



Background

- August 14, 2012, Long-Term Arena Strategy (LTAS) approved
 - Recommended regional network of 25 arenas
 - Found that the overall use of arenas was declining; several facilities were outdated and in poor condition
 - Recommended replacing aging, single ice surfaces with new multi-pads
- 2014 – Council approved 4 pad in Dartmouth and expansion to Halifax Forum to replace Gray, Bowles, Devonshire and Lebrun
- 2014 – DND closed Shannon Park prior to new arenas resulting in 24 arenas

Previous Council Direction

July 29, 2014 Regional Council meeting

MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Deputy Mayor Fisher:

- That Halifax Regional Council direct staff to commence planning for the renovation of the Halifax Forum in as a multiyear planned strategic project based on the Forum Community Association submission and developed to ensure best design, plan, and possible on site partnerships for the forum site including possible mixed use opportunities, targeted for completion in 2019.
- That Halifax Regional Council direct staff to declare the Devonshire arena building surplus to recreation needs upon completion of the Dartmouth 4-pad complex and direct staff to initiate the process to demolish the building and retain the land for future recreation needs.
- That Halifax Regional Council direct staff to commence planning for the construction of a 4-pad arena in Dartmouth at Commodore Drive as a planned strategic project to replace the Gray, Bowles, Lebrun arenas targeted for completion in 2017.
- That Halifax Regional Council direct staff to declare Gray, Bowles, and Lebrun arenas surplus to recreation needs upon the completion of the Dartmouth 4-Pad arena and direct staff to review the properties under Administrative Order 50.
- That Halifax Regional Council direct staff to continue to explore funding from other levels of government and potential private sector partners.

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Current Analysis

- Registrants in ice sports is generally flat compared to 2011/12
- Still strong demand for prime time ice hours (94% usage) - 85.25 hours per week available
- Non-prime time usage continues to decline - significant non-prime time hours available
- Increased practice associated with overspecialization appears to be impacting balance of prime time usage
- Community Access Plan (CAP) allocates ice usage during the prime-time in-season period
- CAP and the Standards of Fair Play - provide balance, fairness and access to a variety of users, including underserved groups
- The Gray, Bowles, Devonshire, and Lebrun arenas have reduced their operating times due to lack of demand which in turn reduced prime and non-prime availability
- Inventory of 24 ice surfaces can meet recreational requirements

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Impacting Factors

- Required capital work at Cole Harbour Place Scotia 1 – roof and ice slab
- Strong community interest in acquisition of arenas for alternate usage
- Improvements in balance of Community Access Plan allocations
- Right of first refusal of Bowles Arena
- Lebrun Arena property configuration
- Potential changes to operation of private arenas
- Potential development of university arena and impact on Halifax Forum business case
- Initial findings of detailed assessment of Halifax Forum building

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Devonshire Arena

- Site suitability confirmed for replacement of Needham Community Centre
- Costs to maintain vacant building (\$150-200K)

Recommendation: Consider funding in 2018/19 capital budget for demolition

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Gray Arena

- Strong community interest in acquiring arena
- Potential usage as short term replacement during Scotia 1 work

Recommendation: Categorize as Community Interest under the AO50 process; and

If required, operate the Gray Arena for the 2017/18 prime season and adjust the rental rate to be consistent with the rates at Cole Harbour Place

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Bowles Arena

- Strong community interest in acquiring arena
- Subject to a right of first refusal at market value in favour of the neighboring property owner

Recommendation: Categorize as Extraordinary and give property owner thirty (30) days to respond in writing with its intent to purchase or not purchase the property.

- If right of first refusal not exercised, property would then be categorized as Community Interest under the AO50 process

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Lebrun Arena

- Physically attached to an operational community centre with both buildings located on one land parcel
- Includes a long-term occupant within a third building component attached to the facility (Lion's Den)

Recommendation: Maintain and operate for 2017/18 season as a transition period, adjust rental rate to be consistent with both 4-Pad arenas to allow for a transition period, and return to Council to confirm the future of Lebrun Arena after the 2017/18 season

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Building Assessment

- More detailed assessment of some aspects is required before proceeding with the renovation.

Business Case Audit

- Third-party, independent audit of the business case completed - confirms that the overall cost estimates are realistic within a reasonable margin of error.
- Approximately one-third of the arena ice revenue is received from Dalhousie and Saint Mary's Universities. Potential impact on revenue if university arena is developed

Recommendation: Direct staff to complete additional analysis including further building condition assessment and related renovation feasibility, as well as the potential for a future Dalhousie University arena, and report back to Regional Council prior to undertaking the project.

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Recommendation

It is recommended that Regional Council:

1. Categorize the Gray Arena as "Community Interest" under Administrative Order 50 and undertake the disposal process for the property;
2. Operate the Gray Arena for the 2017/18 prime season and adjust the rental rate to be consistent with the rates at Cole Harbour Place, should the arena be required pursuant to decisions regarding construction timelines at Cole Harbour Place, as outlined in this report;
3. Categorize the Bowles Arena as "Extraordinary" under Administrative Order 50 and give notice to the adjacent property owner that the property is surplus to municipal requirements and that the property owner shall have thirty (30) days to respond in writing of its intent to purchase or not to purchase in accordance with the Right of First Refusal and Agreement dated January 1, 2014; and in the event the adjacent property owner advises in writing of its intent to not to purchase the Bowles Arena, categorize the Bowles Arena as "Community Interest" under Administrative Order 50 and undertake the disposal process for the property;
4. Consider funding in the 2018/19 capital budget for the demolition of the Devonshire Arena and retain the property for future municipal recreation usage;
5. Retain the Lebrun arena for the 2017/18 season and adjust rental rate to be consistent with both 4-Pad arenas to allow for a transition period;
6. Direct staff to return to Regional Council with usage and other related statistics following the 2017/18 season to confirm the future of the Lebrun Arena; and
7. Direct staff to complete additional analysis on the Halifax Forum project including further building condition assessment and related renovation feasibility, as well as the potential for a future Dalhousie University arena, and report back to Regional Council prior to undertaking the project.

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