



Item No. 10.2.1
Board of Police Commissioners for the Halifax Regional Municipality
February 3, 2025

TO: Chair Kent and Commissioners of the Board of Police Commissioners for the Halifax Regional Municipality

FROM: Cathie O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: January 17, 2025

SUBJECT: 2024 Updated Facility Plan

ORIGIN

September 20, 2023 Board of Police Commissioners for the Halifax Regional Municipality motion (Item No 10.1.1):

MOVED by Commissioner Blackburn, seconded by Commissioner Akindoju

THAT the Board of Police Commissioners request a refresh of the 2018 staff report on the building plan for a new Halifax Regional Police headquarters and request a presentation on the topic at a future Board meeting.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board of Police Commissioners for the Halifax Regional Municipality recommend to Regional Council that:

1. staff proceed with an in-depth analysis of the three potential sites that have been short-listed as potential sites for the development of a new Halifax Regional Police headquarters;
2. staff conduct a further, more detailed needs assessment (based on HRP and RCMP service delivery strategies and anticipated organizational growth) including a review of future HRP programming requirements.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The findings of the updated report are highlighted in the sections below. Population projections have been updated showing significantly more growth than was anticipated in 2018. Staffing levels and facility space requirements will continue to grow with the population with 25-year space needs anticipated to be 450,000 sq ft of gross floor area. In this updated report, RPL Architects (RPL) has considered several facility distribution and development concept scenarios, with the goal of centralizing the organization as much as possible.

Several potential sites were considered with the list being narrowed to three sites that warrant further analysis. Currently, the preferred site is HRP's existing location at 1975 Gottingen, with the addition of the Centennial Pool site across the street to make the combined property viable. However, there are a number of pre-conditions that need to be addressed prior to this site moving forward.

This report seeks no additional funding from Council as the funding to address the recommendations has already been approved in existing budgets.

BACKGROUND

Halifax Regional Municipality was created in 1996 when four former municipalities were amalgamated. As part of the restructure, three former municipal police departments, (Halifax, Dartmouth, and Bedford) were merged to form Halifax Regional Police (HRP). HRM operates under an integrated policing model, with the urban core being serviced by Halifax Regional Police and the suburban and rural areas policed by Halifax District RCMP. More specifically, HRP is responsible for policing Halifax, Dartmouth, Bedford and all communities from Bedford to the Sambro Loop, while Halifax District RCMP polices Tantallon, Lower Sackville, Cole Harbour, Musquodoboit Harbour and Sheet Harbour.

The current central police headquarters station, the David P MacKinnon Building, built in 1975 no longer meets the needs of HRP in their administration and delivery of policing services. Over time, the organization has expanded into several buildings across the municipality. HRP operates from the following facilities:

- HRP HQ & Central Headquarters - 1975 Gottingen St, Halifax (HRM owned)
- Criminal Investigation - 50 Garland Ave, Dartmouth (leased until April 30, 2027)
- Central Division Office - 7001 Mumford Rd, Halifax (leased until April 30, 2025)
- East Division Office - 7 Mellor Ave, Dartmouth (leased until November 30, 2028)
- West Division Office - 15 Convoy Run, Bedford (HRM owned; shared with Fire Station 8)
- Training & Information Management (Records) – Northbrook Facility (2 Chapman St., Dartmouth; HRM owned)
- Integrated Emergency Services – Eric Spicer Building (21 Mount Hope, Dartmouth; HRM owned)
- Community Offices – various locations
- Other Specialized Units - various locations

In 2016/17, a study was undertaken by RPL Architects, to determine the most operationally efficient, cost-effective configuration and location of police facilities to support the long-term delivery of policing service in Halifax. This study considered the centralization vs. the decentralization of facilities as well as the general location of facilities. The resulting report (*Halifax Regional Police – A Business Case for New Facilities, February 28, 2018*) showed that centralization led to efficiencies and effectively made the case for new facilities.

Since that time, the population of HRM has exceeded projections assumed in the 2018 report. An updated study (2024) was commissioned to reflect current population projections, associated staffing and space needs.

The scope of the updated study includes:

- Update needs and findings from the 2018 report
- Expand and upgrade current outgrown facilities and provide for future needs
- Maintain that Central Division and prisoner care would be located on the peninsula
- Develop a cost-effective long-term facility solution (15-25 years), that allows for future growth and expansion
- Re-assess needs from a high-level strategic view and with input from HRM and HRP Leadership
- Review potential sites/locations

DISCUSSION

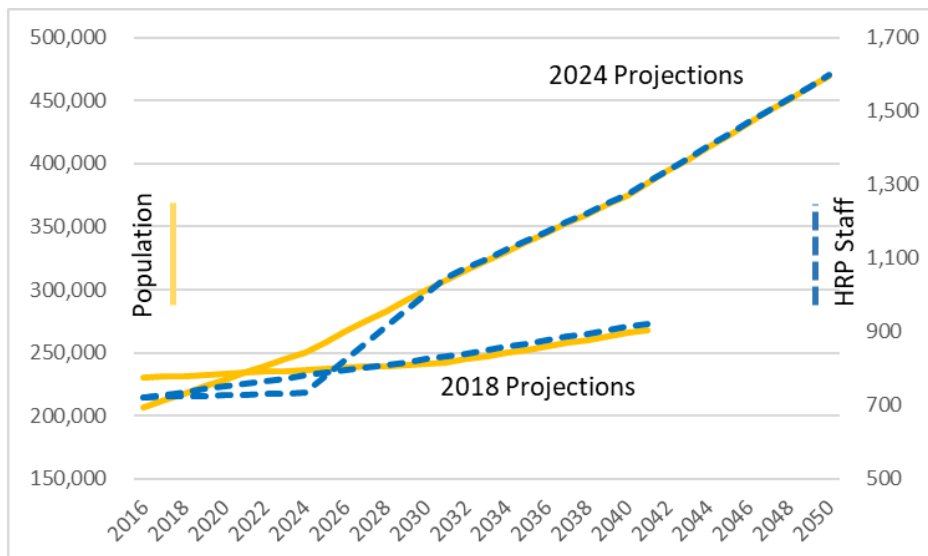
The findings highlighted in this report are the result of the work undertaken by RPL Architects with the support and collaboration of HRP, Corporate Real Estate, and Facility Design & Construction over the period from March to October 2024.

Updated Population Growth & Projections

Population data and predictions were obtained from HRM Planning Information Services (Planning & Development) Annual Evaluation of Population Scenarios, May 2022, as well HRM Population Growth Predictions and others. For planning purposes, to estimate likely future HRP staffing levels, the mid-growth scenario was selected (Hypothetical Growth Scenario A 2031), with anticipated population growth to around 307,795 by 2031 for the regions served by HRP. This was extrapolated to 470,000 by 2050. Actual population growth (and subsequently HRP service demand and staffing levels) may vary.

In the chart below, the lower set of lines shows the population for the area covered by HRP (yellow) and projected HRP total staffing levels (blue dashed line), based on a continuation of the 3.4 per 1,000¹ police-to-population planning ratio established in the 2018 Report.

The upper set of line shows the updated population growth since 2018, and significantly higher population projections now anticipated. Currently, HRP staffing is 2.9 per 1,000 population, similar to 2018. Total HRP staff planning is maintained at the established 3.4 per 1,000 population for planning purposes. Subject to population growth, the 25-year target staffing figure may be reached sooner or later than 2050.



¹ Police-to-Population Ratios in Canada – 1962-2016

Future Staffing Levels & Space Requirements

Space requirements to accommodate current and future police operations in Halifax are based on anticipated staffing levels that were prepared for each operational unit in 2018, and specific space requirements, functions, equipment and storage needs for each. Anticipated future staffing levels are based on increased recent population projections and extrapolated to an approximate 25-year planning horizon. These figures are approximate for strategic planning purposes. Space provisions are based on a continuation of police service and operational and technical trends – however there are many unknowns regarding future policing needs, strategies and technologies. These should be confirmed in a formal operational, staffing and space needs assessment. Any new facility should be designed with flexibility to adapt to future policing needs, methods and technologies. Note that areas given in this report are estimates only. The final gross floor area (and associated building cost) will depend on the final building shape and configuration, number of floors, internal planning efficiencies, provision of expansion space, property development costs, site servicing and many other factors. More detailed concept designs and cost estimates will be prepared following site selection.

The updated high level estimated staffing levels and resulting space requirements are summarized below in Table 2.1.2 – Summary & Comparison from the updated 2024 study:

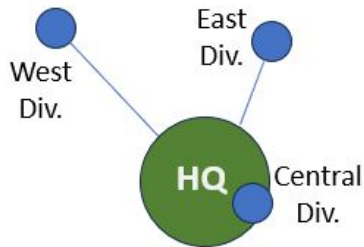
	2016	2024	
Current Total Staff	Approx. 721	743	Little change (2.9/1000)
Current Population (HRP area)	418,000 230,000	470,000 250,000	
Projected 15-year Population (HRP area)	(2031) 483,000 242,000	(2040) 750,000 375,000	Higher than anticipated in 2017
Projected 25-year Population (HRP area)	(2041) 536,000 268,000	(2050) 940,000 470,000	Higher than anticipated in 2017
Anticip. 15-year Staff	832 (2031)	1,275 (2040)	At 3.4 per 1,000 popul.
Anticip. 25-year Staff	922 (2041)	1,598 (2050)	At 3.4 per 1,000 popul.
Current Space	153,000 sf	153,000 sf	No change
15-Year Space Needs		346,000sf	(80% of 25-year needs)
25-Year Space Needs	260,000 sf	450,000 sf	At 280 sf/person

*721 Employee strength as of May 7, 2024 + planned 19 sworn positions and 3 civilian positions to be filled in October 2024 = 743. Does not include 26 currently vacant sworn positions and 10 vacant civilian positions. Total 2024 positional strength is 779.

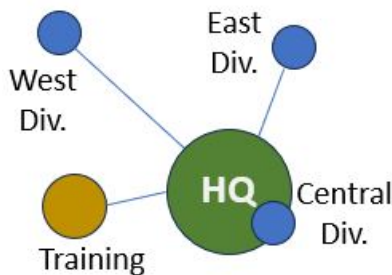
Facility Distribution Scenarios

To evaluate the suitability and capacity of the potential sites reviewed, and the impact on HRP operations should sites outside the downtown Halifax core be considered, several facility distribution scenarios were considered. It is assumed that under each of these scenarios, prisoner care will remain with Central Division, but this could also be co-located with the main headquarters if the location was appropriate. Percentages listed in each scenario represent the space provision by department/division in the planning and site evaluations based on the anticipated 450,000 sq ft.

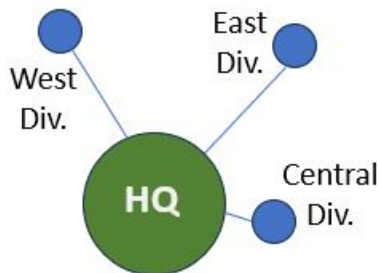
Scenario A: Central HQ & Training (89%); E+W Divisions. (11%)



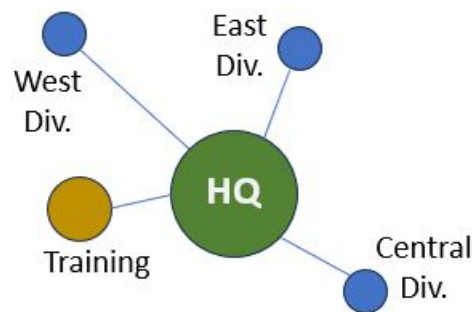
Scenario B: Central HQ (75%); Training (14%); E+W Divisions. (11%)



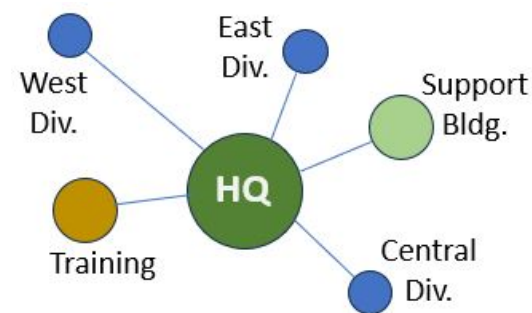
Scenario C: Central HQ, Training (81%); Central Div. (8%); E+W Divisions. (11%)



Scenario D: Central HQ (67%); Central Div. (8%); Training (14%); E+W Divisions. (11%)



Scenario E: Central HQ (61%); Central Div. (8%); Support Building including Training (20%); E+W Divisions. (11%)



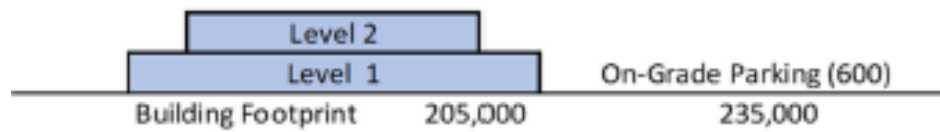
Other facility distribution options may be required depending on future facility planning objectives and police operational strategies.

Development Concepts

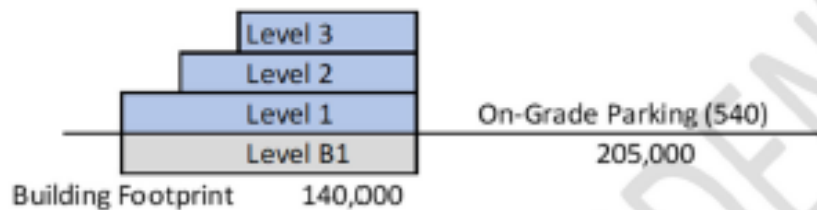
Conceptual building and parking arrangements were developed to assist in evaluating the suitability and capacity of the proposed locations. These are intended to provide a high-level view of how sites of various sizes could be developed to accommodate a central headquarters and one operational Division. If the final decision is to locate HRP facilities at separate locations, site needs for a centralized headquarters would be less. On tight urban sites, for example, training and/or support functions could be at a separate location.

Three concepts were developed for comparison. These are not intended to be architectural planning solutions, merely to determine the likely usable site area required for each concept. Planning requirements, zoning restrictions, building massing, parking requirements will be determined in future design phases.

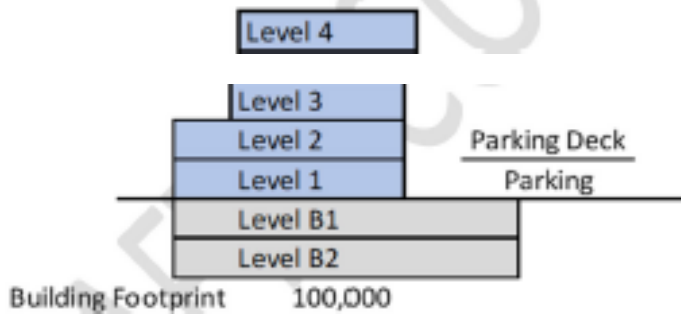
- Development Concept 1 - Open site with sufficient space (low-density two-storey block plus garages/storage) – up to 13 acres approximately.
- Development Concept 2 - Adequate site to allow workable configuration (e.g. three-storey plus below-grade parking) – approximately 10 acres.
- Development Concept 3 - Tight (urban) site (high-density multi-storey building, two levels of below-grade parking and a parking deck) – approximately 6.5 acres.



Development Concept 1	Building Footprint	205,000
HQ + Division	On-Grade Parking	235,000
Open Site	Open Space	125,000
		565,000
	sf	
	acres	13.0



Development Concept 2	Building Footprint	140,000
HQ + Division	On-Grade Parking	205,000
Adequate Site	Open Space	80,000
		425,000
	sf	
	acres	9.8



Development Concept 3	Building Footprint	100,000
HQ + Division	Parking/Deck	140,000
Tight Site	Open Space	40,000
		280,000
	sf	
	acres	6.4

Potential Locations:

Multiple locations were proposed (by HRM Property, Fleet & Environment) for review and evaluation with respect to site suitability and impact on police operations. No private parcels passed the screening.

Site Evaluation:

Evaluation of potential locations was done under an adapted version of the HRM Corporate Real Estate Composite Value Level of Service (CVLOS) tool. The tool was adapted to meet the particular requirements of the Halifax Regional Police in terms of location, site capacity and suitability to accommodate a new police headquarters, however it was not the only basis for scoring and ranking the potential suitability of each site or location. Importance factors or weightings, assigned through consensus amongst the evaluation team, were applied to each criterion, and then applied to the score for that aspect of the location or site.

CVLOS Evaluation criteria included:

1. **Identity** – would this be an accessible, visible facility, in suitable surroundings
2. **Heritage Conservation** – natural heritage, cultural heritage
3. **Specific Land Use** – land character & suitability, capacity & resilience, program versatility, physical site risks
4. **Operational Impact** – through construction, ongoing (e.g. requirement to phase construction, HRP travel distances, proximity to service areas, courts, etc.)
5. **Connectivity/Mobility** – police access/egress, proximity to streets and highways, public accessibility
6. **Acquisition Cost, Access and Control** (municipally owned or privately owned)

Participants in the CVLOS scoring exercise included representatives from Halifax Regional Police (HRP), HRM Facility Design & Construction (FDC), HRM Corporate Real Estate (CRE), HRM Planning & Development (PD) and RPL Architects.

CVLOS Results for municipal owned sites:

Gottingen St	77 - Pass	Recommend further analysis
Mackintosh Street	47 - Fail	Not considered suitable
Cowie Hill	78 - Pass	Recommend further analysis
Burnside Industrial Park	69 - Pass	Recommend further analysis

These results should be considered a high-level opinion of the comparative suitability or feasibility of each site. Future analysis of how the proposed development could be accommodated on each site, site conditions, required remediation measures or other criteria impacting police operations, site security or construction must be completed before any of these locations can be recommended for development.

The Mackintosh Street Site

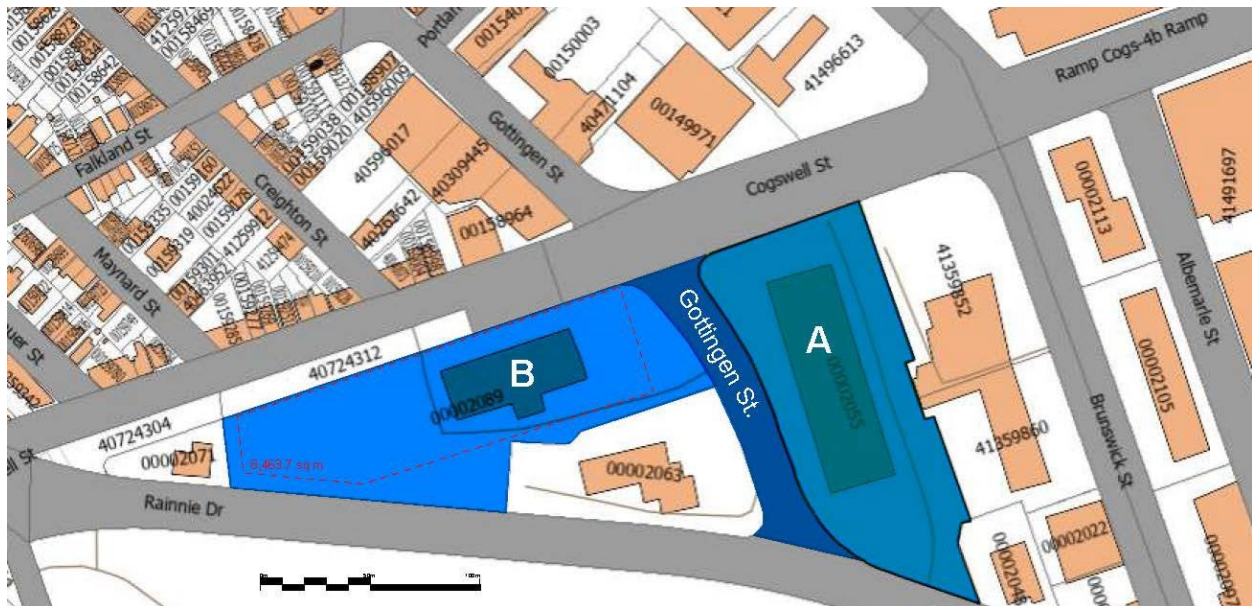


This property was not considered suitable or feasible as a location for a new police headquarters as it did not meet a number of the key physical site and location criteria outlined above.

Subject to further site analysis, planning restrictions, confirmation of site conditions, test-fitting of concepts (following needs assessment and functional programming) and other factors, the order of preference of the locations would be:

1. Phased construction at Gottingen Street
2. Cowie Hill
3. Burnside

Gottingen Street Site



Under this scenario several currently dispersed operations could be relocated to the new centralized headquarters, except for East and West Divisions.

- Investigations can be moved from leased space at Garland Avenue.
- Functions located at Northbrook (Information Management/Records and Training). Development of this site under facility Scenario A (fully centralized headquarters) would be challenging. It may be more appropriate to develop this site according to facility Scenarios B, where between 50% and 75% of total space required would be located at the HRP headquarters, constructed in a phased manner.

Should this location be selected for further analysis and consideration, the proposed sites be developed as follows:

- New headquarters building on parcel B – constructed to meet 10 to 15-year space needs, but expandable.
- New Investigative Services, support services and training building on Parcel A after demolition of the existing building.
- The feasibility of an above-ground bridge or below-grade connection has not been analyzed but may be possible.
- HRP Central Division serving the peninsula of Halifax would be part of the new headquarters.
- The existing East and West Division buildings would remain in their respective communities.

Pre-Conditions to Selection of Gottingen Street Site

1. This scenario assumes that the Centennial Pool and modular housing units sites will be available, permitting phased construction of a new headquarters and replacement of the existing building. However, it is recognized that an expansion of a policing facility to the Centennial Pool site may result in competing priorities for the site. The municipality is undertaking a Training and Competition Aquatic Facility Study that includes the assessments of the Centennial Pool site for a new competition and recreation pool, or the retention and reconstruction of the existing pool. The results of that study may affect the viability of this site. Further coordination with HRM's Parks and Recreation Business Unit will be required.
2. Another HRM initiated project that may also impact this site and which will require coordination between business unit is [Planning and Development's Completion of Phase 1 - Downtown Gateway Comprehensive Plan](#).
3. A new Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre (MNFC) is planned on the adjacent parcel to the south, so any future redevelopment on Parcel B would need to be coordinated with that development, including engagement with the MNFC to determine compatibility with adjacent land uses.

Cowie Hill Site



Under this scenario several currently dispersed operations could be relocated to a new centralized headquarters, except for Central, East and West Divisions.

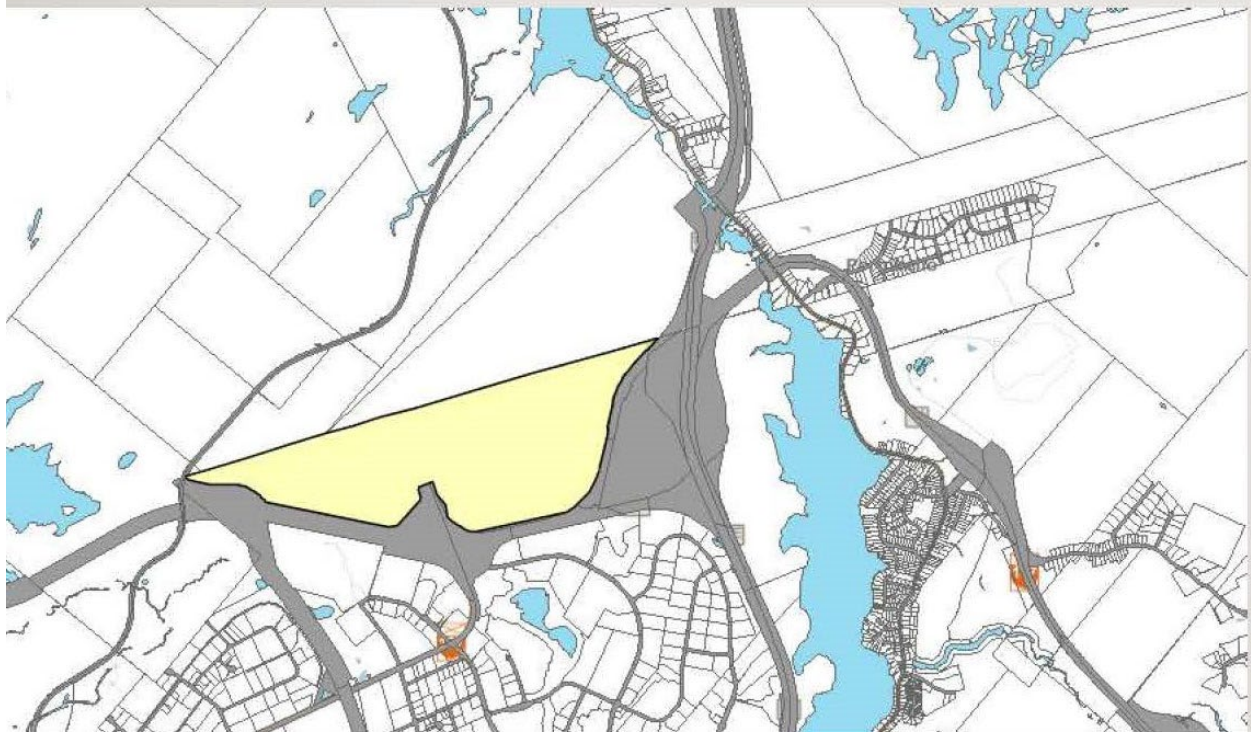
- Investigations could be moved from leased space at Garland Avenue.
- Functions located at Northbrook (Information Management/Records and Training).

Under this scenario a new Central Division and prisoner care facility would have to be provided in a suitable location closer to the current location in downtown Halifax. A temporary location for the Central Division and prisoner care would be needed while the existing HQ facility on Gottingen is replaced to accommodate

a new Central Division and prisoner care facility. If this option is pursued, a more in-depth analysis is required.

There is an existing HRM operations base on this site which would need to be relocated or incorporated into the site planning of the new HRP Facility.

Burnside Site



Serviced land is being prepared for sale in the Burnside Park as part of the municipality's ongoing industrial park program with a range of lots sizes available. This location is well situated for transportation connections.

Under this scenario several currently dispersed operations could be relocated to a new centralized headquarters, except for Central and West Divisions. East Divisions could be co-located with the new headquarters; thus eliminating the need for space currently leased at Mellor Ave.

- Investigations could be moved from leased space at Garland Avenue.
- Functions located at Northbrook (Information Management/Records, Courts, Training).

Under this scenario a new Central Division and prisoner care facility would have to be provided in a suitable location closer to the current location in downtown Halifax. A temporary location for the Central Division and prisoner care would be needed while the existing HQ facility on Gottingen is replaced to accommodate a new Central Division and prisoner care facility. Land in Burnside is owned by the municipality; however, it would be required to purchase to offset the cost of the developed site as per the reserve business case and policy. If this option is pursued, a more in-depth analysis is required.

Next Steps & Timelines:

The table below indicates approximate timelines for implementation of this facility improvement program. Actual implementation steps, phasing and timelines for needs assessment, functional programming, funding approvals, design and municipal planning approvals may change these projections.

Opt.	Scope	Scen.	Locations	Stages	Timeline
1	Single building, new construction	A	None identified	Pre-Design, Programming	1 year
				<u>Design & Construction</u>	<u>3 years</u>
				Total	4 years
2	Two buildings, new construction (one project)	B, C	4 – Cowie Hill	Pre-Design, Programming	1 year
			6 – Burnside	<u>Design & Construction</u>	<u>4 years</u>
			Total	5 years	
3	Three or more new buildings (separate projects)	D, E	None identified	Pre-Design, Programming	1.5 years
				<u>Design & Construction</u>	<u>4.5 years</u>
				Total	6 years
4	Phased construction, Two new buildings and removal of existing facility (one project)		1 - Gottingen	Pre-Design, Programming	1 years
				<u>Design & Phased Constr.</u>	<u>5 years</u>
				Total	6 years

While the Gottingen Street location is preferred, a more in-depth analysis of the three potential sites should be undertaken. Concurrently, conduct a detailed facility needs assessment (based on HRP and RCMP service delivery strategies and anticipated organizational growth) and full functional programming. This work is planned for the 2025/26 fiscal calendar year with a presentation to the BoPC in the Spring of 2026.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The current 10-year Capital Budget (CB000022) includes a budget of \$180,500,000 to replace HRP HQ and supporting facilities starting in 24/25 and finishing in 2033/34.

2024/25 funding of \$500,000 was to complete this update and begin the functional space planning.

An additional \$650,000 has been identified for 2025/26 to complete the function planning and the site selection process.

The recommendations set forth in this report require no additional funding as the above budgets contain the required funding.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

No community engagement was required.

ALTERNATIVES

The Board of Police Commissioners for the Halifax Regional Municipality could choose:

- 1) not to approve the recommendations as stated.
- 2) to recommend to Regional Council that staff be directed to proceed with an in-depth analysis of the Gottingen Street site only for the development of a new Halifax Regional Police headquarters.

The drawback with only completing an in-depth analysis of the Gottingen Street location is that it requires the Centennial Pool property, which has not been declared surplus by Parks & Recreation and the construction would have to be phased for two facilities.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, S.N.S. 2008, c. 39

7A The purposes of the municipality are to

- (a) provide good government;
- (b) provide services, facilities, and other things that, in the opinion of the Council, are necessary or desirable for all or part of the municipality; and
- (c) develop and maintain safe and viable communities.

79A (1) Subject to subsections (2) to (4), the municipality may only spend money for municipal purposes if

- (a) the expenditure is included in the municipality's operating budget or capital budget or is otherwise authorized by the municipality;
- (b) the expenditure is in respect of an emergency under the Emergency Management Act; or
- (c) the expenditure is legally required to be paid.

(2) The Municipality may expend money provided for in an operating budget or capital budget for a purpose other than that set out in the operating budget or capital budget for that fiscal year if the expenditure does not affect the total of the amounts estimated for the operating budget and the capital budget.

ATTACHMENTS

None.

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