



P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

Item No. 15.4.1
Halifax Regional Council
March 18, 2025

TO: Mayor Fillmore and Members of Halifax Regional Council

FROM: Councillor Deagle Gammon, Chair, Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee

DATE: February 13, 2025

SUBJECT: Halifax Rugby Football Club

ORIGIN

February 13, 2025 meeting of Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee, Item 13.1.1.

RECOMMENDATION

The Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee recommends that Halifax Regional Council decline the proposed HRFC clubhouse construction proposal and direct to staff to engage the HRFC, and other stakeholders, on additional project elements that could be considered when a washroom capital project advances.

BACKGROUND

Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee received a staff recommendation report dated December 5, 2024 to consider funding for a HRFC clubhouse construction proposal.

For further information refer to the attached staff report dated December 5, 2024.

DISCUSSION

Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee considered the staff report dated December 5, 2024. Following discussion, Standing Committee moved to amend the motion to add “and direct to staff to engage the HRFC, and other stakeholders, on additional project elements that could be considered when a washroom capital project advances” to the original recommendation to Halifax Regional Council as outlined in this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial implications are outlined in the attached staff report dated December 5, 2024.

RISK CONSIDERATION

Risk consideration is outlined in the attached staff report dated December 5, 2024.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Meetings of the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee are open to public attendance and members of the public are invited to address the Standing Committee for up to five (5) minutes during the Public Participation portion of the meeting. Meetings are live webcast on Halifax.ca. The agenda, reports, video, and minutes of the Standing Committee are posted on Halifax.ca.

For further information on Community Engagement refer to the attached staff report dated December 5, 2024.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Environmental implications are outlined in the staff report dated December 5, 2024.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternatives are outlined in the attached staff report dated December 5, 2024.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Legislative Authority is outlined in the attached staff report dated December 5, 2024.

Administrative Order One, Schedule 3 Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee Terms of Reference:

Purpose

1. The purpose of the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee is to recommend to the Council directions to support Community and Economic life "making HRM the most livable community in which to live, work and play"
2. The specific areas of oversight include:
 - a. the Municipality's Regional Plan and community planning programs;
 - b. the Municipality's Economic Strategy and Economic Prosperity Outcomes including the implantation of "Capital Ideas" and the Immigration Action Plan;
 - c. Community building initiatives in the areas of arts, culture, recreation and heritage and related facility strategies; and

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Staff recommendation report dated December 5, 2024.



P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

Item No. 13.1.1
Community Planning and Economic Development
Standing Committee
February 13, 2025

TO: Chair and Members of Community Planning and Economic Development
Standing Committee

FROM: Cathie O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: December 5, 2024

SUBJECT: Halifax Rugby Football Club

ORIGIN

February 7, 2023, Meeting of Regional Council (Item 15.3.1):

MOVED by Councillor Blackburn, seconded by Councillor Russell and approved as part of the Consent Agenda

THAT Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer to:

1. Engage with Halifax Rugby on their planned consultation on the proposed project as presented at the January 19, 2023 Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee meeting; and,
2. Prepare a staff report assessing the proposal for alignment with municipal plans and priorities including the January 2022 Gorsebrook Park Plan and identifying possible funding sources.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Halifax Rugby Football Club (HRFC) is a registered non-profit society with the Nova Scotia Registry of Joint Stocks. The HRFC made a presentation to the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee (CPED), on January 19, 2023, for a proposed clubhouse project at Gorsebrook Park. Staff were directed to engage with HRFC on a community consultation process and assess the proposal for alignment with municipal plans and priorities as well as identify funding sources. Staff provided input and recommendations on the framework of the community consultation.

The HRFC is proposing the development of the Gorsebrook Park Clubhouse, a 2,700 sq ft multipurpose facility aimed at creating a welcoming and functional space that enhances both the park and the broader community. The proposed clubhouse would have 2 (possibly 4) public washrooms, a drinking fountain, changing rooms, a 960 sq ft rentable community space, and storage facilities designed to support rugby and various other sports and events held in Gorsebrook Park.

Concept plans were assessed under the Gorsebrook Park Plan, the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) Washroom and Drinking Fountain Strategy as well as the Community Facility Master Plan 2 (CFMP2).

The clubhouse plan includes publicly accessible washroom facilities which aligns with the Gorsebrook Park Plan, however, the need to include a clubhouse/multi-purpose facility on the park is not substantiated through HRM's CFMP2. The proposed location of the clubhouse within the park does not align with the Gorsebrook Park plan.

A funding plan has been submitted by HRFC; however, funding has not been confirmed by other orders of government at the time of writing this report. The Class D project estimate is \$2.5 million, with a total funding target of \$3.1 million which includes a 25 percent contingency. HRFC has applied for federal funding through the Green and Inclusive Community Buildings Program, aiming for a funding amount of \$1.3-\$1.75 million, while also seeking provincial and municipal contributions of \$800,000 respectively. Additionally, HRFC's private fundraising efforts are estimated to raise \$200,000.

While the Gorsebrook Park location has been identified as a site that would benefit from washrooms and drinking fountain amenities, funding is not available at this time as other competing HRM capital projects have taken priority.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee recommend to Regional Council that Regional Council decline the proposed HRFC clubhouse construction proposal.

BACKGROUND

The HRFC is a registered non-profit society with the Nova Scotia Registry of Joint Stocks. At the January 19, 2023, CPED meeting, the HRFC made a presentation of a plan for a clubhouse at Gorsebrook Park.

Gorsebrook Park occupies 7.6 Ha (19 acres) in the South End of Halifax. The major features of the park include:

- Two schools (Inglis Street Elementary and Gorsebrook Junior High Schools).
- A treed park perimeter.
- An accessible playground adjacent to the Inglis Street Elementary School.
- An outdoor ball hockey/box lacrosse court.
- Two ball diamonds.
- A sport field.
- A community garden.
- Three tennis courts.
- A basketball court.
- Two large berm formations that offer views into the park and seasonal sledding opportunities.
- Park frontage and access along Robie and Inglis Streets; and
- Lundy's Lane, a street that operates as a park entrance and public parking.

Since its establishment in the 1940's, on what was formerly a golf course, the park has had little in the way of comprehensive planning despite pressures from new development and increased population in the area. As a result of decades of ad hoc upgrades to this park, it was necessary to have a defined management program. In 2015, area residents and the local councillor met with an interest in identifying issues and possible improvements to the park. Subsequently, Regional Council directed that a park plan be prepared as part of the 2018/19 Parks & Recreation Business Plan.

On January 14, 2020, Regional Council approved the Gorsebrook Park – Park Plan. It was based on a fulsome review of existing park conditions, nearby recreation facilities, community demographics, recreation booking data, guiding municipal policy, and issues and opportunities identified by the community.

The approved Park Plan serves as the guiding document for future improvements and upgrades to the park. Direction for the Park Plan was taken from previously completed functional plans and strategies, such as the Urban Forest Master Plan, HRM Washroom and Drinking Fountain Strategy, and the Green Network Plan.

The HRFC is requesting HRM approve the construction of a clubhouse at the east end of the Gorsebrook Park Sports Field. The HRFC proposed clubhouse is 2,700 sq ft, with exterior dimensions of 60'x45', comprised of the following features:

- Viewing deck (600 sq ft);
- 2 Change rooms (300 sq ft each);
- Showers/bathrooms (140 sq ft each);
- 2 Public washrooms and water fountain (100 sq ft each);
- Community room (960 sq ft);
- Café/bar (140 sq ft);
- Kitchen (80 sq ft);
- Office (50 sq ft);
- Maintenance room (36 sq ft); and
- Equipment Storage (300 sq ft).

Staff were directed to engage with the HRFC on their community consultation process, assessing the clubhouse construction proposal for alignment with municipal plans and, as well as identifying potential funding sources.

The project is estimated to cost \$2.5 million, with a total funding target of \$3.1 million (including a 25% contingency). HRFC has applied for federal funding through the Green and Inclusive Community Buildings Program, aiming for \$1.3-\$1.75 million, while also seeking a provincial and municipal contribution of \$800,000 respectively, and HRFC private fundraising efforts estimated at \$200,000.

DISCUSSION

HRM values the contributions of non-profit organizations in recreation service delivery and considers partnerships with community groups when assessing the need for facilities and their operation. However, it is important that these partnerships that may provide an individual organization exclusive access to a municipal recreation asset are limited to situations where such arrangements are merited and necessary.

Proposed projects are evaluated for alignment with HRM mandates, identified needs, community support, capital budget priorities, and operating viability. HRM seeks opportunities to provide the best value to its residents, with better services or reduced costs while allocating resources fairly across HRM.

There have been two HRM-led community consultations to inform and review the preliminary Gorsebrook Park Plans (2015 and 2018). A key finding of this work was that due to previous ad hoc park upgrades, over time site safety and accessibility had been overlooked. The adoption of the Gorsebrook Park Plan, approved in 2020, and other municipal strategies recognize the importance of a properly planned park with the development of well-designed facilities. Any further additions to Gorsebrook Park should align with the proposed phased approach to the Park's development and increase general recreational field and green space in an urban area adjacent to schools.

The Gorsebrook Park Plan identifies the lack of publicly accessible washrooms and drinking water as issues that prevent the use of the park as a destination. The Park Plan also states there are well-established community landmarks (e.g. sledding hill, community garden) that are working well and should not be changed. The 2023 community feedback reconfirmed these findings and identified additional concerns.

The HRFC's community engagement strategy focused on three approaches:

1. Online survey: September 20 - October 13, 2023, which was communicated through the distribution of 400 flyers to local residents and a social media ad campaign which resulted in 9600 impressions. Overall, 242 community members completed the survey.
2. Public event: On September 26, HRFC hosted a community BBQ and information session with local residents, attracting over 100 members of the community.
3. Community meetings: HRFC met with 13 distinct stakeholder groups to understand how the proposed project would impact them. Seven of these groups have provided Letters of Support, to accompany this report (Attachment 2).

The results of HRFC's community engagement can be found in Attachment 1.

The findings show that 92% of the survey respondents were in favour of the HRFC project and respondents saw public washrooms (96%), and public fountains (86%) as the most important features. The least important features to non-HRFC members were café space, community event space, licensed social space and picnic area. Letters of support for the project are included in Attachment 2.

The HRFC engagement identified community concerns around vandalism, unauthorized gathering after hours and the facility's impact on community character and environment. The HRFC has safety, security and facility design mitigation strategies that may address these specific concerns. The strategies include surveillance cameras, lighting, and security staff as well as engaging local architects and designers who understand the community's character.

Additional concerns from local residents and parkgoers were submitted to HRM staff outside of the HRFC community consultation process (Attachment 3). The proximity to residential, elementary and junior high schools and a well-used playground is also a concern, especially if the facility is to be granted a liquor license.

It should be noted that Gorsebrook Park is subject to the Municipal Alcohol Policy which does not permit alcohol on certain HRM properties unless there is a specific exemption. Further review of the ownership model for the proposed facility, possible exemptions and updates to municipal policies may be required for a licensed facility in Gorsebrook Park and would be the subject of future Council reports. Gorsebrook Park may not be viewed as a suitable location for a licensed facility.

HRM's Washroom and Drinking Fountain Strategy identified Gorsebrook Park as one of five High-Need Parks that should have priority for newly built washrooms and drinking fountains. To date, this project has not advanced as part of the overall capital budgeting process.

The HRFC concept plan for the clubhouse includes a public washroom facility and drinking fountains, which by itself would fit within the Gorsebrook Park Plan. However, neither the Gorsebrook Park Plan nor the CFMP2 cite the need for a clubhouse or recreation facility of its kind on the property. The development of a recreation facility would create an ad hoc development within the park which has been identified within the Gorsebrook Park Plan as a previous approach that created issues.

HRM already owns two recreation facilities within a ten-to-fifteen-minute drive of Gorsebrook Park, both St. Mary's Boat Club and Citadel Community Centre are available for public use. The CFMP2 has a goal of preserving and enhancing natural areas in high-density urban environments.

HRM has partnered with other sports teams and non-profit organizations on an ad hoc basis to place facilities on parkland, typically close to sport fields or other amenities but not generally in residential areas or beside schools. This approach enables the installation of facilities or washrooms with financial support from additional parties rather than only through HRM's capital budget. This is recommended when

partnership opportunities align with approved municipal plans and budgets. HRM needs to ensure the balance of new assets against facility recapitalization obligations.

HRFC has provided a funding model contained in the Business Plan (Attachment 4) which requests a financial contribution from HRM in the amount of \$800k plus funds associated with maintenance and upkeep. The project is estimated to cost \$2.5 million, with a total funding target of \$3.1 million (including a 25% contingency). HRM does not have approved capital funding for the identified need of a washroom facility at Gorsebrook Park. Based on the most recent construction projects the cost to build standalone washrooms is approximately \$850,000 (depending on sq ft). Fort Needham's Park Washroom project, completed June 2022, cost \$850,000, the project consisted of 4 washroom stalls, 2 of those being accessible stalls. Met Field project in January 2024 cost \$950,000 and consisted of 2 storage areas and 4 washroom stalls, 1 of those being an accessible stall.

The Strategic Planning & Design division of Parks & Recreation is in the process of scoping a project to establish updated facilities planning strategies. This review will determine criteria for facility decision-making based on HRM's rapidly growing population and their recreational requirements. The ownership and operation of facilities are an additional consideration.

The HRFC business plan (Attachment 4) proposes the public washrooms and water fountains be operated and maintained by HRM. Annual cleaning and daily maintenance costs are estimated to be between \$14,400 and \$18,000 plus an additional \$3,000 (as of 2021) annually for winterization, building maintenance, and plumbing.

HRM capital funding contributions are typically made to enhance a facility to meet a municipal service need, reduce future operating costs, or secure public access to a facility. While a washroom has been identified as a desirable facility within the park, there are limited advantages for the Municipality through the current proposal. The provision of a washroom facility is not a current priority for HRM's capital budgets, and the contribution requested is similar to HRM's cost for a stand-alone facility. There are no operational savings in the proposal and funding would be provided to a sport club for a facility. Other user groups have provided letters of support but there is no evidence to confirm that HRM requires a community space in Gorsebrook Park at this time. Therefore, staff do not recommend proceeding at this time given current municipal priorities and resources.

Should capital funds be committed for washroom facilities at Gorsebrook Park, staff will engage the HRFC, and other stakeholders, on additional project elements that could be considered.

This approach would align with a similar project, the Halifax Tars Rugby Club (TARS) at Graves Oakley. In this project, HRM did provide a one-time contribution to the TARS Club for one-third funding towards the development of a fieldhouse and washroom facility at Graves Oakley Memorial Park. That decision was based on the Regional Council-approved Capital Budget being allocated for improvements for that specific park at the time staff received a proposal from the TARS for the fieldhouse and washroom facility. It should also be noted that TARS is responsible for operating, maintenance, repairs, supplies, as well as daily cleaning, including opening and closing of the public washrooms at this location.

Due to an increasing number of groups, including individual sport clubs, coming forward with requests for recreation assets, staff will be developing a framework to evaluate requests for recreation assets. This will better position community and staff to understand priorities and processes for such requests in advance of making a proposal.

HRM and Rugby NS have a common interest in providing the best value and experience to the users of the playing fields. Any future partnership with HRFC to enhance Gorsebrook Park with a clubhouse would address facility ownership and public access. HRM owns facilities that are operated by third parties and alternatively, HRM can provide a less-than-market value land lease to non-profit organizations providing a community benefit. In either scenario, a written agreement would outline operating responsibilities and ensure access for other user groups and the general public.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications with the recommendation of this report.

RISK CONSIDERATION

No risk considerations were identified in the recommendation of this report.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community was engaged by consultation conducted by the HRFC and HRM's work to develop the Gorsebrook Park Plan.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

No environmental implications were identified.

ALTERNATIVES

The Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee could choose to recommend that:

1. Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Office to include funding in capital project account CB200010 PR - Regional Park Washrooms to support the HRFC proposal, pending funding confirmation from other levels of government, within a future Capital Budget for consideration by Regional Council.
2. Regional Council direct staff to negotiate a Less than Market Value land lease with HRFC, with detailed public access conditions, and permit the project to proceed with no financial contribution from HRM. HRFC would assume responsibility for the facility design, construction and operation..

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, S.N.S. 2008, c. 39

7A The purposes of the municipality are to

- (a) provide good government;
- (b) provide services, facilities, and other things that, in the opinion of the Council, are necessary or desirable for all or part of the municipality; and
- (c) develop and maintain safe and viable communities

79A (1) Subject to subsections (2) to (4), the municipality may only spend money for municipal purposes if

- (a) the expenditure is included in the municipality's operating budget or capital budget or is otherwise authorized by the municipality;
- (b) the expenditure is in respect of an emergency under the Emergency Management Act; or
- (c) the expenditure is legally required to be paid.

(2) The Municipality may expend money provided for in an operating budget or capital budget for a

purpose other than that set out in the operating budget or capital budget for that fiscal year if the expenditure does not affect the total of the amounts estimated for the operating budget and the capital budget.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 HRFC Community Consultation Report
- Attachment 2 Letters of Project Support
- Attachment 3 Letters of Concern
- Attachment 4 HRFC Business Plan

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

Report Prepared by: Trish Higby, Community Facility Partnership Coordinator 902.456-7062



GORSEBROOK PARK CLUBHOUSE PROJECT

Community Consultation ←

Presented by

Halifax RFC



www.gorsebrookparkclubhouse.com

Halifax, NS

Table Of Content ←

Introduction

03

Objectives

04

Methodology

05

Findings

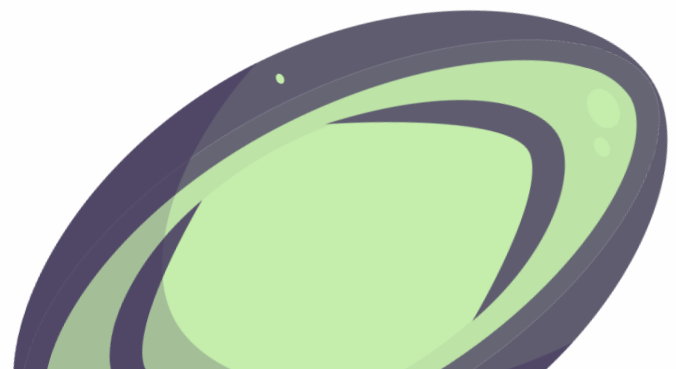
06

Impact on the Community

10

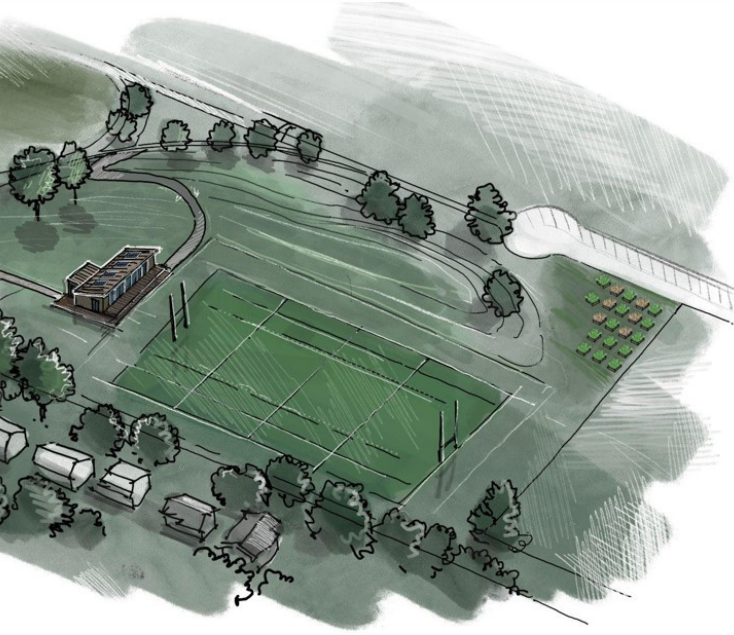
Future Plans

12





Introduction



Founded in 1958, Halifax RFC has been an integral part of the local rugby and broader athletic community in Halifax for over six decades. As initially presented to Halifax's Community Planning and Economic Development Committee on January 17, 2023, we seek to build a clubhouse facility beside the sports field in Gorsebrook Park. The building would include public washrooms, change rooms, storage, and community space. Facilities would be available for rent to community groups including but not limited to sports teams. Following our January presentation, staff were directed to engage with Halifax RFC as we embarked on a comprehensive Community Engagement process, ensuring that our plans align with the community's needs and the city's objectives.

Community Engagement Approach

Throughout 2023 we sought to understand and incorporate the diverse needs and concerns of Gorsebrook Park's users through a multi-faceted engagement strategy:

- **Online Survey:** Conducted to gather feedback from over 200 respondents, including our club members, other athletic teams, and local residents.
- **Public Event:** An on-site event at Gorsebrook Park enabled us to directly interact with community members, providing a platform to discuss their views and gather valuable insights.
- **Targeted Meetings:** Detailed discussions with specific groups, such as local sports teams, schools, and resident associations, offered deeper understanding of varied perspectives.

This report elaborates on the outcomes of these engagement efforts and reflects our dedication to fostering a vibrant, inclusive, and functional community space.



Objectives ←



Engage with Local Community & Athletic Users of Gorsebrook Park

Our foremost goal for 2023 was to create a meaningful engagement with both the local community and athletic users of Gorsebrook Park. This involved understanding and integrating their needs, preferences, and concerns into our project. We aimed to reach out to various groups, including casual park visitors, community garden enthusiasts, families who use the playground, and athletes from various sports disciplines. By doing so, we hoped to ensure that the park’s development truly reflects the diverse interests and requirements of all its users, fostering a sense of ownership and pride within the community.

Collaborate on Building a Clubhouse

A central component of our project is the collaboration with the City of Halifax to develop a clubhouse or fieldhouse within Gorsebrook Park. This facility is envisioned to be a multifunctional space that can cater to the needs of our rugby club as well as other sports teams and community events. The clubhouse will serve as a focal point for sporting activities, offering amenities like changing rooms, meeting spaces, and a social area. Our continued collaboration aims to ensure that the design and functionality of this facility align with community expectations and city standards, making it a valuable asset for both the athletic community and the general public.

Augment Halifax’s Plans

In alignment with the existing development plans of the City of Halifax for Gorsebrook Park, we propose to augment these plans by adding athletic facilities. This includes not just the basics like public washrooms and drinking fountains, but also more specialized amenities such as change rooms, showers, and equipment storage. These additions are intended to enhance the usability and appeal of the park for sports teams and individual athletes. By complementing the city’s plans with these athletic facilities, we aim to create a more comprehensive and inclusive recreational space that can serve a wider array of community activities and sports programs.

Methodology



Online Survey

Halifax RFC ran an online survey from September 20 - October 13 2023, which was communicated through the distribution of **400** flyers to local residents and a social media ad campaign which resulted in **9600** impressions. Overall **242** community members completed the survey.



Public Event

On September 26, Halifax RFC hosted a community BBQ and information session with local residents, attracting over 100 members of the community and giving out 160 hamburgers and hotdogs!



Community Meetings

Halifax RFC met with **13** distinct stakeholder groups to understand how the proposed project would impact them. **Seven** of these groups have provided Letters of Support, to accompany this report.

Stakeholders Engaged

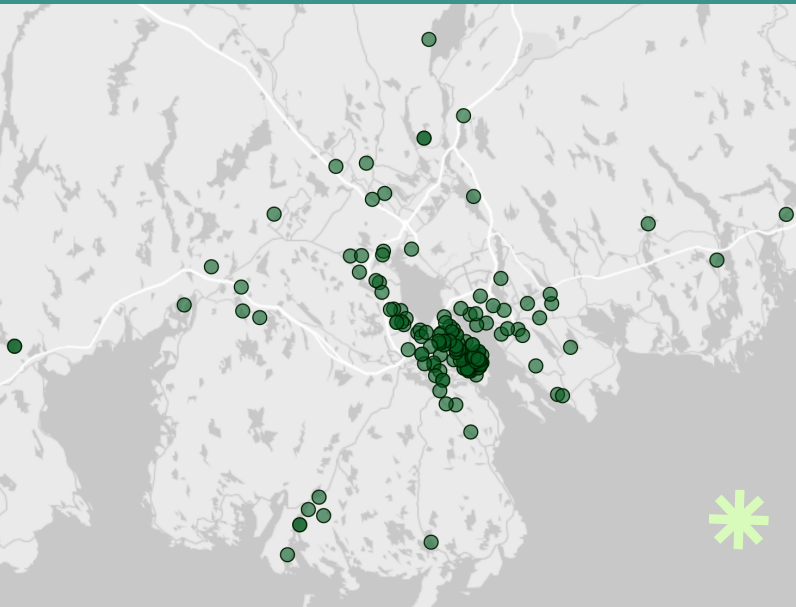
- Halifax Minor Ball Hockey League*
- Metro Touch Football League*
- Lacrosse NS*
- Sacred Heart School of Halifax
- Dalhousie Rugby*
- Peninsula Urban Garden Society
- University of Kings College Rugby*
- Halifax Gaels GAA club
- Inglis Street School
- Rugby NS*
- Halifax Ultimate*
- Park to Park
- Tennis NS



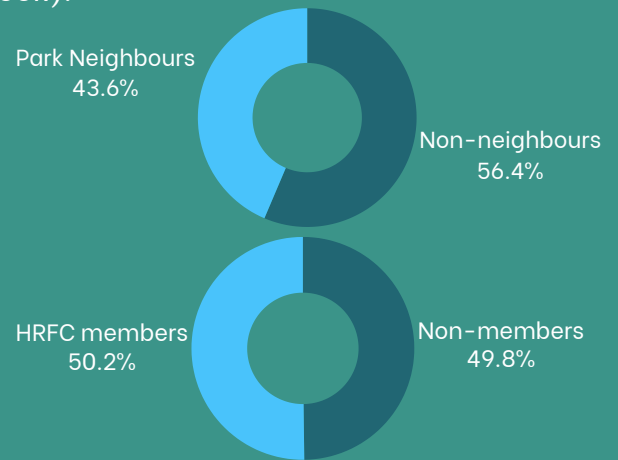


Findings ←

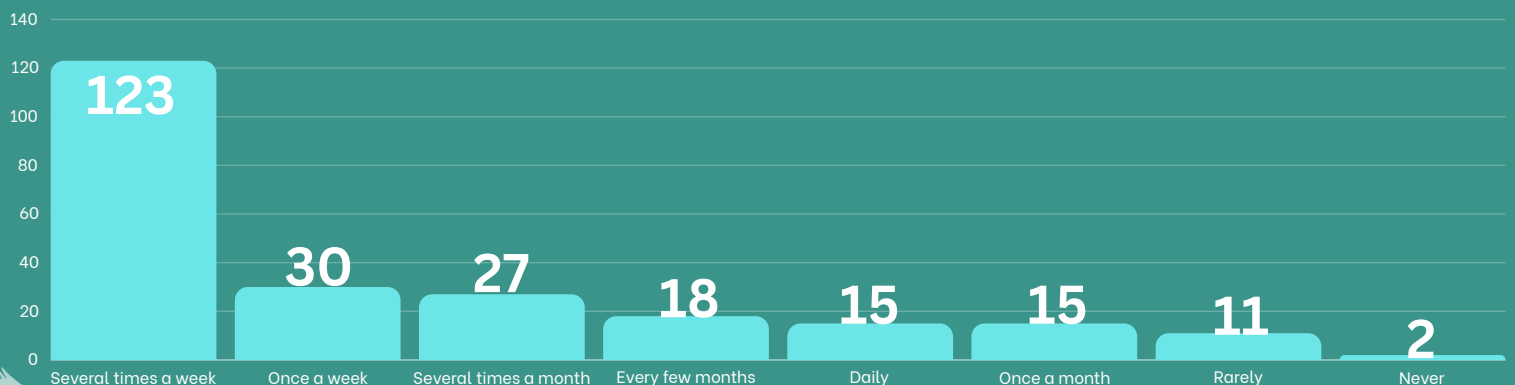
1. Who was engaged



Survey respondents came from all over HRM, but with a significant concentration on the peninsula of Halifax. They were also a mix of club members and non-members. Respondents tended towards being intensive park users (nearly ¾ of respondents use the park one or more times during the week).

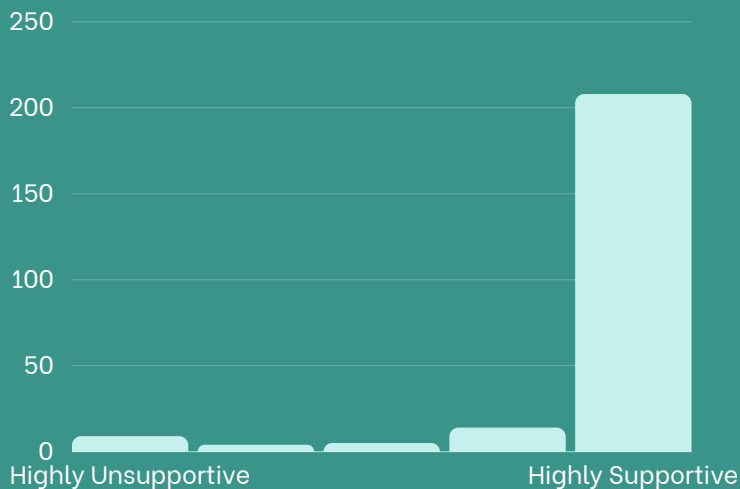


More than half of the survey respondents indicated that they use the park several times a week and the vast majority (90%) were users of the sports field. But there were also many respondents who used: the unstructured greenspace (33%), playground (27%), Tennis/Basketball courts (17%), Community garden (13%), lacrosse/ball hockey rink (10%), and ball diamonds (10%).



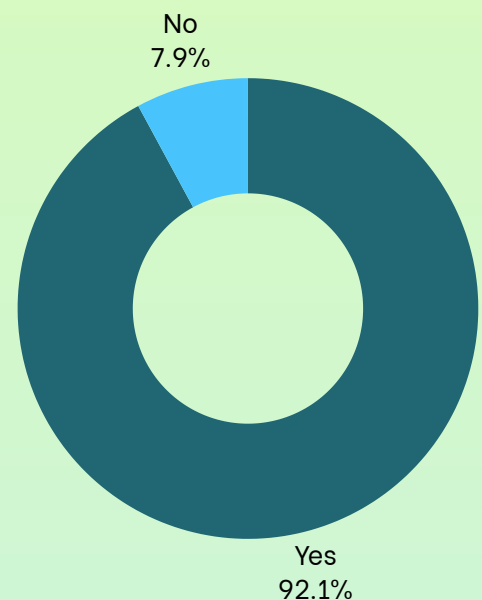
2. Support for the Project

How supportive are you of the proposed clubhouse project?



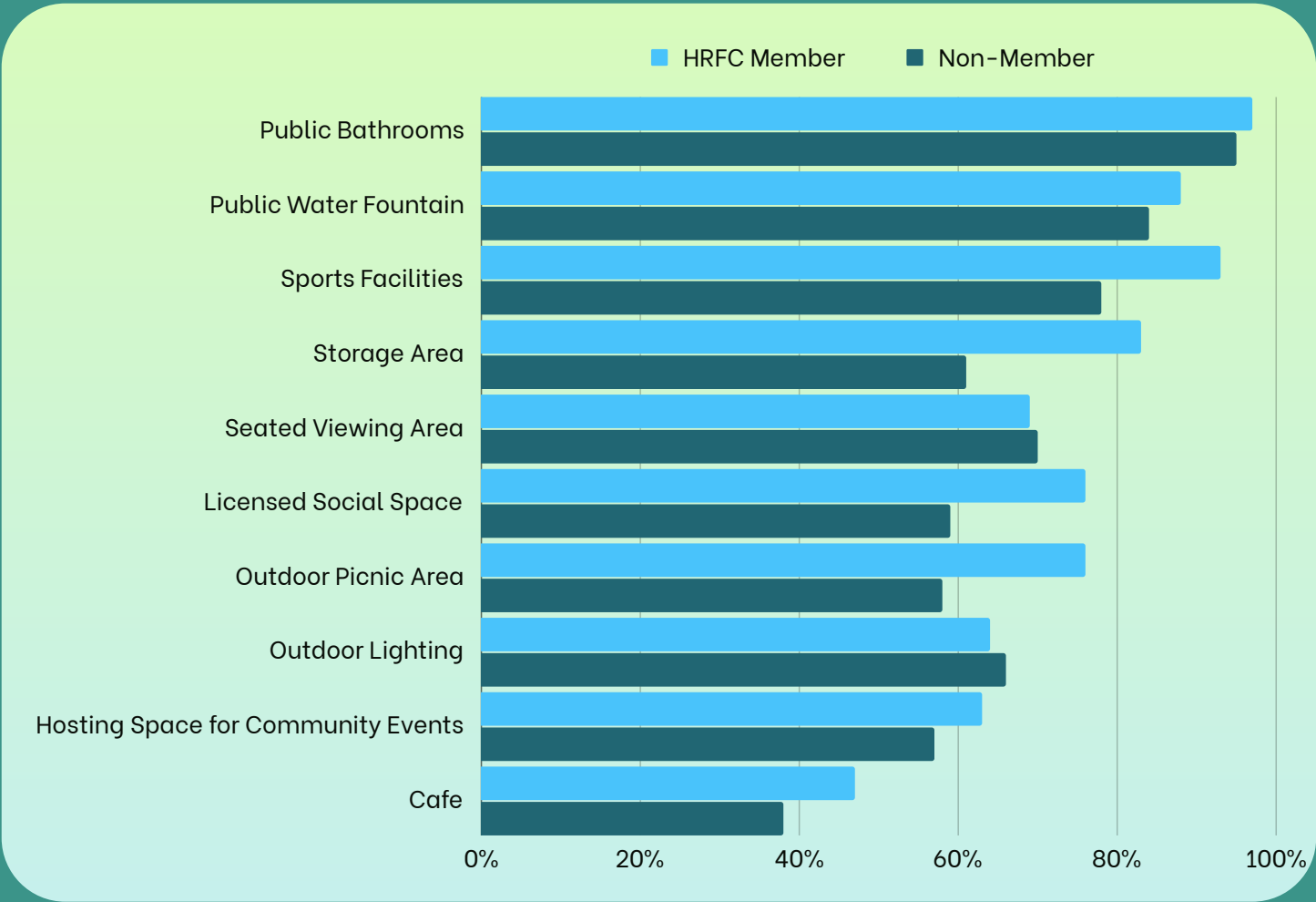
Over 92% of respondents were supportive (scored 4 or 5) with over 86% being highly supportive. 5.4% were unsupportive (scored 1 or 2). Concerns cited include security, misuse of facilities, governance and operations, having a licensed venue in a public park, loss of greenspace, and privatization of public land (which is not contemplated in this project). There were also questions about the consultation process (specifically concerns that the club was running the process and not the city).

Does the proposed project increase the likelihood of you coming to the park?





3. Priority Features



Overall 96% of all respondents identified the public washroom as a priority for this project, followed by public water fountain (86%). The proposed sports facilities were supported by 85% of all respondents, which included 78% support from respondents who were not members of Halifax RFC. Out of the proposed features a cafe was the least popular option with support from under 50% of both club members and non-members alike.





4. Identified Community Concerns

Safety and Security Concerns

- **Community Concern:** There were worries about vandalism, unauthorized access, and the facilities potentially becoming a gathering spot for youths or the unhoused population, which could lead to safety issues.
- **Mitigation Strategies:** Implementing security measures such as surveillance cameras, appropriate outdoor lighting, and regular supervision by staff could help address these concerns. Additionally, involving local law enforcement in creating a safety plan and conducting regular safety audits could further ensure the security of the facilities.

Privatization of Public Spaces

- **Community Concern:** Local residents expressed concerns about the privatization of public spaces, fearing restricted access to park facilities.
- **Mitigation Strategies:** Clear communication about the public ownership and operation of the facilities is crucial. Ensuring that the City of Halifax maintains ownership and control over the park and its amenities, with the club possibly managing certain aspects in collaboration with the city, can alleviate these concerns. Transparency in operation and open access policies would also be essential.

Local Environment and Community Character

- **Community Concern:** A few residents raised concerns about the environmental impact of new construction and how it blends with the existing community character.
- **Mitigation Strategies:** Environmental impact assessments and adherence to sustainable building practices will be important. Engaging local architects and planners who understand the community's character will ensure the new structures complement the existing environment. Involvement of the community in the design process can also ensure their views are considered.



Impact on the Community



The proposed project by Halifax RFC at Gorsebrook Park is anticipated to significantly increase park usage, enhancing it as a vibrant community hub. By introducing well-designed, accessible facilities, the park is expected to better serve a broad spectrum of visitors. This includes families, athletes, and community groups, fostering a more dynamic and interactive park environment. The enhanced facilities will not only cater to sports enthusiasts but also provide essential amenities that encourage more people to spend time outdoors, engage in physical activities, and connect with nature.





Improved Facilities for Diverse User Groups



Community Cohesion and Enhanced Safety



Support for Educational and Athletic Activities



Sustainability and Addressing Long-term Community Needs

Central to our project is the improvement of park facilities to cater to a wide range of users. The addition of fully accessible washrooms and drinking fountains addresses a critical gap, especially beneficial for children and individuals with physical disabilities. These improvements are crucial in making the park more inclusive and user-friendly, ensuring that facilities are not just for athletic activities but also for general community use. By addressing these basic needs, we aim to make Gorsebrook Park a more welcoming space for all.

The project is designed to enhance community cohesion by providing a space where various groups can come together. The inclusion of a community social space is particularly important in light of the rapid population growth in Halifax’s south end. Moreover, addressing the concerns of local residents, we plan to implement safety measures such as appropriate outdoor lighting and security cameras. These initiatives will not only mitigate concerns about vandalism and unauthorized access but also create a safer environment for youth and all park visitors.

Our collaboration with the local schools represents a significant opportunity to support educational activities. The proposed facilities will provide much-needed amenities for students engaging in outdoor education and sports, addressing issues such as the current lack of accessible bathrooms for playground users. Additionally, by offering convenient equipment storage, changing rooms, and bathrooms, we aim to enhance the experience for school sports and extracurricular activities, further embedding the park as an integral part of the local educational landscape.

In line with the feedback received during our engagement process, we are committed to ensuring that the development and operation of the facilities remain focused on long-term sustainability and inclusivity. Regular assessments will be conducted to ensure that the facilities continue to meet the evolving needs of the community. By doing so, we aim to maintain Gorsebrook Park as a relevant and cherished space for future generations, underlining our commitment to the well-being and development of our community.





Future Plans ←



Ongoing Engagement

Halifax RFC is committed to maintaining an open dialogue with the community as the Gorsebrook Park project progresses. We plan to continue utilizing surveys, public forums, and community meetings to gather feedback and keep residents informed. This ongoing engagement will ensure that the project remains aligned with community needs and preferences.

Development of Facilities

The development of facilities at Gorsebrook Park will be approached in phases, prioritizing elements based on community feedback and available resources. Our focus will initially be on establishing essential amenities like accessible washrooms and drinking fountains, followed by sports facilities and community spaces, ensuring a balanced development that benefits all park users.

Collaboration

We envision a strong partnership with the City of Halifax and other stakeholders in bringing this project to fruition. Collaboration will be key in aligning our goals with city plans, securing necessary approvals, and ensuring that the project serves the wider community interests.

Addressing Long-term Community Needs

Our vision extends beyond the immediate completion of the project. As Halifax RFC approaches our 70th year in operation we are dedicated to regular assessments of our role within the park and wider community to adapt to changing needs. This approach will help in maintaining the relevance and utility of the park for future generations, ensuring it remains a cherished community asset.

Sustainability and Inclusivity Goals

Sustainability and inclusivity will be at the forefront of our development plans. We aim to adopt eco-friendly practices in the construction and operation of the facilities and ensure that they are accessible and welcoming to all members of the community, reflecting our commitment to environmental stewardship and social responsibility.





Thank You For Your Attention

Contact Information

 halifaxrugbyclubhouse@gmail.com

 gorsebrookparkclubhouse.com



Halifax RFC



The Halifax Minor Ball Hockey League is about to begin our 6th year of operation playing at Gorsebrook Park in Halifax. In 2022 we served just over 200 youth for the first time and this year we anticipate continued growth. To support this growth, we will work with the city to continue developing the outdoor Ball Hockey court with a goal to create a first-class outdoor facility. We are proud to share that we are currently the largest Ball Hockey program in Nova Scotia.

On behalf of the Halifax Minor Ball Hockey League, I would like to express our strong support of the Halifax Rugby Club and their effort to build a clubhouse at Gorsebrook Park. We have discussed various partnership options related to this project and are excited to work with Rugby to ensure both sports and even more people can benefit.

I am confident a clubhouse, as proposed by Halifax Rugby, will allow Ball Hockey to continue to grow while creating a dynamic addition to our local community.

I urge community leadership to join us in this game changing project.

With thanks,

Louis Brill
Halifax Minor Ball Hockey League
Founder and Managing Director



The Dalhousie Men's rugby team would like to express their support for the Halifax RFC clubhouse. Not only will this provide a hub for rugby in the city, but it can be that for all sports. A centralized clubhouse will provide the groundwork for rugby to boom throughout the HRM and allow for community to grow for all facility users.

Patrick Spiteri
Dalhousie Men's Rugby President



October 16, 2023

Dear Anthony Black and Maddison Dennison,

Subject: Support of the Halifax RFC Gorsebrook Clubhouse Project

Thank you for contacting Halifax Ultimate (HU) in your public engagement initiative for a potential Gorsebrook Park Clubhouse.

Halifax Ultimate is a registered not-for-profit sports league with the goal of providing affordable and fun Ultimate Frisbee for the residents of HRM. Our community consists of approximately 500 members with ages ranging from 16 to 65. We offer multiple leagues (co-ed and single gender), player development clinics, and scrimmages year-round at various fields, gyms, and all-weather turf facilities in the Halifax Regional Municipality. (HRM)

HU hosts the largest indoor Ultimate tournament in Atlantic Canada, drawing teams from across the Maritimes to HRM every Fall to compete at the Canada Games Centre. Members of our community have created teams that have gone on to compete at the Ultimate Canada (UC) Canadian Ultimate Championships, United States of America Ultimate (USAU) Triple Crown Tour, and the World Flying Disc Federation (WFDF) World Ultimate Club Championship.

The last few summers, HU has been fortunate to receive Gorsebrook sportsfield in our field allotment. HU recognized this field as the perfect opportunity to provide a low barrier to entry to our sport in the form of pick-up Ultimate.

HU decided to use Gorsebrook sportsfield for pick-up as it is centrally located and easy to access via public and active transportation; however, the lack of amenities at the field produces barriers that may exclude certain members and/or groups from meaningful participation.



With pick-up Ultimate, teams are created based on who shows up each week. Which doesn't allow for jerseys to be determined in advance. Washroom facilities would provide desperately needed basic amenities, in addition to space for individuals to comfortably and privately change if needed.

Player safety is integrated into our leagues. HU monitors weather conditions and encourages players to modify games (or cancel in extreme heat conditions) during periods of high humidity and temperature. As previously mentioned, Gorsebrook was selected because of its accessibility by public and active transportation, which impacts the amount of supplies, in this instance, drinking water, players can bring to the field. Public water fountains would help mitigate the potential for heat-related injuries to our players.

Team sports are about so much more than their physical benefits. The proposed Halifax RFC Clubhouse, which would be available to other sport users and located adjacent to the sportsfield, would provide HU members with a location to congregate after games, encourage players to create connections, and further build a community.

The 2023 - 2024 Halifax Ultimate Board of Directors supports a venue available to other Gorsebrook Park sports field users and augments the amenities available at the field.

Sports, and the locations that service them, provide valuable experiences and skills that players will take with them beyond the field.

Sincerely,
Kaitlyn Baillie
2023 - 2024 Chair
Halifax Ultimate Board of Directors

Email: board@halifaxultimate.ca
Website: <https://www.halifaxultimate.ca/>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/halifaxultimate>
Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/halifaxultimate>

CC: Kelsey Hayden and James McKenna, HU League Coordinators, info@halifaxultimate.ca



5516 SPRING GARDEN ROAD, 4TH FLOOR · HALIFAX, NS B3J1G6
 P: (902) 425-5450 EXT. 310 · F: (902) 425-5606
 WWW.LACROSSENS.CA

October 24, 2023

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this letter on behalf of Lacrosse Nova Scotia (LNS), to support the Halifax Rugby Football Club proposal to build a clubhouse at Gorsebrook Park in Halifax, NS. We read through their project presentation and agree that a clubhouse would be an important and critical addition to provide needed amenities for park users.

LNS has member organizations, like the Halifax Hurricanes Lacrosse Club and our NS Special Needs Lacrosse Club, who use the Gorsebrook Box during the spring and summer box season, for practice, when weather permits. In past years, the Halifax Hurricanes have provided volunteer service to paint the Gorsebrook Box. Our sport suffers from lack of access to appropriate venues and those we do have access to are often aging and neglected.

Looking at the bigger picture, the clubhouse improvements being proposed would address the needs of the larger community of current users, including those in the neighborhood. Specifically, having access to public washrooms, change rooms, social and meeting space, and equipment storage, would be very beneficial for all sport users. Access to water through safe drinking fountains are a critical need.

In closing, LNS has concerns about the lack of venue access for our sport, both from an indoor and field/turf perspective, on the Halifax peninsula and HRM. It hinders our ability to grow our sport at a time when we are having a successful recovery from pandemic shutdowns. We are seeing youth and adults coming into our sport, because of our equity, diversity and inclusion programs. We are behind all efforts to improve facilities that will help support growth for all sports and activities, cooperatively.


Yours in lacrosse,
 Donna Goguen
 Executive Director
 902 488-6175





5516 SPRING GARDEN ROAD, 4TH FLOOR · HALIFAX, NS B3J1G6
P: (902) 425-5450 EXT. 310 · F: (902) 425-5606
WWW.LACROSSENS.CA



From: shane.gushue [REDACTED] 
Subject: Gorsbrook Clubhouse
Date: September 12, 2023 at 12:44 PM
To: [REDACTED]



Hi Anthony,

Sorry for the delay! See below.

The Metro Touch Football League (MTFL) has been a part of the Halifax sport scene since 1967. The addition of a clubhouse at the Gorsbrook field site, as proposed by Halifax Rugby, would be an incredible resource to help build recreational sports in the Halifax community. A clubhouse facility at the Gorsbrook field site would help touch football grow as a sport in Halifax and continue to provide a fun activity for the city.

Shane Gushue
League President
Metro Touch Football League



Shane Gushue
Territory Account Manager – Atlantic Canada
Mobile: 902.293.4908

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

From: Geno Carew [REDACTED]
Subject: Clubhouse
Date: September 18, 2023 at 10:54 AM
To: Anthony Black anthonyblackmail@gmail.com



Hi,

We would love to see a clubhouse at St Francis Field as proposed by the Halifax Rugby Club. The lack of public washrooms and changing facilities on-site is always an issue for us at practice and for our traveling teams games. Would be a great enhancement for the facility and community.

Geno Carew

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, October 16, 2023 10:55 AM
To: Mason, Wayne <Waye.Mason@halifax.ca>; Higby, Trish <higbyt@halifax.ca>; Cushing, Stephen <cushins@halifax.ca>
Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: [External Email] Comments on proposed Halifax Rugby Football Club clubhouse, Gorsebrook Park

[This email has been received from an external person or system]

Hi Wayne -

I am attaching some comments on the clubhouse proposal currently being explored by HRFC with some HRM staff members (Trish Higby and Steve Cushing), who are copied on this message. We attended the recent information meeting held by HRFC at Gorsebrook Park, and have also looked at relevant documents on their website and documents on the HRM website concerning similar structures in other HRM parks. We also responded to the HRFC questionnaire and expressed some concerns about the proposal.

In particular, we are concerned about the process to date, the financial and operational viability of the proposal for both HRFC and HRM, and its proximity to an elementary school, a junior high school, and a busy public playground - particularly if it is to be run as a licensed establishment.

Please let us know if we should be communicating with any other HRM staff members about this project.

Thank you very much -

Rebecca Jamieson & Christopher Beaumont

[REDACTED]

--

Dr. Rebecca A. Jamieson
Professor Emeritus,
Department of Earth Sciences,
Dalhousie University,
PO Box 15000,
Halifax, NS
Canada B3H 4R2

phone: (902) 494-3771
fax: (902) 494-6889

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Concerns regarding the Halifax Rugby Football Club (HRFC) proposed Clubhouse Project

We wish to state that we are fully in support of the City building and maintaining both washrooms and changing rooms on Gorsebrook Park, but there should be consultation with park users and neighbours concerning the building size, style, and location.

Our specific concerns regarding the financial viability of the Halifax RFC Clubhouse project and its location are outlined below.

We have inserted clauses from the HRM Municipal Planning Strategy (19May 2023) where these provide suitable requirements relevant to this proposal.

Our first concern is the process of evaluating the proposal.

Process

The Halifax RFC held an informal Information Meeting on 26 September 2023 to unveil their proposal for a Halifax RFC Clubhouse on Gorsebrook Park. They have also posted a questionnaire on their website. These may be suitable starting points for introducing the project but do not constitute the full process before HRM Staff evaluate the project. Because there is no independent oversight on this process so far, there is no guarantee that comments from the public will be reported completely and accurately to HRM Staff. HRM Council needs to commit to a full Public Hearing which is the appropriate venue for the public comments. In the meantime, we recommend that public comments be sent directly to HRM Council and not contributed through the Halifax RFC questionnaire.

The above is consistent with 12.5.

12.5 The City shall encourage citizens to make written submissions on planning issues or items of neighbourhood concern (for example, development proposals, rezoning issues). These briefs will, if possible, accompany staff reports to City Council, but in any case shall be submitted to Council for their information.

Financial/Operational Viability

1. The financial viability of both building and maintaining the Clubhouse must be established and made public as part of the evaluation process. We are not favour of the City (HRM) paying nearly all of the construction cost.

The Halifax RFC needs to disclose to the public the dollar amount it will contribute to the construction costs.

In similar cases, the TARS Rugby Club raised an initial \$1.05 million from several levels of government and then additional building funds by private and commercial donations, including the \$40,000 initial donation from Admiral Insurance Canada.

Similarly, for the Graham's Grove Building in the Kiwanis Graham's Grove Park the Kiwanis Club contributed \$300,000 toward its part of the building.

We expect the Halifax RFC to raise equivalent proportional funding for the construction of its Clubhouse. This will demonstrate there is support from the people who donate funds and should put the project on a reasonable financial footing. There should be 'no free lunch'.

2. It is likely that the Halifax RFC will request a 'Less than Market Value Lease', as was the case for the Graham's Grove Building. This reduction should only be granted if the Halifax RFC has contributed a similar

fractional amount to the building construction as did the Kiwanis Club and the TARS Rugby Club.

3. If the final Halifax RFC proposal does not include a suitable contribution to the building cost the proposal should not be approved. Approval would lead to a private club leasing a building built by the City on City property. There is no justification to either construct the Clubhouse or to give the Halifax RFC an exclusive lease under those circumstances.
4. The financial viability of operating the Clubhouse also needs close scrutiny. It appears the Halifax RFC would only need to use the Clubhouse in association with their practices and actual games 3 to 4 times a week during the 5-month period (May to September or June to October). Even if their usage related to playing rugby is exaggerated to 3 full days a week for this 22 week period for a total of 66 days this only represents 18% of the time available each year. We do not see this usage justifying an exclusive Halifax RFC lease and brings the operational costs and usage of the Clubhouse into question.

Halifax RFC needs to partner with other sports organizations such that the lease is to some form of consortium, which will prevent the Halifax RFC dominating the priority on the usage and also help increase the overall usage. There is also the question of the use of the sports field, which was converted to a rugby field in 2019, and the rest of the park.

Consistent with

7.7 The City shall encourage, wherever appropriate, the multiple use of existing and proposed lands and facilities in order to promote their most efficient use.

Consideration should be given to the 2019 HRM Report on Gorsebrook Park:

Although Point Pleasant Park is a larger park at the southern end of the peninsula, the recreation facilities found in Gorsebrook Park are largely the only ones south of University Avenue. Therefore, the service-level catchment

area for Gorsebrook Park is much larger than 500m and represents a diverse area. As a result, Gorsebrook is a hard-working park and the aging facilities within it are under pressure due to high usage. On this basis, there is a need to recognize the importance of a properly planned park with the development of well-designed facilities.

*Given the varied demographics, the park should be designed to accommodate a wide range of potential users, **with special attention to schooled children**, particularly with the presence of the two schools.*

5. The question of costs to other partners and independent users needs to be addressed and set by the City, not Halifax RFC.
6. In the absence of suitable partner and independent groups using and paying for the Clubhouse in the remaining nearly 300 days, when Halifax RFC is neither practicing nor playing, what will the Clubhouse be used for?

Two possibilities are:

- A. That there will be little usage, but the upkeep still remains the responsibility of the Halifax RFC, whose funds may not be sufficient for running the Clubhouse in this manner.
- B. The Clubhouse will, if granted a liquor license, become a 'bar' for Halifax RFC members and probably extended associates and other members. It may only be the revenue from bar sales that could provide for the upkeep of the Clubhouse.

Location

7. The use of the Clubhouse as a 'bar' situated in the middle of a multiuser park and immediately adjacent to the Inglis Street elementary school (which is actually within the park boundary), the public playground, and in a part of the park where children from daycares are taken for daily walks is totally undesirable. This would detract substantially from the amenity of the park, which must be maintained for these users and

others. There are no major equivalent problems for the Admiral Club and Graham's Grove Building, which have liquor licenses but are well removed from homes and schools.

8. For the above reasons, loss of amenity and potential use as a bar, we are against granting a liquor license to the Halifax RFC as part of its lease for the Clubhouse. The potential problem from drinking, including leaving refuse and broken glass on the 'viewing deck' and beyond, plus the social noise from the occupants, would actively deter other users from coming to Gorsebrook Park and drive children away from their play areas. Consuming alcohol in HRM parks is illegal. Where would the 'boundary' be between the Clubhouse, its viewing deck and the surrounding park? It will be difficult for Halifax RFC to confine 50 or more drinking rugby players, associates and their supporters to the clubhouse alone. A liquor license is just asking for trouble.
9. In addition to the potential 'bar' problem, the proposed site of the Halifax RFC Clubhouse and wash/changing rooms is not suitable and needs to be changed. It is about 100 m from Inglis Street Elementary School and 50 m from a very busy playground.

Guidance from

*7.6 The City shall encourage the provision of recreation and community facilities in the vicinity of commercial centres and in City schools (and/or on school grounds), Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy Page 25 based on their appropriateness and location. The City shall avoid the duplication of facilities for any one area. In all cases, prior to encouraging recreation and community facilities to locate in City schools, or on school grounds, the City shall first identify the appropriateness of such locations based upon: **(a) the necessity of avoiding disruption of the main function of schools;** (b) the effect upon possible funding structures; (c) the effect upon possible operating budget structures; **(d) the age level and needs of the students;** and **(e) an assessment of community need.***

10. Furthermore, the Halifax RFC proposed location of the clubhouse (grassy knoll behind bleachers at west end of field) is not suitable for other reasons. Nearby bedrock suggests that there could be added construction costs associated with buried sewer and electrical lines. The suggested footprint (2500 sq ft) would occupy the whole of this raised area, and if so, the viewing deck would have to be close to the edges of the knoll, which raises safety concerns.
11. This part of the berm and adjacent areas is used by children as a play area daily, both during and after school hours and on weekends. In winter it is used by young children for sledding. *(see photos next page)*.
12. Current access to the proposed Clubhouse location is mainly by foot or bicycle, although HRM service trucks can navigate the paths. For equipment access during construction and during future use (e.g. accessibility and garbage collection), it seems likely that construction of a hard-surface access road or driveway from Inglis St would be necessary. This would be unacceptably close to the playground and schoolyard and would pass between them. It would also likely require removal of trees. The question of parking also needs to be addressed.
13. The proposed location is also unsuitable for viewing of rugby games from the 'viewing deck'. It only allows viewing of one end of the field. There is no suitable Clubhouse location that will provide effective viewing of the entire field. Instead, the Clubhouse needs to be relocated to a suitable location and the 'viewing deck' justified for another reason if really necessary.



The entire berm, including the proposed HRFC clubhouse site (yellow oval), is heavily used by young children. **Above:** Sledding on the berm, winter 2022.
Below: Recess at Inglis Street elementary school, October 2023.





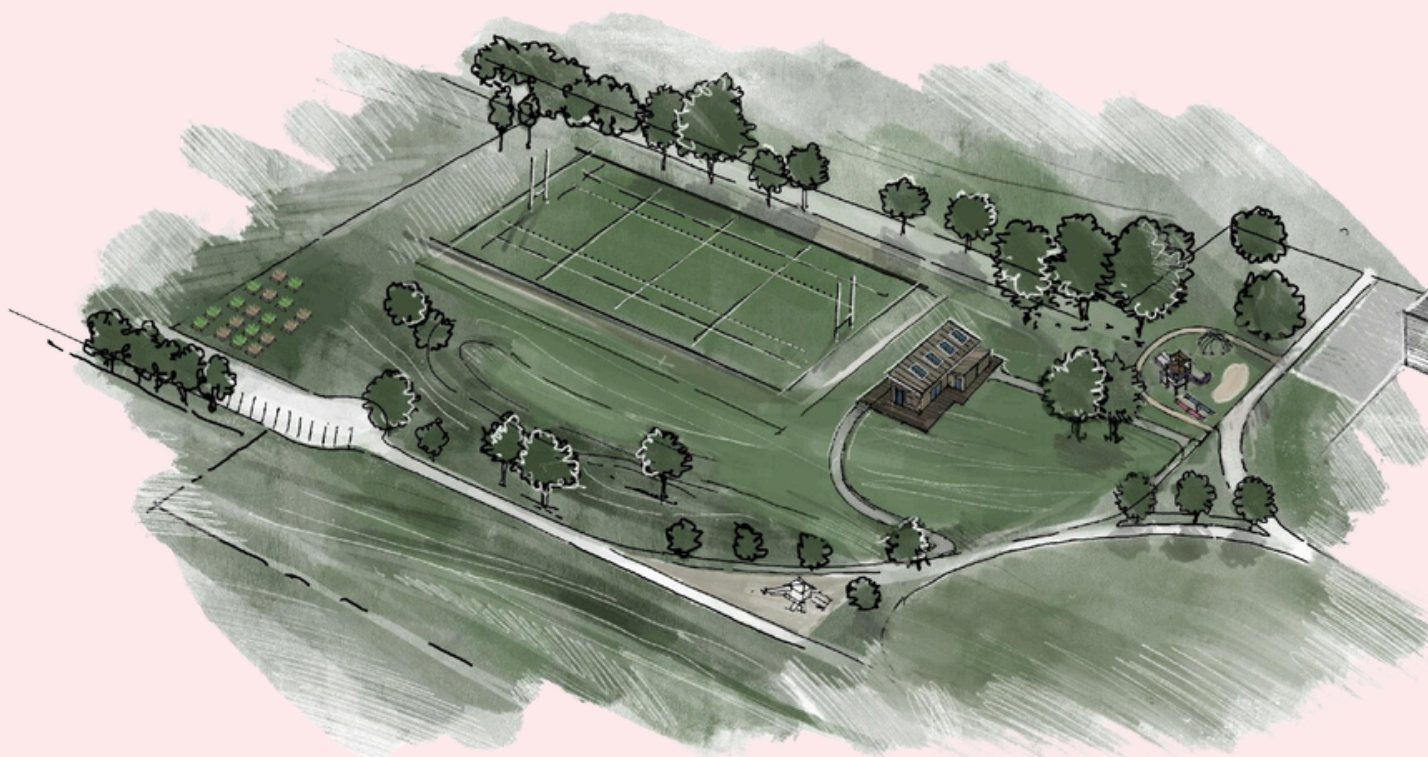
Business Plan

GORSEBROOK PARK CLUBHOUSE



Halifax Rugby Football Club

2024





Global Goals

TABLE OF CONTENTS

01	Executive Summary	03	Introduction
06	Facilities	10	Design and Construction Plan
13	Operating and Maintenance Plan	16	Risk Analysis and Mitigation
18	Conclusion	19	Appendix: Key Personnel



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Halifax Rugby Football Club (HRFC) is proposing the development of the Gorsebrook Park Clubhouse, a 2700 sq ft multipurpose facility aimed at enhancing community engagement, accessibility, and sustainability in one of Halifax's most frequented parks. This project aligns with the City of Halifax and Province of Nova Scotia's urban development strategies, addressing the growing demand for community sports and recreational infrastructure.

Project Overview

WHAT?

A new clubhouse featuring public washrooms, changing rooms, a 960 square foot rentable community space, and storage facilities designed to support rugby and various other sports and events held in Gorsebrook Park.

WHO?

HRFC is a non-profit athletic club which prides itself on inclusivity. The club has 200+ members, of all ages and is the city's oldest rugby club, founded in 1956.

WHY?

The clubhouse responds to a critical need for public amenities, as outlined in Halifax's "Public Washroom Strategy" and the 2018 Gorsebrook Park Plan. The project also supports the goals of Halifax's Green Network Plan, emphasizing sustainable infrastructure.

HOW?

The facility will be designed and constructed with eco-friendly materials and will follow the Zero Carbon Building Design Standard V4. The clubhouse will be a versatile, energy-efficient space, ensuring a long-term, low-maintenance operational model.



Executive Summary

Strategic Importance: The clubhouse supports Halifax’s rapid urban growth by offering much-needed recreational infrastructure. The city’s Gorsebrook Park Plan (2018) notes that “the recreation facilities found in Gorsebrook Park are largely the only ones south of University Avenue... As a result, Gorsebrook is a hard-working park and the aging facilities within it are under pressure due to high usage.” High usage rates and the city’s population growth suggest that improved facilities will significantly enhance local community engagement. This project also aligns with Halifax’s efforts to promote accessibility, inclusivity, diversity, and sustainability, as outlined through the Community Facility Master Plan 2.

Community Impact: This development fosters stronger community ties by providing a space for events, social gatherings, and organized sports. The facility is projected to attract more visitors to the park, increasing its role as a community hub, while providing essential amenities like public washrooms, which are critical to making the park more accessible and attractive.

Funding and Financial Sustainability: The project is estimated to cost \$2.5M, with a total funding target of \$3.1M after including contingencies. HRFC has applied for federal funding through the Green and Inclusive Community Buildings Program, aiming for \$1.3-1.75M, while also seeking provincial and municipal contributions of \$800,000 each, and private fundraising efforts worth \$200,000. The facility’s long-term sustainability will be supported through community rentals, event management fees, and sponsorships, ensuring that it remains a valuable asset for the community.

Conclusion: The Gorsebrook Park Clubhouse will not only meet the immediate needs of the community but also provide a model of sustainable development for Halifax. Aligned with key city strategies and following engagement with local stakeholders, this project creates a welcoming, functional, and environmentally responsible space that enhances both the park and the broader community.

INTRODUCTION

Gorsebrook Park is a vibrant hub for community and sports activities in Halifax, including a sports field (St. Francis Field) for rugby, ultimate frisbee and touch football, an outdoor box used for ball hockey and box lacrosse, courts for tennis and basketball, two ball diamonds, and a busy playground. The unscheduled green spaces in the park are used for a wide variety of activities including running, cricket, and winter-time sledding. The park's current facilities fall short of meeting the growing needs of the community. In response, HRFC proposes the development of a comprehensive clubhouse facility that includes public washrooms, drinking fountains, change rooms, a rentable community space, and storage facilities. This project aligns with the city's objectives of enhancing public spaces to cater to an expanding population and increasing urban density.

A worthy proponent: HRFC, whose home field is St. Francis Field, aims to be the most welcoming and inclusive club in Canada. This ethos will extend to its management of the clubhouse. HRFC's motto is "One Big Club", with programming that serves athletes of all genders, promotes health and wellness in athletes from age 4 to 54+, and includes contact and non-contact programming. The club attracts a number of new Canadians, connecting them instantly to a supportive community and accelerating social integration. HRFC has over 200 active members, in addition to a broader community of families, alumni, and other supporters. Founded in 1958, it is the oldest continuously operating rugby club in the Nova Scotia league.

HRFC is governed by an Executive Committee. Working sub-committees include a social committee, a marketing committee, a finance committee, sponsorship committee, and a clubhouse committee.





Introduction

A Place to Build Community Around Sport: Rugby is exceptional at building community. Maybe it's the large number of players involved. Maybe it's the fact that the sport needs people of all body types and shapes. Maybe it's the mutual respect that comes out of tackling each other to the ground for 80 minutes. Whatever the case, people involved with rugby know that there is something special about the sport. Rugby clubhouses throughout the world are centres of community life and activity. On top of benefitting from change rooms and showers, rugby teams use these spaces to host and connect with family, supporters and former players on game day, work on defensive strategies with markers and a whiteboard when training is rained out, and organize get togethers like junior team socials.

Community Needs: The proposed clubhouse meets a variety of community needs including the need for accessible public washrooms and drinking water for park users, and a rentable community room, boasting a spectacular view of the park's greenspace, anticipated to be in high demand by sports teams and other community groups. The facility enriches community use of the park and expands park enjoyment into the winter.

Social Cohesion and Inclusivity: The clubhouse fosters community cohesion by providing a versatile space for community activities and sport programming. By creating an accessible and inclusive space, the clubhouse contributes to the city's goals of promoting diversity and inclusivity. The facility is expected to increase park usage, enhancing the park as a community hub.

Serving a growing and active population: Located close to Halifax's downtown, which according to Statistics Canada, was the fastest growing downtown in the country between 2016-2021, Gorsebrook Park works hard for residents. The rapid urban growth requires infrastructure that not only meets today's needs but also anticipates future demands. Halifax's population is highly active, with 81% indicating that they participated in outdoor activities close to home in 2021. In addition the proportion of the population who plays organized team sports like rugby is significantly higher than the Canadian average at 20% (Canadian average is 15%).

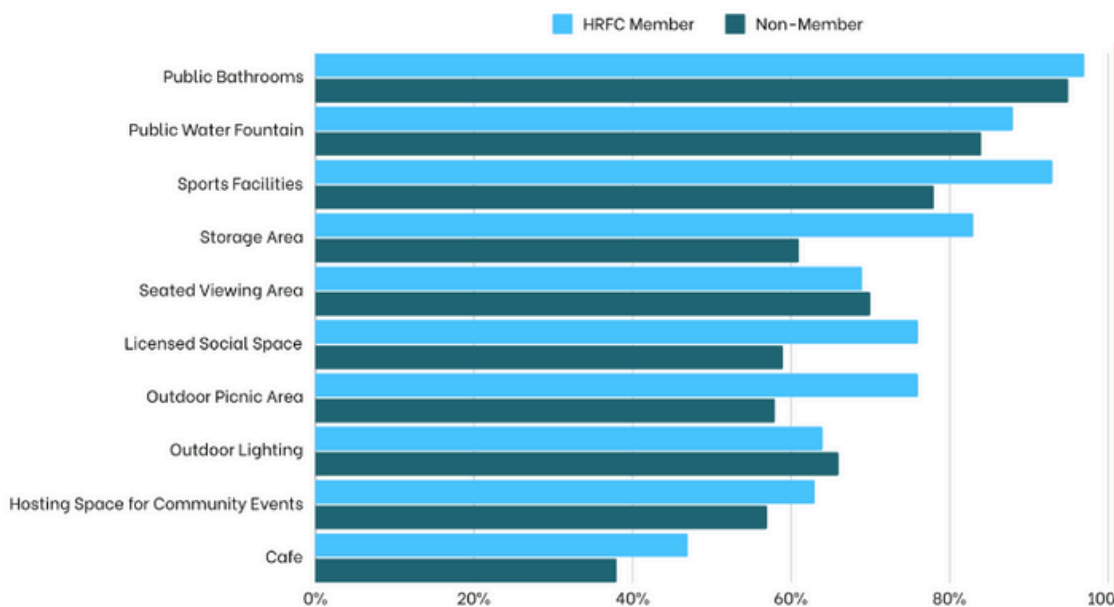
Community and Environmental Sustainability: The design will incorporate eco-friendly materials and technologies, ensuring minimal environmental impact and promoting sustainability, which is a growing priority in city planning. In line with the "Green Network Plan (2018)," which emphasizes the incorporation of year-round recreational infrastructure and enhancing social gatherings in municipal open spaces, the clubhouse serves as a model for sustainable community development.



Introduction

Economic and Social Benefits: The enhanced park will attract more visitors and community events, which aligns with the city’s economic development strategies to leverage community assets to foster economic growth. Additionally, the project supports the city’s efforts to enhance public spaces to make them more attractive to residents and potential newcomers.

Public Engagement: Our initiative is informed by feedback gathered through extensive community engagement, including: surveys, public events, and targeted group discussions. This engagement highlighted a strong community desire for enhanced facilities that promote accessibility, inclusivity, and sustainability. HRFC will provide channels for ongoing engagement and feedback with neighbours and stakeholders via the clubhouse website and emails. Neighbours and stakeholders will have the opportunity to submit concerns to be discussed and addressed by the clubhouse committee and meet with the committee upon request.



Overall, 96% of all respondents identified the public washroom as a priority for this project, followed by public water fountains (86%). The proposed sports facilities were supported by 85% of all respondents, which included 78% support from respondents who were not members of Halifax RFC. Out of the proposed features a cafe was the least popular option with support from under 50% of both club members and non-members alike.

Alignment with city priorities: The Gorsebrook Park Clubhouse is aligned with several city plans and reports. The city of Halifax’s Washroom and Drinking Fountain Strategy (2020) identifies Gorsebrook as a “high-need” park. The 2018 Gorsebrook Park Plan states that the “the lack of publicly accessible washrooms and drinking water prevent the use of the park as a destination.” The project aligns with the Halifax Green Network plan, which calls for initiatives that “incorporate year-round recreational infrastructure, including winter-oriented activities, when planning parks.” The facility also aligns with the city’s 2014 Community Facility Master Plan 2 by: prioritizing accessibility and universal design, ensuring inclusivity for new Nova Scotians, developing healthy citizens and children, attracting and retaining new Canadians, and creating partnerships that help to build capacity and promote diversity.

FACILITIES

The design and construction of the proposed facilities for Gorsebrook Park Clubhouse will follow the high standards set by the City of Halifax, as exemplified by the recent development of the Halifax Commons Aquatics Facility and the Emera Oval pavilion. These facilities are tailored to enhance the functionality, sustainability, and aesthetic appeal of Gorsebrook Park, catering to a diverse group of park users.

PUBLIC WASHROOMS



- **Sustainable Design:** The public washrooms will incorporate water-saving fixtures to minimize water usage and large windows to maximize natural light, thereby reducing electricity consumption. Sustainable building materials and construction methods will be employed to ensure environmental responsibility and durability.
- **User Accessibility:** Fully accessible, these washrooms will accommodate all park visitors, including those with disabilities, providing a comfortable and convenient experience for everyone.
- **Placement and Design:** The facility is centrally located in the park, providing close access to public washrooms and drinking water for users of the adjacent playground, tennis and basketball courts, lacrosse/ground hockey box, and softball diamond.



Facilities

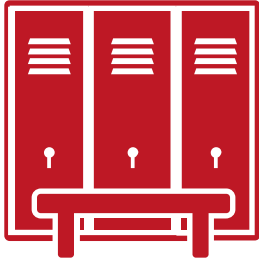


COMMUNITY SPACE

- **An Attractive and Versatile Space:** With a capacity of 100+ people, serviced by a small kitchen, and with a view to the park, the community room is suitable for a wide range of activities including community events, meetings, baby showers, birthday parties, yoga classes, and sports team gatherings. In winter, it can serve as a warming station and hot chocolate pavilion for the many tobogganers drawn to the park's excellent sledding hills.
- **Sustainability:** The design will include energy-efficient systems for heating, cooling, and lighting, reflecting our commitment to sustainability.
- **Outdoor Space:** Freely accessible at all times, the outdoor viewing deck provides space to watch games, or simply gather and enjoy the outdoors.



Facilities



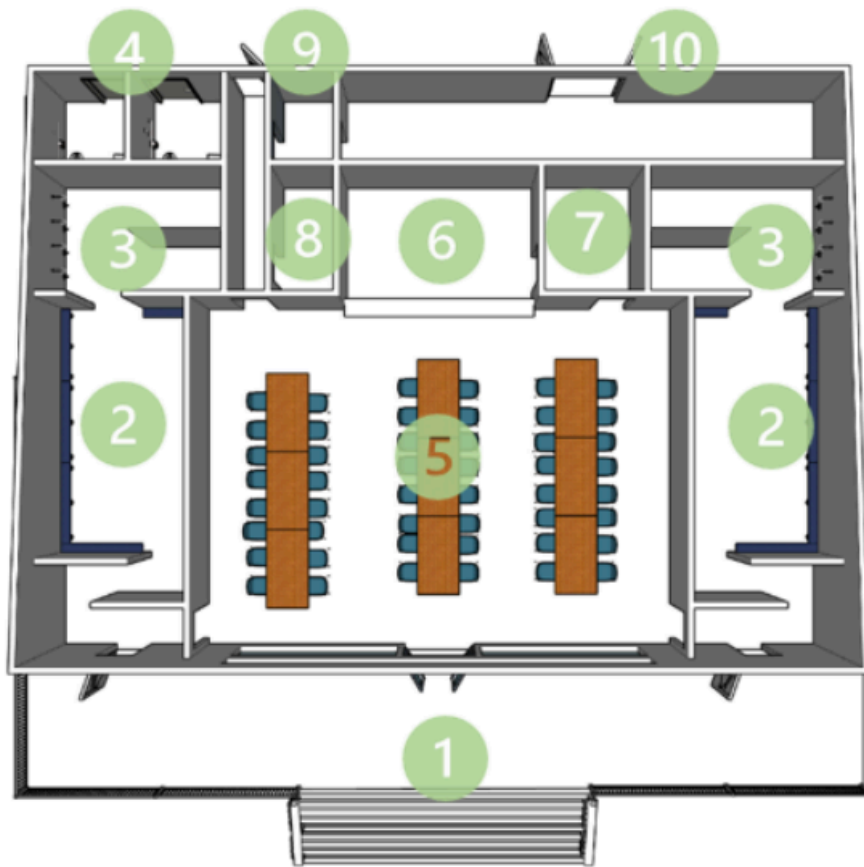
ATHLETIC FACILITIES

- **Dressing Rooms:** Equipped with dedicated toilets and showers, the dressing rooms make playing sports more convenient and enjoyable.
- **Equipment Storage:** Sports groups can store equipment (like post pads, hockey nets, tackle shields) securely locked up in the park, easing the logistical load on teams and leagues.



Facilities

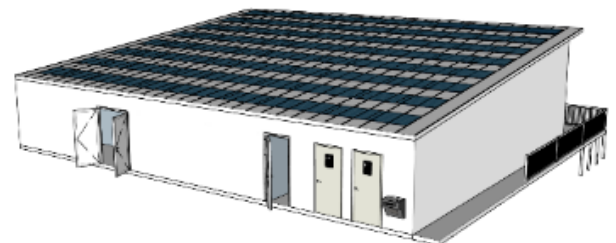
LAYOUT AND DIMENSIONS - (CONCEPTUAL DRAWINGS)



The proposed building is 2,700 sq ft, with exterior dimensions of 60' by 45'.

1. Viewing deck (600 sq ft)
2. Changing rooms X2 (300 sq ft each)
3. Showers/bathrooms (140 sq ft each)
4. Public toilets & water fountain (100 sq ft each)*
5. Community room (960 sq ft)
6. Café/bar (140 sq ft)
7. Kitchen (80 sq ft)
8. Office (50 sq ft)
9. Maintenance room (36 sq ft)
10. Equipment Storage (300 sq ft)

*Current layout contains two public bathrooms but we are exploring the feasibility of increasing to four.



DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION PLAN

Budget

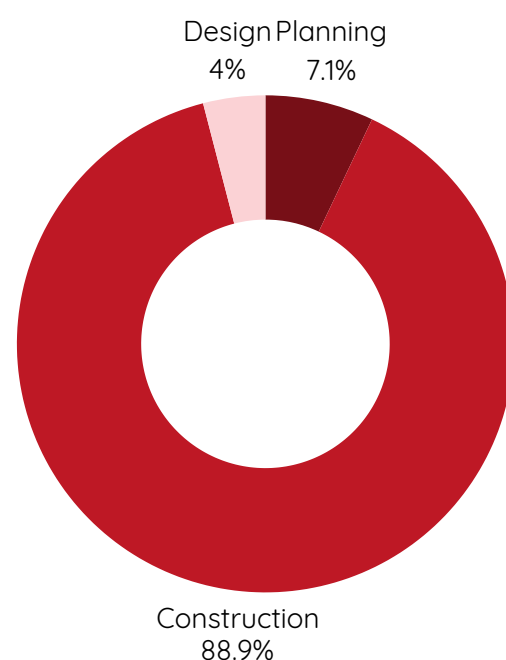
Based on Class D estimates prepared by a local real estate development firm, we are budgeting \$2,480,000 (plus a 25% contingency) for the development. The bulk of this amount is associated with labour and materials, and will occur during the primary construction phase during the 2025-26 fiscal year. This budgeted amount takes into account the ambitious net-zero energy efficiency standards as well as the high quality design elements deserving of one of Halifax’s marquee parks.

Annualized spending

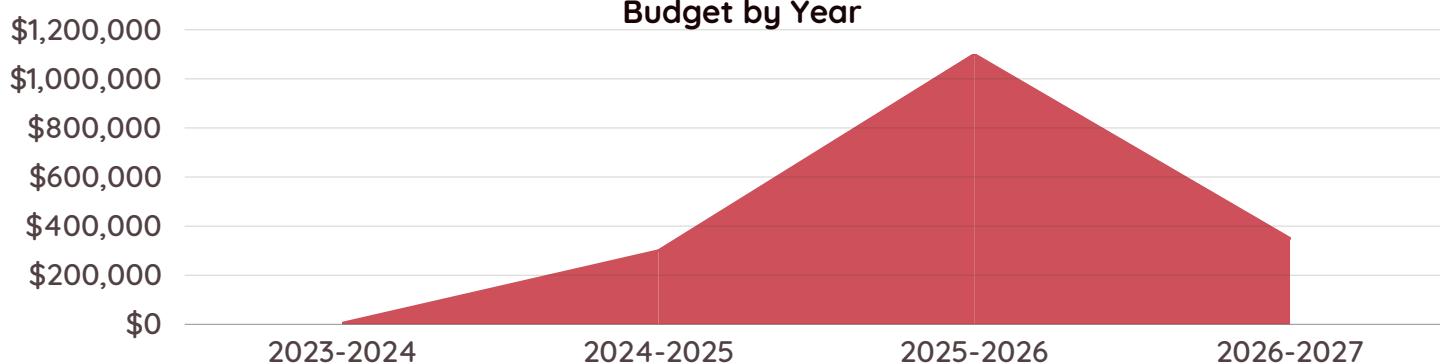
HRFC has invested significant amounts of volunteer labour in recent years into this project, as well as funds contributed by our community. This current fiscal, ending march 31st, sees raising costs associated with finalizing the projects planning phase, including soil tests, environmental site assessment, and professional schematics.

Costs are anticipated to ramp up as we move into the construction phases. with the main bulk of the the project expenditures anticipated to occur between 2025 and 2026, with a grand opening possible for the summer of 2027..

Budget by project phase



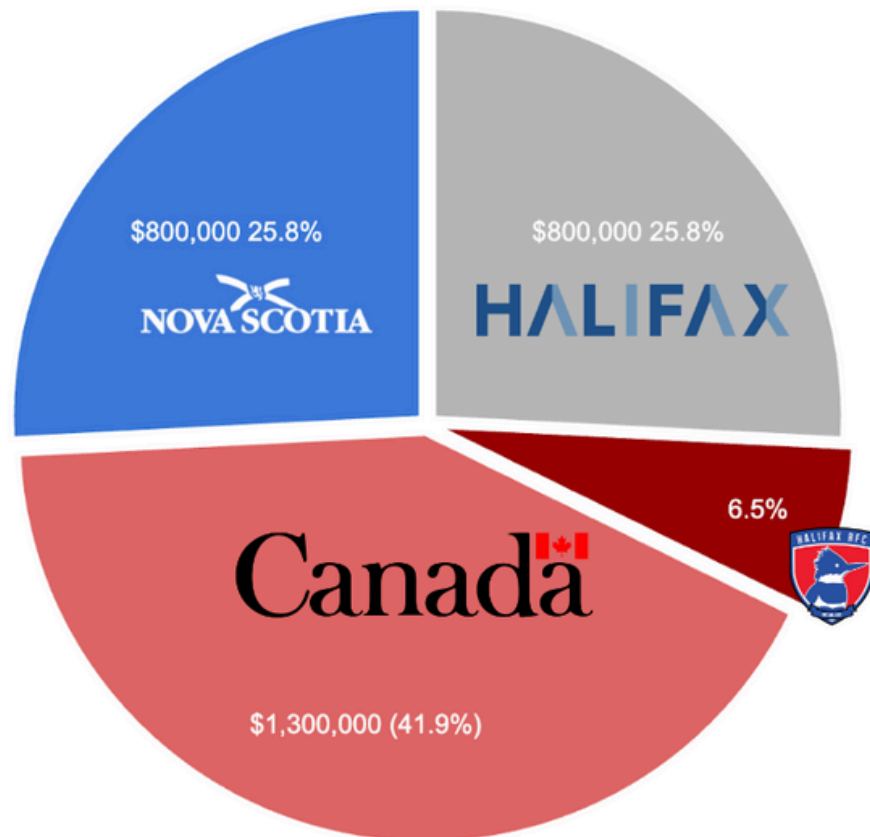
Budget by Year





Funding

\$3.1 M Total Funding to cover Hard Costs, Soft Costs, and Contingency



FEDERAL FUNDING (TARGETING \$1.3 MILLION)

The Funding Plan above reflects \$1.3m in funding from the federal government’s Green and Community Buildings Program. An application to the program was submitted October 16, 2024, with a request of \$1.75m.

- The cost estimate is based on a project built to the Zero Carbon Building Design Standard v4.
- The total costs include a contingency for inflation and other cost overruns

Alternative Federal Funding being actively explored includes:

- Canada Healthy Communities Initiative (Disbursed to Nova Scotia)
- Investing in Canada plan: (Disbursed to HRM)
- Canada Community-Building Fund (Distributed through NS DMAH)
- ACOA Innovative Communities Fund

Funding

\$3.1 M

**Total Funding to cover
Hard Costs, Soft Costs,
and Contingency**

PROVINCIAL FUNDING (TARGETING \$800,000)

Provincial funding (\$800,000) to be sourced through the Strategic Funding Initiative of the Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism, and Heritage.

MUNICIPAL FUNDING (TARGETING \$800,000)

Municipal funding (\$800,000) comes from the Capital Budget. Preliminary estimates for standalone public washrooms in Gorsebrook Park are \$1.2m.

CLUB FUNDRAISING (TARGETING \$200,000)

HRFC currently has \$60,000 in the bank towards its \$200,000 commitment. It is in the process of creating a capital fund with the Rugby Canada Foundation which will allow it to issue charitable tax receipts for individual donations and foundations.

Fundraising with a number of donors and foundations has begun, including with HRFC's large alumni community as well as some private foundations. A number of our current members and player parents are involved in the construction industry and discussions are underway for the provision of in-kind services and equipment contributions - notably excavation services and HVAC equipment). A capital campaign committee will be struck to liaise with prospective donors and identify new sources, including corporate sponsorships.

FINANCING (\$400,000)

Currently looking at options to secure a construction loan to cover two years of cash flow and variances between funding disbursements, and shortfalls in the above targets.



MANAGING AND MITIGATING BUDGET OVERRUNS

The 24% contingency portion of the budget offers partial protection against costs overruns. As the design advances, progressively more detailed costing (Class A) allows opportunities to evaluate and control against scope creep.



OPERATING AND MAINTENANCE PLAN

A Unique Opportunity

The proposed clubhouse in Gorsebrook Park represents a unique opportunity to create a valuable community asset that seamlessly integrates public access with essential infrastructure in a popular and beautiful public park setting. By combining public amenities like washrooms and a viewing deck with rentable spaces like the community room, the clubhouse creates an operationally sustainable community facility and enhances the park experience for everyone.

Operational Responsibilities

The public washrooms and water fountains will be operated and maintained by the city of Halifax, ensuring these are maintained to municipal standards and ensures that these essential amenities are freely accessible to all park users. The remainder of the facility is to be owned and operated by HRFC, which leases the land from the city. A General Manager, (engaged for 2/3 of FTE contract), will be in charge of day to day operations, with support from hourly event staff and club volunteers.

A Neighbourhood-Compatible Business Model

The facility's prime location amidst playgrounds, sports fields, and residential areas makes it an attractive venue for a variety of events, with the potential to become a vibrant hub for recreation, social gatherings, and community life in the south end of Halifax. At the same time, careful consideration has been given to the needs and interests of park users and neighbors, particularly residents of Inglis and Wellington streets and students of Inglis Street Elementary School. The clubhouse's operations plan prioritizes daytime and early evening events, focusing on rentals for community gatherings, meetings, children's parties, and other family-friendly activities. This approach will ensure that the clubhouse enhances the park without disrupting the tranquility of the surrounding neighborhood. Additionally, by securing ongoing rental clients who can benefit from the unique combination of facilities, such as yoga classes, local private schools, and community social clubs, the clubhouse can establish a stable and reliable revenue stream. This model allows the project to be financially viable while fulfilling its mission to create a much-needed recreational and community space in the heart of Gorsebrook Park.

Operating and Maintenance Plan

Revenue sources Operating revenue for the clubhouse will be generated by five primary sources, which themselves contain a basket of goods and services:



COMMUNITY FACILITY RENTALS

- Commercial rentals
- Community and non-profit rentals
- Event management and staffing fee



ATHLETIC FACILITY RENTALS

- Locker room/shower rentals
- Equipment Storage



CONCESSION SALES

- Food and non alcoholic beverages
- Licensed beverages



SPONSORSHIP

- Current HRFC sponsors are interested in expanding support of the club through sponsorship the Gorsebrook Park Clubhouse



HRFC DUES

- Approximately 10% of HRFC membership dues will be earmarked as a contribution to the clubhouse operations.



Operating and Maintenance Plan

ANNUAL FORCASTED GAINS AND LOSSES

Through extensive interviews with the operators of similar facilities, HRFC was able to develop an operating model that both reflected the realities of running a community based athletic facility, and the unique opportunities and demands of serving the broader community.

Revenue Category	Amount
Facility Rental (Community & Athletic)	\$93,050
HRFC Dues (Clubhouse Contribution)	\$4,300
Concessions	\$18,680
Sponsorship	\$15,000
Total Annual Revenue	\$131,030

Expense Category	Amount
Staffing Costs	\$64,200
Utilities	\$4,300
Garbage and Snow Removal	\$3,800
Maintenance and Repairs	\$10,000
Cleaning Supplies and Services	\$1,800
Insurance and Licensing	\$18,250
Point of Sale	\$1,440
Administrative Expenses	\$6,000
Cost of Goods Sold (COGS)	\$5,560
Total Annual Expenses	\$122,870

Surplus (EBITDA)	\$8,160
-------------------------	----------------

RISK ANALYSIS AND MITIGATION

FINANCIAL RISKS

- Risk: Construction costs could exceed the budget due to unforeseen site conditions, fluctuations in material prices, or inaccurate cost estimates. Additionally, fundraising efforts may fall short, affecting the project's ability to move forward.
- Mitigation:
 - A detailed budget with a 25% contingency has been prepared to cover unexpected expenses.
 - Prior to construction, firm quotes from contractors and suppliers will be secured to minimize the risk of cost overruns.
 - Multiple funding sources have been identified, including federal, provincial, and municipal contributions, alongside private fundraising and sponsorships, reducing reliance on any single funding stream.
 - In the event of fundraising shortfalls, scalable design options will allow for the project to be adjusted without compromising its core functions.

LAND ACQUISITION AND PERMITTING RISKS

- Risk: While there is strong support from the Halifax Community Planning and Economic Development committee, there is a risk that the necessary land-lease agreement may face delays or be withheld. Additionally, obtaining required building permits could be time-consuming or face unexpected public opposition.
- Mitigation:
 - The project team has engaged closely with municipal officials and local stakeholders to ensure broad support for the land-lease agreement.
 - Regular communication with the Halifax Planning Department will help to expedite the permitting process and anticipate any regulatory challenges.
 - Extensive community engagement has been conducted, and there is overwhelming public support for the project, reducing the risk of opposition.



Risk Analysis and Mitigation

CONSTRUCTION AND DESIGN RISKS

- Risk: Delays may occur due to weather, material shortages, contractor issues, or permit approval delays. Design changes could also lead to rework and increased costs.
- Mitigation:
 - Reputable contractors with experience in similar projects will be selected to ensure realistic estimates and high-quality work.
 - A flexible project timeline will account for potential weather-related delays or supply chain disruptions without impacting overall project viability.
 - Detailed design specifications will be finalized and agreed upon with contractors before construction to limit scope changes and cost overruns.
 - The HRFC Clubhouse Committee, which includes individuals with a range of relevant skills and experience, will oversee project management, ensuring that any issues are addressed promptly during both design and construction phases.

OPERATIONAL AND MAINTENANCE RISKS

- Risk: Ongoing maintenance costs, utility expenses, and staffing requirements could strain the club's finances, making the facility challenging to operate over the long term.
- Mitigation:
 - The clubhouse will generate revenue through community rentals, events, and concessions, ensuring financial sustainability.
 - A comprehensive operational plan has been developed, including a detailed maintenance schedule and budget to ensure that the clubhouse is efficiently managed.
 - The building is designed to meet the Zero Carbon Building Design Standard V4, minimizing utility costs through energy-efficient systems.
 - Long-term sponsorship agreements will be secured to provide a reliable source of income for ongoing maintenance and operational costs.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY RISKS

- Risk: The project could face criticism or delays due to potential environmental impacts, or failure to meet sustainability goals.
- Mitigation:
 - The design will incorporate sustainable materials and construction methods to reduce environmental impact.
 - The project is aligned with Halifax's "Green Network Plan," ensuring that it contributes positively to the city's sustainability goals.
 - By adhering to the Zero Carbon Building Design Standard V4, the facility will promote sustainability and energy efficiency, which aligns with both municipal and provincial climate objectives.



CONCLUSION

The Gorsebrook Park Clubhouse represents a transformative opportunity to create a sustainable, inclusive, and vibrant community space that will serve the needs of Halifax's growing population. By providing essential amenities like public washrooms, changing facilities, and a versatile clubhouse, this project aligns with the strategic goals of the City of Halifax and the Province of Nova Scotia. It also supports federal initiatives aimed at fostering healthy, inclusive, and connected communities.

This project is more than infrastructure—it is an investment in community well-being, local engagement, and sustainable development. The proposed clubhouse will be a vital asset to Gorsebrook Park, significantly enhancing its usability and appeal while creating a lasting legacy for future generations.

We urge all levels of government to join us in bringing this community-driven project to life.

By providing financial support and the necessary approvals, you will help ensure that this much-needed facility can meet the needs of our rapidly growing city. Together, we can transform Gorsebrook Park into a premier destination for recreation, social connection, and community pride.

Now is the time to act. We are calling on the City of Halifax, the Province of Nova Scotia, and the Government of Canada to invest in this project, support the local community, and demonstrate a shared commitment to sustainability, inclusivity, and urban vitality. Your partnership is essential in making this vision a reality—help us build a stronger, more vibrant future for Halifax.

APPENDIX A: KEY PROJECT PERSONNEL, HRFC

Maddison Dennison (President, Co-chair of the clubhouse committee) is a data analyst and strategist who holds a senior leadership position with the central Office of Priorities and Planning within the Nova Scotia government. This role leverages a deep analytical background Maddison developed through years of studying computer science and philosophy (earning a B.A. and M.A.), as well as the practical, strategic, and management skills she gained while earning her MBA. In addition to over a decade in senior strategist roles with the public sector, Maddison has been serving on nonprofit boards in the sport and recreation sector since 2010. Locally this has been through a range of roles with HRFC, and since 2022 has been a Trustee of the charity International Gay Rugby (IGR) based in England and Wales. Since May 2024 Maddison has been serving as the Chairperson of IGR.

Anthony Black (Club Vice-President, Co-chair of the clubhouse committee) is Senior Writer at the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21; He has 20 years experience managing 2b theatre, a successful professional touring company and 8 years of non-profit board experience. He has extensive experience managing government funding projects and operations. He accessed and managed funding through the Canada Council's operating and project funding program. In his current role he writes the Museum's Corporate Plan and Annual Report, working in consultation with the department of Canadian Heritage.

Jennifer MacHattie (Treasurer) holds an MBA and is a Chartered Professional Accountant, bringing a decade of experience in project management, cost estimating, and timeline execution within the construction and real estate development sectors. She is currently working toward her PMP certification, further enhancing her robust skill set in managing complex projects. Her expertise spans financial oversight, strategic planning, and the management of high-stakes projects; ensuring the successful delivery of large-scale construction and real estate initiatives.

Maddie McDonald (Social Director) is the Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Sport Navigator for the Halifax Municipality under Sport Nova Scotia. She has been part of the Sport and Recreation sector in HRM for 6 years now. She has gained this experience under the Canadian Armed Forces, the Provincial Government division of Communities, Culture, Tourism, and Heritage, the North American Indigenous Games, and now Sport Nova Scotia.

Daniel Hiltz (Marketing Director) is an HVAC Technical Sales Manager for Compact Appliances, a Wholesale Distributor based out of Sackville, NB. With over 25 years of consultative sales and training experience and brings over 14 years' experience in purchasing, inventory management and project management. His strengths lie in data analysis and sales forecasting.

**Thank you for supporting this effort to
build a key piece of recreational and
community infrastructure in Halifax.**

Contact

Halifax Rugby Football Club

902-448-6700

www.halifaxrugby.com

president@halifaxRFC.ca

[@halifaxrugby](https://www.instagram.com/halifaxrugby)

