



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee **Date:** March 20, 2024

From: Todd Gross, Director, Parks Services **File:** 06-2345-01/2024-Vol 01

Re: **Designated BMX Track and Pump Track Facilities**

Staff Recommendation

That Option 1, as outlined in the staff reported titled “Designated BMX Track and Pump Track Facilities”, dated March 20, 2024, from the Director, Parks Services, be endorsed.

Todd Gross
 Director, Parks Services
 (604-247-4942)

Att. 1

REPORT CONCURRENCE		
ROUTED TO: Recreation & Sport Services	CONCURRENCE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER
SENIOR STAFF REPORT REVIEW	INITIALS: 	APPROVED BY CAO

Staff Report

Origin

At the May 25, 2022, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee meeting, staff received the following referral:

That staff analyze the concept of a designated BMX track and neighbourhood pump track, and report back with potential sites, estimated costs and possible funding sources.

The purpose of this report is to respond to the referral.

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2022-2026 Focus Area #3 A Safe and Prepared Community:

Community safety and preparedness through effective planning, strategic partnerships and proactive programs.

3.4 Ensure civic infrastructure, assets and resources are effectively maintained and continue to meet the needs of the community as it grows.

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2022-2026 Focus Area #6 A Vibrant, Resilient and Active Community:

Vibrant, resilient and active communities supported by a wide variety of opportunities to get involved, build relationships and access resources.

6.1 Advance a variety of program, services, and community amenities to support diverse needs and interests and activate the community.

6.2 Enhance the City's network of parks, trails and open spaces.

6.3 Foster intercultural harmony, community belonging, and social connections.

Background

Publicly accessible bike park facilities afford opportunities to recreate, develop and hone bike skills for a broad range of ages and abilities. They are an important component of the City of Richmond's parks and open space provision. The referral mentions both a "designated BMX track" and "neighbourhood pump track," which are two distinct facility types with unique design and planning considerations, functional requirements, target users and operating models.

A key difference between the two facility types is in their governance and operation. Designated BMX (bicycle motocross) track facilities in British Columbia are governed by either BMX Canada or Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI), which are known as sanctioning bodies. These organizations establish and enforce competition rules, qualifications and responsibilities of participants, including facility owners and operators. Sanctioning bodies are also responsible for providing insurance coverage, and organizing and scheduling race events. Designated BMX track facilities are typically operated by non-profit volunteer societies or clubs that are

responsible for facility administration, maintenance and collection of participant membership and event entry fees that go to the sanctioning body.

Pump tracks are provided among typical public park amenities and maintained by the City without additional oversight or management considerations.

The following table compares the primary functions, design features, operating models and additional considerations of designated BMX track and pump track facilities.

Table 1. Comparison of Designated BMX Track and Pump Track Facilities

	Designated BMX Track	Pump Track
Primary Function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Race/practice course with ability to host local, provincial, national and international competitions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills park for non-competitive uses. • Could host sponsored race events, depending on facility type/quality.
Design Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject to standards established by BMX Canada/UCI. • Tracks are typically 300–400 metres long and consist of a series of jumps and bumps with banked corners. • Requires specialized competition features, e.g., start gates. • Typically located within a fenced enclosure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best practices should be followed. • No applicable design standards.
Operating Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typically operated and maintained by a non-profit volunteer society/club. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City operated and maintained.
Public Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closed to the public for practice and race events, as well as during inclement weather to avoid track damage. • Open to the public (free of charge) at other times. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open to the public during standard park operating hours.
Facility Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires additional facilities such as parking and drop-off areas, washrooms, concessions, secure storage space for loaner bicycles and helmets, tools, first aid supplies, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specific accompanying facility requirements, though access, parking, rest areas, washrooms, etc., should be considered.

	Designated BMX Track	Pump Track
Area Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger minimum area requirements due to established track standards and program/facility requirements. • Estimated range from 4,000 to 12,000 square metres in size, excluding parking areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less prescriptive area and program requirements, therefore it can be accommodated on a broader range of sites. • Estimated range from 1,000 to 4,000 square metres in size, excluding parking areas.
Site Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typically located away from residential areas due to the nature of activities, size and facility requirements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be accommodated on smaller park sites with fewer constraints and facility requirements.

Currently, the City of Richmond owns and operates two bike park facilities: the Richmond Bike Terrain Park and the Railway Granville Bike Park. The former is a non-competitive skills park while the latter is a pump track. While the City does not monitor use of park facilities and thus does not have usage statistics, it is understood that each bike park facility is well-used by a dedicated user group. The following section provides an overview of each facility, its features and target users.

Richmond Bike Terrain Park

The Richmond Bike Terrain Park is located within Garden City Community Park (9071 Granville Avenue – refer to Attachment 1) and opened to the public in 2014. Approximately 3,600 square metres in size, it offers a broad range of features including a start hill, technical skills zone with timber elements, pump tracks, wood ramps and dirt jumps. It also includes seating and picnic areas. The Richmond Bike Terrain Park caters to skill levels ranging from beginner to expert, and is predominantly oriented toward wheeled users on bicycles, including BMX, freestyle, and mountain bikes.

Railway Granville Bike Park

The Railway Granville Bike Park is located along the Railway Greenway (5000 Granville Avenue – refer to Attachment 1) and opened to the public in 2021. Approximately 2,400 square metres in size, it offers a central platform deck, paved pump track along with a complement of technical balancing features such as logs and wood decks. The Railway Granville Bike Park caters to skill levels ranging from beginner to advanced, and is oriented toward wheeled users of all kinds, such as those on bicycles (including BMX bikes), skateboards, scooters, and in-line skates.

Analysis

The following section presents local examples of designated BMX track and pump track facilities, along with considerations for design and operation. It has been informed by discussions with subject matter experts, including those involved with BMX organizations and the provision of bike park design-build services in the Lower Mainland. The Lower Mainland case study locations, along with select images, are included in Attachment 1.

Lower Mainland Case Studies – Designated BMX Tracks

Langley BMX (4375 206 Street, Langley)

Langley BMX was established in 1978 and is the oldest BMX track in British Columbia. Located within a BC Hydro right-of-way on Township of Langley property, the facility is approximately 9,500 square metres in size, excluding parking areas. It is operated by a non-profit volunteer society, sanctioned by BMX Canada, and open to the public on non-race and practice days from dawn to dusk. Langley BMX hosts approximately 40 race events and 25 practice events each season, and reported approximately 200 members at the start of last season. On-site facilities include washrooms and a storage shed.

North Shore BMX (1 Inter River Park Road, North Vancouver)

North Shore BMX was established in 2008. Located at the southern end of Inter River Park, the facility is approximately 4,900 square metres in size, excluding parking areas. It is operated by a non-profit volunteer society, sanctioned by BMX Canada, and open to the public on non-race and practice days from dawn to dusk. North Shore BMX hosts approximately 20 race events and 35 practice events each season, and reported approximately 140 members at the start of last season. The BMX track is co-located with the Inter River Bike Skills Park and on-site facilities include a public washroom and storage shed.

Lower Mainland Case Studies – Pump Tracks

Inter River Bike Skills Park (1 Inter River Park Road, North Vancouver)

Inter River Bike Skills Park was established in 2019. Co-located with North Shore BMX at the southern end of Inter River Park, the facility is approximately 3,100 square metres in size. Its features cater to skill levels ranging from beginner to advanced and include a paved pump track, dirt jump area, gravel track, timber elements, seating and viewing areas. The facility is operated and maintained by the District of North Vancouver.

Empire Field Bike Park (2901 East Hastings Street, Vancouver)

Empire Field Bike Park was established in 2015. Located within Hastings Park, the facility is approximately 1,200 square metres in size. Its features cater to skill levels ranging from beginner to advanced and include a dirt pump track, dirt jumps, and timber elements. The facility is operated and maintained by the City of Vancouver.

Community Demand/Need

In December 2023, the findings of the Sports Facility Needs Assessment were endorsed by Council. This study included a comprehensive engagement process that sought input from local sport organizations that use City facilities and the community associations and societies that program City community centres. The resulting Sport Facility and Infrastructure Priority List identified through this process did not include a designated BMX bike track or pump track facility.

To date, there has not been any correspondence from residents or user groups expressing a community desire or need for an additional bike park facility in the City. Community engagement completed as part of recent park design studies, e.g., for Aberdeen Neighbourhood Park, Alexandra Neighbourhood Park and Tait Waterfront Park, did not reveal a community need/desire for a designated BMX track and/or additional pump track facility.

Potential Sites

As noted in Table 1, designated BMX tracks and pump tracks each have distinct design and spatial requirements. A pump track, with a smaller footprint, fewer associated facility/program requirements and design standards, could be more easily accommodated within neighbourhood parks; parks such as Tait Waterfront Park (9991 River Drive) and McLean Neighbourhood Park (22500 McLean Avenue) may be suitable for such a facility. A designated BMX track, with a larger footprint, more rigid design standards and associated facility requirements, would be less suited to a neighbourhood park within a residential area. It may be better suited to more isolated park sites such as Model Airplane Park (12851 Rice Mill Road) or Hamilton Highway Park (4571 Thompson Road).

Beyond meeting criteria for design, functionality and compatibility, a future bike park facility planning process should identify and consider underserved areas of the City, e.g., East Richmond and Hamilton.

Potential Costs

As evident from the Lower Mainland case studies, designated BMX track and pump track facilities come in a broad range of sizes and configurations. Given the multitude of factors, including total site area, required associated facilities and program, it is difficult to provide an accurate estimate of costs without further project definition. The distinct operating model for designated BMX tracks, whereby non-profit volunteer societies or clubs assume administrative and maintenance tasks, poses an additional challenge for quantifying and estimating operational costs.

For reference, the Railway Granville Bike Park project was completed in 2021 at a cost of approximately \$412,000. This included the combined efforts of an external design-build company and City forces to construct a small (approximately 2,400 square metres) pump track. The total costs included fees related to planning, design, community engagement and construction. The Railway Granville Bike Park has an annual Operating Budget Impact (OBI) of approximately \$10,000.

Based on discussions with local subject matter experts and a review of BMX Canada, BMX USA and UCI documentation, it is estimated that an order of magnitude cost for a designated BMX track could range from \$500,000 to over \$10,000,000, depending on the amenities provided. Operating costs would be commensurate with design and facilities provided. As an example, staff at Langley BMX estimate approximately \$50,000 in annual operating costs.

Potential land acquisition costs have not been considered as part of this initial study.

Potential Funding Sources

In order to fund such a project, a future capital funding request (as part of the City's five-year capital planning process) would be required. Grant funding opportunities may be available to offset the financial burden on the City; however, this would be contingent on factors such as project type, target user groups, community partners and timing.

Next Steps

Upon review of designated BMX track and pump track planning and design requirements and demonstrated community demand/need, staff have identified two options for consideration by Council.

Option 1 – Monitor Community Demand/Need (Recommended)

Option 1 is to proceed with the status quo and continue to monitor community demand/need for a designated BMX track and/or additional pump track facility. Any input received from residents, e.g., via individual correspondence, feedback through future community engagement processes, park design studies, Parks and Open Space Strategy updates, will be recorded by staff and taken into consideration for future capital planning. Staff will consider ways to engage bike park users and invite feedback on existing facilities, e.g., through use of on-site signage. If and when a conclusive community demand/need is demonstrated, staff would initiate a citywide public engagement process to confirm community preferences for a new bike park facility.

This option is recommended, as community demand/need for a designated BMX track and/or additional pump track has not been demonstrated to date. Additionally, this approach would allow staff to continue to be responsive to emerging trends and desires while focussing on administering the established Parks capital program. Should Council endorse this option, no further action would be required at this time.

Option 2 – Conduct Community Demand/Needs Analysis (Not recommended)

Option 2 is to conduct a community demand/needs analysis for a designated BMX track and/or additional pump track facility. This process would be led by staff and utilize established City public engagement approaches (e.g., Let's Talk Richmond) to reach residents, community associations and sports organizations. It would seek to determine the level of community demand/need for a designated BMX track and/or additional pump track facility, and resident preferences for facility type and location. Following the conclusion of this process, staff would

report to Council with the findings of the community demand/needs analysis, including community preferences for facility type and location, and recommended next steps.

This option is not recommended, as community demand/need for a designated BMX track and/or additional pump track facility has not been demonstrated to date, and this approach may delay work on existing priorities in the established Parks capital program.

Financial Impact

None.

Conclusion

In response to the referral, staff have studied the concept of a designated BMX track and pump track, as well as provided an overview of local case studies, design and operational considerations, potential sites, potential costs and funding sources.

To date, community demand/need for additional bike park facilities in Richmond has not been demonstrated. The recent Sports Facility Needs Assessment, which included a comprehensive citywide engagement process, did not identify a designated BMX track or pump track as a priority project for the community, nor did it reveal organized user groups who may have a vested interest in such a facility. The City's two existing bike park facilities, the Richmond Bike Terrain Park and Railway Granville Bike Park, are being maintained in good working order and appear to be meeting the needs of the local riding community. Staff have not received correspondence from residents or user groups expressing a community demand/need for an additional bike park facility in the City.

For next steps, Option 1 is recommended, as it will allow staff to continue to administer the established Parks capital program, monitor community demand/need for a designated BMX track and/or additional pump track facility, and conduct further engagement and analysis if and when it is demonstrated. With Council endorsement, no further action is required at this time.



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Att. 1: Lower Mainland Case Studies



Lower Mainland Case Studies



North Shore BMX, North Vancouver



Empire Field Bike Park, Vancouver



Langley BMX, Langley



Inter River Bike Skills Park, North Vancouver