



THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON REPORT TO COUNCIL

SUBMITTED BY: Larissa Price, Manager
Park Projects and Community
Initiatives

COUNCIL MEETING: REG ☒ COW ☐ I/C ☐
COUNCIL MEETING DATE: January 27, 2025
REPORT DATE: January 2, 2025
FILE: 6140-20

SUBJECT: KIN RACE TRACK PARK – PLANNING UPDATE

PURPOSE:

To seek Council's approval to develop a new vision and site improvement plan for Kin Race Track (KRT) Park that aligns with the site's environmental constraints and financial limitations, prioritizing passive park features.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council direct Administration to develop a site improvement plan for the Kin Race Track Lands and bring back for consideration as outlined in the report titled "Kin Race Track Park – Planning Update" dated January 2, 2025, and respectfully submitted by the Manager, Park Projects and Community Initiatives;

AND FURTHER, that Council authorize funding to a maximum of \$100,000 from the Kin Race Track Park Reserve for the development of a Site Improvement Plan as a passive park on the Kin Race Track property located at 3485 43rd Avenue.

ALTERNATIVES & IMPLICATIONS:

THAT Council receive for information the report titled "Kin Race Track Park – Planning Update" dated January 2, 2025, and respectfully submitted by the Manager, Park Projects and Community Initiatives.

Note: This recommendation will halt further work and designate the Kin Race Track property located at 3485 43 Ave as part of the City's surplus land inventory for future consideration.

ANALYSIS:

A. Committee Recommendations:

N/A

B. Rationale:

1. Background

In 2022, the Kin Race Track Park Lands had been identified as a potential site for a large-scale Athletic Park. Proposed amenities included artificial turf fields, ball diamonds and multi-sport courts designed to accommodate organized sports.

At the August 14, 2023, Regular Council Meeting, Administration provided an update on the planning process for the site. This included a summary of preliminary assessments which included geotechnical, environmental, archaeological, traffic impact, and stormwater management reports. Following that,

Council directed Administration to continue planning for the park following the completion of the design for the Active Living Centre (ALC).

As part of the ALC project's Detail Design Stage, additional studies were conducted to verify that adjacent drainage requirements could be accommodated on-site. The findings from these reports will inform the next steps in the planning process for Kin Race Track Park.

2. Constraints

The Kin Race Track Park Lands face several constraints that impact the feasibility of developing a large-scale Athletic Park as originally envisioned.

The site has significant environmental and drainage challenges related to the high groundwater table. A high-level Storm Water Management Plan has been completed for the site, identifying these challenges and recommending the addition of stormwater management ponds and other drainage infrastructure on-site, which further limits the available space for active recreation and sports fields. These constraints must be carefully integrated into any development plans to ensure environmental sustainability and to prevent additional downstream impacts on BX Creek.

From a financial perspective, the environmental constraints make the development of high intensity sports fields and their associated infrastructure, such as parking lots and amenity buildings, costly. In 2022, EXP Services Inc. provided a conceptual cost estimate, placing high-level development costs for the Athletic Park in the range of \$50 million, excluding project risks, specific design features and inflation. To provide context, the total current value of all existing City park assets is approximately \$54 million. This does not take into consideration annual operational and maintenance expenses. At this time the Kin Race Track Park Reserve has an uncommitted amount of \$4,497,138.

3. New Direction for Kin Race Track Park

In consideration of the significant site constraints, funding limitations and the opportunity for improvement to the existing sports field inventory, Administration recommends that the Kin Race Track Lands be developed as a passive park featuring trails, interpretive areas, the site's environmental features, natural drainage patterns across the site and allow areas for seasonal flooding. These factors will need to be carefully integrated into the development plans. This plan would be developed in conjunction with the City's Active Living Centre to ensure a cohesive and integrated approach to both projects.

A passive park allows the City to retain the ability to reconsider the site's use should community needs change. Long-term possibilities and future opportunities may emerge for storm-water management ponds, housing options and partnerships, large-scale music and event space and potentially other active recreation opportunities.

4. Planning Process

Administration is recommending developing a site improvement plan for the Kin Race Track Park Lands consistent with the Passive Park concept. The plan will focus on enhancements such as general site clean-up, grading, and the addition of trails and interpretive areas. The process would include the engagement of consultants and qualified professionals in the areas of Environment, Drainage and Landscape Architecture. By creating flexible greenspace, the City can activate the park for community use while adapting to environmental conditions. This approach keeps the park accessible and beneficial to residents while minimizing the need for costly infrastructure. Public engagement conducted in 2022 regarding these lands will serve as input for developing the plan.

The proposed process would include:

- a. Planning Phase: Develop a comprehensive site improvement plan that outlines specific enhancements.
- b. Reporting Phase: Present the proposed site improvement plan including cost estimate to Council.
- c. Detail Design & Construction Documentation: Create the necessary detail designs and construction drawings including final Site Plan to tender the works.
- d. Implementation Phase: Begin development and construction as outlined in the final Site Plan, integrating with the completion of the ALC.

5. Supporting Analysis - Existing Athletic Inventory

The identified constraints prompted Administration to review the current sports field inventory and usage, while exploring alternative short and long-term approaches to planning. Attachment 1 outlines the current athletic park inventory within Greater Vernon.

Attachment 2 provides an overview of the sports field inventory benchmarked against a selection of comparable communities. These communities were chosen to represent a range of small to medium-sized urban centers, allowing for a balanced comparison across different jurisdictions.

Table 1: Benchmarking Summary

Municipality	Population 2021	Ball Diamonds	Rectangular Field	Artificial Surface
Chilliwack	93,203	36	20	3
Cranbrook	20,499	9	6	0
Lake Country	15,817	4	9	0
Langley (Township)	132,603	75	61	7
Mission	41,519	13	14	1
Nanaimo	99,863	30	21	3
New Westminster	78,916	18	23	0
North Vancouver (City)	58,120	3	10	3
Penticton	36,885	19	23	0
Port Coquitlam	61,498	23	16	2
Port Moody	33,535	14	9	2
Prince George	76,708	16	21	3
West Kelowna	36,078	7	11	0
Average	60,403	21	19	2
Vernon*	44,519	25	22	1

*Excludes School District, includes neighbouring communities

The benchmarking indicates that Greater Vernon has a higher number of rectangular natural surface sports fields and ball diamonds and fewer artificial surface sports fields than comparable jurisdictions.

Attachment 3 provides a general overview of the sports field utilization within Greater Vernon, which includes the City of Vernon, Neighbouring Communities and School District Sites. Available data indicates that a fair amount of capacity exists within the overall inventory. Available hours were calculated based on the field classification and industry standards, focusing on prime-time availability. Several factors can impact the assumed annual capacity of each field class, either increasing or decreasing it. While the capacity estimates are based on industry standards, real-world capacity may vary depending on these elements and site-specific conditions.

Table 4: 2023 Utilization of Available Capacity

Utilization	Rectangular Fields	Ball Diamonds
City of Vernon		
Number of Fields	11	19
Hours Available	5,800	10,000
% Booked	42%	36%
Neighbouring Communities		
Number of Fields	11	6
Hours Available	6,024	2,400
% Booked	18%	20%
School District		
Number of Fields	37	15
Hours Available	7,400	3,000
% Booked	14%	0%

As population grows over the next decade, available capacity will be reduced, but rather than add new sports fields, a more effective approach, where feasible, is to increase the capacity of the existing inventory through targeted upgrades and improvements to optimize available booking times and enhance user experiences. Targeted improvements may include:

- **Field Surface Upgrades:** Improving turf quality, drainage and subsurface soils; installing synthetic fields; and/or adding irrigation systems and maintenance equipment to increase durability and extend the usable season of fields.
- **Enhanced Lighting and Accessibility:** Installing or upgrading field lighting to extend usable hours, allowing for more evening bookings and creating more flexibility for users. Accessibility upgrades would make facilities more inclusive for all residents.
- **Additional Amenities:** Adding seating, shelter areas, change rooms, washrooms or equipment storage to improve player and spectator experiences.

Investing in these upgrades in the future would allow the City to increase available booking times and enhance the quality of athletic experiences for the community when the demand is needed. By focusing on enhancing current assets, the City can meet growing needs incrementally, ensuring that facilities remain functional, accessible, and enjoyable.

The Parks Asset Management Plan highlights a strategic shift in funding priorities, focusing on investing the current funding towards the renewal of high-risk assets, and then addressing the funding gap in operations and maintenance to reach the recommended level of service for existing parks. Once the funding priorities are met, then consider investment in new amenities and additional operations and maintenance to meet the level of services. During the development of this plan, an assessment of service levels for Parks revealed a funding gap in operations and maintenance, which is necessary to achieve the target service levels for athletic and community parks. This policy framework will be incorporated into the City's new Official Community Plan as a key strategy for park investment to provide for additional population growth over the next 20 years.

C. Attachments:

- Attachment 1 – Athletic Park Inventory
- Attachment 2 – Sports Field Benchmarking
- Attachment 3 – Utilization of Available Capacity

D. Council's Strategic Plan Alignment:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Governance & Organizational Excellence | <input type="checkbox"/> Livability |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation, Parks & Natural Areas | <input type="checkbox"/> Vibrancy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Leadership | <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable |

E. Relevant Policy/Bylaws/Resolutions:

1. At its Regular Meeting of August 14, 2023, Council passed the following resolution:

THAT Council receive the memorandum titled "Kin Race Track Athletic Park – Project Update" dated July 4, 2023, and respectfully submitted by the Manager, Infrastructure and Manager, Infrastructure Projects;

AND FURTHER, that Council direct Administration to continue the park planning process for the Kin Race Track Athletic Park following completion of the design for the ALC.

AND FURTHER, that Council direct Administration to update the Parks Master Plan;

AND FURTHER, that Council direct Administration to update the Parks Development Cost Charge Bylaw following the completion of the updated Parks Master Plan.

BUDGET/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

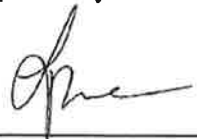
Should Council support the recommendation, Administration would explore costs associated with the development options.

There is \$4,497,138 available in the Kin Race Track Project for the Planning Process and Site Development.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> None | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Budget Previously Approved | <input type="checkbox"/> New Budget Request
(Finance Review Required) |
|-------------------------------|--|--|

Prepared by:


X 

Larissa Price, Manager
Park Projects & Community Initiatives

X 

Terry Barton, Director
Planning & Community Services

Approved for submission to Council:



Peter Weeber, CAO

Date: _____

REVIEWED WITH

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Operations | <input type="checkbox"/> Current Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bylaw Compliance | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Works/Airport | <input type="checkbox"/> Long Range Planning & Sustainability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Real Estate | <input type="checkbox"/> Facilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Building & Licensing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> RCMP | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering Development Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fire & Rescue Services | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation Services | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure Management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Parks | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial Services | | <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Development & Tourism |
| <input type="checkbox"/> COMMITTEE: | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER: | | |

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