



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

Item No. 15.2.3
Halifax Regional Council
September 9, 2025

TO: Mayor Fillmore and Members of Halifax Regional Council

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

DATE: August 21, 2025

SUBJECT: Proposal for an Air-supported Dome for Tennis Courts at Gorsebrook Field

ORIGIN

August 21, 2025 meeting of Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee, Item 10.3.1.

RECOMMENDATION

The Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee request that Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer to prepare a staff report responding to the request of Headstart Tennis to install an air-supported dome over the four planned tennis courts at Gorsebrook Park per the park plan, including recommendations for public consultation and engagement with this organization as a stakeholder when the existing courts are at end of life.

BACKGROUND

Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee received a presentation from Headstart Tennis to consider the proposal for the installation of an air supported dome for tennis courts at the Groosebrook field.

For further information refer to the attached presentation dated August 21, 2025.

DISCUSSION

Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee considered the presentation and approved a motion to Halifax Regional Council as outlined in this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No financial implications at this time.

RISK CONSIDERATION

No risk considerations were identified.

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.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

No environmental implications at this time.

ALTERNATIVES

Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee did not provide alternatives.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Administrative Order One, *Respecting the Procedures of the Council*, Schedule 3 Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee Terms of Reference subsections 5(a) and (b):

Oversight – Community Building Initiatives

5. The Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee shall oversee the Municipality's Community building initiatives in the areas of arts, culture, recreation and heritage and related facilities strategies by:

- (a) promoting and enabling an inclusive range of arts, culture, recreation and heritage opportunities in the municipality; and
- (b) promoting and enabling access to arts, cultural, recreation and heritage facilities that support the Municipality's Community Outcome areas.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Presentation dated August 21, 2025

Attachment 2 – Handout dated August 18, 2025

Attachment 3 – Request to present July 17, 2025

 **Attachment 1**

Proposal: New Seasonal Indoor Tennis Facility at Gorsebrook Park

Date: August 21, 2025

Jamie Power – Co-owner Headstart Tennis Centre

Rishabh Bandari – Program Coordinator Headstart
Tennis Centre

Our Vision

Bringing year-round, accessible tennis to the heart of Halifax — serving local schools, universities, families, seniors, and recreational players with affordable, community-first programming.



Who we are

- Headstart Tennis is Halifax's most successful tennis academy, delivering quality tennis programs to the public in Halifax since 2010
- We currently operate a successful seasonal indoor facility and outdoor academy in Clayton Park (9+ years)
- Serving thousands of participants annually — from children to seniors
- Working in association with Tennis Nova Scotia and Tennis Canada



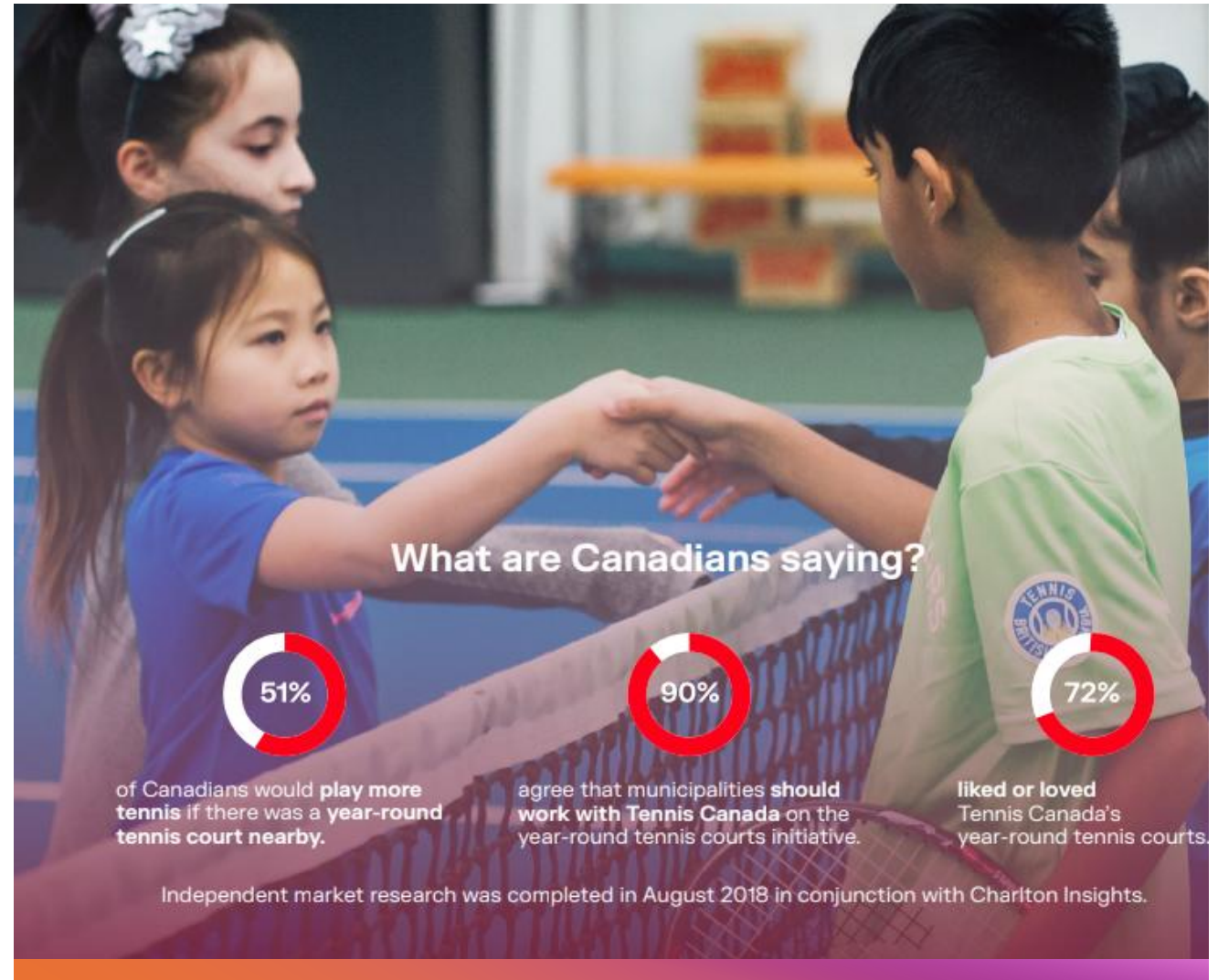
Why This Is Needed

- Supports the municipality's goals for active living and inclusive recreation as well as its commitment to improving health, wellness, and accessibility to all residents.
- No indoor tennis courts currently exist on the Halifax Peninsula. Only two indoor facilities exist in Halifax, both are operating at nearly 90% capacity, limiting court availability.
- High demand for affordable indoor tennis and pickleball. In year 1 we project up-to 12,000 visits
- University teams and local programs lack training facilities on the peninsula



Building healthier communities through year-round tennis

- A recent long-term study has shown that regular participation in tennis increases lifespan by 9.7 years, longer than any other activity tested. ([Copenhagen Study](#))
- Our program will grow participation in active recreation across the community, with little to no financial burden on the municipality thus ensuring sustainable and affordable access to tennis
- Increase the physical, mental & social well-being of the community
- Create a variety of new jobs generating economic and social returns
- Tennis is a sport for life. Participants range across all age groups from as young as 4 to 98
- Provide education opportunities, coach certification & volunteering roles



Our Ask / Proposal

- We request that the municipality proceeds with the construction of four tennis courts, including fencing and concrete footings designed for dome support.
- Allow Headstart Tennis to install and operate the dome, including heating, lighting, and clubhouse facilities at no cost to the municipality.
- Grant Headstart full responsibility for facility operations and maintenance at no cost to the municipality during the indoor season.
- Secure a 15–20-year lease for seasonal installation of an air-supported dome over four tennis courts at Gorsebrook Park, with terms similar to our current agreement, paying the municipality a monthly lease.
- Collaborate with us on court positioning and public washroom placement to ensure efficient winter operation.



Option A: Preferred



Option B: Current Plan



Partnerships and support



[Tennis Canada](#)



[Dalhousie University Tennis Club](#)



[Tennis Nova Scotia](#)



[Rogers Communications](#)

Why support this initiative?

- This model has been successfully operating in Clayton Park since January of 1992 with Headstart Tennis operating the facility since 2016.
- Headstart Tennis covers all further construction and operating costs for the indoor months with no costs to the municipality (from October to May annually).
- Monthly lease payments will be made to the city, similar to Clayton Park facility.
- Covering courts in winter reduces wear and extends lifespan, lowering resurfacing needs



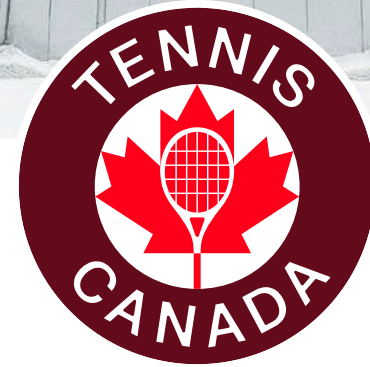
What can you do to help this initiative?

- Help advance the approved 2020 Gorsebrook park planning proposal.
- While developing the 4 courts as planned in the approved proposal, we would need the footings to be inserted that would allow for a bubble.
- We will take it from that point to help keep your constituents physically active and assist with building a healthy community.



BRING YEAR-ROUND TENNIS TO YOUR COMMUNITY

YEAR-ROUND



For more information, please contact

coveredcourts@tenniscanada.com

Tennis Canada | 2024

LET'S PLAY



“

These year-round covered courts are helping to grow the sport of tennis in Canada and providing communities with opportunities to stay active. As a pro tennis player, I know first-hand that accessibility for kids, and up-and-coming high-performance athletes, is truly helping to empower the next generation of Canadians.

– Bianca Andreescu



To have more covered courts, it's the most important thing. We already have great coaches and players, and now we have people who are interested in the sport – they want to play. But access is everything. They need access to courts, indoor courts, so they can play all year long. I think having that access is going to change a lot of things in the Canadian tennis landscape.

– Félix Auger-Aliassime



”



**Tennis Canada's
Municipal Tennis
Facilities Strategy &
Partnership Framework**

Who are Canada's tennis players?

- + **Tennis is gender-balanced.** Equally represented across all genders.
- + **Tennis is a sport for life.** Participants represented from ages 4 to 94.
- + **Tennis is popular among New Canadians.** 26% of tennis players were born outside of Canada.

Why do Canadians play tennis?

- + To **get active.** Tennis can be played at any age and it is easy to get started.
- + To **live longer.** Research shows that tennis can extend your life expectancy.
- + To **have fun while staying safe.** Tennis is a low-injury sport compared to other popular sports.

Tennis Canada's strategy to achieve affordable and accessible year-round recreation

- 1 **Alignment with national sport and recreation policies to get every Canadian active.**
- 2 **Flexible operating and ownership models** to meet the needs of all municipalities.
- 3 **Making the best use of space** through multi-sport and multi-functional facilities.
- 4 **Tools & resources** to help municipalities every step of the way.
- 5 **Supporting municipalities** so Canadians can play tennis in any community, any time of the year.

Tennis Canada is here to help

Want to keep your community active year-round? Tennis Canada has everything you need to make a year-round court facility a reality. To learn more about our program and access our planning tools, resources, and local contacts, reach out to us at coveredcourts@tenniscanada.com



A year-round four-court facility can...



Create a **variety of new jobs**



Provide a community of **50,000 access to year-round physical activity**



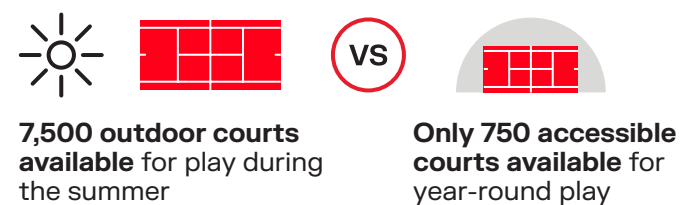
Run **hundreds of programs** for kids, adults and seniors



Be built **easily** by covering an existing bank of courts with an air-supported structure

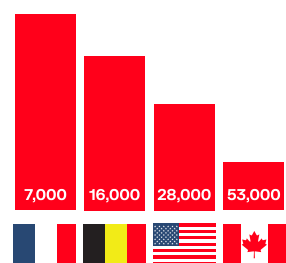


Where do Canadians play tennis?

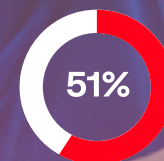


That's only 1 year-round court for every 53,000 Canadians...

How does Canada compare? Canada ranks poorly when it comes to year-round courts.



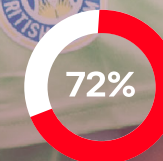
What are Canadians saying?



of Canadians would **play more tennis** if there was a **year-round tennis court nearby.**



agree that municipalities **should work with Tennis Canada** on the year-round tennis courts initiative.



liked or loved Tennis Canada's year-round tennis courts.

Independent market research was completed in August 2018 in conjunction with Charlton Insights.

Benefits for investing in year-round tennis



- + **Tennis is affordable;** it only needs a racquet and a few balls
- + **Tennis is accessible;** inclusive of all abilities and ages
- + **Cost-efficient and flexible** infrastructure options
- + **Courts returned to free public** use in the summer
- + **Multi-sport and multi-functional** facility design
- + **Generate a positive** net revenue
- + **Create new full and** part-time jobs
- + **Grow local** sport tourism
- + **Provide education,** coach certification & volunteering opportunities
- + **Increase the physical, mental & social** well-being of residents

Payton Nicol

Head Coach

Dalhousie Tennis Club

August 18, 2025

Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee

Dear Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my full support for the proposal to establish an indoor seasonal tennis dome at Gorsebrook Park, to be operated by Headstart Tennis. As Head Coach of the Dalhousie Tennis Club, I believe this project would provide an incredible benefit to both the university community and the wider Halifax region.

At Dalhousie, our tennis program currently consists of 24 student-athletes. However, each year, our tryouts attract more than 50 students eager to participate and play, but because of the limited availability of nearby indoor facilities, we are forced to turn away many interested players and cannot run as many practices as we would like. Currently, our training requires commuting to Bedford or Fairview, which presents barriers for many students who rely on public transportation or active transportation.

A dome at Gorsebrook Park would transform this reality. Placing year-round courts in the heart of the Peninsula would allow students and community members to walk, bike, or bus to practices and matches. This accessibility would enable us to expand participation, run more regular practices, and open the sport to a wider group of students who are currently excluded due to logistical challenges.

The benefits of the indoor dome would extend well beyond our team. The facility would serve universities, schools, and community members across the Peninsula, creating an inclusive and central hub for tennis. It would foster youth programming, support lifelong participation, and provide Halifax with much-needed indoor tennis infrastructure. More broadly, it represents an important investment in health, recreation, and community engagement for our city.

For these reasons, I respectfully encourage the Committee to approve the proposal for an indoor seasonal tennis dome at Gorsebrook Park. I am confident that this project will deliver significant and lasting benefits to Dalhousie students and to the Halifax community.

Sincerely,

Payton Nicol

Head Coach

Dalhousie Tennis Club

Attachment 3

HALIFAX REGIONAL
MUNICIPALITY

July 17, 2025

MUNICIPAL CLERK

From: [Office, Clerks](#)
To: [Ross Siegel, Simon](#)
Cc: [Vining, Krista](#)
Subject: FW: Written request to present to the Standing Committee on Comm
Date: Thursday, July 17, 2025 8:09:17 AM
Attachments: [CPED Standing Committee presentation request.docx](#)

Logging as presentation request to CPED.

Item 10.3.1

From: Jamie Douglas Power [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 16, 2025 11:02 PM
To: Office, Clerks <clerks@halifax.ca>
Subject: [External Email] Written request to present to the Standing Committee on Community Planning and Economic Development

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

I have attached a written request to present to the community planning and economic development standing committee.

Please let me know if there is anything further I must do.

With thanks,

Jamie Power
Owner/Operator,
Headstart Tennis

Redacted
[REDACTED]

Municipal Clerks Office

Date Distributed: August 13, 2025
Committee members, William Hatfield,
Maggie MacDonald

Meeting: CPED

Meeting Date: August 21, 2025

Item Number: 10.3.1

To: Municipal Clerk's Office
Halifax Regional Municipality
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Subject: Request to Present to the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee

Re: Enhancing Year-Round Access to Tennis and Active Living for Peninsula Residents

Dear Municipal Clerk,

On behalf of Headstart Tennis and with the full support of Tennis Nova Scotia, we respectfully request the opportunity to present to the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee at the earliest possible date.

Our presentation will outline a proposal to significantly increase access to tennis and active living opportunities for residents of the Halifax peninsula by enabling year-round use of municipal tennis courts. Specifically, we propose the seasonal installation of an air-supported dome over the planned four tennis courts at Gorsebrook Field. This would extend public access from the current 5–6 months to a full 12 months annually.

This model is being actively promoted by both Tennis Canada and Tennis Nova Scotia. It has already demonstrated long-standing success locally, most notably at Northcliffe Park, where seasonally covered public courts have operated successfully since January, 1992. This includes very successful operation by Headstart Tennis since 2016. With no indoor tennis currently available on the peninsula, and both existing centres in Clayton Park and Bedford operating near capacity, this proposal addresses a significant gap in recreation infrastructure.

The proposed Gorsebrook facility would be publicly accessible, provide affordable indoor sport opportunities (including pickleball at times) and support a broad range of community recreation and development goals. This would also build on the success of our Headstart program, which has already shown measurable benefits in youth development and active lifestyles.

From a broader perspective, this project offers considerable public benefit, including:

- Expanded year-round access to physical activity and community sport
- Economies of scale by leveraging existing municipal investment in court construction
- New employment and programming opportunities through public-private operational collaboration
- Economic spin-offs through tournaments, leagues, programming, special events, increased park usage, and sport tourism.

We are requesting the following from HRM:

- A 15–20 year lease agreement permitting us to seasonally dome the courts at Gorsebrook Field and operate a publicly accessible indoor tennis facility.
- That HRM move forward with the planned construction of the four tennis courts, including fencing and the required concrete grade beam to accommodate the dome
- Collaboration on the placement and design of the proposed public washrooms to support winter usage.
- Coordination on the precise positioning of the courts to ensure efficient snow removal and dome operation.

Headstart Tennis would fund and install the dome, as well as provide the air support, heating, lighting, and an on-site clubhouse. We would assume full responsibility for all operational and maintenance costs associated with the facility. We believe this project aligns strongly with the goals of the municipality's active living strategy and the vision for sustainable, inclusive community development. We welcome the opportunity to further present and discuss this initiative.

Sincerely,

Jamie Power
Owner/Operator - Headstart Tennis