

**Item No. 10.1.3**  
**Halifax Regional Council**  
**January 15, 2013**

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

**SUBMITTED BY:** Original signed by   
Richard Butts, Chief Administrative Officer

Original Signed by   
Mike Labrecque, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** January 7, 2013

**SUBJECT:** Eastern Passage School Enhancement

---

**ORIGIN**

- April 2012 announcement by the Minister of Education for the construction of an Alterations and Additions project for the Eastern Passage High School, with the project completion set to open in September 2014.
- April 17, 2012 Motion of Council that: “Staff prepare a report regarding the recently announced high school project in Eastern Passage including any needs for community enhancement in the area, potential partnerships with the Province and possible infrastructure funding opportunities.”
- April 24, 2012 Motion of Council that: “Staff undertake a site development planning process for the Eastern Passage Common, formerly known as the lands at Elkins Barracks.”

**LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

- *HRM 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.

**RECOMMENDATIONS ON PAGE 2**

## **RECOMMENDATION**

1. Approve entering into a joint partnership with the Province to add 2,100 sf of gymnasium space, at an estimated net cost of \$630,000, as a community enhancement to the Eastern Passage Additional and Alterations Project provided the site can accommodate the expansion;
2. Request the addition of required funding to the 2014-15 project budget as outlined in the financial implications section of this report; and
3. Approve entering into a Joint Use Agreement with the Halifax Regional School Board to ensure appropriate community access to the gymnasium as a condition of municipal funding to the Project.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Community Facility Master Plan**

In May 2008, Regional Council approved in principle the Community Facility Master Plan (CFMP). The CFMP analyzed demand for recreation facilities in HRM and compared it to the existing facility inventory. The resulting planning document incorporated previous plans and presented guiding principles and implementation models for making decisions about existing and future facilities. The CFMP discusses HRM's relationship with the Halifax Regional School Board (HRSB) including joint opportunities to deliver programs and operate facilities.

The CFMP also recommends HRM build upon the past successful relationship with the HRSB and explore joint project opportunities where new school facilities are being planned. The CFMP further outlines the need to ensure that, when new or replacement facilities are developed, the facilities are placed in the most relevant locations and are consistent with other planning documents such as the Regional Plan and Transportation Plan.

In addition to the Citadel Community Centre enhancement in 2008, HRM successfully collaborated with the HRSB in 2010 for a community enhancement to the new elementary school in Porter's Lake, and in 2011 in the communities of Bedford and Hammonds Plains to enhance the new Charles P Allen High School.

### **Additions and Alterations Project: New Eastern Passage High School**

In April 2012, the Minister of Education announced an Additions and Alterations Project that would result in a new high school in Eastern Passage to be completed in September 2014. Further, the existing Seaside Elementary School was selected by the Province in September of 2012 as the site for the project. The announcement of this large renovation project resulted in HRM staff being directed to complete a Recreation Needs Assessment in order to identify whether benefits existed for a potential partnership with the Province to expand the school with a community enhancement. The Needs Assessment was required to supplement the CFMP which did not provide sufficient detail to determine potential community needs associated with a new school or other community facilities in the Eastern Passage area. The assessment, carried out

between August and November 2012, included: developing a community profile, data research and analysis, community consultations and interviews with key stakeholders. The Needs Assessment is provided in an Information Report to Regional Council on January 15, 2013.

In order to meet the provincial schedule for the Eastern Passage School project, HRM must immediately advise the province if the interest exists to participate in the project with a community enhancement of the school. Originally, the Province requested a response by the end of December 2012, but agreed to an extension to the first regularly scheduled Council meeting in January.

## **DISCUSSION**

The Eastern Passage Recreation Needs Assessment (appended to Information Report to Regional Council on January 15, 2013) produced evidence and feedback from citizens to support the need for additional gymnasium space and the refurbishment of Tallahassee Community Centre, amongst other findings. In particular, community sport and non-profit groups, citizens and respondents to online surveys, and previous public consultation, note that there is currently insufficient gymnasium space or access to gymnasium space in the Eastern passage area. Current waitlists and the data assessment provided in the Eastern Passage Recreation Needs Assessment support that claim. Additional gymnasium space is the only identified community need that can be facilitated through the Alterations and Additions Project for the Eastern Passage District High School.

Currently, in Eastern Passage, the size dimensions of the existing gymnasiums available to rent at Seaside Elementary and Oceanview Elementary schools are sufficient for child and some youth activities, but do not meet the field of play requirements for adult usage or high school and provincial competitions. The Tallahassee gymnasium is sized to meet all requirements but is booked to capacity with a wait list.

The current wait list includes a variety of child, youth and adult activities including volleyball, indoor soccer, indoor baseball, badminton and basketball. In addition, there are other groups that have shown interest but have not been able to obtain access and have been required to make other arrangements. These include gymnastics, Special Olympics, Boys and Girls Clubs, Lacrosse and Football. Some of the alternate arrangement locations expand beyond HRM including football which has relocated to East Hants due to lack of access in HRM.

CFB Shearwater is accessible for residents of Eastern Passage but parameters inhibit the full usage of the facility. Those that are members of the Military have full access at no cost. Military family members have access with some restrictions, and residents that are not associated with the military also have access but with limitations.

Feedback was also received regarding the need for performance and drama space in the Eastern Passage School. Recent provincial templates for new school construction have included replacement of a standard cafeteria with a cafetorium for expanded uses. HRM has encouraged the Province to use the cafetorium template in the Eastern Passage School.

### **Recommendation**

Based on the Eastern Passage Needs Assessment, the development of community gymnasium space is recommended. An enhancement of the Eastern Passage High School is seen to be the most cost effective and appropriate mechanism to construct additional space of this type at this time. It is proposed that a gymnasium enhancement of 2,100 sf be approved in order to construct a 10,500 sf gymnasium (8,400 sf of which is to be constructed by the Province for the school). This will provide a full-sized gymnasium (suitable for curtained separation) for both school and community use. The proposed enhancement of the gymnasium would create the equivalent of another full gymnasium providing guaranteed access for primetime usage by the community including minor sport groups, recreational family access and some adult recreation usage. Appropriate HRM Recreation programming and community access will be ensured through the administration of a Joint Use Agreement for that site with the Halifax Regional School Board and will allow the municipality to construct the enhancement at a reduced capital and operating cost.

The overall estimated net cost of construction of a 10,500 sq ft gymnasium as part of a capital renovation of the school is estimated to be \$3.15 Million. HRM's share of this amount would be 20%, or \$630,000, based on the 2,100 sq ft expansion. The savings from combining a new community component with the school project arise from reduced exterior wall construction, reduced footprint and reduced land development costs for site development and parking.

These proposed enhancements are representative of community need, are supported by both analytical review and community consultation and are consistent with other planning documents for the region.

### **Site Considerations**

The Eastern Passage High School project is taking place on existing provincial lands as a redevelopment of a current elementary school. As a result of limited space, topographical realities, and neighboring housing and roadway complexities, there is limited availability for enhancement development at the school. The Halifax Regional School Board has indicated some challenges related to the project that include sizes of the existing rooms, size of the existing gymnasium, and available footprint for expansion. It is unknown at this time if the site or existing building footprint will accommodate any community enhancements. This assessment will be undertaken as detailed design work is completed by the Province.

### **Eastern Passage Common**

On April 24, 2012, Regional Council directed staff to undertake a site planning process for the Eastern Passage Common. This work is ongoing and was considered during the needs assessment since Seaside Elementary School is located within the Eastern Passage Common. However, the overall site planning process could not be completed within the timeline required for the Eastern Passage High School project. The opportunity to partner with the Province on the high school project is specific to the building, therefore, a decision on the school project does not

impede opportunities associated with the Eastern Passage Common site planning process. Real Property staff will complete the work for the Eastern Passage Common and return to Regional Council for consideration.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Eastern Passage High School Enhancement Proposal: expansion of gymnasium space by 2,100 sq ft.

#### **Estimated Net Costs:**

Provincial share (8,400 sq ft):	\$2,520,000
HRM share (2,100 sq ft)	<u>\$630,000</u>
Total Gymnasium (10,500 sq ft) Net Cost:	\$3,150,000

- There is no HST charged to HRM in this type of partnership.

100% of the project is proposed to be funded by project no. CB000007. The funding is contingent on the project being requested and approved in the 2014-15 project budget.

Any project cost overruns are the responsibility of the Province. The annual Operating Cost of Capital for utilities and programming is estimated to be \$16,000 starting in September, 2014 when the school is scheduled to open.

Under Council's approved tax structure, recreation and community facilities of this nature are general rated when located within the urban/suburban area (e.g. East Dartmouth, Citadel, North Preston) and area rated when located in the rural area (e.g. Porter's Lake, Prospect). Since the proposed school project is located in the urban/suburban tax boundary, staff recommend that the project be general rated. However, it should be noted that Council has previously made exceptions to its policies and area rated three facilities that would otherwise have been general rated (Bedford-Hammonds Plains, Sackville Heights, Gordon Snow).

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

HRM staff provided Eastern Passage community members a variety of feedback methods to ensure their voice was heard: on-line survey, Facebook, twitter, HRM dedicated phone number, HRM dedicated e-mail and 2 Community Consultations. The consultations were held at the New Eco Tourism Service Centre on October 11 and 17, 2012 with the focus on what is currently working well in terms of community use of indoor and outdoor recreation space and how an improvement to the current space could impact community recreation needs. The detailed findings from the community feedback and consultations are contained in the Eastern Passage Recreation Needs Assessment Information Report to Regional Council, January 15, 2013.

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

None indicated.

**ALTERNATIVES**

- Alternative 1: Regional Council could choose to not approve enhancement of the gymnasium as part of the Eastern Passage School project. This is not recommended as there are cost savings associated with undertaking a cost sharing project with the provincial school project.
- Alternative 2: Regional Council could direct staff to consider construction of a separate gymnasium on the capital list for future consideration. This is not recommended as the assessment determined there is an immediate need for new gymnasium space and cost savings from undertaking a joint project with the province would not be realized.
- Alternative 3: Regional Council could direct staff to fund all or a portion of the project cost from an area rate. This alternative would require staff to undertake an area rate survey process. However, should the community not accept an area rate, Council would be required to fund its commitment from the general rate.

**ATTACHMENTS**

None

---

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/agenda.html> 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: Betty Lou Killen, Regional Recreation and Culture 490-4833  
Cathy Nearing, Regional Recreation and Culture 490-6542

Report Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Denise Schofield, Manager, Regional Recreation and Culture, 490-6252

Financial Approval by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Greg Keefe, Director of Finance & Information Technology/CFO, 490-6308

Report Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Brad Anguish, Director, Community and Recreation Services, 490-4933

---