

# HALIFAX

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

**Item No. 11.1.4**  
**Halifax Regional Council**  
**August 31, 2021**

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

**SUBMITTED BY:** Original Signed by   
Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** Aug 10, 2021

**SUBJECT:** Funding for Field Enhancement – JL Ilsley High School

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## **ORIGIN**

June 29, 2021 Regional Council Meeting:

MOVED by Councillor Cuttell, seconded by Councillor Russell.

THAT Halifax Regional Council request a staff report in response to the request from the Province for funding for an enhanced grassed field at the new JL Ilsley High School in Spryfield, as per the attached letter from Transportation and Active Transit dated June 3, 2021.

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

## **LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

*Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*

Section 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;

## **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer to respond to the Province of Nova Scotia declining the funding request for an enhanced natural grass football field at the new JL Ilsley High School in Spryfield.

## **BACKGROUND**

JL Ilsley High School is in the community of Spryfield and was originally built in 1971 (Attachment A). In 2017, the province decided to replace the school at its existing location through a complete redevelopment of the site by removing its existing facilities and building a new school building, parking areas, and playing field. Construction is underway and the school is planned to be occupied in September 2021 (Attachment B).

The Province follows certain standards for the facilities that are to be established as part of any new school planning and construction (DC350 Design Requirements Manual). For a high school playing field, the standard is for the Province to construct a soccer field that is 67 by 107 metres in size. This makes them capable of being able to accommodate soccer games, other types of games that may not require larger fields, as well as practices for a full range of field sports. However, this field size does not enable regulation football games to be played.

When new schools are built, the Province consults with municipalities and community groups to determine if there are interests in making financial contributions to enhance school facilities beyond its normal facility standards. These may include enlarged gyms, equipment storage areas, theatres, and outdoor recreation infrastructure that may fill service gaps within communities. The difference in cost between the provincial standard and the enhancement is the amount that is requested that HRM contribute to the Province.

The construction of the new school is underway. However, the playing field and other site features such as parking areas, have yet to be built. The Province and the District Councillor have identified a local interest in an enhancement of the playing field, to change it from a soccer field to a football field. This change would narrow the playing field by 8 metres while considerably extending its length. On the current site plan (Attachment B), the field extension would replace the student parking area to the south and slightly extend it to the north, as well as change a small part of the driveway.

Pursuant to the letter dated June 3, 2021 (Attachment C) from the province, two figures were provided relating to the financial request. Upon further investigation into the request, the amounts are not firm as they are estimates and subject to market conditions. For the purpose of this staff report, the preliminary cost estimate of this enhancement is deemed to be \$950,000, subject to market conditions and further investigations. The June 3, 2021 letter from the Province to the Municipality also outlines a local interest in the playing field enhancement.

Regional Council's June 27, 2021 motion is for a staff report to provide a response to the field enhancement request from the Province. In order to be able to complete the overall project in time for the upcoming school year, provincial staff have confirmed that they require HRM's response by mid- August.

## **DISCUSSION**

From a general perspective, the proposed field enhancement would have merit if the new school would be disadvantaged without it or if there was a unique circumstance that warranted the football field. From a municipal service perspective, the field enhancement would be warranted if it were to fill a service gap.

### **Purpose of Field Enhancement Request**

JL Ilsley originally had a sports field which was lined for soccer, measuring approximately 60 by 90 metres, with the appropriate space for run off at the sides and ends of the field of play. Consistent with provincial standards, the new field, which has been planned to be developed as a soccer field, will be slightly larger at 67 by 107 metres, with 3m of run off space on all four sides. This field would be comparably programmed but larger than a number of Halifax Regional Centre for Education (HRCE) high schools, including but not limited to:

- Sackville High School
- Auburn Drive High School
- Cole Harbour High School
- Prince Andrew High School
- Dartmouth High School; and
- Millwood High School

From this perspective, the soccer field standard does not present a particular disadvantage to JL Ilsley, and is indicative of an overall service approach in which practices occur at these fields, while many games for sports, such as football, take place at larger fields and regional facilities.

#### School Football Program

While school athletic programs are not part of the municipality's mandate, they are supported by municipal recreation infrastructure. Extracurricular sports programs at HRCE high schools vary, but a large portion offer football, soccer, and rugby. Although many high school fields can accommodate soccer games, there is a tendency for them to be played at all-weather fields. Football games tend to be played on a combination of natural grass and all-weather field locations.

In the high school football season, there are typically eight regular season games and playoffs that extend into the middle of November. Except for Lockview and Bay View high schools, no other HRCE high school football program has what is deemed as a home field on the school site. Halifax West is located within walking distance of the Mainland Common all-weather fields and Charles P. Allan (CPA) High School is adjacent to an all-weather field which was constructed as a part of the overall partnership between the Province and HRM in developing the new CPA facility with the adjoined Bedford / Hammonds Plains Community Centre. Typically, HRCE high school football programs practice on their respective school grounds then play their games off site at a field which can accommodate competitive football.

The high school football regular season operates during the fall when there is less daylight. In 2019, 83% of HRCE regular season high school football games were played on municipal all-weather sport fields, which have flood lights. Natural grass sports fields have shorter seasons which often ends in October, leading to sports being scheduled at all-weather sport fields for extended seasons, which includes high school football. All-weather fields are also better suited for more intensive sports, such as tackle football, as they can withstand more wear and are available during and after high precipitation events that may close a grass field.

Additionally, due to the high school football league being province wide, there is a large portion of games played on weekends to accommodate travel. This scheduling counteracts the rationale for hosting games at school sites to convenience players or provide convenient access for the student body directly after school hours. In 2019, the JL Ilsley football program hosted three "home" games at the Graves Oakley sports field (2.6 km from the school) and one game at Mainland Common's all-weather field facility (7.6 km from the school). All other regular season games were hosted at all-weather locations when they were the visiting team.

#### Proposed Field Enhancement

As noted, a high school project includes a standard soccer field (67 x 107m) as part of its construction. An increase to a regulation football field would reduce the width to approximately 59m but increase the length to approximately 137m. The change to a football field would be approximately an additional 914 square metres or a 13% increase to the overall field area. Typically, in a community enhancement project, the additional funding provided by a municipality is based on the increased size of the recreational component or additional amenities and the related costs associated with the specific increase. The costs associated with the construction of the overall asset are not considered as a community enhancement as they are part of the base construction of the provincial facility.

In this case, based on the configuration of the site and proposed changes required to the field to accommodate the size of a football field, the request to HRM includes both the increased recreational amenities as well as significant construction costs such as earthworks, retaining wall and general construction expenses. Further, the letter outlines that the costs are subject to market conditions and requires that HRM agree to fund any overages in the budget. As a result, the cost to HRM could increase through the completion of the expansion and the municipality would not be in a position to mitigate and manage the work.

The \$950,000 estimated cost of the enhancement is significant given that field size would increase by only a small amount, although this is due to the limitations of the site and the considerable earthworks that would be required to support the field extension.

#### Community Programs Related to Football

While the municipality provides regional facilities that are considered multi-use, rather than sport specific, those fields are also able to accommodate community or recreational league play for football related games. There has been growth in youth non-contact flag football, however, it is played on shorter field dimensions than a standard tackle football field. Flag football takes place during the spring season and does not conflict with tackle football. Overall, there has not been increased demand for full-sized football fields within the municipality.

#### **Community Enhancement**

The *Education Act* provides the opportunity for HRM to provide funding to a school project to enable a community enhancement of the school to meet a community need. HRM has partnered with the Province in the past, primarily to co-locate recreation space with a school or to expand the size of a gymnasium such that it can be separated to host two activities.

School enhancement projects have been governed through the development of a Joint Use Agreement (JUA) between HRM and the Province. A JUA is a governing document which contains clauses and terms recognizing HRM's capital investment for the facility enhancement and a reciprocal access to the facility in exchange for the capital investment to meet recreational needs of the general community.

The construction of the new soccer field at the JL Ilesley school will meet the recreational needs of the general community and there will continue to be community access to the field similar to other schools. Therefore, there would be limited ability to achieve reciprocal access to a field for which there is already HRM and community access.

#### **Findings**

The enhanced football field does not present distinct advantages for community or alternative football programs. While it would accommodate additional high school football games, it would not have the same capabilities as regional all-weather field facilities that have flood lights and can be used in a variety of weather situations. Based on the regional field approach outlined in this report, the offer to enhance the field at JL Ilesley would not serve to fill an existing municipal service gap.

The findings in this report should not negate that there may be local interest and support in the football field being established at JL Ilesley. The short duration of time to prepare this report has not allowed a fulsome understanding of this request or more detailed assessments of overall field use. Based on the information as gathered and the overall approach to regional facilities being used for competitive football, there is limited municipal purpose for an enhanced football field that, in addition, would be at a relatively high cost. Therefore, the municipality should decline the offer to enhance the field at the school.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no immediate financial implications associated with the recommendation in this report.

If the staff recommendation is rejected and Regional Council chooses to proceed with one of the options outlined in the alternatives section, estimated costs are outlined in that section, estimated between a maximum of \$500,000 for alternative 1 and \$950,000 for alternative 2. Actual project costs may differ due to market conditions and potential cost overruns.

### **RISK CONSIDERATION**

The risks associated with this recommendation are low. Based on the recommendation the municipality would continue to concentrate its resources on regional recreational facilities for competitive field games.

There are a number of risks should the municipality agree to fund the school field enhancement as requested including that the municipality would be asked to contribute to other school field enhancements that are unrelated to filling a municipal service gap and the costs could rise putting undue burden on municipal taxpayers.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The request for funding by the Province specified some discussion with the local community. No community engagement was undertaken in the preparation of this report.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

No environmental implications were identified.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

If Regional Council chooses to proceed with an alternative, Regional Council must defeat the staff recommendation directing the Chief Administrative Officer to decline the funding request and pass a new motion such as one of the motions included in Alternative One or Alternative Two.

1. Should Regional Council decide a contribution is merited, on the basis of the high cost of the field enhancements (which are due to the characteristics of the site), Regional Council could direct the CAO offer to the Province HRM's support of the expansion project with a contribution of 50% of the cost of the expansion project up to \$500,000 or an alternative percentage and amount at Council's discretion.

It should be noted that provincial staff have advised that the Province would likely proceed with the standard sized soccer field should the municipality not fund the full cost of the enhancement. In accordance with Administrative Order Number 2020-009-ADM Respecting COVID-19 Regional Council can authorize a withdrawal from reserve without the review and recommendation of the Audit and Finance Standing Committee.

If Regional Council chooses to proceed with this alternative, the following motion may be passed:  
"That Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to negotiate and execute an agreement with the Province of Nova Scotia for a sport field enhancement at JL Ilesley High School

for 50% of the cost up to \$500,000 for reciprocal community benefit as deemed reasonable by the CAO with funding from Q421 (General Contingency Reserve).”

2. Regional Council could choose to fund the field enhancement at JL Ilesley at an estimated cost of \$950,000 subject to market conditions and acceptance of cost overages. This alternative would have some risk to the municipality such as the possibility of cost overages. The following motion may be passed:

“That Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to negotiate and execute an agreement with the Province of Nova Scotia for a sport field enhancement at JL Ilesley High School at a cost of \$950,000.00 with funding from Q421 (General Contingency Reserve).

### **ATTACHMENTS**

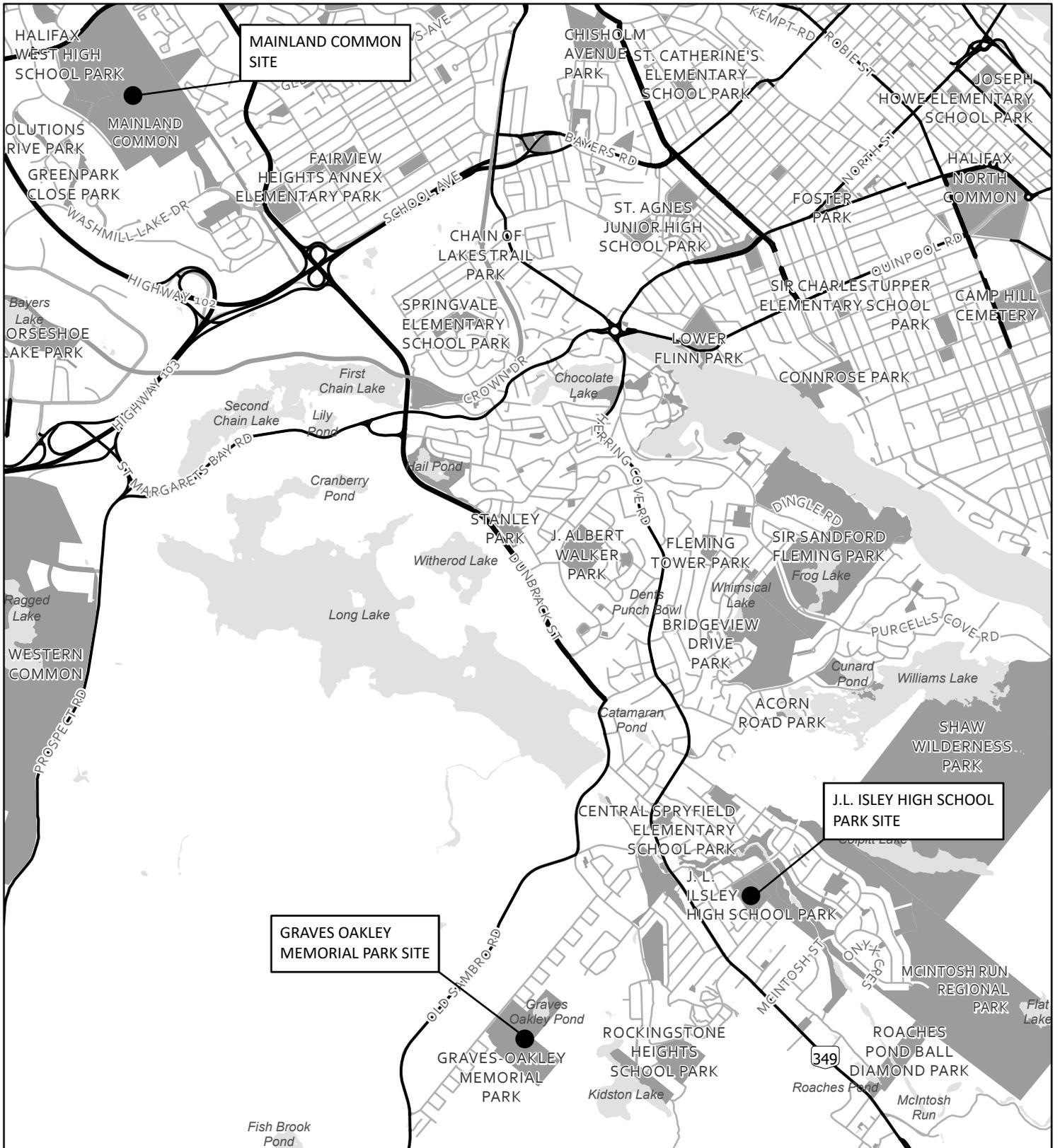
Attachment A JL Ilesley High School Location  
Attachment B School Site Plan  
Attachment C Letter from the Province

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A copy of this report can be obtained online at [halifax.ca](http://halifax.ca) or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

Report Prepared by: Phillip Hammond, Recreation Program Specialist, 902.233.0593  
Gareth Evans, Recreation Program Specialist, 902.292.1264  
Richard Harvey, Manager, Policy and Planning, 902.476.5822

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**J.L. ISLEY HIGH SCHOOL LOCATION**

- Nearest Sports Fields used by J.L. Isley Football Program (based on 2019 Field Schedule)
- HRM Park

**Distance from J.L. Isley High School Park site to:**  
 Graves Oakley Memorial Park Site (2.9km)  
 Mainland Common Site (7.6km)

**HALIFAX**  
 Parks & Recreation  
 Policy & Planning

N 0 0.5 1  
  
 Kilometers

# Attachment B School Site Plan



NORTH

### GENERAL NOTES

1. THIS DRAWING IS TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS.
2. SEE CIVIL DRAWINGS FOR SITE GRADING AND PAVEMENT LAYOUT AND DETAILS.
3. ALL LOCATIONS SHOWN ARE APPROXIMATE. ALL NEW LOCATIONS AND ELEVATIONS TO BE MARKED ON SITE BY CONTRACTOR AND APPROVED BY CONSULTANT PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF WORK.
4. ALL DISTURBED AREAS TO BE GRADED EVEN, COVERED WITH 150 MM OF TOPSOIL AND SODDED.

### LEGEND

- BARRIER FREE RAMP (SEE CIVIL DWGS)
- TRAFFIC SIGN
- NO VAPING NO SMOKING SIGN
- CCTV CAMERA (SEE ELEC DWGS)
- CATCH BASINS (SEE CIVIL DWGS)
- MAN HOLE (SEE CIVIL DWGS)
- PROPOSED DECIDUOUS TREE

### PLANT LIST

QTY	COMMON NAME	BOTANICAL NAME	SIZE / CONDITION
10	BASSWOOD	TILIA AMERICANA	60 MM CAL / WB
4	MAIDENHAIR TREE	GINKGO BILOBA	60 MM CAL / WB
9	PIN OAK	QUERCUS PALUSTRIS	60 MM CAL / WB
10	RED MAPLE	ACER RUBRUM	60 MM CAL / WB
10	SUGAR MAPLE	ACER SACCHARUM	60 MM CAL / WB

### TRAFFIC SIGN SCHEDULE

SYMBOL	QUANTITY	DESCRIPTION
A	6	STOP
B	2	DO NOT ENTER
C	2	DO NOT ENTER BUSES AND AUTHORIZED VEHICLES ONLY MON-FRI 7:30 AM - 4:30 PM SEPT. 1 - JUNE 30
D	1	DO NOT ENTER STAFF PARKING & AUTHORIZED VEHICLES ONLY MON-FRI 7:30 AM - 4:30 PM SEPT. 1 - JUNE 30
E	2	ONE WAY WITH ARROW LEFT
F	8	NO PARKING MON-FRI 7:30 AM - 4:30 PM
G	7	NO PARKING ANYTIME WITH ARROWS BOTH DIRECTIONS
H	6	SPEED HUMPS (IN ACCORDANCE WITH HRM STANDARD)
J	4	BARRIER FREE PARKING



**NOVA SCOTIA**  
Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal  
Building Project Services Division  
Engineering Design & Construction Section

KEY PLAN

**MARCO**  
BUILDERS OF ATLANTIC CANADA

**ha**  
harveyARCHITECTURE

Gordon Ratcliffe  
**LANDscape ARCHITECTS**  
2005 Route 320, RR #1  
HARBORLAND, NOVA SCOTIA  
CANADA, B0J 1T0

TEL: (902) 478-3083  
FAX: (902) 487-1198  
g.ratcliffe@ra.ca

DATE	MARK	ISSUE
2020.08.04	5	ISSUES FOR CONSTRUCTION
2020.06.03	4	REQUIRED - FIRE ACCESS
2020.05.20	3	ISSUES FOR PARKING
2020.04.03	2	SPR SUBMISSION
2019.12.04	1	ISSUES FOR DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

STAMP

GORDON RATCLIFFE

SCALE AS NOTED

DRAWN BY: LG

CHECKED BY: GR

REVIEWED BY: GR

APPROVED BY: GR

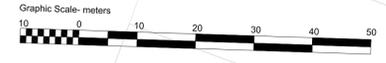
AS-BUILT CHECK

DATE: 09/25/19

PROJECT  
JL ISLEY HIGH SCHOOL

SYLVIA AVE  
PROJECT NO.: F01-55-02-01

SHEET TITLE  
LANDSCAPE PLAN



June 3, 2021

Mr. Jacques Dube  
Chief Administrative Officer  
Halifax Regional Municipality  
P.O. Box 1749  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
B3J 3A5

Dear Mr. Dube:

I am pleased to advise the construction of the new JL Ilesley High School is proceeding very well, and it will open this upcoming school year. This modern educational facility will service the community for many years to come.

As part of this school construction project, we will construct a soccer field next to the new school. Discussions have taken place within the community and a request has been made by representatives of the community to construct a football field instead of the standard soccer field. This change is considered an enhancement to our provincial standard and therefore requires the financial support of the municipal unit to proceed. The current estimate to upgrade the standard soccer field to a standard football field is \$950,000, see attachments. The cost estimate is subject to change due to current market conditions. This estimate covers the incremental cost to increase the size of the field to the standard size football field and all the additional site work required.

To proceed with the construction of the football field, HRM is required to provide written confirmation to support and fund the enhancement and any overages in budget due to market conditions. We require approval and funding support from HRM regarding this enhancement by July 9, 2021. Any delay in receiving this information will impact the schedule for the project.

We look forward to your decision.

Sincerely,



Paul T. Lafleche  
Deputy Minister

c: Eiryn Devereaux, Deputy Minister, Infrastructure and Housing  
Brendan MacGuire, MLA, Halifax Atlantic  
Patty Cuttell, Councillor District 11, Spryfield

# JL Ilsley High School

## Football Field - Construction Costing Matrix

March 2020

Item	Description of Constructability Workslope	Grass Football Field & 8 Stall Parking Lot
1	Delete 64 Student Parking Stalls & walks/curbs	(\$128,000)
2	Delete Soccer Field (Hydroseeded) - Credit	(\$99,055)
3	Add Football Field - Hydroseeded	\$144,609
4	Add Football Field - Artificial Turf	\$0
5	Add Concrete Pads for Bleachers - 4 ea.	\$14,000
6	Add Football Field Bleachers - 4 ea.	\$34,000
7	Additional Earthworks (Rock Cut) - Extend the field south where 56 parking stalls were deleted	\$300,000
8	Additional Earthworks (Rock Cut) - Extend the field east into the highest rock shelf	\$100,000
9	Add North Retaining Wall at Rink Side	\$312,500
10	Replace Loss of 2 LEED credits with Grey water Credits	\$0
11	Reduce Landscaping	(\$2,139)
12	Construction General Expense, Staffing & Mark-Up (1 month schedule extension)	\$165,732
<b>Additional Cost Compared to the original budget</b>		<b>\$841,647</b>
Contingency (5%)		\$42,082
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$883,729</b>
<b>With Inflation (3%)</b>		<b>\$910,241</b>