



THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON

MEMORANDUM

TO: Patti Bridal, Chief Administrative Officer **FILE:** 6140-20
PC: James Rice, Director, Operation Services **DATE:** May 10, 2023
FROM: Kendra Kryszak, Manager, Parks and Public Spaces
SUBJECT: MARSHALL FIELD – PROPOSED FENCING

On the July 8, 2019 regular meeting Council directed Administration to install a 1.2m high galvanized fence at Marshall Field to separate the soccer fields from the off-leash dog area. To reduce the amount of fencing required, the new fencing ended at the west end of the ball diamonds leaving the baseball viewing area, warm up, and bull pens/pitching mounds within the off-leash dog area. This created a conflict between baseball user groups and the off-leash dog users.

Administration has received a number of complaints regarding the uncontrolled interaction between dogs and baseball field users at this location. A number of written complaints are included as Attachment A to this report. Typical concerns that have been raised regarding this issue include:

- not everyone that plays baseball likes dogs
- dogs love to chase/take the baseballs
- some dogs are very aggressive
- some people are highly allergic to dogs
- dogs have urinated all over our equipment/spectator stuff and
- I have stopped playing the sport I love due to this situation

The current situation may create a potential liability issue for the City of Vernon if it is not addressed.

An additional 340m of 1.2m high galvanized fence would be required to complete the delineation between the off-leash dog park and baseball diamonds as shown on Attachment B. The estimated cost to install the fence is \$45,000. The attached letter (Attachment C) from the Vernon Baseball Association indicates that they support the additional fencing and are willing to donate \$10,000 to help fund the project.

The remaining \$35,000 required to complete the fence could be funded by the 2022 Unexpended Uncommitted Balance that has a current amount available of \$2,673,561.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council receive the memorandum titled "Marshall Field – Proposed Fencing" dated May 10, 2023, respectfully submitted by the Manager, Parks and Public Spaces;

AND FURTHER, that Council authorize Administration to install a fence at Marshall Field, as identified in the memorandum titled "Marshall Field – Proposed Fencing" dated May 10, 2023, at a cost not to exceed \$45,000 to be funded \$10,000 donated from Vernon Minor Baseball and \$35,000 from 2022 Unexpended Uncommitted Balance.

Respectfully submitted:

Kendra
Kryszak

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Kendra Kryszak, Manager, Parks and Public Spaces

Attachment A: Complaint letters

Attachment B: Map

Attachment C: Supporting letter from Vernon Baseball Association

Approved for the Agenda by the CAO



May 11, 2023

City of Vernon
3400 30th Street
Vernon BC V1T 5 E6

To Whom It May Concern:

On Saturday April 29th, 2023, I was sitting at the baseball diamond closest to the parking lot watching my son play baseball. During the game two different off leash dogs peed on the legs of my lawn chair, in my case one owner apologized and the other called their dog away but did not comment on the pee. While the game was happening two other parents had their lawn chair and bag peed on. In past seasons I have seen dogs laying on people's blankets, eat people's food and shake their wet and muddy bodies on people.

In my opinion a fence is needed to keep the baseball diamonds, its players and fans apart from the off leash dog park.

Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.

Regards,
Tanis Hornhardt
250-545-4788

May 4,2023

Dear City of Vernon:

On Monday April 17th my son Lucas and I were attending our first baseball practice of the year at Marshall Fields. Upon arriving at the field - my son grabbed his ball bag and cleats, so both hands were full with gear. We entered the gated off leash dog park area on our way to the baseball diamond located behind the soccer centre (this is the only way to get to the baseball lockup and baseball diamond).

I was approx 30 feet behind him and as he walked to the ball diamond a dog came towards him and continued to jump up trying to grab what was in his arms. He naturally lifted his arms to keep them out of reach and the dog leapt up and bit him in the upper arm. Fortunately, my son was not injured but it was not a good situation. I yelled ahead and the owner said the situation was under control which it clearly wasn't. He tried multiple times to put a leash on it, but it kept running away and coming back to jump on my son. The dog left a large red mark from his teeth on my son's arm. At no point did the owner apologize for the dogs behavior. He continued to walk away from me as he was avoiding confrontation.

We own a dog and understand the need for a dog park but the ball players need a safe way to get to and from their field. We would like to encourage the City of Vernon to install a fence to separate the area used by ball players from the remainder of the dog park.

If you would like additional information, please call me at 250-938-1981

Regards

Shawn and Lucas Vandervelde

May 11, 2023

City of Vernon
3400 30th Street
Vernon BC V1T 5E6

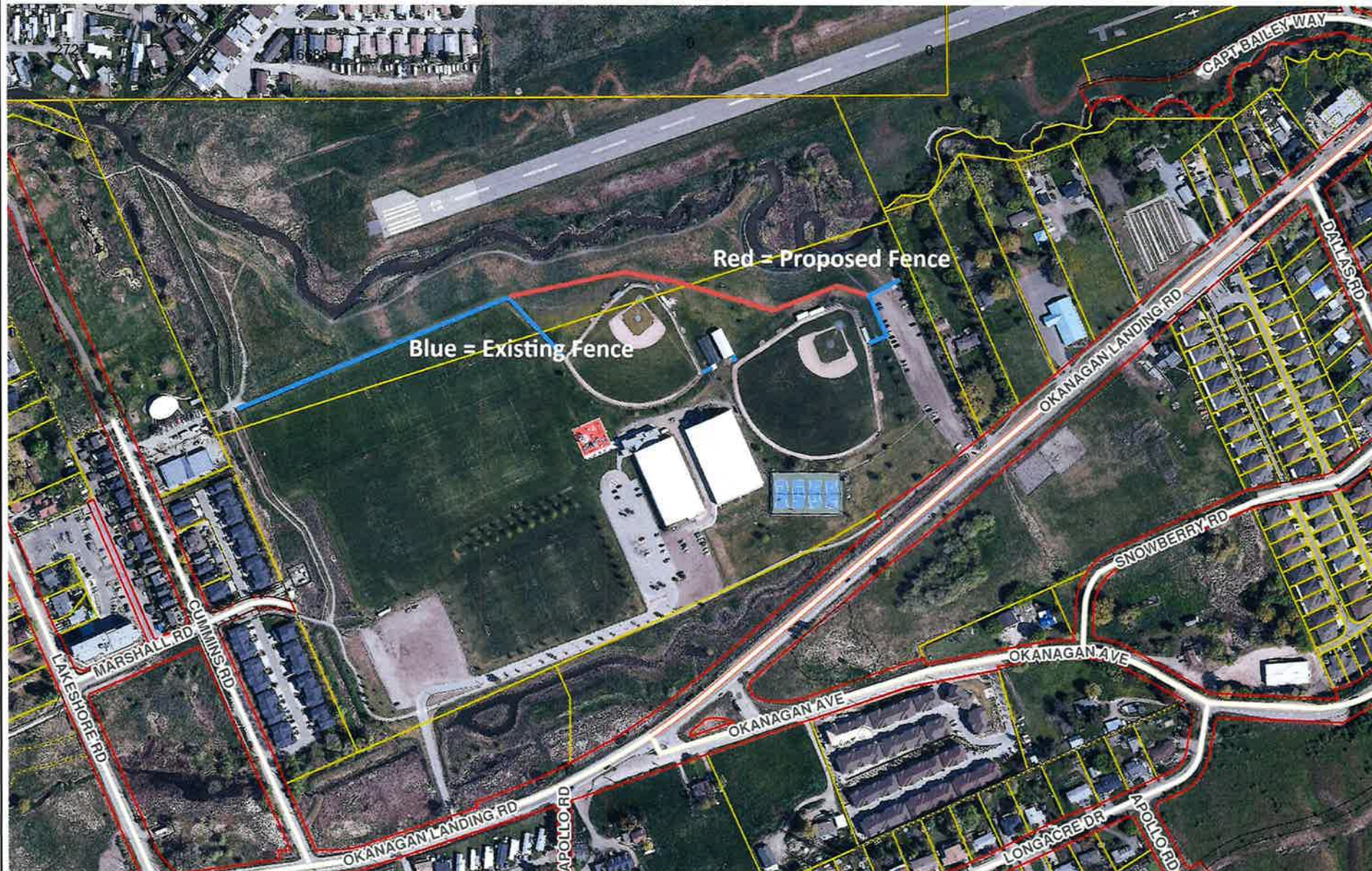
To Whom It May Concern:

On May 1st our baseball team was practicing at Marshall Fields – U15 diamond (far ball diamond behind the soccer centre). While the majority of the team, including the coaches, were inside the fenced area my son, Luc and another player were practicing pitching/catching in the bullpen area. If you are not aware, the bull pen area is located outside the ball field (part of the combined dog park area/spectator area). Two large dogs approached the boys and became aggressive. The one I witnessed (a large white dog that appeared to be a pit bull cross) was barking and circling Luc and had him pinned against the fence. Another coach yelled over the fence to the owner to get the dogs under control and put them on leash. The owner (in this instance, was a parent that was walking her daughter's dogs) was not able to get the dogs under control. The dogs continued to circle, bark and aggressively pursue my son. After approximately a minute of circling and barking the dogs finally came close enough to the owner and she leashed the more aggressive dog. This was a terrifying incident as the boys were defenceless, did nothing to agitate the dogs and were separated from the group. It is incredibly unsafe to have dogs and ball players/spectators sharing the same space.

This is in no way the first time we have had issues with the combined dog park/baseball diamond. This is Luc's second year of U15 using the ball park and there have been numerous incidents varying from mild annoyance to potentially dangerous. He has another four years of attending this park for baseball and I would like it to be a safe and fun experience for him, his team mates, his coaches and the spectators.

The dog park is very well used, as are the ball fields. I believe installing a fence would work for both user groups. Leaving a large area for ball player/spectators to watch and leave a large area for dogs to run off leash. I would encourage the City to move on this quickly before a more serious incident occurs.

Regards
Jason Gilbert
1104 28th Ave, Vernon BC
Cell 250-306-0674



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Hello Mayor and Council.

The Vernon Baseball Association has discussed the urgent need to adjust the current fencing by separating the dog park from the two Marshall Field ball diamonds. In working with Kendra Kryszak on a solution, the Vernon Baseball Board of Executive is offering to donate \$10,000 to help fund the fencing project and hopefully get the project going immediately.

There have been several unfortunate instances this year where dogs, players and fans have been forced to interact due to the location of the dog park being inside where our spectators take in the game. Dogs urinating on blankets and belongings, taking people's food, chasing players, being aggressive, and running out onto our fields are just a few of the issues. While we fully believe that 99% of dog owners and dogs are responsible and great to interact with, we do feel that the risk is certainly there to have a major incident that no one wants to occur. In addition, we do have players and fans that have allergies and fear of dogs in general. By creating some separation with this additional fencing, we do believe that this risk of an incident will be greatly limited.

As we discussed, Vernon Baseball wants to work together and fund improvement projects that not only improve the safety of our fields but continue to make Vernon a desired destination to host tournaments and bring more people to the city. The scoreboard project and resurfacing projects are great examples of what we can do together to continue to enrich our offering to the community. We are hopeful that this project will be addressed with urgency as our season is ongoing. Thank you for your considerations.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Michael Sanfilippo
President – Vernon Baseball