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Halifax Regional Council

July 06, 2004

*July 13, 2004*

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

**SUBMITTED BY:**

*Betty MacDonald*

**Betty MacDonald, Acting Chief Administrative Officer**

**DATE:** June 28, 2004

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

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### **ORIGIN**

The supplementary information provided in this report is highlighted in bold font and represents changes made to the staff report of June 08, 2004.

This supplementary report is further to Council's request made at the Regional Council meeting of June 08, 2004 requesting staff to review their original recommendations (please see the Recommendations section below) in consideration of:

- a) the HRM/HRSB Service Exchange Agreement, adopted by Council on June 22, 2004; and
- b) the Indoor Recreation Facility Master Plan adopted by Council on June 29, 2004.

The issues reported in the staff report of June 08, 2004 (reproduced herein) originated with an invitation from the Halifax Regional School Board (HRSB) for Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) to participate in the provision of enhancements to the new high school for peninsular Halifax, which will replace Queen Elizabeth (QE) and St. Patrick's High Schools (St. Pat's), proposed for opening in September 2006.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is hereby recommended that Halifax Regional Council approve:

- 1) a request to the Nova Scotia Department of Education, through the SST process, to direct approximately \$30,000 (plus HST, if applicable) as a field improvement allocation (**i.e., one-time capital installation of an irrigation system**) to the Trollope St. Field (South Common) as part of the Province's standard new school construction program.

- 2) a request to the Nova Scotia Department of Education, through the SST process, to reserve appropriate land adjacent to the new gym (i.e., as prescribed by the Department of Education in Attachment -A- of this report) for *potential* gym expansion as a community enhancement subject to the conditions identified on page four (4) of this report.

## **BACKGROUND**

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

HRM staff have therefore reviewed the request to fund enhancements to the new high school. Three enhancements were considered:

- 1) an auditorium,
- 2) a **second** gymnasium (over-and-above the gym that is proposed for construction), and
- 3) improvements to the Trollope St. field (i.e., at the South Common) across from the existing NSCC campus.

The Provincial Department of Transportation and Public Works (T&PW), which is responsible for managing the demolition of the NSCC building, site preparation, and construction of the new high school on behalf of the DOEd, expects to select a design architect in July 2004, subsequent to completion of a design competition. **The next School Steering Team (SST) meeting is scheduled for July 28, 2004 when SST members will meet with the architect.**

## DISCUSSION

### 1. AUDITORIUM

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 2. GYMNASIUM

The proposal to fund the construction of a community-use gymnasium - with an indicative cost of \$1.35 million - to be added to the new high school is not recommended **at this time**. **It is proposed, however, that Council direct staff to request the appropriate Provincial Departments, through the SST process, to:**

- 1) **reserve appropriate land adjacent to the new gym (i.e., as prescribed in Attachment -A-) for potential future gym expansion;**
- 2) **approve such potential expansion subsequent to a review via the Indoor Recreation Facility (IRF) Master Planning framework, as adopted by Council on June 29, 2004; (whereby such review is conducted no later than September 01, 2004);**
- 3) **request the architect to plan for such future expansion within the architectural concepts and drawings (including engineering considerations) to facilitate potential future connections to adjacent multi-purpose-type rooms, washrooms, locker rooms, storage facilities, and the school's physical plant (to be designed to accommodate such potential addition.)**

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

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

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

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<sup>2</sup> The IRF Master Plan intends to provide recommendations to Council regarding the strategic direction and operation of the development, acquisition, and retirement of indoor recreation facilities in HRM. The IRF Master Plan, now in its final draft, is to be presented to Council in the immediate future.

It is anticipated that **the approved**<sup>3</sup> “Service Exchange Agreement” between HRM and the Halifax Regional School Board (HRSB) will improve *access* to school gyms and other facilities. Future uses will be monitored closely as a result of the agreement, but for now, it is recommended that this experience be considered in this decision.

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

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

### 3. TROLLOPE STREET FIELD

It is recommended that the Trollope St. (South Common) field be rehabilitated by an injection of up to **\$30,000** (+ HST, if applicable) for an irrigation system. **This capital amount is recommended to be funded by the Province as part of their standard field improvement allocation.**

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

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

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<sup>3</sup> Approved by Regional Council on June 22, 2004.

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

**As an alternative to the above recommendation, Regional Council may direct RPAM staff to include the Trollope Street field as a location for *priority* consideration under HRM's Field Irrigation Program.**

The Trollope St. (South Common) field is currently not in use from a booking standpoint. The field has deteriorated as a result of over-use since it was last rehabilitated, five (5) years ago, and is not sustainable in its present state other than for casual uses. The potential for rehabilitating this field with the installation of an irrigation system is an opportunity to reintroduce the field as a Class B field<sup>5</sup> (i.e., an HRM field designation) for scheduled purposes (e.g., high school soccer games, football practices.) **However, the City of Halifax, Halifax Common Background Report of 1992 identifies the opportunity for the "concentration of active<sup>6</sup> facilities can be reduced and an introduction of more passive<sup>7</sup> opportunities can be accommodated."<sup>8</sup>**

Yet another option to the proposed irrigation installation is to consider construction of an artificial turf. Such artificial turf would, however, cost an estimated \$1.0 - 1.2 million. In light of recent additions to the artificial field program in the region<sup>9</sup> and the considerable cost therefore, it is recommended that from a financial standpoint, it would not be prudent to pursue another artificial surface at this time. It is the intent of Staff to monitor artificial turf usage and the associated financial model (i.e., revenues versus costs), before making further incremental recommendations for new artificial turf construction.

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

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

<sup>6</sup> "Active is more organized, athletic, and strenuous ... (tennis, ball, swimming and wading pool, playground, soccer ... baseball, football, lawn bowling, and horse riding.)" City of Halifax, Halifax Common Background Report, 1992, section 5.0 Active and Passive Uses, p.15.

<sup>7</sup> "Passive activities tend to be more of a spectator or appreciation type. Enjoying historic sites, picnics, nature appreciation, strolling, sunbathing, socializing and reading ..." City of Halifax, Halifax Common Background Report, 1992, section 5.0 Active and Passive Uses, p.15.

<sup>8</sup> City of Halifax, Halifax Common Background Report, 1992, section 2.0 Active and Passive, p.17.

<sup>9</sup> two (2) Mainland Common; two (2) for construction in 2004 at Burnside Drive, Dartmouth; one (1) St. Mary's University; one (1) Dalhousie University (to be resurfaced); one (1) at Wier Field, Upper Sackville.

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

### **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

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

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

### **FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN**

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

### **ALTERNATIVES**

- A. Auditorium - Regional Council may approve the construction of a new, dedicated 1,200-seat auditorium at \$3,000,000 (indicative costs.) This is not recommended in light of the fact that it would be premature to commit to such significant funding, the decision of which would be made out-of-context, that is prior to Regional Council having adopted a cultural and performing arts policy.
- B. Auditorium - Another option as proposed by the SST was to retain a portion of the existing QE school, specifically the auditorium. This option cannot be assessed and recommended as a viable option without undertaking engineering and feasibility studies to determine the feasibility and costs of such action, as per the recommendation of the Capital District Public Facilities Needs & Opportunities Strategy<sup>10</sup>. It is also unclear, at this point, what the business plan might be in terms of supporting future adaptive reuse of the building and site versus complete demolition and subsequent site uses.

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<sup>10</sup> The Capital District Public Facilities Needs & Opportunities Strategy is a document inspired by the Capital District Vision. The Strategy is intended to provide leadership in public lands planning, and was before Council on May 18, 2004.

- C. Gymnasium - to build a minimum 8,400 square foot gymnasium, complete with complimentary floor markings and amenities (e.g., basketball, volleyball standard, storage space, dressing rooms over-and-above high school needs, separate access to promote appropriate traffic flow and security, time clock.) At an *indicative* \$150/sf, the shell, lighting, and flooring would cost approximately \$1,260,000. Additional expenses for the amenities listed above would be in the order of \$80-100,000. This is not recommended as a result of the above discussion. **If it were to be approved by Council, the above estimated expenditures would have to be incorporated into the 2004/05 capital Budget and Business Planning Process and in absence of additional capital budget capacity, it would come at the expense of other capital priorities.**
- D. Gymnasium - Council may direct staff to request the appropriate Provincial Departments, through the SST process, to:
- 1) reserve appropriate land adjacent to the new gym (i.e., as prescribed in Attachment -A-) for potential future gym expansion;
  - 2) approve such potential expansion subsequent to a review via the Indoor Recreation Facility (IRF) Master Planning framework, as adopted by Council on June 29, 2004; (*whereby such review is conducted no later than September 01, 2004*);
  - 3) request the architect to plan for such future expansion within the architectural concepts and drawings (including engineering considerations) to facilitate potential future connections to adjacent multi-purpose-type rooms, washrooms, locker rooms, storage facilities, and the school's physical plant (to be designed to accommodate such potential addition.)
- E. Trollope St. Field - Regional Council may direct RPAM staff to include the Trollope Street field as a location for *priority* consideration under HRM's Field Irrigation Program. This cost would be approximately \$30,000 (plus HST if applicable.)
- F. Trollope St. Field - As discussed, an artificial turf may be built to supply all-weather play, approximately 10-12 hours/day (unlit) and up to 16 hours/day (with lighting) at an approximate cost of \$1.0 - 1.2 million. This is not recommended as a result of the other artificial and natural turf opportunities on the peninsula, as per the aforesaid discussion.





Supplementary Report - Enhancements  
- New High School - Halifax Common  
Council Report

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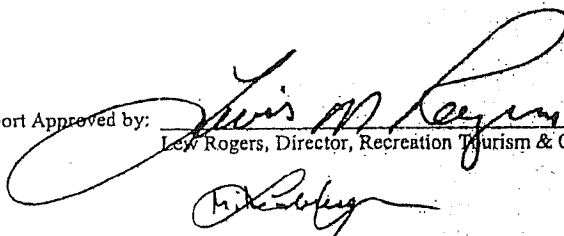
ATTACHMENTS

-A- Department of Education School Space Allocation - New High School

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

Report Prepared by: Rudy Vodicka, Real Property Policy, RPAM, 490-5582

Report Approved by:



Lewis M. Rogers, Director, Recreation Tourism & Culture, 490-5978



Mike Labrecque, Director, Real Property & Asset Management, 490-4581

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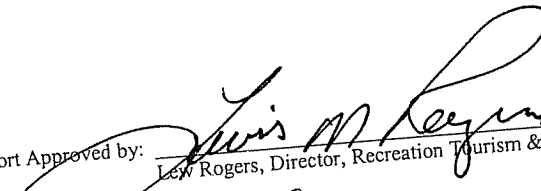
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Report Approved by:

  
Lew Rogers, Director, Recreation Tourism & Culture, 490-5978

  
Mike Labrecque, Director, Real Property & Asset Management, 490-4581

**Attachment -A-**

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

Department of Education  
Facilities Management

School Space Allocation

School Name

St Pats/Queen Elizabeth

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

Space	Area	Q1	Total Area	Total Square feet	Comparison
<b>Classrooms</b>				40,200	
Classrooms Elem	900	0	0		
Classrooms Secondary	900	41	36,900		
language	900	1	900		
General Science	1200	2	2,400		
<b>Total Classrooms</b>		44			
<b>Support Areas</b>				4,540	
small group areas/storage	100	22	2,200		
learning support Classroom	formula	distributed	2100		
assistive care washroom	120	2	240		
learning recovery programming	120	0	0		
<b>Library/Resource</b>				3,600	
general library/storage	3000	1	3,000		
seminar	600	1	600		
<b>Laboratory Rooms</b>				10,550	
chemistry lab	1200	2	2,400		
preparation room	150	1	150		
physics lab	1200	2	2,400		
biology lab	1200	2	2,400		
info technology/CRS/Business	1000	2	2,000		
Comm Tech lab	1200	1	1,200		
<b>Arts Room</b>				7,600	
Visual arts	1000	2	2,000		
storage	100	1	100		
music / storage	1600	2	3,200		
practice rooms	200	1	200		
drama / stage (raised)	Formula	2	2,100		
NOT SUPPORTED BY GOV'T POLICY, BUT ELEVATE ARTS SPACE TO MEET EXPECTATIONS/ARTS - PLACED ADJACENT TO GYM					
<b>Technology/Ed</b>				3,900	
technology	1000	1	1,000		
production areas	1400	1	1,400		
Alternate Education area	1500	1	1,500		
TRANSITION FROM WOODWORKING TO COMPUTER MODELLING FORESTRY, MECHANICS, BUT ACOUSTIC ROOM, NOT GARAGE					
<b>Family Studies</b>				2,250	
nutrition/textiles LAB	1350	1	1,350		

# Department of Education Facilities Management

## School Space Allocation

St Pats/Queen Elizabeth

Space	Area	Q1	Total Area	Total Square feet	Comparison
technology	900	1	900		
Gymnasium				11,700	
gym → SAREAS HFX. WEST → 10'000	8400	1	8,400		
change rooms	2@300, 2@500	4	1,600		→ TO BE INCREASED TO 10'500
office	100	2	200		
storage	800	1	800		
multi-purpose	700	1	700		
• BLEACHER SEATING @ 250					
Cafeteria				5,450	
cafeteria (1200 STUDENTS x 40% SITTING)	4800	1	4,800		
kitchen	500	1	500		
storage	150	1	150		
Administration				4,204	
general office	1200	1	1,200		
staff room	1104	1	1,104		
student services	800	1	800		
teen health	600	1	600		
itinerant rooms - POLICE, PHYSIO, ETC. VISITORS	100	3	300		
student council	100	3	300		
Storage				1,150	
general	1000	1	1,000		
outside equipment storage	150	1	150		
TOTAL NET SQUARE FOOTAGE			95,244	95,244	
ESTIMATED GROSS SQUARE FOOTAGE			140,009		
↳ COTTON SPACE, SUPPORT/DANITY, WALL THICKNESS					

Gross Square foot per student  
Total teaching spaces

116.7  
67

Approved:

Director of Facilities Mangement

Date