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## Plans for Bedford hockey rink unanimously approved

Metro Halifax

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Rink rats are celebrating plans to build a \$30-million, four-rink arena in Bedford. Regional council voted unanimously Tuesday night to construct the new facility on the Hammonds Plains Road, near the intersection with Highway 102.

Todd Watson, president of the Bedford and District Minor Hockey Association and father of two hockey players, said it would be a "tremendous asset" to the area.

"It's long overdue for the Bedford community," Watson said Wednesday. "We are one association in desperate need of ice, and I know there are others."

One of his sons plays bantam, and the other plays for Lockview High School in Fall River. His eldest son's team currently calls the Dartmouth Sportsplex home.

"That tells you the travel that's incurred by the parents and kids because there's just no ice to be had," Watson said. The current shortage of ice time has some kids practicing at 6 a.m. before heading off to school, and some teams lacing up at 10 p.m.

He sounded a note of caution, though. "We have to be a realist as well, and question what facilities the city will be closing."

Tim Outhit, councillor for Bedford, said HRM isn't planning on closing any rinks. He was reached on his cellphone at the LeBrun Rink: built in 1974, it's the most recent ice project in the area. Outhit said they picked the location because it's a fast-growing area near Clayton Park and right by a major highway.

"It's exciting," he said. "There definitely was a crunch for ice space."

He added the city hopes to eventually build another four-rink facility in the Dartmouth/Fall River area.

HRM staff will start negotiations with the winning proponent to set the parameters for the design, build and operation phases of the project. Construction is slated to begin in the spring with completion targeted for fall next year.



Ryan Taplin/Metro Halifax

Cole Harbour Red Wings Atom AA players watch third-period action as their team takes on the Halifax Hawks at the St. Margaret's Centre in Upper Tantallon in this file photo. HRM council has approved the construction of a four-rink arena in Bedford which will help alleviate the chronic shortage of available ice in Metro.

