

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

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

**DATE:** April 7, 2022

**SUBJECT:** **Community Engagement Results on the Future of 10 Monique Avenue,  
Dartmouth (site of the Gray Memorial Arena)**

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## **ORIGIN**

February 12, 2019 Regional Council motion (Item 14.1.1):

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Mancini, seconded by Councillor Karsten

THAT Halifax Regional Council:

1. Decline the offer of purchase from Soccer Nova Scotia;
2. Re-categorize the property from Community Interest property to Ordinary Sale Clause 2(2)(c) of Administrative Order 50;
3. Direct staff to pursue disposal of the subject property for market value in accordance with the re- categorization; and
4. Direct staff to conduct community consultation to receive feedback concerning possibilities for the redevelopment of the lands and report back to Council with the results of the consultation and for future direction.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED

## **LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

*Halifax Regional Municipality Charter* (HRM Charter), 2008, S.N.S c.39,

Powers of Municipality regarding property

61 (1) The Municipality may acquire and own property granted or conveyed to the Municipality either absolutely or in trust for a public or charitable purpose.

(2) Where property is conveyed to the Municipality in trust for a public or charitable purpose, the Municipality holds the property according to the terms of the trust and may do anything necessary to carry out the objects of the trust.

(3) The property vested in the Municipality, absolutely or in trust, is under the exclusive management and control of the Council, unless an Act of the Legislature provides otherwise.

63. (1) The Municipality may sell or lease property at a price less than market value to a non-profit organization that Council considers to be carrying on an activity that is beneficial to the Municipality.
- (2) A resolution to sell or lease property referred to in subsection (1) at less than market value shall be passed by a two-thirds majority of the Council present and voting.
- (3) Where the Council proposes to sell property referred to in subsection (1) valued at more than ten thousand dollars at less than market value, the Council shall first hold a public hearing respecting the sale.
- (4) The Council shall advertise the public hearing at least twice, in a newspaper circulating in the Municipality, the first notice to appear at least fourteen days before the hearing.
- (5) Notice of the public hearing shall include the date, time and place of the hearing, the location of the real property or description of the tangible personal property, the estimated value of the property and the purpose of the sale.

*Administrative Order 50, the Disposal of Surplus Real Property Administrative Order.*

**Clause 2(2)(b)**

(2) The Municipality will dispose of real property Council determines is no longer required for the purposes of the Municipality. Staff will identify surplus properties by the following categories:

**Community Interest**

- (b) Properties known to have potential for community use, in particular where:
- (i) there has been a prior community or institutional use of the property; or
  - (ii) by location or scarcity of available property the consideration would reasonably arise.

3 (5) Corporate Real Estate staff will prepare a Surplus Property Report to Council which will attach lists of properties by category. The report will recommend that all lists of properties should be declared by Council to be surplus property, that each category be approved by Council, and that the disposal method recommended for each list under this policy be approved by Council.

(6) Council may approve the recommendations, **may remove any property from any list**, and may move any property from one list to another list, and may declare the lists, or any of them, surplus to the Municipality's requirements.

**Section 19 of Schedule 1 of Administrative Order 50**

- (1) Upon receiving a recommendation, Council may consider any alternative method of disposing of community interest property if:
- (a) there are no applications by eligible non-profit organizations received within the applicable period of time for the disposal method initially selected; or
  - (b) Council rejects all the complete applications the Municipality received from eligible non-profit organizations.
- (2) If subsection 1 applies, notwithstanding Administrative Order One respecting rescission, Council may by majority vote:
- (a) direct another method of disposal;
  - (b) reclassify the property in accordance with this Administrative Order and dispose of the property in accordance with that reclassification; or
  - (c) subject to subsection 3, take such action as Council considers appropriate.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council:

- 1) Remove, pursuant to section 3(6) of AO 50, 10 Monique Avenue, Dartmouth from the list of properties which by the July 29, 2014 motion of Council was declared surplus to the needs of the Municipality;
- 2) Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to include \$100, 000 in the 2023/24 operating budget to dedicate adequate resources for the creation of a redevelopment program for 10 Monique Avenue, Dartmouth; and
- 3) Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to utilize the redevelopment program to:
  - a. re-assess municipal needs for 10 Monique Avenue, Dartmouth, to be informed by existing and proposed community facilities in the broader community; and
  - b. progress the engagement findings and partnership interests generated from the community consultations.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Council-directed engagement stemming from the February 2019 Regional Council motion demonstrated significant community interest in the continued use and redevelopment of 10 Monique Avenue, Dartmouth (“the **Site**”). The engagement program directly engaged with over 1,200 residents, had more than 1,000 website visits, and generated 1,150 ideas for future use. Most of the ideas were for community spaces such as a community/recreation facility and outdoor spaces for enjoying nature, parkland and recreational activities.

Shifting priorities and a growing recognition of the potential community and municipal value warrant the Site’s removal from HRM’s surplus property catalogue. As a substantial municipal holding in a community recognized as a priority for investment, staff advise that the Site could be deemed a strategic project in the future, pending the results of the redevelopment program, with the necessary resources and cross-departmental collaboration. This program should build on the engagement results to further explore possibilities for continued municipal use, community revitalization, and/or partnerships for the future of the site.

## **BACKGROUND**

The 1.9 hectare (4.7 acre) Gerald B. Gray Memorial Arena Site at 10 Monique Avenue is a substantial municipal land holding in the diverse community of Dartmouth North, within the boundaries of the neighbourhood known as “Between the Bridges” (Attachment A). This Site was zoned Park in recognition of a shortage of usable green space<sup>1</sup> and since its construction in 1975, the Arena has seen steady use, predominantly from outside the community. The following sections highlight features of the Site, surrounding community and previous surplus land history, in addition to results of the community engagement program.

### **The Site – 10 Monique Avenue**

The Site is located at the corner of Monique Avenue and Farthington Place, in the heart of a dense, predominantly residential neighbourhood. Residential uses include a mix of single unit and semi-detached dwellings and mid- and high-rise apartment buildings (Attachment A). The area is considered a high-density

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<sup>1</sup> Policy 4.1 Dartmouth Municipal Planning Strategy, as amended November 30, 2019

neighbourhood; more than 2,400 households are located within a 10-minute walk of the Site, in an area of approximately 1 km<sup>2</sup> (97.3 hectares). With an average Nova Scotian household size of 2.3 persons (2016 Census), approximately 5,500 people live close to the Site, many of whom are housed in multi-unit buildings without traditional backyards. Attachment B provides details on the features and planning considerations for the Site. It is a predominantly level, 1.9-hectare (4.7 acres) lot with a swath of open space, play areas, a parking lot (containing 66 parking spaces) and a 2,600 m<sup>2</sup> (27,800 ft<sup>2</sup>) arena.

The Gray Arena was developed in the 1970s and was predominantly used for hockey, skating, and other ice surface activities. In 2014, the ice surface was considered surplus as a result of the development of the RBC Centre (Burnside 4-pad); however, the Arena is still in use today for dry surface bookings. While the Arena and parking lot have generally been used by those outside of the neighbourhood who drive to the site for sporting activities, the community typically uses the outdoor play areas and open space. Both the Arena and the outdoor areas may be nearing the end of their functional life cycle and could require significant financial investment to maintain their current uses.

**Surplus History**

Attachment C outlines the surplus history of the Gray Memorial Arena Site. Since being declared surplus to community parks and recreation requirements by HRM in 2014, the disposal route has shifted several times, while the Arena and Site continue to be used. A recommendation to recategorize the Site from “Community Interest” to “Ordinary” and proceed with market sale went to Regional Council in [February 2019](#). The recommendation was amended to suspend moving forward with the sale to allow for comprehensive engagement and community visioning on the future of the Site, to inform Council’s next steps.

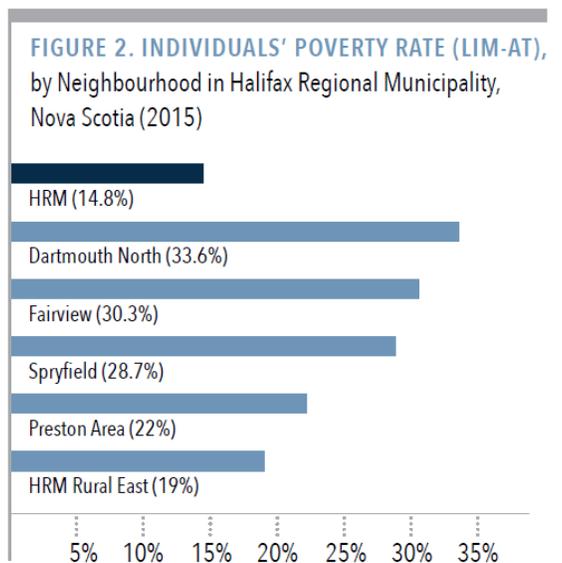
**Dartmouth North**

The Site is in the community known as Dartmouth North or “Between the Bridges”, conveniently located between the MacDonald and MacKay Bridges. Attachment D provides demographic information on the community, derived from the 2016 Census. The demographics illustrate that the community has lower incomes, needs access to affordable housing, and experiences high turnover.

This community has a strong base of active, long-time residents and newcomers. Many local organizations are working to bring people together for positive change and to strengthen community connections, such as Inspiring Communities, Take Action Society, Islamic Association of Nova Scotia, North Grove (formerly the Dartmouth North Food/Family Centres), etc. HRM has a role to play in addressing inequities and building community resilience. Investment has been made with the recent renovations to the Dartmouth North Library and those underway at the Dartmouth North Community Centre. The combined facility is located within one kilometer of the Gray Memorial Arena.

The June 2018 HRM Affordable Housing Work Plan recognized “Between the Bridges” as a vulnerable community and the primary location for efforts to address inequities in housing and other determinants of wellbeing. HRM’s Building Poverty Solutions (2018) ranked Dartmouth North as experiencing the highest individual rate of poverty of the five HRM communities identified with deeply rooted conditions of poverty. Poverty Solutions recommends developing a better understanding of and action around quality of transportation, food, housing, and access to services. The Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy recognizes Dartmouth North as a unique place requiring more engagement, investment, and services to achieve community-supported revitalization (Attachment E). The Highfield Park Drive Centre is identified

*Figure 1 2018 HRM Building Poverty Solutions*



as an area of significant future growth which could generate even greater demand for public amenities that could be accommodated on the Site.

## **DISCUSSION**

Given key municipal documents and directions recognizing North Dartmouth as a unique community requiring increased efforts and engagement to address inequities, staff advise building on the 2019 engagements through the creation of a re-development plan for the Site with the following considerations in mind:

The lessons learned from this engagement process and emerging best practices in municipal land holdings should be used to inform HRM practices beyond this Site. This is especially important for communities that have been traditionally under-served or are considered vulnerable. Before further decisions on the lands are made, HRM should further engage with the community to understand how the lands or programming on the sites may better suit the needs of community. Staff have researched and developed resources to support consideration of the following:

- **Engaging Communities:**

As facilities age and communities evolve, HRM business units regularly consider the future of land and asset holdings such as this Site through strategic planning exercises such as the Long-Term Arena Strategy, Community Facilities Master Plan (CFMP2), and the Green Network Plan. However, during this engagement program, there was interest expressed in potentially requiring comprehensive community engagement for municipal land holdings located in vulnerable communities. This would assist business units in reviewing their assets against criteria for vulnerability, and through protocols for engagement such as the Diversity and Inclusion Lens. Staff recommend that this continue to be explored, based on the ideas and community wisdom generated from this engagement process.

- **Exploring Community Land Trusts (CLT):**

A CLT is a not-for-profit corporation that is typically resident and local organization-led and created to acquire and hold land for the benefit of a community. In urban centres, they have typically been used with the objective of redevelopment without displacement. Cities have worked with these groups to secure lands and effectively take them off the private market to ensure the affordability of the buildings or uses on the land. The land is owned by the CLT, while the buildings or uses on the land are leased to residents or not-for-profit organizations who manage affordable rental housing, community gardens and urban farms, greenhouses, community greenhouses, park space, market space, and commercial space.<sup>2</sup> Many CLTs have expanded their purpose beyond managing lands to capacity building endeavors, such as educating residents about building credit and general finance, training residents in community leadership, board governance and civic engagement, and providing opportunities for youth leadership. Depending on the governance model of the CLT, enabling legislation may be required to pursue a CLT.

- **Exploring Municipal Development Corporation (MDC):**

Many Canadian cities are expanding the role of in-house real estate functions or are creating MDCs to lead the development of sites. Most MDCs have a mandate of focusing on defined communities with the aim of kickstarting revitalization. Other MDCs have a dispersed geographic scope with the main objective being to generate revenue for the Municipality. With increasing public interest in the retention and redevelopment of public lands for continued community use, on November 23, 2021 Regional Council [passed a motion](#) directing staff to prepare a report exploring MDC models, which will include consideration of the potential benefits of municipally-led development approaches for public lands with the potential for major community impacts. Again, depending on the governance model of the MDC, enabling legislation may be required to pursue an MDC.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://plannersweb.com/wp-content/uploads/1996/07/1622.pdf>

### Redevelopment Program

As a large, central, and relatively easy to develop land holding in the rapidly growing Regional Centre, this Site has the potential to be an important component in community-supported revitalization efforts. Staff are recommending building on the engagements through the creation of a re-development program for the Site.

*... continue the social, environmental, and economic development of the Dartmouth North community while providing additional opportunities to re-invest in the area, including infill development on vacant and under-utilized lands. Due to the current road network and large lot sizes, this Centre may benefit from further subdivision that support improved pedestrian and transit connections, and more diverse and human-scale developments.*

Regional Centre MPS, 2.5.2

The program could explore options for municipally owned assets or community ownership/partnership, redevelopment of the Arena lands, parceling off portions of the Site for different interests and revisiting municipal amenities such as the active transportation corridor, parks and open spaces. A program developed in consultation with the community and interested partners could provide the space and time to explore the opportunities listed below and uncover new ones.

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Redevelopment plans for sites of this scale are multi-year initiatives, factoring in procurement of consultants/reports (if required), community engagement and exploration of options for redevelopment. Staff are recommending that funding and resources for the program be incorporated into 2023/24 budget and business planning process, ensuring sufficient resources and internal commitments are applied to exploring redevelopment options. The program should include, but not be limited, to the following:

- consideration of the connectivity of the Site, potential land uses, transportation network, recreation facilities, parks and open spaces and other community needs/context;
- assessment to determine adaptive re-use potential or demolition of the existing Arena facility;
- review of the urban design and architectural context of the neighbourhood, specifics of the site, and development of design guidelines;
- additional consultation and expansion on the engagement findings to further identify community needs, interests, and potential partners; and
- identification of options for Council to consider outlining the costs, planning considerations, municipal role, and tenure partnerships required.

### Related Municipal Initiatives

HRM is undertaking or recently completed initiatives that could impact/inform the redevelopment of the Site:

- Participatory Cities: HRM is supporting the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre in a Participatory Cities initiative and exploring the potential for other opportunities. The redevelopment of this Site should be informed by the collaborative practices of Participatory Cities: building flexible and supportive spaces for people to learn more about each other and work together for the future wellbeing of their communities through eating, moving, and making.
- Centre Plan: Currently, the designation for the Site is Parks and Community Facility. The Centre Plan development agreement options for large parcels of land allow for more flexible design, partitioning, and comprehensive development of sites. A rezoning or MPS amendment may be necessary for future uses not permitted within the designation.
- Local Food Hub: JustFOOD Halifax (HRM and the Halifax Food Policy Alliance), the Mobile Food Market, NourishNS, and Farmer's Markets of Nova Scotia have developed a concept and are undertaking a feasibility study to develop a local food hub. A local food hub would create centralized infrastructure to distribute local food to meet the regional need, with public spaces to increase

*While community-based efforts have been able to achieve positive results, there may be persistent gaps in public infrastructure, mobility connections, and community facilities and services that can benefit from additional municipal support. This municipal support may include data collection, community consultation, and the development of a local vision and action plans that guide community, business and government initiatives and investments. Regional Centre MPS, 5.5*

access and connections to food. Access to food and space for food production were an important theme of the engagements, and food uses would be a natural fit in the redevelopment.

### **Continued Interim Use of the Arena**

While the creation of a redevelopment program for the Site will take time, there is the potential for continued use of the Arena provided there is ongoing maintenance, and it is deemed safe for public use.

While the Arena continues to be used for purposes outside of its original design, the costs of upkeep may continue to grow, and the facility might need significant investment or replacement to meet current standards and safety requirements. Through the engagement program, some community organizations and outside sporting interests identified an interest in the adaptive re-use of the existing Arena. The exploration of redevelopment is expected to include an updated, comprehensive building assessment to determine the viability and costs of continued use or adapted use of the building.

While access to the Site has been limited during COVID-19, the Arena was used to support FeedNS's emergency food distribution program and storage overflows. In September 2021, the Arena was opened to provide shelter for homeless people. In January 2022, those staying at the Arena were transitioned to the Dartmouth modular housing or to hotel accommodations with support from Out of The Cold. The Arena was then returned to its recreational uses.

Community access to the Arena is typically booked through Parks and Recreation as a dry-floor sporting activity. In this interim period, Staff are recommending exploring options to use the Arena to promote the redevelopment planning and provide community access, re-establishing a connection to the facility and demonstrating a commitment to continued community use.

Parks and Recreation staff have prepared a Staff Report "*Potential Indoor Skate Park Space*". This Report considers wheeled sports, and other dry floor recreation programs within the Arena and the promotion and booking of this facility for these uses. This interim use is in keeping with the engagement findings and recommendations of this Report, provided low cost, community access is included and prioritized. The lack of affordable and available flexible space was a consistent message during engagements. With the temporary closure of the Dartmouth North Recreation Centre for renovations, Staff are hearing of increased demand for community space, which provides additional support for enabling community use in the interim. The Dartmouth North Recreation Centre is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2022 and as noted is within 1km of the Site. The condition of the Arena should continue to be monitored as use might have to be suspended if there are any major issues with the building infrastructure that can't be addressed through standard maintenance.

### **Conclusion**

HRM has recognized Dartmouth North as a focus for investment and provision of municipal services. As a substantial municipal holding, in a dense and vital neighbourhood, this Site could be leveraged to create opportunities for the community to come together and build resilience. These engagements identified considerable community interest in spaces and places for being active, sharing knowledge and enjoying nature. The impact of investing in Dartmouth North could exceed the monetary value of divesting of the property. Staff are recommending investing in a redevelopment program, building on these engagement results to further explore possibilities and partnerships for the future of the Site. Exploring options for low-cost community access to the Arena in the interim period, re-establishing the community connection to the Site and offering much needed community space is also recommended.

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*I would like to see this site as a multi-faith and multicultural centre in near future...  
We like to come together with different faith and culture to share our ideas, show love and care for each other.*

Survey Respondent

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### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 1) Costs to engage a consultant to prepare a development framework for the consideration of future large municipal land holdings is estimated at \$100,000. Internal capacity, the requirement for consultant support or reports, as well as staff resources will be considered as part of the 2023/24 budget and business planning process.
- 2) Other costs associated with the future of the Site are to be determined through the redevelopment plan process and presented to Council in a follow-up report.
- 3) Costs associated with continued operation and maintenance of the Gray Arena, estimated at \$160,000 per annum for the interim period until the redevelopment plan is complete or the building ceases to be functional for the interim uses. If there are additional costs determined through the exploration of low-cost community access in the interim, these will be covered through existing operating budgets or brought to Council for consideration.
- 4) Potential costs associated with the building demolition are estimated at \$250,000.00, should the building cease to be functional and be deemed unsafe to remain standing.

The 4- year estimated financial implications are summarized as follows:

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>
<b>Operating – Cost Centre</b>	\$0	\$100,000	\$0	\$0

### **RISK CONSIDERATION**

In addition to providing feedback to inform Council's decisions, community engagement is also about building connections and establishing trust. Lack of trust in HRM and previous failures to meet expectations was identified as an issue in the community of Dartmouth North. Engaging with the community on the future of the site and then not acting on this could further damage trust and relationships with the community.

Many HRM policies and plans recognize Dartmouth North as a vulnerable community and commit to increased engagement, planning, and investment to address inequities. This Site presents an opportunity to consider how a significant municipal asset could be leveraged to strengthen the community and act as a catalyst for positive change.

As the old Arena is continuing to be used, Staff recommend ensuring that it is safe for continued use, until it is no longer functional or the redevelopment plan is completed, whichever comes first.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Attachment F of this report outlines the variety of opportunities offered for the community to engage and share their ideas for the future of the Site. The engagements led to direct connections with more than 1,200 people and approximately 1,000 people visited the project website on Shape Your City. 1,150 unique ideas for the future of the site were submitted through the engagement.

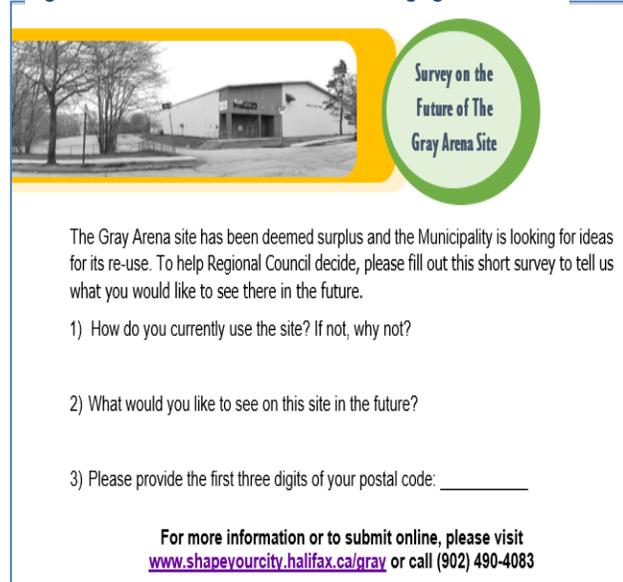
### Community Engagement Program

Planning and Development (P&D) led the community engagement, developing a working team which included staff from Corporate Real Estate.

Based on the Council motion and discussion; it was clarified that the purpose of the engagement program was to hear directly from community members on their vision for the site. Engagement was designed around the basic questions in Figure 2 and the following objectives:

- Clearly establish context and the purpose of engagements;
- Increase awareness of the opportunity to provide feedback to inform Regional Council's decisions on the next steps for the site;
- Offer a variety of ways for community members to be heard, at their convenience; and
- Create a welcoming atmosphere that encouraged the generation and sharing of ideas.

Figure 2: Basic Questions for all Engagements



The Gray Arena site has been deemed surplus and the Municipality is looking for ideas for its re-use. To help Regional Council decide, please fill out this short survey to tell us what you would like to see there in the future.

- 1) How do you currently use the site? If not, why not?
- 2) What would you like to see on this site in the future?
- 3) Please provide the first three digits of your postal code: \_\_\_\_\_

For more information or to submit online, please visit [www.shapeyourcity.halifax.ca/gray](https://www.shapeyourcity.halifax.ca/gray) or call (902) 490-4083

Prior to consultation, staff met with on-the-ground experts, including Between the Bridges (Inspiring Communities), Dartmouth North Food Centre (North Grove), Dartmouth North Association, the Public Good Society, and the Dartmouth North Library, and Recreation staff at the Dartmouth North Community Centre whose valuable advice shaped the engagements including:

- going to where people already gather;
- offering food to draw in busy residents;
- making events accessible and friendly for all;
- building trust through partnering with people and organizations with community standing; and
- inviting people to the Site for a community party, as many residents would not be familiar or feel comfortable there.

The project team connected with over 1,200 people through the mailouts, community party, pop-ups, surveys, etc. Over 1,000 people visited the project website (<https://www.shapeyourcityhalifax.ca/gray>) and advertisements, posters, social media and network connections were used to spread the word. The surveys, posters, conversations and children's drawings generated approximately 1,150 discrete ideas for the future of the site. These ideas were grouped into broad categories of space use or focus; Figure 3 below illustrates distribution by category and Table 2 of Attachment F provides more information about the categories and count of the specific ideas submitted under them.

**Engagement Results**

Connections with more than 1,200 residents and 1,000 website visits, generated 1,150 unique ideas for the future of the Site (Attachment F). 42% of all ideas were for a recreation or community facility and 30% for outdoor space for enjoying nature and recreational activities.

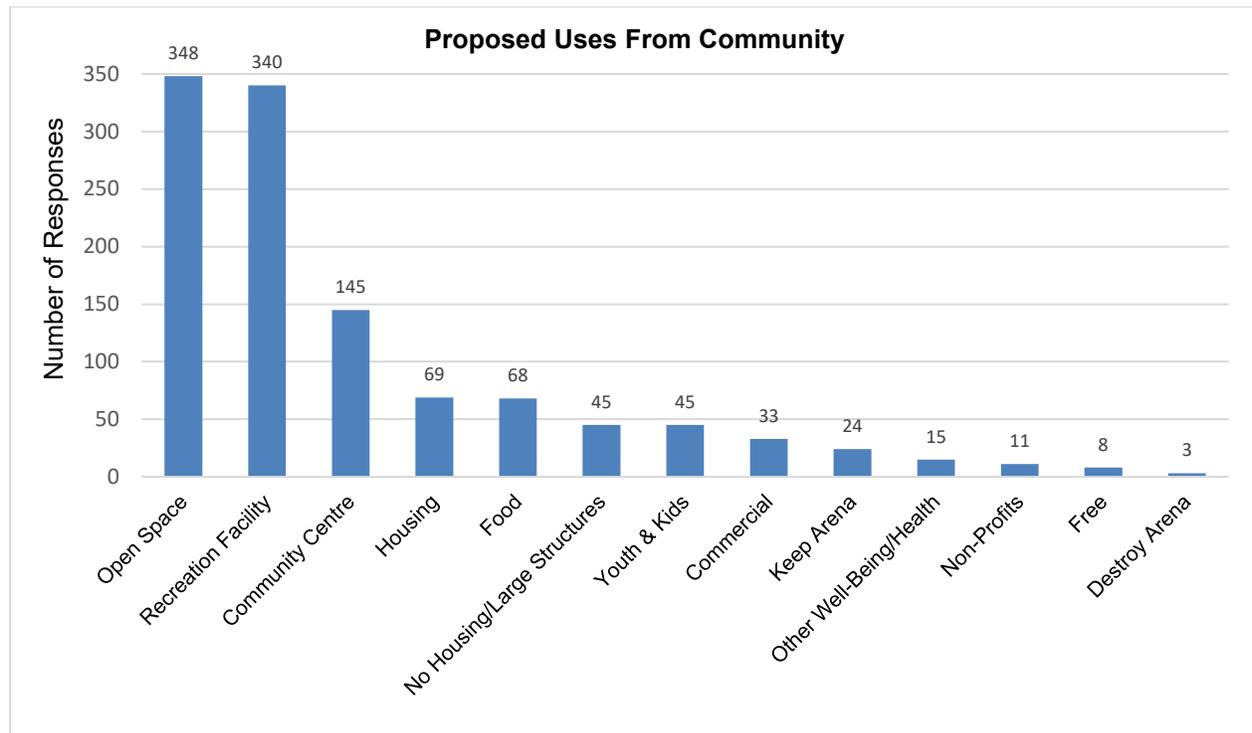
Housing was not a big focus of engagement, with roughly 6% in favour of affordable, seniors’ or supportive housing and 4% against housing or large buildings. 6% of ideas indicated a need for access to food including production and retail. 4% of ideas were for space and uses to support youth and kids.

*A multi purpose facility for indoor sports and events which the community can benefit from all year round. The facility will keep the community healthy and improve the quality of life of many residents living in the numerous apartment buildings nearby. The site is surrounded by apartment buildings. However, none of these apartment buildings provides a place for fitness, activity or events. In addition to a multi-purpose hall, a nice children park in the outside with rides and splash pads will keep the families active in summer months.*

Survey Respondent

The general sense received from comments was that the community has a lot of housing options (although not necessarily “quality” options), what is missing are places for community to come together and spaces to enjoy the outdoors. There was also support shown for keeping the Arena, however most ideas focused on the need for space for recreational activities, without specifying if this activity was in the existing Arena.

Figure 3: Distribution of Ideas/Themes



The following interests and needs were consistently expressed throughout the engagements:

- \* Safe space for youth
- \* Space to enjoy nature and outdoor activities
- \* Facility for recreation and community gathering
- \* Access to Food- outlets and production space
- \* Low cost/free
- \* Culturally appropriate programming

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*Walk through this area regularly to enjoy “nature” + “quiet” from the regular sidewalk route & to get to the pedway as the Highfield intersection is too risky.*

Survey Respondent

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The surveys also made it clear that many in the community were not currently using the Site; of the 196 surveys submitted, 39% currently used the Site, while 47% do not and 14% chose not to answer. Based on the comments received, this may be because residents think that the Arena is not open or available to them and that the outdoor spaces are less than ideal.

During the pre-engagement consultations and the various engagements, community efforts to establish a collaborative health centre in Dartmouth North were frequently mentioned. These centres provide a central hub for a suite of health services and offer space for complementary amenities like daycares, multi-purpose spaces, and other community assets. Due to shortage of land and low vacancy rate of existing commercial properties, this Site was identified as a potential future home for a health centre.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

Engagements followed HRM’s “Corporate Guidelines: Greening our Meeting and Catering Requirements” and considered the environmental impacts, including:

- print materials made from recycled paper, old poster boards and other re-purposed assets.
- equipment used for the community party (tables, chairs, stands, games etc.) borrowed from other business units, excepting the chalk and bubbles used for outdoor games.
- decorations were paper based and recycled after the event; and
- food was sourced from local businesses. Finger foods were chosen to reduce the need for plastic cutlery; leftovers were donated, and food/paper plate waste was composted. Juice was purchased in large containers and water jugs were used to minimize plastic. Paper cups were composted.

As a large, mainly undeveloped land mass in a heavily developed urban landscape, the Site is providing environmental services such as urban cooling, stormwater retention and possible climate change mitigation supports. These services should be valued in the redevelopment considerations.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

Regional Council could choose to:

1. Not remove the Site from the surplus property list;
2. Not direct the CAO to include resources in the 2023/24 budget and business planning process;
3. Not direct the CAO to utilize the redevelopment program to re-assess municipal needs for the Site or progress the engagement findings and partnership interests generated from the community consultations; and
4. Direct the CAO to return to Audit & Finance Standing Committee with options for funding and resources to undertake the redevelopment program in the 2022/23 fiscal year. This would likely impact the ability to complete other work which Regional Council has recently approved in the 2022/23 Business Plans.

**ATTACHMENTS**

- Attachment A: Site Map
- Attachment B: Site Features
- Attachment C: Surplus History
- Attachment D: Demographics
- Attachment E: Centre Plan
- Attachment F: Engagement Tools & Results

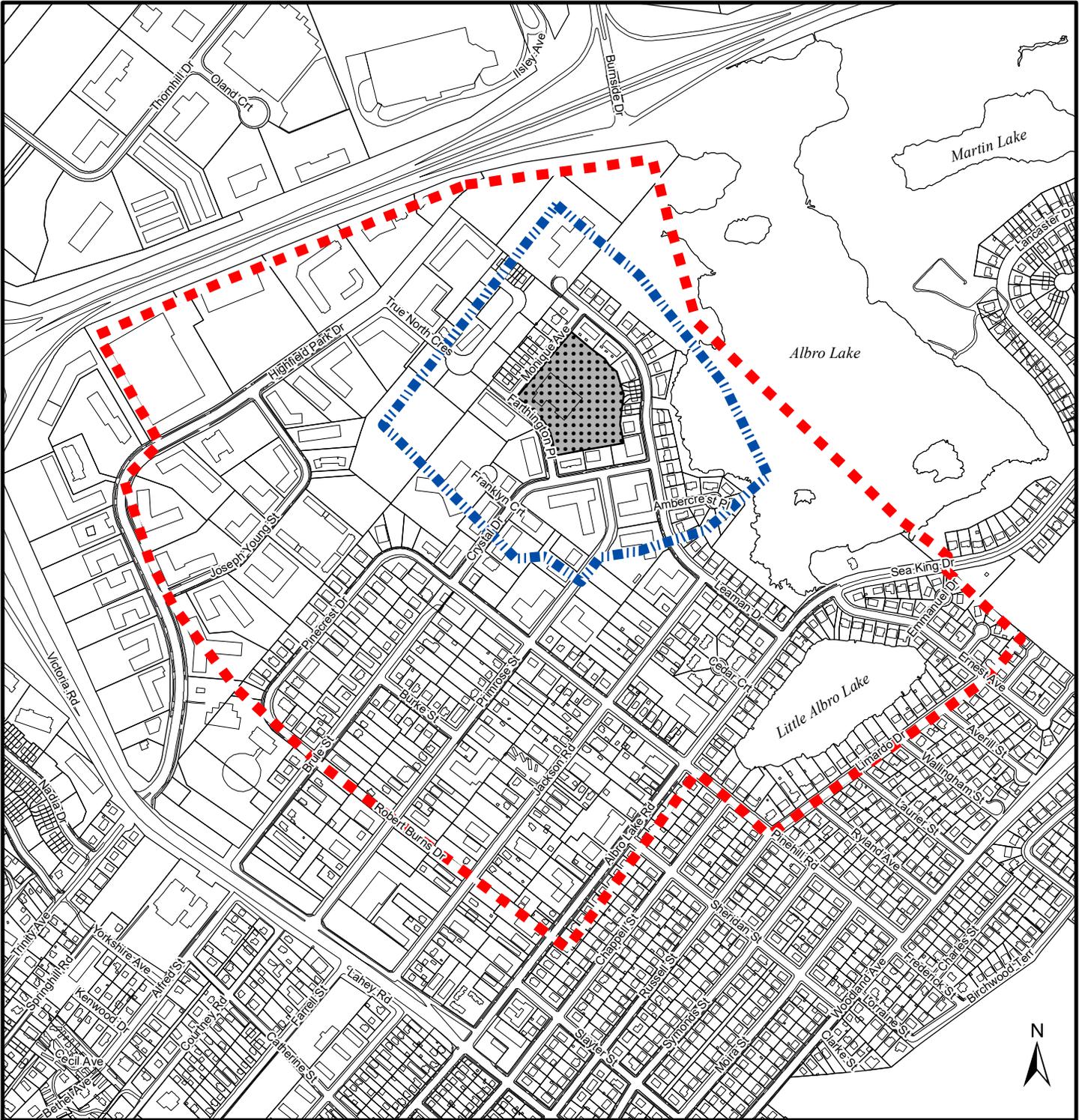
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A copy of this report can be obtained online at [halifax.ca](http://halifax.ca) or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

Report Prepared by: Leticia Smillie, Planner III, 902-266-4958

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ATTACHMENT A: GRAY ARENA SITE MAP



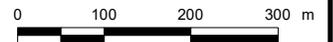
**Map 1 - Areas of Notification**

10 Monique Avenue,  
Dartmouth

**HALIFAX**

 Tenants and Property Owners Notification Boundary

 Property Owners Notification Boundary



Dartmouth Plan Area

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

## ATTACHMENT B: SITE FEATURES (10 MONIQUE AVENUE)

### **The Arena:**

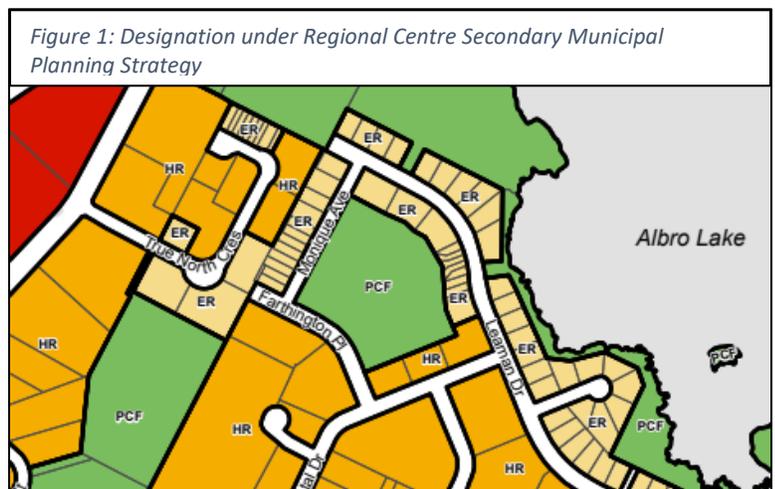
- Gray’s Memorial Arena was built in 1975 and is a 27,800 ft<sup>2</sup> (2,600 M<sup>2</sup>) ice surface with stands, wash and change rooms.
- Named Gerald B Gray Memorial Arena in honor of a community member who was active in the volunteer fire service and sport of hockey. Administrative Order 56 is silent on the need to retain the name.
- Renovated in 2004 to update change rooms, at a cost of \$285K.
- Majority of use of the arena is from outside of the community who drive in to the community to use the facility.
- Currently in use for dry surface sports such as ball hockey and lacrosse. The ice surface is no longer being put in and free community skates are no longer offered.
- Building was appraised in April 2018- thought to be in “average” condition.
- Annual holding costs are approximately \$100,000.
- Estimated cost to demolish in 2018 was \$250,000.

### **The Site:**

- Corner lot with two driveway accesses off Monique Avenue and Farthington Place
- Located in District #6, in community of Dartmouth North, “Between the Bridges”
- 4.7 acres (1.90 hectares), generally level site, with a heavily wooded portion at the back which gently slopes down into a ravine.
- Serviced with municipal sewer and water.
- In addition to the Arena, includes paved parking lot with 64 spaces, children’s playground and a decommissioned tennis court being used for roller sports with the construction of a skateboarding ramp.
- Includes a well-used active transportation corridor with a path cutting across the site and providing connectivity between adjacent streets and nearby green spaces.
- In 2018, Property Valuation Services assessed total value as \$4,060,000 (\$3,400,000 for land, \$700,000 for building). An independent appraisal was commissioned and a more realistic value of \$1,100,000 for land and \$670,000 for building was determined based on current zoning and condition.

### **Zoning and Designation under Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy and Regional Centre Land Use By-law:**

- Designated Park and Community Facility (PCF- Figure 1)), applied to existing parks and open spaces and is intended to protect and support our park and open space network. This designation recognizes that as the Regional



Centre grows, these assets will experience additional demand and may require further investment and expansion. Equitable access and continuous improvement of these spaces are cited as key components of healthy and complete communities. Future park planning is charged with considering the objectives of the designation including equitable access, active and healthy lifestyles, connectivity, socio-economic factors and make-up of the area being served. The ecological services provided by these open spaces are also recognized as key considerations for future use and planning.

- Zoned Park and Community Facility (PCF)- applied to municipal parks, facilities and clubs which serve local to municipal-wide recreational needs. This zone does not permit residential or industrial uses. It allows for limited commercial (only daycare and cruise ship), all forms of urban agriculture (including farmer's markets and urban farms), some institutional uses (cultural, library, spectator venue, public building and school commercial uses) and the full range of park and community facility uses (community recreation, park, conservation, etc.). If the redevelopment plan envisions uses not permitted under the current zoning, a rezoning or plan amendment may be necessary.
- Also subject to general policies for Highfield Park Drive Centre and community of Dartmouth North (see Attachment E).

## **ATTACHMENT C: "SURPLUS" HISTORY**

### **July 2014: Slated for market sale to contribute to funding for RBC Centre (Burnside 4-pad): [REPORT](#)**

- Gray, Bowles and LeBrun Arenas declared surplus to municipal needs due to construction of the RBC Centre;
- Directed to go through Administrative Order 50 (AO-50) and profits from their sale included in the funding calculations to pay for the RBC Centre (Strategic Capital Plan, July 29, 2014);
- Categorized Ordinary Sale, for properties that are deemed ordinary and surplus to municipal purpose. Disposal process for this category typically proceeds from appraisal of market value, marketing of the sale opportunity and sale on the market at or above the appraised market value;
- Since 2014, the Bowles Arena recategorized to Community Interest and sold to a private school and Council has approved the continued use of the LeBrun Arena.

### **June 2017: Extension of operation and recategorization to Community Interest: [REPORT](#)**

- Regional Council supported extended operation of the Gray's Arena into 2017/18;
- Recategorized as Community Interest under AO-50, first noted in the June 9, 2017 *Indoor Ice Surface Review*, approved by Regional Council on June 20, 2017. Rationale for re-categorization was interest from various parties in the arena for community and private uses;

### **2017-2019: Exploration of disposal under Community Interest**

- Community Interest category is for properties with the potential for community use due to prior use or by location/scarcity of available land;
- Classified as "high-value" under AO-50 as value exceeds \$250,000; can only be sold to not for profits potentially at less than market value and must include call for interest and public meeting:
  - Call for Submissions of Interest issued on December 9, 2017 with a submission deadline of June 4, 2018.
  - Public meeting held on Nov 22, 2017 with 10 attendees and site visit on Jan 30, 2018 with 6 attendees.
- One formal expression of interest received. Soccer Nova Scotia proposed to convert the arena to an indoor turf facility, contribute \$50,000 and asked for HRM to retain and refurbish the outdoor amenities.

### **February 2019: Refusal of proposal and direction to consult with community on redevelopment: [REPORT](#)**

- Jan 18, 2019 Staff Report recommending decline offer from Soccer NS, recategorize from Community interest to Ordinary sale, and direct staff to pursue disposal for market value.
- February 12, 2019 Regional Council discussion of recommendations identified need to gain community input on vision for the whole site which resulted in an amendment to the original motion...
  - direct staff to conduct community consultation to receive feedback concerning possibilities for the redevelopment of the lands and report back to Council with the results of the consultation and for future direction.

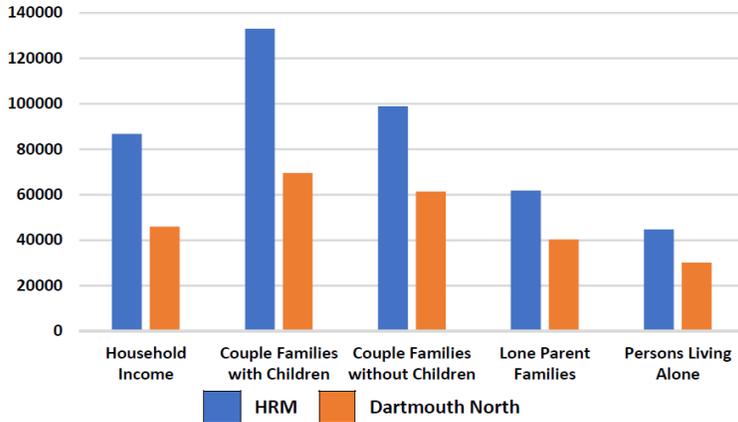
### **September 2021: Gray's Memorial Arena in Use for Temporary Accommodations**

September 2021 to January 2022: The Arena was used to provide shelter for homeless people displaced from local parks and the Comfort Inn. This was an interim accommodation until the temporary modular housing units were established.

**ATTACHMENT D: DEMOGRAPHICS OF DARTMOUTH NORTH**

The following are excerpts from the January 2018 *“Dartmouth North Highlights”* prepared by DWPilkey Consulting for United Way Halifax and based on analysis of the 2016 Census data

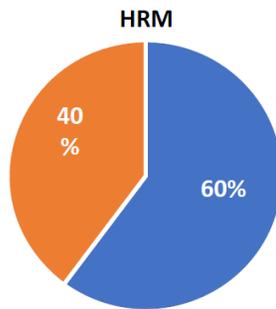
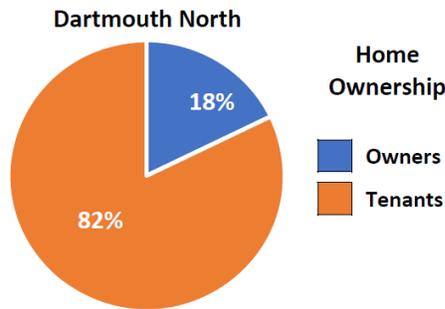
**Income**



Dartmouth North average household income is \$45,900 compared to \$86,800 for HRM. HRM couple families with children have an average family income of \$133,000 with Dartmouth North at \$69,500 which is 52% of the HRM average. Lone parent families and persons living alone have much lower household income which are \$40,300 and \$30,100 respectively for Dartmouth North.

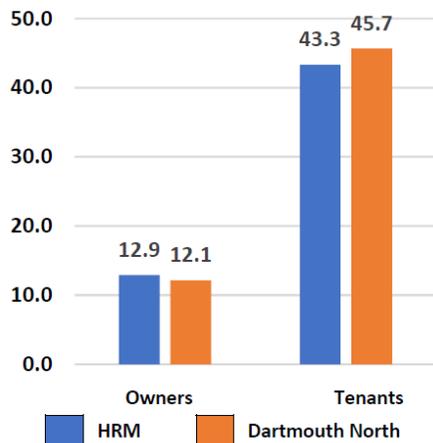
**Housing**

**Home Ownership**



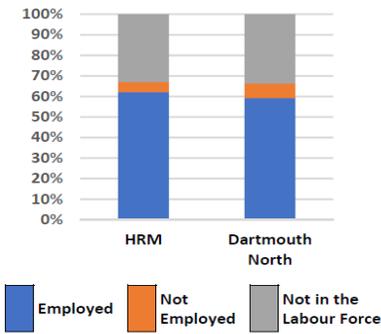
In 2016, Dartmouth North had just over 7,000 households. Eighty-two percent of these households lived in rental units compared to 40% for HRM.

**Shelter Costs**



In Dartmouth North, almost 46% of renters spent over 30% of their income on shelter compared to 12% of owners. For HRM, 43% of renters spent over 30% of their income on shelter compared to 13% of owners. Since 82% of Dartmouth North households are rented, shelter costs are a challenge for most residents. Average shelter cost is 25.1% of after-tax household income in Dartmouth North compared to 20.1% for HRM.

## Labour Force

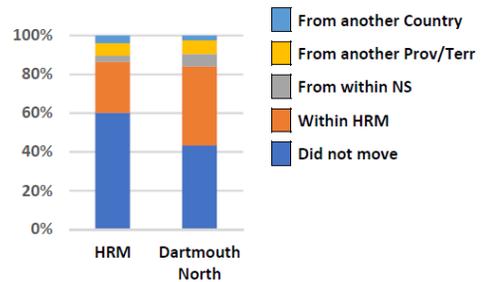


Fifty-nine percent of the population were employed compared to 62% for HRM. Seven percent were unemployed and almost 34% were not in the labour force. The corresponding rates for HRM were 5% and 33%. There are several reasons for people not to be in the labour force, such as those with mental and physical disabilities, single mothers with small children, seniors, and discouraged workers no longer looking for employment.

Thirty-seven percent of Dartmouth North's workforce were in sales and service jobs which are generally low paid. HRM had 25% of its work force in these areas.

## Mobility

Fifty-seven percent of the population of Dartmouth North moved in the last five years compared to HRM at 40%. Forty-one percent moved from within HRM while 2.5% came from another country. This compares to 26% and 4% respectively for HRM. This high degree of mobility means that the standard supports of more stable neighbourhoods may not be available.

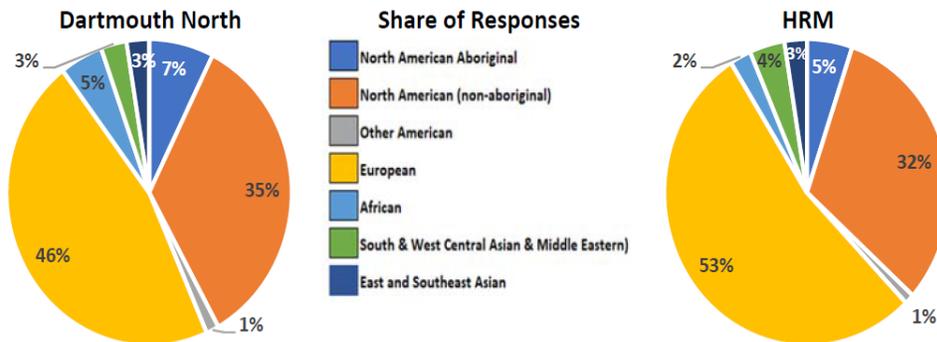


## Racially Visible

Fifteen percent of the population identified as racially visible compared to HRM at 11%. The percentage of black residents was more than twice that of HRM. Aboriginals were not identified separately under this category of reporting for the Census. Aboriginal information is included under Ethnic Origin below.



## Ethnic Origin



The Census allows for multiple responses. There were 519,000 responses for the 397,600 HRM respondents. Charts are based on the percentage of responses; the following is based on the number of people responding. Dartmouth North has

10% of its population with an Aboriginal origin and 7% African; compared to 7% and 3% respectively for HRM. Sixty-two percent of Dartmouth North residents indicated a European background compared with 69% for HRM.

## **ATTACHMENT E: RELEVANT POLICIES from the Regional Centre Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy**

### **2.5.2 HIGHFIELD PARK DRIVE CENTRE**

The Highfield Park Drive Centre is generally bounded by Highway 111, Highfield Park Drive, and Victoria Road, and located near the Burnside Industrial Park, Highfield Park Transit Terminal, several schools, and a combined library and community centre, as shown on Map 1. This Centre and the surrounding neighbourhood contain multi-unit dwellings, including market and non-market housing, which serves a diverse population. The current road network and block pattern is oriented to automobiles and isolates this Centre from the surrounding community. Apart from multi-unit dwellings, this Centre also includes large car-oriented commercial uses. The area provides some services to the neighbouring Dartmouth North community and additional services would contribute to a complete community.

The former Pinecrest-Highfield Park Secondary Planning Strategy adopted in 1991 under the Dartmouth Municipal Planning Strategy focused on the social and economic development of the area while limiting development in much of the surrounding neighbourhood. This Plan recognizes the community's efforts and partnerships to continue the social, environmental, and economic development of the Dartmouth North community while providing additional opportunities to re-invest in the area, including infill development on vacant and under-utilized lands. Due to the current road network and large lot sizes, this Centre may benefit from further subdivision that support improved pedestrian and transit connections, and more diverse and human-scale developments.

Future developments in this Centre are envisioned to consist of mixed-use low-rise to high-rise buildings that consider the community's needs, and the impact on overall affordability and accessibility of the area. This can be achieved by improving access for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users. Additional services, amenities and housing choices will support the livability of the surrounding neighbourhood.

Improvements in pedestrian access, street grid, and open space connectivity are encouraged to support the development of this area as a complete community. New built form requirements that require buildings to be located closer to the streetline can improve the safety and comfort of pedestrians. New developments are encouraged to consider connectivity to the surrounding context, and incorporate appropriate setbacks from Highway 111.

### **5.5 Neighbourhood Housing**

There are neighbourhoods in the Regional Centre where residents are faced with mobility challenges, social vulnerability or difficulty with accessing essentials such as healthy foods, child care, affordable housing, and jobs. While community-based efforts have been able to achieve positive results, there may be persistent gaps in public infrastructure, mobility connections, and community facilities and services that can benefit from additional municipal support. This municipal support may include data collection, community consultation, and the development of a local vision and action plans that guide community, business and government initiatives and investments.

#### **Policy H-8**

To support community and social development, the Municipality may partner with specific neighbourhoods and groups to support greater access to municipal and other services, including:

- a) developing a neighbourhood vision and action plan;
- b) improving local parks, transit, community facilities, and services;
- c) improving the public realm, such as street grid connections, streets and sidewalks;
- d) encouraging improvements to food security;
- e) supporting improvements to energy efficiency and climate change resilience;
- f) addressing community safety and access to programs;
- g) monitoring the existing housing stock;

- h) supporting the development of new housing;
- i) improving landscaping and tree planting;
- j) identifying strategic areas for investment;
- k) identifying opportunities for the use of municipal lands;
- l) identifying opportunities and partnerships to increase community engagement; and
- m) identifying other matters raised through community engagement.

## ATTACHMENT F: ENGAGEMENT TOOLS & RESULTS

A variety of engagement techniques were utilized to reach a diverse audience and to increase engagement by going to where people were already gathering. Table 1 provides a brief description of the engagement tools used and community feedback generated. The project team directly engaged with more than 1,200 people through the community party, pop-ups, meetings, mailouts, surveys and emails/phone calls. Over 1,000 people visited the project website (<https://www.shapeyourcityhalifax.ca/gray>) and advertisements, posters, social media and network connections were used to spread the word about the engagement.

*Table 1 Engagement Tools & Community Outreach*

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>People Engaged</b>	<b>Ideas Submitted</b>	<b>Surveys Received</b>
<b>1 Community Party</b>	Saturday June 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2-5 PM on site. Family centred event with food, games, comment boards and other ways of sharing ideas	<b>140</b>	<b>498</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>4 Pop-up Info Booths</b>	Pop-up info booths with 2 staff with surveys, post-its & idea boards, set up for casual conversations. Surveys & comment boxes @ Food Centre + Library until Labour Day  Library: June 20 12-9PM Farrell Park: June 23 11AM–2PM Food Centre: June 26 11AM–1PM Mosque: June 26 2-5 PM	35 33 14 33 <b>115</b>	107 23 45 149 <b>324</b>	11 0 17 11 <b>39</b>
<b>1 Community Meeting</b>	Attended the June 20, 2019 monthly meeting of the Dartmouth North Association (coalition of service providers, religious leaders, neighbours, health workers and political representatives.	<b>20</b>	0	0
<b>950 household mailouts (Attachment A)</b>	One pager with context & ways to be involved. Sent to tenants & owners in 5-minute and property owners in 10-minute walk of site	<b>950</b>	Unknown	Unknown
<b>Public surveys</b>	Simple survey asking if currently use the site, what would like there in the future and where live. Hard copies brought to events, boxes left at the Library and Food Centre & online until Labour Day	<b>121</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>121</b>
<b>Emails/Phone calls</b>	Between June 10 <sup>th</sup> - July 31 <sup>st</sup> received email and phone inquiries	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>Direct Engagement</b>	<b>1,212</b>	<b>1,154</b>	<b>196</b>
<b>1 HRM Project Website</b>	Project webpage online June 8 <sup>th</sup> , 2019 sharing context for engagement, details on site, ways to be involved plus email/phone point of contact	<b>1,003 visits</b>	Unknown	Unknown
<b>50 Posters at public spaces in Dart North</b>	Poster inviting community to the party on the 15 <sup>th</sup> and providing information about the engagement were posted throughout	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>People Engaged</b>	<b>Ideas Submitted</b>	<b>Surveys Received</b>
	the neighbourhood including library, community centre, day cares, stores, food centre, bus terminal, doors of the Arena, and lobby of large apartment buildings.			
<b>1 Ad in Dartmouth North Echo</b>	Advertisement in early July edition of the Echo promoting the survey and other ways to be involved	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
<b>Notification through political channels</b>	Information on the project shared with Councillor Mancini for inclusion in newsletters	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
<b>Communication packages</b>	Custom emails sent to community partners to share with networks	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
<b>Social Media blasts and Facebook ads</b>	Multiple tweets, advertisements and social media blasts prior to party and pop-up events plus regular reminders to complete survey	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown

Figure 1 Current Usage of Site

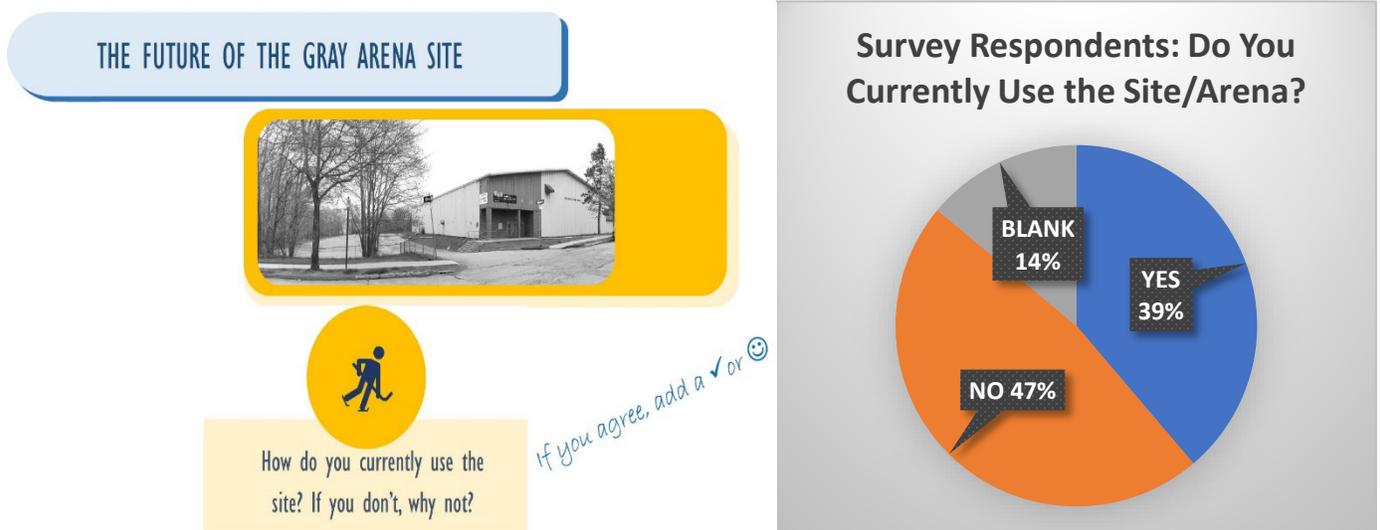


Table 2 Major Categories of Submitted Ideas

CATEGORY OF USE	# OF IDEAS	% OF TOTAL
<b>OPEN SPACE:</b> Green space, garden, playground, splash pad, sportsfield, etc.	<b>348</b>	<b>30.2%</b>
<b>RECREATION FACILITY:</b> ice surface, general sports, roller derby, etc.	<b>340</b>	<b>29.5%</b>
<b>COMMUNITY CENTRE:</b> community hub, youth centre, multi-culture/faith, etc.	<b>145</b>	<b>12.6%</b>
<b>HOUSING:</b> affordable housing, Shelter, Senior, etc.	<b>69</b>	<b>6.0%</b>
<b>FOOD:</b> community garden/urban farm, farmer's market/grocery, etc.	<b>68</b>	<b>5.9%</b>
<b>NO HOUSING/LARGE STRUCTURES:</b> no apartments/large buildings, no affordable housing/residential, etc.	<b>45</b>	<b>3.9%</b>
<b>YOUTH &amp; KIDS:</b> youth centre, after school, daycare, etc.	<b>45</b>	<b>3.9%</b>
<b>COMMERCIAL:</b> restaurant, retail/mall, etc.	<b>33</b>	<b>2.9%</b>
<b>KEEP ARENA</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>2.1%</b>
<b>OTHER WELLBEING/HEALTH:</b> emergency/health centre, etc.	<b>15</b>	<b>1.3%</b>
<b>NON-PROFITS</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0.9%</b>
<b>FREE</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0.7%</b>
<b>DESTROY ARENA</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0.3%</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1154</b>	<b>100%</b>

# THE FUTURE OF THE GRAY ARENA SITE

## OPEN SPACE & COMMUNITY/RECREATION FACILITY

Poster comments from Gray's Party highlighting this theme

we are looking for ideas for the re-use of the site and all ideas are welcome!  
We will make sure that Council and other decision-makers hear what you have to say

Imagine, if with a little bit of planning + effort, ~~we~~ ~~can~~ make an event like this successfull + ~~what can~~ bring the community together - what is the potential for this space this space was developed enough to make this possible daily.

- Make it a hub for community, for families, for growth + relaxation
- keep it as the Green Space DN needs!
- Keep it a rec. facility children can use + need.

MAKE FREE

An updated playground for all children + ~~adults~~ and a green space with benches to just sit on a nice day.

SPORT !!  
Centre

We are looking for ideas for the re-use of the site and all ideas are welcome!  
We will make sure that Council and other decision-makers hear what you have to say.

• Make it more accessible for the local community to use  
e.g. open gym or space to have meetings or yard sales or markets

What would you like to see on this site in the future?

If you agree, add a ✓ or ☺

# Multi faith & multicultural Centre where people from different communities can meet each other, know each other, where we have various sports activities for the kids, science & arts club etc - to build social & peaceful Canada. ✓

Sport Centre

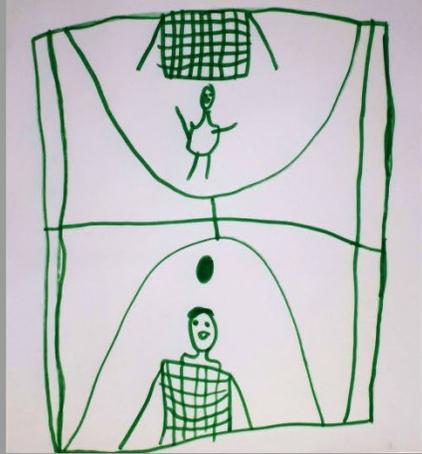
My family uses the park outside. I've never used the rink because it's only available through rec fee sports teams - which is a shame because if it was open my kids would use it to play in during winter + really hot days

City development should not be about Money! It should be about people + community! Let's make about families + community.

**YOUTH & CHILDREN**  
samples of kid's drawings  
from the Mosque engagement



to ride bikes with my big brother,  
s of grass.



Greenhouse

