





P.O. Box 1749  
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## Item No. 11.1.4

Halifax Regional Council  
February 11, 2014

**TO:** Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council  
Original signed by 

**SUBMITTED BY:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Richard Butts, Chief Administrative Officer  
Original Signed by   
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mike Labrecque, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** November 4, 2013

**SUBJECT:** Cole Harbour Artificial Turf

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### ORIGIN

- January 15, 2013 Regional Council meeting, Cole Harbour Needs Assessment Information Report
- October 30, 2012 Motions of Regional Council:

#### Amended Motion:

1. Halifax Regional Council repeal the current practice of selling surplus school properties passes as policy on January 31, 2012.
  2. Adopt by resolution a process to dispose of the surplus school property known as St. Patrick's Alexandra, Halifax, and the Gordon Bell building and property, Cole Harbour, as outlined in Appendix A and that this process be used for the disposal of this property in consideration of the Court Decision with an amendment to allow for community public consultation prior to the initiation of a process requesting proposal submissions from non-profit groups so that the local community has the opportunity to discuss and comment on options for the property, with minutes from the public consultation being included in the staff report to Council.
  3. And further that if HRM decides not to appeal the Supreme Court decision, this report be released to the public and this item be moved to the regular agenda.
- MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

**RECOMMENDATIONS ON PAGE 2**

MOVED by Councillor Watts, seconded by Councillor Johns that Appendix “A” be amended to allow for community public consultation prior to the initiation of a process requesting proposal submission from non-profit groups so that the local community has the opportunity to discuss and comment on options for the property, with minutes from this meeting being included in the staff report to Council. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

MOVED by Councillor Nicoll, seconded by Councillor Hendsbee that any deposit made on the Gordon Bell building be returned and that reference to the Gordon Bell building be removed from the motion. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

### **LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

- *Halifax Regional 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 May 27, 2008

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council:

1. Approve the retention of the Gordon Bell Annex lands to be used as a future site for an artificial turf;
2. Direct staff to change the land use from sport to passive open space for the Cole Harbour High School Field, Scotia Sport Field and redevelop the Gordon Bell field as an artificial turf;
3. Direct staff to include the project for consideration in the 2015/16 capital budget process to be prioritized against other capital priorities; and
4. Declare the Gordon Bell Annex building (only) surplus to municipal purposes and direct staff to include funding in the 2014/15 capital budget for the demolition of the vacant building.

### **BACKGROUND**

In April 2012, the Minister of Education announced an Additions and Alterations Project for the existing Cole Harbour District High School to be completed in September 2014. The work on this project is currently underway. The announcement of this large renovation project resulted in 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 Recreation Needs Assessment was required to supplement the Community Facility Master Plan which did not provide sufficient detail to determine potential community needs associated with a new school or other community facilities in the Cole Harbour 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 Cole Harbour Recreation Needs Assessment was provided to Regional Council on January 15, 2013.

The Recreation Needs Assessment outlined a variety of needs in the community including a regulation size artificial turf community sport field, for all relevant regular season sport usage. It should be noted, that the assessment did not outline a requirement for a spectator sized venue as HRM's needs for large spectator events are addressed elsewhere. In addition, the Recreation Needs Assessment outlined the potential value of the municipally-owned Gordon Bell Annex site as an option for a future field site.

The Gordon Bell Annex site is located adjacent to the existing Cole Harbour Commons and related recreation amenities. Currently, the immediate area is served by four sportsfields (Bell Annex, Scotia 1, Scotia 2 (Wagner) and Cole Harbour High School field). In addition, the area includes Cole Harbour Place, BJ Higgin and John Russell Diamonds along with other recreation amenities such as playground, tennis court, skatepark, trails, etc.

## **DISCUSSION**

The Community Facility Master Plan (CFMP) supports the development of an artificial turf in Cole Harbour based upon the community demand for field access as indicated in the Cole Harbour Needs Assessment. The CFMP states: "That three additional artificial turf fields be constructed (in the municipality) to meet the increasing demand for outdoor field sports." Artificial turf fields tend to have a much higher usage rate than natural fields. The Cole Harbour Recreation Needs Assessment analysis and public feedback indicated that there is potential benefit to the community with the redevelopment of a field from natural turf to artificial turf. It also indicated that the location should be convenient for both community users and varsity usage by Cole Harbour High.

Since the approval of the CFMP, one new artificial turf field has been opened in Bedford/Hammonds Plains bringing a total of six artificial turf fields in HRM. Others are located in Burnside, Sackville, Clayton Park and south end Halifax. Placement of a field in Cole Harbour would improve the geographical distribution of fields across HRM. There has been commentary regarding placement of an artificial turf field in the area in the past when other fields have been constructed in HRM, however, full site analysis had not been undertaken to determine the most viable location prior to this process.

### **Site Selection Process**

A Site Selection Committee comprised of HRM representatives from the divisions of Regional Recreation & Culture, Municipal Operations, CPTED (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design), Sports and Community Events booking staff, Facility Development, Facility Operations, Real Property Planning, and Community Recreation & Culture developed criteria to evaluate potential sites. The criteria related to the following categories:

- Land ownership
- Site conditions (size, topography, contamination, complementary uses, etc.)
- Site Accessibility (street access, emergency access, impact on neighbouring streets, etc.)
- Community context (community access, CPTED principles, impact on neighbouring usage, etc.)

- Amenities (parking, washrooms, etc.)
- Strategic Planning (zoning, synergy with related uses)

As outlined in the Site Selection Analysis and Business Case (Attachment 1), the analysis undertaken showed that many of the HRM owned properties in the area are of insufficient size to accommodate an artificial turf field. Other HRM properties that could accommodate an artificial turf field are challenged by lack of supporting infrastructure or other site constraints. While there are some privately owned lands in the area that could accommodate an artificial turf field, they too would require construction of supporting infrastructure in addition to the purchase of the lands. The Gordon Bell Annex lands can accommodate an artificial turf field, and its close proximity to Cole Harbour Place, Cole Harbour High School, other recreation infrastructure and adjacent open space lands, provides opportunity to create a recreation campus with access to all relevant amenities which is consistent with the Cole Harbour Basin Open Space Plan. As a result, the Gordon Bell Annex lands were identified as the most viable locate an artificial turf field in the community of Cole Harbour.

Due to the increased usage which is possible with an artificial turf field, replacement of the existing natural turf field on the Gordon Bell Annex site with an artificial turf field would also allow the decommissioning of two additional natural turf fields from sport usage in the area. Based on the existing quality of fields and ongoing field challenges, the HRM owned Scotia 1 and Cole Harbour School fields would be able to be changed from sport use to passive open space use, which would reduce the amount of maintenance required for the sites and eliminate the requirement for them to be booked for use. The sites could then be considered pursuant to the Cole Harbour Basin Open Space Plan for their relevant and potential value as open space in the community.

### **Cost Benefit Analysis**

As evidenced in the attached Site Selection Analysis and Business Case, the installation of an artificial turf allows the decommissioning from sport usage of natural turf fields as artificial turf field can accommodate substantially more use than natural turf fields. The annual average use of an artificial turf field is typically 5-7 times more than the usage of natural turf fields. The primary reasons for this increase are the reduced amount of maintenance required for artificial turf fields and the fact that they are not impacted by weather in the same way as natural turf fields.

The initial capital cost for construction of an artificial turf field is approximately \$2.3 million which is offset by the change of land use of a total of three natural turf fields from sport use and the resulting reduction in maintenance costs. Also, with the increased available usage associated with an artificial turf field, revenue from rental fees offsets the maintenance costs required for the operation of the artificial turf field. As outlined in Attachment 1, the annual cost to maintain an artificial turf field and the associated amenities is approximately \$46,000. These costs are offset and exceeded by annual revenue in the amount of approximately \$77,000 which is significantly higher than the revenue of approximately \$4,000 achieved from the existing three natural turf fields in an average year.

In addition, the engineering assessment of the existing building on the Gordon Bell Annex site has indicated that capital requirements for the building over the next 25 years will be in the range of \$6.5 million. This capital avoidance, in addition to the avoidance of approximately \$90,000 which would be required annually for the building utilities and other costs to operate the building, provides further confirmation of the financial benefit to repurpose the existing Gordon Bell Annex site with an artificial turf field. As noted, since artificial turf fields offer significantly more available hours for use, the replacement would also increase the opportunities for recreation and sport users in Cole Harbour and across HRM.

Further, it is recommended that capital funding in the amount of \$550,000 be allocated in the 2014/15 fiscal year to demolish the existing building as HRM is currently expending approximately \$70,000 annually to maintain the building in its vacant state.

### **Conclusion**

The redevelopment of the existing field located at the Gordon Bell Annex site as an artificial turf is the most cost effective and appropriate site. The demolition of the Bell building and the cost savings from the decommissioning of three natural turf fields with the subsequent redevelopment of one of them to an artificial turf will not only offset the capital cost of the artificial turf installation but result in annual operating cost savings and provide the community with a more effective service delivery model. The campus location along with increased available usage possible with an artificial turf field will be beneficial to the Cole Harbour community and all user groups. Therefore, it is recommended that Regional Council direct that HRM retain the Gordon Bell Annex site for the future location of an artificial turf field.

In order to reduce the costs which would be incurred to maintain the vacant building and prepare the site for construction of the artificial turf site, it would be further recommended that staff be directed to include funding in the 2014/15 capital budget process for the demolition of the building. This would allow the option for the building to be removed from the site prior to the field design and construction work.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The placement of an artificial turf field on the Gordon Bell Annex site will result in a variety of financial impacts as outlined below:

#### **Capital Expenditures:**

Proposed 2014/15 budget:	\$550,000 for building demolition
Proposed 2015/16 budget:	\$2.3 million for construction of the turf and amenities (lighting, landscaping, parking, etc.)

#### **Operating Budget Impacts (artificial turf)**

With the change of use for three natural turf fields from sport use, the majority of the current costs for maintaining those fields would be saved. Litter pick up and grass cutting would require

less than a quarter of the current maintenance costs to continue to be expended on two of those existing fields while the third would incur costs for the maintenance of the artificial turf. The maintenance costs incurred by the artificial turf field would be offset by revenue achieved from the field. Further, with the demolition of the Gordon Bell building, annual maintenance costs would also be saved.

### **Current Scenario**

Cost:	Maintenance of 3 fields for sport use	\$11,500
Revenue:	Current revenue from 3 fields	<u>(\$4,000)</u>
	Net cost	\$7,500

### **Future Scenario (artificial turf and 2 open space fields)**

Cost:	Maintenance of artificial turf and amenities	\$46,100
	Maintenance cost of 2 open space fields	\$ 2,000
Revenue:	New artificial turf	<u>(\$77,000)</u>
	Net cost	(\$28,900)

The net change in the cost of from the current scenario of 3 sports fields to one artificial turf and two open space fields is (\$21,400).

Cost Avoidance: \$6.5 million over 25 years for Gordon Bell building capital costs as per the Engineering Assessment of the existing building  
\$90,000 annually for utility costs for Gordon Bell Building

If Regional Council approves the retention of the Gordon Bell Annex site for location of an artificial turf field, the project would be prioritized for consideration against other capital priorities through the capital budget process.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Citizens in Cole Harbour were provided with a variety of feedback methods during the creation of the Needs Assessment such as; on-line survey, Facebook, twitter, HRM dedicated phone number, HRM dedicated e-mail and two structured public meetings. The public meetings were held at Cole Harbour Place in 2012 on October 10<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

None identified at this time.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

1. Regional Council could choose to not retain the Gordon Bell Annex site as the future site for an artificial turf field and sell the Gordon Bell Annex site through the Administrative Order 50 process. This would require that another site be selected for the artificial turf field or no field be approved at this time. This is not recommended as the site was determined to be the

most suitable and cost effective site in the Cole Harbour area and the field requirement was outlined in the Cole Harbour Recreation Needs Assessment.

2. Regional Council could direct staff to further evaluate privately owned alternate sites in the Cole Harbour community. This is not recommended as the expected cost to purchase the land as well as build the field and supporting infrastructure is not cost effective when compared to other HRM owned options.
3. Regional Council could direct staff to defer the inclusion of the demolition of the Gordon Bell building from the 2014/15 capital budget process and the construction of an artificial turf field from the 2015/16 capital budget process. This is not recommended as the Community Facility Master Plan and Cole Harbour Recreation Needs Assessment outlined the requirement for an artificial turf field in this area and significant costs are incurred in maintaining the vacant building.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

### **Attachment 1: Site Selection Analysis and Business Case**

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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.

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*Site Selection Analysis & Business Case  
Cole Harbour Artificial Turf*



## **THE OPPORTUNITY**

The Cole Harbour Recreation Needs Assessment which was accepted by Regional Council in January 2013 outlined a variety of needs in the community including a regulation size artificial turf community sport field. In addition, the Recreation Needs Assessment outlined the potential value of the municipally-owned Gordon Bell site as an option for a future field site. The Gordon Bell site is a former school property that consists of a vacant building, surface parking lot and sports field. It was declared surplus by the Province of Nova Scotia in 2010 and reverted back to HRM for municipal use. Subsequently, through analysis findings that the building was not required for municipally mandated services, the property was included in a request for proposals for potential sale with other vacant surplus school properties which closed in August 2011.

With Council's acceptance of the Recreation Needs Assessment and the potential value of the Gordon Bell property for a future artificial turf field, staff agreed to undertake a site selection exercise and return to Council with a recommended location for the artificial turf in order to determine whether the Gordon Bell site should be retained.

### **Current Situation**

The majority of sport fields that are located in the Cole Harbour community are categorized as "C" or less which indicates that the community does not have access to a well maintained and multi-use field. Consequently, many of the sport groups travel outside of their community to access "A" rated fields. This does not mean that the existing field inventory is not useful to the community, only that there is a need for fields at a higher standard to provide more play hours and access to a variety of activities.

Current outdoor facility inventory in Cole Harbour consists of 12 natural turf sport fields, 18 natural turf ball diamonds, 13 outdoor basketball courts, 27 playgrounds, 4 tennis courts and 1 skateboard park.

Analysis of usage determined that they are full to capacity and teams are in the queue for times. Each HRM field is rated based on usage and condition; many of the fields in the Cole Harbour area can only be used by mini groups or for practice. There are few fields that have the right field of play requirements for adult usage, and for high school or provincial competition.

### **Field Usage by Hour**

#### **Cole Harbour High Sport Field ('C') -**

2010 - 593 (390 soccer; 172 football; 31 special event)  
2011 - 437 (200 soccer; 207 football; 30 special event)  
2012 - 314 (202 soccer; 112 football as of Oct 2012)

**Clients** - Cole Harbour Soccer Club; Cole Harbour District High School

#### **BJ Higgins - Lighted Diamond ('A') -**

2010 - 589 (423.3 baseball; 30 football; 130 tournament)  
2011 - 393 (247.3 baseball; 36 football; 79.3 tournament)

2012 - 476 (264 baseball; 212 tournament as of Oct 2012)

**Clients** - Cole Harbour Minor Baseball; Dartmouth Arrows Minor Baseball; Westphal Port Wallis Minor Baseball; Humber Park Minor Baseball; Woodlawn Minor Baseball; Nova Scotia Senior Women's Baseball; Dartmouth mixed recreational Ball League

**John Russell Diamond - ('B') -**

2010 - 416.3 (266.6 baseball; 144 tournament; 5.3 cross country)

2011 - 276 (175 baseball; 71 tournament; 30 special event)

2012 - 324 (Oct/Nov - 166.3 baseball; 66.3 tournament as of October 2012)

**Clients** - Metro High School Girls Fastball; Cole Harbour Minor Baseball; Dartmouth Arrows Minor Baseball

**Scotia 1 Sport Field - ('D') -**

2010 - 129.3 (73 football; 11.3 cross country; 45 special event)

2011 - 220.3 (159 football; 4.3 cross country; 57 special event)

2012 - 249 (204 football; 45 special event as of October 2012)

**Clients** - Dartmouth Minor Football; Glo Parties/Dexter Const.; Community Festival

**Wagner (Scotia 2) Sport Field - ('B') -**

2010 - 168 (107.3 soccer; 11.3 cross country; 49 special event)

2011 - 157.3 (96 soccer; 4.3 cross country; 57 special event)

2012 - 247 (202 soccer; 45 special event as of October 2012)

**Clients** - Cole Harbour Soccer Club; Graham Creighton Junior High; Glo Parties/Dexter Construction

**Bell Annex - ('C') -**

2010 - 359.3 (203.3 soccer; 126 football; 30 special event)

2011 - 344 (314 soccer; 30 special event)

2012 - 478 (as of October 2012 Oct/Nov - 316 soccer; 162 Auburn High School)

**Clients** - Cole Harbour Soccer Club; Auburn High School

HRM Municipal Operations has indicated that the quality of the fields in the Cole Harbour community has been an on-going complaint. The various sport and community groups have expressed a level of frustration about the lack of equitably access for field use. Also, it was noted that some sport groups dominate the usage of better quality and/or lit fields as well as access the prime times for their membership's age groups. The other groups will use fields that have drainage issues, are unlit or not regulation size and therefore, they are unable to hold tournaments and train their elite teams.

The football community in particular struggles with inadequate access to sport fields and is currently utilizing the Scotia 1 field, a "D" rated outdoor facility. Recent athletics upgrades (concrete pad for shot put and discus) to the Beazley field have reduced access to that multi-use field by football. Football Nova Scotia is currently relocating the sport

central facility to East Hants due to lack of accessibility in HRM.

### **Impact**

The Recreation Needs Assessment analysis and public commentary indicated that there is potential for a high level of benefit to the community with a redevelopment of a field from natural turf to artificial turf. As a result of thorough analysis, the Gordon Bell field is proposed to be redeveloped as an artificial turf and two other fields would be decommissioned.

This recommendation is also aligned with the corporate direction contained in the Regional Plan and Municipal Planning Strategy, the vision as documented in the Cole Harbour Basin Open Space Plan and the Guiding Principles of the Community Facility Master Plan.

The enhanced accessibility to turf usage for sport groups due to more availability (seasonally and hourly) and the continued promotion of the “campus setting” in the hub of Cole Harbour are positive impacts to this community and HRM.

## **PROPOSED SOLUTION**

### **Site Selection Process**

A Site Selection Committee comprised of HRM representatives from the divisions of Regional Recreation & Culture, Municipal Operations, CPTED (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design), Sports and Community Events booking staff, Facility Development, Facility Operations, Real Property Planning and Community Recreation & Culture developed criteria to evaluate potential sites.

Using these criteria, the committee assessed HRM owned lands as well as privately owned lands within the Cole Harbour geographical area. The analysis of available HRM owned land resulted in the determination of two (2) parcels which could meet the size required to build an artificial turf within the community of Cole Harbour. Table 1 summarizes the analysis of the sites.

Table 1: Site Selection Summary

<b>Site Selection Criteria</b>	<b>Scotia 1 Sports Field</b>	<b>Gordon Bell Annex</b>	<b>Graham Creighton School site</b>	<b>Cole Harbour High School field</b>	<b>Former NS Rehabilitation Site</b>	<b>Privately Owned Lands</b>
<b>Site Size</b>	Site size can accommodate field and allow for future expansion	Site size can accommodate field but does not allow for future expansion	Minimum size requirements not met	Minimum size requirements not met	Site size can accommodate field	Site with sufficient land area is available
<b>Site Conditions</b>	Good site visibility; Potential site contamination, grading and drainage issues	Good site visibility	Site visibility concerns	N/A due to size constraints	Dependent on location	Varies
<b>Site Accessibility</b>	Access to collector streets; minimal impact to local street network; access to public transit	Access to collector streets, access to public transit	N/A due to size constraints	N/A due to size constraints	Dependent on future use of lands	Varies
<b>Existing Community Synergy</b>	Close proximity to regional and community facilities	Close proximity to regional and community facilities	N/A due to size constraints	N/A due to size constraints	Close to Regional pathways	Varies
<b>Zoning</b>	Consistent with proposed use	Consistent with proposed use	N/A due to size constraints	N/A due to size constraints	Rezoning required	Rezoning required
<b>Proximity to Existing Amenities</b>	Parking and washroom facilities adjacent to site	Parking and washroom facilities across the street	Proximity to school amenities	N/A due to size constraints	Parcel of land is undeveloped at present	Varies

<b>Site Selection Criteria</b>	<b>Scotia 1 Sports Field</b>	<b>Gordon Bell Annex</b>	<b>Graham Creighton School site</b>	<b>Cole Harbour High School field</b>	<b>Former NS Rehabilitation Site</b>	<b>Privately Owned Lands</b>
<b>Additional Costs over those required for field construction</b>	In-filling required, water shed assessment required, engineering study required	\$550k approximately for demolition, \$25k to research appropriate landscaping materials to mitigate negative impact to abutting property owners	N/A due to size constraints	N/A due to size constraints	Costs for site amenities required (parking, washrooms, seating, etc)	Acquisition cost \$800k; costs for site amenities also required (parking, washrooms, seating, etc)
<b>Additional Challenges</b>	Flood Plain	Potential negative impact to abutting property owners due to lighting and usage hours	Insufficient space for additional amenities	N/A due to size constraints	Planning process required to determine future land uses not completed	Lack of available land that meets the size requirements

In addition to the summary of findings, the following commentary on the assessed sites is provided:

#### Option 1: Scotia 1 Sports Field

This site is located behind Cole Harbour Place (Attachment 1), rated a “D” category field by Municipal Operations standards, and primarily used as a practice field for football or to host special events.

Although this site has many positive attributes as a potential site, it is located in an area which is designed to be a flood plain and supports drainage from the surrounding lands. Typically it takes one or two days for the surface water to recede after a rain event. As a result, the use of this field can be significantly reduced due weather conditions. The original storm water management design included a system of french drains for the fields which are intended to slowly drain the area after a rain event, so the area is designed to capture and hold water in a storm event. The impact of this design is shown in a photo included in Attachment 2.

In order to build an artificial turf on this site, the land would have to be in-filled to raise the structure to avoid flooding. Consultation with representatives of Halifax Water and Department of Environment confirms that building an artificial turf on this site would increase the risk of diverting flood waters to neighbouring properties as the elevated structure would displace the water from the original flood plain path. Therefore, a complete assessment of the water shed would need to be conducted in order to assess the potential impact on the floodplain. Also, during flooding times, there is potential for delayed user access of the field and no ability to guarantee that the artificial turf material would not be impacted.

As a result, it is not recommended to explore this site further and incur the costs of an engineering study to examine methods to build an artificial turf in this area due to the potential risk and liability of dispersing the flood water to abutting lands.

#### Option 2 – Gordon Bell Annex Property

This site is located beside Cole Harbour Place on Forest Hills Parkway (Attachment 3), has a “C” rated sports field that is used for mini soccer and Cole Harbour High school practices, and a building which is currently not being utilized.

This site size does allow for the artificial turf construction and a parking area for 70 vehicles. In addition, there is additional parking as well as washroom and change room facilities located off Auburn Drive. Overall, the use of the site as an artificial turf field would enhance the campus setting for recreational services in Cole Harbour. One of the CFMP recommended principles is to provide residents of HRM with a wide variety of outdoor facilities, preferably in clustered sites. The Gordon Bell Annex site is adjacent to the Cole Harbour Place facility, ball fields, other sportsfields, walking track, arts and culture programs, enhanced community gymnasium and potential future multi-use trail system. The artificial turf would enable HRM to provide citizens with a variety of sporting activities conveniently co-located with a multi-purpose community recreation facility.

The site does have an existing brook on the corner of the lands; however, through appropriate placement of the turf and drainage measures, the impact can be mitigated without environmental consequences. As well, in consultation with HRM Landscape Architects, the potential impact to the abutting residents due to increased usage of an artificial turf (noise and lighting) can be mitigated through the usage of appropriate landscaping materials at a cost of approximately \$25,000. Therefore, since the site is able to accommodate an artificial turf field and impacts can be mitigated, the Gordon Bell Annex Property would be a viable site for the placement of the field.

#### Option 3 – Alternate HRM owned Lands

The site selection committee reviewed other HRM owned properties including Cole Harbour District High sports field, Graham Creighton Junior High sports field and the former NS Rehabilitation site. However, each of those properties either did not meet the size requirements or would require additional analysis on the HRM strategic direction for land use on the sites.

The Cole Harbour District High School field is a category “C” field and used primarily by the high school and community groups for practice session. The site size cannot accommodate the dimensions required for an artificial turf and there is no room to expand.

The Graham Creighton Junior High School site size cannot accommodate the dimensions required for an artificial turf. In addition, there are challenges with lack of space for amenities and CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) concerns due to lack of visibility.

The former NS Rehabilitation site has land available to construct an artificial turf; however, the planning process to determine the appropriate use of these lands is not completed so it would be premature to consider the site for an artificial turf prior to this process as it could impact the future use of the lands. Further, it does not have any other required amenities such as parking, washroom, etc., which would be required and therefore, would add additional costs.

#### Option 4 – Privately owned Lands

In addition to the HRM owned properties, several privately owned lands that would accommodate the size, topography, access, amenities and visibility requirements were reviewed. Based on the amount of land that would be required and historical sales data, the potential acquisition cost of land could be estimated to be approximately \$800,000. This cost would be over and above the costs associated with the construction of the field and the additional expenditures for the required infrastructure such as lighting, parking, washrooms and bleacher seating.

Another challenge associated with privately owned sites is that the existing zoning on the lands currently would not support the proposed use. Therefore, a rezoning process would be needed to review traffic impact and compatibility of use with surrounding area in order to determine whether a rezoning would meet the Municipal Planning Strategy and as a result permit construction of an artificial turf field.

As a result, it is not recommended that privately owned lands be explored further at this time as the cost for land acquisition and construction of amenities would far exceed the required costs for construction of a field on the HRM owned property.

#### **Alternatives**

While it has been determined that there is no municipal need for the Gordon Bell building, there has been significant interest in the community for the potential use of the building. Through both the request for proposal and recreation needs assessment processes, feedback was received that indicates that there are community groups interested in the building. With the approval of Administrative Order 50, HRM has a process that can allow for the consideration of the disposal of surplus properties to non-profit organizations. While the site is recommended for retention for a future artificial turf field, Council does have the option to declare the site surplus and dispose of it

through Administrative Order 50. It should be noted that should this be pursued and if the subsequent decision of Regional Council is to dispose of the site, a less optimal site would have to be selected for the future artificial turf field and could be expected to result in additional costs.

## **COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS**

### **Artificial Turf**

The CFMP outlines the importance of ensuring that HRM's playing fields are maintained at a level that allows for proper and safe play. Currently, several fields located in Cole Harbour are classified as "D" and "C" which is considered a lower quality of field. Replacement of a "C" class field with an artificial turf will ease the stress on class "A" and "B" fields, which are higher quality fields. In addition, while artificial turf fields tend to receive substantially more use than natural turf fields (in excess of 1,200 hours of use per year), they require less maintenance and as a result maintenance costs are reduced.

<b>Chart 1: Artificial Turf vs Natural Turf (CFMP 3.4.2 Fields, pg 22)</b>			
	<b>Annual Maintenance Cost per Field</b>	<b>Average Usage/Yr/Field</b>	<b>Maintenance Cost/Hour</b>
Artificial Turf	\$3,500.00	1,250 hours	\$2.92
Natural "A" Fields	\$11,500.00	160.75 hours	\$71.54
Natural "B" Fields	\$8,000.00	252 hours	\$31.75
Natural "C" Fields	\$4,500.00	209.88 hours	\$21.53
Natural "D" Fields	\$2,500.00	161.75	\$15.45

<b>Chart 2: Maintenance Cost Items per Field Classification</b>				
Maintenance Activity	Class A	Class B	Class C	Class D
Line marking	Once per week	Every second week	Every second week	Groups to maintain
Litter pick-up	3 times per week	2 times per week	Every 2 <sup>nd</sup> week	Every 2 <sup>nd</sup> week
Field Repairs	Checked 3 times per week	Checked weekly	Checked every 2 <sup>nd</sup> week	Users to repair
Goal Posts	Place in Spring remove at end of season	Supply in spring and remove in fall	Supply in spring and remove in fall	May be available, not guaranteed
Opening date	May 25	May 29	June 2	June 2
Closing Date	End of season	End of season	End of Season	End of season
Aerating	Up to six times per year	Four times per year	Twice per year	Twice per year
Lighting	As required	Not available	Not available	Not available
Rest periods	Every Friday	None	None	None



	including nights			
Uses	Games only – No practices or camps	Games and practices	Games and/or practices and/or camps	Games and/or practices and/or camps

Since the writing of the CFMP, historical data from the current HRM artificial turf maintenance indicates that the grooming costs for an artificial turf field are closer to \$6,900. In addition to the grooming, other maintenance costs such as litter collection and incidental repairs increase the annual maintenance costs to \$9,700 or \$7.76/hour. In addition to maintenance, HRM incurs other costs associated with artificial turf fields such as monitors, lighting costs, etc. As a result, the historical data shows that artificial turf fields incur total expenses of \$46,100. However, as noted, the available usage possible with an artificial turf field is increased both from the length of season and hours of play. As a result, HRM tends to achieve approximately \$77,000 in annual revenues from artificial turf fields. This is significantly higher than the current revenue of approximately \$4,000 achieved from the three natural turf fields in an average year (Bell Annex, Scotia 1 and Cole Harbour High).

Currently, the Municipal Operations division of TPW maintains 3 natural turf fields in this area of Cole Harbour which would be decommissioned from sport usage as part of the installation of the artificial turf should Regional Council approve the placement of the artificial turf field on the Gordon Bell Annex site. One of those fields would be replaced with the artificial turf field. As outlined in Chart 1, based on the annual costs to maintain “C” and “D” class fields compared to an artificial turf field, annual maintenance costs savings would be achieved. While some of the maintenance items outlined in Chart 2 are still required for open space, the costs to maintain the decommissioned fields as open space would be less than a quarter of the cost to maintain a class “D” field as it includes minor litter clean up and grass cutting only.

This will allow the staff to focus on other natural turf fields that are classified higher and provide cost savings both in staff resources and materials. In addition, the available hours for field usage would be significantly increased as Scotia 1 field is located in the floodplain, and as result, is rendered unusable for periods of time after rain events.

Another benefit is the promotion of this geographical area as a multi-district hub. The area would offer a collection of facilities at this one geographic location, ice pad, the new community gymnasium and cafetorium at the school site, tennis courts, skateboard park, indoor pool, library, meeting rooms, and a new artificial turf. This “hub” will promote the central character of the community and attract participants within a 20 minute drive time radius (as referenced in the CFMP).

The 3 impacted sport fields require drainage and turf repair or complete replacement. This type of rebuild requires a minimum field closure of 15 months. The decommissioning of the 2 fields as playing fields for outdoor sports and the replacement of 1 as an artificial turf has the most positive impact both from a fiscal and service delivery perspective.

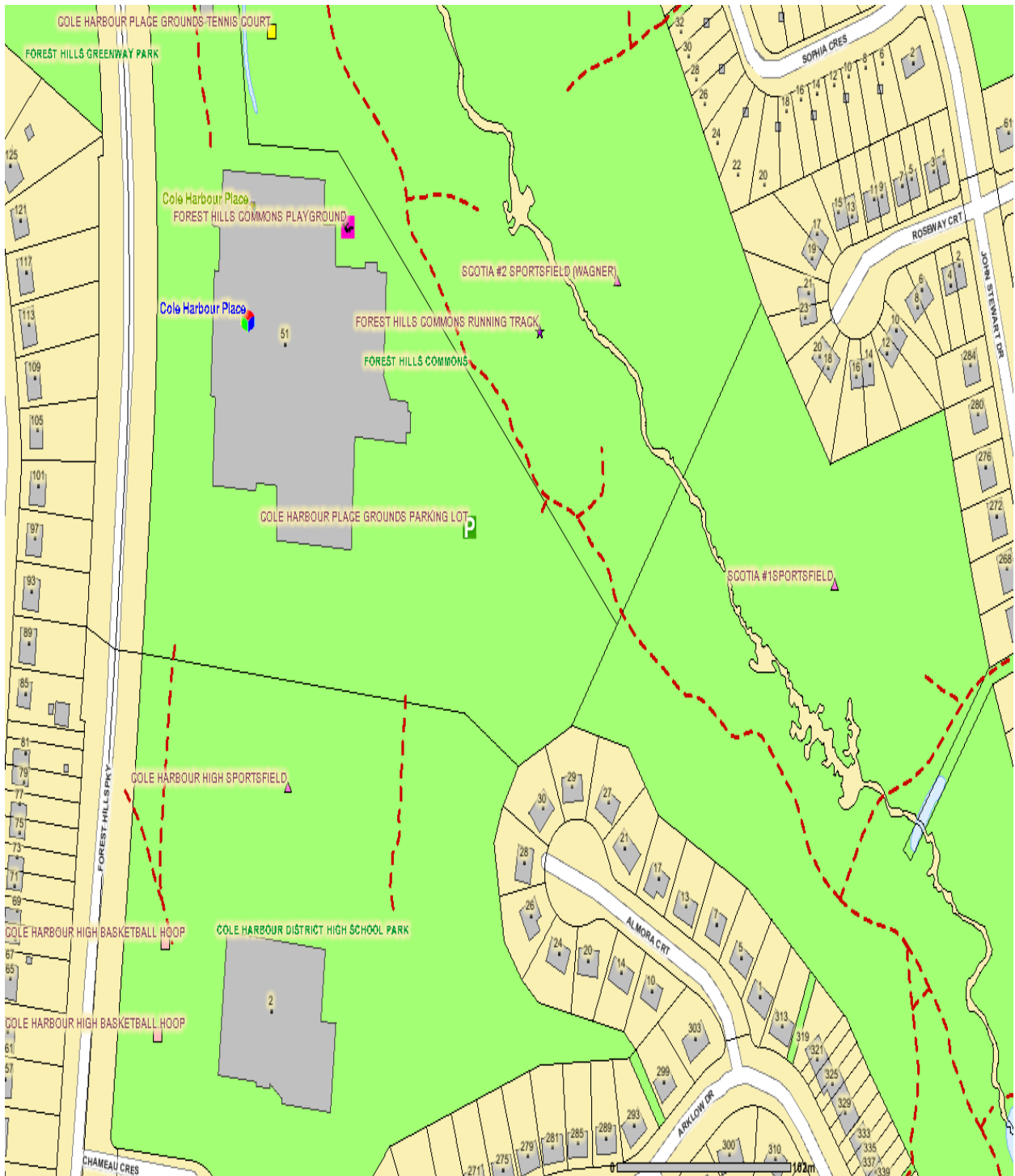
## **Gordon Bell Annex Building**

The circa 1980 building is large with approximately 70,000 square feet over 2/3 stories located on an overall lot size of 7.60 acres (331,056 SF). The facility includes a small gymnasium and several rooms. The gymnasium is approximately 5,400 square feet in area and contains a tile on concrete floor. Annual utility costs are approximately \$90,000 and are in addition to other facility operating costs. The current size, condition and configuration of the facility do not meet requirements for municipally mandated programs and services.

The building has been primarily vacant since the HRSB transferred the school to HRM and does not meet the current National Building, Fire or Electrical Codes, standards and Acts governing within the Municipality and the province of Nova Scotia. The capital cost to ensure the building is maintained for non-municipal usage over the next 25 years is estimated to be over \$6.5 million. Currently, HRM expends approximately \$70,000 annually to cover necessary costs required by the retention of the vacant structure (i.e., security).

The divesting of the surplus property allows HRM to locate the proposed artificial turf in the best activity coverage area for the community. Although there is a cost for the demolition of the Gordon Bell Building, it is outweighed by the long term benefit and opportunity for community usage, sport hosting, synergies at that community campus site and enhanced recreation service delivery.

## Attachment 1: Scotia 1 Field Location Map



## **Attachment 2: Scotia 1 Field Water Challenges**



