

Since being elected in 2012, I've been interested in the possibility of creating a HRM multi-service centre for youth in the Sackville area.

Many fabulous groups strive to help youth in their own ways; however, I have always felt that Sackville needed a designated space for wide ranging, comprehensive youth programming to complement what is already in place.

After many discussions with staff and various stakeholders, the idea was put in motion, and in February 2017 the motion for a staff report outlining the benefits, opportunities and challenges of establishing a multi service youth Centre in Sackville was approved.

In January 2018 Parks, Recreation and Communities staff brought back a report to the Community Planning and Economic Development Committee. Utilizing at least three Halifax Regional Municipality reports to help create the feasibility of building a multi service centre for youth in Sackville, staff settled on recommending a one-year anniversary pilot project that will begin this fall.

This provides an opportunity to re-purpose existing HRM owned space into a multi-agency, multi-service collaborative centre for youth programming and service delivery.

This one-year pilot project will establish a collaborative multi agency, multi service Youth Centre at Acadia School in Sackville. At the end of one year, staff will return to Council with a report evaluating the pilot project, there by allowing Regional Council to decide whether to continue with the program at Acadia School in Sackville and/or whether the program should be expanded to other communities within the municipality.

The main goals of the youth centre are to remove barriers of access around mental and physical health, provide and implement various drop in programs, create youth services that are inclusive for all youth, design of physical spaces that are open and welcoming to youth, use partnerships to deliver on non HRM programs and services.

In April 2018, Regional Council approved the staff recommendation to allot \$65,000 for a youth centre pilot program. Since we are still in the planning stages, below is a bird's eye view of the project:

- Approximately 2000 square feet has been designated to house the Multi Service Youth Centre.
- The Centre will be located in the lower level of 636 Sackville Drive in the municipal building.

- There will be a large multi purpose room as well as kitchen area, a small meeting or group space, as well as two offices available for staff.
- A first planning meeting of the stakeholder group took place on March 29th . The purpose of the meeting was to scope out the work needed to be done before the Centre opens in the fall. The stakeholder group includes the Boys and Girls Club, Laing House, the YMCA, Halifax Public Libraries, Opportunity Place, IWK Community Mental Health Team, Cobequid Youth Health Centre, Parks & Recreation,
- In the coming months, the stakeholder group will work on the following:
 - o Develop a youth outreach plan
 - o Develop a recruitment plan for a youth advisory group
 - o Create a schedule of programs and services
 - o Create an evaluation tool for the Pilot

I will be keeping you up to date on any new information on the youth centre as it becomes available from staff. For more information on the youth centre and/or to get involved, please contact

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