



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

**Item No. 15.1.2**  
**Halifax Regional Council**  
**December 2, 2025**

**TO:** Mayor Fillmore and Members of Halifax Regional Council

**FROM:** Brad Anguish, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** October 30, 2025

**SUBJECT:** Recreation and Infrastructure Needs: New Timberlea School

---

### **ORIGIN**

February 3, 2025 Letter from Province of Nova Scotia inquiring about partnership opportunities for recreation amenities at new Timberlea school.

May 27, 2025 Halifax Regional Council motion (Item 18.1):

**MOVED by Councillor Steele, seconded by Councillor Hartling**

Direct the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to provide a staff report, relative to the new school being planned on Maple Grove Avenue and Amalfi Way in Timberlea, that identifies:

- a) opportunities and recommendations for municipal recreation enhancements; and
- b) infrastructure such as sidewalks that may be necessary to support the school, and prospective funding and timing from the province and/or municipality for the installation of such services.

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In September 2024, the Province of Nova Scotia announced plans to construct a new pre-primary to grade 8 school in Timberlea, designed to accommodate approximately 800 students. The school will be located on recently acquired provincial lands at Amalfi Way and Maple Grove Avenue.

The new school will include several recreational features, such as a gymnasium, cafetorium, soccer field, basketball court, and two playgrounds, with many of these facilities available for community use under a Service Exchange Agreement (SEA). The school will supplement existing local park amenities, and its proximity to the soon-to-be-completed Beechville Lakeside Timberlea (BLT) Community Centre means that the area's major recreational needs are increasingly being addressed.

The province invited the municipality to consider potential community recreation enhancements to the school, which would need to be municipally funded. Regional Council also requested this be considered through a motion that was made on May 25, 2025. Following a staff assessment, no enhancements are recommended due to spatial constraints on the school site and the range of nearby existing and planned recreational amenities. The development of future recreational facilities at the adjacent Amalfi Way Park with the development of the adjoining school site will be assessed.

Separate to the possible recreation enhancements, Regional Council raised concerns about the lack of sidewalks and multi-use pathways on Timberlea Village Parkway, an arterial road that students may use to access the school and nearby amenities. The terms of previous development and servicing agreements exempted the original developer of the surrounding subdivision from contributing to sidewalk and pathway costs.

Given the planned school development, its proximity to pedestrian destinations, and existing infrastructure, the need for additional pedestrian or active transportation infrastructure will be assessed. The municipality will also engage with the province to explore potential cost-sharing for any identified active transportation facility additions or upgrades, with updates to be provided through future capital and business plans or a separate staff report as necessary.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer to:

1. inform the Province of Nova Scotia that Halifax Regional Council has not identified recreation enhancements for municipal purposes to the new school being planned on Amalfi Way and Maple Grove Avenue in Timberlea; and
2. assess the need and priority for sidewalks and pathway improvements on Timberlea Village Parkway and as warranted, identify any such projects within future capital budgets and engage with the Province of Nova Scotia for funding contributions.

## **BACKGROUND**

In September 2024, the Province of Nova Scotia announced the construction of a new pre-primary to grade 8 school in Timberlea that is to accommodate approximately 800 students. The school will be located on PIDs 41436486 and 41327859, on Amalfi Way and Maple Grove Avenue, off Timberlea Village Parkway. The province recently acquired these lands and a third property, PID 41464694, that has not been identified as part of the school development (Attachment A).

The new school is to include the following recreational and cultural features:

- a gymnasium;
- a cafeteria (a combined cafeteria and auditorium);
- a soccer field;
- a basketball court; and
- two playgrounds.

Facilities, including the gymnasium and the soccer field, will be available to be booked by community groups under the terms of the Service Exchange Agreement (SEA) between the Halifax Regional Centre for Education and the municipality. In addition, other general facilities such as the basketball court and the playgrounds will be available to the community outside of regular school hours. There are four parks in the surrounding community, three of which are small local parks with playgrounds and limited space for other facilities or play lawns. The school site adjoins Amalfi Way Park, a larger park that was originally planned to include a sports field, but it has been programmed to date as general play lawn (Attachment B).

When new schools are being planned, the province has often invited municipalities to identify possible facility enhancements which would exceed the province's facility specifications for new schools. Such enhancements are for community use and are funded by municipalities. In February 2025 the province inquired if the municipality had community enhancements that it wished to have considered as part of the new Timberlea school. Separate to the province's inquiry, on May 27, 2025, Regional Council requested a staff report to identify opportunities and recommendations for municipal recreation enhancements at the

new school.

In addition to the possible school enhancements, Regional Council made note of the lack of sidewalks along Timberlea Village Parkway. They requested that the staff report also address the opportunities for the development of related community infrastructure such as sidewalks that may be necessary to support the school, and prospective funding and timing from the province and/or municipality.

## **DISCUSSION**

While both the prospective recreational enhancements and the sidewalk and alternative transportation infrastructure could have budget implications, they are separate considerations.

### **Recreation Enhancements**

Recreation enhancements that have typically been identified in other school projects have included:

- recreation centres as standalone facilities joined with schools;
- larger gymnasiums;
- equipment storage within gymnasiums;
- workout rooms, such as multi-purpose studios or weight and cardio rooms;
- sports field improvements including an enlarged field, an all-weather turf, and lights; and
- running tracks.

The province has advised that the overall school site's size and configuration are constrained, which results in insufficient space for additional outdoor recreation facilities such that only the recreation facilities that are required for the school are likely able to be reasonably established. The province's standard size soccer field will be developed at 67m by 107m, but there is insufficient space for a larger-sized sports field or a running track to be considered.

The province's standard size junior high gymnasium of 28.7m by 21.3m (611.3 sq. m) with a moveable partition will be constructed. This size gymnasium incorporates a full basketball court, but not two cross courts with basketball standards. An additional half gym will be constructed as well, to meet the provincial requirements for three separate gymnasium spaces for a school of this size. As the gymnasium will be part of a P-8 school, there will be relatively more opportunities for community use, when compared to high school, as it will not be extensively used by the school in the evenings.

Additionally, the municipality is completing the new Beechville Lakeside Timberlea (BLT) Community Centre, which is approximately 2 kilometres away. It will have many recreation assets available for direct public use without being shared with a school, including a full-size gymnasium of 816 square meters, which can be separated into two courts, multi-purpose rooms, a community kitchen, an outdoor playground, and a splashpad. These will complement other existing outdoor recreation facilities that include a sport court, a tennis court, a ballfield, and community gardens. Given the proximity of the BLT Community Centre and its facilities, the anticipated major public recreational needs within the community will be met.

A possible shortfall is the absence of the cardio/weight room at the BLT Community Centre. However, such a facility would be impractical at the new school as it would either need to be shared with the school with limited availability for the community or established as a standalone facility, which in either circumstance would require staffing for what is foreseen as a limited number of users without it being part of a larger recreation centre.

The new school's indoor and outdoor recreation facilities will provide the community with access to a new soccer field, a gymnasium, and other amenities that will be able to be used under the SEA Agreement. On this basis and with the limitations to consider additional facilities with the size and configuration of the school site, no community recreation enhancements at the school are recommended. Future possible uses and facilities at Amalfi Way Park and their relationship to the school site will be assessed with the province as planning for the school continues.

### **Sidewalks and Multi-use Pathways**

There are sidewalks on both sides of Amalfi Way and on one side of Maple Grove Avenue. There are no sidewalks or multi-use pathways on Timberlea Village Parkway. It is a controlled access, arterial street which would normally have such features based on current standards. A concern highlighted by Regional Council is that the lack of sidewalks may require students to use gravel shoulders when walking to/from the school, or when walking to nearby commercial areas at lunchtime.

The school site is within the Brunello subdivision, a planned community that was approved by the municipality in the early 2000s under the terms of a development agreement, which has been the subject of subsequent amendments. An option for a school, approximately in the area where the province has acquired its lands, was identified in the original and current plans for the subdivision, although possibly not of a size as is now being planned.

With the original development agreement for the Brunello subdivision, cost sharing arrangements were reached between the developer and the municipality. In the development agreement that was approved in December 2001, section 2.5.6 (b) (iii) states that “the developer will not be required to pay any costs associated with providing sidewalks along the [Timberlea Village Parkway].” Cost-sharing arrangements identified other capital improvements that would be funded by the developer, meaning that the municipality would be responsible for any future sidewalk and pathway improvements.

#### New Sidewalk Installment & Timberlea Village Parkway Condition

A recent Regional Council Report (January 23, 2024, Item 15.1.6) identified that there are a multitude of service gaps within the municipality’s existing sidewalk network, including Timberlea Village Parkway. The reasons for these gaps include:

- differing standards for street design over time;
- places where sidewalks may not have been necessary, but new development is now generating a need; and
- places where construction factors make adding a sidewalk prohibitive.

The report identified criteria to determine the prioritization of new sidewalk construction where these gaps exist. This includes the proximity of pedestrian destinations such as schools, stores and transit services, population density, existing road conditions, and social equity. Proximity to schools is recognized as an important factor in prioritizing projects, however these need to be considered with other projects. Based on the report and sidewalk assessment tool, each year five to seven new sidewalks are installed as part of recapitalization.

Timberlea Village Parkway is identified on the high need sidewalk rating list and has been reviewed for potential active transportation (AT) facilities (sidewalk or multi-use pathway). Given the significant work still required to identify the preferred facility type and complete detailed infrastructure design, implementation could not be aligned with the recent recapitalization program, and road recapitalization had to proceed without AT facilities. Functional planning and design are intended to begin as part of the proposed 2026/2027 Active Transportation capital program.

#### Future Timberlea Village Parkway Improvements

Based on the planned development of the school, and the need, physical requirements and priority for sidewalk or pathway improvements, Timberlea Village Parkway will be assessed and identified for a future capital budget project as appropriate. The high cost and design challenges, including the need for a stormwater system associated with constructing AT facilities on this long road segment, create challenges with implementation. Staff will investigate potential design options and funding opportunities to help move the project forward as part of future capital plans. As an immediate action, staff has installed rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFB) to upgrade the existing crossings on Timberlea Village Parkway at the Brunello Boulevard/Maple Grove Avenue and Marketway Lane/Amalfi Way intersections to improve pedestrian connections between the neighbourhoods on both sides of Timberlea Village Parkway.

### **Amalfi Way Park**

As a separate but related matter to any prospective community enhancements, the province has inquired about the use of part of Amalfi Way Park for a potential childcare centre. Additional information is being sought and as necessary, this matter will be brought to Regional Council for consideration through a separate report.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no immediate financial implications associated with this report. Any projects for sidewalks, pathways, or other infrastructure that may be considered in the future would be subject to the capital budget process, including evaluation, prioritization, and scheduling.

### **RISK CONSIDERATION**

There are no risks associated with the recommendations within this report.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

No community engagement was undertaken in preparing this report.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

The planning and development of a school and its related recreation facilities and active transportation improvements broadly contributes to environmental sustainability and complete communities.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

Regional Council could:

1. Identify specific recreation enhancements and direct the Chief Administrative Officer to advise the province on the municipality's interest in having such facilities accommodated at the new Timberlea school and return to Regional Council with a staff report that includes capital budget costs and implications.
2. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to take no further action to consider sidewalks and pathways as a priority upon the Timberlea Village Parkway.

### **LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

#### **Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, S.N.S. 2008, c. 39 as amended**

- 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 A – Location Map  
Attachment B – Local Parkland Context




---

Report Prepared by: Mackenzie Childs, Parks and Open Space Planner, Parks and Recreation, 902-430-3304  
Doug Reid, Parkland Planning Coordinator, Parks and Recreation, 902-237-7856  
Richard Harvey, Manager, Policy and Planning, Parks and Recreation, 902-476-5822

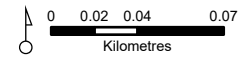
---



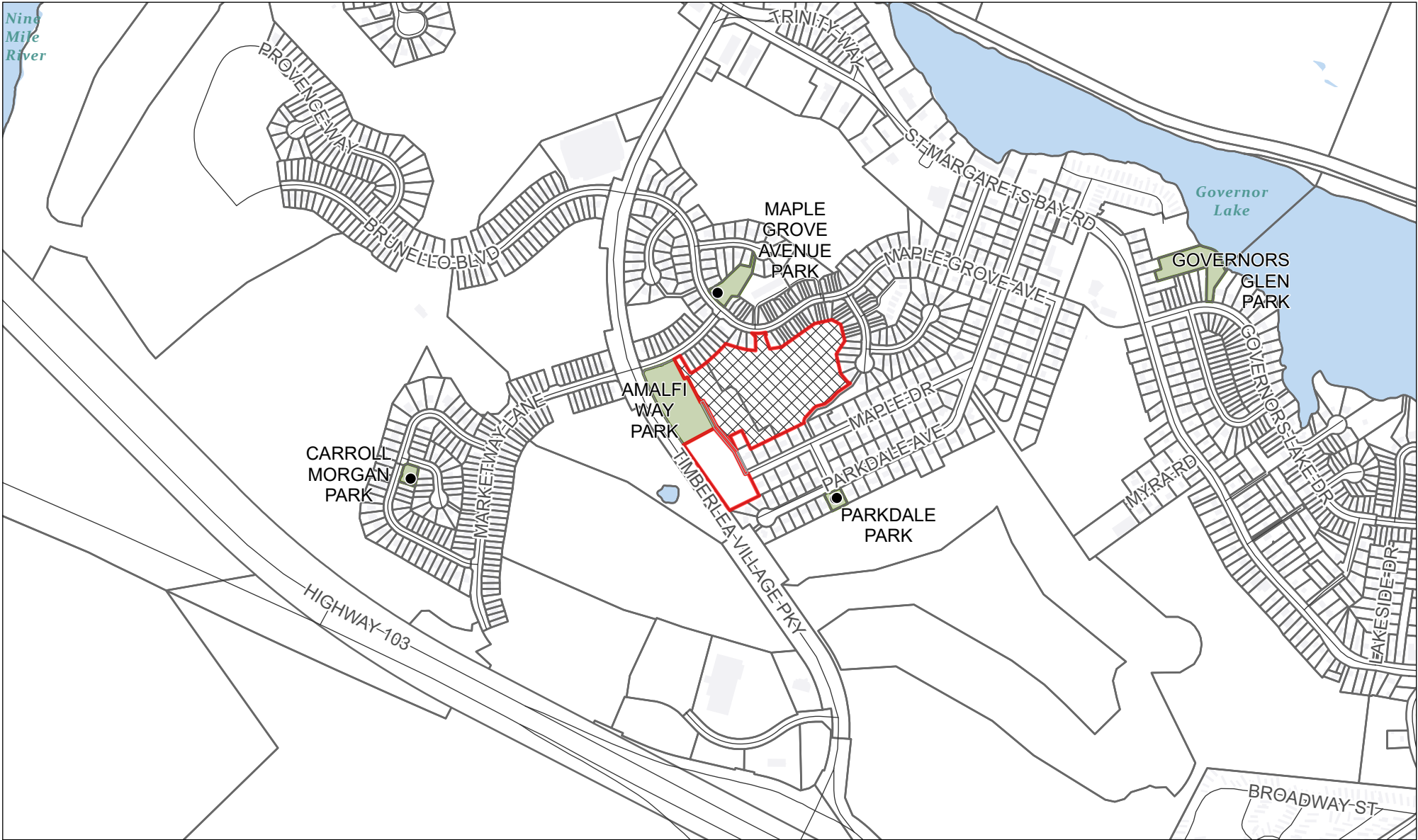
### New Timberlea School - Location Map

-  School Site
-  Provincial Lands
-  HRM Parkland

**HALIFAX**  
Parks & Recreation  
Policy & Planning



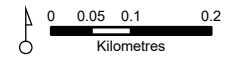
The accuracy of any representation on this map is not guaranteed.



### New Timberlea School Site - Parkland Context

-  School Site
-  Provincial Lands
-  HRM Parkland
-  Play Structure

**HALIFAX**  
**Parks & Recreation**  
**Policy & Planning**



The accuracy of any representation on this map is not guaranteed.