

# HALIFAX



# COMMUNITY

## Facility Master Plan 2

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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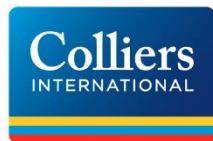
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# 1.0 Executive Summary

## BACKGROUND

In 2004, Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) created the Indoor Recreation Facilities Master Plan. In 2008, the Community Facilities Master Plan (CFMP) was commissioned to update the 2004 Plan's recommendations and to develop recommendations for playing fields. Of the 59 recommendations in the 2008 CFMP, 52 are completed, are in progress or were reconsidered. The successful implementation of the 2008 CFMP has proven the value in strategic planning for community facilities in Halifax. This document, known as CFMP2, provides updated guidance for the provision of indoor and outdoor community facilities throughout the Municipality and extends the CFMP analysis to cover additional outdoor community facilities such as playground structures, skate parks and lawn bowls.

The implementation of the CFMP2 recommendations will provide the facilities necessary for HRM to deliver recreation programs that enhance the life and health of all Halifax citizens. The CFMP2 gives direction for a clustered approach to community facilities management that will provide a more cohesive infrastructure and will encourage more integrated and universally accessible programming.

## FUNCTION OF CFMP2

Like its predecessors, CFMP2 is a high-level plan that fits within, supports, and elaborates on other key policy, including the Regional Plan. Council endorsement of this document should be understood to give approval for the overall direction with implementation details to be further elaborated and considered later. Some recommendations can be implemented by staff without further Council approval, others will require Council allocation of funds and still others may require Council approval of policies. Before bringing specific recommendations for Council approval, staff will analyze the recommendations of the CFMP2, conduct further study as required, and consider any changes in the social, cultural and economic context that could not be foreseen as this document was prepared. This approach allows the CFMP2 to give an overarching direction while ensuring that the details of implementation are properly considered at the time they are implemented.

The CFMP2 recommendations are intended to provide broad direction for staff to implement the renewal and enhancement of the municipality's recreation infrastructure through to 2025.

## APPROACH

The development of CFMP2 required an extensive effort involving consultants, HRM staff, external stakeholders and the public. Direction for the consultant team was provided by a Staff Technical Team (STT) which also included representatives from the Province of NS Department of Health and Wellness, and Sport Nova Scotia. The consultant team worked closely with both the STT and HRM's Project Manager. The approach included:

- A review of existing HRM Policy and evaluation of each recommendation in the 2008 CFMP;
- Analysis of new demographic and school enrollment data to determine where changes in population are occurring and where facilities may be needed;
- Review of building assessments to determine future capital, operating and maintenance liabilities;
- Analysis of facility utilization;
- Focus groups with provincial sport organizations to determine which facilities are best utilized and why;
- Benchmarking Halifax against comparable Canadian cities and Auckland, New Zealand to determine if HRM's allocation of facilities is sufficient;
- Phone and web surveys to seek public feedback, as well as 8 public and 3 engagement sessions with identified groups.

### KEY FINDINGS

The research and consultation identified how Halifax is performing, what community members are concerned about, and which opportunities for improvement should be implemented in the short, medium and long-term. CFMP2 provides recommendations to address the identified needs, including:

- Increased affordability for programs and facility rentals, especially for low income families and seniors.
- A common membership that provides access to all of HRM's Facilities.
- Improved communications and marketing so people can easily find out what programs are available.
- A common web-based portal to HRM's Facilities that includes online scheduling and payment.
- Improved transit service and active transportation routes to make it easier to get to Facilities.
- Broader programming, including programming for seniors and programming in arts and culture.
- New mechanisms to provide feedback to facility operators and service providers so they can make continual improvements.
- Increased engagement on an ongoing basis to understand and address concerns as they arise.
- New and up-to-date multipurpose facilities that are well maintained and efficiently operated.
- Approaches to determine the appropriate number and types of facilities, in the best locations to meet the overall mandate and needs of citizens.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Based on the key findings, an updated set of Goals and Objectives acknowledge HRM's general philosophy of service provision to its citizens and address the gaps that exist between this philosophy and current practice.

Table 1 - Goals and Objectives	
Goals	Objectives
<b>1.0 Diversity &amp; Inclusion</b> Enable and promote access for all by helping to attract a diversity of users and conserving, promoting and incorporating culture	1.1 Address barriers related to factors such as age, gender, sexual orientation, race, income, ability and beliefs
	1.2 Ensure culture and heritage are incorporated in future decision-making processes
<b>2.0 Connectivity</b> Improve the connections between communities and their Facilities and improve communications between Facilities and citizens	2.1 Create a framework that ensures Facilities effectively integrate with active transportation and public transportation routes
	2.2 Recommend improvements to more effectively promote, communicate and market community facilities and their programs
<b>3.0 Facility Development</b> Balance input from stakeholders and the need to invest in new Facilities; maintain and improve existing Facilities; and decommission Facilities at the end of their useful life in order to provide high quality Facilities	3.1 Provide transparent, fair and equitable processes to determine which Facilities should be opened, upgraded or decommissioned
<b>4.0 Facility Operations</b> Ensure Facility operations are sustainable and are accountable to citizens in an ongoing and transparent manner	4.1 Adopt an approach to receiving feedback and collaborating with stakeholders that supports continual service improvements
	4.2 Implement mechanisms that ensure operational, financial and utilization data is collected and reported in order to enhance future decision-making, ensure efficient operations and promote good governance

## HUB & SPOKE MODEL

Arising from the Findings, Goals and Objectives, CFMP2 defines the Hub & Spoke Model as a way of describing the organization and distribution of facilities and programs across the municipality. By organizing facilities in clusters, HRM can encourage residents to make more use of other Facilities in the cluster and thus access a wider variety of programming than can be delivered in any single facility. For community organizations running Facilities, clustering can leverage common services to make every operation more efficient – not to save costs but to deliver a richer set of services. From a facility management perspective, clustering can better match the Facilities to the need. The diagram below illustrates how the clustering could be realized, centred on the Sackville Sports Stadium:



Hub & Spoke Concept Example

## STRUCTURE OF CFMP2

In this plan, the term Facilities when capitalized is used to refer to all types of recreational facilities within the scope of the CFMP2, whether indoor or outdoor, built structures or playing fields. In lower case, the term 'facilities' has a generic meaning as appropriate to the context.

The recommendations are categorized into 5 Sections based on the updated goals and objectives:

- Diversity & Inclusion (Section 6.0)
- Connectivity (Section 7.0)



## Community Facility Master Plan 2

- Facility Development (Section 8.0)
- Facility Operations (Section 9.0)
- Implementation (Section 10.0)

Each Section addresses specific concerns and opportunities identified throughout the team's research and consultation. The recommendations are further organized into an implementation schedule also be found in Section 10.0.

- Short-Term: 2016 to 2018
- Medium-Term: 2019 to 2021
- Long-Term: 2022 to 2025

A summary of the recommendations is provided in Section 10.0.

## 2.0 Introduction

### 2.1 About Halifax

K'ijipuktuk is home to Mi'kmaq and First Nations people. For centuries their ancestors thrived throughout the Region. Halifax is also the capital of the province of Nova Scotia with an estimated population of 414,400<sup>1</sup>. Like other Canadian cities, Halifax is home to people from all corners of the world and is focused on attracting, welcoming and retaining new Canadians.

As the centre of Nova Scotia's economic growth and seat of government, Halifax plays an important role both provincially and regionally.

The Municipality consists of four former municipalities that were amalgamated in 1996 including:

- City of Halifax
- City of Dartmouth
- Town of Bedford
- Municipality of the County of Halifax

As a cultural hub, rich in history, Halifax is one of North America's oldest European settlements. It also happens to be one of the largest at 5,490 km<sup>2</sup>, stretching 165 km from west to east; and consisting of many small communities with important histories of their own.

Sheet Harbour, for example, lies 120 km east of downtown Halifax and was settled in 1784. It later became a prosperous centre for Nova Scotia's lumber industry. The Musquodoboit Valley, also settled in the late 18th century, comprises the largest farming district in the region and still today includes small family farms passed from

generation to generation. The Eastern Shore, the Chebucto Peninsula, and St. Margaret's Bay are home to numerous important fishing villages and today support both a traditional economy, as well as a burgeoning tourism industry.

First settled by Europeans in the 18<sup>th</sup> century as the new capital of Nova Scotia, settlers took advantage of Halifax's strategic location on the Eastern seaboard, which has since played an important role both economically and militarily throughout Canada's history. Indeed, Halifax, Bedford, Sackville and Dartmouth are Atlantic Canada's largest urban conurbations, realizing continued growth and prosperity.

Throughout Halifax, each unique, yet connected community continues to grow and change together, as Nova Scotia's Capital, as well as its economic and cultural hub.



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<sup>1</sup> Population of census metropolitan areas (2015-02-11). Statistics Canada. Retrieved 12 7, 2015, from Statistics Canada <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/l01/cst01/demo05a-eng.htm>

Throughout Halifax, each community has a unique sporting history as well, from hockey in Cole Harbour to paddling on Lake Banook; from baseball in Dartmouth to curling in Halifax and boxing in its North End. Halifax has a proud tradition of supporting sports and athletics. Likewise, and perhaps equally important, Halifax's communities and community groups have historically provided, and support, a wide range of activities and social recreation at local Community Halls and other community operated venues. This important contribution of community provided activities and community supported venues have and will continue to provide citizens with an opportunity to engage in active lifestyles throughout the Municipality.

The diverse communities in Halifax are linked through a common municipal government that seeks to provide municipal services to the meet the needs of each community, whether rural, suburban or city core. In meeting these needs HRM will provide different levels of service to different areas of the municipality. The aim is to provide a fair and reasonable level of service to all citizens while ensuring long-term financial sustainability. Accordingly, HRM must continually work to understand each community's unique challenges and find viable opportunities for improvement.

To plan across a broad spectrum of needs, HRM staff must understand the context of each urban, suburban and rural community and the location within a large geographic area. While local planning initiatives look to address communities' needs at the micro scale in individual communities, several regional plans aim to address issues at the macro scale.

The 2014 Regional Plan is the primary municipal planning document and there are relevant several supporting plans including:

- The 2014-19 Halifax Active Transportation Priorities Plan;
- The 2015 draft Halifax Transit Moving Forward Together Plan,

- The 2006 Cultural Plan

Each of these plans addresses significant issues and opportunities facing the Municipality.

All planning documents must be read at both the Regional and local scale. Community facilities, from multi-purpose sports venues to local playgrounds, play an important role in the vibrancy, liveability and economic success of the entire Region. The CFMP2 therefore considers facilities primarily from the Regional perspective. Future studies on location of specific facilities will consider local requirements.

## 2.2 About CFMP2

In 2004, HRM undertook the task of creating its first plan that would help guide the provision of indoor recreation facilities. Known as the Indoor Recreation Facility Master Plan (IRFMP), the plan established planning principles and recommendations to improve the provision of Facilities throughout the Municipality.

In 2008, the Community Facility Master Plan (CFMP) extended the IRFMP to include some outdoor facilities, such as sport fields and ball diamonds. Like the 2004 IRFMP, the 2008 CFMP provided strategic guidance for the provision of sustainable, planned, accessible and appropriate community Facilities in Halifax.

From 2009 to 2014, the 2008 CFMP recommendations guided improvements to the planning, development, service and operations of major facilities, community (recreation) centres, community halls, arenas, pools, ball diamonds and sport fields. Having addressed 52 of the 59 recommendations, it was determined in late 2014 that the 2008 plan had taken HRM as far as it could. An update to the plan known as CFMP2 was put in motion under the direction of Regional Council.

## Community Facility Master Plan 2

As Halifax evolves, evidence-based decision-making is increasingly a priority amongst its leaders, looking to enable the gathering of evidence and then using that data to make informed decisions and create new policy. To do so the Municipality must collect the best available data and then consult with both experts and the public prior to making decisions.

In early 2015, HRM procured Colliers Project Leaders (formerly MHPM Project Managers) and Asbell Management Innovations to work with staff, Council, stakeholders and the broader community to update the 2008 CFMP. The update allows the plan to address new and emerging issues and to include new and up-to-date information including a current inventory of facilities.

The aim of CFMP2 is to expand service, improve quality and accessibility, increase collaboration and define a strategy for locating recreation Facilities across the municipality. The scope of the CFMP2 was specifically defined to address the following types of recreational Facilities: major facilities, community (recreation) centres, community halls, pools, sport fields, ball diamonds, lawn bowl greens, skate parks, BMX parks, playgrounds, tennis courts, and spray pools.

In this plan, the term **Facilities** when capitalized is used to refer to all types of recreational facilities within the scope of the CFMP2, whether indoor or outdoor, built structures or playing fields. In lower case, the term 'facilities' has a generic meaning as appropriate to the context.

To update the plan, HRM staff and the consulting team followed a multi-step process. The process started with a review of existing HRM policy to understand how policies should influence recommendations in CFMP2. Next, interviews were conducted with HRM staff and focus groups were held with provincial sport organizations and other sport promotional groups. A review of HRM's facility assessments provided information on the buildings' conditions and the upgrades necessary to keep the buildings operational. Next, a study was conducted to determine how well Facilities are utilized. Halifax was then benchmarked with other Canadian municipalities to determine if HRM's provision of Facilities was on par with others.

The final, and most important step, was to consult with members of Regional Council and the public to understand the unique and emerging issues that exist amongst Halifax's diverse communities.



## HIGHLIGHTS OF CFMP ACCOMPLISHMENTS

2008

- Dartmouth East Community Centre
- Gordon R. Snow Community Centre

2009

- Community Access Plan and Ice Allocation Plan (BMO Centre)

2010

- Peninsula Recreation facility & Service Review
- Dartmouth Sportsplex Revitalization Report – Phase 1
- Prospect Road Community Centre
- BMO Centre 4-Pad Arena

2011

- Halifax Forum Complex Revitalization Report
- Hosted Canada Winter Games
- The Canada Games Centre
- The Lake & Shore Community Recreation Centre
- Bedford-Hammonds Plains Community Centre and Artificial Turf

2012

- Long Term Arena Strategy (report)
- North Preston Community Centre addition
- Re-build of Beaverbank-Kinsac Community Centre
- Implementation of the Ice Allocation Plan at all HRM-owned arenas

2013

- Dartmouth Sportsplex Revitalization Report Phase 2

2014

- Long Term Arena Strategy - Consolidation of Aging Arenas (report)
- Community Gymnasium at Cole Harbour and District High School
- Council approval of the Community Gymnasium at the new Eastern Passage High School

2015

- Council approval of Cole Harbour Artificial Turf

## 2.3 Consultation

To engage citizens, the team undertook eight public meetings, an empirical phone survey, a web survey, several meetings with stakeholders and accepted phone and email correspondence. Summaries and results of the consultation can be found in Appendix L and Appendix M.

Throughout the consultation, the team aimed to understand the community's values and to gain a better understanding of Halifax's unique communities. The consultation demonstrated the important relationships that exist between community members and their local Facilities.

Commonly heard opportunities for improvement included:

- There is no significant need for net new facilities, but existing older buildings are in poor condition and priority should be put on upgrading/replacing aging facilities.
- Programs and facility rentals should be more affordable, especially for low income families and seniors (costs to access facilities are too high, and can be prohibitive).
- Sport groups want better of maintenance of outdoor facilities and want to extend their outdoor seasons which will require either more artificial turf fields or indoor facilities.
- Sports groups want facilities that can host tournaments.
- Informal recreation opportunities and programs (arts, culture, music) are seen as important complements to formal recreation.
- A common membership should provide access to all HRM Facilities.
- Improved communications and marketing are needed so people can easily find out what programs are available.

- Sports groups wanted on-line search, booking and payment for Facilities.
- Improved transit service and active transportation routes are needed to make it easier to get to Facilities.
- New mechanisms are needed to provide feedback to facility operators and service providers so they can make continual improvements.
- There should be increased engagement on an ongoing basis to understand and address concerns as they arise.
- Respondents wanted new and up-to-date multipurpose facilities that are well maintained and efficiently operated.

Overall, the consultation undertaken identified common themes amongst stakeholders and across the Region.

## 2.4 Benchmarking

To understand how HRM's community Facilities compare to other municipalities, the consultant team conducted a benchmarking study examining how community facilities are currently allocated, planned and funded. A summary of the benchmarking can be found in Appendix K. The municipalities studied included the following:

- Saanich: A district municipality on Vancouver Island in British Columbia, within the Greater Victoria area. It is the most populous municipality in the Capital Regional District and includes a mixture of urban and suburban communities. Like peninsular Halifax, Downtown Victoria is constrained by its geography and its harbour.
- Edmonton: The provincial capital consisting of urban and suburban communities. Edmonton has emerged as a hub for the oil and natural gas industries. Some communities are

wealthy and other areas have challenging social issues.

- **Winnipeg:** Winnipeg is much smaller geographically than Halifax, but is similar in many ways: as the provincial capital, the economic hub of the province and home to two large universities. It has similar population demographics to Halifax.
- **Hamilton:** Hamilton is a harbour city on Lake Ontario at the western end of the Greater Toronto Area. It has a long history of industry and manufacturing, but like Halifax, has recently emerged as a City focused on reinventing itself and redeveloping the urban core. In 2001 several outlying municipalities were amalgamated into the new City of Hamilton and thus, like Halifax, it has a combination of rural, suburban and inner core areas, but has only about 1/5<sup>th</sup> of the area of Halifax.
- **Auckland, New Zealand:** Considered a sample of international best practice in the provision and management of community facilities.

## 2.5 About this Plan

This Plan is structured in two components. The first component, "the Report", includes background information, a summary of the analysis, and recommendations.

The second component is a series of "Appendices" that support the Plan's recommendations and give more detailed analysis.

In the Report:

- Section 3.0 describes the vision, goals and objectives of this plan.
- Section 4.0 describes the context in Halifax and projections for the future.
- Section 5.0 describes the existing community recreation Facilities.

The Plan's recommendations are organized in the final five sections:

- Section 6.0: Diversity & Inclusion
- Section 7.0: Connectivity
- Section 8.0: Facility Development
- Section 9.0: Facility Operations
- Section 10.0: Implementation

Each CFMP2 recommendation is associated with a recommended time frame, which is further illustrated in a schedule for implementation in Section 10.0:

- Short-Term: 2016 to 2018
- Medium-Term: 2019 to 2021
- Long-Term: 2022 to 2025

## 3.0 Our Vision

### 3.1 Values

This Master Plan is designed to support and reinforce the values defined by Parks and Recreation staff in consultation with a wide variety of stakeholders and informed by several key studies, including those listed at right.

At a fundamental level, these studies emphasize that the Municipality will:

- Strive to deliver excellent customer service;
- Seek to meet the needs of the unique communities across Halifax;
- Remain committed to sustainability and fiscal responsibility;
- Engage the public to seek input and value open dialogue, team work and a supportive, respectful, ethical and diverse environment;
- Value the contribution and support of partnerships;
- Seek to provide universal access to recreation services to address barriers from geography, gender, race, income, ability and otherwise;
- Focus on entry or introductory-level programs to engage residents in healthy active lifestyles;
- Create an opportunity for every resident to walk, bike, skate, swim and paddle.

**Table 2 – Foundation Studies**

- The 2006 Regional Plan
- The 2014 Regional Plan
- The Parks and Recreation Blueprint
- 2004 IRFMP and 2008 CFMP
- Halifax's Making Connections: 2014-2019 Halifax Active Transportation Priorities Plan
- Halifax's Cultural Plan
- The Physical Activity Strategy for the Halifax Region – Stepping Up
- The National Recreation Framework
- The Canadian Sport Policy
- Shared Strategy for Advancing Recreation in Nova Scotia



## 3.2 Goals & Objectives

The Goals and Objectives were developed after extensive study and consultation with both stakeholders and the general public. The Goals and Objectives of CFMP2 acknowledge HRM's philosophy of service provision to its citizens and address the gaps that exist between this philosophy and current practice.

Table 3 - Goals and Objectives	
Goals	Objectives
<b>1.0 Diversity &amp; Inclusion</b> Enable and promote access for all by helping to attract a diversity of users and conserving, promoting and incorporating culture	1.1 Address barriers related to factors such as age, gender, sexual orientation, race, income, ability and beliefs
	1.2 Ensure culture and heritage are incorporated in future decision making processes
<b>2.0 Connectivity</b> Improve the connections between communities and their Facilities and improve communications between Facilities and citizens	2.1 Create a framework that ensures Facilities effectively integrate with active transportation and public transportation routes
	2.2 Recommend improvements to more effectively promote, communicate and market community Facilities and their programs
<b>3.0 Facility Development</b> Maintain and improve existing Facilities; decommission Facilities at the end of their useful life, and build new/replacement Facilities, considering input from stakeholders, to provide high quality Facilities	3.1 Provide transparent, fair and equitable processes to determine which Facilities should be opened, upgraded, replaced or decommissioned
<b>4.0 Facility Operations</b> Ensure facility operations are sustainable and are accountable to citizens in an ongoing and transparent manner	4.1 Adopt an approach to receiving feedback and collaborating with stakeholders that supports continual service improvements
	4.2 Implement mechanisms that ensure operational, financial and utilization data is collected and reported in order to enhance future decision making, ensure efficient operations and promote good governance

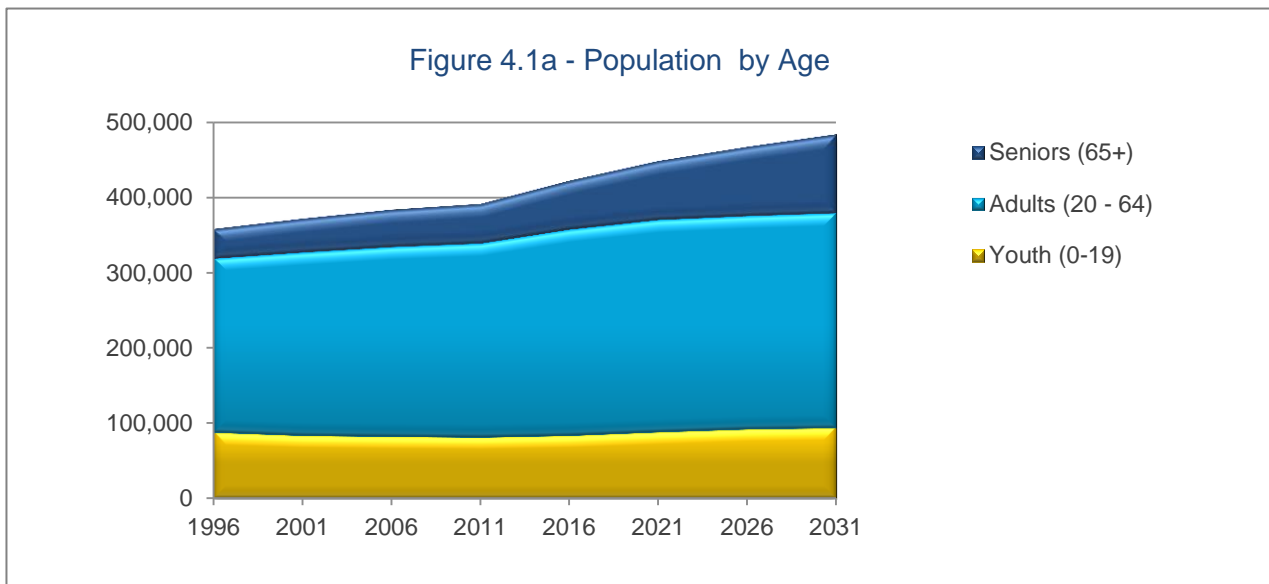
# 4.0 Our Changing Halifax

Halifax covers an area slightly larger than Prince Edward Island and is a mix of 200 urban, suburban and rural communities. This makes Halifax one of Canada’s largest municipalities. Because the population is dispersed, it creates challenges related to providing infrastructure and services that meet the needs of everyone. HRM is faced with addressing these challenges, and further, in the context of an aging population with decreased mobility.

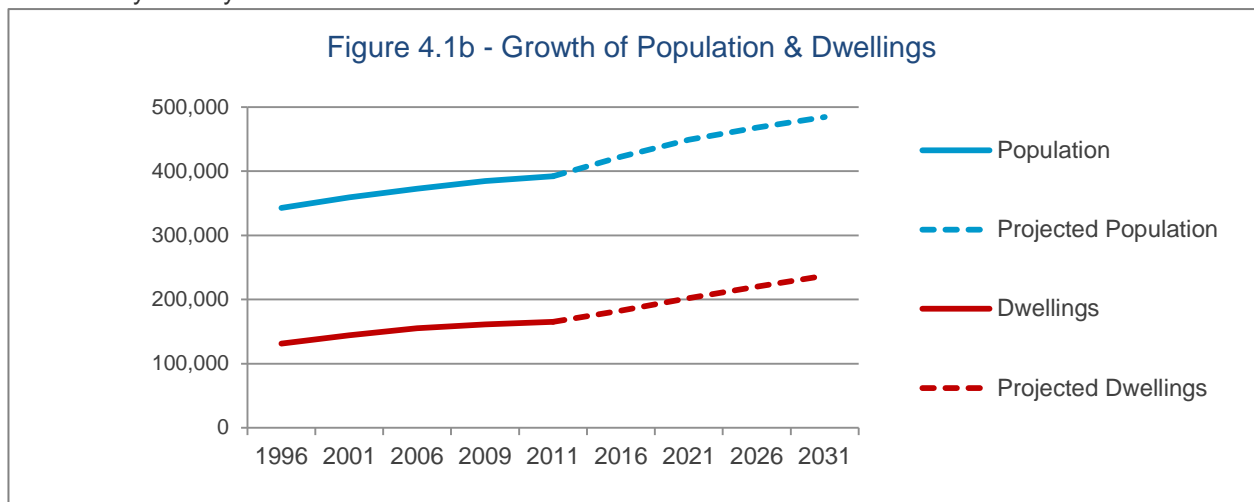
Despite the challenges, Halifax remains an attractive place to live, attracting newcomers from the rest of Canada and abroad. Citizens are served by many local and regional community Facilities, which in turn helps to attract and retain citizens. CFMP2 seeks to recognize and balance the factors driving change throughout the municipality including increased development, an aging population, and increased diversity.

## 4.1 Population

Halifax is the capital of the province of Nova Scotia and has an estimated population of 414,400<sup>2</sup>. Halifax is now home to 44% of Nova Scotia's population, making it the 13<sup>th</sup> most populated city in Canada. The municipality is growing faster than other areas in Nova Scotia and equivalent to the rate found elsewhere in Canada at approximately 1% per year. The number of dwellings is, and is expected to continue, growing at a faster rate than the population because of a decline in the size of households. That growth will bring increased demand for community Facilities in both urban and non-urban areas.



<sup>2</sup> Population of census metropolitan areas (2015-02-11). Statistics Canada. Retrieved 2015-07-25, from Statistics Canada <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/l01/cst01/demo05a-eng.htm>



Within this population growth, the seniors' population (65+) is growing fastest and is expected to double between 2011 and 2031. The youth population (19 and under) is expected to grow marginally after several years of slight decline.

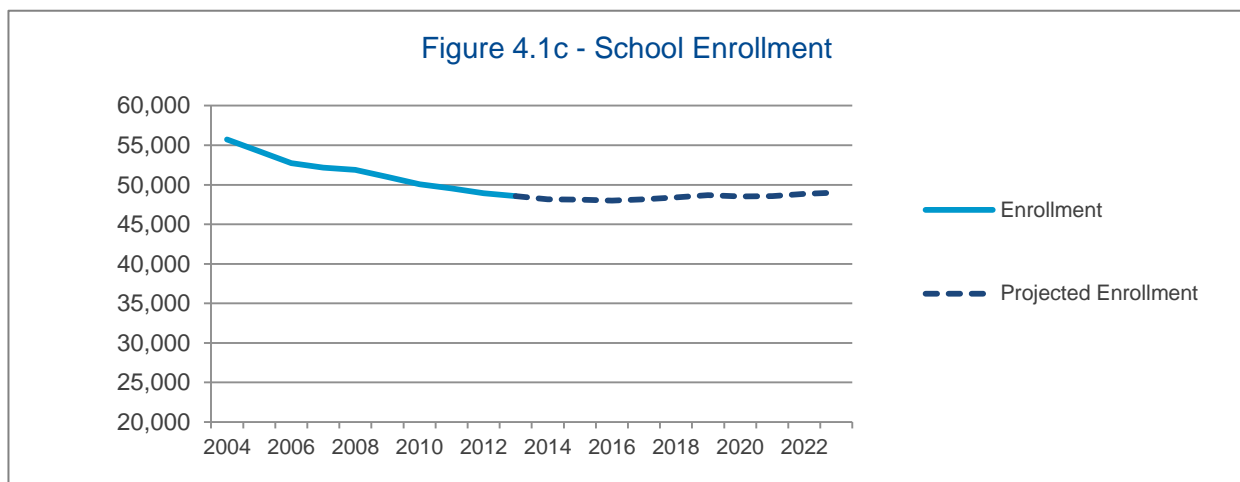
In line with the rest of Canada, Halifax families are becoming more diverse in family structure. Lone-parent families, common-law couples, same-sex couples, adopted children, multi-generational living arrangements have changed the way we view the 'traditional family' home. Diverse families have varied needs that should be accommodated with appropriate community infrastructure and programming.

Overall, school enrollment in the Halifax Regional School Board (HRSB) has begun to steady after several years of decline. While enrollment is

expected to increase over the next decade, many schools in Halifax are expected to operate well below their capacity in the near and medium term.

HRSB data illustrates 12 schools with increasing enrollment, while 35 schools have declining enrollment. The fastest growing enrollments correspond to areas that have seen increased development and population growth (including Basinview Elementary, Charles P. Allen High School and Sackville Heights Elementary). The schools with the sharpest decline in enrollment correspond to areas where population has aged and/or is declining (including Auburn Drive High School, Cole Harbour High School, Dartmouth High School, Eastern Shore District High School and Prince Andrew High School).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> HRSB (2015). HRSB Long-Range Outlook.



## 4.2 Culture & Diversity

Ethnic diversity plays an important role in Halifax's culture and vibrancy. In fact, Halifax has the highest proportion of Canadian-born visible minorities in all of Canada<sup>4</sup>. Other Canadian cities are diverse because they have higher levels of new immigrants. Persons of African and Arab descent account for most visible minorities in Halifax. It is important to recognize the unique needs of various ethnic groups, including a wide variety of interests and sports.

In 2011, there were 31,260 citizens born outside of Canada (8.1% of the population) living in Halifax.<sup>5</sup> The percentage of immigrants is higher than the rest of Nova Scotia (5.3%). HRM and the Government of Nova Scotia are actively pursuing policies that promote immigration as a means of cultural and economic development. It is important that services and infrastructure reflect a changing demographic, even though it is unlikely increased immigration will have a significant impact on community Facilities in the near future.

Program development is one area that may consider an altered approach to ensure inclusivity for new Nova Scotians. Reported mother tongues include:

- English (90.2%)
- French (2.6%)
- Arabic (1.5%)

Access to multi-lingual services will continue to be an important component of creating an inclusive environment.

Halifax's Household Median Income was \$78,690 in 2011 compared to \$72,240 nationally, ranking it 14th amongst Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs).<sup>6</sup> A total of 15.1% of the population in private households in Halifax had low income status in 2011 compared to 14.9% in the rest of Canada.<sup>7</sup>

## 4.3 Development Patterns

The 2006 Regional Plan sought to distribute new growth across the City with 25% of growth in the urban area, 50% in suburban areas and 25% in rural areas over the planning horizon. Between 2006 and 2011, only 16% of growth occurred in the Regional Centre (Peninsula Halifax and Dartmouth between the Circumferential Highway and Halifax Harbour)<sup>8</sup>. This is slightly below Regional Plan target but it is a reversal of the modest declines experienced before 2006.

From 2006 to 2011, the highest growth rates occurred in Bedford (along the Bedford Highway and in Bedford West), around Russell Lake in Dartmouth and in Middle and Upper Sackville and Fall River. Meanwhile, many areas in Dartmouth and its suburbs, as well as Halifax's eastern-most rural areas, declined in population. While the rural areas east and west of Halifax have remained fairly stable, there has been rapid growth in St. Margaret's Bay.

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<sup>4</sup> Statistics Canada. (2010, 02 11). Statistics Canada. Retrieved 11 3, 2015, from Canada's Ethnocultural Mosaic: <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2006/as-sa/97-562/p18-eng.cfm>

<sup>5</sup> Province of Nova Scotia. (2014). Nova Scotia Community Counts. Retrieved 3 11, 2015, from Data by Community Profile : <http://www.novascotia.ca/finance/communitycounts/profiles/community/default.asp?gnum=mun91&gvie w=3&glevel=mun>

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<sup>6</sup> Statistics Canada. (2014, 07 23). Median total income, by family type, by census metropolitan area . Retrieved 03 11, 2015, from Statistics Canada: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca>

<sup>7</sup> Province of Nova Scotia (2014). *ibid*

<sup>8</sup> Stantec Consulting. (2013). Quantifying the Costs and Benefits of Alternative Growth Scenarios. Halifax: Halifax.

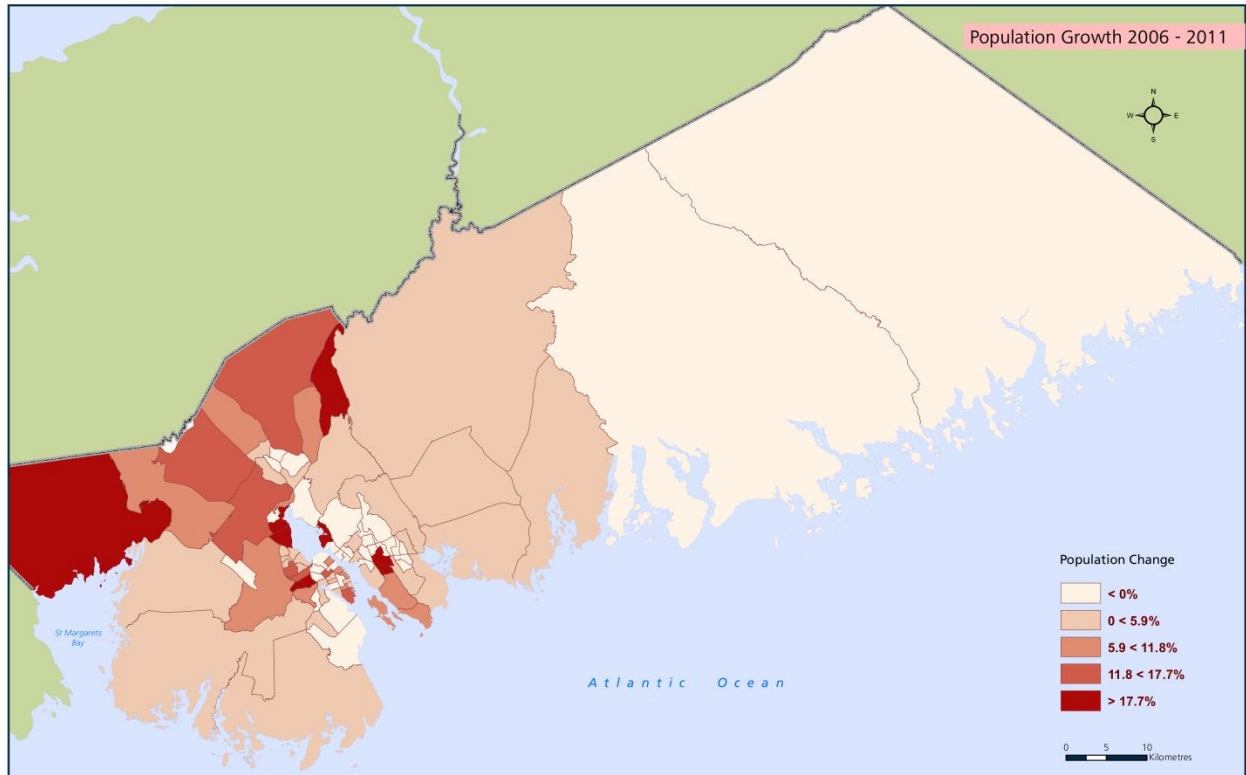


Figure 4.3.1 – Population Growth Rates – 2006 - 2011

The Halifax peninsula has remained fairly stable growing at 3.7% overall, with some census tracts in the peninsula experiencing rapid growth (South End) and others experiencing very subtle population decline. Dartmouth’s populations declined slightly over the 5 year period (-1.4%).

The 2014 Regional Plan targets 75% of all new housing units to be located in the Regional Centre and urban communities (communities serviced with publicly managed water and wastewater services). The location and provision of appropriate community facilities will play an important role in meeting these targets.

## 4.4 Trends in Recreation

The benchmarking conducted for this study identified several trends in recreation.

### ARTS, CULTURE & HERITAGE

A broad definition of recreation includes art, culture and heritage as activities that can be supported as an integral programming element within community Facilities. Supporting these activities can build a creative community that has both recreational and employment benefits. Arts, culture and heritage activities appeal to all age ranges from youth to seniors and can be adapted to a wide range of spaces in HRM’s Facilities.

Opportunities for incorporating arts and culture in community Facilities include art exhibitions, public art, performance space, visual and performance art lessons, programming and showcases, amongst others. To support this type of programming, appropriate stakeholders should be

engaged in consultations during facility design. Inclusion of public art (both permanent and rotating displays) and artists in residence spaces in community Facilities is an important way to validate the importance of these activities.

## INFORMAL RECREATION

The broadening definition of recreation emphasizes the need to assess the Facilities that support a wide range of informal activities, such as walking, swimming and cycling. Informal activities involve individuals or small groups participating, often near their home and at the most convenient time. It also includes activities that can be done as a family and across generations.

As the population ages, less strenuous activities will be sought by some, and intergenerational opportunities will be sought by others. It is also likely aging individuals will seek cultural and learning experiences as they pursue new personal skills. This may include a combination of physical activities, personal learning and social activities, such as dance classes, nature walks, outdoor photography or gardening instruction, as well as more leisurely activities such as lectures, book clubs and cooking classes. The social opportunities of recreation should not be overlooked. According to Statistics Canada, epidemiological studies suggest that social activities may be particularly important for older adults. Possible health benefits include reduced risk of mortality, disability and depression, and better cognitive health, self-rated health and health-related behaviours.<sup>9</sup>

## DEMANDING SCHEDULES

School, work, long commutes and families with two working parents all result in pressure to find leisure time. It is important that Facilities are located and programmed to facilitate changing schedules and busy people.

- The shift toward informal recreation is in part due to the pressures on families with demanding schedules. It may be difficult to commit to a weekly class, but drop-in classes may be more conducive and likely to be successful.
- The challenges of shuttling children to league sports may be easier to plan for if all games and practices are at the same or centralized location.
- Trends towards flexible employment and self-employment may allow for adult activities to be scheduled during the daytime, or off hours.

## ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Increasingly, recreation and community Facilities are seen as an important support for economic development in communities. Community Facilities have the potential to attract growth because they provide a more complete range of services. They also create local jobs and, where they stimulate more recreational activity, may support spin-off jobs. A significant stimulus can be created with recreation and sport tourism, whether through local tournaments or destination recreation tourism (such as sea kayaking or surfing).

## VOLUNTEERISM<sup>10</sup>

While volunteerism in Canada remains steady it is true most of the work (53%) is done by less than

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<sup>9</sup> Gilmour, H. (2015, July 7) Statistics Canada. Retrieved 2 11 2016. Social participation and the health and well-being of Canadian seniors: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/82-003-x/2012004/article/11720-eng.htm>

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<sup>10</sup> Vezina, M., & Crompton, S. (2012, April 16). Volunteering in Canada. *Canadian Social Trends (11-008-X)*, pp. 37-55.

10% of the volunteers. Sports and recreation and social services sectors enjoy the most volunteer support with organizations associated with sports and recreation accounting for 19% of volunteer hours. It is likely that as the population ages, more volunteers will come forward after retirement although volunteerism tends to decline with age. It is important new volunteers are approached and once committed, feel their role is meaningful and effective to keep them engaged in the long term. Experienced volunteers with institutional knowledge are very important to many community organizations. Short-term volunteer opportunities related to a specific task with a particular goal may be attractive to those not able to commit to the long term. Young Canadians aged 15 to 24 were more likely to volunteer than any other age groups, at 58%. Young volunteers with skills in social networking, fund raising, engaging peers and mentoring youth are increasingly engaged in public service, however they may be difficult to retain as volunteering competes with jobs, school, and social commitments. Enabling volunteerism amongst youth by combining it with a portion of employment or school credits are two ways to encourage more young people to become engaged.

## PERSONAL HEALTH

It is widely accepted that an active lifestyle can provide positive impacts to individual health. An active lifestyle helps adults prevent or manage conditions such as diabetes, obesity and depression, and increases overall life expectancy. Recreation and sports are equally important in the development of healthy children, building self-esteem, tackling childhood obesity and providing opportunities for social lessons such as team building and fair play. Many sports organizations, such as Canadian Sport for Life<sup>11</sup> emphasize the importance of engaging youth in the development

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<sup>11</sup> Canadian Sport for Life (2014). Sports. Retrieved 2/11/15 from [www.Canadiansportforlife.ca](http://www.Canadiansportforlife.ca)

of physical literacy and fun in sports as a way of developing life-long participation in sports and the health benefits that brings.

Increasing awareness of personal and children's health is creating new demand for recreation services amongst all generations. And individuals are not only looking for recreation infrastructure, but also for instruction, dietary information and cessation programs for items such as tobacco and alcohol, for example.

Community Facilities can serve as a wellness centre with space for activities, programming and information resources that help promote public health.

## NEW RECREATION ACTIVITIES

Recreational activities continue to evolve with some niche activities becoming more widely practiced, while new activities are continually being developed. Some sports and activities that have recently emerged include:

- Pickleball
- Disc Golf
- Geocaching
- Quidditch

Even established sports can grow when local stars emerge on the international stage or when popular culture spurs an interest. Consider the following activities that have seen significant transition in the past few years:

- Tennis (success of Eugenie Bouchard, Milos Raonic, Vasek Pospisil and others)
- Archery (popularity of the Hunger Games)
- BMX and Mountain biking (new Olympic sport, 2004)
- Surfing (Lawrencetown Beach renowned as destination for local and international surfers)
- Hockey (local success of Nathan MacKinnon, Sidney Crosby and others).

## Community Facility Master Plan 2

- Female hockey with the success of the National Women's Hockey Team;
- Female soccer with the 2015 FIFA Women's World Cup hosted in Canada and the success of the Canadian women's team.

This Report addresses recreational activities that have achieved some popularity but other sports will grow and emerge during the period covered by this plan.



## 5.0 Our Current Facilities

An inventory of Facilities covered in this plan can be found in Appendix G. HRM owns and operates hundreds of facilities throughout the municipality. The buildings make up a wide range of building type, use, size, age and condition. Ranging in age from two years old to over a hundred years old, the sheer number represents significant challenges in terms of operations and maintenance. With this aging building stock and a multitude of sport fields, ball diamonds, playgrounds and other outdoor infrastructure, Halifax requires a significant annual investment to simply maintain its Facilities at the status quo.

### 5.1 Aging Infrastructure

Like many municipalities in Canada, Halifax has many aging community Facilities that are nearing or at the end of their useful life: they are not fully accessible, have high operating costs, and require capital improvements for building safety.

The previous infrastructure stimulus programs provided support from provincial and federal governments and allowed HRM to renew several Facilities and narrow the infrastructure deficit. Work remains in the near and medium term to replace or decommission aging Facilities. The Federal government has dedicated funding for sport infrastructure but the funding available to HRM is unknown at this time.

Facility condition is commonly measured using a Facility Condition Index (FCI) which measures the ratio between the current and anticipated repair cost, and the replacement value<sup>12</sup>. Higher FCI ratings indicate buildings that require more repairs. In addition, higher FCI ratings are often correlated with higher energy costs. The table below shows a summary of HRM’s building condition overall health. Forty one percent of Community Facilities are in excellent condition, however 9% need to be replaced or closed.

**Table 4 – State of Facilities**

% of Community Facilities	FCI (2018)	Rating
41%	0-5	Excellent
29%	5-10	Good
21%	10-25	Fair to Poor
9%	25+	Replace or Close

In addition to facilities that need to be replaced or closed, some facilities in fair or poor condition could be considered for replacement. A replacement building would usually have lower energy costs, would avoid extensive repair costs, and in many cases, would provide a better user experience because older Facilities in poor condition are not designed to current expectations. Decommissioning assets and incorporating existing activities in nearby Facilities can have the added benefit of avoiding any new capital financing.

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<sup>12</sup> The current and expected repair cost is formally called the Accumulated Deferred Maintenance and measures expected repair costs in the next five years. Capital Management Energy Ltd. has conducted building assessments of all community facilities to determine the FCI ratings.

By 2023, without significant investment, the following Facilities will have an FCI >25 and will therefore require review. A summary of current building assessments can be found in Appendix F.

Facility	FCI (2023) <sup>13</sup>
St Mary's Boat Club	61
Wallace Lucas Community Hall	48
Spryfield Arena (Improvements Ongoing)	35
Carroll's Corner Community Hall (Improvements Ongoing)	34
The Old Common Pavilion (Music Venue)	32
Cole Harbour Outdoor Pool & Tennis Court Complex (Improvements Ongoing)	32
Eastern Shore Arena (and Community Hall)	30

The condition of outdoor Facilities such as playgrounds, skate parks, tennis courts and playing fields is not recorded in the same way as indoor Facilities. However, anecdotal comments provided in consultation sessions identified that there are many outdoor Facilities in poor condition. A program to evaluate outdoor Facilities would provide the data necessary to manage those assets in the same manner as buildings.

## ACCESSIBILITY

Many of HRM's Facilities lack the benefits of universal design. While new Facilities (<20 years old) tend to be compliant with current requirements, many Facilities including playgrounds are not accessible to people with

<sup>13</sup> The FCI (2023) indicates the Facility Condition Index that would be expected in 2023 if there was no investment in capital repairs between now and 2023.

different abilities and those using wheelchairs, for example. Adaptation is increasingly important for an aging population. Some of HRM's Facilities will require significant upgrades to meet current accessibility standards. Accessibility considerations also include the need for convenient public transit access and accessible parking.

## 5.2 Delivery Models

HRM has two primary models governing major community facilities, community (recreation) centres, community halls, sport fields, ball diamonds and tennis courts:

- **Direct Provider:** HRM staff provides programs and services in HRM owned and operated Facilities.
- **Enabler:** HRM contracts operations of some of its owned Facilities to Community Boards (or other Partners) which in turn offer programs and services to citizens. In some cases, HRM staff work at community operated Facilities.

In the Enabler model, Halifax builds on the long and proud tradition of citizens, organizations, and government working together in a cooperative manner to operate many of its community facilities. In this model, HRM's role is to:

- Ensure Community Boards deliver upon their Agreement with HRM.
- Support organizational development for Community Boards.
- Develop Condition Assessments for Facilities.
- Provide recapitalization of facilities
- Evaluate & report on relationship to Council.

The role of Community Boards (or other Partners) is to:

- Meet the requirements of their Agreement with HRM.

## Community Facility Master Plan 2

- Manage the facility's operations, maintenance and programming.
- Fully recover all facility operating and programming costs.

Community Boards (or other Partners) work closely with HRM Parks and Recreation, which monitors and supports their work. In this way, they help HRM promote active and healthy living and social connections in the Community.

Many facilities are not able to fully recover their operating costs. HRM therefore provides varying subsidies in the form of operating financial and administrative support. Other financial support may also be available such as:

- Lease revenue,
- Deferred payments,
- Provincial grants,
- Grants,
- Councillor discretionary funding,
- Pay parking,
- Other funding sources, and
- Gaming revenue.\*

\*While gaming has been used in cost recovery, it should not be a major revenue stream for community boards and facilities. Any gaming occurring in HRM owned facilities should be incidental and typically hosted by community groups.

The provision of various subsidies among facilities creates confusion about expectations for cost recovery.

The agreements with partners for operating Facilities are not consistent. This creates more confusion about who is responsible for costs. Further confusion arises because capital improvements (expansion) and recapitalization (replacement of components as needed) are treated differently.

Community Boards have inconsistent reporting approaches which make it challenging for HRM to ensure appropriate governance, accountability and alignment with HRM principles, policies and practices. HRM will continue to address these challenges through a series of processes, including the current Multi-District Facility review.

# 6.0 Diversity & Inclusion

Goals	Objectives
<p><b>1.0 Diversity &amp; Inclusion</b></p> <p>Enable and promote access for all by helping to attract a diversity of users and conserving, promoting and incorporating culture</p>	<p>1.1 Address barriers related to factors such as age, gender, sexual orientation, race, income, ability and beliefs</p> <p>1.2 Ensure culture and heritage are incorporated in future decision making processes</p>

Throughout Canada and abroad, municipalities are seeking new policies that ensure fair and equitable access to community Facilities. During consultations and focus groups, many stakeholders commented that HRM should strive to provide Facilities that encourage participation and help address historic inequities. As a key goal of this Plan, the recommendations in the following section ensure citizens have access to community Facilities independent of ability, wealth, culture, ethnicity, race, age, gender, sexual orientation and sexual identity.

## 6.1 One City

### 6.1.1 Gaps & Opportunities

#### COMMUNITY ACCESS PLAN

Halifax’s Community Access Plan (which contains the Ice Allocation Policy) was created to ensure fair and equitable access to the newly constructed BMO Centre 4-pad arena, which opened in 2010. Since then the Ice Allocation Policy has been implemented in all of the municipally-owned arenas. This policy is helping to provide a more proportionate and equitable allocation of ice time to various user groups, not just in proportion of ice time allocated but also in the time of day at which access is given.

There are similar gaps in access to other Facilities and programs. HRM should extend the

Community Access Plan to other community Facilities such as sport fields, ball diamonds and community centre gyms. This approach aligns with practices in many other Canadian municipalities. It can provide clarity and equity amongst sports groups and help ensure access is based on need and number of participants instead of historical allocation.

Considerations for implementing the plan include: existing and historic allocations; the booking process; matching the quality of the facility to the level of play; balancing the ability to book more fields than needed for ease of user group scheduling with optimizing use; and collecting data, such as participation numbers and waiting lists in order to create and update the plan on an ongoing basis.

#### NEW CANADIANS

The 2005 Halifax Immigration Action Plan recognizes the challenges facing the municipality and Nova Scotia in attracting and retaining new Canadians. HRM has a significant and vested interest in providing the most welcoming environment possible for newcomers. Engaging new Canadians through outreach activities is essential to understand barriers and concerns. The information gained from engagement and outreach will allow development of programming to serve a more diverse community and make the community Facilities more inclusive.

## SUPPORT FOR LOW-INCOME FAMILIES

HRM supports important programs, such as Jumpstart/Halifax Rec Kids program and the Thrive Program, to enable participation in HRM Facilities and programs. Kidsport NS also provides support to local families. While these important programs will continue, and will require support to meet demand, it is also recognized that other means of support are required to increase participation amongst low income Haligonians, including families, single adults and seniors. A “Recreation Fee Assistance Program” (based on family income or equivalent economic indicator) could provide a framework that would attract support from partners such as non-profits, private entities, donations and other levels of government.

## UNIVERSAL ACCESS CARD

While many individuals identify strongly with specific Facilities and value the sense of belonging that comes with membership at a specific facility, many others see memberships as a barrier to accessing HRM Facilities. Providing a single card that identifies a resident and gives basic access to all municipal facilities was identified as a priority by stakeholders. This card would function much like the library card that gives access to every branch of the Halifax Public Libraries. The ‘Universal Access Card’ would provide the ability to access HRM recreation services, including bookings, rentals, program registration, payment and membership identification. It may even be possible to integrate the ‘Universal Access Card’ with the Library Card to serve as a general public access card.

A similar single access card model has been implemented successfully in many municipalities, such as Vancouver and Edmonton<sup>14</sup>.

## ‘ONE MEMBERSHIP’

Some Facilities offer added value services that are available as ‘memberships’, with different discounts for different periods -annual memberships are significantly discounted. Currently a membership at one Facility is not transferrable to any other Facility. As a result, in addition to a Universal Access Card, stakeholder priorities included having a transferrable ‘One City – One Membership’ model. This model would provide a user with one or more levels of premium services that could be used at any facility that offered the services across the municipality. For example, a fitness membership at Cole Harbour Place would be honoured at the Canada Games Centre. The same would be true for an aquatic membership, which would give access to public swim times at all HRM pools.

While most users would continue to access their ‘home’ facility most of the time, a ‘One Membership’ model would allow a user to access other Facilities, such as shifting a work out closer to their employment location. Similarly, a parent waiting for a child to play a hockey game could take advantage of other services provided in the arena their child was playing at, regardless of where the game was held.

It should be noted that this One Membership model would not mean that every facility offered the same services, but the One Membership would give access to those services wherever they were offered.

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<sup>14</sup> City of Vancouver , City of Edmonton (2015). Retrieved 3 11, 2015. <http://vancouver.ca/parks-recreation-culture/onecard.aspx>  
[http://www.edmonton.ca/programs\\_services/leisure-access-program.aspx](http://www.edmonton.ca/programs_services/leisure-access-program.aspx)

## COORDINATED PROGRAMMING & PROMOTION

The current programming in HRM's community Facilities is wide ranging. It includes traditional sports and recreation but also programs as diverse as archery, cooking classes, quilting, photography, bird watching, fencing, belly dancing, kayaking, inline skating and horseback riding. Unfortunately, the wide variety of programming available is not well known or easily discovered. Users are unaware of where and when activities are taking place and are not being reached by current advertising. This occurs because each facility operates independently to meet the needs of the local community. Even the Recreation Program Catalogue is organized by location rather than by activity. An ability to search by activity and then find out where it is offered would be more searchable; a web-based search on a wide variety of parameters would be even better. HRM should provide a more focused and sustained marketing and communication strategy that engages citizens in the offerings at all Facilities.

## CULTURAL ACCESS

HRM's cultural plan recognizes arts and culture as a pillar of economic and community growth. Recreational Facilities have an important role to play in fostering the expansion and exploration of arts and culture. Many of HRM's Facilities already offer programs in visual and performance art, and provide arts space, such as pottery rooms and dance studios. As Facilities are designed, redeveloped or retired, it is important these functions are considered as a component of youth, adult and seniors' recreation programming expectations.

### 6.1.2 Recommendations

#### 6.1a:

The successful Halifax Community Access Plan (HCAP) should be extended from allocating ice time in arenas to allocating

access to other Facilities such as sport fields, ball diamonds, pool time and gyms. The goal of the HCAP is to achieve fairness in the allocation of recreational Facilities with respect to age, gender and sport. It seeks to balance the ability of established programs to continue and build on prior year operations with the right of new organizations to access an appropriate share of prime time, and to match the available time to the capabilities of the group. For example, as is fair, children and youth activities are be scheduled at a time that does not disrupt school, family time or sleep, whereas adults can use later time slots. Similarly, sports such as Ringette (a female sport) get an opportunity to book times in the same time slots as male hockey of the same ages, but proportional to their membership numbers.

Extending the HCAP is an important element in ensuring that access to Facilities is equitable and transparent.

#### 6.1b

Develop and implement an outreach strategy that engages community support organizations offering assistance to identifiable or self-identified groups that are not currently using community recreation Facilities. Such groups should include low income individuals, families and seniors, groups identified by sexual orientation, religion, culture, abilities, immigrants, and new Canadians among others. The objectives of this strategy should be to identify programs that would serve these groups by responding to their needs, introducing them to other activities and potentially integrating them into the broader community. For example: a program directed to immigrants might target activities that are familiar to them or would help them embrace the Halifax experience. Leveraging existing community organizations will also help develop new channels for communication to promote HRM programs. Finally, the community support organizations can provide a sounding board for the policy and programming changes that might make facilities more welcoming.

Implementing such a strategy will significantly reduce barriers to access for individuals and groups that are not currently using HRM recreational Facilities.

**6.1c:**

HRM should develop financial support for those who are limited in their ability to use HRM programs by income. Development of such a program will require investigation into the availability of support from corporate and individual donors and from other levels of government. Implementation may consider an unobtrusive access card that identifies those eligible for free/reduced cost access.

Addressing financial obstacles to participation is an essential component of enhancing community access.

**6.1d**

Develop policies and processes that allow residents to access all HRM recreational Facilities at an entry level, as if they were a single set of Facilities and programs. Implementing a 'Universal Access Card' and a 'One Membership' model is complicated by the various governance management groups, cost recovery requirements for individual Facilities (which don't apply to libraries) and the lack of profit and resource sharing amongst Facilities. It will be critical for HRM to redefine its operational agreements, educate facility operators on activating the model, implement new accounting software and install new access technologies over the short and medium term to enable a 'One City' approach and option for membership among Facilities.

The new model should not preclude some level of price advantage for programs for new users, or for high volume users. Discounts might also be available at a single Facility to recognize people who volunteer there.

Implementing this unified membership approach will increase accessibility by making all HRM Facilities equally available to all residents. It will also require greater consistency in operational agreements.

**Table 6 – Summary of Planning Recommendations**

<b>6.1a</b>	Extend the Halifax Community Access Plan to all high-demand Facilities to ensure equitable access.
<b>6.1b</b>	Implement an outreach strategy to identify programs that would support and attract individuals and self-identified groups such as immigrants, new Canadians, low income individuals, families and seniors, and groups defined by religion, sexual orientation, culture or ability.
<b>6.1c</b>	Develop and implement a financial support program or free/low cost admission to remove income-based barriers to participation.
<b>6.1d</b>	Implement a Universal Access Card and a 'One Membership' model that enhances access to all HRM Facilities.

## 6.2 Strategic Partnerships

### 6.2.1 Gaps & Opportunities

HRM offers a basic level of service through its Facilities. Partnerships have the potential to provide more than this basic level of service, providing higher level services and specialized facilities. For example, a partnership with a local sport organization could provide top-up funds to make an indoor field house larger to allow more types of indoor sport (such as Ultimate). Partnerships also have the potential to increase the utilization of new and existing infrastructure.

Partnerships help to build capacity, promote diversity and include groups that may otherwise be underserved or lack access to necessary Facilities and services. HRM recognizes the synergies and efficiencies that can be gained by combining Facilities and programming. Partnering

acknowledges the overlap of requirements in Facilities and increases HRM's ability to reach and serve more citizens than it otherwise could on its own.

HRM already has many valued partners throughout the municipality that help deliver recreation services. New and rejuvenated partnerships could vary widely in the level of support but could lead to improved engagement and quality of service.

## COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS & LOCAL SPORT ASSOCIATIONS

HRM's community organizations and local sport associations play a tremendous role in providing sport and recreation services to people of all ages. From recreation league hockey to little league baseball to dance and arts classes offered by volunteers, HRM's diverse and generous volunteers provide significant value to its citizens.

Community organizations and local sport associations included in the focus groups were very appreciative of the opportunity to speak about their aspirations. They sought continued opportunities to provide feedback to HRM, to help ensure they have the tools needed to organize and deliver their programs.

## SCHOOLS

To serve school age children, the Halifax Regional School Board (HRSB) operates 85 elementary schools, 28 junior/middle schools, 8 primary to grade nine schools, and 13 high schools: the total enrolled student population is approximately 48,000.<sup>15</sup> Conseil Scolaire Acadien Provincial (CSAP) also operates another 6 schools. Several Private Schools also provide elementary, junior and high school education.

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<sup>15</sup> Halifax Regional School Board (2015). Enrollment Projections. Provided via email 16 2 2015, from HRM.

Each school offers a variety of Facilities that are utilized by both the student population and in many cases the community at large.

HRM's historic relationship with HRSB through its existing Service Exchange Agreements (SEA) and Joint Use Agreements (JUA) has provided opportunities for sharing Facilities, co-locating Community (Recreation) Centres, provision, maintenance and expansion of playgrounds, sport field use and maintenance, constructing enhanced gymnasiums and expanding the open gyms program.

Access to HRSB facilities, gyms and fields represents a significant challenge for users due to their cost, lack of availability and lack of clarity around which gyms or facilities are available where and when. This is a common problem where provinces have sought to use public assets in schools for non-educational community needs. In Hamilton, even in a community centre that is on land leased from a school board, the challenges of managing school operations causes friction that makes sharing difficult. This is exacerbated if the school design requires the whole school to be open to allow access to the gym. Considerations are addressed in Recommendations 6.2a and 6.2b, and Section 8.6 which addresses the use of Gyms.

## HALIFAX PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The Halifax Public Libraries (HPL) network has fourteen branch libraries with a collection of over 1 million items. HPL's programming, community space and events are an important part of citizens' lives providing access to opportunities for education, socialization, culture and increasingly, recreation. The cross-over between HPL programming and HRM Parks and Recreation programming provides additional service to citizens and provides additional locations for public service. However, there is sometimes overlap in programs, there is a high cost of additional space, and those spaces may not be located to provide the best overall distribution of services.



There are synergies in the services provided by HPL and HRM Recreation – both provide direct service to citizens and both provide programs that cater to leisure activities. Six of HRM's 15 library branches are collocated with recreation centres. HPL staff indicated a sincere willingness to collaborate in offering programs.

As new library and community Facilities are planned, it is important that HRM carefully consider co-locating Facilities. Facilities that share space provide common infrastructure which reduces operating costs and can attract users of all ages as well as families throughout the day. Co-located Facilities allow for tightly integrated programming to avoid duplication and competition and allow for shared reception and operations staff. The four newest libraries in Hamilton's system are multi-use facilities, combined with municipal or partner recreation centres. Potential actions to realize these synergies are discussed in 6.2.2 Recommendations below.

### UNIVERSITIES

While focused on their own community needs, Halifax's Universities also make their recreational facilities available to the wider community. Dalhousie's Dalplex and Saint Mary's Homburg Centre welcome many public members who take advantage of their gyms, fitness centres, pool, indoor and outdoor tracks and courts. In addition, Dalhousie and Saint Mary's varsity teams are important users of HRM Facilities including the Forum Complex

Despite the good relationships, collaboration between HRM and the Universities can be improved. There is a tremendous opportunity to collaborate on infrastructure through shared capital and operational funding. It should be noted however the HRM Charter currently restricts HRM's use of capital funding to HRM owned buildings and assets. Examples of potential future projects may see HRM redeveloping the Forum Complex, and/or building a new 50m pool with sufficient seating when either Centennial Pool or

Dalplex reaches the end of their serviceable life with financial assistance from University partners.

### DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE (DND)

The Department of National Defence (and the Canadian Armed Forces) have played an important role in the history and development of Halifax. Home to large army, air force and navy contingents, Halifax hosts significant recreation facilities including Stad-plex and the Shearwater Fitness & Sports Centre & Arena. DND is committed to providing recreation facilities for its service and civilian personnel. Traditionally DND facilities provided somewhat limited access to the general public, however recently DND has expressed interest in cost sharing facilities which have the dual benefit of providing a common public facility and reducing capital and operational costs.

### 6.2.2 Recommendations

#### 6.2a

Appoint an individual responsible for liaison with community organizations, sports groups, HRSB, HPL and Universities to actively manage the collaboration opportunities. The liaison will be tasked with leading the development of solutions to common issues and for engaging in regular joint planning. The involvement with community organizations and sports associations should be more structured with semi-annual program planning aligned with the development of HRM's recreation program. The liaison with community organizations and sports associations should also include sessions much like the focus group sessions for this study which will allow all parties to find opportunities for improvement. These sessions should initially be semi-annual sessions with a re-evaluation of the frequency after the second year.

Taking a leadership role in collaboration with other partners is necessary to advance the sharing opportunities.

**6.2b**

Negotiate a revised Service Exchange Agreement with the HRSB with a focus on a more collaborative partnership where resources are shared and access is improved. A key goal of the new Agreement should be to ensure that gym access is centrally scheduled and easily navigated online. Available gyms should be easily identified, scheduled and accessed. The cost to individual clubs and users must be well understood and in some cases offset by HRM and HRSB funding.

**6.2c**

In addition to providing leadership in developing partnerships, HRM should take an active role in developing joint planning of facilities with HPL, integrating strategic plans and improved capital planning co-operation. Many municipalities, including HRM, have found significant benefits in combining libraries with recreation centres. There are capital and operating cost advantages of co-locating these functions. Even though the governance of the library is separate from HRM, the residents do not make that distinction. The opportunities for cross-promotion of services and for collaboration in program development are significant.

<b>Table 7 – Summary of Strategic Partnership Recommendations</b>	
<b>6.2a</b>	Appoint an individual responsible for liaison with community organizations, sports groups, HRSB, HPL and Universities to provide leadership for collaboration opportunities.
<b>6.2b</b>	Negotiate a revised Service Exchange Agreement with the HRSB to achieve a higher level of sharing for all publicly owned recreation assets.
<b>6.2c</b>	Future development of recreation Facilities should consider the potential to integrate or consolidate library branches.

## 6.3 Sport Policy

### 6.3.1 Gaps & Opportunities

People engage in sport at different stages of life and with a variety of intentions. Many people see sport as a way to stay fit and socialize with friends, while others enjoy the competition and the challenge of continually improving their own skills. Others engage in sport as a livelihood that requires constant training and dedication. The distinction in level of engagement in sport is important because HRM’s ambitions and policies attempt to appeal to, and provide infrastructure for, a variety of users at different stages in their personal sport development.

HRM cannot and should not provide everything for everyone.

Other municipalities facing the same concerns have decided to provide basic facilities for the majority of users, while focusing on distinct purpose-built and centralized Facilities that are dedicated to a higher level of sport participation. For example, the City of Hamilton has one 25m pool with spectator seating, and uses the 50m pool at McMaster University for larger events.

As HRM is focused on providing equitable access to all of its sport and recreation Facilities, those Facilities should be designed and built for multiple purposes that can accommodate and appeal to as many users as possible and at a reasonable cost. At the same time, there is also a demand for HRM to provide adequate competition venues on a strategic basis that are located for optimal utilization and the likelihood of being sustainable in the long term.

Balancing the investment in basic recreation and sport infrastructure with competition venues is challenging. Municipal investment in programming varies by sport but generally cities invest in the recreational level programming, and leave it to sports clubs and organizations as well as Provincial and National sports organizations to develop programming for development, competitive and elite levels. The provision of

Facilities is different: almost all sports rely on municipalities to provide most, if not all Facilities.

Cities have the challenge to balance between sport levels. Too much investment in competition venues means less funding for basic Facilities. On the other hand, competition venues can engage new, young participants that will become the future elite athlete or life-long participants. Halifax has a long and proud history of hosting local, regional, national and international sport events and continues to recognize the significant value of sport tourism and the role it can play in the local economy.

The balance is harder for some sports where the elite needs differ significantly from the basic needs. For example, a 25m pool with no dive well or leisure pool is sufficient for recreation, development and club competition, but a 50m pool is required for the elite competitive swimming. On the other hand, a football field is the same for all levels (although competitive and elite levels are less tolerant of poor field conditions than recreational levels).

### 6.3.2 Recommendations

#### 6.3

HRM should develop a Sport Policy to define the amount of support to be provided to each of the seven levels of the Long Term Athlete Development<sup>16</sup> plan, from 'Active Start' through 'Train to Win', perhaps with a focus on 'Active for Life'.

The policy should be developed in conjunction with Provincial sport funding plans, recognizing that as the capital city, and the largest population centre in the Province, Halifax will likely be the location for any Provincial investment in sport facilities. Consideration should also be given to the Facilities that are developed in other Atlantic

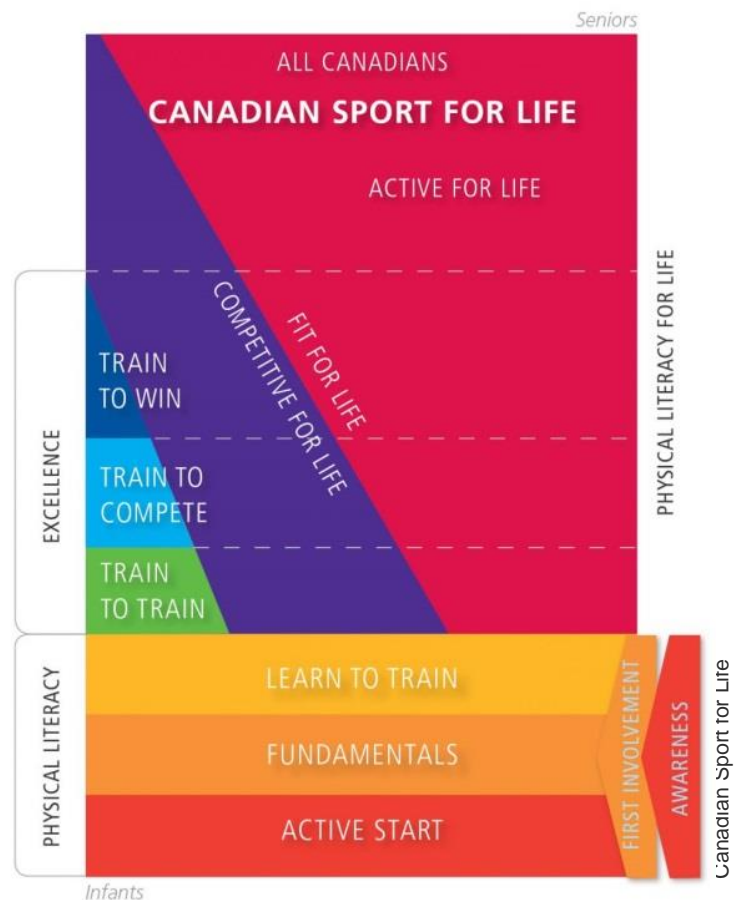
provinces. There may be value in collaborating with other provinces to allocate specific sports Facilities and avoid competition between provinces to host national competitions.

Development of such a policy could play a key role in setting expectations for provincial sport bodies on the degree of support for their elite national level sports.

**Table 8 – Summary of Sport Policy Recommendations**

#### 6.3

Develop a Sport Policy to define the level of support provided for s\ setting priorities among different levels of sport and different sports.



<sup>16</sup> Canadian Sport for Life (See illustration at right). Retrieved 3 11, 2015, <http://canadiansportforlife.ca/learn-about-canadian-sport-life/ltad-stages>

# 7.0 Connectivity

Goals	Objectives
<p><b>2.0 Connectivity</b></p> <p>Improve the connections between communities and their Facilities and improve communications between Facilities and citizens</p>	<p>2.1 Create a framework that ensures Facilities effectively integrate with active transportation and public transportation routes</p>
	<p>2.2 Recommend improvements to more effectively promote, communicate and market community Facilities and their programs</p>

Improving connections to community Facilities is a key component of this plan and a common theme raised during the consultations. Better physical connections are provided by improved transit service at Facilities, new linkages to walking and bicycle networks and reasonable drive times.

Better social connections are provided by removing social, cultural and economic barriers to use of Facilities, making them more inclusive. Addressing barriers to access is covered in Section 6. Better social connections can also be provided by developing Facilities that support social activities, such as community meals. This is covered in Section 8.

In addition to improved physical connections, better outreach and engagement activities are also required to connect citizens to HRM’s services. A more frequently updated web presence will help engage citizens, improve facility utilization and market existing programs. Currently, HRM is challenged with outdated technology. Meanwhile the public’s expectations include web-based services, including the ability to access information and maps, see schedules and availability, book venues and programs, and interact with municipal staff online. Opportunities for enhancing web-based tools are discussed in 7.2 Outreach below.

## 7.1 Physical Connections

### 7.1.1 Gaps & Opportunities

#### TRANSIT

HRM’s draft Moving Forward Together Plan seeks to increase the number of transit trips to work by expanding the transit services (in the area covered by transit), improving service intervals and making convenient transit stops. HRM continues to seek opportunities to enhance the adoption of transit by the public. Community Facilities are ideal locations for transit stops and junctions because they are strong activity generators. As new facilities are required, it will be important to select locations that enhance, and are enhanced by, the transit network.

In some cases, it may be possible to extend transit routes to community Facilities, but in other cases this may not be viable, such as in rural areas where transit services are not provided.

Strong transit connections are also important to make community Facilities accessible to youth who do not yet drive, to lower income individuals who cannot afford a car, and for seniors who may no longer be able to drive.

## ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

Halifax's Active Transportation Priorities Plan highlights the need to locate HRM's facilities, such as recreation centres and libraries, on walkable, mixed-use areas, well served by transit. This means that where there is a demand for a new Facility, one of the criteria for site selection should be the adjacency of the site to uses and environments that are comfortable pedestrian and cycling routes. Ideal locations would be adjacent to existing pedestrian/ bike trails or street-oriented retail areas, and not adjacent to shopping plazas surrounded by parking areas. The design of new Facilities should contribute to the streetscape, making the uses within the Facility visible from the street to animate the pedestrian realm, and locating parking areas so that they do not isolate the building from pedestrian routes. For existing Facilities, wherever possible, improvements should be made to strengthen connections from the Facility to the pedestrian realm and to open up the façade to enliven the street.

The Moving Forward Together Plan also recognizes that Active Transportation routes can double as recreational amenities and calls for increased programming and support that promotes active transportation. This direction can complement the concepts being explored in the recreational aspects of the Halifax Green Network

study that is now in progress. There will be opportunities for the trails in the green network to provide connections with existing Facilities, and new Facilities can be located adjacent to a trail network. Where these opportunities can be realized, the principles of Active Transportation will be advanced and further opportunities will be created to use Facilities as the hub for programs that make use of trail networks, such as for trail running and mountain biking.

## DRIVE TIME

Many people drive to community Facilities and thus drive times are key to perceptions of how convenient the Facilities are. The surveys conducted for this update show a 20 minute drive time to existing Major Facilities remains an acceptable standard for citizens in the Regional Centre and in urban communities. The surveys also showed rural citizens are willing to drive further to access a major facility.

The surveys validate the principle of using drive time as one of the factors in choosing facility locations. While the survey did not ask specifically about other modes of travel, the survey results should be extended to the target travel time for other forms of transportation, setting objectives for walking, biking, or transit time to facilities as appropriate to the scale of the facilities.

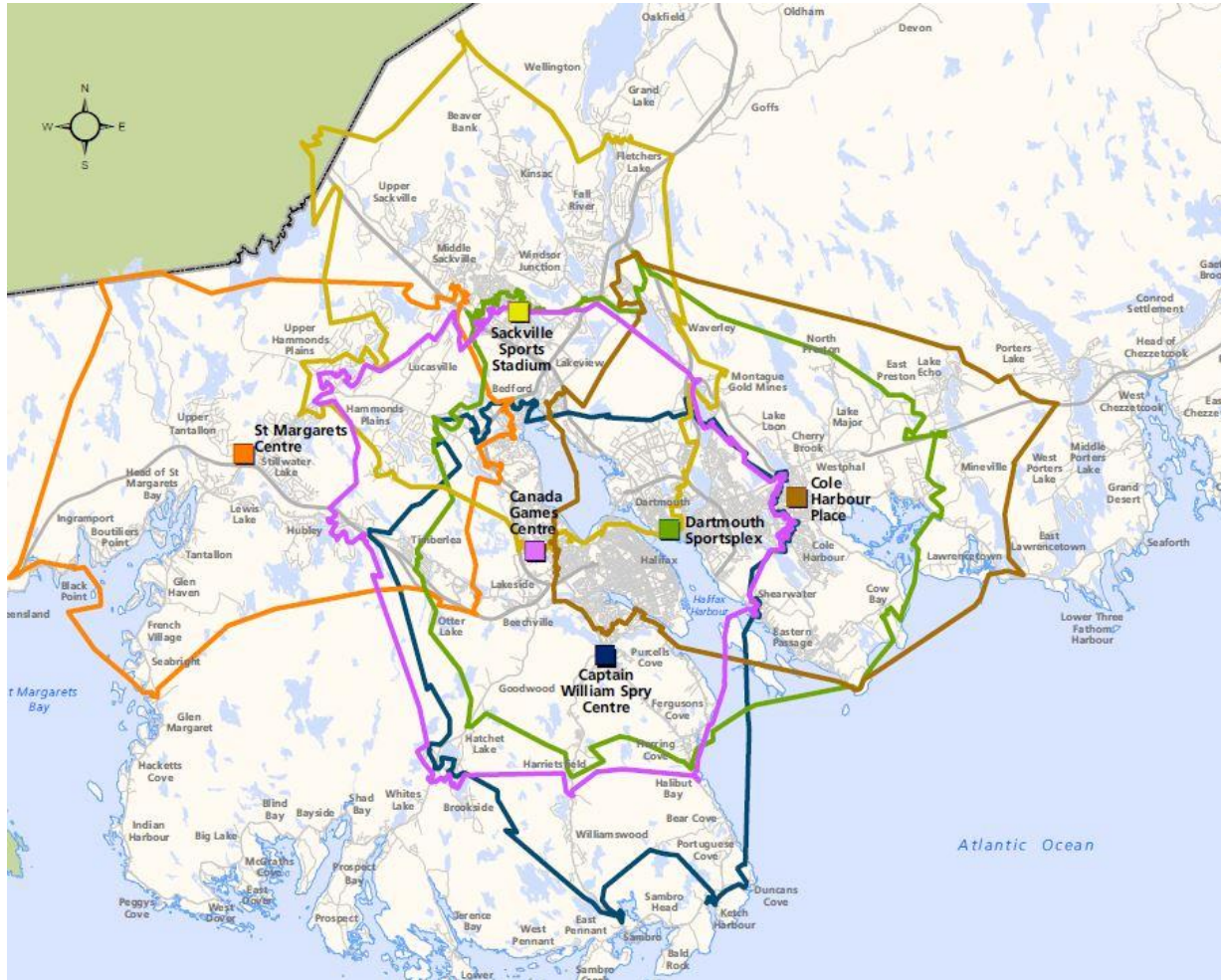


Figure 7.1a - Drive Time Analysis – note overlap in 20 minute drive time from major facilities.

## 7.1.2 Recommendations

### 7.1a

Improve the transit access to Community Facilities by locating new Facilities on high volume transit routes and bringing transit routes to existing Facilities, wherever possible. At the site design level it will be important to provide walkways and entrances that give easy access from adjacent transit stops, and these walkways will need to be kept clear in the winter.

### 7.1b

Consider potential connections to Active Transportation routes and trails in the Halifax Green Network as one of the criteria for locating new Facilities. Consider the potential to develop Active Transportation routes and

trails in the Halifax Green Network to connect to existing Facilities. Develop a plan for the regular upgrade of active transportation connections between Facilities, the planned active transportation network of walkways, trails and cycling routes and the incorporation of CPTED principles. This may involve developing gracious walkways through parking lots, developing cross-walks to access other connection points, providing additional bicycle storage facilities at community Facilities or providing sidewalks or walkways in some areas that do not have them.

In rural areas the opportunities for active transportation may be limited to the development of trail networks using the community Facility as a trail-head facility.

**7.1c**

Establish drive time and travel time targets to be used as one of the criteria for the selection of community recreation facility locations. These criteria may be applied in examining the potential to close under-used community Facilities if there is another Facility within the target drive/travel time. The table below gives the recommended target drive times to reach the nearest facility by facility type and location.

Table 9 – Drive Time by Facility Type and Location	
Major Facility or Arena	Drive Time
Regional Centre	20 min.
Urban Community <sup>17</sup>	30 min.
Rural*	60 min.
Community (Recreation) Centre or Community Hall	Drive Time
Regional Centre	10 min.
Urban Community	15 min.
Rural*	30 min.
* For Rural areas, the target should be achieved for about 90% of the population of the catchment area.	

Travel time targets (or an equivalent distance as a proxy for travel time targets) could also be established for other types of Facilities, such as playgrounds, or other modes of travel, such as walking or biking.

Travel time is only one of several considerations for location and other considerations, such as the population served, may result in shorter travel times in the Regional Centre.

<sup>17</sup> Communities serviced with publicly managed water and wastewater services outside the Regional Centre.

**Table 10 - Summary of Physical Connection Recommendations**

<b>7.1a</b>	In areas served by transit, locate transit stops near community Facilities and locate any new Facilities on high volume transit routes.
<b>7.1b</b>	Allocate funding to initiatives to extend connections from Facilities to the Active Transportation networks and trails in the Halifax Green Network.
<b>7.1c</b>	Formally adopt and apply travel time standards as one of the criteria used in assessing the location of community recreation Facilities.



## 7.2 Outreach

### 7.2.1 Gaps & Opportunities

#### ENGAGEMENT

Effective communications, marketing, promotion and engagement are necessary tools to promote healthy living and the recreation programs offered by Community Facilities. In a 2015 online survey<sup>18</sup> of 419 respondents:

- 38% were not satisfied with respect to the “Ease of access to community recreation programming and service information”;
- 32% did not agree that “I can easily access municipal recreation information online”;
- 36% did not agree that “[Halifax] effectively promotes healthy lifestyles, vibrant communities, and sustainable environments”;
- 40% did not agree that “I can easily find information I need in the Recreation Program Catalogue”.

While the Recreation Program Catalogue is organized to provide information by Facility, only 28% of survey respondents prefer to search by Facility while the greatest number of respondents prefers to search by community (46%) and activity (45%) (multiple responses were permitted).

HRM aims to be effective in communicating with current users of its Facilities through the website and the semi-annual printed Recreation Program Catalogue, but improvements are needed. For example the Parks and Recreation website is not able to provide desired and or up to date information, and the catalogue isn’t organized in a way that users can navigate.

- 52% of respondents preferred to get recreation information from the website, but there are opportunities to improve the recreation website.
- 60% of respondents wanted information for all facilities consolidated in a single website (vs. 24% who wanted Facility specific sites).
- More integration with location links is required (links to Google Maps do not bring the user to the actual location).
- Google Maps does not show the correct location when entering the municipal address, particularly for Community Halls in the Eastern Shore area.
- 25% of respondents want to get information from Facebook but there is no recreation Facebook page.
- Only 11% of respondents wanted updates via Twitter.

The recreation program has implemented a Twitter feed, but a single feed for all recreation services is likely to generate a lot of “noise” for every valued message. There are opportunities to develop more specific twitter accounts to allow people to follow only a narrower area of interest, be it aquatics, soccer, etc. It will be important to continue to track preferences because social media trends change rapidly.

#### SPORTS COUNCIL

Sport Nova Scotia is promoting the implementation of a Sports Council that can promote sports requirements and help sports organizations achieve their goals. Of the benchmarked municipalities, Edmonton and Hamilton appear to have sport councils with a similar objective. A sports council could be particularly effective in two key areas:

- A sports council can help Council set priorities among the various demands of individual sports organizations.

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<sup>18</sup> Corporate Research Associates.(2015) Halifax Recreation Services Study. Halifax Regional Municipality.



- A sports council can enable and strengthen individual sport organizations to allow them to become stronger partners for HRM in the delivery of its recreation mandate.

In Edmonton and Hamilton, it appears that the sport councils were developed independently, although Sport Hamilton (Hamilton’s sport council) was supported financially by the Trillium Foundation (which distributes revenue from lottery and gaming ventures).

## Recommendations

### 7.2a

Funding for the regular re-assessment of communications initiatives is essential. Well-organized, up-to-date information should be available through 311, online, social media and in print. Parks and Recreation should extend its online presence to allow citizens to discover and engage with community Facilities related to their interests, such as through activity specific Twitter accounts.

Links to transit information, such as stop location, routes and arrival time of the next bus, would enhance the use of transit. Integration of recreation Facilities into a Halifax transit app would also be helpful.

Consideration should be given to development of a recreation app that would alert a user to registered programs and promote similar programs.

Communications that embrace social media technologies to modernize community connectedness must recognize that approaches evolve rapidly and the communications strategy must respond to those changes.

### 7.2b

HRM should explore the potential value of a Sport Council in promoting sports, strengthening sport organizations, facilitating engagement, and setting priorities among competing investments. This exploration should be completed in concert with the development of a Sport Policy (see Section 6.3)

**Table 11 - Summary of Marketing and Communications Recommendations**

<p><b>7.2a</b></p> <p>Fund, develop and implement an annualized engagement strategy for Parks and Recreation programs and Facilities with a broad reach over multiple media.</p>
<p><b>7.2b</b></p> <p>Explore the value of, and potential to support the development of a sports council.</p>

# 8.0 Facility Development

Goals	Objectives
<p><b>3.0 Facility Development</b></p> <p>Balance input from stakeholders and the need to invest in new Facilities; maintain and improve existing Facilities; and retire Facilities at the end of their useful life in order to provide high quality Facilities</p>	<p>3.1 Provide transparent, fair and equitable processes to determine which Facilities should be opened, upgraded or retired.</p>

## 8.1 Planning Process

Planning for the location of new facilities and the retirement of un-needed or failing older facilities is a multi-faceted challenge. The same factors will be considered whether adding, expanding, contracting or retiring Facilities.

The key questions to be addressed include:

- Is there a need, either in total numbers across the Region or locally?
  - Is the overall number of Facilities sufficient to meet the demand based on current levels of use, typical rates for providing facilities in similar municipalities, any regional variations?
  - Are there parts of the Municipality that are disproportionately under-served?
  - Are there parts of the Municipality that are disproportionately over-served?
  - Are the requirements for facilities changing over time with changes in demographics and in the popularity of recreation activities?
- Where should the facility be located?
  - Are there different expectations for urban, suburban, and rural areas (which may vary by recreational activity)?
  - Should some Facilities be dispersed so that people can access them close to home (like Playground Structures)?

- Should some Facilities be centralized to allow provision of Facilities that have limited demand (like Lawn Bowls)?
- Are there other locational implications such as the potential for city-building, travel time, or promotion of transit?
- How should the facility be designed, constructed and maintained so that it achieves the best value for money?
  - Are there opportunities to design Facilities in a way that allows HRM to provide better service at the same cost or to reduce the cost of service?
  - How can the HRM derive the best value from existing facilities?
  - Are there facilities that need to be retired because they are under-used or are excessively expensive to maintain?
- How can the public be engaged in planning and locating facilities?

### 8.1.1 Need

#### MUNICIPAL-WIDE CRITERIA

An assessment of the need for additional facilities can be determined most reliably from the utilization of existing Facilities. Where utilization data indicates that available time is well-used across the municipality, it is a strong indicator that additional Facilities may be needed. However,

perception of utilization is often different from actual utilization, particularly with respect to prime-time bookings. For example, for arena ice time there is high demand for the period between 6-10pm on weekdays and 8am-10pm on weekends. If there are sufficient arenas to meet all demands for prime time access, there would be substantial excess capacity at other times, leading to much higher operating costs.

When there is no available utilization data, the municipality-wide need for Facilities can be determined by a target user-per-facility ratio. For example, to preserve soccer field condition, a field should rest for two days a week and to have a limit of one game or practice per weeknight and four games or practices on weekend days. This would give 11 field bookings per week. For non-competitive children's teams without practices, this could accommodate 22 teams per field. With competitive teams with one practice and game per week a field would accommodate 7 teams. For organized sports activities such an approach can be sufficiently accurate to determine the number of Facilities to be provided.

Where Facilities are not used for structured sports, a general ratio of Facilities-to-population or population cohort can be effective. For example Skate Parks may be best measured on the number of facilities for a given population of youth aged 5-19, which is the age-cohort most likely to use a Skate Park. In the absence of utilization data, determining the appropriate ratio can be a challenge and thus it can be useful to compare the target ratios with those of other municipalities.

## CATCHMENT AREA CRITERIA

Even if the region-wide provision of Facilities meets target criteria, it is possible that some areas of Halifax may be under-served or over-served to assess this, it is necessary to examine the ratios of Facilities per person at the micro level. For example, if the target is to provide one pool per 40,000 – 50,000 people, a spatial analysis of census districts should be used to confirm that each contiguous portion of the City with the target

population has a pool. However, this analysis is simplistic by itself and such an analysis must consider natural barriers, community identities, travel times, the location of existing Facilities and many other factors.

## CHANGES OVER TIME

Different communities in Halifax have different growth potential. In assessing local Facilities requirements, it is also necessary to examine past and projected future changes in population and demographics. Areas that are stable in population would generally not be considered for additional new facilities. Facilities in areas where a target cohort has been decreasing or is expected to decrease might be considered for retirement. And, in areas that are planned for growth, Facilities might be considered even before the population reaches the target in anticipation of future growth.

## PARTNERSHIP REQUESTS

In the past, many municipal Facilities were developed in partnership with community organizations. The strength of a group of citizens promoting the need for a facility was seen as an indicator of need. It is now apparent that communities that have a true need may not organize because of a variety of issues such as shift work, multiple jobs, language barriers or other cultural factors. Therefore, the engagement of community groups must be managed in a fair and transparent manner to ensure that communities are treated with respect but also to ensure that scarce resources are fairly allocated across the municipality. In particular, HRM must guard against over-looking areas where service may be poor but where there has been no community involvement on the one hand, and avoid giving focus to areas with vocal groups if service is at the expected standard on the other.

There have been recent developments in partnership with private sector organizations that can be particularly effective where the municipality seeks to support entry level recreation but there is

a demand for support for advanced recreation services that is beyond the HRM mandate. Some examples:

- Contracting with a private sector operator brings in best practices in private sector facility operations.
- HRM may support entry level ceramics and may be able to partner with a private sector firm providing advanced classes.
- HRM provides entry level gymnastics programs but does not have the mandate for advanced programs and facilities. It might be possible to partner with a gymnastics club to construct a facility that would meet the club's needs and provide facilities that HRM could use that it would not otherwise be able to construct.
- Some municipalities have partnered with non-profits such as the YMCA or provincial health ministries to offer a variety of youth and adult health and wellness services.
- In assessing the need for Facilities, the opportunities for partnerships with community groups or the private sector should be considered.

### 8.1.2 Location

#### URBAN, SUBURBAN & RURAL CONSIDERATIONS

The diversity of communities in Halifax requires different approaches and those approaches may vary by type of activity.

- In rural areas there is no expectation that individuals could walk to an HRM recreation facility, yet in densely populated urban areas, or in low income urban areas it may be appropriate to consider walk-times in evaluating the number and location of facilities.

- In rural areas where there is no municipal water supply it would be exceedingly expensive to provide a swimming pool.
- In urban areas it would be challenging to provide even a single new playing field, let alone to create a new cluster of playing fields.
- In urban areas, playground structures could be located within walking distance of residences, but in suburban and rural areas, a different location strategy would be appropriate.

This CFMP2 examines some of the differences between urban, suburban and rural requirements for some types of facilities but also identifies the need for a Rural Facilities Strategy. See Section 8.2.7.

#### CLUSTERS VS SINGLE PURPOSE FACILITIES

There are competing considerations in whether to have single purpose Facilities dispersed across the municipality or to cluster them in nodes. Council has determined that the clustered approach is best for arenas and there has been strong feedback from sports organizations that the same approach is necessary for at least some playing fields, baseball diamonds and tennis courts.

Not all sports and activities will have the same solution. The advantage of a dispersed approach is that more people are close to a Facility. This makes great sense for Facilities like playground structures or other Facilities that are relatively low in construction cost, operate without staff and are used by individuals.

Where Facilities are used for organized team league play, a centralized approach is better. For example, where a community has a single ball diamond, the local ball teams could be close to their home field location, but would still have to travel for away games. The reasonable average travel time obscures the time-consuming travel

time to away games. Rather than have this wide variability in travel time, it would be an advantage to have a consistent travel time to a complex with multiple diamonds. Further, a complex with multiple diamonds is far more appropriate for tournaments where more games can be compressed into a shorter time, avoiding moving from one location to another mid-tournament, and avoiding teams having long periods to wait for their next game.

For most types of facilities there is an advantage to having most Facilities clustered in a few nodes, with a few single Facilities as needed to provide the rural target level of service.

For some types of activities, the Facility is so specialized and the demand so limited that it Halifax may be best served by a one or two Facilities. Activities such as tower diving, paddle sports, and lawn bowls are most appropriate for highly centralized Facilities. In the balance of Section 8, recommendations are given for the sport-specific centralization, clustered nodes, and dispersed Facilities.

## CITY-BUILDING

Recreation Facilities represent a significant municipal investment, create a substantial built form and serve many people. As such, recreation Facilities can play a role in city-building by strengthening community nodes attracting people to an area that can be served by private sector businesses.

Recreation Facilities also support city-building by providing desired amenities. Wherever these Facilities are located, they can stimulate residential development in the surrounding area or raise property values in developed areas.

Finally, recreation Facilities can provide a hub for service delivery and provide activities that can support and engage youth in positive leisure opportunities.

## TRAVEL TIME & TRANSIT

The considerations of transit, active transportation and travel time were discussed in Section 7.1 and must be integrated into the considerations of Facility location. Additional interactions between travel time and transit, and other location considerations include:

- The ability of clustered Facilities to create a node that can be more easily served by transit, thereby supporting higher frequency service on those transit lines;
- The importance of transit for giving access to youth and adults that do not drive, or have mobility limitations.
- The different expectations for travel time and transit access for urban vs. suburban vs. rural areas.

With respect to the latter, for example, because rural residents expect to drive their children to playground structures, these Facilities should be located adjacent to other uses that to allow parents to make a visit to the playground part of another trip they needed to make.

### 8.1.3 Operational Considerations EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS

The desirability of clustering Facilities was discussed in section 8.1.2 with respect to the advantages for co-locating multiple Facilities of the same type, such as multiple tennis courts. There are additional advantages of clustering multiple types of recreation facilities. In particular, co-locating multiple types of activities can allow one family trip to meet diverse recreation needs of several people in the family – such as allowing one child to take a craft course while another plays hockey. A multi-activity recreation centre also gives the potential for participants of any age to engage in multiple activities and thus enjoy a longer visit at the Facility.

In addition to the improved recreation potential of a multi-activity Facility, there are opportunities for improved operational efficiency. There is a fixed

operational requirement for each facility, whether for a receptionist or custodian at a recreation centre, for an ice maker at an arena or for the travel time for a grounds crew to get to a playing field. Where multiple facilities to support multiple activities are co-located the incremental cost of supporting the additional facilities is a fraction of the cost of maintaining a separate single-purpose facility. For example a single arena requires a trained ice-maker – but the ice-maker is not applying that valuable skill for much of the time. A two-pad arena can be fully maintained with little additional staff or equipment cost. If ice is groomed between bookings rather than between periods, a four-pad arena can be maintained with the same equipment and with significant staff efficiencies as compared to a single-pad arena. Other facility types could share similar synergies. A pool operator who is an expert pump and disinfection systems could be shared amongst facilities instead of each pool requiring an their own. Likewise a common janitorial service could provide reduce overhead and increase efficiencies.

## EXISTING FACILITIES

The existing stock of recreation Facilities complicates location decisions. Existing Facilities may be located unevenly leaving inconsistent travel time for people to access the nearest centre. Where facilities are well used and in good condition, this sub-optimal distribution must be accepted because it would be cost-prohibitive to construct a new facility when there is viable service-life in the existing facility.

Where existing Facilities are nearing, or have reached the end of their service life, the costs of maintaining and operating the facility can approach the cost of building a new facility. In this situation, consideration should be given to a replacement or retirement. The replacement could involve relocation of the specific recreation functions to another nearby Facility, which would realize the operational efficiencies of multi-purpose facilities.

## UNDER-USED FACILITIES

Where facilities are under-used, there is a significantly higher cost per use because the costs to staff, heat and repair the facility are spread over fewer users. Data should be collected and analyzed based on a standard metric, such as cost per swim. With such a common metric, the high-cost facilities can be assessed for opportunities for improvement.

The considerations for under-used Facilities are similar to those that have reached the end of their service life. The Facility should be assessed to determine whether it can be rejuvenated to increase use or should be retired to avoid cost. As part of that decision, the other Facility development criteria should be considered. If there appears to be a municipal-wide need for a Facility of this type, it would be appropriate to consider if another existing Facility could be expanded to add that facility type.

### 8.1.4 Public Engagement PLANNING AND DESIGN

HRM will continue to engage local communities during the planning and design of new and upgraded Facilities. User and community input is critical to ensuring the facility meets local needs and is therefore viable in the long term. Opportunities for public input will help manage expectations and allow the public to contribute input at the appropriate stage of the project.

## DECOMMISSIONING

A number of Facilities in Halifax are nearing the end of their practical life. These Facilities will need to be closed or replaced on the same site or at another location. Halifax's Administrative Order Number 50 defines a comprehensive approach to identify and analyze each facility prior to Council considering its closure or relocation. In addition to this process, HRM will need to undertake broad public consultation to determine how community needs might be affected by retiring a Facility.

## AD HOC REQUESTS FOR FACILITIES

A focus of this CFMP2 report is to provide the high level planning that will allow staff to be proactive in determining where new or renewed facilities are required. Even so, it is expected that HRM will continue to be receive requests from community organizations.

It is important these opportunities are addressed consistently and fairly. Potential projects should be evaluated for viability but also to ensure the support provided by HRM provides the best value for money to citizens.

When community groups request a new Facility, HRM should use the same approved process and criteria for provision of facilities to evaluate the new request. A recommended process and set of criteria can be found in Appendix N. Consideration may be given to potential nearby closures in considering requests for new facilities.

Any requests for Facilities that have been received but not approved should be put on hold until the process and criteria for provision of facilities is approved, and should be used as a pilot to test the proposed criteria.

Implementation of a formal process and criteria for provision of Facilities will, over time, result in a more consistent and equitable distribution of facilities. For some residents that have a higher than average access to little-used recreation facilities there may be a decrease in service, but the overall level of service will improve.

### 8.1.5 Recommendations

#### 8.1a

HRM should adopt a standard set of Facility location criteria that recognizes the required variation by area (Regional Core, Urban Development and Rural) and by activity type. Draft criteria are provided in Appendix N. Further analysis is required and before being applied universally the criteria should be assessed in a pilot study for several Facilities.

In addition to adopting criteria, a standard process should be adopted to screen for the

viability of new or upgraded Facilities. A three-step screening process is recommended, including the following:

1. Confirm the need based on the metrics for the municipality and local region for the specific activity;
2. Develop a detailed business case that assesses the operating plan, management plan, capital and operating costs, schedule and the proposed role for the municipality and possible partners to demonstrate the benefits and costs;
3. Evaluate the priority for the facility among other requirements based on service gaps across all recreation facilities and all parts of the municipality. This should include assessing requirements for non-sport activities such as art and passive recreation, emerging trends, revenue impacts and opportunities, alignment to corporate objectives, and the capital and operating cost impacts in relation to the total capital and operating budget available.

Appendix N provides a draft screening processes for decommissioning and evaluating new proposals.

For the evaluation of priority, the recommendations in the following subsections should be considered as a whole. These recommendations examine the requirements by facility type and it will be necessary to balance allocation between facility types. In assessing priorities, HRM should consult with the Province, Sport Nova Scotia, sport associations, parents, volunteers, youth and adult participants who schedule and use HRM's Facilities. All are important stakeholders in facility development.

#### 8.1b

While HRM cannot provide sport Facilities to meet all sporting and hosting needs, it can focus its resources on providing Facilities to satisfy the most appropriate potential users. Sections 8.2 through 8.10 provide considerations and recommendations on meeting those needs. Sport Nova Scotia's

## Community Facility Master Plan 2

Community Sport Development initiatives also provide an indication of priorities in the provincial sport communities.

**Table 12 - Summary of Facility Planning Recommendations**

**8.1a**

Adopt a set of criteria for provision of Facilities, based on the draft criteria in Appendix N, after further analysis, pilot application and revisions. Communicate the criteria to stakeholders to define how they can be involved in a transparent and structured process.

**8.1b**

Use the facility-specific recommendations in this plan as tools in assessing the priorities for allocation of funding.





## 8.2 Facility Distribution and Planning

This section focuses on building Facilities and their relationships but the use of the term 'Facilities' continues because many of the building Facilities are co-located with other types of facilities, such as playgrounds, skate parks and playing fields.

The sport-specific utilization of Facilities is analyzed in Sections 8.3 through 8.10 below.

### 8.2.1 Existing Facilities

#### MAJOR FACILITIES

HRM has six Major Facilities that act as local and regional hubs for recreation. These large multi-purpose facilities host tournaments, attract families to participate in a wide variety of activities, and provide services that better serve the public by being co-located, improving access and reducing cost by sharing services and building infrastructure. Major Facilities in Halifax range from 4,500 to 15,000 m<sup>2</sup> in size and serve a population of 60,000 to 80,000 persons from a combination of districts.

It is noteworthy that the Halifax Peninsula does not have an HRM-owned Major Facility as defined here, but rather HRM Council opted to partner with the YMCA on the development of their new Peninsula facility, which serves a similar purpose and offers comparable amenities. There are also several closely located single-use facilities, and there are University-owned facilities that would fit this definition. Because they are not owned by HRM they are not reported here.

Table 13 – Features of Major Facilities

Facility	Arena	Gym	Fitness	Pool	Rec Space
Canada Games Centre		✓	✓	✓	✓
Captain William Spry			✓	✓	✓
Cole Harbour Place	✓		✓	✓	✓
Dartmouth Sportsplex	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sackville Sports Stadium	✓		✓	✓	✓
St Margaret's Centre	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

The Major Facilities were built between 1975 and 2010 and have been well maintained, with a projected median FCI (2018) of 3.3.

## COMMUNITY (RECREATION) CENTRES & SITES

Community (Recreation) Sites and Community (Recreation) Centres serve as minor centres (spokes) for communities throughout Halifax. These facilities are spread throughout a geographical area surrounding a regional hub facility. Each facility varies in the services it provides based on local community requirements and thus the infrastructure also varies widely. At a minimum these facilities provide recreation space, meeting space and some level of programming. Many have small gyms, multi-purpose spaces, or small fitness centres. A small number of Community (Recreation) Centres provide specialized facilities, such as pottery rooms, recording studios and in the case of Needham Centre, an indoor pool. These specialized facilities reflect community interests identified at the time of construction.

The Community (Recreation) Centres and Sites and their features are listed in the table at right.

## COMMUNITY HALLS

In addition to the Community (Recreation) Centres and Community (Recreation) Sites, HRM has 20 community halls in both rural and urban areas. While these facilities are sometimes challenged with increasing operating costs they have contributed in building Halifax's communities. These facilities are often used by community groups who host activities for children, youth, adults and seniors.

The rural community halls often have a long and storied history in providing an important community service to local residents. In many cases, they are the only public building in the community. They host a wide variety of recreational, community and social events including weddings, community dinners,

recreation activities, community fundraising events and local concerts.

Table 14 – Features of Community (Recreation) Centres and Sites				
Community (Recreation) Centres and Sites	Gym	Fitness	Pool	Rec Space
<i>Acadia School (Sackville)*</i>				✓
<i>Basinview School (Bedford)*</i>	✓			✓
Bedford Hammonds Plains	✓			✓
<i>Beechville Lakeside Timberlea*</i>				✓
Chocolate Lake (Armdale)	✓	✓		✓
Citadel (Halifax)	✓			✓
<i>Cole Harbour*</i>				✓
East Dartmouth	✓			✓
East Preston	✓	✓		✓
Findlay (Dartmouth)	✓	✓		✓
George Dixon (Halifax)	✓			✓
Gordon R Snow (Fall River)	✓	✓		✓
<i>Graham Creighton (Cherry Brook)*</i>	✓			✓
Lake and Shore (Porter's Lake)	✓			✓
Lake Echo	✓			✓
<i>Middle Musquodoboit*</i>	✓			✓
<i>Musquodoboit Harbour*</i>		✓		✓
Needham Centre (Halifax)	✓		✓	✓
North Preston	✓	✓		✓
Prospect Road	✓	✓		✓
<i>Sheet Harbour*</i>		✓		✓
St. Andrews (Halifax)	✓			✓
Tallahassee (Eastern Passage)	✓			✓
<i>* indicates a minor Community (Recreation) Site</i>				

Rural community halls provide neighbours with facilities to meet, socialize, and hold community focused events, and thus are important in creating social connections.

<b>Table 15 – Community Halls – Rural</b>
Carroll's Corner
Grand Desert-West Chezzetcook (Ste. Therese)
Harrietsfield Williamswood
Hubbards
Moser River
Samuel Balcom (Port Dufferin)
Sheet Harbour Lion`s Hall
Springfield Lake
The Bay (Head of St Margaret's Bay)
Upper Hammonds Plains
Upper Sackville
Wallace Lucas

The urban community halls provide community space for a variety of activities including community events and recreational programming such as day camps.

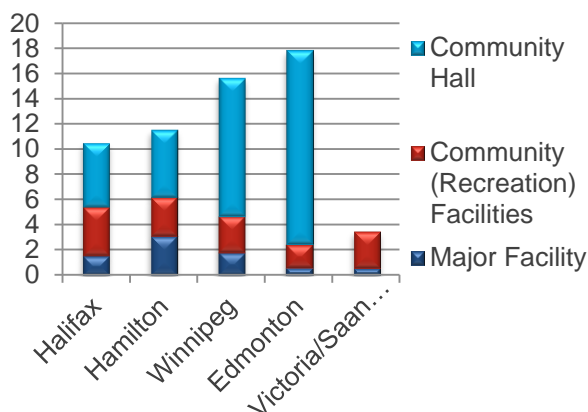
<b>Table 16 – Community Halls – Urban</b>
Beaverbank - Kinsac
The Old Common Pavilion (Music Venue)
Dartmouth North
Isleville Street (Halifax)
Larry O`Connell (Halifax)
North Woodside
Sackville Heights
Saint Mary's Boat Club (Halifax)

In addition to the facilities that are listed above, many other facilities in Halifax function like Community Halls such as fire halls, church halls and school gyms. HRM should work closely with the operators of these facilities so that programs complement one another. Currently HRM books some of these community facilities to offer programming, which supplements their assets and provides support to the facilities.

## 8.2.2 Current Provision

A benchmarking study was conducted as part of the analysis for the CFMP2 (the details are provided in Appendix K). Among the benchmark municipalities, Hamilton has twice as many Major Facilities as Halifax but only about 15% more facilities when combining Major Facilities and Community (Recreation) Facilities. The greater allocation of Major Facilities in Hamilton is believed to be a result of it having larger pre-amalgamation towns, whereas the more sparsely populated rural areas of pre-amalgamation Halifax did not leave a legacy of many Major Facilities. Winnipeg has about 15% more Major Facilities but 25% fewer Community (Recreation) Facilities. This reflects Winnipeg's smaller geography and more concentrated urban area.

**Community Centres /100,000 People**



The greater presence of Community Halls in Winnipeg and Edmonton reflects a model of City support for urban Community Halls in most established neighbourhoods. However, without utilization information for Community Halls in these cities, there is no evidence that HRM should adopt this model. Further, the community consultations during this review did not identify such a widespread need for additional Community Halls.

### 8.2.3 Uses

During public consultations, comments were received requesting either the continuation of existing, or the introduction of new, programs and uses. The identified uses are presented here to reflect the requests received. Actual demand would need to be determined - a few suggestions at an open house does not provide sufficient evidence to commit to the necessary facilities. A brief commentary is provided on how the programs and uses may be incorporated. Other uses that were requested are listed in the following sections that address specific types of facilities.

#### ARTS AND CRAFTS SPACES

Arts and crafts activities can generally be accommodated in multi-purpose rooms in Major Facilities, Community Recreation Centres or Community Halls provided that there is sufficient storage available. Multi-purpose rooms should continue to be provided which will support this type of use.

#### BILLIARDS

Billiards requires little more than a billiard table and could be accommodated in most community centres. However, a billiard table is not moveable and thus precludes the use of space for other purposes. Unless there is a specific demand from a partner community organization and unused space, HRM should put a low priority on supporting billiards.

#### COMMUNITY PERFORMANCE VENUES

Performing arts can take place anywhere; however a traditional theatre-like setting is often preferred for plays, dance recitals and concerts, amongst others. The City does support community performance in facilities other than those examined in this study. As an example, HRM currently owns venues such as Alderney

Landing, Shakespeare by the Sea Offices at Point Pleasant Park and the Musquodoboit Bicentennial Theatre, amongst others. Continued support for these facilities and the activities they support should be justified based on the utilization of the facilities. Past surveys of the cultural community have illustrated the need for centrally located, affordable, flexible performance and production space. While outside the scope of this study, HRM is encouraged to consider community performance needs as a possible use when developing new Facilities.

#### DANCE STUDIOS

Dance studios are provided in many existing community facilities. Instruction at entry and recreational levels can be accommodated in fitness and multi-purpose rooms that are equipped with barres and mirrored walls or have moveable mirrored walls.

#### GAMING

Some community facilities host bingo games as part of their regular activities. This may be accommodated as part of multipurpose spaces where a variety of activities can take place. Any gaming occurring in HRM owned facilities should be incidental and typically hosted by community groups. This will provide opportunities for the community to access municipally owned spaces to participate in games of leisure, such as card, board and video games.

#### MUSIC AND SINGING

For instrumental music instruction, particularly for ensembles, an acoustically isolated room with appropriate reverberation is highly desirable. Where demand warrants, such facilities may be able to be provided by school music rooms. An effective introductory program would also benefit from having musical instruments available.

Vocal music could also make use of school music rooms, performance rehearsal spaces, Community Halls and even churches, wherever the appropriate acoustic environment can be created. Such spaces could be made available in partnership with other groups, and there is no apparent need for HRM to provide specific music rooms in community Facilities.

## POTTERY

Pottery programs are offered at Findlay, St. Andrews and George Dixon Community Centres. Pottery facilities require the ability to manage the mess that is created managing clay, special power provisions for kilns and special ventilation (for the kilns and fume hoods for working with some glazes). The facilities to support these programs may not be ideal but there appears to be value in continuing the use as long as it is practical. If there is a need to invest in upgrading these facilities, consideration should be given to the level of demand and whether there are opportunities to collaborate with other service providers (private sector or HRSB) to share in facilities so that HRM can deliver entry-level programs. Irregular pottery programs could be delivered at some level in a multi-purpose space in Community Recreation Centres if the firing occurs elsewhere.

## SENIOR'S SPACES

Some municipalities, such as Hamilton, are constructing dedicated seniors' spaces in new community recreation facilities to support the expected increase in participation by seniors in recreation. These spaces are designed as multi-purpose spaces with sinks and storage to support multiple activities and some with kitchens to support cooking activities but are dedicated to seniors' programs.

An intergenerational approach is noted as a progressive way of developing a socially cohesive community. Seniors often benefit from participating in activities with children and youth,

and children and youth benefit from interactions with seniors. Further, seniors who do not wish to be involved in inter-generational programs have the opportunity to make use of Facilities during the day when only pre-school children would be using the Facility. The continuation of a shared-space approach to providing facilities is encouraged for the efficiency of space use and social integration it promotes.

## WOODWORKING

Woodworking at a level more advanced than assembling a kit of parts requires a dedicated workshop. For program use, to safely accommodate a class, a workshop would need to be at least 75m<sup>2</sup>. It is unlikely that such a facility (and the cost of equipment) could be justified as a dedicated space in a new facility. However, such a facility could be created if a suitable space existed in an under-used facility, and if there was support for fitting out the necessary equipment. Where schools have suitable facilities, they could be used for such programs.

## CLIMBING WALLS

There are currently several indoor climbing facilities in Halifax, three private sector facilities and two facilities at the Dalplex. Concerns about managing the liability have discouraged many municipalities from accommodating this activity. There does not appear to be a need for HRM to provide a facility given the current opportunities for people to enter the sport.

## CURLING RINKS

Curling rinks are specialized facilities that are commonly provided by private, not-for-profit curling clubs. In particular the maintenance of curling sheets requires a skilled and experienced staff to provide good ice for a predictable game. Halifax has five curling facilities: Dartmouth Curling Club, Halifax Curling Club, Mayflower Curling Club, CFB Halifax and Lakeshore Curling

Club. Given the existing facilities, Halifax should not be involved in providing curling facilities.

## INDOOR SOCCER

Indoor soccer is increasingly popular in many communities as a way of extending the season. An active indoor soccer league exists for players of all ages with games held in the BMO Soccer Centre. This facility can be configured for up to four concurrent 100' x 200' pitches. The field allocation policy reserves 85% of the available field time for soccer, with the balance available for other sports including football, lacrosse, baseball and other uses.

There may be sufficient demand for another indoor facility for multi-sport use. A feasibility study would be needed to validate the demand.

## SKATE PARKS

The period of demand for an indoor Skate Park is primarily in the winter and thus cannot be accommodated in an arena. (Some municipalities have used arenas for summer time skate parks when the ice has been taken out). If an old arena was retired because the cost of replacing the ice plant was prohibitive and if the building skin was in good condition, it might be possible to create an indoor Skate Park as an adaptive re-use of the building.

It appears that Halifax has no private indoor skate parks, which are found in many municipalities. In the absence of private sector providers, Halifax may consider developing an indoor skate park as part of a multi-sport indoor field house facility.

## SQUASH / RACQUETBALL / HANDBALL

Squash and racquetball require dedicated indoor courts which are generally provided by university athletic centres or private clubs. HRM has these courts at Cole Harbour Place and the Dartmouth Sportsplex because racquet sports were popular at the time these facilities were built (1975 and 1982 respectively). Except for universities, it is

rare to find squash and racquetball courts in facilities built within the past 20 years.

Handball can be played in squash and racquetball courts or even in outdoor courts with one or three playing walls. In focus group sessions, the handball representatives encouraged the creation of outdoor handball courts. Where there are under-used tennis courts or tennis hitting walls, these could be converted to handball courts. Alternatively, in the development of a community centre, an outdoor handball area could be created using the building wall and a few wing walls.

## WALKING TRACKS

Walking tracks are increasingly popular additions to arenas or indoor field houses because they provide an opportunity for sheltered exercise during the winter. When combined with other facilities in a recreation centre, they allow parents to exercise while their children are engaged in organized sport. A walking track could be considered as part of the needs assessment and business case for any reconstruction of a Major Facility where it can be accommodated at a mezzanine level, but is generally not appropriate for a Community (Recreation) Centre.

### 8.2.4 Community Centre Trends

Among benchmarked municipalities, aging single-purpose facilities are being replaced with multi-purpose facilities that can be operated and maintained more efficiently, effectively creating strong recreation hubs. More comprehensive multi-purpose facilities have an added benefit of attracting members of all generations who may use the facility throughout the day, creating synergies for energy savings and facilitating large events and tournaments. This is true for both recreation buildings and multi-field parks which are also more efficient to operate and maintain when clustered.

Benchmarked municipalities are also using the development of Major Facilities as new opportunities for partnerships with other service

providers such as other levels of government, corporate sponsors, libraries, regional health authorities, private sector service providers, or not-for-profit organizations. Adjacent mixed use development, together with a combination of leasable spaces, government services, libraries, arts studios, performance space, and restaurant or retail establishments create opportunities to generate additional revenue.

## 8.2.5 Gaps & Opportunities

### MAJOR FACILITIES

The current Major Facilities are adequate for the provision of ice surfaces and pools. There will be opportunities to strengthen the Hub role of Major Facilities, as existing 'Spoke' Community (Recreation) Facilities reach end-of-life.

Consideration and analysis will be undertaken to ensure that, as appropriate and where capacity allows, replacement program spaces and Spoke facilities are incorporated into the Hub sites.

### COMMUNITY (RECREATION) CENTRES

During the community consultations, the public expressed a desire for new Community (Recreation) Centres in several communities and for the renewal of older existing facilities in other communities. It also appears that several older facilities are under-used. This gap of not having the right facilities in the right place needs to be confirmed through further analysis through the implementation of the Hub & Spoke model discussed below.

The CFMP2 analysis identified a wide variation in the form, amenities and services in the Community (Recreation) Centres, Offices and Community Halls. Despite this variation, the community facilities share an essential connection to the local community. The variation is in direct response to the historical differences in needs and priorities of these communities and represents a strength that should be preserved. At the same time, there is an opportunity to strengthen

linkages between the community centre spokes and the Major Facility hubs in a way that updates the relationship of the Major Facilities to the community and builds a stronger connection to a broader range of recreational opportunities.

Where existing Facilities are replaced, consideration should be given to consolidating Facilities at the hub. However, there will be a continuing need to have some stand-alone Facilities to meet local community needs.

For all Facilities, and particularly for local Facilities, spaces must be easily adaptable without specialized equipment to ensure that the programming can be responsive to the characteristics of the local community and to take advantage of other infrastructure nearby, such as regional Major Facilities. Community facilities should therefore not have specialized equipment or space that can be better utilized and maintained when consolidated at the hub.

### RURAL FACILITIES

Halifax is unique among Canadian cities in its broad geography and many rural communities. While residents in rural communities may not expect the same service levels as urban residents, there is a gap in services that could be addressed by providing a secondary level of service to meet many of their needs. Connectivity of rural Facilities is discussed in Section 7. The sport and Facility-specific discussion below considers the specific needs of rural areas.

### OPERATIONALLY CLUSTERED FACILITIES

There is an opportunity to provide more varied and integrated recreation services by organizing Facilities and their programming into clusters with shared program planning and promotion and shared administrative support. Clustering can encourage residents to make more use of other Facilities in the cluster and thus access a wider variety of programming than can be delivered in any single facility. For community organizations

running Facilities, clustering can leverage common services to make every operation more efficient – not just to save costs but to deliver a richer set of services. From a facility management perspective, clustering can better match the Facilities to the need.

There are several ways that Facilities could be clustered including by Council district, by facility type or by other geographical grouping such as the preferred Hub & Spoke model. In a Hub & Spoke model, each cluster would centre on a Major Facility, or in some cases one or two large Community (Recreation) Centres, as the hub, and be surrounded by a number of Community (Recreation) Centres, Recreation Offices and Community Halls.

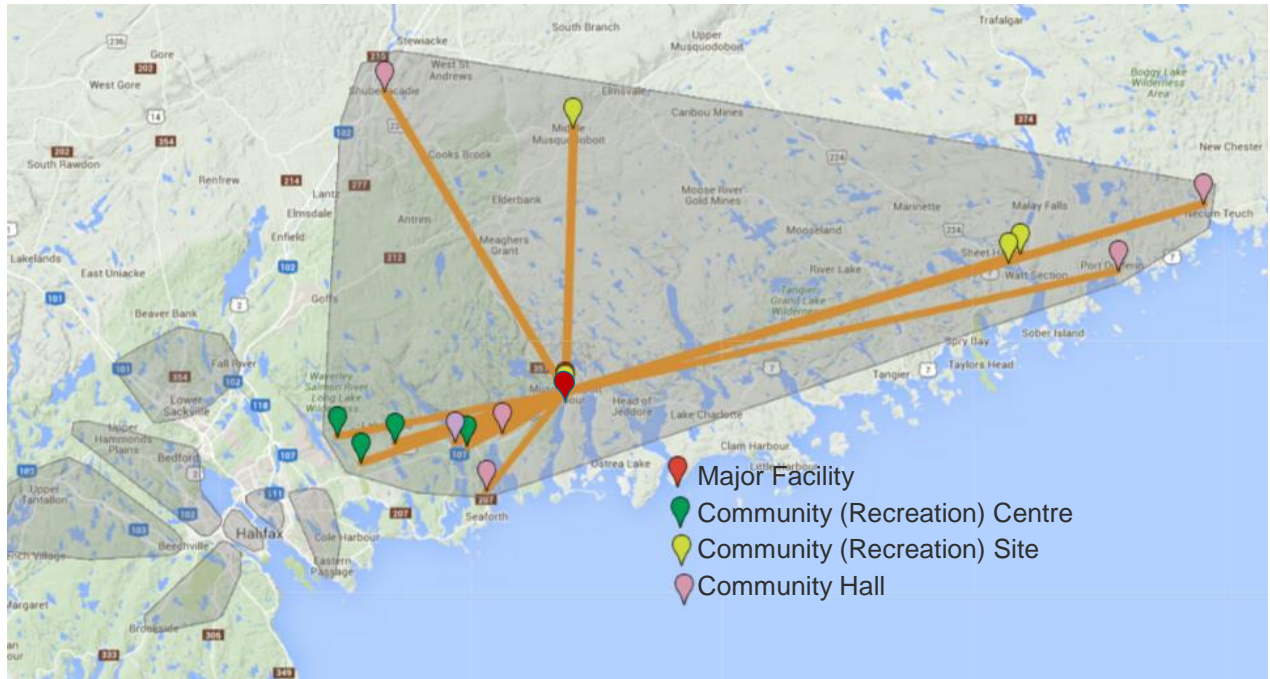
The Hub & Spoke model is not meant to be geometric in its clustering, nor to have a specifically defined distance between hubs and spokes. This model recognizes that any new and upgraded Facilities will be located in the Regional Plan growth centres, the areas where HRM seeks to invest. The location and investment in new community Facilities will therefore complement the Regional Plan's vision of complete communities and mixed-use & vibrant community cores, both rural and urban.

Potential clusters are listed in the tables and figures below. The tables list the Hub facility and Community (Recreation) Centres (CRC), Community (Recreation) Sites (Rec. Site) and Community Halls (CH). The figures show the location of the Facilities within each cluster and the relative location to the other clusters shown as shapes.

Figure 8.2.5a: Example of Clustered Facilities







google.com/maps

Figure 8.2.5b: Eastern Shore Cluster

### Eastern Shore Cluster

The Eastern Shore Cluster is the largest geographic and least populous cluster. It provides services to outlying areas through several Community Halls.

Table 17 – Eastern Shore Hub & Spokes	
Hub	Spokes
Eastern Shore Community Centre	East Preston CRC Lake & Shore CRC (Porter’s Lake) (Porter’s Lake Elementary) Lake Echo CRC North Preston CRC
	Middle Musquodoboit (Rec. Site) (Musquodoboit Rural High School) Musquodoboit Harbour (Rec. Site) Sheet Harbour (Rec. Site)
	Carroll’s Corner CH Grand Desert-W. Chezzetcook CH Moser River CH Samuel R. Balcolm CH Sheet Harbour Lions CH

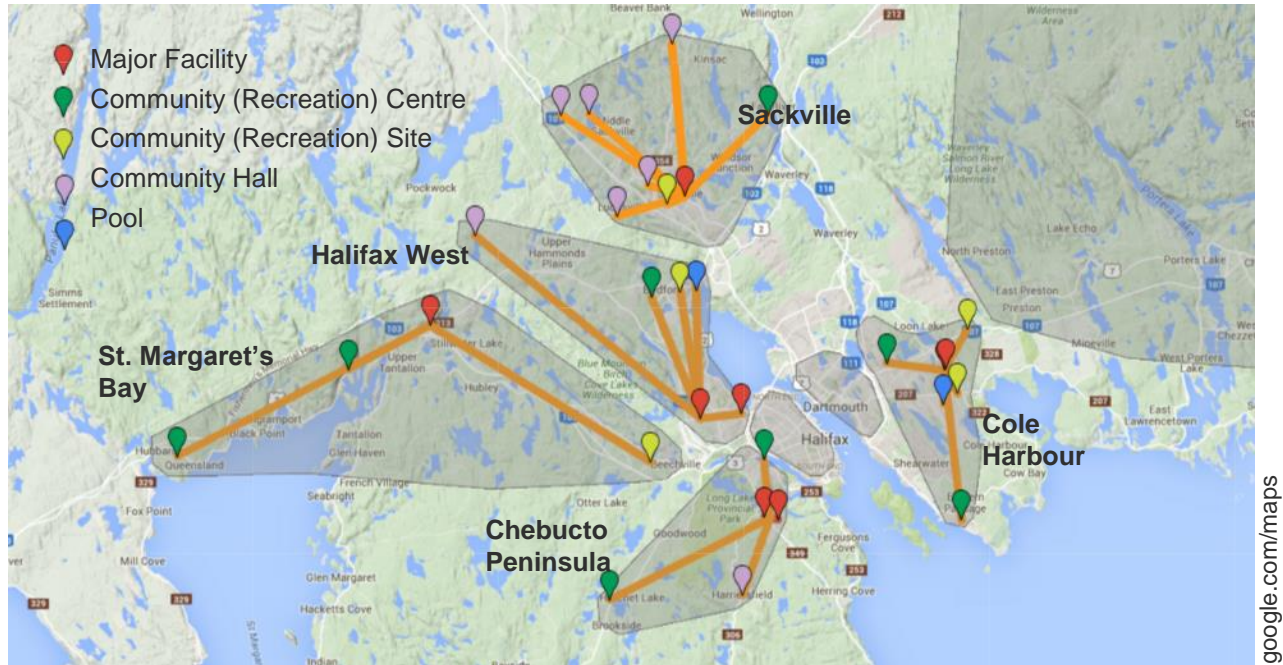


Figure 8.2.5c: Central/Western Hub & Spoke Clusters

### Central and Western Clusters

The St. Margaret's Bay cluster is similar in Facilities to the Eastern Shore cluster, but is much smaller in area.

The Sackville, Halifax West and Cole Harbour clusters have a suburban character with more Facilities located close together providing greater potential to share Facilities within the cluster.

Table 18 – Central & Western Clusters	
Hub	Spokes
<b>St. Margaret's Bay</b>	
St. Margaret's Centre	BLT (Rec. Site)
	Hubbards CH
	The Bay CH
<b>Halifax West</b>	
Canada Games Centre	Bedford-Hammonds Plains CRC (CPA High School)
	Basinview School (Rec. Site)
	Upper Hammonds Plains CH
	Bedford Outdoor Pool

Table 18 – Central & Western Clusters	
Hub	Spokes
<b>Sackville</b>	
Sackville Sports Stadium	Gordon R Snow CRC
	Acadia (Rec. Site)
	Beaverbank Kinsac CH
	Sackville Heights
	Springfield Lake CH
	Upper Sackville CH
Wallace Lucas CH	
<b>Cole Harbour</b>	
Cole Harbour Place	East Dartmouth CRC
	Talahassee CRC (Tallahassee Elementary School)
	Cole Harbour (Rec. Site)
	Graham Creighton (Rec. Site)
	Cole Harbour Outdoor Pool & Tennis
<b>Chebucto Peninsula</b>	
Captain William Spry Centre	Spryfield Lions Arena
	Chocolate Lake CRC
	Prospect Road CRC
	Harrietsfield Williamswood CH

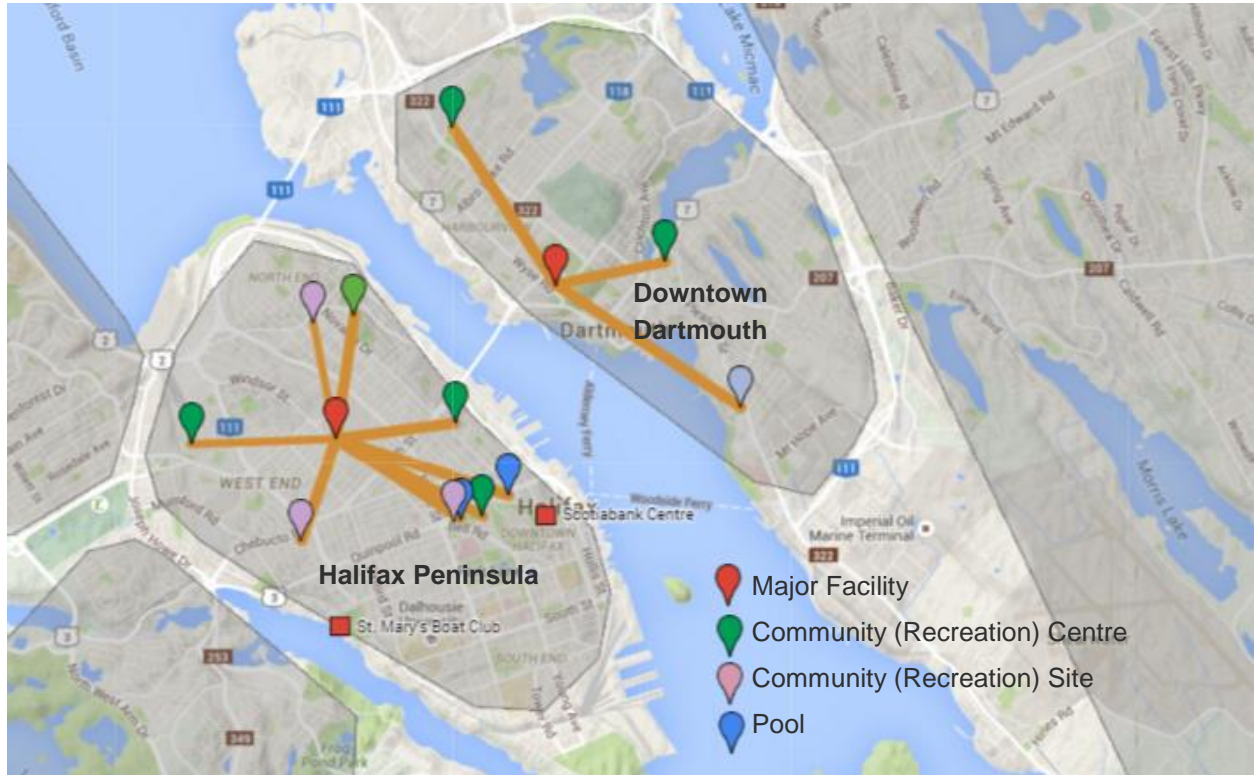


Figure 8.2.5d: Urban Hub & Spoke Clusters

**Urban clusters**

The Urban Clusters have a larger number of comprehensive Facilities located closer together, with fewer small Community Halls.

Table 19 – Urban Clusters	
Hub	Spokes
<b>Downtown Dartmouth</b>	
Dartmouth Sportsplex	Findlay CRC
	North Woodside CH Dartmouth North CH
<b>Halifax Peninsula</b>	
Halifax Forum Complex*	Citadel CRC (Citadel High School) George Dixon CRC Needham CRC St. Andrews CRC
	Isleville Street CH Larry O’Connell CH The Old Common Pavilion (Music Venue)CH St. Mary’s Boat Club
	Centennial Pool Common Pool
* The Halifax Forum Complex is not a Major Facility but is the most central municipally-owned facility and thus can serve as a Hub	

## 8.2.6 Halifax Common

The Halifax (North and South) Common, located in the heart of urban Halifax, is home to some of Halifax's most important (and best utilized) summer and winter community Facilities. The successful implementation of the Emera Oval has proven the Halifax Common's central and strategic location can meet a Regional demand for a centralized, intergenerational service for all. Tens of thousands of users can easily access the Halifax Common via walking, biking, transit or otherwise. While the Emera Oval is likely the most prominent feature of today's Common, the Common is also home to countless softball, tennis, cricket, lawn bowl, Ultimate, soccer, football and rugby matches. The Old Common Pavilion (Music Venue), pool, splash pad, playground and Skate Park attract many people for a variety of activities that are cultural, social and recreational in nature. The importance of the Halifax Common can be further enhanced through strategic improvements to existing Facilities, some of which are in need of significant recapitalization. These facilities, such as the Common Pavilion, the Common Pool, the splash pad, the Wanderers Ground, and more, will be evaluated and considered as part of the upcoming Halifax Common Master Plan.

## 8.2.7 Recommendations

### HUB & SPOKE CLUSTERING

#### 8.2a

The HRM recreational Facilities should be organized in clusters using the Hub & Spoke model. The clusters are not geometrically perfect because this concept is overlain on existing Facilities which have followed development patterns, which in are turn shaped by Halifax's rugged topography. In spite of the lopsided shapes, this Hub & Spoke model is a useful construct because it creates small groups of Facilities that can respond to the recreational needs of the people in each catchment area. In implementation, the boundaries may be

adjusted to reflect the natural re-alignment of the residents as different parts of the community grow.

Implementing the Hub & Spoke clustering model supports many of the other recommendations including: support for diversity and inclusion through coordinated programming; better opportunities for partnership by integrating geographical service areas; strength of financial management and accountability; and improving connections in coordinated marketing.

### MAJOR FACILITIES

#### 8.2b

Based on available utilization data, feedback from staff, and comments from public consultations and sports organizations, the number of Major Facilities (arenas and pools) are meeting the current needs for ice surfaces and pools and the condition of the existing Major Facilities is good<sup>19</sup>. Therefore there is no need for net new or replacement Major Facilities. However, when a nearby Community (Recreation) Centre needs to be replaced, consideration should first be given to consolidating program spaces or activities at existing Major Facilities when appropriate and when capacity allows or when the site allows room for expansion.

Implementing this recommendation will enhance access, build linkages and improve efficiency of operations.

### COMMUNITY (RECREATION) CENTRES

#### 8.2c

While it is recognized that Community (Recreation) Centres can become excellent community amenities, several existing

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<sup>19</sup> The Needham Pool is nearing its end of life but is considered a Community (Recreation) Centre, rather than a Major Facility.

Community (Recreation) Centres are underutilized as they have become outdated, lack functionality, or are competing for users with other public infrastructure. These facilities should be reviewed for potential closure, following the approved process and criteria (a recommended process and criteria are provided in Appendix N.

Implementation of a formal process and criteria for siting of Community (Recreation) Centres will, over time, allow for a more even distribution of Facilities relative to their Hub. This will in turn allow for more effective and efficient delivery of programs and will result in a more uniform provision of service within areas of similar population density.

## COMMUNITY HALLS

### 8.2d

The Edmonton and Winnipeg models, supported by independent operating associations, provide many more Community Halls across the municipality. This model does not appear to be required in Halifax according to the feedback from focus groups and public consultations. However, there are many Community Halls that are in poor condition. Existing Community Halls should continue to be evaluated annually for necessary capital improvements. When a community hall reaches the end of its serviceable life, an assessment should be conducted to determine the hall's utilization and whether or not the uses can be accommodate elsewhere in facilities such as fire halls, churches and other HRM-owned community Facilities. A consistent review process for facility retirement is illustrated in Appendix N.

When replacement of any HRM infrastructure is planned within a community, consideration should be given to the Community Hall needs as well. For example, if a new fire station is required and the local Community Hall is in poor condition, consideration could be given to a room that could function as a Community Hall if the site can be designed to avoid any potential access conflicts.

Creative solutions could improve local facilities and reduce cost. Ideas presented by the community included more collaboration with churches, existing community facilities not owned by HRM and local businesses or not-for-profits.

## RURAL FACILITIES

### 8.2e

A rural recreation strategy should be developed to govern the provision of community supported recreational Facilities (such as outdoor skating surfaces and spray parks) in outlying locations. Communities such as Sheet Harbour, Musquodoboit Harbour and Musquodoboit Valley should be considered for potential pilot implementations. Wherever possible any new Facilities should leverage existing or planned Facilities to create an active local recreation node. Consideration should be given to the level of demand, potential Community Association partnerships and funding options.

Such a strategy will address equity, accessibility of recreation Facilities and will support transportation objectives.

## MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

### 8.2f

Throughout Canada, the private sector has proven an effective partner for municipalities and not-for-profits in delivering new infrastructure and operating facilities. The proposed YMCA is a local examples of leveraging corporate partnerships to develop and/or operate community facility infrastructure. Additional opportunities may exist in Halifax including examples such as the Halifax Forum Complex.

In examining options for any Community (Recreation) Centre, consideration should be given to maximizing the value to Halifax by leveraging an adjoining mixed use development or engaging a private sector partner to develop and operate the facility.

The approach will be more effective for arenas because there is a proven private sector operating model. The same approach could be used with Major Facilities, but the opportunity for rebuilding these is farther in the future. Regardless of partnership opportunities, facility development should only take place as a result of HRM business planning and priority setting.

Implementation of such partnership opportunities could build stronger linkages between recreational Facilities and the urban fabric and could enhance efficiency in delivering services.

**8.2g**

Develop an updated master plan for the Halifax Common that is renewed at least every five years. The Common is an invaluable community asset and has substantial opportunities, and costs, to keep the space new and relevant for the people that use it. Potential improvements include a regional outdoor pool / spray pool, renewed fields, improved lighting, landscaping, paths, security, and access.

<b>Table 20 - Summary of Hub &amp; Spoke Recommendations</b>	
<b>8.2a</b>	Adopt a Hub & Spoke clustering model to guide the planning of Facilities as well as a supporting management philosophy and programming.
<b>8.2b</b>	Future investment in Major Facilities should only take place as a result of HRM business planning and priority setting.
<b>8.2c</b>	Conduct a pilot study using current requests for Community (Recreation) Centres to test and refine the recommended process and criteria in Appendix N for determining whether to renew, relocate or decommission Facilities, and apply the refined process in future assessments.

<b>Table 20 - Summary of Hub &amp; Spoke Recommendations</b>	
<b>8.2d</b>	Investment is required to upgrade or replace aging Community Halls where the demand warrants, rather than to create new Community Hall facilities.
<b>8.2e</b>	Develop a rural recreation strategy and conduct a pilot implementation to confirm effective ways of increasing recreational opportunities for outlying areas of Halifax.
<b>8.2f</b>	Consider leveraging private sector partnerships and adjoining commercial uses when undertaking planned upgrades or replacement of larger Community (Recreation) Centres and, in time, Major Facilities.
<b>8.2g</b>	Regularly review the master planning for the Halifax Common to define priorities for re-investment.



## 8.3 Playgrounds

### 8.3.1 Existing Facilities

Halifax’s playgrounds are an important component of attracting young families and providing opportunities for early active play and socialization amongst children. HRM currently owns 1,254 pieces of playground equipment in 388 playgrounds distributed throughout Halifax. Playgrounds are typically found in Halifax parks (about 252) or adjacent to local elementary schools (about 136).

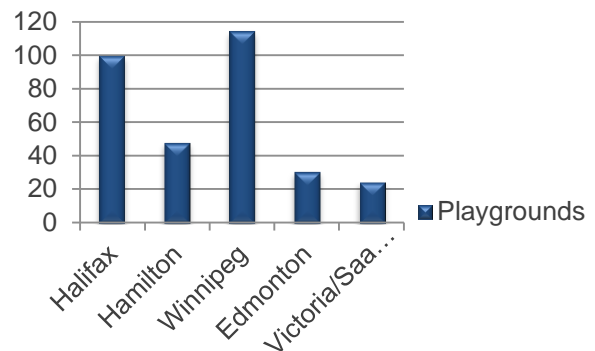
### 8.3.2 Current Provision

Among the benchmark municipalities, the rate at which playgrounds are provided varies widely. Only Winnipeg provides more playgrounds in relation to its population than Halifax.

The utilization of playground is very difficult to track directly and none of the other municipalities had found effective metrics. Hamilton has a target of locating playgrounds to serve a radius of 500m in residential areas.

In the 2015 Halifax Recreation Services Study about 27% of respondents reported using an outdoor playground in the last year. Only beaches were used by more respondents.

Playgrounds  
/100,000 People



### 8.3.3 Playground Trends

Benchmark municipalities report increasing use of non-traditional equipment that promotes creative play. Ideas include musical instruments (such as drums and xylophones), sculptures of boats, vehicles and buildings and oversized building blocks or game pieces. Other non-traditional facilities include naturalized playgrounds that have the ability to introduce nature and imaginative play for urban children. In naturalized playgrounds, swings, slides and monkey bars are replaced by, or supplemented with, plantings, trees, rolling terrain, logs, pathways, and boulders. The concept of naturalized and creative playgrounds is still growing.

Safety and accessibility are important to users with a particular focus on alternative ground covers. The Canadian Standards Association (CSA) dictates safety requirements but does not address accessibility, which is an important consideration for both ground covers and equipment. Several benchmarked municipalities reported a need to decommission or replace older playgrounds that do not meet the current CSA standard.

### 8.3.4 Gaps & Opportunities

In the past playgrounds in Halifax were allocated, planned and funded in an ad hoc basis. The result is a range of playgrounds styles, equipment, quality and accessibility in locations that may not be ideal or equitable. Aging populations, settlement types and demographics in communities require a different approach to provision of services including playgrounds in order to better meet the needs of citizens of all ages.

In addition, some developers pay for the installation of playgrounds in new communities as part of their marketing programs. These playgrounds are not always based on an analysis of actual need, sometimes on left-over sites that have no other recreational potential or at inaccessible school sites, yet those playgrounds are assumed by HRM which takes on operating and recapitalization liabilities.

A more consistent process is recommended in Appendix N which ensures future playground investment is directed to the most pressing need.

	2013	2014	2015
West	\$652	\$886	\$875
Central	\$451	\$705	\$658
East	\$572	\$687	\$638
Total	\$1,674	\$2,277	\$2,172
Per Playground	\$4.3	\$5.9	\$5.6

In addition to operational costs, in 2015/16 funding of \$555,000 was provided to build 12 new / replacement playgrounds. With a total of 388 playgrounds, even if all funds were allocated to replacements, playgrounds would only be replaced every 30 years.

Playground structures are built on a variety of scales, from simple local structure, to regional scale structures that provide many more play opportunities. There are significant advantages to locating playground structures in conjunction with Community Halls, Community (Recreation) Centres, and Major Facilities because they create a play opportunity for young children while other family members are engaged in other recreational pursuits.

### 8.3.5 Recommendations

#### 8.3a

HRM's current playground service provision is approximately 1 playground per 1,000 people. With the exception of Winnipeg, this is above the service level of many other municipalities of similar size. As stated, playground service is often inconsistent serving some HRM communities better than others. The condition of playgrounds is deteriorating, and some playgrounds are left in communities with few children.

Addressing these issues requires that HRM develop a playground servicing strategy that recognizes changing demographics, the nature of different community types and shifting recreation trends in order to better meet the needs of all citizens.

#### 8.3b

Prior to the approval and adoption of a playground servicing strategy, as per recommendation 8.3a adopt a preliminary scoring system that can be used in the annual evaluations of existing playgrounds, considering safety standards, accessibility and utilization, to determine which playgrounds should be decommissioned or rebuilt. A recommended process and system is provided in Appendix N. The recommended



criteria include a number of objective measures aligned to ensuring a strategic allocation of playground facilities.

Capital planning should be prioritized to ensure accessible and sustainable play equipment in existing playgrounds. Consideration should also be given to implementing non-traditional approaches, such as creative play and naturalized playgrounds.

Implementing such a priority setting approach will enhance accessibility by ensuring safe playgrounds, accessible to all, located where they will be used.

**8.3c**

The funding currently allocated to playground replacement requires each playground to last for 30 years. Looking at the past 30 years, expectations for playground safety and playground design have changed significantly and thus a 30-year-old playground will not meet current requirements. Additional funds should be allocated to the playground recapitalization program to allow replacement/renewal of about 20-25 playgrounds per year which would allow replacement/renewal of each playground every 15-20 years.

It should be noted that the age distribution of playground is not likely to be even and thus there may be a need for more funding in some years. Further, while the population of Halifax is not expected to grow rapidly, newly developed areas will need new playgrounds which will be added to the life-cycle renewal program and may require additional funding.

The need for additional funding may be reduced if under-used old playgrounds are decommissioned rather than being replaced, following recommendation 8.3a.

Appropriate funding for a playground replacement program is essential to ensure equitable access to safe and relevant play opportunities.

Requirements for funding allocation should be considered as part of the renegotiation of the Service Exchange Agreement with the HRSB. It will be important to set expectations for

maintenance and for the sophistication of school playgrounds that HRM is willing to finance. The Service Exchange Agreement should also recognize that, while school sites are optimally situated for convenient access to residential areas, the school use of these facilities during the day makes them unavailable for home-schooled children, and the design of them may be less effective for pre-school age children. Addressing this latter demand may require additional playground structures which would be an additional cost.

**8.3d**

The ability to manage the long-term maintenance and replacement of playground facilities is hampered by the past acceptance of playgrounds created by developers to make their homes more attractive. HRM should adopt policies and practices to ensure that the number and location of playgrounds is determined by HRM, based on sound planning and facility management principles, rather than as a marketing tool to sell houses.

Controls on what developers can provide will allow HRM to implement a sustainable long-term program to maintain playground facilities.

<b>Table 22 - Summary of Playground Recommendations*</b>	
<b>8.3a</b>	Develop a playground service strategy that recognizes changing demographics, needs of community types, and shifting recreation trends.
<b>8.3b</b>	Prior to approval and adoption of a playground servicing strategy develop a scoring system to prioritize existing playground equipment based on safety, accessibility and utilization.
<b>8.3c</b>	Allocate additional funding to replacement of playground equipment to shorten the replacement cycle from 30 years to 15-20 years.
<b>8.3d</b>	Develop and implement criteria for acceptance of developer-initiated playground installations.



## 8.4 Aquatics

### 8.4.1 Existing Facilities

#### POOLS

HRM currently owns seven indoor pools and four outdoor pools. All indoor pools are located in a Major Facility except for the Needham Pool which is located in a Community (Recreation) Centre and Centennial Pool which is a stand-alone facility.

In addition to the HRM-owned pools, there are three other indoor pools within Halifax that are available to members of the public at a cost. There are also numerous lakes and beaches in Halifax operated by the Province and HRM that supplement the pools in the summer.

Table 23 - Pools	
<b>Municipally owned Indoor Pools</b>	
Canada Games Centre	
Captain William Spry Wave Pool	
Centennial Pool (Halifax) (50m)	
Cole Harbour Place	
Dartmouth Sportsplex	
Needham Pool (Halifax)	
Sackville Sports Stadium (Sackville)	
<b>Municipally owned Outdoor Pools</b>	
Bedford Outdoor Pool (Bedford)	
Cole Harbour Outdoor Pool and Tennis Complex	
Halifax Common Pool	
St. Margaret's Centre Outdoor Pool	
<b>Other Pools in Halifax often used by the Public</b>	
Dalplex (Halifax) (Indoor - 50m)	
Shearwater Fitness and Sports Centre (Eastern Passage) (Indoor)	
Stad-Plex (Halifax) (Indoor)	

## SPRAY POOLS

Spray pools<sup>20</sup> could be considered as playground features but we consider them in the aquatics section because a growing number of municipalities are using large-scale spray pools or spray parks as an alternative to outdoor pools. Currently, there are five spray pools located on the Halifax Peninsula and one in Sackville.

Table 24 - Spray Pool
Central Common, Halifax
George Dixon, Halifax
Isleville Street Playground, Halifax
Sackville - Kinsman, Sackville
Westmount School, Halifax
Westwood Park, Halifax

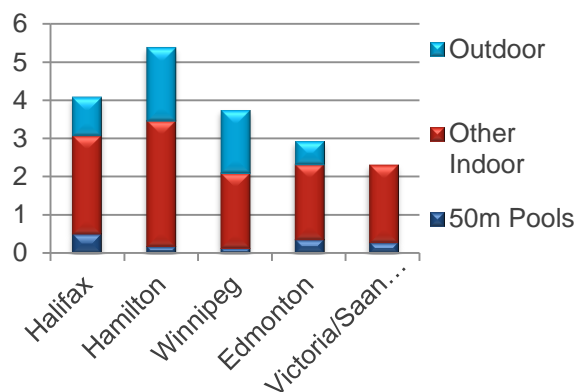
### 8.4.2 Current Provision

#### POOLS

As compared to the benchmark municipalities, only Hamilton provides more total pools and more indoor pools per 100,000 than Halifax.

Both the 2007 Mainland Common 50 metre Pool Study and the 2014 Eastern Region Aquatic Needs Assessment determined the current and projected need for pools are met with existing pools. This considers the significant growth in swim sports (Swim NS reports about 600 new club members over the past 5 years).

Pools/100,000 People



In Halifax's pools about 80% of total swim time not used for swimming lessons is available for recreational swimming, open lane swimming and other programming, but these uses are light (an average of 9 users per hour) and the time allocated could be reduced with minimal impact to recreational users (as illustrated in Appendix H). Of the time allocated to Halifax's 21 adult and youth swim teams and clubs about 20% remains un-used. This confirms that there is sufficient pool capacity. If demand from swim clubs increases substantially, additional pool time could be allocated without significant impact to other users.

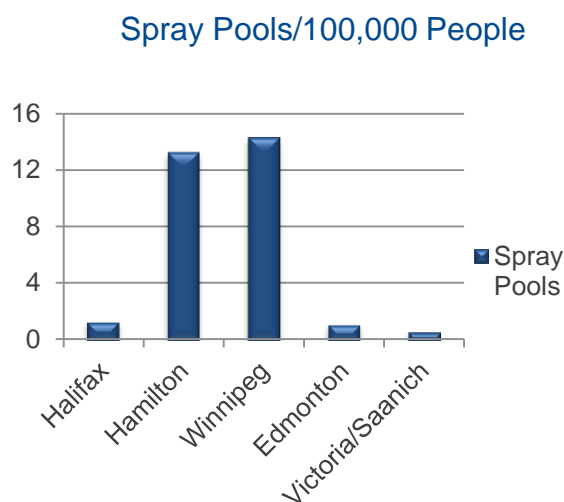
Notwithstanding this analysis, many users may complain that there is insufficient time available in the preferred location or at the preferred time. As with any facility, there is a high demand for prime times and this causes normal tension between the recreational demands and the swim club and team demands, but does not indicate a need for more pools. Discussions with the swim club community on allocation of time may be required. The application of the Halifax Community Access Policy may address some concerns but in any case would give transparency to the allocation of pool time.

In addition to admission fees and rentals to swim teams and clubs, pools are also rented for parties and other private events.

<sup>20</sup> There is no established terminology for the variety of alternative water features. The Halifax Recreation Department predominantly uses the term Spray Pools on its web site. The terms Splash Pad is often used to denote smaller facilities and Spray Park for larger facilities.

## SPRAY POOLS

Among the benchmarked municipalities, Hamilton and Winnipeg have invested much more heavily in Spray Pools. Hamilton has a target of providing one Spray Pool for every 1,100 residents under 10 years of age.



### 8.4.3 Trends in Pool Design

#### POOLS

From the benchmarking study, most municipalities reported that they are increasing the recreational potential of their pools through a variety of features, such as beach entries, water slides, lazy rivers, spray features and multiple tanks with different depths and water temperatures. Multiple tanks allows cool water for lane swims and warmer water suitable for swimming lessons, aquafit, seniors swimming and water play. These features increase the accessibility for all patrons and create a more attractive, fun recreational atmosphere and increase public utilization rates. For example, Hamilton recently replaced or renewed several pools with this new dual tank leisure/sport model. Dual tank designs will become increasingly important as the population ages.

Municipalities reviewed in the benchmark study indicated that they are implementing change rooms that provide more privacy for changing and showers than was expected in the past, and are implementing family change rooms. These facilities are more welcoming for a varied clientele, and support self-identified gender and sexual orientation. Hamilton Staff noted that in one high-risk neighbourhood, a standard change area used supervised basket checkers to reduce the risk of bullying in the change rooms, although at an increased operational cost.

Accommodation for cultural groups will be increasingly important. Some Muslim women are forming groups to rent pools so that they can swim while preserving their modesty<sup>21</sup>. Policies may need to be adapted to accommodate these practices.

## SPRAY POOLS

Benchmark municipalities are making increasing use of water play features at a variety of scales. Water play features use fountains and jets to provide an interactive play experience for young children and therefore attract families throughout the summer months. Because they do not have standing water, spray pools do not require a lifeguard. Many smaller spray pools (sometimes called splash pads) of about 50-80 m<sup>2</sup> are installed as an enhancement to playgrounds. They are most popular with young children under 10. Larger spray pools (sometimes called spray parks) are designed to appeal to a wider age range and to accommodate more participants. Larger spray parks can be a less costly alternative to an outdoor pool in terms of construction, maintenance and operations.

If provided, small splash pads should be located adjacent to Community (Recreation) Centres or

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<sup>21</sup> As reported in <http://mcclungs.ca/2012/11/20/muslim-women-form-own-swim-group/>. Retrieved 10 3 2015.

large playgrounds in regional parks and near washrooms and change areas, not as stand-alone facilities.

Spray pools have increasingly replaced older forms of wading pools which have generally been phased out. Requirements for lifeguards at wading pools and the need to upgrade disinfection equipment to current standards have made a wading pool as expensive to build and maintain as an outdoor pool. HRM does not currently provide outdoor wading pools.

#### 8.4.4 Gaps & Opportunities

##### INDOOR POOLS

Few of the existing pools can be considered fully accessible. Lifts can be added to allow persons with limited mobility to enter the pool. While this approach allows minimal accessibility, it does not allow the equal access that is increasingly expected for municipal pools. Benchmark municipalities indicated that beach or ramp access is the preferred mode of providing accessibility in pools.

In focus group discussions, the aquatics representatives did not identify a shortage of pools, but there was concern that the competition pools do not meet their requirements.

The swim clubs identified that it is essential to have at least one 50m pool. The Centennial Pool is inadequate for regional and national competitions because it has only 6 lanes (8 are required and 10 would be preferred), it does not have sufficient seating, a warm-up pool, adequate space for dryland training and stretching. The Dalplex pool area has recently been upgraded for code compliance and minor improvements to seating and is now the best competitive pool in the region. Both the Centennial and Dalplex pools are aging and despite recent investments should be considered for replacement within 10-20 years, based on the Facility Condition Assessments.

The diving participants identified that the diving tank is not sufficient for national competitions because it does not have enough diving boards/platforms and the seating for judges is not adequate.

While the existing indoor pools are sufficient in quantity to meet training demand, some pools are near the end of their expected life. The Needham (Recreation) Centre is aging and in the near future will need to be considered for retirement or redevelopment if demand warrants.

##### OUTDOOR POOLS/SPRAY POOLS

The Halifax Common Outdoor Pool, the Bedford Pool and the Cole Harbour Outdoor Pool will approach the end of useful life within the next 5 years. HRM should assess demand and, if not warranted, consider conversion to spray parks in light of their considerably lower construction and operating costs, and thus the opportunity to provide more aquatic facilities closer to residents at the same cost. The assessment of potential for conversion should consider the negative impact of reduced opportunities for the public to experience access to an outdoor swimming pool in warm weather.

Several rural communities are underserved for pools because of the travel distance to the nearest pool. Some of these communities have local beaches staffed by HRM and the Province. Outdoor pools or spray pools may be appropriate solutions depending on the level of demand.

#### 8.4.5 Recommendations

##### 8.4a

No net new indoor pools are required in the planning horizon of this Plan. The existing pools are well used but are not at capacity. Pools nearing the end of their useful life may be replaced if the need is established. This approach will achieve the greatest financial value from the facilities while maintaining the current accessibility.

#### 8.4b

Conduct a long-term aquatic strategy study to evaluate the aquatic needs, including:

- A detailed analysis of the expected remaining life of the existing pools (such as the Needham pool);
- The geographical distribution of pools;
- The features that should be provided in aquatic centres (dual tanks, play features, etc.); and,
- Validation of the need to maintain a combination competition pool (swimming and diving) in the municipality.

The aquatic strategy study should determine HRM's priorities for addressing the requests of the aquatic groups in providing competition pool features, such as:

- 8-10 lanes – 50m with moveable bulkhead;
- Diving area to national standards;
- Capability for water polo and synchronized swimming;
- Sufficient seating;
- Warm-up tank;
- Dryland training areas.

The aquatic strategy study should also examine the need for outdoor aquatic facilities, including where pools are appropriate; where splash pads and spray parks can be used to reduce operating cost; and how to best serve communities that are not currently served. The following communities were identified as underserved during community consultations but this needs to be validated and there may be others that should also be considered:

- Sheet Harbour;
- Musquodoboit Harbour;
- Musquodoboit Valley;
- Upper Sackville;

- Beechville – Lakeside-Timberlea;
- Fall River;
- Sambro & Prospect.

Finally the long-term aquatic strategy should address specifically:

- The need for a 50m competition venue and how such a need would be satisfied if the Dalplex pool were to be closed.
- Whether the Needham Pool should be included in the new recreation facility to be constructed as a replacement for the aging Needham Centre.

(The replacement of the Halifax Common Pool, which is nearing the end of its useful life, will be considered as part of the Halifax Common Master plan, expected to be completed before the aquatic strategy.)

Like the long-term arena strategy, the aquatic strategy will ensure that HRM can meet the needs of the community and can allocate the appropriate resources to recreational and competitive aquatics.

#### 8.4c

Make new and existing pools more accessible to all users, including physical access (beach entries and ramps) and support for diversity of culture, religion, gender, ability and age (appropriate change facilities, policies and programming to support self-identified groups). These changes are fundamental to removing barriers to access and meeting the needs of the entire community.

**8.4d**

Splash pads generally serve the same community and the same children as playgrounds. Splash pads can only be used for 2-3 months a year whereas playgrounds can be used most of the year (all year if parents allow children to use them in the winter even if the snow is not cleared). For the recreation value, a splash pad will be more expensive to install and maintain than a playground. Where a local playground is in poor condition priority for funding should be given to repair and replacement of playground before installing a new splash pad.

Table 25 summarizes the aquatic recommendations.

Table 25 - Summary of Aquatic Recommendations	
<b>8.4a</b>	Net new pools are not required – existing indoor/outdoor pools at the end of useful life should be assessed to determine whether there is a continuing need in that location.
<b>8.4b</b>	Conduct an aquatic strategy study to assess the long-term future of existing facilities, the likely timing for facility replacements, the features desired in new facilities, the requirements to support competitive aquatics, and the approach to providing outdoor pools and splash pools.
<b>8.4c</b>	Make new and existing aquatic facilities more accessible in physical access (beach entry and ramps), support facilities (change rooms) and policies.
<b>8.4d</b>	In considering investments in new splash pads near an existing playground, priority should be given to addressing any deficiencies in the playground before investing in a splash pad.





## 8.5 Arenas & Ice Surfaces

### 8.5.1 Existing Facilities

Upon completion of the Dartmouth 4-pad and the Halifax Forum Complex redevelopment, there will be 25 ice surfaces in Halifax. In addition to the arenas, there are a number of outdoor ice surfaces, supported by community groups. The Emera Oval provides a popular family-oriented outdoor activity throughout the winter and provides practice and event hosting for long track speed skating. In the summer, rollerblading and roller-skating are popular on the track.

The Long Term Arena Strategy – Consolidation of Aging Arenas indicated “the Short Term Arena Strategy recommended that 25 ice surfaces were required for the region.” The requirement for 25 ice surfaces was confirmed as part of the Long Term Arena Strategy analysis and is based on the percentage of usage for prime time, non-prime time, and year-round ice by all user groups at that time.

Soon after the Consolidation of Aging Arenas report was considered by Regional council in June 2014, the DND-owned Shannon Park arena was closed. Although there was significant inconvenience to user groups as a result of the

timing of the closure, all user groups were accommodated and continue to be well served within the existing remaining 24 ice surfaces.

The CFMP2 does not recommend additional ice surfaces beyond the 24 existing surfaces, and has seen no evidence that there is a need for more ice. Continued review of ice usage is recommended in order to monitor prime, non-prime and year-round ice usage and inventory requirements.

Regional Council recently approved the construction of a new 4-pad arena for Dartmouth to be completed in 2017 which will retire four existing aging arenas. Council has directed staff to proceed with an extensive renovation and expansion of the Halifax Forum Complex to be completed in 2019. An additional ice surface at the Halifax Forum Complex allows for the retirement of an additional aging single-sheet arena in the inventory ensuring the overall strategic provision of ice is well positioned for service provision and is low risk relative to facility failure. The CFMP2 recommends a review of inventory requirements given the fact that client groups appear to be adequately serviced with the current inventory of 24 ice surfaces. Table 26 below, shows the full implementation of the Long Term Arena Strategy – Consolidation of Aging Arenas approved by Council in 2014.



Table 26 - Arenas	Ice Surfaces
BMO Centre - 4-Pad Arena Complex (Hammonds Plains)	4
Centennial Arena (Halifax)	1
Cole Harbour Place	2
Dartmouth Four Pad (4 Future 2017)	(+4)
Dartmouth Sportsplex	1
Eastern Shore Community Centre & Arena	1
Halifax Forum Complex (1 Future 2019)	2 (+1)
Sackville Sports Stadium	1
Scotiabank Centre (Halifax)	1
Spryfield Lions Arena	1
St. Margaret's Community Centre	2
<b>Other Arenas in Halifax</b>	
Rocky Lake Dome / Edge Sports Centre (Bedford)	1
Sackville and District Community Arena	1
Shearwater (Eastern Passage)	1
Saint Mary's University (Halifax)	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>

Arenas and outdoor ice surfaces support a wide range of sports including:

**IN-SEASON:**

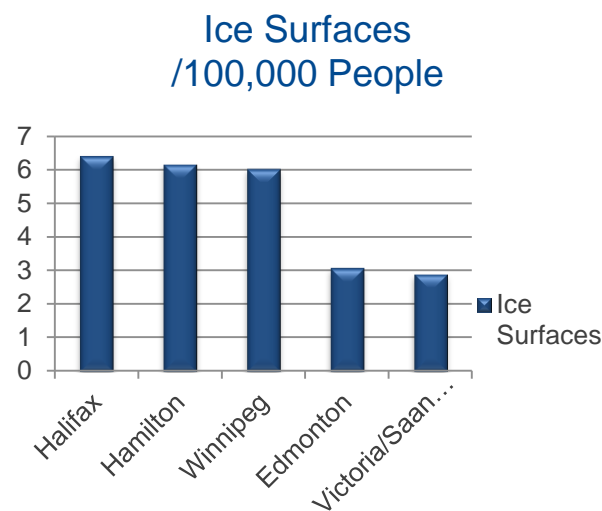
- Figure skating
- Hockey
- Ice dance
- Public skating
- Recreational skating
- Ringette
- Shinny
- Sledge hockey
- Speed skating (short track and long track)

**OFF-SEASON:**

- Lacrosse
- Ball Hockey
- Roller Derby
- Skateboarding

**8.5.2 Current Provision**

In relation to its population, Halifax has as many indoor ice surfaces as any benchmarked municipality.



Most of these sports can occur in any arena, but speed skating has particular needs. Long track speed skating occurs only at the Emera Oval (an artificial outdoor oval). Short track speed skating requires an Olympic size ice surface and thus is limited to one rink at St. Margaret's Community Centre. The Dartmouth 4-pad arena design includes one Olympic-sized ice surface which would provide an additional location for short-track speed skating. Speed Skating clubs may also need substantial storage space for its safety padding.

The Long Term Arena Strategy (LTAS) including the LTAS Consolidation Strategy were recently completed and provided a detailed analysis that is incorporated into this master plan. We note that four of the ice surfaces are privately owned: Saint Mary's University, DND Shearwater, and community/ privately owned arenas in Bedford and Sackville. There is some risk to relying on

external organizations to provide the required number of ice surfaces in Halifax, but the risk is relatively low that several will close or cease operations at the same time. The LTAS concludes that the combination of HRM and partner facilities meets the current and projected need of indoor ice surfaces.

The Scotiabank Centre is considered effective in meeting the needs of elite hockey, and temporary event style tennis and basketball in Halifax.

According to the Long Term Arena Strategy ice utilization in prime and fringe periods dropped from 89% in 2007 to 82% in 2011. Prime time ice utilization dropped from 100% in 2007 to 99% in 2011 with 15 hours (or more) of prime time ice unused per week. In summary, the current and planned ice surfaces are sufficient. There will always be unmet demand for prime ice times for certain arenas at certain times, however it's not sustainable to provide enough arenas to meet all peak demands. The recent implementation of the Community Access Plan has created an equitable allocation of prime time. From the focus group sessions, it appears that there is some lingering concern from parties that previously had more prime ice time, but that is not sufficient to justify additional ice surfaces.

### 8.5.3 Trends in Arena Design

All municipalities consulted in the benchmarking analysis identified that they have recently been building four-pad arenas because they are more efficient to operate, are appreciated by local leagues (who always go to the same arena for practices and games) and are more attractive for weekend tournaments because they avoid travel time between games.

Some municipalities surveyed were exploring outdoor leisure ice surfaces that provide access to smaller ice surfaces outside the confines of a typical hockey ice surface for recreation activities. Halifax is well served by the Emera Oval in this regard but may wish to consider additional infrastructure adjacent to or as a component of new arenas.

### 8.5.4 Gaps & Opportunities

Based on the success of the Emera Oval, there appears to be a good opportunity to expand outdoor ice surfaces in geographically dispersed communities under-served by indoor ice arenas. The season for outdoor ice can be extended significantly with artificial refrigeration and the value of this has been demonstrated by the Emera Oval. HRM could support volunteers willing to flood and clean an outdoor rink by supplying a refrigeration unit and lighting.

All skating related organizations were interested in offering more learn-to-skate opportunities and to obtain low-cost or no-cost ice time to minimize the participant's cost for these programs.

The planned expansion of the Halifax Forum Complex will provide an excellent tournament venue with multiple pads of ice and existing seating and amenities available for spectators.

Both Lacrosse and Roller Derby stakeholders identified the challenge of getting access to ice-free arenas to start their season at the appropriate time. Many arenas continue to maintain their ice during the post-season hockey playoffs, but the overall utilization of ice drops significantly during that period, and thus the net cost of maintaining ice is much higher than during the season. HRM could achieve significant savings by coordinating the end-of-season date across arenas by removing ice in many arenas while keeping sufficient ice surfaces for the hockey playoffs. Removing ice earlier in some arenas would also allow arena time for Lacrosse and Roller Derby.

### 8.5.5 Recommendations

#### 8.5a

The CFMP2 recommends a review of inventory requirements given the fact that client groups appear to be adequately serviced with the current inventory of 24 ice surfaces. HRM should follow the Long Term Arena Strategy and Consolidation Strategy which envisions no net new indoor ice surfaces but renewal of arenas through consolidation. To coincide with the Halifax

Forum Complex redevelopment, HRM should review the full LTAS within the next 3 years to address emerging issues. Implementation of the LTAS will require additional studies and will continue to involve the public in a transparent decision-making process. The consolidation envisioned in the LTAS will result in more economical and functional arenas.

**8.5b**

Develop an outdoor ice policy, implementing criteria such as: provision of outdoor ice to serve areas more than a 10 minute drive from an arena in urban areas, and more than a 30 minute drive from an arena in rural areas, where the community will contribute by assuming clearing and flooding duties. Consideration should be given to the potential for portable artificial ice plants to be provided, which would extend the skating season and reduce days lost to mid-winter thaws. Consideration should also be given to integrating the provision of outdoor ice surfaces with the provision of splash pads to create community focused spaces. Implementing an outdoor ice program will increase accessibility to skating facilities, will support active transportation, and will build connections to the community.

**8.5c**

In view of the interest by skating clubs to provide enhanced learn-to-skate programs, HRM should consider pricing policies that reduce or eliminate the cost of renting prime-time ice for approved introductory programs. The value of such programs would be to introduce people to ice sports and thus should not be focused on the very young, but on older children, new Canadians, and others who have not had an early introduction to skating. Such a program could be modelled on the free learn-to-skate program available at the Emera Oval. Implementing a program at indoor ice surfaces would require development of criteria for the program, determination of how much prime-time ice would be allocated, and would require some oversight to monitor the effectiveness of the program.

Such a program could enhance access to the sport and arenas and ice surfaces, overcoming the perceived barrier that one can only learn to skate through the early age hockey and figure-skating programs.

**8.5d**

HRM should coordinate the dates for arenas to take out their ice, including removing ice in some arenas after the end of league play so that sports clubs such as lacrosse, roller derby, indoor soccer and many other users have access to dry arenas earlier in the spring.

**8.5e**

If an old arena is retired because the cost of replacing the ice plant is prohibitive but the building skin is in good condition, HRM should consider the viability of providing an adaptive re-use of the building for sports such as lacrosse, skateboarding and roller derby.

<b>Table 27 - Summary of Arena and Ice Surface Recommendations</b>	
<b>8.5a</b>	Review inventory requirements given the fact that client groups appear to be adequately serviced with the current inventory of 24 ice surfaces. Continue to implement the Long Term Arena Strategy and re-assess it in 3 years.
<b>8.5b</b>	Develop an outdoor ice policy with criteria to determine where outdoor ice should be located and how it should be managed.
<b>8.5c</b>	Explore the potential for subsidized ice fees for organizations providing ice sport programs focused on individuals that would not otherwise be exposed to skating.
<b>8.5d</b>	Coordinate the dates for arenas to remove ice in the off season to make higher quality space available for sports such as lacrosse and roller derby and to reduce operating costs.
<b>8.5e</b>	Consider the viability of adaptive re-use of arenas for sports such as lacrosse, skateboarding and roller derby.



## 8.6 Indoor Gyms

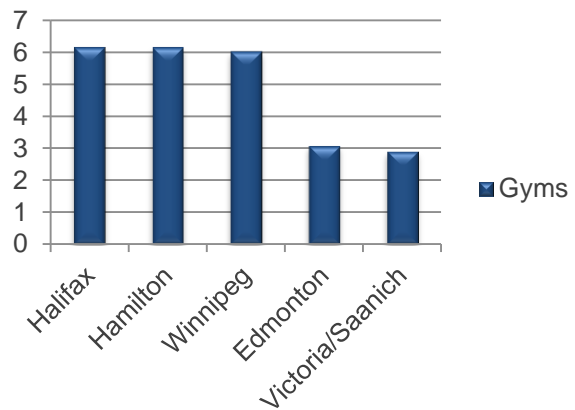
### 8.6.1 Existing Facilities

Currently, there are 190 gyms available for public access in Halifax. The majority are owned and operated by HRSB. HRM owns and operates gyms in Community (Recreation) Centres and in most Major Facilities. To reflect the potential uses in gyms, gyms were defined according to four classes by size. The table below shows the number of gyms in each class.

Table 28 - Gyms	# of HRSB Gyms
A Class Gyms (>500 m <sup>2</sup> )	29
B Class Gyms (400-500 m <sup>2</sup> )	28
C Class Gyms (350-400 m <sup>2</sup> )	16
D Class Gyms (<350 m <sup>2</sup> )	56

### 8.6.2 Current Provision

#### Gyms/100,000 People



In HRSB's indoor gyms, priority is given to school use, which results in approximately three times as much time allocated to school usage compared to community usage. HRM Staff can only book community time after each school has booked the time they require for school-related activity.

Gyms are used for a wide variety of activities from conventional court sports to more specialized activities including:

- Cadet marching drills
- Archery
- Combat Sports
- Pickle ball
- Gymnastics
- Floor Hockey/Ball Hockey/Floorball etc.
- Lacross
- Roller Derby

Some of these activities may cause wear and tear or additional maintenance depending on the flooring surface and thus organizers have difficulty obtaining access to gyms. Other uses are provided at advanced levels by clubs or private sector organizations.

Gym time during peak hours (5:30pm – 9pm) in preferred facilities can be hard to obtain for some sport and user groups due to a lack of availability and price.

Gyms vary in size, floor quality, ventilation, lighting and equipment but facility type and quality is not easy for the public to discover and many groups end up in gyms that are not well matched to their requirements.

Several venues, including Scotiabank Centre, Canada Games Centre, University and High School facilities, provide excellent quality indoor gyms for local and regional competitions.

The Scotiabank Centre meets the current needs for an elite event-oriented sport indoor gym.

### 8.6.3 Trends in Gym Design

Gyms will be included in new school construction and will be provided in HRM's Major Facilities and Community (Recreation) Centres as demand requires. New gyms will be built with a greater emphasis on multi-purpose space that can accommodate a number of activities and sports. Storage space for unique equipment, such as

large mats, gymnastic equipment and sports equipment may be provided where warranted.

### 8.6.4 Gaps & Opportunities

There is a need to achieve a better match between gym users' requirements and the capabilities of each facility. A better inventory of gym sizes and features would allow better user experiences.

There are limitations in the ability of HRM to share the use of school gyms because the long lead time for Municipal programs is not synchronized with school requirements. Schools generally cannot commit to their use of gyms until late summer for the immediately following year, whereas the Recreation Program Catalogue is finalized before the end of June for fall and winter programs. Where a school principal is familiar with the long-term school patterns commitments can be made, but a new principal often cannot confidently release blocks of time for non-school use.

Some other gym users, such as the Halifax Sport and Social Club (HSSC), as well recreational basketball and volleyball programs may be able to respond to gym availability on shorter notice. The HSSC identified that it could make use of gyms even on very short notice of a few weeks if there was a booking system that allowed them to browse available gyms.

HRM staff are currently directed to undertake needs assessments and business cases to determine the need for gyms or other enhancements in schools or community facilities. This partnership in planning is intended to minimize duplication of gyms. However, if access is difficult or denied, user groups will continue to identify their needs and there is a risk of increased costs to taxpayers who fund both schools and HRM Facilities.

## 8.6.5 Recommendations

### 8.6a

HRM should develop a more comprehensive inventory of gyms to track their size and features. If this database were available on the internet, it would allow user groups to request a gym that is better suited to their requirements. A more refined inventory of gym characteristics should be accompanied by a more sophisticated rental pricing model that would charge more for better gyms to help manage the demand.

Making bookings, and cancellations, available for review on the internet would allow some user groups, such as the HSSC, to make use of available time as it is released.

Better information shared with the public will enhance access to gyms. It will also help in the long-term planning of new HRM Facilities to determine the potential demand for gym spaces.

### 8.6b

HRM should continue to work with the HRSB and representative principals to define effective approaches to making gyms more available.

HRM should develop and analyze trends and patterns of non-school use of school gyms, including where non-school bookings were cancelled for school events. This information would help HRM predict the available spaces and could help principals get better certainty of their own needs.

HRM may also be able to take better advantage of available space by finding ways to reduce the lead time for program development and registration. School planning cycles do not match planning cycles for HRM recreation programs. If HRM can synchronise its planning of space requirements with the HRSB, there will be fewer conflicts.

**Table 29 - Summary of Gym Recommendations**

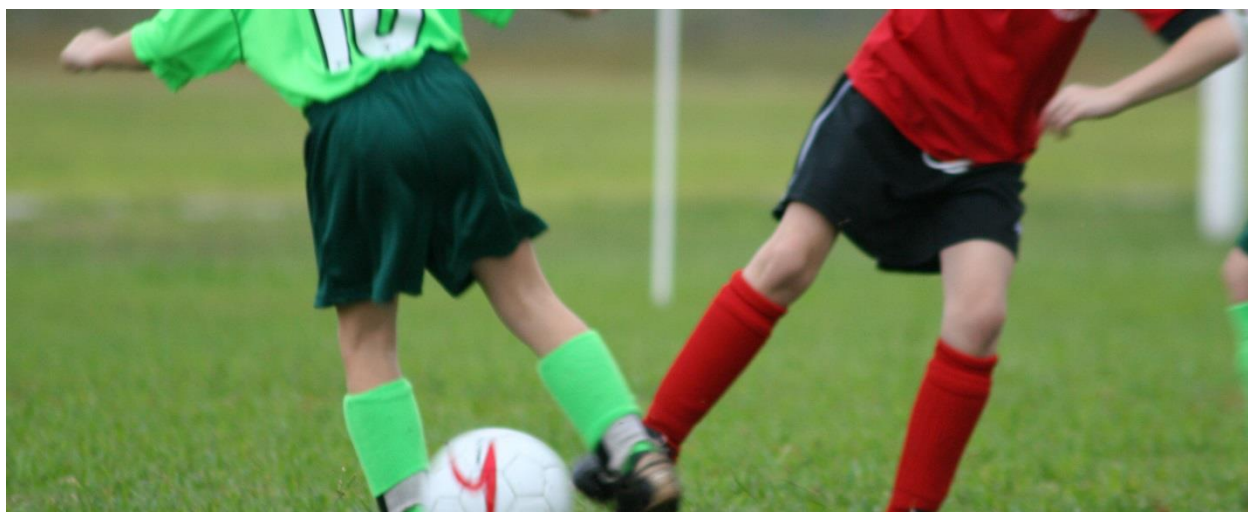
#### 8.6a

Make a more complete inventory of gyms available online to assist groups in finding appropriate gyms, including posting available time slots.

#### 8.6b

Seek better relationships with school board partners by predictive analysis of usage data and aligning planning timelines for allocation of available school gym time.





## 8.7 Sport Fields

Sport fields, including playing fields (soccer, football, rugby, Ultimate and others), cricket grounds and ball diamonds (softball and baseball) are grouped together for analysis because, despite the very different demands of the sports, the fields have similar metrics, challenges and solutions. In the 2015 Halifax Recreation Services Study (the HRM Citizen Survey) the following percentage of respondent households reported using sport fields:

- 19% - Soccer Fields
- 14% - Baseball diamonds
- 7% - Football fields
- 7% - Softball diamonds

### 8.7.1 Existing Facilities

#### ALL-WEATHER FIELDS

All-weather fields allow much greater utilization as they can be used in shoulder seasons, during wet weather and at night (when lit). HRM currently owns six all-weather (also known as artificial turf) fields. An additional municipally-owned all-weather field is planned for Cole Harbour Common. Both Saint Mary’s and Dalhousie Universities operate all-weather fields. In addition, there are 2 indoor fields at the BMO Soccer Centre.

Table 30 - All-Weather Fields		# Fields
Bedford / Hammonds Plains (CPA)		1
Cole Harbour (Approved)		1
Harbour East (Dartmouth)		2
Mainland Common (Halifax)		2
Weir Field (Sackville)		1
<b>Other All-Weather Fields</b>		
Huskies Stadium (Saint Mary’s)		1
Wickwire Field (Dalhousie)		1
<b>Indoor Fields</b>		
BMO Soccer Centre (Halifax)		2*
* Can be subdivided into 4 smaller fields.		

#### NATURAL TURF SPORT FIELDS

HRM has 135 natural grass sport fields which can be used for sports such as soccer, football, rugby, Ultimate and others. Most fields are lined for soccer<sup>22</sup>. In the focus groups, users noted that lines are not maintained well and occasionally the local sport association that is scheduled to use a field will line (or chalk) the field prior to their event. Despite the abundance of fields, the lack of proper

<sup>22</sup> Lining typically lasts for 7 – 10 days on natural grass. Most municipalities will line a field for the sport that is booked most frequently on a field. Lining for multiple sports is rare.

line work limits some potential users in their choice of field – sports such as Ultimate, football and rugby each have their specific field line requirements. Lining a field is time-consuming and requires precise measurement using proper paint, as well as coordination with mowing schedules to make re-lining for other sports more effective.

One cricket ground is provided on the Halifax South Common with a hybrid field – natural grass except for the pitch which is artificial turf. This represents a compromise: it is not the ideal well-prepared natural grass crease, but it is better than a poorly maintained crease. However, the cricket ground is somewhat disturbed by uneven turf and poor turf condition.

Throughout Halifax playing fields are classified by size and condition. The number of fields in each classification is shown in the table below.

Classification	# Fields
A	11
B	46
C	38
D	29
Unclassified	6
Dept. National Defense	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>136</b>

See Appendix G12 for listings and Appendix H4 for utilization

## BASEBALL & SOFTBALL DIAMONDS

Halifax has 187 ball diamonds, of which 17 are designed for baseball with a pitching mound. Both baseball and softball diamonds are of a variety of classes based on size and condition as shown in the table below.

Classification	# Diamonds	# With Lights
<b>Softball Diamonds</b>		
AA	1	1
A	11	6
B	31	3
C	41	1
D	62	3
Unclassified	24	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Baseball Diamonds</b>		
AA	4	4
A	8	6
B	3	1
C	1	-
Unclassified	1	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>11</b>

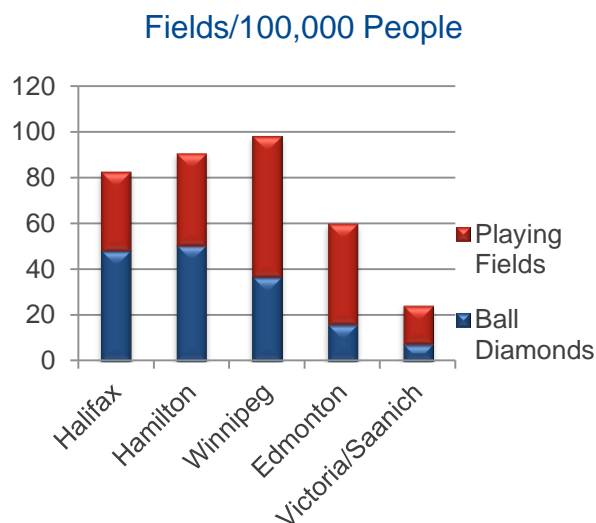
The amenities available at diamonds vary, such as bleachers, protected dugouts, regulation diamond and field sizes, and washrooms.

Note that AA refers to the best quality fields with the most amenities. These fields are serviced regularly and are kept at a level of competition readiness. The lesser quality fields are assigned a classification of A through D respectively.

See Appendix G13 for listings and Appendix H5 for utilization.



## 8.7.2 Current Provision



Halifax provides slightly fewer total fields per capita than Hamilton and Winnipeg but more than Edmonton. The comparison with Victoria and Saanich is not reliable because these statistics do not include fields owned by clubs and private sector organizations. The provision of playing fields vs. ball diamonds is believed to reflect regional differences in popularity of sports.

From the benchmarking exercise, only Hamilton and Halifax had targets for the rate at which playing fields and diamonds were provided. The table below shows those targets and the actual levels achieved.

<b>Table 33 - Field Targets</b>		
<b>Target Metric</b>	<b>Halifax*</b>	<b>Hamilton</b>
Target population / field	2,750	n/a
Actual population / field	2,870	2,464
Target registered soccer players / field	100	100
Target population / diamond	3,350	n/a
Actual population / diamond	2,086	1,985
Target registered ball players / diamond	100	75

\*Targets from the 2008 CFMP.

This illustrates that the HRM targets are similar to those of Hamilton. It also shows that HRM is providing about 70 more ball diamonds than the 2008 target, and about six fewer playing fields than the 2008 target. It must be noted that the 2008 targets reflected demand at that time. However, the comparison with the targets does correlate with feedback from the focus group sessions where stakeholders indicated that there was no shortage of ball fields, but a demand exists for more playing fields. During the public consultations, however the most common concern raised by stakeholders related to the quality and condition of fields and diamonds, as opposed to the number of diamonds and fields.

## BASEBALL

There are approximately 7,000 registered baseball participants in Nova Scotia with active leagues throughout Halifax. Programs tend to focus on youth with the majority of participants under 18. Ensuring every age group has access to baseball programming requires quality diamonds with regulation dimensions, pitching mounds and fences.

Women's and girl's baseball is increasingly popular, with new leagues in Canada, and participation in high profile events, such as the Pan-Am games.

Several high performance provincial male and female teams draw players from across the province and use diamonds throughout Nova Scotia for practices and games. Competitive leagues are organized by age and into levels of play (A, AA, AAA) throughout Halifax. The NS Senior Baseball League is the highest level of adult baseball played in Nova Scotia. The Dartmouth Moosehead Dry and the Halifax Pelham Molson Canadians are served by Beazley and Mainland Commons complexes respectively. Weir Field in Sackville, Graves Oakley in Spryfield and Canada Games (Field #9) on the Halifax Common are the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> AA Class Fields in Halifax.

Baseball tournament organizers seek multiple diamonds at a single site to host tournaments on a single site and facilitate their organization.

## SOFTBALL

Softball Slo-pitch remains popular throughout Halifax with several leagues organized by volunteers and sponsors. Most softball slo-pitch leagues are co-ed, recreational in nature and use a variety of diamonds throughout Halifax. Youth and adults both participate in slo-pitch however many youth prefer baseball or fast-pitch.

Competitive women's, men's, girls and boys softball teams play both slo-pitch and fast-pitch in provincial and inter-provincial leagues. AA and A Diamonds in Halifax serve these users.

The NS Female Summer Games Softball team plays and practices throughout Nova Scotia. Men's Softball was reinstated in the 2017 Canada Summer Games.

### 8.7.3 Trends in Field Design

#### ALL-WEATHER FIELDS

All-weather (artificial) turf fields are becoming increasingly popular throughout Canada. The primary benefit of artificial turf fields is that they can be programmed non-stop during all weather conditions and can be used during extended seasons.

All-weather fields:

- Are more expensive to build;
- Are less costly to maintain;
- Can be used every day without damage;
- Provide a more consistent playing surface;
- Can be used immediately after heavy rain, thus avoiding cancellations;
- Can be used earlier in the spring and later in the fall without damage to the field.

Some sports, such as rugby, are significantly affected by playing on synthetic turf and others, such as soccer, prefer natural turf if the field can be in top condition. Natural turf fields have a lower initial cost but cannot be used after heavy rain or early in the spring without temporary or permanent damage that will shorten the annual or on-going life of the field.

Lighting of fields extends their use into the evenings and potential for use, particularly in the fall when days are shorter. Energy efficient LED lighting is now an accepted technology that helps reduce operating costs in new lighting installations.). HRM will continue to invest in lighting on premier fields, all-weather fields and well used ball diamonds.

### 8.7.4 Gaps & Opportunities

#### NATURAL FIELDS

Natural sport fields also act as park space, when not in use, providing green space for picnics, dog walking and family activities. Unfortunately, many natural sport fields were not constructed to current standards for drainage and thus are vulnerable to damage in wet weather and are harder to maintain in playable condition. The lack of irrigation limits the ability of fields to recover from over-use during hot, dry weather.

Current policies for season start and end dates and for the number of weekly rest days have allowed some fields to recover and improve in condition. However, some fields that were poorly constructed are unlikely to recover even if rested for a full season.

#### FIELD CONDITION

The condition of the fields is a significant factor in determining the quantity required. From the available data, it appears that natural playing fields are unevenly booked. Overall, the average playing field is used about 175 hours which is a good level of play. If a field is used more than 200 hours per year it is not able to recover and will deteriorate rapidly. Of the 100 fields for which we

have data, 29 are used more than 200 hours (more than 3,000 total excess hours) and 44 are used less than 150 hours (3,000 available hours). This indicates that while the overall number of fields is about right, the distribution of use among the fields is not ideal. It is likely that the better fields are over-used, causing additional wear and tear and reducing their quality.

The over-use of fields is a significant contributor to poor field condition. Poor condition fields put increased demand on the remaining fields causing their deterioration. The wear caused varies by sport:

- Soccer – in spite of the small size of the players, the U10 and younger soccer players put inordinate stress on playing fields. Idle players tend to kick at the sod, trying out their cleats with the result that the goal mouth on youth soccer fields is often bare dirt and can be a fairly deep hole. Older soccer players use more of the field and thus cause less wear in specific areas.
- Football – the need for the front lines to dig in at the line of scrimmage tends to cause high wear in the centre third of the field, fairly uniformly down the length of the field.
- Rugby – Rugby players dig in harder with their cleats during scrums and rucks than football players (and the cleats are bigger), but the play ranges widely across the playing field and thus wear is even, although play on wet fields can create significant damage.
- Ultimate – played without cleats in a wide-ranging play is easy on fields.
- Cricket – causes intense wear in the wicket and pitch area and relatively little outside of the pitch. The use of a hybrid cricket ground helps manage wear.
- Baseball / softball – generally very gentle on the field. The high wear area of the infield is a sand/clay mix that is regularly

scarified to repair wear. The outfield (and baseball infield grass) gets little wear spread evenly around the diamond.

Considering all the multiple uses, playing fields are more vulnerable to overuse than ball fields.

To address the excess wear on about 30% of fields, the most economical solution would be to re-balance the field use through better scheduling controls. However, this approach may not meet travel time objectives. Further analysis is needed to determine whether re-balancing could be effective.

Where there is a particularly high demand (nine fields with more than 300 hours and six with more than 400 hours), artificial turf fields should be considered as a replacement for existing fields. Artificial turf can tolerate a much higher level of use, both during the prime playing season (May 24 – September 15) and shoulder season (earlier in the spring and later in the fall). The existing artificial turf fields average about 1,600 hours use per year of which about 55% is estimated to be in the prime playing season, meaning that one lit artificial turf field can provide the same capacity as 4 – 5 natural fields. Further study is required to determine what combination of re-balancing and artificial turf fields would meet the demand.

Wanderer's Grounds will require site specific study. In 2014 it saw about 430 hours of use, up from an estimated average of 270 in the previous four years. This field is used for Rugby games which are better on good natural turf. Achieving a balance between the demand and the use that can be achieved on natural turf will be a challenge.

## EVENTS/TOURNAMENTS

From focus group sessions, sports organizations are concerned about the challenges faced in hosting tournaments. With a few exceptions, sports fields and diamonds are located with one or two at a location. This makes it inconvenient for tournaments because teams must drive from one location to another during the tournament. Best

practice is to have many fields/diamonds located together. (This is also an advantage for house-league play because teams can always go to the same location rather than worrying about getting to different locations for each game and practice.)

The Baseball Nova Scotia representatives identified that the tournament facility at Moncton has eight diamonds co-located which allows for very effective tournament play. Soccer representatives identified a similar desire to have co-located pitches. Both identified that spectator seating is required for Regional tournaments.

The Mainland common and the Harbour East All Weather Field are capable of hosting local events and tournaments. Saint Mary's Huskies Stadium provides a rejuvenated and state-of-the art facility for regional soccer, football and track and field competitions.

## MULTI-USE FIELDS

Some playing fields intended to accommodate multiple uses do not accommodate the playing dimensions for Ultimate which requires a longer field than soccer, football or rugby and would be obstructed by goal posts.

## BALL DIAMONDS

Many softball diamonds throughout Halifax are currently underutilized. Users report field condition as the main barrier to increased use.

There is a need to improve conditions at some of the most popular softball diamonds if they are to remain playable in the short to medium term. Improvements may include washrooms, bleachers and benches, backstops, grass cutting and leveling.

### 8.7.5 Recommendations

#### 8.7a

To identify need, opportunity, and costs associated with advancing additional all weather turf fields in the region, beyond the existing fields and the field under construction

at Cole Harbour, HRM should develop and implement a playing field strategy, which should contemplate converting some existing natural grass playing fields to all-weather fields. Better data will be required to complete a robust analysis of the demand for natural and all-weather fields during prime season.

About 30% of existing natural fields appear to be over-used with more than 200 hours per field per year. In other municipalities, the target use is for about 150-200 hours per year for natural fields (a season from May 24 to September 15 with 2 rest days a week and average 2-3 hours play per day). Achieving this standard would require shifting bookings to other fields or adding new fields. If none of the bookings could be shifted an additional 15 natural fields or 3 artificial turf fields would be required in order to avoid continued over-use of fields. At the same time, there are 23 fields now used less than 100 hours per year. If that use was re-directed to other fields, 11 fields could be closed with little loss of capacity. Further reductions may be possible.

The playing field strategy will confirm the number and configuration of fields but current indications support planning for at least one additional all-weather field in the next 3 years with further evaluation thereafter.

New all-weather fields should be grouped, or grouped with other natural fields with at least two and up to four fields together to facilitate their use for tournament play.

The playing field strategy should explore the potential for partnerships in developing indoor all-weather fields such as with the Halifax Regional School Board, Universities or Provincial Sport Organizations. If an indoor all-weather playing field is provided, it should be centrally located.

#### 8.7b

HRM should revisit policies to restrict the use and thus enhance the quality of natural grass fields. The policies should include a delayed spring field opening date (e.g. to the third week of May) and earlier fall closing dates (e.g. to mid-September) and sufficient rest days to minimize damage and give fields a

chance to recover. This should be complemented with a defined standard for maintenance of natural sport fields. At the same time alternative sites for programming should be considered and advertised to users

HRM should adopt an annual recapitalization plan for sport fields that is consistently funded and aims to address issues at well used sport fields such as turf quality, irrigation and drainage.

HRM should dedicate several grass fields to be maintained and protected to a premier condition in order to facilitate important regional competitions and exhibitions. The fees to access these venues will be higher than typical fields and the limitations on use will be stricter.

Examine the utilization of non-school sport fields to determine if location, size, amenities or condition is the barrier to higher use. Where condition is the limiting factor, make these fields a priority for rehabilitation.

**8.7c**

HRM should collect consistent statistics for each playing field and diamond including field conditions, dimensions and features and what groups prefer to use them. This information would allow a detailed analysis of the supply of fields by sport and age category.

Based on the inventory, identify where and what number of new fields may be required or what fields might be retired or converted to other recreational purposes.

**8.7d**

HRM should continue with private and public partners and organizations to contribute to maintenance and provision of their 'home fields', including the addition of amenities such as dugouts, fences, lights and bleachers. Victoria and Saanich use this 'home field' concept for facility improvement. In some cases this may result in dedication of a field to a particular club or sport which could engage groups in the preservation of field quality. For example, if the rugby club has a defined field and chooses to rest the field for more days or supports maintenance and lining activities,

they benefit directly from their improvements and are more likely to comply with stewardship practices.

**Table 34 - Summary of Field Recommendations**

**8.7a**

Develop and implement a playing field strategy which may include replacing existing natural fields with all-weather playing surfaces.

**8.7b**

Develop polices and implement practices to improve the quality of natural turf fields, including further restricting the use of the fields and adopting best practices in field construction.

**8.7c**

Collect consistent data on the condition, dimension, amenities and key users of all playing fields and diamonds for analysis of supply and demand.

**8.7d**

Strengthen relationships with groups and clubs that have a strong association with particular fields to enlist them in stewardship of the field while also promoting home fields.



## 8.8 Tennis Courts

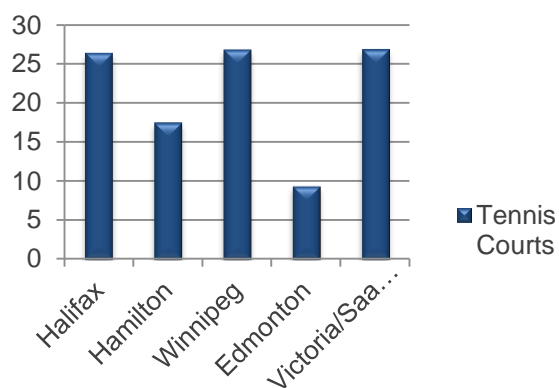
### 8.8.1 Existing Facilities

HRM has 103 tennis courts in 70 locations. In addition to HRM's courts, several private clubs operate both indoor and outdoor courts. In total there are 144 known courts in Halifax available for public and/or paid use.

Table 35 – Tennis Courts	
Facilities	# Courts
Halifax Courts	103
Other Courts:	
St George's Tennis Club	4
Waegwoltic Club	10
South End Tennis Club	3
Haliburton Hills Tennis Club	2
Indian Point Tennis Club	2
Riverview Tennis Club	6
Dalhousie University	2
Northcliffe Tennis Club	6
Daniel Nestor Indoor Facility	6 (8 future)
	144

### 8.8.2 Current Provision

Municipal Tennis Courts  
/100,000 People



Based on the benchmarking study, Halifax is tied with Winnipeg and Victoria/Saanich for the highest provision of tennis court, with many more courts than other benchmarked municipalities in proportion to the population. However, this benchmarking only assessed municipally owned courts and there may well be variation in the number of private courts available, which may balance the numbers to a degree.

Hamilton reported a target of having a tennis court within 2km of residential areas.

In relation to the rate of provision at benchmarked municipalities and based on feedback from focus groups, the current provision of tennis courts is meeting the needs of the local community, and there appear to be courts that are not well-used<sup>23</sup>.

In the 2015 Halifax Recreation Services Study, 10% of respondent households reported having used a tennis court in the past year.

### 8.8.3 Trends in Court Design

Tennis Canada promotes a progressive approach to introducing 5-10 year-old children to the game<sup>24</sup>. This requires half-sized courts for children from 5-8 years old and a 3/4 size court for children aged 7-10. In addition to court size, slower balls (with less bounce) are used to make it easier for children to meet the ball.

In focus groups, Tennis Nova Scotia identified that competition is enhanced with a cluster of 10-12 courts that can host local and regional competitions. The courts need to be supported with parking, washrooms, locker rooms, and seating areas for spectators. If the tennis competition facility is located adjacent to a recreation centre, many of the support spaces could be provided there. The planned expansion of the Daniel Nestor Tennis Centre, if implemented, would give an improved competition venue but a facility with more courts would be preferred.

### 8.8.4 Gaps & Opportunities

Halifax has no half or 3/4 courts that would be suitable for progressive youth play. There are believed to be under-used courts that could be converted to youth play or additional markings could be added to existing courts.

Tennis courts should be evaluated and when appropriate decommissioned or repurposed. Rarely used courts could be repurposed for other sports, such as pickle ball, ball hockey, skateboarding, lacrosse, or outdoor rinks. Pickle ball is deemed a potential growth sport for the aging population of Halifax. Consultation with the community is required prior to decommissioning.

It is expected that private partners, including the Daniel Nestor Tennis Centre will provide elite level indoor training facilities.

### 8.8.5 Recommendations

#### 8.8a

HRM should continue to provide public tennis courts. Private clubs and private sector organizations provide tennis courts and facilities in significant numbers. However, the cost of such facilities could be a barrier to participation for some people. Providing public facilities, including half-court and 3/4 court facilities for youth, therefore increases accessibility.

Some of the existing courts may be under-used. This is particularly likely in locations with only one or two courts. Tennis courts are in high demand on warm dry days and evenings. Players are encouraged to play for only a half-hour at a time when the courts are busy but this approach may not be honoured universally. HRM should develop metric and collect data on court utilization. To maximize the use of facilities and achieve economies of scale, HRM should relocate under-used courts into clusters.

Tennis in summer evenings is popular, particularly in hot weather when the evenings are sometimes cooler. HRM should consider providing lights at some tennis courts to extend the available playing time.

Consolidating tennis courts and providing lights will improve the ability of residents to access courts and thus will support the growth of the sport.

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<sup>23</sup> Utilization rates are anecdotal because actual use is not recorded.

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.tenniscanada.com/kids/what-is-kids-tennis/kids-tennis-resources/>

**8.8b**

A purpose built elite tennis competition venue for national level events with seating for paid attendance is not required and is not recommended.

The competition facility desired by Tennis Nova Scotia is intended for local and regional tournaments. Seating would be required, but would be primarily for other participants and families and thus the seating would be limited. Such a facility would require little more than relocating some courts to make a cluster of 10-12 courts, and locating the facility so that it could take advantage of amenities provided in an adjacent Facility.

HRM should develop a master plan for local and regional tournaments consisting of a cluster of courts that could be expanded as demand warrants. As usage metrics identify under-used courts that can be retired, assess the opportunity to implement the planned competition venue in an incremental manner.

Implementing such a facility would provide increased support for competitions and would help the sport to grow.

**8.8c**

Where under-used courts are decommissioned, alternative repurposed uses of the court should be considered to meet community recreation needs, such as pickle-ball, ball hockey, natural ice rinks, or basketball. Where the court surface is not useful for other purposes, consider reclaiming the area for community gardens or other similar purposes. Additional research on the possible growth of pickle ball should be undertaken.

This strategy for under-used tennis courts could improve access for other recreational purposes at very little cost.

Table 36 - Summary of Tennis Recommendations	
<b>8.8a</b>	Enhance tennis courts including (where appropriate) lighted courts and courts sized for progressive tennis, develop metrics and collect data to assess utilization; and repurpose or decommission under-used courts.
<b>8.8b</b>	Develop a master plan for a tennis venue suitable for local and regional competitions and implement the plan in an incremental manner as usage data identifies under-used courts in other areas that can be relocated. A venue for elite competition with spectator seating is not required.
<b>8.8c</b>	Seek alternative recreational purposes for under-used courts that are relocated or decommissioned. Conversion for pickle ball use should be researched.





## 8.9 Skate Parks

### 8.9.1 Existing Facilities

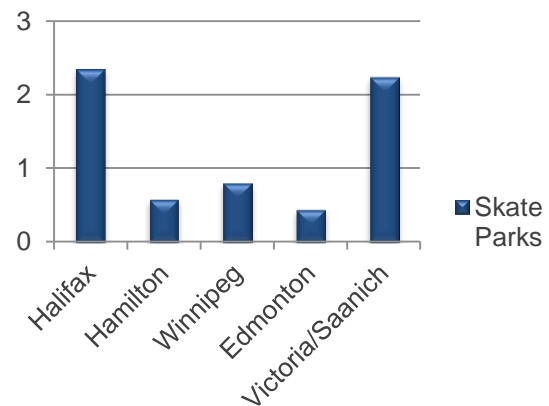
Halifax has 13 skate parks located throughout the municipality of varying sizes and thus varying capacity for concurrent users.

**Table 37 – Skate Park Facility**

<b>A Class</b>
Captain William Spry (Spryfield)
Cole Harbour
Dartmouth Commons
Gordon Snow (Fall River)
Halifax Common
Hubbards
Metropolitan Field (Sackville)
<b>B Class</b>
Beechville Lakeside Timberlea
Caledonia Road (Dartmouth)
Eastern Passage
Hubbards
Sackville Beaverbank / Kinsac
Sheet Harbour
St. Margaret's Bay Arena

### 8.9.2 Current Provision

Skate Parks /  
10,000 Youth Age 4-18<sup>25</sup>



Among the benchmark municipalities, Halifax provides as many skate parks per youth population as Victoria/Saanich and significantly more than other benchmark municipalities. Data were not available on the relative sizes or total

<sup>25</sup> This is the StatsCan cohort of 0 – 14 years of age in 2011, which would be 4-18 years old in 2015 and assumes steady state migration gains which is considered appropriate for all but Edmonton.

capacity of skate parks in relation to the youth population.

The geographic distribution of skate parks and stable youth population indicates that new skate parks are not justified but there may be value in improving existing parks with a focus on improving safety and security.

### 8.9.3 Skate Park Design Trends

Based on a review of skate park construction firms,<sup>26</sup> there are a wide variety of approaches to skate park design and construction with no standard approach. Current approaches include pre-manufactured wood, steel or concrete structures with synthetic or concrete riding surfaces and galvanized steel rails, ramps and other features. The features in each park are designed for the skills and abilities of the target boarders, with larger skate parks offering a variety of challenges.

Skate parks are also used by BMX riders who can generally take advantage of many of the same features in the skate park.

Best practices in site design include:

- Central locations or locations adjacent other Facilities to allow easy monitoring and service;
- Easy access via transit or active transportation;
- Adjacent to public washrooms;
- Sufficient number of garbage cans;
- Designed to follow Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles.

A significant element of the skate park culture is creative graphic design elements, such as graffiti style murals and other forms of public art.

### 8.9.4 Gaps & Opportunities

Current information on utilization is based on anecdotal evidence. Objective evidence of utilization would be beneficial for capacity planning, including an assessment of design approaches that are preferred, acceptable travel time to reach a skate park and preferences for design and construction. Given the choices available, it is important to ensure that investments in new skate parks and maintenance of existing skate parks are valued by users. Related to skate parks, some stakeholders noted the absence of quality and sanctioned BMX parks in HRM. Other municipalities have partnered with local BMX organizations. For example, Victoria provided parkland for the construction of a BMX track, which is now independently operated by the greater Victoria BMX Association.

### 8.9.5 Recommendations

#### 8.9a

Develop a program to obtain objective evidence of utilization of current skate parks, including metrics for number of users, size, condition, types of features, together with survey data on user preferences and expectations.

Skate parks should provide features suited to a range of skills to ensure that they are relevant to a broad range of users. Consideration should be given to making the Skate Parks attractive through decorations, such as graffiti type murals, which could involve youth in the design and execution.

Objective data will allow planning and maintenance decisions to be made according to standard criteria in a way that adds value for users and maintains and improves accessibility.

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<sup>26</sup> Canadian Ramp Company (2015), Accessed January 2015. [www.canadianrampcompany.ca](http://www.canadianrampcompany.ca)

**8.9b**

The current number of Skate Parks appears to be generous in comparison to other municipalities; however, a demand for additional facilities was expressed in the public consultations. It is not clear if the demand is reflective of a need for more facilities, the poor quality of maintenance of some facilities (which was also expressed), or the location of facilities (which are generally located at a regional scale and may not be close enough to users). Recognizing that skate parks and BMX parks have both commonalities and different requirements, it would be appropriate to develop a skate park and BMX park strategy, which should include:

- An analysis of usage data for existing and planned facilities;
- Age targets and skill levels for park features;
- Locational criteria;
- Opportunities to retire old or under-used facilities;
- Analysis of the potential demand for a competition venue.

**8.9c**

Due to interest expressed by the public for additional BMX parks, it is recommended BMX parks be included in future community facility master planning and or park planning exercises.

**Table 38 - Summary of Skate Park Recommendations**

**8.9a**

Collect objective evidence of Skate Park use, design features and user preferences to confirm that existing Skate Parks are required and ensure that new or replacement Skate Parks are designed to meet user expectations.

**8.9b**

Develop a skate park and BMX park strategy to determine the appropriate level of service across HRM and to guide decisions on new skate parks and BMX parks and retirement / renewal / relocation of older or under-used Skate Parks when they reach their end-of-life.

**8.9c**

Include BMX parks in future community facility master planning and or park planning exercises.





Dartmouth Lawn Bowls

## 8.10 Lawn Bowl Greens

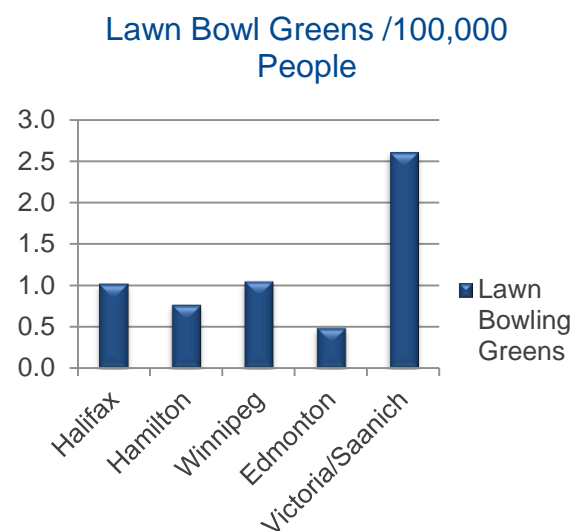
### 8.10.1 Existing Facilities

Currently there are four Lawn Bowls clubs in Halifax. Three bowling greens are owned by the municipality and the fourth is operated under a lease agreement between the Club and the Province of NS.

Each of the four clubs has one green (8 lanes), natural turf except the Dartmouth Club, which is artificial turf. The Dartmouth Lawn Bowls Club is utilized by all clubs in the spring and fall seasons and offers a more consistent degree of access as a result of the artificial turf.

Facility	Members	Location
Bedford Lawn Bowls Club	80	Bedford Highway
Dartmouth Lawn Bowls Club	100	Mount Hope Ave.
St Mary's Lawn Bowls Club	65	Fairfield Rd, Halifax
Wanderers Lawn Bowls Club	65	Sackville St, Halifax

### 8.10.2 Current Provision



Halifax has about as many Lawn Bowling greens per capita as most municipalities surveyed in the benchmarking study, but significantly fewer per capita than Victoria/Saanich. Hamilton noted that within the past 5 years, one Lawn Bowling facility was closed because the club closed as demographic changes in the area resulted in too few members for it to be viable.

The HRM Bowling Greens are considered sufficient for the current and forecast demand, although aging demographics could lead to an increase in potential participants.

### 8.10.3 Trends in Green Design

The most significant change in Lawn Bowling was the introduction of artificial turf which has dramatically reduced the maintenance effort and reduced the use of herbicides needed to maintain a consistent, playable surface.

### 8.10.4 Gaps & Opportunities

The municipality spends approximately \$60K per year (2014) – not including costs associated with right-of-way access, parking access, and in one case, snow removal – to provide various maintenance, repair, and greens management at the four locations. Clubs are generally responsible for facility operating costs such as utilities. The three natural turf clubs require capital reinvestment in the greens and in the buildings on site in order to appropriately meet the needs of the existing membership at each club. Estimated costs related to the required recapitalization have not been developed as part of this review. None of the greens currently meet requirements for hosting national competitions, and are best described as recreational.

Lawn Bowls Nova Scotia has indicated that there is a desire across the municipality to grow the sport and to appeal to a broader demographic of participant. There are positive examples of special events that attract non-members to greens in order to provide introductory programming, and increase awareness of the benefits of the activity. However, Lawn Bowls Nova Scotia provided demographic information that more than 50% of members are over age 65 and less than 15% of members are under age 40.

Lawn Bowls Nova Scotia responded to the opportunity presented by the CFMP review by bringing the four clubs together, and initiating very positive discussions regarding future direction and planning for the sport in Halifax. Membership generally understands that it will be difficult and not necessarily financially prudent to invest recapitalization funding into all sites and at best, can anticipate a status quo approach to the facilities.

Further review is necessary to determine the appropriate outcomes and opportunities for the future of these facilities, and should include analysis of benefits and challenges regarding consolidation and adaptation to artificial turf.

### 8.10.5 Recommendations

#### 8.10a

The current level of demand for Lawn Bowling should be monitored to test if participation is declining like many other municipalities, or if the increasing population of seniors will cause an increased demand such as appears to be occurring in the Victoria area. If demand stays relatively consistent or declines, there is value in consolidation of existing facilities.

#### 8.10b

HRM should conduct a comprehensive review of current lawn bowl facilities to determine if there are opportunities to consolidate clubs or, if the clubs cannot agree to merge, development of a time sharing model within a single facility. With the implementation of an artificial turf green at the Dartmouth Club, this facility becomes the most promising facility to continue. Any recapitalization of Lawn Bowls facilities should be put on hold until the completion of the comprehensive review – recapitalization of the Dartmouth Club should consider the potential for future amalgamation, and the other facilities should be considered for potential retirement.

**Table 40 - Summary of Lawn Bowls Recommendations**

#### 8.10a

Monitor the trends in demand for lawn bowls to ensure the appropriate number of greens as population demographics shift in the future.

#### 8.10b

Undertake a comprehensive review in consultation with Lawn Bowls Nova Scotia and put recapitalization decisions on hold until the review is complete.

## 8.11 Specialty Activities

While this Plan considers a specific list of facilities that are traditionally provided by municipalities, several activities were noted during public consultations that are outside the scope of this study but may warrant further consideration as components of future and or re-purposed venues.

If special purpose facilities are required, HRM will need to analyze the cost and value of supporting these activities and whether private organizations can fill the need. In some cases, if the participation rate is low, a regional approach to provision may be justified, and in other cases if there are very few participants or the facilities are costly, it may not be possible for HRM to justify the expense of the facilities.

The following is a brief commentary on demands identified through the focus groups and community consultations. No recommendations are made where the activities are beyond the scope of the CFMP2.

### BMX / MOUNTAIN BIKING

BMX bikes can be used in Skate Parks where policies allow because many of the terrain features also work for BMX. However, a dirt BMX track offers a different challenge more fitting to the BMX sport. The City of Toronto recently installed a BMX park near the lakeshore. The facility appears to be well-used. Further examination is required to assess the effectiveness and risks associated with the facility.

In focus groups, biking representatives requested the development of permanent BMX bike parks and mountain bike trails, noting that trails are informally developed by individuals but many trails

are lost when these lands become developed for subdivisions.

### HORSESHOES

There is minimal cost associated with establishing a horseshoe pit. HRM could include such a facility in Community Centre or Community Hall development or redevelopment if there is sufficient demand. Re-establishing existing pits should occur when supported by community groups.

### ROWING / CANOEING / KAYAKING / STAND-UP PADDLEBOARD, SAILING AND SURFING

With an ample coastline and both fresh and salt water access, Halifax has many opportunities for paddle sports such as rowing, canoeing, kayaking, and stand-up paddle-boarding, as well as sports like sailing and surfing. Lake Banook provides a world class flat-water competition venue. The Saint Mary's Boat Club provides a public location to launch boats in addition to many other private boating facilities and public beaches. HRM has provided access points for surfing locations as they have been identified.

Organizations in the non-profit sector and private sector meet citizen interests for on-water sports beyond the introductory and competition programs on Lake Banook.

# 9.0 Facility Operations

Goals	Objectives
<p><b>4.0 Facility Operations</b></p> <p>Ensure facility operations are sustainable and are accountable to citizens in an ongoing and transparent manner</p>	<p>4.1 Adopt an approach to receiving feedback and collaborating with stakeholders that supports continual service improvements</p>
	<p>4.2 Implement mechanisms that ensure operational, financial and utilization data is collected and reported in order to enhance future decision making, ensure efficient operations and promote good governance</p>

## 9.1 Operations

### 9.1.1 Gaps & Opportunities

#### HUB & SPOKE

The Hub & Spoke model was introduced in the 2008 CFMP and is described in Section 8.2. When Facilities in the Hub and Spoke cluster reach the end of their useful life there is an opportunity to assess the best location for each function and possibly relocate functions for more effective service delivery. The Hub & Spoke model also has an important operational effect.

The current delivery model with Community Operated Facilities and HRM Operated Facilities nearby creates an environment where there is some competition among facility operators. At its best, this competition can allow individuals with new ideas to try them and prove that there is a market for new programs. It allows groups with a specialized interest to pursue that niche in recreation. However, there are times when the competition can be destructive, such as when several operators try to run similar programs at a level that is not supported by the market. This is detrimental to the operators if they fail to meet their business model and may affect their ability to continue delivering the services they care about most. It can be detrimental to the public if

programs are not offered because there is insufficient demand at every facility when there might be sufficient demand to run a program at a smaller number of Facilities.

There is an opportunity to develop a structure that makes it easier to operate in a more collaborative approach.

Each Hub has nearby Facilities (Spokes) that offer a range of services and functions to meet community needs and historical demand. The Spokes act as feeders to the larger Hubs, fill gaps that the Hubs are not meeting, and provide localized service to users.

By identifying Hubs and Spokes, HRM seeks to create a family of Facilities in close proximity that can interact, share information, and work together to develop synergies.

For example:

- Beginner and developmental programming can be offered in smaller Facilities that have the appropriate amenities and equipment.
- Programs that require more sophisticated instruction, facilities or equipment, or programs that could not draw enough participants in a Spoke could be offered at a Hub.

- The Spokes also provide more localized programming which may not require a large catchment area to attract sufficient registration to make a program viable.

Currently, programming is determined by the facility programmers and by HRM Parks and Recreation staff with little collaboration between them. Therefore programming is often developed based on the local community's historic needs and what has worked well in the past. This may have resulted in some gaps in programs, simply because there is no body examining where gaps may exist. Likewise, HRM may be missing key trends in the provision of modern recreation programs and providing overlapping services.

## SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY BOARDS

Beginning in 2011, HRM undertook a series of steps to address key issues facing 'Multi-District and Event Facilities' in a process known as the *MDF Review*. The ongoing work included addressing 3 key issues:

- Issue 1: The absence of effective accountability within Major Facilities.
- Issue 2: The absence of adequate reporting and management processes to support informed decision-making and new HRM oversight requirements.
- Issue 3: Lack of alignment between the community and program expectations; facility mandates, facility and program funding, and governance.

Throughout the course of the *MDF Review*, HRM has committed to renewing relationships with Community Boards with the aim of ensuring that accountabilities and responsibilities are communicated and understood. For example, an expanded information report on the financial performance of the MDFs is now required on an annual basis. In addition to financial reporting, improvements to management practices were

undertaken or are underway, including data collection, procurement, policy creation and IT.

In 2015, Council directed Staff to develop a standard board governance model for the community run recreation centres and to implement new agreements that would:

- Establish a Regional funding model;
- Initiate the absorption of the outstanding operating and capital debts of the Facilities;
- Align annual budgets and business plans with the overall HRM budget process, including requirements to meet budget targets and approval by Regional Council;
- Provide HRM-delivered ICT technology and software, restoring appropriate and legally-defined employer relationships, supporting a safety review of all facility maintenance, outlining community access requirements, and initiating the implementation of a consistent pricing and membership model.

Under these steps, Community Boards will remain autonomous but will begin to mitigate risk, share data, and align expenditures and programming.

Even though the *MDF Review* is not complete, it is clear that there is an opportunity to apply the same principles to the other Community Operated Facilities that were not included in the scope of the *MDF Review*. Many other Facilities, including some Community (Recreation) Centres, Community Halls, Arenas and Pools, are still governed by Community Boards under dated service agreements, and present the same risks identified in 2011.

## COST RECOVERY

Currently, Community Operated Facilities are expected to recover 100% of operating costs through fees, subsidies, area rates, fundraising and other sources of revenue. The cost recovery



requirements create pressure to increase revenue and, in many cases, this prevents access to Halifax Facilities for some potential users. Meanwhile, HRM operated Facilities, which are not required to recover costs, must 'fill the gaps'.

The subsidies granted to Community Operated Facilities are not uniform or in relation to clearly defined criteria. Because the subsidy is included in the revenue for cost recovery model, Facilities do not actually operate on a full cost recovery model.

The present subsidies, fees and rates for many HRM operated Facilities are based on historical factors and not necessarily the actual cost of providing the service. In order to achieve a more equitable system, a rationalization of fees and rates should be considered. A review of current subsidies, fees and rates would provide a rationalization of user fees, but would require a staged change process over a period of several years to enable groups to adjust to the financial implications of the new system.

The next steps in the *MDF Review* will begin to address this recognized imbalance, but only for those Facilities included in the review. The transition period will be uneven unless it is applied to all Community Operated Facilities. Further review of the operating agreements will be required to determine the recovery objectives. Fee harmonization can begin before all operating agreements are harmonized.

## SUSTAINABLE OPERATIONS

Environmental sustainability is a theme that runs throughout pertinent federal, provincial, regional and municipal policy. New community Facilities can address sustainability through appropriate design and technology. Existing Facilities may not be able to achieve the efficiency of new buildings but many building operators have proven the ability to generate net benefits from investments in energy reduction and in refined operating practices. For Community Operated

buildings, there is an opportunity to develop programs to assist the operators in the search for energy savings and sustainable practices (such as eco-friendly cleaning products and practices).

## 9.1.2 Recommendations

### 9.1a

HRM should develop an implementation plan to achieve strong communications and joint program planning amongst the Facilities to define and make the Hub & Spoke model work. Eventually, increased cooperation will help lead to shared memberships – or One Membership - consolidated governance and revenue sharing.

Each Hub & Spoke cluster is likely to include a combination of Community Operated and HRM Operated Facilities. While different management structures may be in place for the foreseeable future, it should not preclude increased cooperation among Facilities.

A new consolidated governance model, combined with the adoption of Hub & Spoke clusters, offers a number of potential benefits:

- A combined regional and local approach to service delivery and funding.
- Reduced competition between facility operators for users and volunteer hours.
- Better matching of facility assets to program requirements.
- Consistent implementation of strategic direction.
- Integration of staff resources and business processes.
- Ability to optimize facility utilization and program delivery.
- Reduced costs through shared services and increased purchasing power.
- Ability to undertake increased oversight and reduce risks.

- Reduced pressure on volunteers and thus reduced risk of volunteers leaving.
- Consistent approaches to procurement, IT, legal, HR, etc.
- Consistent asset management planning and implementation of safety policies.
- Standardized technical systems and data reporting.

In defining the Hub & Spoke operational model, further definition of operating criteria is required. Consideration should be given to operating approaches that would support a standardized annual survey of all Facilities to evaluate the quality of programming and determine where improvements are required. This will require ongoing data collection of participation rates and post program feedback mechanisms to ensure that business plans report and address programming improvements.

#### 9.1b

The scope of the MDF review should not be expanded because that would delay the process and add complexity to the analysis. However, after the recommendations of the MDF review have been implemented and sufficient time has been allowed to assess the effectiveness of the model, they should be considered for broader application.

This would involve a project to apply the lessons learned and the practices that have proven effective in the *MDF Review* to other Community Operated Facilities.

Undertaking the implementation across all Community Operated Facilities at the same time would be a daunting challenge. A staged approach would simplify implementation. The stages should be aligned with the Hub & Spoke clusters to achieve the greatest benefits from the new operational models. It is likely that the different characters of the rural and urban clusters will pose different challenges and this should be considered in the planning of the stages.

#### 9.1c

HRM should continue its study to analyze the existing subsidies, fees and operating objectives with a view to recommending and implementing a harmonized system with an appropriate level of cost recovery with a target completion date of 2017. In particular, greater transparency of subsidies and cost recovery objectives is required. The study should consider practices in a wider sample of municipalities than the benchmark study for CFMP2. That study identified a wide range of cost recovery objectives of as low as 30% in Hamilton to as high as 90% in Edmonton with some facilities achieving 130%. HRM must determine its own solution.

In determining that solution, attention should be paid to the accessibility objectives and the recommendations in Section 6.1, which may require a subsidy program, either to the Community Operators or to the individuals.

#### 9.1d

HRM should develop a system-wide sustainability strategy that creates goals, indicators and monitoring requirements for all Community Facilities. Reporting should be completed annually with the aim of improving each facility's performance year over year. Ensure annual business plans (where applicable) address sustainability and report on improvements and challenges.

<b>Table 41 - Summary of Operations Recommendations</b>	
<b>9.1a</b>	Define the Hub & Spoke operating model and develop policies and procedures to implement a collaborative and integrated program planning and delivery model
<b>9.1b</b>	After the <i>MDF Review</i> recommendations have been implemented, define a project to roll out the same principles to all Community Operated Facilities in a staged process by Hub & Spoke cluster.
<b>9.1c</b>	Complete the subsidy, fee and cost recovery review approved in the 2016/17 budget for all HRM owned Facilities, with the aim of providing a more consistent and equitable fee structure.
<b>9.1d</b>	Develop a sustainability strategy that motivates facility operators to achieve annual improvements in operating efficiencies and greenhouse gas reductions.

# 10.0 Implementation

This section provides recommendations regarding this plan's monitoring, promotion and implementation.

## 10.1.1 Recommendations

### 10.1a - Monitoring the Plan

The recommendations set out in the CFMP2 should be tracked, reported and evaluated on an annual basis. Priorities may change and issues that are unknown today may emerge. By monitoring the plan, progress can be evaluated, and where necessary, adjustments can be made based on changing priorities.

Appoint an internal implementation team to implement CFMP2's recommendations. The team should be responsible for an annual implementation plan with annual goals that are realistic and achievable

### 10.1b - Promoting the Plan

CFMP2 provides a series of recommendations to meet its goals and objectives. These recommendations will take years to implement. In the spirit of increased collaboration and stakeholder engagement, it is important that the public understand this progress as it occurs. In addition, when projects arise through future capital planning exercises, staff will direct stakeholders to CFMP2 as a guide to decision-making. In order for CFMP2 to be understood and accepted, it must be communicated effectively. It is important that stakeholders are initially aware of the plan, but more importantly understand it. A website has the ability to reach the most people in the most cost effective way, and can be updated regularly. The CFMP2 website should provide the complete version of CFMP2 as well as a more condensed form, organized in simple themes and graphics that can be quickly evaluated and understood. Each year, the website should

be updated to show the progress made toward meeting CFMP's recommendations.

### 10.1c - Funding Implementation

Future capital investments will be funded by a number of sources, including capital spending, cost sharing with other levels of government, grants, donations, private investors and not-for-profits. Development charges may also help fund community Facilities. In 2014, the province amended HRM's charter to allow HRM to levy development charges for the provision of playgrounds, swimming pools, arenas and recreation centres, amongst other infrastructure. Currently, HRM is studying how to collect these charges in an equitable manner.

Development charges are common across Canada although provinces vary in the permitted purposes. Some municipalities have sought to keep development charges low to entice development but the long-term use of this strategy results in either higher property taxes or lower levels of investment in new infrastructure. While the development industry will balk at new charges, the costs are passed on to homeowners who will benefit from the infrastructure funded by these charges. HRM should use development charges as an important funding tool for net new recreational Facilities. However, this is a funding source for life-cycle renewal and should not be expected to generate significant contributions to recreation infrastructure in the next 5-10 years.

### 10.1d – Alignment with a new Strategic Framework.

The Recreation Blueprint (Blueprint) is an internal HRM corporate policy that defines program service objectives for HRM's Parks and Recreation. The vision of the Blueprint (formerly the Community Recreation Services Blueprint) was to provide quality,

inclusive and innovative recreation and leisure opportunities, indoors and out. The main focus emphasizes an introductory level of programs and participation with children and youth as the primary target group.

The Blueprint was last approved by Council in 2003. In a January 8, 2015 report to the CPED standing committee, staff identified that the “Blueprint no longer adequately aligns with Council priorities and the corporate vision for Halifax.” Council provided direction to Staff to develop a new Strategic Framework.

In the absence of that new framework, the CFMP2 study sought to align with the Blueprint as the facilities should be designed to support the programs. However, demographic changes and operational aspects have emerged over the past decade that were not anticipated in the Blueprint. Therefore, the CFMP2 needed to make assumptions on service provision in areas where the Blueprint is silent or where the current situation is strikingly different.

Some examples of the areas where service assumptions were made include:

- The Blueprint focuses on youth, despite an aging population;
- The Blueprint is silent on the topic of sport tourism and particularly on the value of being able to host tournaments;
- The Blueprint is silent on the integration of programs to promote community Facility integration with the Halifax Green Network and Active Transportation initiatives.
- The Blueprint is silent on the value of promoting social integration through programs or Facility design.

On the strength of input from sports organizations, the public and staff, the CFMP2 has moved beyond the direction of the Blueprint in several areas, but always seeking to align with the overall intent of the Blueprint and best practices observed in other municipalities.

After the new Strategic Framework is in place, the CFMP2 should be reviewed to identify potential inconsistencies. If CFMP2 recommendations do not support the new Strategic Framework, those recommendations should be adjusted.

### 10.1e - Locating Facilities

The Regional Plan incorporated the 2008 CFMP as it relates to needs assessments, planning, management and financing of community facilities in Halifax. However other existing subordinate planning policies have not been brought into line with this direction. For example, the Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy (Section II - 7.1) states:

*“Unless clearly inappropriate to the good development of the City, existing regional and City-wide recreation and community facilities shall be encouraged to remain in their present locations and efforts shall be made to protect, maintain and upgrade these facilities”*

The Regional Plan recognizes that new Facilities can help direct growth in centres where supporting services and infrastructure are already available. Currently, there appears to be little need for net new Facilities and thus any city-building opportunities will require retirement and relocation of some older Facilities. Further, many existing Facilities are old and costly to upgrade, and the sites cannot support a larger multi-purpose facility. Finally, this policy appears to prevent the re-alignment of facilities to make the Hub & Spoke model more effective, or to improve transit and active transportation linkages.

HRM should amend existing subordinate policies as they are updated through future planning processes so that policies that conflict with Regional Plan better reflect the city-building potential of recreational Facilities and enable the Hub & Spoke model and other locational objectives described in CFMP2.

### 10.1e – Facility Design

When new or repurposed Facilities are designed, each should be unique and

respond to the needs of the community that it serves. However, several design criteria should be applied to all facility design to support the implementation of this Plan.

- The location of community Facilities should align with municipal policy by facilitating growth in urban areas, and should be situated so they can be reached conveniently through public transit, Active Transportation and the community open space.
- Facilities should be made fully accessible. New Facilities will require barrier free access. In existing Facilities, spot improvements will include ramps, new bathrooms, lifts and elevators, accessible parking spots and appropriately designed and maintained ground covers, paths and curb cuts, to name a few.
- Facilities should aim to reduce Halifax's carbon footprint through efficient design. Buildings will be built to a LEED Silver standard and designers will consider including systems such as solar hot water panels, photo-voltaic panels, heat recovery ventilators, low flow fixtures and efficient building envelope components.
- All HRM Facilities should provide multi-purpose space that can be used for appropriate combinations of activities. Depending on the nature of the building this could include performances, sports, crafts or other activities. HRM should promote joint development of multi-purpose space in schools and libraries to maximize the value of public investment.
- The building site design should consider incorporating naturalized green space, passive open-space, appropriate storm-water management and the provision of natural habitat.

- All Facilities should be designed and located using Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles to ensure safety and security.
- All Facilities should foster a welcoming user experience for all community groups.

#### **10.1f - Renewal**

CFMP2, like CFMP before it, is a ten-year plan with a decreasing ability to accurately predict requirements towards the end of the planning horizon. A comprehensive renewal of the CFMP2 should be conducted eight years after approval of this plan, or sooner if most of the recommendations have been addressed or if there are significant changes in the sport and recreation environment.

<b>Table 42 - Summary of Implementation Recommendations</b>	
<b>10.1a</b>	Appoint an implementation team to track progress and provide annual reports.
<b>10.1b</b>	Create a dedicated CFMP2 section of the HRM website that provides the Plan in an easy to understand form and is updated at least annually with progress reports on implementation.
<b>10.1c</b>	Development charges should be used to the extent available to pay for new community recreation Facilities in newly developing areas.
<b>10.1d</b>	Update the Parks and Recreation Blueprint and revise any conflicting recommendations in this Plan to support programming objectives.
<b>10.1e</b>	Amend subordinate planning policies to align with the city-building policies of the Regional Plan and to enable the relocation of existing facilities to achieve efficient delivery of recreation services.
<b>10.1f</b>	Develop recreation facility sites and buildings to support the objectives and recommendations of this plan.
<b>10.1g</b>	Conduct a study to review, update and extend CFMP2 after 8 years.

# 11.0 Summary of Recommendations

The following table shows the recommended timing to complete each of the recommendations as short term, medium term and long term. Within each period, recommendations are listed in the order they were presented in the body of the CFMP2.

The timing is based on an assessment of:

- Opportunities for quick wins;
- Requirements for prerequisite actions;
- Impact on budgets;
- Duration of activities required to complete the recommendation;
- Maintaining an even workload for the HRM departments accountable for implementing the recommendations.

Some recommendations may take a few years to implement and thus may need to be started sooner than indicated in the timing.

Recommendations that require on-going activities are listed with Short Term recommendations and noted as 'on-going'.

<b>Table 43 - Summary of Recommendations</b>			
No	Ref.	Theme	Recommendation
<b>Short Term &amp; Ongoing</b>			
1	6.1a	Diversity & Inclusion	Extend the Halifax Community Access Plan to all high demand Facilities to ensure equitable access.
2	6.1b	Diversity & Inclusion	Implement an outreach strategy to identify programs that would support and attract individuals and self-identified groups such as immigrants, new Canadians, low income individuals, families and seniors, and groups defined by religion, sexual orientation, culture or ability.
3	6.1d	Diversity & Inclusion	Implement a Universal Access Card and a 'One Membership' model that enhances access to all Halifax Facilities.
4	6.2a	Diversity & Inclusion	Appoint an individual responsible for liaison with community organizations, sports groups, HRSB, HPL and Universities to provide leadership for collaboration opportunities.
5	6.2b	Diversity & Inclusion	Negotiate a revised Service Exchange Agreement with the HRSB to achieve a higher level of sharing for all publicly owned recreation assets.
6	6.2c	Diversity & Inclusion	Future development of recreation Facilities should consider the potential to integrate or consolidate library branches.
7	7.1a	Connectivity	In areas served by transit, locate transit stops near community Facilities and locate any new Facilities on high volume transit routes.



Table 43 - Summary of Recommendations			
No	Ref.	Theme	Recommendation
8	7.1c	Connectivity	Formally adopt and apply travel time standards as one of the criteria used in assessing the location of community recreation Facilities.
9	7.2a	Connectivity	Fund, develop and implement annualized engagement strategy for Parks and Recreation programs and Facilities with a broad reach over multiple media.
10	7.2b	Connectivity	Explore the value of, and potential to support the development of a sports council.
11	8.1a	Facility Development	Adopt a set of criteria for provision of Facilities, based on the draft criteria in Appendix N, after further analysis, pilot application and revisions. Communicate the criteria to stakeholders to define how they can be involved in a transparent and structured process.
12	8.2a	Facility Development	Adopt a Hub & Spoke clustering model to guide the planning of Facilities as well as a supporting management philosophy and programming – <b>On-going.</b>
13	8.2b	Facility Development	Future investment in Major Facilities should only take place as a result of HRM business planning and priority setting. – <b>On-going.</b>
14	8.2c	Facility Development	Conduct a pilot study of current requested Community (Recreation) Centres to test and refine the recommended process for determining whether to renew, relocate or decommission Facilities, and apply the refined process in future assessments.
15	8.2f	Facility Development	Consider leveraging private sector partnerships and adjoining commercial uses when undertaking planned upgrades or replacement of larger Community (Recreation) Centres and, in time, Major Facilities – <b>On-going.</b>
16	8.2g	Facility Development	Regularly review the master planning for the Halifax Common to define priorities for re-investment.
17	8.3a	Facility Development	Develop a playground service strategy that recognizes changing demographics, needs of community types, and shifting recreation trends.
18	8.3b	Facility Development	Prior to approval and adoption of a playground servicing strategy develop a scoring system to prioritize existing playground equipment based on safety, accessibility and utilization.
19	8.3c	Facility Development	Allocate additional funding to replacement of playground equipment to shorten the replacement cycle from 30 years to 15-20 years.
20	8.3d	Facility Development	Develop and implement criteria for acceptance of developer-initiated playground installations.
21	8.4a	Facility Development	Net new pools are not required – existing indoor/outdoor pools at the end of useful life should be assessed to determine whether there is a continuing need in that location – <b>On-going.</b>
22	8.4c	Facility Development	Make new and existing aquatic facilities more accessible in physical access (beach entry and ramps), support facilities (change rooms) and policies – <b>On-going.</b>

Table 43 - Summary of Recommendations			
No	Ref.	Theme	Recommendation
23	8.4d	Facility Development	Where a local playground is in poor condition priority for funding should be given to repair and replacement of playground before installing a new splash pad.
24	8.5c	Facility Development	Explore the potential for subsidized ice fees for organizations providing learn-to-skate programs focused on individuals that would not otherwise be exposed to skating.
25	8.5d	Facility Development	Coordinate the dates for arenas to remove ice to make space for lacrosse and roller derby and to reduce operating costs.
26	8.5e	Facility Development	Consider the viability of providing an adaptive re-use of arenas for sports such as lacrosse, skateboarding and roller derby – <b>On-going</b> .
27	8.6b	Facility Development	Seek better relationships with school board partners by predictive analysis of usage data and aligning planning timelines for allocation of available school gym time – <b>On-going</b> .
28	8.7b	Facility Development	Develop polices and implement practices to improve the quality of natural turf fields, including further restricting the use of the fields and adopting best practices in field construction.
29	8.7c	Facility Development	Collect consistent data on the condition, dimension, amenities and key users of all playing field and diamonds for analysis of supply and demand – <b>On-going</b> .
30	8.7d	Facility Development	Strengthen relationships with groups and clubs that have a strong association with particular fields to enlist them in stewardship of the field while also promoting home fields.
31	8.8a	Facility Development	Enhance tennis courts including (where appropriate) lighted courts and courts sized for progressive tennis, develop metrics and collect data to assess utilization; repurpose or decommission under-used courts – <b>On-going</b> .
32	8.8c	Facility Development	Seek alternative recreational purposes for under-used courts that are relocated or decommissioned. Conversion for pickle ball use should be researched – <b>On-going</b> .
33	8.9b	Facility Development	Develop a skate park and BMX park strategy to determine the appropriate level of service across HRM and to guide decisions on new skate parks and BMX parks and retirement / renewal /relocation of older under-used skate parks when they reach their end-of-life.
34	8.9c	Facility Development	Include BMX parks in future community facility master planning and or park planning exercises – <b>On-going</b> .
35	8.10a	Facility Development	Monitor the trends in demand for lawn bowls to ensure the appropriate number of greens as population demographics shift in the future – <b>On-going</b> .

Table 43 - Summary of Recommendations			
No	Ref.	Theme	Recommendation
36	8.10b	Facility Development	Undertake a comprehensive review in consultation with Lawn Bowls Nova Scotia and put recapitalization decisions on hold until the review is complete.
37	9.1a	Operations	Define the Hub & Spoke operating model and develop policies and procedures to implement a collaborative and integrated program planning and delivery model.
38	9.1c	Operations	Conduct a subsidy, fee and cost recovery review for all HRM owned Facilities, with the aim of providing a more consistent and equitable fee structure.
39	10.1a	Implementation	Appoint an implementation team to track progress and provide annual and tri-annual reports.
40	10.1b	Implementation	Create a dedicated CFMP2 section of the Halifax website that provides the Plan in an easy to understand form, and update quarterly with progress reports on implementation.
41	10.1c	Implementation	Development charges should be used to the extent available to pay for new community recreation Facilities in newly developing areas – <b>On-going</b> .
42	10.1d	Implementation	Update the Parks and Recreation Blueprint and revise any conflicting recommendations in this Plan to support programming objectives.
43	10.1e	Implementation	Amend subordinate planning policies to align with the city-building policies of the Regional Plan and to enable the relocation of existing facilities to achieve efficient delivery of recreation services.
44	10.1f	Implementation	Develop recreation facility sites and buildings to support the objectives and recommendations of this plan – <b>On-going</b> .
Medium Term			
45	6.1c	Diversity & Inclusion	Develop and implement a financial support program or free/low cost admission to remove income-based barriers to participation.
46	6.3d	Diversity & Inclusion	Develop a Sport Policy to define the level of support provided for sport Facilities, setting priorities among different levels of sport and different sports.
47	8.1b	Facility Development	Use the facility-specific recommendations in this plan as tools in assessing the priorities for allocation of funding.
48	8.2d	Facility Development	Investment is required to upgrade or replace aging Community Halls where demand warrants rather than to create new Community Halls.
49	8.2e	Facility Development	Develop a rural recreation strategy and conduct a pilot implementation to confirm effective ways of increasing recreational opportunities for outlying areas of Halifax.

<b>Table 43 - Summary of Recommendations</b>			
No	Ref.	Theme	Recommendation
50	8.4b	Facility Development	Conduct an aquatic strategy study to assess the long-term future of existing facilities, the likely timing for facility replacements, the features desired in new facilities, the requirements to support competitive aquatics, and the approach to providing outdoor pools and splash pools.
51	8.5a	Facility Development	Continue to implement the Long Term Arena Strategy and re-assess it in 3 years.
52	8.5b	Facility Development	Develop an outdoor ice policy with criteria to determine where outdoor ice should be located and how it should be managed.
53	8.6a	Facility Development	Make a more complete inventory of gyms available online to assist groups in finding appropriate gyms, including posting available time slots.
54	8.7a	Facility Development	Develop and implement a playing field strategy which may include replacing existing natural fields with all-weather playing surfaces.
55	9.1b	Operations	After the MDF Review recommendations have been implemented, define a project to roll out the same principles to all Community Operated Facilities in a staged process by Hub & Spoke cluster.
56	9.1d	Operations	Develop a sustainability strategy that motivates facility operators to achieve annual improvements in operating efficiencies and greenhouse gas reductions.
<b>Long Term</b>			
57	7.1b	Connectivity	Allocate funding to initiatives to extend connections from Facilities to the Active Transportation networks and trails in the Halifax Green Network.
58	8.8b	Facility Development	Develop a master plan for a tennis venue suitable for local and regional competitions and implement the plan in an incremental manner as usage data identifies under-used courts in other areas that can be relocated.
59	8.9a	Facility Development	Collect objective evidence of Skate Park use, design features and user preferences to confirm that existing Skate Parks are required and ensure that new or replacement Skate Parks are designed to meet user expectations.
60	10.1g	Implementation	Conduct a study to review, update and extend CFMP2 after 8 years.



# HALIFAX