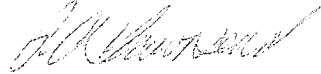


**TO:** Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

**SUBMITTED BY:**   
Phillip Townsend, Acting Director Infrastructure and Asset Management

**DATE:** April 8, 2009

**SUBJECT:** Information Report - Track and Field Facilities

**ORIGIN :**

Council session of April 7, 2009.

**13.5 Councillor Harvey - Status of Metropolitan Field**

*Councillor Harvey advised that he received notice that the Metropolitan Field Track is shut down for events this summer, with no upgrade in the proposed budget. He expressed concern that the track is shut down indefinitely and it is not as part of an upgrade.*

*Councillor Harvey requested that the issue of the status of Metropolitan Field Track in Sackville be added as an item at April 14, 2009 Committee of the Whole. If this cannot be accommodated as an agenda item next week, a staff report be prepared for Council as soon as possible. The Councillor is requesting staff provide information on why the field is closed this season and an update to the upgrading and the long term plans of the facility.*

## **BACKGROUND**

HRM provides two track and field facilities within the municipality: one at Beazley Field in Dartmouth and one at Metropolitan Field (Met Field) in Sackville. Both facilities have been refurbished and their equipment replaced in the last ten years. In 1998, Beazley and Met tracks were repaved and surfaced with black crumb rubber at a cost of \$1,000,000. In 2002, Metropolitan Field, due to heavier usage, was upgraded with a structural colour coat surface to better protect the crumb surface from wear and improve the surface for runners. Since that time, there have been problems with the coating due to product failure in localized spots, inappropriate use and vandalism. This has caused different areas of the track to delaminate each year. Spot repairs have been carried out under warranty; however, before the warranty period was over, the installer went out of business. Since that time, efforts at Met Field have centred around repair to keep the surface in a useable condition. The track currently requires approximately \$10,000 to \$15,000 in repair work.

At Beazley, the crumb surface lasted for six years before the colour coat became necessary (due to less wear). In 2007, a latex colour coat was applied to extend the surface for another five years. It is holding well.

For this upcoming track season, Beazley is fully able to handle the school track season in spring, while Metropolitan requires repairs to reinstate it to a level to hold major local and provincial meets. Met Field is still useable as a rudimentary training track, but requires the repairs before it can host events and be used for the full scope of higher level training.

- ∩ In order to effectively repair Met Field, the work needs to be conducted under certain weather conditions including a steady ambient temperature of 15 degrees Celsius and a precipitation free period of 3 days. The best time to carry out this work is mid summer, but there may be an opportunity to conduct the repairs in late May through early June; however, there are no guarantees that weather conditions will enable the work to happen prior to the spring school track meet season. As a safe guard, staff have advised organizers that meets are to be scheduled this spring at Beazley Field.

## **DISCUSSION**

Rumour has been circulating that HRM is abandoning Met Field and will not be providing it as a facility. This is untrue. The field will be repaired and be back in full service this summer.

It is true, however, that Met Field and Beazley will require major upgrades in the near future. Track surface replacement can cost between \$500,000 and \$2.5 million dollars each depending on the extent of the replacement (lower end resurfacing vs a total rebuild). HRM's tracks have also been subject to abuse and vandalism which is an issue for the useful life of the facility and for the adjacent neighbourhoods. Plans for track replacement at Met have been pushed to the 2011/12 due to

requirements to fund other priority facilities and balance budgets. Neither users nor the municipality are fully satisfied with the current provision of track and field facilities in HRM. It has been a struggle on a number of fronts to provide quality facilities. This is nothing new for track nor for other types of facilities in the municipality. In order to deal with the needs of track and field and understand the expense that HRM will be running into in the next few years, staff will be developing a strategy for track and field facilities this year. The aim is to answer questions including, but not limited to:

- what are the use levels and user requirements for the various user needs
- what is missing in the provision of service
- what is the current condition of Met and Beazley Fields
- what level of carding is appropriate for HRM's tracks
- to what level and where should investment be made
- should there be two event tracks or one event track and one club track
- what surfaces provide the best cost benefit ratio
- how can the chronic vandalism be dealt with in order to protect the investment and address issues for the local residents
- what are the recommended cost options available to satisfy the desired level of service
- \*what are the options and timing requirements for reconstruction of HRM's current facilities

(\*It needs to be understood that it is actually a two year process to take a track though planning, design, funding, tender/ award, scheduling of contractors and construction in order to hit the optimal July/August window for pouring a track in our region. There are only a limited number of vendors in North America who do track surfacing.)

The process will involve many stakeholders, including casual users, the community, track clubs, school and provincial athletic organizations, facility maintainers and schedulers. The results will be brought back to Council.

Currently, staff are dealing with the one-track surface supplier positioned to do small job repairs to effect the required repairs at Met Field. In the meantime, Beazley field will be the host track for this years school athletic program and Met Field will be repaired and continue to serve the clubs and other events. Once completed, the school track season, moved to Beazley this year, could be back at Met Field next year, if so desired.

### **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

There are no budget implications at this time.

There is an amount identified in this year's budget as part of the 09/10 budget deliberations to effect repairs at Met Field, subject to Council approval. In the longer term, staff have identified an amount

in 2011/12 for a major investment in track and field facilities. This will be subject to Council approval through the capital budget process for that year.

**FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN**

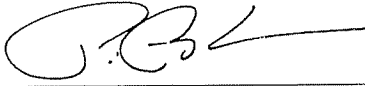
This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

**ATTACHMENTS**

NA

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

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