



Subject: *East Hants Sportsplex - Rate Review*
To: Parks, Recreation & Culture Committee
Date Prepared: November 28, 2024
Related Motions: C24(355)
Prepared by: Scott Preston, Manager of Recreation and Facilities
Alana Tapper, Director of Parks, Recreation and Culture
Approved by: Kim Ramsay, CAO

Summary

In October 2024, staff provided Council with an update on the Sportsplex operations. The discussion resulted in motion C24(355) directing staff to keep 2024/2025 rental rates in place for the remainder of the current fiscal year and to bring back recommended turf and ice rates as part of 2025/2026 budget discussions.

Financial Impact Statement

Estimated financial impacts to user groups are outlined by the change in user fees. Council adoption of rates as recommended by staff would not negatively impact revenue for the draft 2025/26 budget and is expected to break even.

Recommendation

For Council to approve recommended Sportsplex rental rates in principle as outlined in this report to be included in the 2025/2026 draft budget discussions.

Recommended Motion

N/A

Background

In February 2024, Council made the decision to transition daily operations of the East Hants Sportsplex over to the Municipality as of May 15, 2024. As part of that transition, Council discussed and opted to keep rental rates the same until municipal staff had the opportunity to establish new user group contracts, have a better understanding of hours of use and legacy rates.

From an update to Council in October 2024, motion C24(355) directed staff to keep rates the same and to bring back recommended rates as part of 2025/2026 draft budget discussions.

Discussion

User Group Feedback

As per the Municipal Fee Policy, Council has the authority to set fees for the arena and turf rates at the Sportsplex. Staff have heard from user groups that they would like to see a discounted youth/minor sport rate in place for ice rentals similar to other facilities in the province.

Definitions

There are several terms that define different rates for rentals. This includes “prime” and “non-prime” hours, “regular season” or “summer season”. There are also different definitions for “youth” or “adult”. Facilities across the province vary in how they define these terms. For clarity, staff are recommending the following terms:

Arenas

Regular Season (September 1st to June 14th)

Prime-time hours:

- Monday to Friday | 5 p.m. to closing
- Saturday and Sunday | 6 a.m. to closing

Non-prime hours:

- Monday to Friday | 6 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Summer Season (June 15st to August 31st)

Prime-time hours:

- N/A

Non-prime hours:

- Sunday to Saturday | 6 a.m. to Closing

Turf

Regular Season (November 1st to June 14st)

Prime-time hours:

- Monday to Friday | 5 p.m. to closing
- Saturday and Sunday | 6 a.m. to closing

Non-prime hours:

- Monday to Friday | 6 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Summer Season (June 15th to October 31st)

Prime-time hours:

- N/A

Non-prime hours:

- Sunday to Saturday | 6 a.m. to Closing

User Groups

General - Rental users are youth/adult members of the general public or adult non-profit sport or recreation groups

Youth Non-Profit - 90% of the rental users are 18 years of age or younger and part of an organized non-profit sport or recreation group.

Corporate - a user who is renting on behalf of a for-profit sole proprietor, business or entity.

[Jurisdictional Scan & Recommended Rates](#)

Staff reviewed rental rates from comparator facilities. The results show that many arena facilities in the province have a subsidized rental rate for youth/minor sport rentals. Staff have showcased this rate along with what is being recommended.

Arena (Ice) Rates

Regular Season

Facility	Prime	Non-Prime	Youth Prime	Youth Non-Prime
East Hants Sportsplex	\$ 217.39	\$ 117.39	\$ 217.39	\$ 117.39
Centennial Arena (Halifax)	\$ 191.30	\$ 117.39	\$ 191.30	\$ 117.39
HRM Operated Rinks	\$ 234.09	\$ 140.45	\$ 187.27	\$ 93.64
RECC (Truro)	\$ 200.00	\$ 156.52	\$ 178.26	\$ 156.52
West Hants Sport Complex	\$ 213.04	\$ 130.43	\$ 213.04	\$ 130.43

<i>*Recommended Rates</i>	\$ 223.36	\$ 117.39	\$ 178.68	\$ 117.39
---------------------------	-----------	-----------	-----------	-----------

This data shows that the East Hants Sportsplex is predominantly in line with other similar facilities for rental fees for adults, but is the most expensive for youth for prime-time rentals. Out of the jurisdictional scan, HRM operated rinks and RECC both had discounted rates in place for youth/minor sport rentals.

Summer Season

Some arenas keep ice in during the late spring/summer months. A jurisdictional scan shows that there is no consistency with user fees for summer ice. Some charge prime ice all summer and some charge non-prime all summer. East Hants staff recommend that non-prime ice rental rate should be charged during summer/off-season to encourage utilization. The standard rate for a dry pad surface is \$75 plus tax, which is what East Hants charges.

Turf Rates

Staff reviewed comparable facilities in the province to the East Hants Sportsplex dome. While there are plenty of outdoor turf facilities in the province, there are very few indoor turf facilities. The only true comparable facility is BMO Centre in Halifax. The West Hants Sports Complex does have one turf field which equates to 1/3 of the turf size that the East Hants Sportsplex has.

In reviewing these rates, it doesn't appear that a youth rate is common and therefore is not recommended for turf. Staff have proposed some small changes in non-prime fees for regular season rates and whole field regular and summer season rates.

Regular Season

Facility	Prime	Non-Prime
1 Field		
BMO (Soccer NS) (Halifax)	\$140.00	\$57.18
East Hants	\$121.74	\$76.52
<i>*Recommended Rates</i>	\$121.74	\$40.00
West Hants (Windsor)	\$126.09	\$86.96
Whole Field (3 Fields)		
BMO (Soccer NS) (Halifax)	\$420.00	\$171.54
East Hants	\$291.30	\$ 184.35
<i>*Recommended Rates</i>	\$320.00	\$120.00

Summer Season

Facility	Prime	Non-Prime
1 Field		
BMO (Soccer NS) (Halifax)	\$57.18	\$40.00
East Hants	\$36.52	\$36.52
<i>*Recommended Rates</i>	\$40.00	\$40.00
West Hants (Windsor)	\$86.96	\$86.96
Whole Field (3 Fields)		
BMO (Soccer NS) (Halifax)	\$171.54	\$120.00
East Hants	\$85.22	\$85.22
<i>*Recommended Rates</i>	\$120.00	\$120.00

Impact to Users

The recommended changes will produce major impacts to users. The most noteworthy change to highlight is a price reduction for minor sport organizations renting space during prime hours for ice season. Non-prime rates for turf have decreased, with some small increases for whole field prime to align with the market rates. Summer rates for field rentals have increased on average by 25%. Regular season non-prime turf rates have reduced on average by 41%.

Fee	Season	Prime or Non-Prime	Current Fee	Recommended Fee	Change in Fee
1 Field	Regular Season	Prime	\$ 121.74	\$ 121.74	\$0.00
1 Field	Regular Season	Non-Prime	\$ 76.52	\$ 40.00	\$36.52

Whole Field	Regular Season	Prime	\$ 291.30	\$ 320.00	-\$28.70
Whole Field	Regular Season	Non-Prime	\$ 184.35	\$ 120.00	\$64.35
Arena (Ice)	Regular Season	Prime	\$ 217.39	\$ 223.36	-\$5.97
Arena (Ice)	Regular Season	Non-Prime	\$ 117.39	\$ 117.39	\$0.00
Arena (Ice)	Regular Season	Youth Prime	\$ 217.39	\$ 178.68	\$38.71
Arena (Ice)	Regular Season	Youth Non-Prime	\$ 117.39	\$ 117.39	\$0.00
1 Field	Summer Season	Prime	\$ 36.52	\$ 40.00	-\$3.48
1 Field	Summer Season	Non-Prime	\$ 36.52	\$ 40.00	-\$3.48
Whole Field	Summer Season	Prime	\$ 85.22	\$ 120.00	-\$34.78
Whole Field	Summer Season	Non-Prime	\$ 85.22	\$ 120.00	-\$34.78
Arena (Dry)	Summer Season	Any	\$ 75.00	\$ 75.00	\$0.00

Impact to Budget Estimate

Increasing and decreasing fees can have different impacts on utilization. If a fee is lowered, there is potential for more hours to be booked. On the other hand, as fees rise, users may be deterred from booking as many hours. Staff have calculated that the proposed fee increases for turf, would offset the negative impact from ice surface rentals. While there is the potential for summer turf rentals to decrease as a result, staff are recommending these rates to align more with the closest comparator and to have a consistent non-prime rate across both seasons.

Corporate Rate

Staff are recommending a corporate rate that will be charged during the regular season prime rate for each rental area regardless of day or time per year. This rate would not apply to non-profit organizations. Non-profits will be subject to the rental rates as per the age group category they are renting for.

Additional Fees

Staff are recommending that Council give CAO discretion to charge additional cleaning or overhead fees to apply to certain event rentals that may have additional costs associated with staff working after hours, additional cleaning, etc.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

Proposing more equitable rates aligns with the 2021-2024 East Hants Strategic Plan as this promotes inclusivity, community engagement and quality of life for all residents.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Estimated financial impacts to user groups are outlined by the change in user fees. Council adoption of rates as recommended by staff would not negatively impact revenue for the draft 2025/26 budget and is expected to break even.

Alternatives

1. That Council does not approve the recommended rates and rates remain the same for the 2025/2026 draft budget.
 2. That Council approves alternate rates set by Council.
 3. That Council direct staff to conduct further analysis on rates and come back to Council with new proposed rates.
-

Attachments

Appendix A - Recommended Rates

Appendix B - Jurisdictional Scan