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Item No. 15.1.12
Halifax Regional Council
July 11, 2023

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

Original Signed

SUBMITTED BY:

Cathie O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: May 29, 2023

SUBJECT: **Halifax Forum Parking and Parkland Public Engagement**

ORIGIN

July 29, 2014 Regional Council meeting motion (item 14.2):

MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Deputy Mayor Fisher

That Halifax Regional Council direct staff to commence planning for the renovation of the Halifax Forum in as a multiyear planned strategic project based on the Forum Community Association submission and developed to ensure best design, plan, and possible on site partnerships for the forum site including possible mixed use opportunities, targeted for completion in 2019. **MOTION PUT AND PASSED**

June 20, 2017 Regional Council meeting motions (item 14.1.11):

MOVED by Councillor Smith, seconded by Councillor Nicoll

6. Direct staff to return to Regional Council with usage and other related statistics following the 2017/18 season to confirm the future of the Lebrun Arena; and
7. Direct staff to complete additional analysis on the Halifax Forum project including further building condition assessment and related renovation feasibility, as well as the potential for a future Dalhousie University arena, and report back to Regional Council prior to undertaking the project.

MAIN MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

August 14, 2018 Regional Council meeting motions (item 14.1.2):

MOVED by Councillor Smith, seconded by Deputy Mayor Mason

1. Consider a building program of two ice surfaces at the Halifax Forum complex as per the discussion section of the report dated August 3, 2018 and undertake the cost/benefit analysis of replacing or renovating the Civic, as well as adding other appropriate recreation uses, community space and an ice plant that can be expanded to support an additional, third ice surface should conditions change to justify further expansion;
2. Prepare a class D estimate for inclusion in the 2020/21 capital budget process;
3. Undertake a heritage impact analysis; and
4. Prepare an estimate for inclusion in the upcoming capital budget for HRM to undertake necessary repairs and maintenance to ensure the facility is able to be maintained while the analysis is undertaken. **MOTION PUT AND PASSED**

November 26, 2019 Regional Council meeting motions (item 15.1.7):

MOVED by Councillor Smith, seconded by Councillor Streach [motions grouped into three parts] THAT Halifax Regional Council:

1. Approve the redevelopment approach for the Halifax Forum complex as outlined in the staff report dated November 12, 2019, including the restoration of the Halifax Forum in accordance with the Heritage Property Act, for the development of a second arena, multi-purpose/event space, parking, and greenspace;
3. Subsequent to exploring partnership opportunities, direct the Chief Administrative Officer to include funds in the 2021/2022 capital budget. **MOTION PUT AND PASSED**
2. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to:
 - a) engage with the Halifax Forum Community Association to determine the size and composition of the multi-purpose space on the basis of it being primarily for community events and uses as outlined in the staff report dated November 12, 2019;
 - b) determine the potential for partnerships on the Halifax Forum complex lands for private mixed-use development, as outlined in the staff report dated November 12, 2019; and report back to Regional Council; and **MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**
4. Engage the public in partnership with the HFCA to receive feedback on the proposed design during the time of investigation of potential partnerships. **MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

August 31, 2021 Regional Council meeting motions (item 11.1.9):

MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Councillor Smith

THAT Halifax Regional Council:

1. Approve the updated building program for the Halifax Forum complex as outlined in the discussion section of the staff report dated July 1, 2021, including: (a) the freehold development site; (b) the increase to the multipurpose program space from approximately 7,800 square feet to 14,500 square feet to accommodate the program needs of the Halifax Forum Community Association; and
2. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to engage the public, in partnership with the Halifax Forum Community Association on the parking and parkland proposals, and return to Regional Council with the results of the engagement and recommendations on a final design and redevelopment approach for the Halifax Forum. **MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY ON CONSENT AGENDA**

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter

61 Powers of Municipality regarding property

(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.

(5) The Municipality may (b) sell property at market value when the property is no longer required for the purposes of the Municipality.

79A Municipal Expenditures

(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;

Administrative Order 50 – Respecting the Disposal of Surplus Real Property

2. (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:

Economic Development

(a) Strategic properties having Economic Development potential ought be sold to:

(i) maximize use or value;

(ii) achieve the attraction of targeted industries and employment or the regeneration of neighborhoods;

(iii) to advance development opportunities; and

(iv) to generate financial return to the Municipality.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council:

1. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to advance detailed site and facility design for the Halifax Forum complex redevelopment project as generally outlined in the building and site program within this report, including heritage approvals;
2. Direct the Chief Administrative Office to allocate strategic initiatives capital funds for the Halifax Forum complex redevelopment project, as outlined within this report, within future municipal budgets and business plans; and
3. Declare the northern portion of the property as shown on Attachment B, surplus to municipal requirements and categorize the property as Economic Development pursuant to Administrative Order Number 50 Respecting the Disposal of Surplus Real Property.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Halifax Forum complex is located in the north end of the Halifax Peninsula along Windsor Street, between Almon and Young Streets. On August 31, 2021, Regional Council considered a staff report and approved recommendations related to the redevelopment of the Halifax Forum complex. This substantial project includes preservation of character defining features of the historic Halifax Forum arena, two ice pads, multi-purpose space, a reduction in on-site parking in favour of placing a greater reliance upon on-street parking and alternative modes of transportation, and the creation of new parkland. The redevelopment costs would be partially offset by the sale of part of the lands. The staff report identified that the proposed parkland and parking would benefit from public consultation to better understand the values associated with these elements of the proposed redevelopment plan.

Community consultation took place in April 2022 through an open house meeting and an on-line survey. In general, support for the project was divided. There was moderate support for the project overall, stronger support for the inclusion of parkland on the site and opposing views on the reduction in the amount of on-site parking. Meanwhile, the Halifax Forum Community Association (HFCA), which operates the Halifax Forum complex under an agreement with HRM, has identified opposition to the reduction of on-site parking.

Additional analysis related to the parking proposal and the need for parkland was undertaken and is outlined in this report. With this, the recommended approach for redeveloping the Halifax Forum complex remains the same as what was proposed in August 2021. The estimated capital costs for the project have increased from \$81M (2021) to \$110M (2023) based on inflationary pressures, although these costs can be partially offset by the identified sale of lands

BACKGROUND

The Halifax Forum complex is in the north end of the Halifax Peninsula along Windsor Street, between Almon and Young Streets (Attachment A). The Halifax Forum has been an indoor arena since 1927, having previously been the site of the Nova Scotia Exhibition Grounds. Over its history, facilities have been added and the building has evolved into the current configuration, which includes:

- the Halifax Forum, a single ice surface built in 1927, which is a registered heritage building;
- the Civic Arena, a single ice surface constructed in 1994;
- the 1,672 square metre (18,000 square foot) Multi-purpose Centre (MPC), which is used for events such as large meetings, retail warehouse sales, and concerts, which was constructed in 1988;
- the 418 square metre (4,500 square foot) Maritime Hall, is a general space used for meetings and events, and the 1,672 square metre (18,000 square foot) Bingo Gaming Centre that is primarily used for bingo, with other events including regular weekend flea markets and a farmers' market; and

- parking lots on the north and south, which provide a total of approximately 500 spaces.

The Halifax Forum complex in its entirety is in a deteriorated condition and does not meet current accessibility standards or modern operational requirements, which prompted reviews for its replacement.

The Halifax Forum Community Association (HFCA) operates the facility under an agreement with HRM, which includes its recreation programming. The HFCA has a long tradition of renting building space for non-recreation uses and events (e.g. Christmas at the Forum), and running a substantive bingo operation. Beyond any recreation activity fees, such as for ice time, the revenues from these non-recreation activities are used to substantially offset annual operational costs.

Previous Project Directions

The major milestones and directions from Regional Council that have guided the development of the Halifax Forum Redevelopment Project to date, include the following:

- [Fall, 2003](#) - The Halifax Forum was added to the Municipal Registry of Heritage Property, under the *Heritage Property Act of Nova Scotia*. By registering the Halifax Forum as a heritage property, Regional Council recognized the building for its cultural and architectural significance and directed that it be preserved and maintained in a manner respecting its heritage character.
- [Summer, 2014](#) - The Long-Term Arena Strategy (LTAS): A staff report entitled, Consolidation of Aging Arenas was presented to Regional Council, which included a recommendation to declare the existing Forum and Civic Arenas as surplus for recreational needs and to enter into a partnership agreement with the Department of National Defence on a multi-pad arena located at Windsor Park. This recommendation was defeated, and direction was provided to continue the use of the Forum and Civic Arenas for recreational needs. To accommodate this, Regional Council directed that the redevelopment project be initiated.
- [Summer, 2017](#) - A report was presented to Regional Council regarding the LTAS, which included the business case review of the Halifax Forum complex redevelopment proposal submitted by the HFCA. Initially the proposal included the addition of a third ice pad, along with the Forum and Civic Arenas. However, upon further review it was determined a third pad was not needed based on the inventory of arenas within the municipality. Additional direction was provided by Regional Council to undertake a building condition assessment of the Forum complex, the feasibility of the redevelopment proposal, as well as the future of a Dalhousie University arena at its campus.
- [Summer, 2018](#) - A report was presented to Regional Council providing details of the building condition, feasibility of the redevelopment as proposed, as well as updating the intent and status of a potential on campus arena at Dalhousie University. The recommendation based on this report provided direction to undertake planning of a two-pad arena with additional programming space, provide costing estimates for budgeting purposes, and undertake a heritage impact assessment.
- [Fall, 2019](#) - A report was presented to Regional Council recommending an approach that addressed the heritage status of the Halifax Forum. It included an updated costing range for the redevelopment project, as well as a recommendation to consider private partnership opportunities with the goal of offsetting the overall capital cost of the redevelopment. Regional Council also directed that community engagement be undertaken regarding the proposed design in tandem with the investigation of private interest for partnership on the Halifax Forum complex lands.
- [Summer, 2021](#) - The latest report, considered by Regional Council on August 21, 2021, recommended approval of an increased footprint for the multipurpose space; creation of a development site at the corner of Young and Windsor Streets to be sold for private development to offset the capital costs of the redevelopment project; a new park to address anticipated open space needs from new residential development in the surrounding area; and a reduction in on-site parking from approximately 500 to 150 spaces in favour of on-street parking which would stem from potential disposal of the freehold

development site and establishment of a park. However, this report identified a need to undertake community consultation on parkland and parking, which was endorsed and directed by Regional Council.

Redevelopment Direction

The redevelopment project parameters, as affirmed by Regional Council in August 2021, is a substantial project which includes:

- the preservation of the Halifax Forum and its key heritage character defining features, including the shape and composition of its roof and the retention of the southern façade and parts of the Windsor Street façade;
- two new ice pads;
- concourse between the two ice pads;
- 14,500 Square foot multipurpose space;
- on site parking for approximately 150 vehicles;
- parkland; and
- the sale of lands at the corner of Windsor and Young to help off-set redevelopment costs (Attachment B).

The staff report identified that the proposed parkland and parking would benefit from public consultation to better understand the values associated with these elements, on the basis that:

- the parking would result in a decrease in the amount of on-site parking from 500 to 150 spaces, thereby placing a greater reliance on nearby on-street parking spaces and alternative means of transportation and travel arrangements; and
- the parkland was identified as a beneficial new outdoor component of the project and is needed to help address the anticipated open space needs from existing and new residential growth in the area; however, takes away from lands that could be used for parking.

Regional Council directed that the public consultation on the project be undertaken, and that staff return to Regional Council with the results of the engagement and recommendations on a final design and redevelopment approach for the Halifax Forum.

DISCUSSION

This report provides:

- an overview of the public consultation process that was undertaken and survey results;
- information about and the position of the HCFA on the redevelopment project;
- additional information and analysis about the parkland and parking, and
- updated capital budget figures for the project.

Public Consultation

Community consultation was undertaken in partnership with the HFCA, from April 8 through May 1, 2022. It was designed to gauge public support for the redevelopment project generally, along with a focus on site design, relative to the parkland and parking proposals of the redevelopment. In addition, questions were asked about the prospect of disposal of the identified development site to offset development costs.

Consultation was hosted online through 'ShapeYourCity', including a survey¹, as well as an open house hosted with the HFCA at the Maritime Hall of the Halifax Forum complex on April 19, 2022. Over 2,000 people participated in the community consultation process, which was promoted through:

- a public service announcement;
- a maildrop to the adjacent neighbourhood of the Halifax Forum complex;
- social media posts;

¹ The survey tool available through 'ShapeYourCity' is frequently used for a variety of municipal initiatives. However, it is not designed to be statistically representative. The survey tool facilitates feedback from interested residents and groups and as a result, the results have a level of bias.

- the Halifax Forum website;
- direct emails to Halifax Forum complex facility stakeholders; and
- in person promotion at farmers' markets, bingo, and flea markets.

Specific to the survey, the tables below identify responses to the main aspects of the redevelopment, by percentage.² Local residents were able to be identified as a subset of overall respondents.

General Survey Responses			
	Agreement	Neutral	Disagreement
Parking Reduction	38%	8%	54%
Add Parkland	66%	12%	22%
Sale of Lands	44%	14%	42%
Project Overall	47%	18%	35%

Local Resident Survey Responses			
	Agreement	Neutral	Disagreement
Parking Reduction	41%	7%	52%
Add Parkland	75%	7%	18%
Sale of Lands	39%	15%	46%
Project Overall	47%	17%	36%

A complete overview of the feedback gathered through the consultation is outlined in the What We Heard Report (Attachment C). Themes identified through the consultation included:

- support for the inclusion of parkland on site;
- concern related to the sale of land for development (including concerns related to traffic impacts, neighbourhood compatibility and affordability);
- concern about the availability of on-street parking in the surrounding neighbourhood, particularly during large events; and
- concern about the overall cost of the redevelopment.

On the key elements of the proposal identified in the tables, the responses show some relatively equally weighted opposing opinions on the merits of the key features of the redevelopment (with respect to the parking, sale of lands, and the overall project). Only the inclusion of parkland in the design received a more resoundingly clear support from participants.

While the consultation results do not provide decisive support for the project, it is important to note that a fair degree of change, impacting both general users and local residents, is proposed, irrespective of which of the directions that may be taken, which may be a factor in survey responses.

HFCAs Position

The HFCAs has identified concerns regarding the reduced number of on-site parking spaces (Attachment D), recommending that 270 parking spaces should be the minimum number provided on-site, and suggest the following summarized changes be made to the redevelopment proposal:

- 15 parking spaces added along the new Civic Arena, aligned with Cork Street;
- 30 parking spaces added along the development site by reducing the size of the parcel; and
- 70 parking spaces added for seasonal use at the plaza area of the Forum building.

² These are simplified from the survey, with "Agree" being "Strongly Agree" and "Somewhat Agree" responses combined; and "Disagree" being "Somewhat Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree" combined.

Most of these changes would increase capital costs, including reductions in the amount of land for the development site, thereby significantly reducing the income from the sale that would be used to help offset project costs. This includes the possibility of realizing a development with two residential towers to meet Regional Centre Land Use By-law (LUB) setback and separation distance requirements. Further, the proposed parking, as identified by the HFCA, would not meet the LUB requirements that restricts surface parking. The HFCA identified the possibility of a flexible parkland/plaza space. This may have merit; however, it would diminish its use as functional year-round parkland to serve the facility and surrounding area and limit its capability for parkland development.

Partly based on the survey responses and general feedback, as well as the HFCA's position, additional information and analysis on the parkland and parking has been undertaken.

Parkland

The introduction of parkland for the redevelopment has been proposed to accommodate additional outdoor programming, such as a farmers' markets and dryland training, and to help address the anticipated increased needs for public parkland to support the additional residential development in the area. Centre Plan identifies an extensive area that includes the Halifax Forum complex as the Young Street Centre and Young Street Lands Future Growth Node (Growth Node). Approved development projects within the area surrounding the Halifax Forum complex, which are already under construction, will add an additional 1,434 dwelling units. Planning and Development's Preliminary Population and Housing Analysis 2021 estimates that the build-out capacity of the growth node is 5,800 dwelling units.

HRM has been assessing standards as possible parkland benchmarks, which would ultimately be considered and adjusted through an independent park planning project, with public consultation. Outside of this, for the purpose of considering this project, the Halifax Green Network Plan identifies a desired standard of having parkland within 500m (a six-minute walk) from a residence. This standard was applied to consider the availability of *functional parks*³ in the area of the Halifax Forum complex. From this, it was found that there was no functional parkland within 500m of most areas of the growth node (Attachment E).

In addition to the distance to functional parkland, the per capita amount of parkland is also an important measure. The second map in Attachment E outlines that even for the established residential areas adjacent to the Halifax Forum that are within 500m of functional parkland, the amount of per capita parkland is low.

The parkland proposed for the Halifax Forum complex project is not substantial and is only envisioned to address a fraction of the parkland needs of the growing area. However, it has the capacity of providing open space and amenities that would be available on a year-round basis to help address the envisioned needs existing and future residents. In addition, it would provide outdoor space for the Halifax Forum complex.

Parking

The proposed parking arrangement, where on-site parking would be limited to approximately 150 parking spaces, stems from the partial removal of lands that are currently used for parking, including areas that would be sold for development to offset project costs. Further analysis has been undertaken to understand the parking demands for the proposed facility (Attachment F). Five scenarios were considered for regular evening peak time usage, ranging from the use of only one ice pad (lowest use) to the use of the entire complex, including both ice pads and a bingo event (high use). All scenarios consider regular anticipated usage, rather than special larger scale events.

Any of the scenarios that involve use of both ice pads and multi-purpose spaces, which would regularly occur during ice sport seasons, would result in demands for parking spaces that greatly exceed the 150 spaces that would be available on-site. For example, the highest use scenario would create an anticipated

³ Functional parks include parkland with at least one built amenity or enough open space for active play or water access. Cemeteries are excluded. The combined area of these parks is calculated with any building footprints removed (typically schools or community centres in parkland).

demand for 370 parking spaces, although this might be reduced if the scheduled booking for each of the ice pads was staggered.

Many HRM ice surface complexes have on-site parking that can accommodate regularly scheduled users. However, the Halifax Forum has a different urban context, and the reduced on-site parking arrangement would place a greater reliance on nearby on-street parking spaces and alternative means of transportation and travel arrangements. Local streets in the vicinity of the Halifax Forum have a variety of parking allowances and restrictions. The parking analysis identified that with changes there is capacity for approximately 790 on street parking spaces. This conclusion is based on one-and one-half sides⁴ of each of the street segments being available for parking. Validation of this analysis with HRM Parking Services concluded that from a practical approach the capacity may be closer to 500 on street parking spaces. Parking analysis does not consider current occupancy, usage data, or additional special restrictions that may be required along specific street sections. All estimates of parking capacity may be impacted by parking management decisions.

The implications of placing a greater reliance on on-street parking is that an increased emphasis will need to be placed on both overall on-site and on-street parking management. At the Halifax Forum complex, drop-off areas for players with equipment and changes to programming schedules such as staggered ice pad times would need to be considered. It is anticipated that there will also be increased demands for on-site and on-street parking enforcement. While current plans for bicycle facilities in the streets west of Windsor do not impact parking supply, a change in Council direction to, for example, install bike lanes on Almon Street west of Windsor, would likely reduce on-street parking supply. There is also opportunity to incorporate public parking spaces into requirements associated with development on the north parcel, should Council declare it surplus. This would add additional capacity to supplement the remaining surface and on street parking.

Capital Budget

The August 2021 staff report identified capital costs for the project. Similar to other construction projects in HRM, these costs have increased substantially, as outlined in the table below.

Building Program	2021 Cost Estimate	2023 Cost Estimate
Updated Building Costs Estimate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> including updated estimates associated with demolition, siteworks, maintaining heritage designation, net zero ready energy standard, cost escalation for commencement in 24/25 reflects the reduced costs of developing the north parking structure (Windsor and Young) 	\$78,500,000	\$106,600,000
Increased multipurpose space <ul style="list-style-type: none"> in 2021 (approximately 7,000 sq. ft) 	\$2,500,000	\$3,400,000
Subtotal	\$81,000,000	\$110,000,000
Estimated Recoveries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sale of Windsor Street and Young Street Lands⁵ 	To be determined	To be determined

⁴ On local residential streets, HRM often implements one-and-a-half sided parking, where, instead of restricting parking full on one side of a relatively narrow street to ensure two-way, free-flowing traffic, parking is installed along one full side and on a portion of the other side, creating both narrow points where traffic has to either slow or yield to ongoing traffic, as well as refuges where vehicles can pass freely. This has been shown to decrease travelling speeds, reduce shortcutting, and increase the on-street parking supply in these neighbourhoods.

⁵ It is recommended that the disposal of these lands be advanced *following* the substantial completion of the Forum Redevelopment in order to maximize the return to the municipality. A similar strategy was used for the sale of three

Building Program	2021 Cost Estimate	2023 Cost Estimate
Net project cost	To be determined	To be determined

The figures underlying the building program have been and will continue to be subject to change based on factors such as inflation, labour availability, supply chain impacts, environmental assessments, market interest, and detailed costing. Increased construction costs are being widely experienced and are anticipated to impact the costs associated with the redevelopment project.

The Estimated Recoveries (i.e., market value) of the recommended surplus property is based on several variables that are expected to change over the course of the Forum Redevelopment project, among them: potential retention of frontage along Windsor Street and Young Street supporting municipal right-of-way improvements (Attachment B), with the potential to change the lot area for disposal, development design options and how many units may be generated, market demand among developers, and other economic conditions, such as interest rates.

Reconstruction Alternative

In previous reports, Council had considered an alternative to deregister the Halifax Forum heritage site and replace the full Halifax Forum complex with a new facility that includes the same components but in a modernized and updated campus, and potentially a replica Forum building. Regional Council chose not to proceed with that option and instead provided the current direction which includes a refurbishment of those heritage features which are possible along with the replacement of the Civic arena and multipurpose spaces as outlined. With the increased estimated costs, should Council wish to reconsider the reconstruction option, there are benefits and challenges.

Heritage Status

If Regional Council chose to demolish the Forum (registered in 2003) due to the condition of the building and to reduce cost, Council would have to comply with the *Heritage Property Act* and HRM's heritage policies and procedures. In 2014, Regional Council adopted municipal conservation standards for the evaluation of proposed alterations to heritage buildings that require minimal intervention, and require the preservation of character defining elements and original building materials wherever possible. The Forum proposal outlined in the August 2021 report will allow the Forum to retain its registered heritage status.

Demolition and subsequent de-registration of the Halifax Forum under the *Heritage Property Act* is not recommended, as it would be in conflict with municipal policies contained in the Regional Plan and Centre Plan that pertain to the conservation of significant heritage properties, including those owned by the Municipality. This option would require public engagement, a recommendation by the Heritage Advisory Committee and a decision of Regional Council. This would be followed by a subsequent de-registration process that includes a requirement for a public hearing. However, if Regional Council chose to demolish and subsequently de-register the Forum it would create a reputational risk to the HRM as a heritage property owner and as an administrator of heritage policy.

Construction Benefits

While there would be challenges with the municipality moving to deregister the Halifax Forum as noted above, there would be benefits that could be achieved. There would be reduced construction costs, but the savings would not be significant as compared to the current construction estimate for the refurbishment of the existing facility. Staff estimate the reduction would be in the 5-10 million range. However, there would be other benefits which would supplement that reduction in that the facility siting on the property could be optimized and the overall functionality of the facility could be improved. In addition, there would be reduced construction risks which are expected due to the current state and age of the existing building as well as overall reductions in the long term operating and maintenance costs.

surplus properties adjacent to the new Central Library. The construction of the Central Library significantly elevated the property values of these lots resulting in a higher return on the sale for the municipality.

Conclusions

Based on the public feedback and the additional analysis related to the parking, parkland, and overall project, the recommended approach for redeveloping the Halifax Forum complex remains the same as what was proposed in August 2021. The estimated capital costs for the project have increased from \$81M (2021) to \$110M (2023) based on inflation pressures. The increase in cost can be mitigated partially by the identified sale of lands.

The proposed redevelopment program builds upon previous staff reports and Regional Council decisions. The current decision-points of the project relate to the parking and parkland and ultimately to the extent of uses that occur within the building. The community consultation has resulted in some opposing sentiments regarding many of the questions of these aspects of the proposed building program. The analysis over these topics provides additional information to support the proposed redevelopment program.

The proposed redevelopment program will provide space for a diverse range of activities and programs. While there would be a reduction of on-site parking, which would result in increased on-street parking, the project will introduce needed parkland for the local area and for the facility itself. The identified sale of the development site will assist with project costs. With the proposed redevelopment the Halifax Forum should maintain its heritage designation, which would be confirmed through subsequent substantive alteration approval reviews.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The 2023/24 capital budget identifies funding for the Halifax Forum Redevelopment project (Attachment G). This budget estimates the total current project costs to be \$110,000,000.00 between 2023/24 and 2027/28.

Previously, funding for the \$81M project cost was secured between contributions to the Strategic Initiatives Debt Reserve and sale of land. Because the sale of land is now proposing to occur once the capital project is complete, that funding source will instead be used to repay a portion of the debt financing required. This land sale timing change plus the increased project scope cost now requires Council to approve an additional \$53 million in debt towards the Strategic Initiative funding plan in the 2024/25 budget.

Regarding capital funding opportunities, it is recognized that outside agencies and foundations may have funding programs to support projects related to heritage, infrastructure, energy efficiency and climate resiliency. Outside of the capital budget allocations, as part of the subsequent redevelopment planning, the opportunities for funding through other sources will be explored.

RISK CONSIDERATIONS

There is risk to the state of the building by not approving the redevelopment recommendation. The primary risk consideration is the existing building condition of the Halifax Forum complex. Some risks have been mitigated to date through temporary wall reinforcements and other measures. However, the condition of the building continues to deteriorate such that there are significant challenges with continuing to maintain the building in its current state. This increases the risk of failure of the building which would impact capacity for recreational programming. Rain events this past fall and winter resulted in significant leaking through the walls and freeze/thaw has continued to destabilize the masonry wall system.

Other building issues, such as building accessibility and compliance with updated code requirements can only be addressed through a substantial building reinvestment.

The sale of the development parcel has been proposed to reduce the overall development costs and continues to be recommended. However, the sale may introduce risk whereby HRM may be unable to effectively meet future land needs in this neighbourhood. Anticipated redevelopment along the Young and Robie Street Corridors, and population growth in the north end of the peninsula, will increase demand for

municipal services in the area, while also increasing competition for developmental land. These pressures can create scarcity of large urban land parcels, which may pose challenges for siting of future public uses, such as a larger park than what is proposed in this report or additional institutional/community facility uses in the long-term.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement occurred through the Spring of 2022 online and an open house was hosted in person in April 2022. Beyond the community engagement, the HFCA has been engaged extensively through the process of finalizing an approach to the redevelopment.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no environmental implications at this time. Environmental impact studies will be completed prior to construction should Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer to proceed with the redevelopment.

ALTERNATIVES

Regional Council could choose to

1. Eliminate the proposed new parkland and replace it with additional on-site parking, which would result in a total of approximately 280 on-site parking spaces.
2. Retain the freehold development site for parking or other future municipal uses. This would result in HRM forgoing the prospective income from its sale to offset the capital costs.
3. Reduce the proposed building program elements of the redevelopment program. This would reduce capital costs and parking needs, but also increase the HFCA's operating costs due to not being able to provide commercial event space and some other programming and may require that the municipality provide operating grants to support the operation of the arena. If this alternative was Council would need to provide specific direction on the elements to be removed in order for the project to proceed in the necessary timeline.
4. Deregister the Halifax Forum as a heritage building and direct the CAO to undertake a full reconstruction of the Halifax Forum campus. As outlined in the Reconstruction Alternative section of the report, there would be benefits and challenges with this option. This would also require a rescission of Regional Council's previous direction with two-thirds vote. In order to consider this alternative, the following motion would need to be passed.

It is recommended that Regional Council,

1. Rescind the August 31, 2021 motion;
2. Initiate the process to consider deregistration of the Halifax Forum heritage property and schedule a public hearing;
3. Subsequent to the deregistration, direct the CAO to undertake a complete reconstruction of the Halifax Forum complex on the site including the site components included in the discussion section of this report.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A	Halifax Forum and Surrounding Area Map
Attachment B	Conceptual Site Plan and Building Plans

Attachment C	What We Heard Report
Attachment D	HFCA Letter
Attachment E	Parkland Analysis
Attachment F	Parking Analysis
Attachment G	Halifax Forum Redevelopment Budget

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

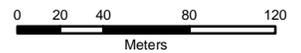
Report Prepared by: Gareth Evans, Recreation Planning Specialist 902.292.1264
Richard Harvey, Manager, Policy and Planning, 902.476.5822



HALIFAX FORUM AND SURROUNDING AREA

HALIFAX

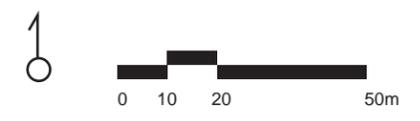
Parks & Recreation
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HALIFAX FORUM SITE OPPORTUNITIES - PARKING & PARK LAYOUT

PARKS & RECREATION
POLICY & PLANNING





FORUM









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Reception

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FORUM NEWS





Halifax Forum Redevelopment

What We Heard Report



Fall 2022

HALIFAX

Overview

The Halifax Regional Municipality conducted public engagement, assessing community support and values for the proposed redevelopment of the Halifax Forum complex. Project information and a survey were available on the *Shape Your City* portal from April 8 to May 1, 2022. Residents also had the option to email or phone municipal staff to ask questions or provide comments. Additionally, an in-person open house was hosted by Halifax Forum Community Association (HFCA) members and municipal staff on April 19, 2022 at the Halifax Forum Maritime Hall. This provided an opportunity for the public to learn more about the redevelopment proposal.

Engagement opportunities were promoted via:

- A public service announcement
- Maildrop to the adjacent neighbourhood (approximately 2,000 households)
- Social media posts
- Halifax Forum website
- Emailed to Halifax Forum facility stakeholders
- HFCA Redevelopment Committee member attended Farmers Markets, Flea Market and Bingo to promote

Engagement Summary

There were over 1,900 survey responses, largely from the B3L and B3K (West and North End Halifax) postal codes. 291 (15%) survey respondents identified they lived in the area highlighted in the survey (pictured here):



This area was identified as these streets are regularly impacted by overflow parking during regular programs and events occurring at the Halifax Forum Complex.

The age range of survey participants was as follows:

- 18 – 34 (19%)
- 35 – 54 (37%)
- 55 – 74 (37%)

- 75 and older (5.5%)
- Prefer not to say (1.5%)

Survey respondents indicated that the top five activities they attend at the Forum Complex were sales events, farmers markets, arena spectator events, other community events, and concerts. Nearly 900 respondents identified that they attended the Forum Complex ‘annually to a few times a year’, while 346 and 304 respondents identified they attended ‘several times a month’ and ‘monthly’ respectively. Otherwise, 226 respondents did not attend the facility regularly, 139 respondents attended several times a week, and 35 respondents never attend the Forum Complex.

Survey participants were asked to rank the importance of the significant components of the proposed Halifax Forum complex redevelopment, which were ranked from least important to most important as follows:

- New greenspace
- Preserved façade / heritage of the Forum Arena
- On-site parking
- Two ice surfaces
- Multipurpose and event space

New greenspace received the lowest average ranking of 2.80/5 and multipurpose and event space received the highest average ranking of 3.12/5.

Several survey participants did describe this question as confusing, so slight tweaks were made in the wording to ensure participant engagement.

Respondents were asked their most frequent mode of transportation to get to the Halifax Forum complex, and 1,912 people responded as follows:

- Personal Vehicle (1,389)
- Walk/Roll (635)
- Bike (176)
- Transit (168)
- Dropped off by family/guardian/friend (69)
- Taxi/Uber (48)
- Other (16)

Participants were asked to respond to a series of questions, based on a Likert scale, regarding impacts of the proposed redevelopment. Statements were as follows:

- “I support a reduction in the amount of on-site parking to approximately 150 spaces, which may result in additional parking on the adjoining streets.”
- “I support the development of the proposed parkland, which may result in additional greenspace and outdoor recreation facilities.”

- “I support the sale of a portion of the Halifax Forum Complex lands which will help offset the cost of the Forum redevelopment.”
- “I support the entire redevelopment plan as proposed.”

These statements gave participants the choice of “completely disagree”, “somewhat disagree”, “neither agree nor disagree”, “somewhat agree”, and “completely agree”. Of the 1,912 responses to each statement, the answers were as follows:

- Reduction in parking (“completely disagree” 716, “somewhat disagree” 307, “neither agree nor

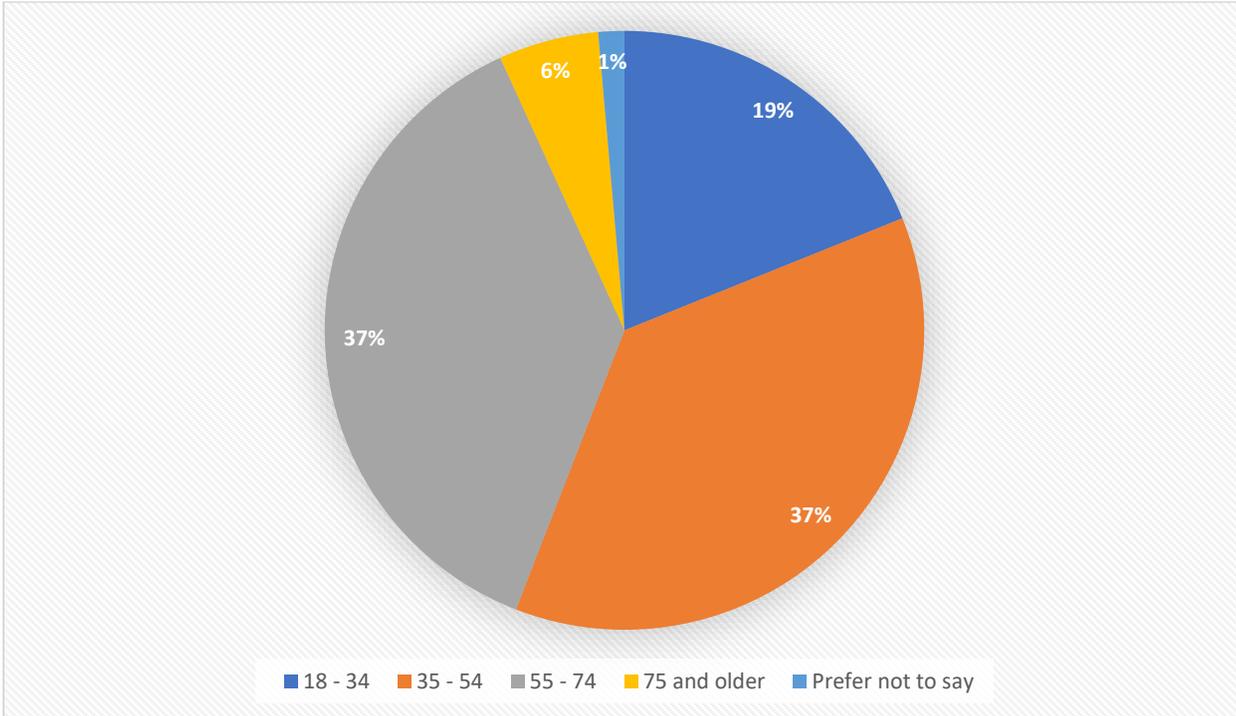
disagree” 160, “somewhat agree” 299, and “completely agree” 428)

- Development of parkland (“completely disagree” 214, “somewhat disagree” 200, “neither agree nor disagree” 244, “somewhat agree” 374, and “completely agree” 877)
- Sale of portion of Forum site (“completely disagree” 541, “somewhat disagree” 263, “neither agree nor disagree” 271, “somewhat agree” 370, and “completely agree” 459)
- Entire redevelopment proposal (“completely disagree” 301, “somewhat disagree” 370, “neither agree nor disagree” 336, “somewhat agree” 566, and “completely agree” 319)

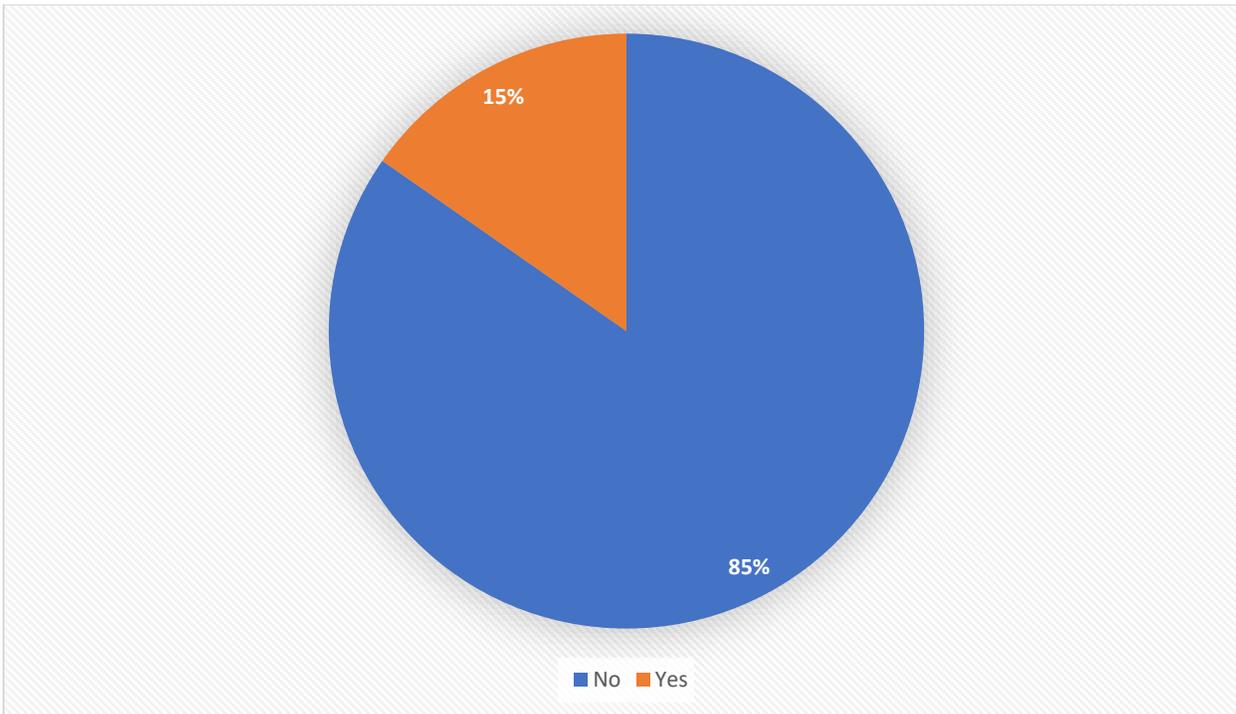
Survey Results

The following provides a visual summary of survey responses. The graphs and charts were developed directly from data provided through the 'ShapeYourCity' responses.

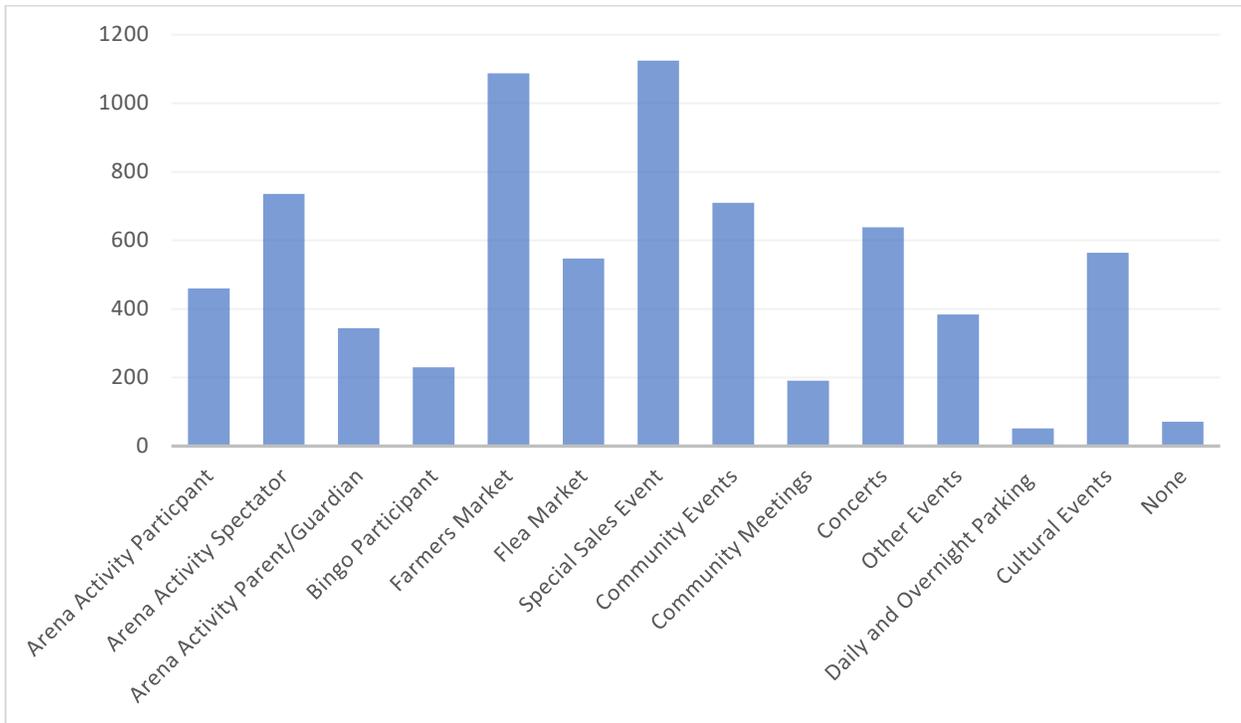
Please select your age range



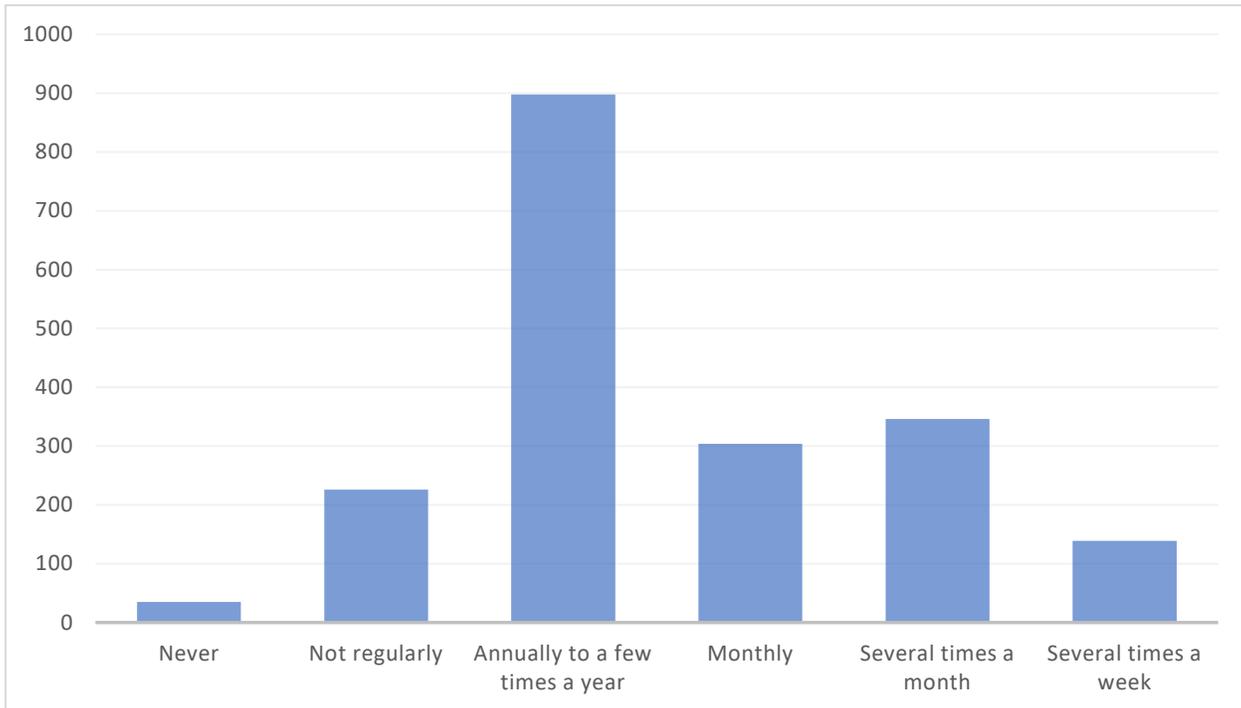
Do you live in the identified area?



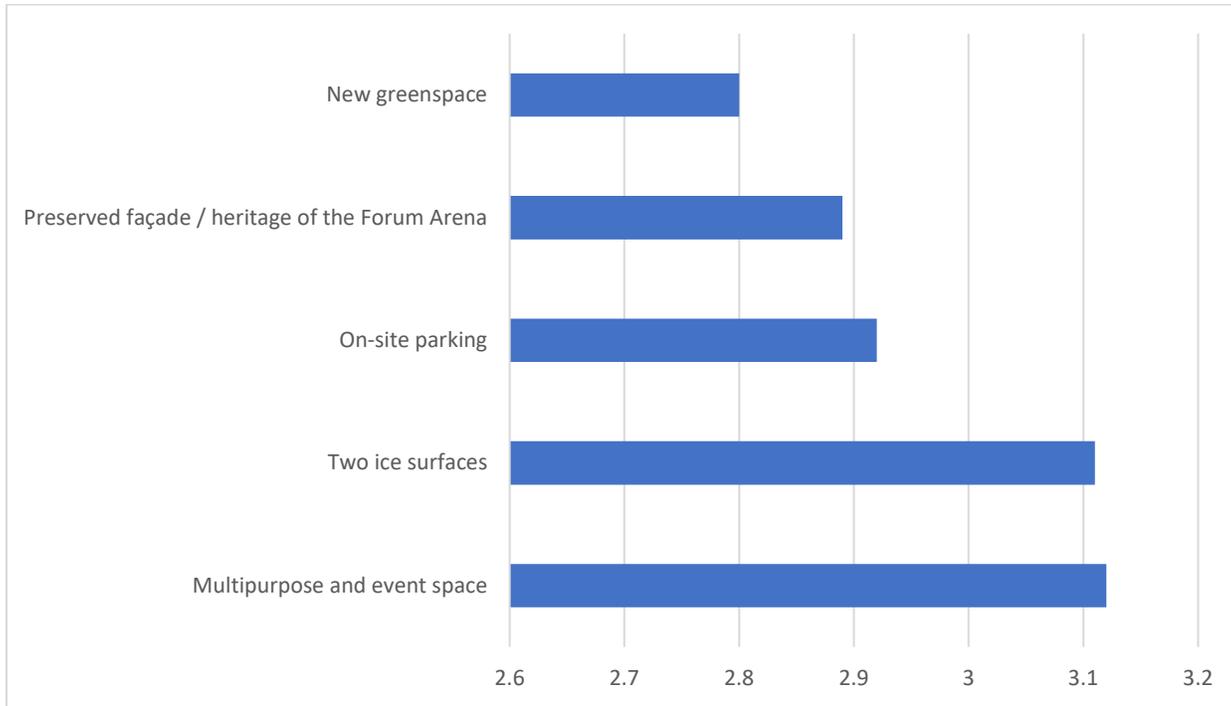
Select any of the following that best describe your regular use of the Halifax Forum Complex



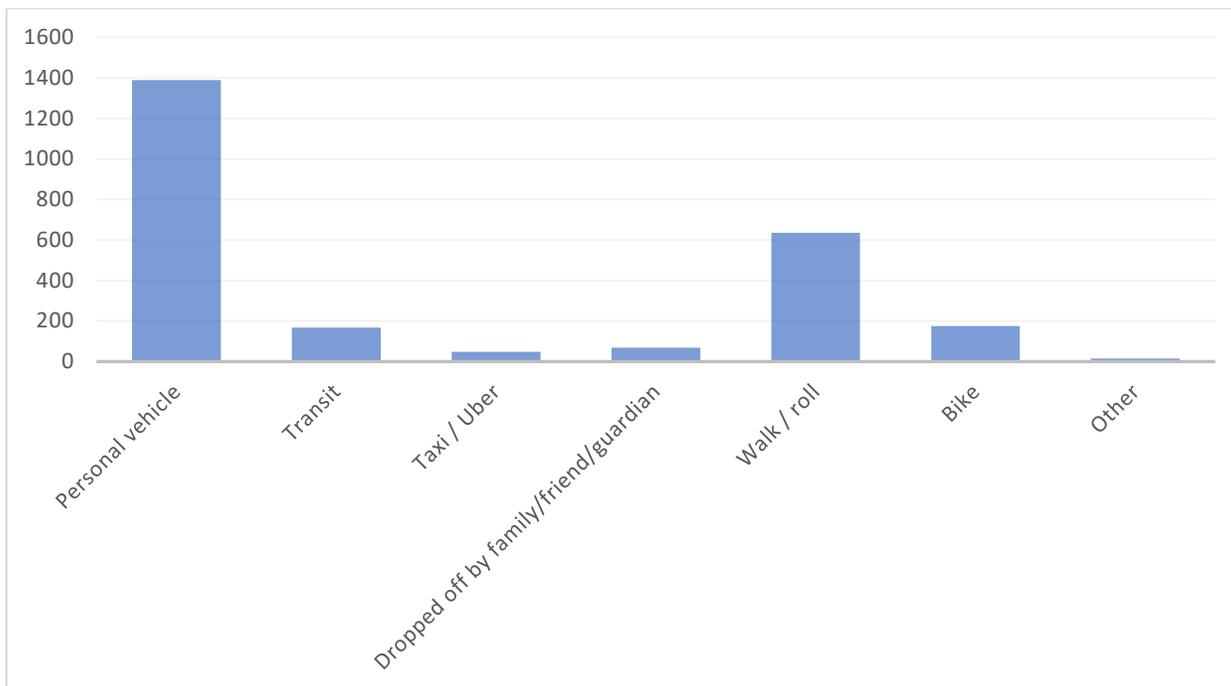
Select how often you attend the Halifax Forum Complex



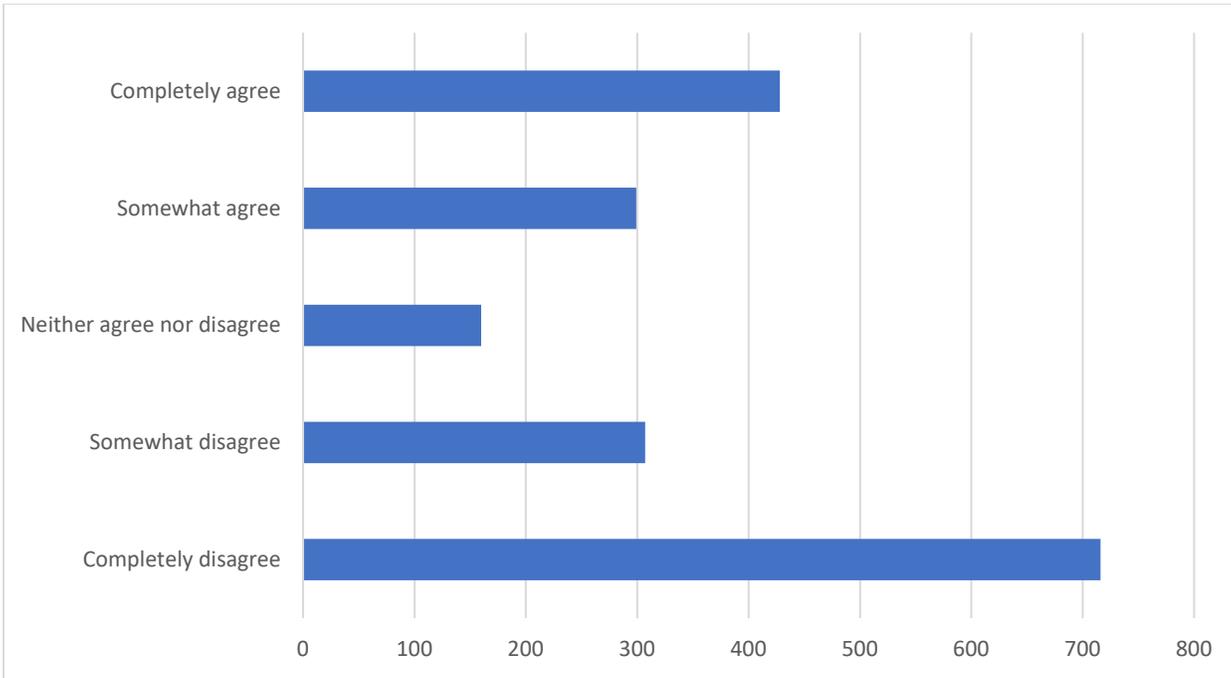
Please rank in order of importance the components of the Halifax Forum Complex redevelopment (1 – least important to 5 – most important)



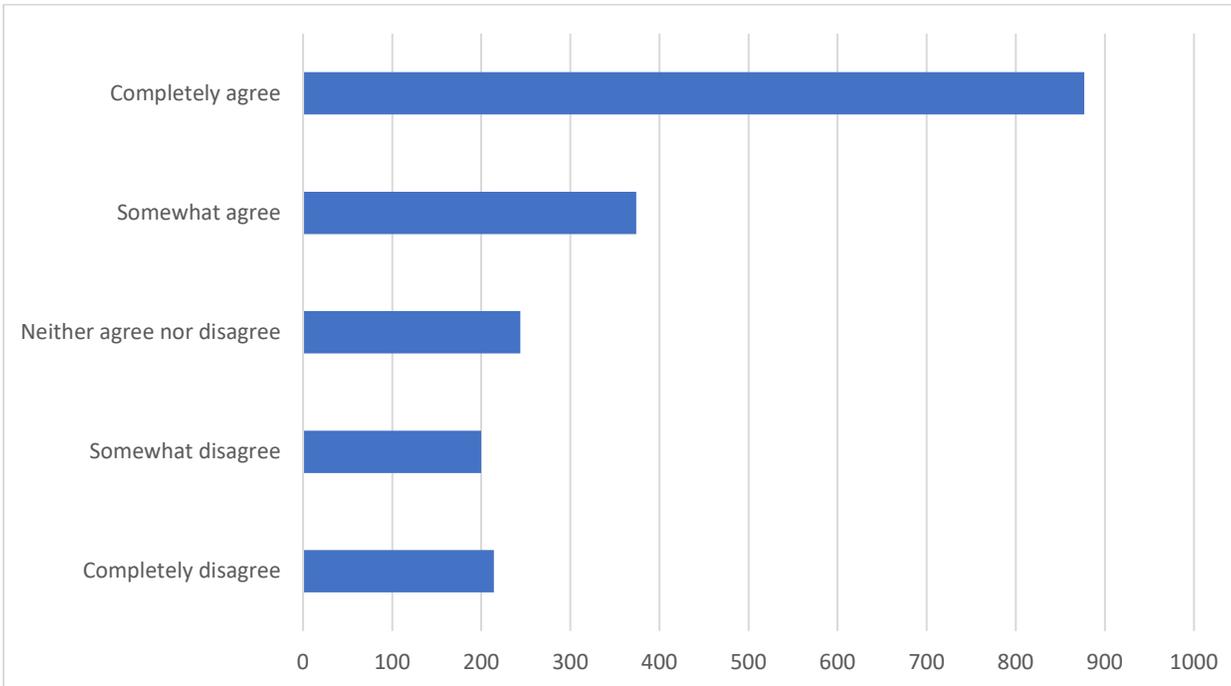
Which mode of transportation do you use most frequently to get to the Halifax Forum Complex?



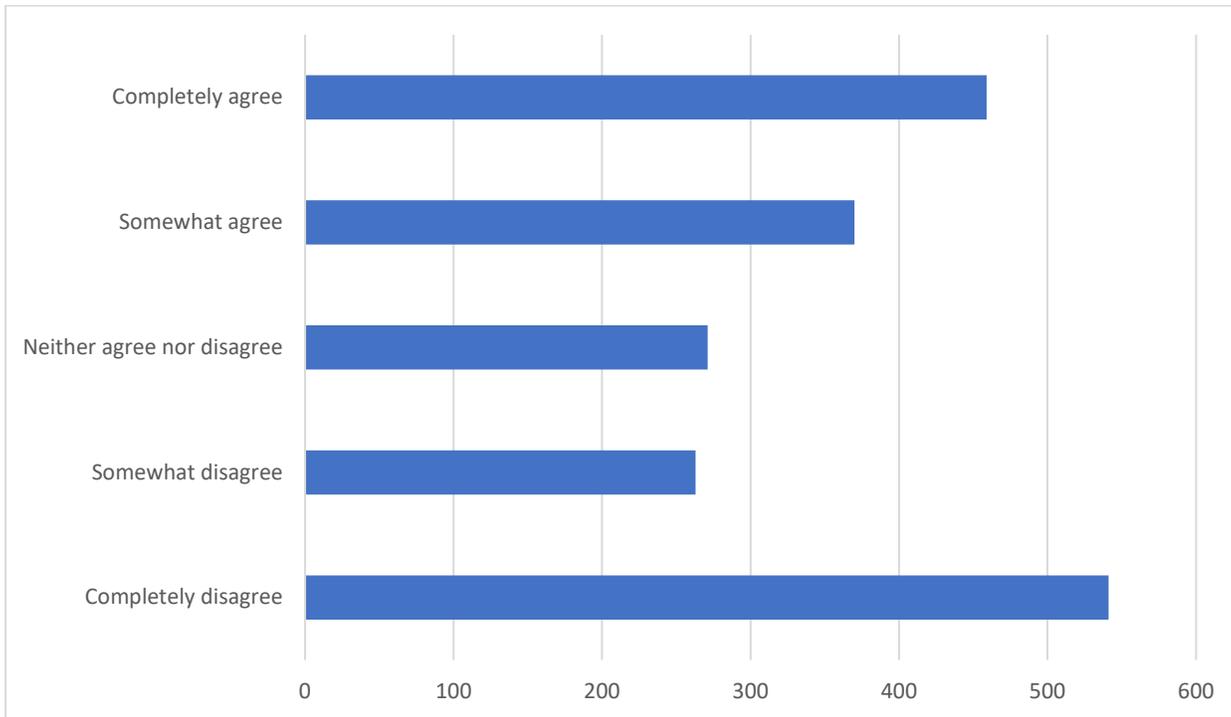
I support a reduction in the amount of on-site parking to approximately 150 spaces, which may result in additional parking on the adjoining streets.



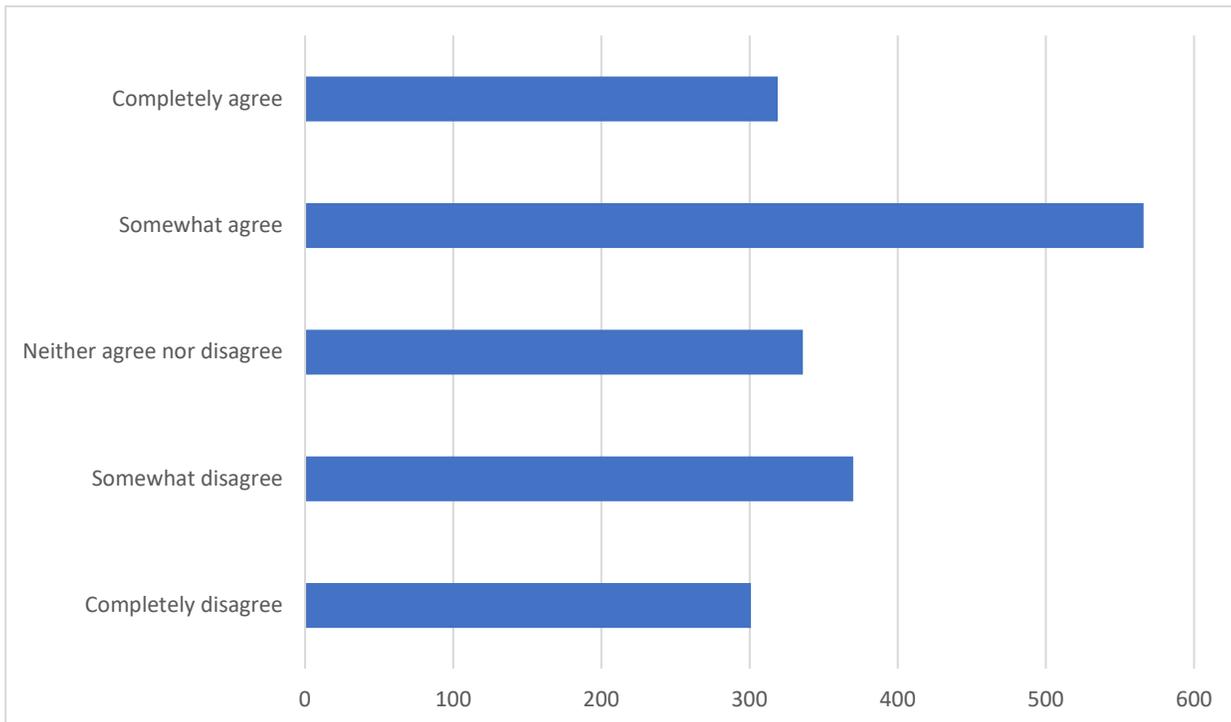
I support the development of the proposed parkland, which may result in additional greenspace and outdoor recreation facilities.



I support the sale of a portion of the Halifax Forum Complex lands which will help offset the cost of the Forum redevelopment.



I support the entire redevelopment plan as proposed



Survey Comments

Survey participants were also given the opportunity to provide written feedback directly in the survey, calling or emailing the staff overseeing the survey, as well as the in person open house session on April 19, 2022. Feedback received was primarily focused on the components of the redevelopment, including greenspace, heritage, parking ice pads, multipurpose space, and the proposed development site with considerations articulated within these themes, as follows;

Greenspace

- *Consideration given to programming of greenspace – sports courts, play structures, seating, vendor space, and pathways.*
- *Consideration given to the trees and plants at the proposed greenspace, such as pollinators, native species, people and pet friendly planting.*
- *Consideration given to developing greenspace throughout the exterior of the entire site, rather than proposed parking and development sites.*
- *Consideration to ensure there is a buffer between the adjacent streets of Windsor and Almon.*

Heritage

- *Consideration to ensure elements of the interior are preserved in addition to the façade.*
- *Consideration to preserving the entire Forum Arena, including the interior components.*
- *Consideration to demolishing and replicating the Forum.*

Parking

- *Consideration to leave the parking as is, develop a parking a structure, or add additional parking to the existing site.*
- *Consideration to add pay and display parking on site for facility users.*
- *Consideration to ensuring some parking on adjacent street is reserved for residents.*
- *Consideration of developing park and ride programs for larger events.*

Ice Pads

- *Consideration of adding additional ice pads.*
- *Consideration to ensure ice pads are accessible for users.*
- *Consideration to ensure ice pads have appropriate spectator areas and sightlines.*

Multipurpose Space

- *Consideration to ensure space is flexible for a variety of programming.*
- *Consideration to ensure space is acoustically sounds for concerts and events.*

Proposed Development Site

- *Consideration given to ensure site accommodates affordable housing.*
- *Consideration given to ensure site remains intact for public use.*
- *Consideration to adding additional public recreation infrastructure.*
- *Consideration for using space for surface parking.*

Local Resident Comments

- *Consideration given to additional parking enforcement during annual events hosted on the Forum site.*
- *Consideration given to the neighbourhood impact to potential greenspace programming – ie; siting of sports courts and associated noises.*
- *Consideration to traffic impacts from potential development site.*
- *Consideration given to traffic calming on surrounding streets to accommodate additional vehicles parking*
- *Consideration to ensure greenspace is achieved on site with additional development coming to the area.*

Standout Commentary

“The green space is much, much needed in this neighbourhood, which is close to where I live! There’s already a number of developments around Young St. without adequate green space. Something should also be done to calm traffic at the Windsor / Bayers Road intersection if you expect more people to walk or cycle through there. I think the development plan is great except for the part to get rid of the city’s land. We should hang on to as much public land as possible if we can. There’s already not a lot of places in the city you can go that belong to everyone.”

“...I am a resident of the immediate community within which the Forum is located. As counsellors, planners and community members are aware, the area adjacent to the Forum is undergoing significant changes. The community and area is described in my mind as "up and coming", with many renovations and new builds occurring in the area. I believe the community broadly welcomes our new neighbours in the many high-rises and new apartments being built. It is, for this reason, I believe the green space portion of the forum redevelopment is of such importance. To emphasize the scale of redevelopment in the area; on the corner of Almon and Robie, four large towers (one 30 stories high) is being constructed. Two new developments are occurring on the corner of Windsor and Young,

Another on Almon (8-stories) directly opposite the post office. With the influx of new people, their families and their pets, green space will be essential to the quality of life for this growing community, while benefiting the overall appearance of the Forum re-development. Members will be aware of the importance of green space for communities. Indeed, scientific evidence demonstrates the importance of green space, bike, walk and roll-ability of public spaces for the well-being and mental health of the people who use them. While many people may be concerned about the parking, the current parking is not conducive to a pleasant environment to live in, walk around in or attended events at. In fact, the current parking situation is dangerous for children and the broader community alike. Please consider that traffic calming, more biking, and sustainable transport with the provision of improved bus stops, bike parking etc are fundamentally needed at a time when the world, the pandemic and the climate are forcing us to re-think the way we use spaces and provide places for all people to use. Taxpayers should not be subsidizing free parking for private vehicles, and the surrounding streets and areas will be able to handle any large influx of traffic that is needed on the rare occasion of a large event. Occasions, where a large number of cars would need to be accommodated are certainly outweighed by the daily use and lives of the immediate community, which is growing. It is for this reason I also oppose the selling of the adjacent lot for private sale. The money gained from the sale is a "drop in the bucket" to the re-development costs, and substantially reduces the space available for additional green space, or indeed more parking if that is what the community decides."

"I think the general proposal will enhance the neighbourhood, however, reducing the parking spaces will adversely affect the area and our quality of life. When there is an event at the forum, there is spillage of parking everywhere in the neighbourhood with no accessible parking. Where are all the hockey parents going to park? The city planners are short sighted in their planning with insufficient parking for everyone. There is an apartment going up on Gladstone with 50 parking spots for 80 + apartments, where are their guests, deliveries, etc, going to park? There is going to be reduced parking on Almon for bike lanes which will significantly affect parking for residents and businesses along Almon Street. We live here and we are fortunate to be able to pay for an indoor parking space, however, I am very concerned that eventually there will be nowhere for our friends and family to park to visit us. There are only so many on street parking spots and they will not be sufficient and our quality of life will be negatively impacted. The reason we did not choose to rent downtown was because of lack of parking. I am very fearful that the same fate awaits us with the diminished parking at the forum. The reason I go to the

farmers market is that there is accessible parking. Please reconsider the parking issue. I would suggest you temporarily remove all but 150 parking spaces for 2 months and study the ramifications. They will be significant. I am not in favour of selling the back parking lot to developers."

"Green space with outdoor facilities for play, sport and general recreation is an excellent addition to the site's services/functions. This area should also be inviting and appropriate for seniors as well (ample comfortable seating, lighting, shaded areas, tables & seating for picnics, lawn games) - Natural elements (trees, grass, plants) are excellent addition for aesthetic and environmental enhancement to a currently bleak massive area. - While I appreciate that fewer parking spaces encourages alternative transportation use, the nature of activities at this facility that tend to draw people from off-peninsula and much greater distances, 150 spaces are insufficient (unless private development parking will be available around the same period of Forum completion). It puts an incredible amount of pressure on the residential area's traffic and street parking. - With great emphasis on transit and AT use, make a point of enhancing infrastructure: multiple large bus shelters from N to S on E and W and COVERED parking for bicycles/kick-scooters/e-stand-scooters at ALL entrances (NOT 1 or 2 entrances) near entrances (NOT distanced). - Roadway/Driveway: Rendering doesn't appear to have provisions for kiss n' drop (appears they'll travel the full distance between Windsor & Almon and add to traffic of those trying to park) which will result in frequent drops/pick-ups along Windsor St blocking cycle track (I live downtown and I see this lack of design feature consistently cause this result). - Ice-rink: If there is structural possibility of having a walking track around one ice rink this really should be prioritized for a much more inclusive space beyond athletes. - I'm aware the survey is about infrastructure planning, but because there is such an emphasis on ice-rinks (2), I'll make a crucial point about HRM having operation and program policy that emphasizes equity of its use (e.g. ice time) for multiple diverse ice activities (not just hockey), gender, age, and lower socio-economic populations. Ice-rinks classically serve hockey players which subsequently means a very very small percentage of population (i.e. greatest ratio of facility expenses to individual compared to other types) who are male adolescents and adults from higher socio-economic groups. - Multi-purpose space: An audio designer contribute to the plan so that the space feels more intimate for events (loose the echo) and have good acoustics for live music."

Questions and Answers

Throughout the survey comment section, there were recurring statements and concerns articulated by survey participants, which have been converted into a 'questions and answers' section as follows:

Q. How are people meant to take hockey equipment on a bike or bus?

A. Though it is manageable to transport equipment on a bicycle or transit, with the remaining 150 proposed on-site parking spaces and overflow on street parking would be available for ice pads users to park their vehicles and transport equipment into the Forum Complex

Q. Why do we need another park? There is a park down the street and the Commons is only a few blocks away.

A. Ideally, residents have a park within a five-minute walk / roll of their residence, meaning for some residents of the adjacent streets of the Forum are beyond a five minute walk to their local park. Additionally, with development underway or being planned, there will be added pressure to existing parks which can be relieved at the proposed park at the Forum Complex.

Q. When I attend concerts and events, there is already a shortage of parking – why not keep it as is or add more?

A. There is a desire to redevelop the Forum Complex, to ensure it is both a community and regional destination for users. The proposed greenspace development will be available for community and regional users, for their desired frequency. The larger events which facility users travel to by personal vehicle can be mitigated with planned improvements to transit, active transportation, and changes to parking restrictions and enforcement.

Q. Will the development site include affordable housing?

A. The proposed site is zoned CEN-2, which would be subject to density bonusing based on Centre Plan. This does not guarantee affordable housing, though it would be an opportunity for potential future owners of the land to pursue.

Q. Why are you preserving the Forum?

A. The Forum is a heritage property, and as such the municipality is responsible for the maintenance and preservation of its heritage assets.

Q. How long is this going to take? Can you do it in phases to keep parts of the facility operational?

A. Though uncertain, a project of this nature may take upwards of 24 to 30 months to complete. It would be possible to complete the redevelopment in phases, however this would likely increase the cost and length of time to complete the redevelopment.



Halifax Forum Community Association
2901 Windsor St
Halifax, NS
B3K 5E5

August 22, 2022

To: Gareth Evans

Cc: Nalini Naidoo, Richard Harvey, Terry Gallagher, Councilor Lindell Smith

The Halifax Forum Community Association (HFCA) is pleased to know that we are nearing the final stages of the approval process to build a newly revitalized Halifax Forum that will serve the residents of HRM and surrounding areas for years to come. It is our understanding that a final report will be presented to Regional Council in the fall of 2022 in which we hope a unanimous decision will be made to move this project forward.

HRM staff and the volunteers of the HFCA Board have worked closely with each other during this undertaking and are now faced with a decision on how best to handle the proposed freehold development land, park/recreation green space and parking. We believe park/recreation green space and parking are vital components to the future success of the Forum and the HFCA believes there is a way to satisfy those needs.

The Halifax Centre Plan identified that the community surrounding the Forum is underserved for greenspace/parkland. As well, recent public engagement survey clearly highlighted the importance of maintaining green space on the property. The HFCA supports the plan for a redeveloped facility to return the south portion of the Forum property back to greenspace/parkland, similar to how it was when the Forum was first built in 1927

Additionally, the public engagement survey also expressed a clear concern in the reduction of parking in the redevelopment plan. The HFCA has been expressing the same concern since onsite parking was reduced from the planned 356 spaces (November 26, 2019, Staff Report to Council) to the current planned 150 spaces (August 31, 2021, Staff Report to Council). The HFCA also strongly believes that offering limited parking will create unwanted pressure on the local residential streets. These added pressures will create an environment that does not feel accessible for those who come from other districts. The Halifax Forum is a multi-district facility, and we need to ensure that we cater to all groups who choose to use the facility. The current number of defined parking spaces at the Forum is 450. The reduction to 150 parking spaces proposed in the most current HRM Redevelopment plan is due in large part to the HRM's choice to sell off a portion of the Forum's property as a freehold development site.

The proposed 150 spots by HRM are substantially less than required to successfully run an operation such as ours. The HFCA has maintained its position that 270 on-site parking spots is the minimum operational requirement needed to successfully run our programs. To achieve the additional 120

spaces the HFCA proposes the following amendments to the existing site plan and is shown in the attached rough diagram below:

- An additional 15 spaces adjacent to the Northwest practice arena can be realized given HRM's decision to reconfigure the northern driveway to align with Cork Street.
- By reducing the current proposed size of the Freehold development land to 1.03 acres from the current 1.3 acres, an additional 30 spaces can be realized. Specifically, take the first 20 feet on the south side of the free hold development site and revert it back to Forum parking.
- The HFCA also believes that a portion of space dedicated to the Forum greenspace/parkland can be used as recreational /park programming space during Spring and Summer but be available for parking during the Fall and Winter. This adjustment in the Redevelopment Plan would result in an additional 75 "flex parking spaces" during the high parking demand period of the Fall and Winter

Without a compromise proposal as outlined above, the only other options to get us close to our required operational parking threshold would be to forgo the sale of the freehold land or to reconsider the HFCA suggestion of a parking structure on the east side of the facility.

Forgoing the sale of the land would result in adding 288 parking spots back into the redevelopment plan (based on the November 26, 2019, report to council titled Forum Building Analysis), thus providing a total of 438 parking spaces for the redeveloped Forum. The other option, a parking structure on the east side of the Forum lands, would result in 295 parking spots (based on the October 4, 2021, HFCA report titled Halifax Forum Parking Garage Concept), thus providing a total of roughly 368 parking spaces in a redeveloped Forum.

The HFCA feels strongly that our above proposal to achieve 270 parking spaces while honoring the public interest for green space is the most reasonable option to satisfy the needs and service expectations of those who live near, travel from other districts, use, and/or operate the facility. As well, our proposal would satisfy HRM's desire to not add any additional capital costs to the Redevelopment Plan.

The HFCA is seeking mutual endorsement of this proposal from HRM and encourage that endorsement to be added to the report that will be presented to Halifax Regional Council in Fall 2022.

The HFCA looks forward to your response on this matter.

Kind Regards,


Paul Card
Redevelopment Committee Chair
Halifax Forum Community Association

Rough diagram depicting HFCA's proposed amendments to the existing site plan





Halifax Forum | Functional Parkland Per Capita within a 500m walk

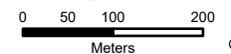
- Residential Building
- Functional Parkland*
- Halifax Forum
- Approved Development

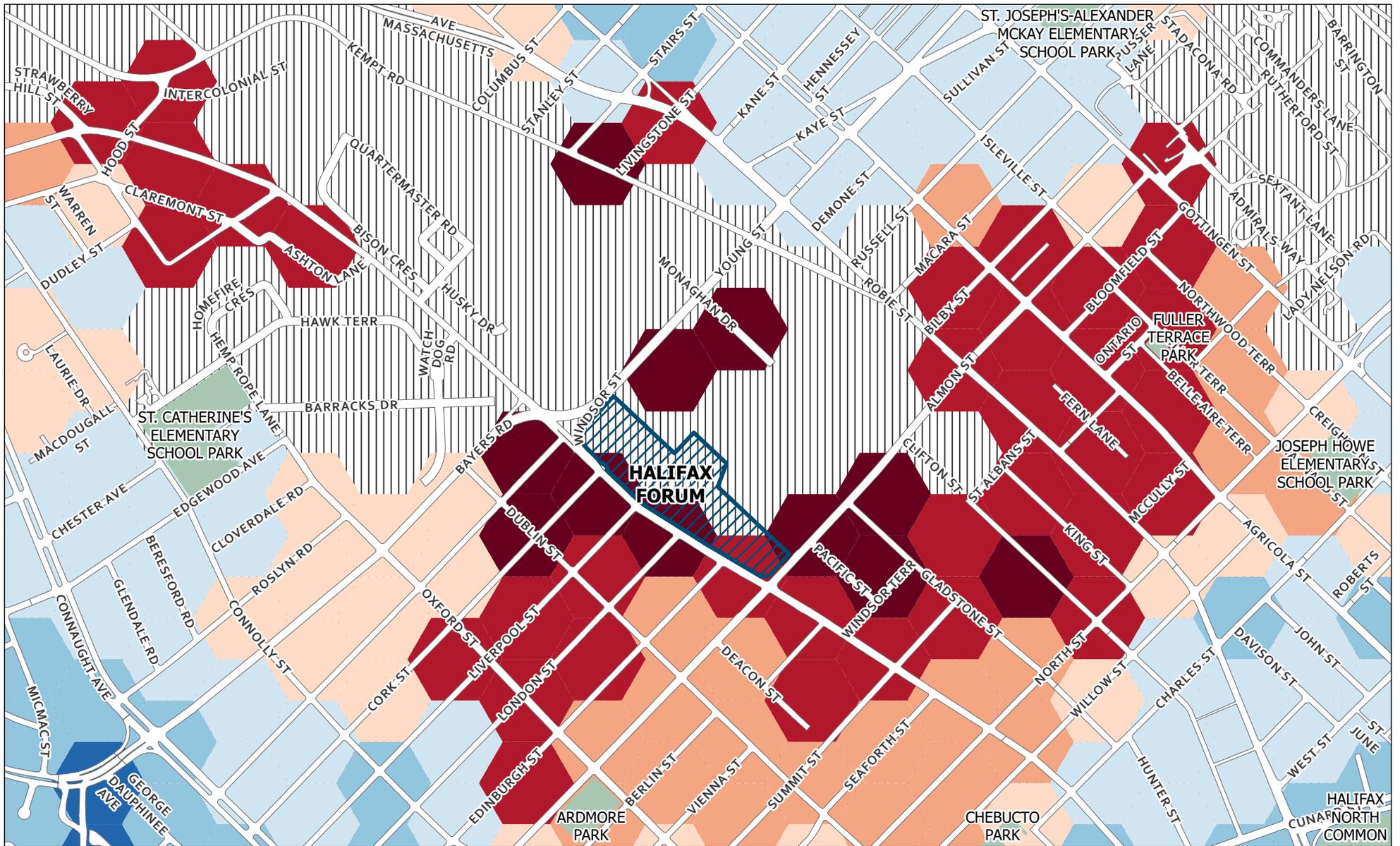
Functional Parkland Service Area (m)

500

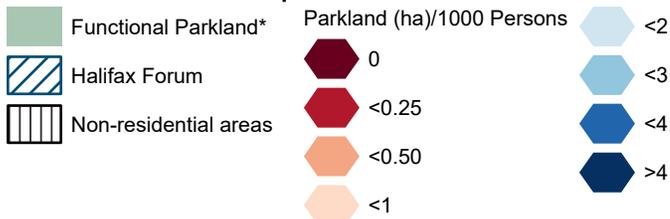
* Functional parks include parkland with at least one built amenity or enough open space for active play or water access. Cemeteries are excluded. The area of these parks are calculated with building footprints removed.

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Halifax Forum | Functional Parkland Per Capita within a 500m walk



* Functional parks include parkland with at least one built amenity or enough open space for active play or water access. Cemeteries are excluded. The area of these parks are calculated with building footprints removed.

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HALIFAX FORUM REDEVELOPMENT Parking Analysis

January 26, 2023

Prepared by:
HRM Transportation Planning

Introduction

Planning and design work is currently ongoing for the redevelopment of the Halifax Forum site. As such, the Transportation Planning team has completed an analysis of anticipated parking demand for typical events at the redeveloped Halifax Forum. The following analysis includes a description of the event scenarios considered, assumptions made about events (e.g., number of attendees, mode share rates, arrival/departure distributions, etc.) and the expected demand for parking. Please note that the assumptions and analysis are intended to be high level and for planning purposes only.

Background

Existing Facility

The existing Forum site consists of five venues, including two ice pads, conference space, a multi-purpose centre and a bingo gaming centre. The ice pads (Halifax Forum arena and Civic Centre arena) are most often utilized for ice-based events (e.g., hockey, skating) and are also capable of hosting non-ice events. The conference room (Maritime Hall) is traditionally used as a reception hall, meeting room or exhibition centre. The multi-purpose centre can host a series of events such as concerts, trade shows and retail sales. Lastly, the gaming centre is used for bingo events on nearly a daily basis.

Forum Redevelopment Concept

The redevelopment concept for the site includes two ice pads, a multipurpose event space, and new outdoor parkland space. The redeveloped multipurpose facility will be the new venue for bingo events. It is expected that the frequency and capacity of bingo events will be reduced compared to existing conditions.

Parking Supply

The existing Halifax Forum site includes nearly 500 parking spaces. The redevelopment proposes to significantly reduce available on-site parking to approximately 150 spaces. There is on-street parking capacity near the Halifax Forum (within 500m) for approximately 790 vehicles, as shown in Figure 1. The current occupancy rate for on-street parking is not considered in this analysis.

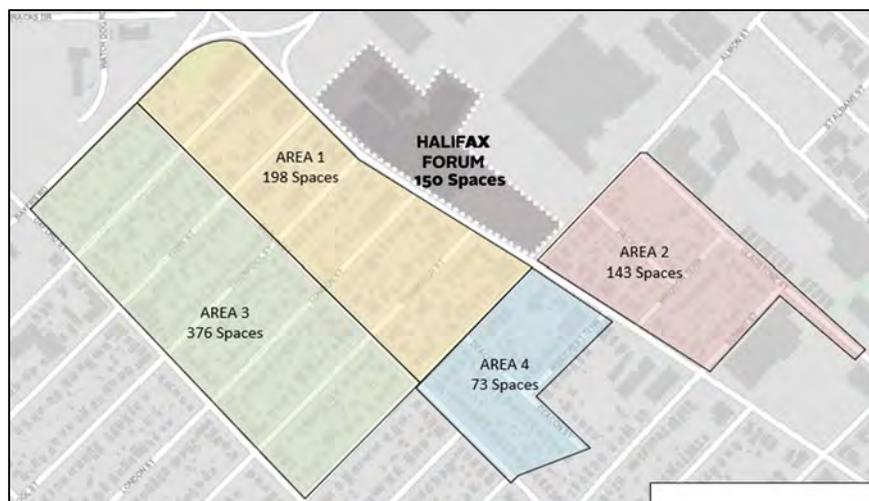


Figure 1 – Proposed On-Site Parking and On-Street Parking Capacity

Multimodal Transportation Options

In addition to vehicular transportation, there are several existing transit routes and cycling facilities within a 500m radius of the Halifax Forum, as shown in Figure 2. There are also a number of future planned transit routes, including two Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) routes, and two more cycling facilities.

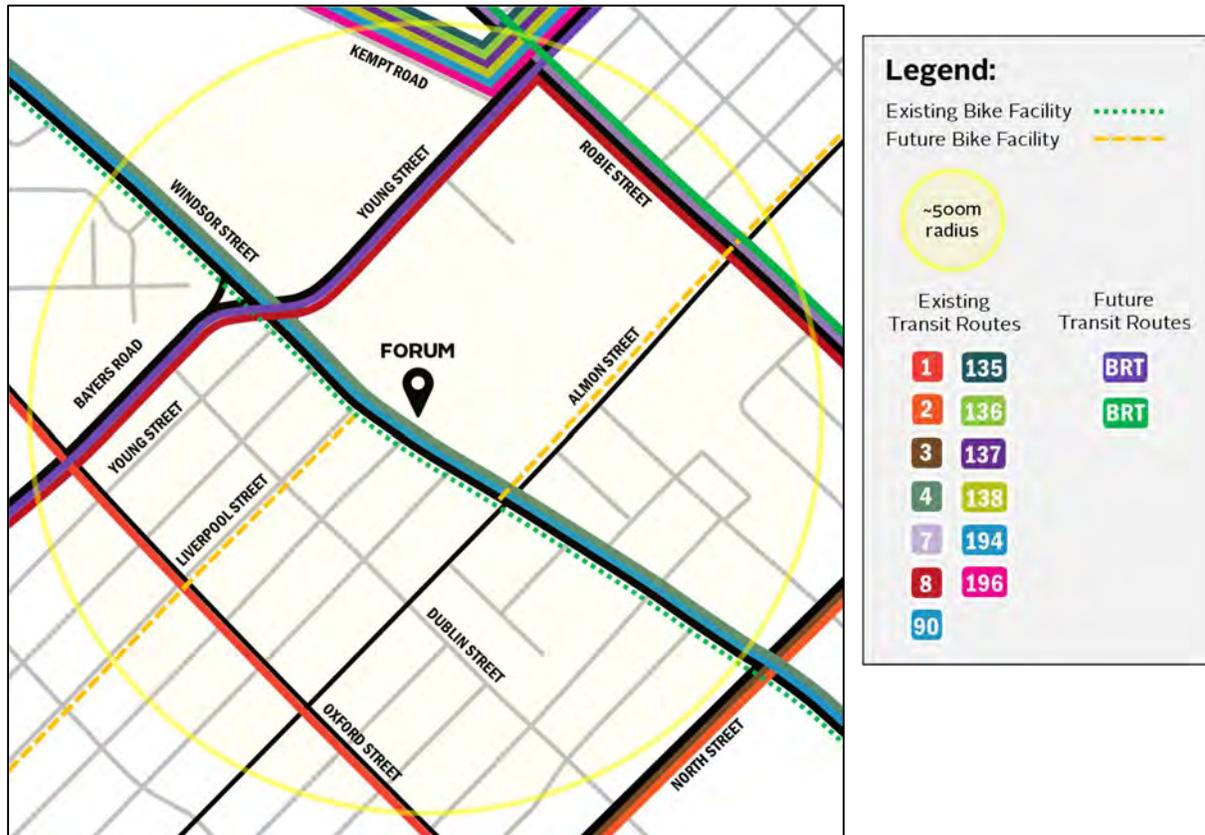


Figure 2 – Summary of Existing/Future Multi-Modal Travel Opportunities

Parking Demand Analysis

A parking demand analysis has been completed to estimate the amount of parking demand at the site based on different event scenarios and assumptions. The Halifax Forum site accommodates a wide range of users, as events fluctuate with the time of year. For the purposes of this analysis, the focus is a typical weekday evening during the fall/winter, when ice activities (primarily minor hockey) are in season.

Event Assumptions

Minor Hockey

The following assumptions have been made regarding the number of hockey participants and spectators associated with minor hockey events at the Forum along with the mode of transportation used.

- One minor hockey event is assumed to draw a total of 30-50 participants including players, coaches, and officials. Some of these participants will typically arrive together – for example, coaches and team officials are often a parent or guardian of a participant.
- Minor hockey events can have a varied number of spectators depending on the nature of the event. For example, a practice is likely to generate relatively few spectators, while a game may generate more attendance. Most spectators for a typical minor hockey event will arrive at the facility with one or more participants; however, there are additional spectators that may arrive independently. It has been assumed that an additional 40 spectators (beyond those that arrive with the hockey participants) will attend a typical minor hockey event.
- Most hockey participants will arrive at the facility by vehicle. Minor hockey events often have a regional draw and there are unique factors (e.g., large equipment bags) that make arrival by vehicle most common.
- Based on assumptions made related the number of hockey participants/spectators (50 participants and 40 spectators), it is estimated that a typical minor hockey game will generate approximately 60 vehicle trips to the facility based on the following breakdown of arrivals:
 - Hockey participants typically have early arrivals delayed departures to facilitate changing time. As a result, hockey participants will typically overlap with the next group of hockey participants when back-to-back events are scheduled. It is assumed that arrival of hockey participants/spectators will be distributed over 30 minutes before the game starts, and departures from the arena will be distributed over 30 minutes after the game ends.
- Larger scale hockey events (e.g., university/junior hockey games) can draw more significant amounts of spectators. Larger scale events may see an increase in carpooling and other non-auto transportation modes among spectators.

Bingo

The following assumptions were made regarding to the number of participants/staff expected for a Bingo event, auto/non-auto mode splits and the distribution of arrivals/departures to/from the Forum.

- Existing Bingo events are generally attended by approximately 200 people, including participants and staff. It is expected that the Bingo facility at the redeveloped Forum will have a lower participant capacity than the existing facility, however, this analysis has considered typical existing attendance to be conservative.
- In general, Bingo events are longer in duration than minor hockey events, resulting in a significantly lower parking turnover rate for Bingo participants than hockey participants. Based on observations previously made by HRM's Parks and Recreation department related to weeknight Bingo-events, this analysis assumes that Bingo participants start to arrive around 5:00pm and being to depart around 9:00pm.
- Mode share rates for Bingo participants were determined based on an in-person survey conducted at the Halifax Forum Redevelopment Committee prior to a weeknight Bingo event. Based on the survey responses (42 participants), the following mode share breakdown was determined:
 - Approximately 50% of participants drive alone, 38% drive with at least one other person, and the remaining 12% use an alternative mode of transportation (e.g., walking, cycling, transit, taxi/uber, etc.).
- Based on available capacity for Bingo attendees and the survey results, it is expected that a Bingo event drawing 200 participants/staff will result in parking demand for approximately 130 vehicles.

Event Parking Estimates

To evaluate how the proposed parking capacity is expected to operate, five event scenarios were selected for analysis:

- Scenario 1: One Ice Pad in use
- Scenario 2: Two Ice Pads in use
- Scenario 3: Multi-Purpose Centre in use
- Scenario 4: One Ice Pad & Multi-Purpose Centre in use
- Scenario 5: Two Ice Pads & Multi-Purpose Centre in use

The following subsections describe the scenarios considered in this analysis and the associated parking demand estimates based on the assumptions listed previously. It should be noted that all five scenarios consider typical weeknight event circumstances and do not consider large-scale events (e.g., Christmas at the Forum, craft fairs, small festivals, etc.).

Scenario 1: One Ice Pad in use

Scenario 1 consists of examining expected parking demand for the usage of one ice pad on a weeknight. In this scenario, two back-to-back minor hockey games take place, using only one ice pad at a time.

Figure 3 represents the anticipated parking demand for Scenario 1, where one hockey game is scheduled for 6:00pm and another is scheduled for 7:00pm on the same ice pad. As shown in the figure, hockey participants will typically overlap with the next group when back-to-back games are scheduled. Parking demand is not expected to exceed the proposed capacity when only one ice pad is in use.

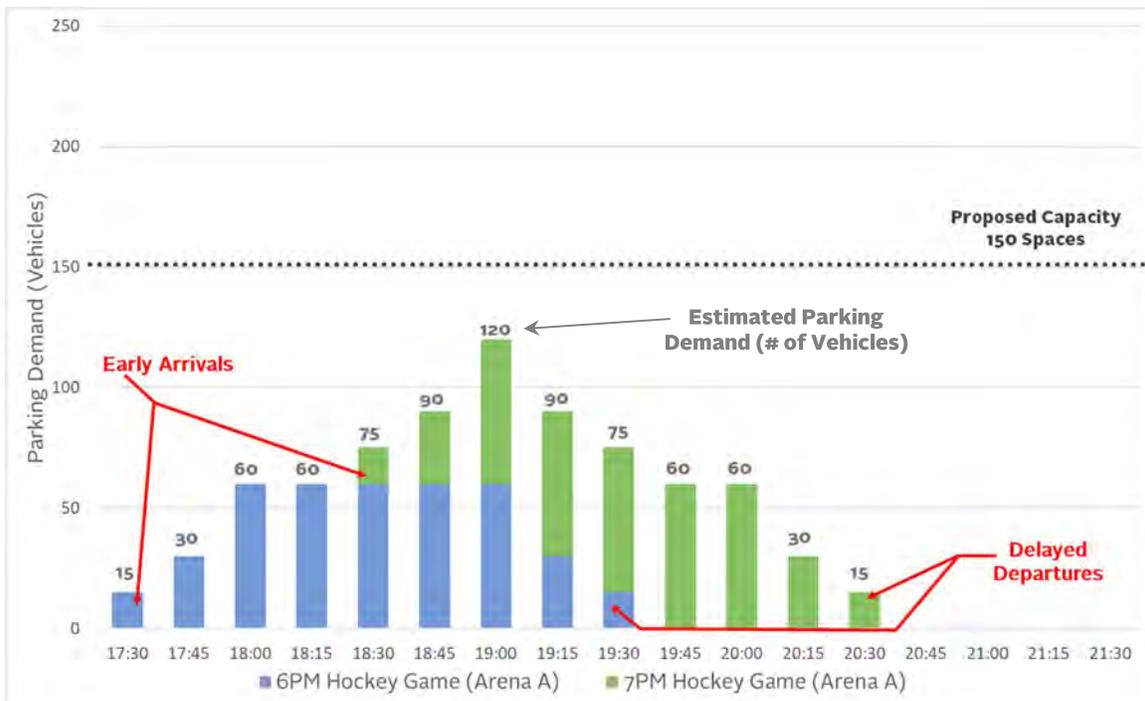


Figure 3 – Estimated Parking Demand: Scenario 1

Scenario 2: Two Ice Pads in use

Scenario 2 consists of examining expected parking demand for the usage of two ice pads. In this scenario, two **concurrent** back-to-back minor hockey games take place (i.e., both ice pads are used at once).

Figure 4 represents the anticipated parking demand for Scenario 2, where two concurrent hockey games are scheduled for 6:00pm and two more are scheduled for 7:00pm. Like Scenario 1, hockey participants will likely overlap with the next group when back-to-back games are scheduled. It should be noted that to be conservative, this assumes **directly concurrent** hockey games, however, in reality it is expected that games will likely be staggered between the two ice pads, which would reduce parking demand at any given time. In this scenario where games are scheduled concurrently, it is expected that parking demand may exceed the proposed capacity.

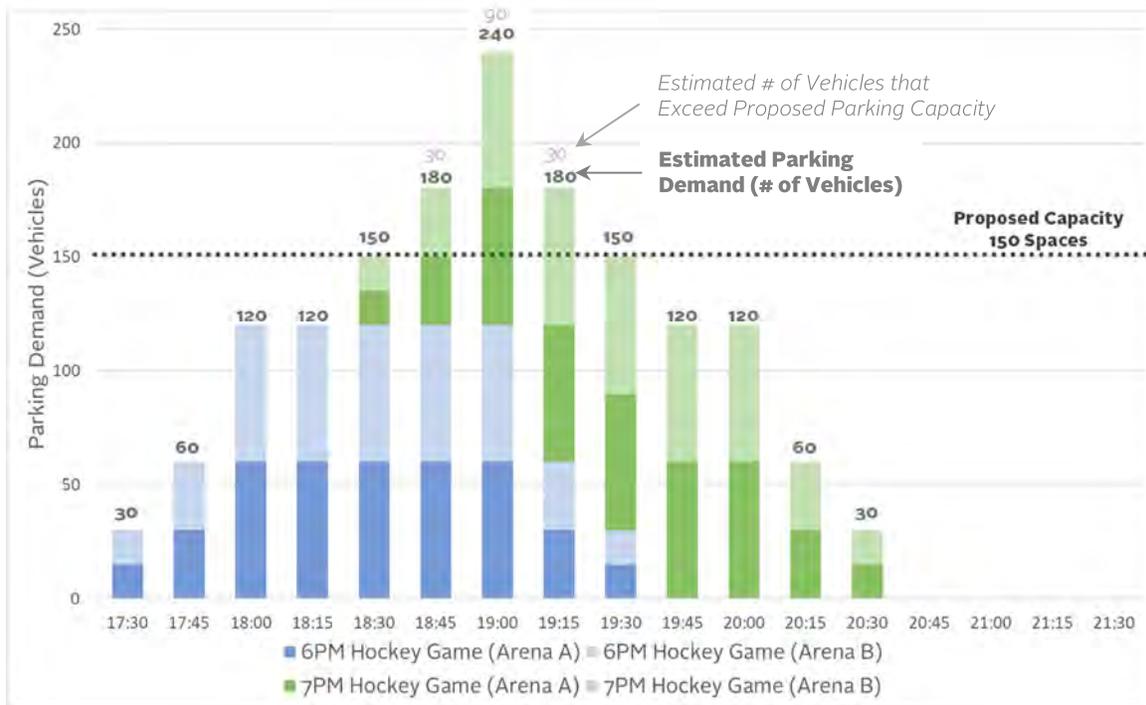


Figure 4 – Estimated Parking Demand: Scenario 2

Scenario 3: Multi-Purpose Centre in use

Scenario 3 consists of examining a Bingo event with maximum attendance (200 people). In this scenario, no ice pads are in use.

Figure 5 represents the anticipated parking demand for Scenario 3, where Bingo attendance is at capacity and no other events are taking place. Bingo events are not expected to exceed the proposed capacity, however, the estimated parking demand approaches capacity. It is expected that approximately 87% of available parking will be utilized for a significant portion of the evening, given the low parking turnover rate for Bingo participants.

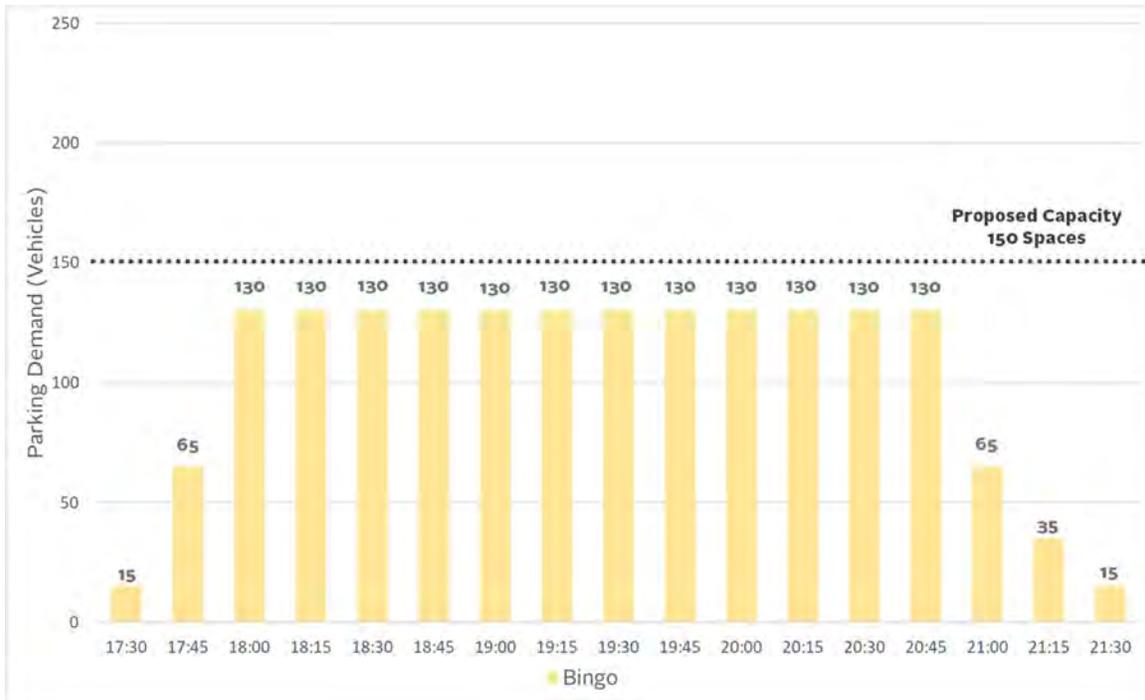


Figure 5 – Estimated Parking Demand: Scenario 3

Scenario 4: One Ice Pad & Multi-Purpose Centre in use

Scenario 4 consists of examining expected parking demand for the usage of one ice pad and the multi-purpose centre (combination of Scenario 1 and 3). In this scenario, a Bingo event (at capacity) takes place during two back-to-back minor hockey games (using only one ice pad at a time).

Figure 6 represents the estimated parking demand for Scenario 4. In this scenario, it is expected that parking demand may exceed the proposed on-site parking availability. Since Bingo participants start arriving at the Forum around 5:00pm, it is expected that they will occupy a substantial portion of on-site parking by the time the first minor hockey game starts, and there will be limited on-site parking available for hockey participants as they arrive through the evening.

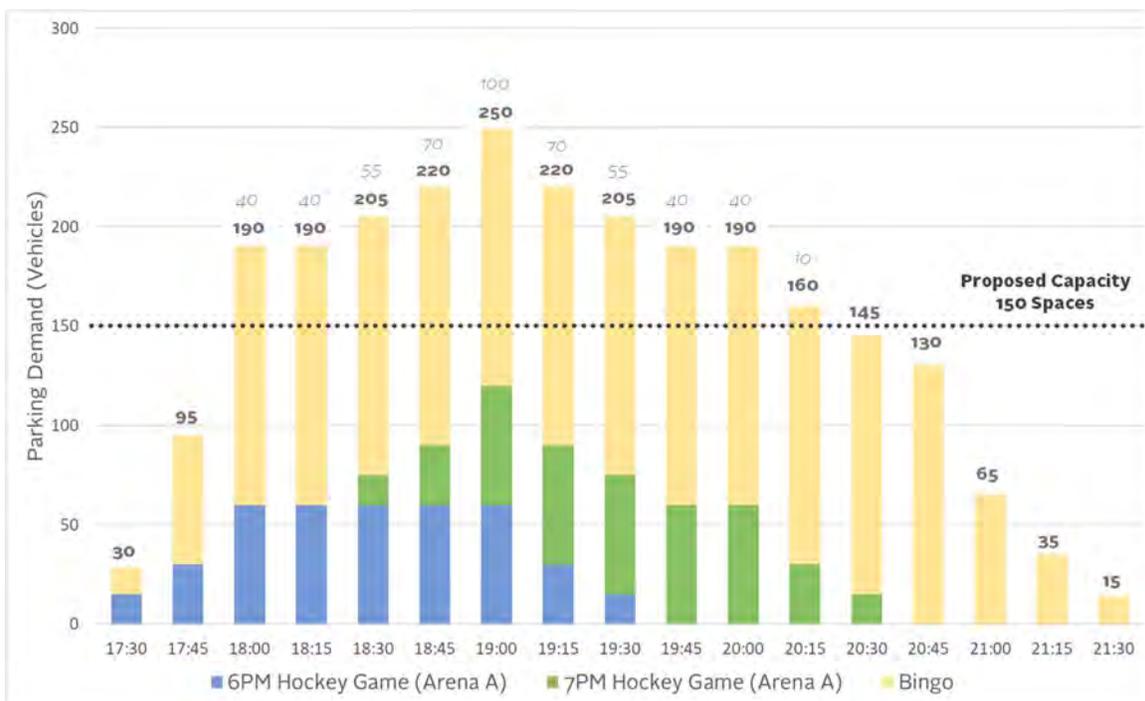


Figure 6 – Estimated Parking Demand: Scenario 4

Scenario 5: Two Ice Pads & Multi-Purpose Centre in use

Scenario 5 consists of examining expected parking demand for the usage of two ice pads and the multi-purpose centre (combination of Scenario 2 and 3). In this scenario, two **concurrent** back-to-back minor hockey games take place (both ice pads in use) while a Bingo event takes place.

Figure 7 represents the estimated parking demand for Scenario 5. In this scenario where back-to-back games are scheduled concurrently, it is expected that parking demand may exceed the proposed capacity. Since Bingo participants start arriving at the Forum around 5:00pm, it is expected that they will occupy a substantial portion of on-site parking by the time the first minor hockey game starts, and there will be limited on-site parking available for hockey participants as they arrive through the evening. To be conservative, this analysis assumes two **directly concurrent** hockey games, however, in reality it is expected that games will likely be staggered between the two ice pads, which would reduce parking demand at any given time.

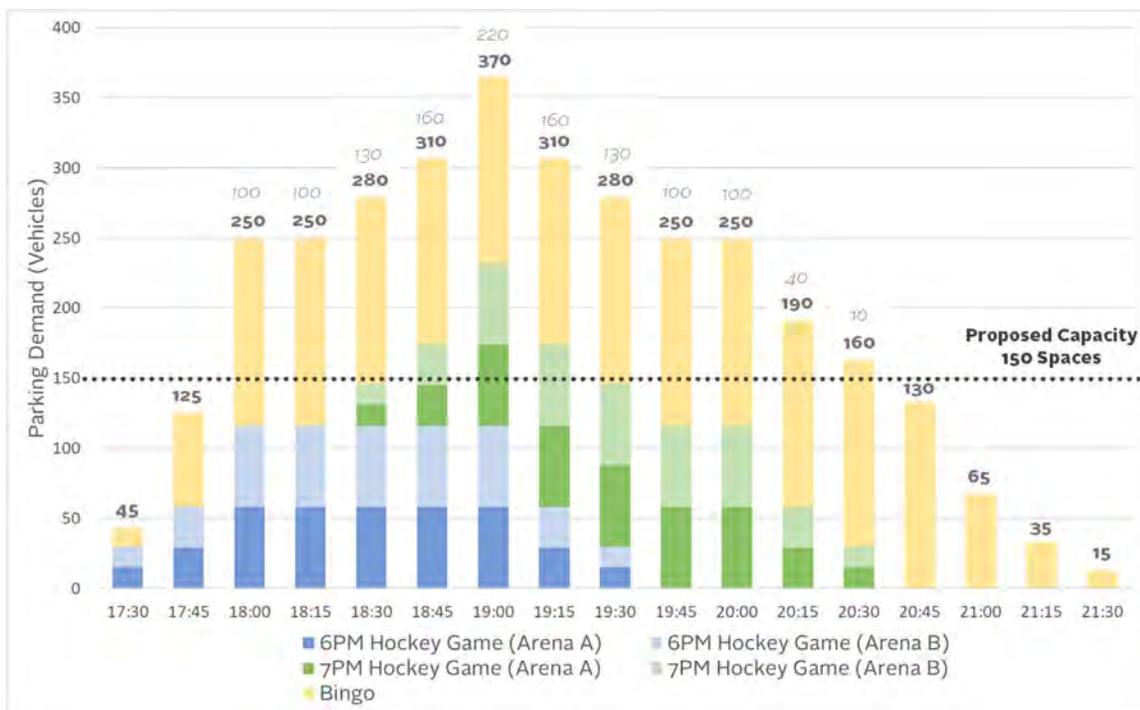


Figure 7 – Estimated Parking Demand: Scenario 5

Review of Similar Facilities

A review of similar HRM facilities was conducted to contrast the proposed Forum Redevelopment. The distribution of the facilities considered is provided in Figure 8.

Six arena facilities in HRM were reviewed, ranging from one to four available ice pads, and on-site parking ranging between approximately 110 and 350 spaces. The average number of on-site parking spaces is roughly 121 spaces per ice pad, as shown in Table 1.

It should be noted that all six facilities are located outside the Regional Centre. The more recently constructed facility, BMO Centre (Bedford) consists of four ice pads and 350 on-site parking spaces. This equates to 175 parking spaces per two ice pads, which is comparable to the parking supply proposed for the Redeveloped Halifax Forum (150 spaces for two ice pads).

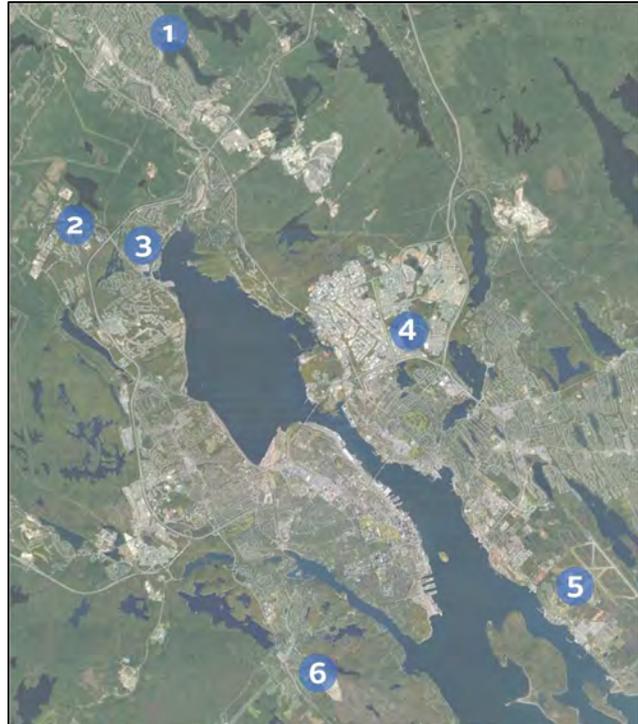


Figure 8 – Map of Similar HRM Facilities

Table 1 – Summary of Facility Review

		Number of On-Site Parking Spaces (Approximately)	Number of Ice Pads	Number of On-Site Parking Spaces per Ice Pad (Approximately)
1	Sackville Community Arena	210	1	210
2	BMO Centre (Bedford)	350	4	87.5
3	LeBrun Centre (Bedford)	130	1	130
4	RBC Centre (Dartmouth)	320	4	80
5	Shearwater Arena	110	1	110
6	Spryfield Lions Area	110	1	110
			Average	121

Summary and Concluding Thoughts

- The proposed redevelopment of the Halifax Forum will have a significant impact to on-site parking supply, reducing the number of spaces from 500 (existing) to 150.
- There is on-street parking capacity for approximately 790 vehicles within 500m of the Halifax Forum. Under existing conditions, on-street parking commonly accommodates overflow parking for major events at the Forum.
- On average, most HRM arenas have approximately 100-150 parking spaces per ice pad. The redeveloped Forum site will continue to have two ice pads; therefore, the 150 spaces proposed for the site will be considerably less per ice pad than is typical for arena facilities in the municipality.
- It is expected that the 150 parking spaces proposed for the site will be sufficient to accommodate *most* typical ice events such as minor hockey; however, capacity will be limited, and some users may need to park off-site. These constraints are not typical compared to most other similar facilities in HRM at present.
- When ice events such as minor hockey are occurring concurrently with events in the multipurpose Centre – specifically Bingo – there is a high probability that on-site parking demand will exceed capacity (potentially by a wide margin), and many facility users will need to park off-site. Bingo events typically have longer duration and less parking turnover relative to ice events, which will further impact parking availability.
- Major events with high attendance such as large sporting events, concerts, or seasonal features (e.g., Christmas at the Forum) will most certainly generate parking demand that exceeds available on-site supply, and many facility users will need to park off-site.
- The reduced on-site parking supply and the operational characteristics of the Forum may often result in operational challenges at the facility. Options to mitigate these challenges that may be considered include:
 - Encouragement of alternate arrival options for facility users including carpooling, drop-off, and the use of non-auto modes of transport (e.g., walking, cycling, transit). The practicality of these options is expected to vary depending on user type.
 - Modifications to parking controls on the surrounding streets to increase the amount of on-street parking available to facility users.
 - Managed on-site and off-site parking, potentially including the use pay or permitted parking.
- The proposed reduction in on-site parking at the redeveloped Forum site represents a significant change in how the facility will operate and is a departure from the typical configuration of most arena facilities in HRM. However, the facility's location is more of an urban context than most arena facilities in HRM, which may influence user expectations and help to mitigate operational challenges.

2023/24 Capital Project					
Strategic Initiative					
Capital Project #:	CB190013	Previous #:			
Capital Project Name:	Halifax Forum Redevelopment				
Executive Director:	John MacPherson				
Asset Category:	Buildings/Facilities				
Service Area:	Recreation & Cultural Services				
Project Type:	Asset Renewal				
Project Outcomes:					
Project Deliverables	Redevelopment of the Halifax Forum.				
Impact to Service	The Halifax Forum is nearing the end of its useful life and redeveloping the space will allow for continued service delivery and improved functionality and accessibility for the community.				
Strategic Plan					
Council/Administrative Priority Area:	Responsible Administration				
Strategy:	Long Term Arena Strategy				
Estimated Project Planning & Design Phase Timing	Start:	Apr-23	End:	Apr-24	
Estimated Project Execution Phase Timing	Start:	Apr-24	End:	Aug-28	
Estimated Asset Operational Date	Sep-28				
Capital and Asset Lifecycle Investment:					
	Unspent Prev. Budget	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Gross Capital Budget	\$ -	\$ 2,500,000	\$ 22,000,000	\$ 45,000,000	\$ 28,000,000
Funding:					
External Funding					
Reserve		2,500,000	22,000,000	45,000,000	28,000,000
Capital from Operating					
Debt					
Previously Approved Budget	\$ 400,000				
2023/24 - 2026/27 Budgets	97,500,000				
Estimated Remaining Budget Required	12,500,000				
Total Estimated Project Cost	\$ 110,400,000				