility. Also, the pool time and swim lanes required for a separate and additional swim team is not available to ensure it has the necessary access.

Aquatic Sport Clubs

Figure 9 shows data collected from Swim Canada and comparable cities to examine the amount of aquatic infrastructure available for swim teams and the amount of swim clubs in each city:

Figure 9:

London Ontario	Municipal Owned	50 metre pool - 8 lane 25 metre pool - 6 lane 25 whale shaped pool
	Swim Clubs	15 in total
Regina, Saskatchewan	Municipal Owned	65 metre pool - 8 lane 25 metre pool - 6 lane 20 metre pool
	Swim Clubs	8 in total
Victoria, British Columbia	Municipal Owned	50 metre pool - 8 lane 25 metre pool 25 metre pool – 8 lane
	Swim Clubs	5 in total
St. John’s, Newfoundland	Municipal Owned	50 metre outdoor pool 25 metre pool 18 metre pool
	Swim Clubs	7 in total
Eastern Region HRM, Nova Scotia	Municipal Owned	1-50 metre pool 5 - 25 metre pools 1 - 20 metre pool
	Swim Clubs	8 in total

As noted in Figure 9, eastern region based swim teams have access to seven municipally owned indoor pools within the CFMP drive time radius. In addition to these municipally owned indoor pools, there are also four other indoor pools owned by Department of National Defence,

Dalhousie University and the YMCA Halifax/Dartmouth, respectively. With eight swim teams, the number of swim teams in eastern HRM alone is comparable to the total number in other cities. Unless alternate location for the club can be determined, integration of participants into other clubs or consolidation with another club may be required upon the closure of the NSCC Akerley pool. As noted in Figure 10, the Dartmouth Manta Rays have 42 members with similar ages to several other clubs.

Figure 10 details the membership and usage data for each swim club by location in the Eastern Region:

Figure 10:

Club Name	Size	Age	Facility	Weekly Usage Hours
Shearwater Bluefins	37	7-20	12 Wing Shearwater	14 – for 11 mos
Dartmouth Manta Rays	42	7-20	Akerley Campus	9.5 – for 11 mos
Dartmouth Crusaders	158	7-23	Dartmouth Sportsplex and Centennial	20 – annually 3 – annually
Canadian Forces East	24	18-80	12 Wing Shearwater	5 – for 11 mos
Dartmouth Whalers	81	18-80	Dartmouth Sportsplex	3.5 – for 11 mos
Cole Harbour Hurricanes	58	5-18	Cole Harbour Place	46 – June to Aug 23 – Sept to May
Banook Lakers	19	5-18	Dartmouth Sportsplex	4 – June to Aug
Colby Sailfish	70	5-18	Cole Harbour Outdoor Pool and Tennis Courts	25 – June to Aug

Removing Financial Barriers

While some of the current programming at the NSCC YMCA is subsidized, HRM also offers support for users through the Jumpstart/HRM Rec Kids program and the Thrive Program through the Provincial Government.

The Province of Nova Scotia Thrive Plan includes a facility access grant to increase the number of free, unstructured recreation opportunities for children, youth and families thus making it easier to be physically active. This is a new program to improve access to major sport and recreation facilities including pools, arenas, multipurpose recreation centres, civic centres and community centres. Also, there is a focus on physical activity partnership opportunities for after-school programs for junior high students which can be of benefit to the rural HRM communities. HRM is partnering with the Province to maximize the benefits of the Thrive Plan at large HRM facilities which include pools. The Dartmouth Sportsplex facility is included in the initial implementation of the Thrive Program.

Canadian Tire Jumpstart/HRM RecKids is an existing partnership that aims to provide financial assistance to as many children and youth as possible who, due to lack of funds, are not able to participate in sport, art, cultural or recreational activities and programs. There were a total of 27

individuals who used this program for a variety of programs/classes at aquatic facilities in the Eastern Region for 2013, with a savings of approximately \$2,400 at the following locations:

Dartmouth Sportsplex – 21 registrations (\$1,636)

Cole Harbour Place – 4 registrations (\$347)

Shearwater – 2 registrations (\$400)

While there was financial support provided for other recreation opportunities, with a budget of approximately \$75,000 and capacity to assist several hundred children, there is the ability to increase the number of participants who benefit from this program for aquatic programming.

Also, the Dartmouth Sportsplex has commenced a pilot program whereby programs are made available to designated groups whose members experience financial barriers at a reduced rate. This takes place by awarding a certain number of “coupons” to each group, which in turn awards them to people/families in need. This is done the week after regular registration and quite simply targets those program spaces still available after regular registration takes place using surplus inventory. The coupons cost can be free or a small portion of the cost for the program. This program will be monitored, analyzed and, dependant on the result may be implemented in other HRM facilities to further enhance access to recreation activities.

Regional Approach

Overall, the analysis found that based on the criteria approved in the CFMP, the eastern region has good access for recreation aquatic programming in the existing aquatic inventory. While the analysis completed relates to aquatic needs in the Eastern Region, municipal aquatic facilities are regional in nature, meaning that a broader and regional assessment of all aquatic facilities in HRM is required to properly determine the overall community needs of this asset. As regional facilities, consideration of partnership opportunities and facility requirements may extend beyond the boundaries and operation of HRM. As an example of facility issues that impact citizens regardless of the ownership of those facilities, Dalplex has implemented new safety policies and procedures related to spectator capacity in their pool and viewing areas. This is impacting competitive events traditionally hosted at that facility. A regional analysis will also ensure a complete assessment of potential opportunities for aquatic facilities and partnerships both across HRM and beyond typical municipal boundaries. Currently, the Municipality of East Hants is also exploring aquatic requirements so a regional approach would also ensure that external factors are appropriately considered.

Further, the operation of the Akerley Pool was not sustainable. This was evidenced through the requirement by the YMCA for a subsidy from HRM for the continued operation of the pool. Extensive operating costs required by pools and competition from other facilities impacts the sustainability of these assets. Proper regional analysis to determine need for the inventory and appropriate siting are necessary for any future decisions on potential new pool infrastructure to ensure an oversupply of pool inventory is not provided. Oversupply and competition between facilities further erodes the sustainability of other recreation pool facilities, including those owned by HRM and those owned by other levels of government, universities and Not for Profit

agencies. A balance of facilities across HRM is necessary to ensure the financial viability of the overall system that allows individual facilities to be sustainable.

Competitive vs Recreation Requirements

The analysis has determined that the Eastern Region has sufficient aquatic facilities pursuant to the CFMP criteria in the municipal mandated aquatic service delivery. While there may be perceived or real shortfalls for the competitive users of the aquatic facilities, the HRM mandate as described in the CFMP is met with the current inventory. While provision of competitive programming does not fall to HRM, competitive programming is a key component in an active and healthy city. Competitive programming requires strong partnerships between Not for Profit groups, Aquatic Sport Clubs, Universities, and all three levels of governments in order to ensure appropriate competitive programming is achievable and balanced with recreation usage. The opportunity to develop partnerships will be a core principle in the renewal of the CFMP update process.

While initial information related to the various competitive aquatic usages has been captured in this initial analysis as follows, a full regional assessment of each would be a fundamental component of the updated CFMP.

Swim Nova Scotia

Currently the position communicated to HRM from the Swim Clubs is they are maxed to capacity and unable to accept new members due to limited pool space. In addition, Swim Nova Scotia has indicated that they have been requesting a 50m pool with sufficient deck and spectator space for several years. Newly interpreted safety standards at the Dalhousie pool has highlighted the fact that appropriate accommodation for both field of play and spectator capacity for long track aquatic competition is limited in HRM. The recent reopening of the 50 metre Centennial pool allows for an appropriate field of play but does not have adequate spectator accommodation. Many large urban regions in the country have one 50 metre pool per 500,000 of population; whereas HRM has 2, one located at Centennial and one owned by Dalhousie university. A more detailed analysis is required and will be part of the upcoming renewal of the CFMP.

Nova Scotia Diving Association

There are no facilities in the Eastern Region area that have a 3-meter diving board and the Dartmouth Sportsplex and Cole Harbour Place have a single 1-meter board each. The Cole Harbour Outdoor Pool and Tennis Courts pool (CHOPTCA) has a single 1-meter board that can be used during the summer months. The group states that having a facility in Dartmouth with both a 1-meter and 3-meter board would potentially allow them to have a club in the eastern region of HRM, as they had one there approximately 16 years ago. A diving club could utilize anywhere between 6-12 hours a week if they had both recreation and provincial competitive level programming.

Synchro Nova Scotia

There are currently 3 clubs within HRM; Atlantis Synchro based out of the Canada Games Centre/Dalplex, Aqua Nova Synchro based out of the Centennial Pool and Oceana Synchro based out of the Akerley Pool who swim from September to May each year. These groups have expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of available pool hours for training, practice and event hosting. Other challenges identified were cost of pool time, limited spectator viewing, pool space not sufficient enough for team warm ups, no bulkheads for teams to walk on prior to competition, limited deck space to accommodate judging and pools are too shallow to host National events.

Key Findings of Analysis

- The pool located at NSCC Akerley Campus is expected to be closed effective December 31, 2014.
- Based on the CFMP criteria and benchmarking analysis, HRM's aquatic inventory adequately meets the recreation needs of its residents for the eastern region.
- The Eastern Region is home to approximately one third of the total indoor pool inventory, one of three outdoor HRM pools, and just under half of the HRM supervised beach locations. Further, Central Dartmouth is served by a total of 11 indoor pools within the CFMP drive time criteria of 20 minutes.
- A relocation plan for the users of the Akerley Pool should be developed and it has been indicated by all of the regional facilities that include pools that there is capacity to host even more participants, but that there are certainly some times, dates or days are limited.
- Competition exists in aquatic facilities between recreation programming and competition programming in all aquatic categories. This competition along with the shifting not for profit and institutional landscape creates a perceived or real shortfall in competitive aquatic access.
- Oversupply of aquatic inventory erodes the sustainability of the overall operation of all facilities, adversely impacting their financial viability.
- HRM is not mandated to meet competition aquatic needs, but does play a partnership role with other levels of government and private sector members.
- A Regional Approach is the best means of providing optimum aquatic service delivery through partnerships, cooperation versus competition, enhancing access by alleviating barriers, and ensuring the financial sustainability.

Conclusion

The analysis supports the recommendation that a regional HRM approach to review the aquatic inventory is important in order to properly assess the future aquatic needs. The strategic document for recreation inventory, the CFMP, will be updated during the current fiscal year, pending the approval of the 2014/15 budget.

Through the update of the CFMP, staff will research best practices and trends, document and make recommendations on all opportunities to develop partnerships, create avenues for enhanced

accessibility, and provide ideas to assist in the promotion of a healthy lifestyle for all HRM residents.