



## City of Richmond

## Report to Committee

**To:** Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services  
Committee

**Date:** October 29, 2009

**From:** Dave Semple,  
General Manager, Parks and Recreation


**File:** 06-2345-20-  
SARM1/Vol 01

**Re:** South Arm Community Park Vision and Master Plan

### Staff Recommendation

That:

1. The draft South Arm Community Park Vision and Development Plan be endorsed.
2. Staff begin discussions with Richmond School District No. 38 regarding the feasibility of the draft Park Vision and Development Plan, as well as the replacement timetables for Whiteside Elementary and McRoberts Secondary schools.

  
Dave Semple  
General Manager, Parks and Recreation

Att. 7

FOR ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT USE ONLY		
CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER		
		
REVIEWED BY TAG	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
REVIEWED BY CAO	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>

## **Staff Report**

### **Origin**

At the July 9<sup>th</sup> 2007 meeting Council, the following referrals were received by staff:

***“That a Park Visioning and Master Plan process be initiated for South Arm Community Park and that the most appropriate configuration for an artificial turf at that site be determined as part of the Master Planning process;”*** and

***“That the South Arm Park Master Planning Process with a recommended final plan, including a potential location/configuration for a potential turf field at South Arm Community Park be completed and presented to Council by March 2008.”***

This report responds to these referrals by summarizing the planning and design process that has occurred to date; presenting a draft South Arm Community Park Vision; developing a list of development priorities for the park; and identifying three potential locations for an artificial turf field at the site.

## **Analysis**

### **Background:**

#### South Arm Community Park

South Arm Community Centre and Park, together with McRoberts Secondary School and Whiteside Elementary School, has been the focus of community life within the South Arm area for over 50 years. The site offers a wide variety of recreational activities, providing a multi-purpose centre for learning, socializing, and participating in physical activity. Its outdoor spaces are large and diverse, and include an outdoor swimming pool and wading pool, a children's playground, open lawns for gatherings and picnics, trails, tennis courts, lacrosse box/sports court, basketball courts, soccer fields, rugby pitch, and ball diamonds (attachment 1).

The park plays an important role in the daily lives of many Richmond residents, and it is fully expected that this will continue into the foreseeable future. This was confirmed by the South Arm Community Association when they commissioned the 'Vibrant Communities Project' in 2006, an assessment that was undertaken to learn more about the needs and priorities of local residents, and their perceptions of an enhanced role for the Community Centre.

#### The Planning Process and Community Input

The planning process was initiated in February 2008. Staff met with board members of the South Arm Community Association, and together took the following steps to gather information that formed the basis of the new development plan:

1. Reviewed results of the South Arm 'Vibrant Communities Project':

The South Arm 'Vibrant Communities Project' was completed in September 2006. Among its findings, the report identified a desire to increase the level of use of South Arm outdoor areas (as well as indoor facilities and services). The list of ideas included: more information and interpretative signage, historical markers, maps, benches, shade trees, public art, gardens, picnic areas and spaces for informal activities such as outdoor chess.

2. Reviewed results of the January 2008 Public Open House regarding Artificial Turf Field:

This Open House was held at the South Arm Community Centre in January 2008. Its purpose was to test the level of public support for constructing an artificial turf field within the site. Two options for location were given, one on the west side of the park, the other at the south end of the park and east of the Garden City drainage canal (attachment 2). Neither option received broad support from the open house attendees. Local residents expressed concerns that constructing such a facility would remove existing green space and trees, increase traffic in the area, create a shortage of on-street parking, and result in problems regarding security, noise and disturbance, and garbage and litter.

3. Conducted an informal survey of the Community Centre/Park users:

From March to May 2008, input to the planning process was sought from visitors to the site. A questionnaire was prepared and distributed to people attending programs at the centre, and to visitors arriving on a drop-in basis (attachment 3). Fifty-seven questionnaires were completed and returned.

In general, respondents were satisfied with their visits to the park, noting in particular the range of facilities and services offered. Positive comments were made about the quality of the walking pathways around the park, the trees, playground, sports fields, the open space, and the presence of the Garden City drainage canal.

Suggestions for improvement included: adding lighting to improve safety along some of the walking trails; creating more naturalized areas within the park; expanding and improving the playground; adding a concession stand for use during sports events; creating a dog off-leash area; and planting more trees to provide shade.

4. Toured Richmond Park Sites:

Community Association members, a number of community residents, and staff toured Terra Nova Rural Park, Garden City Community Park and Paulik Neighbourhood Park in July 2008. The purpose of this visit was to see built examples of contemporary park design located within the City. Highlights from which the group drew inspiration included the community gardens, the Sharing Farm, and the slough at Terra Nova; the play environment at Garden City, and the ornamental display gardens at Paulik Park (attachment 4).

#### 5. Discussed issues with Stakeholders:

Preliminary discussions with Richmond School District No. 38 staff regarding the plans feasibility took place in Spring 2008. Of particular significance will be the plans effect on the configuration of the property lines within the site. More detailed talks will take place in the next phase of work.

#### **Outcomes:**

##### **The Vision**

After review, discussion, research and consultation, a vision statement for the park and community centre was then prepared. It reads as follows:

##### ***South Arm Community Park is a place that:***

1. Is the "historic heart of the community" and a symbol of pride, a hub that fosters a sense of community and "belonging" for the residents of South Arm;
2. Is a safe and accessible gathering place for people and their neighbours, of all ages and backgrounds, to meet and make new friends;
3. Provides a variety of activities, opportunities and programs, both indoors and outdoors;
4. Keeps seniors active, and provides a place for parents with young children to visit and youth to gather;
5. Makes a positive contribution to residents' health, fitness and well being;
6. Connects people with the outdoors and nature, contributing to the physical, spiritual and social health of the community;
7. Provides a setting for community celebration, events and performances, education and learning;
8. Embraces its long-standing 'active' users; and
9. Protects its natural resources.

##### **South Arm Community Park - The Development Plan**

There is general satisfaction with the current conditions at South Arm Community Park. Its great range of features and facilities is well used and much appreciated, and it is felt that the park is already characterized by the statements as articulated in the Vision. Indeed, many residents already consider it to be the heart of the South Arm community, that it is where "Families meet at the park, pool etc, and it (the site) is a way of bringing people together." It is recognized though that improvements and enhancements are needed, and therefore a list of development priorities for the site has been proposed. These projects would require City Council approval, and have yet to be planned and designed. Implementation would also be subject to availability of funding from the Park Capital program, community contributions, and other sources. These development priorities include:



- Constructing a two-court basketball facility, with lights, in the northwest corner of the site (attachment 5). Project value is estimated to be \$350,000. The South Arm Community Association has already passed a motion to contribute \$230,000 towards the cost of construction (attachment 6), and \$120,000 for this project has been included in the proposed 2010 Parks Capital program.
- Improving lighting around the park, particularly along the pedestrian pathways where currently there is none.
- Developing a comprehensive interpretative and way finding signage system for the site.
- Beautifying the Garden City Road drainage canal.
- Constructing a walking/jogging track with a “low-impact” surface.
- Enhancing the children’s playground, located on the east side of the drainage canal.
- Adding exercise equipment outdoors for all users in general, for seniors in particular.
- Installing a picnic shelter to provide for large gatherings.
- Constructing outdoor gathering spaces for both casual use and formal events.
- Providing additional picnic tables and benches throughout the park.

It is noted that an artificial turf field is not included in this list of projects as it did not receive sufficient support at the Public Open House held at the South Arm Community Centre in January 2008. However, the South Arm Community Association is supportive of bringing such a facility to the Community Park, and so the renewed plan retains the potential to construct artificial turf fields within the site, should public opinion change (attachment 7).

Long term development of the park has also received consideration. This farther reaching outlook however, is more closely linked with the buildings located on both the site's City and School District lands. Of the City owned facilities located at South Arm Community Park, only the original Community Hall, built in 1966, was included in the 2007 PRCS Facility Strategic Plan. This building is scheduled for replacement during the 2022 to 2028 time period. The Community Centre was constructed in two phases, the first in 1975 and the more recent one in 1992. The South Arm Outdoor Pool facility was completed in 1971. Replacement schedules for these have yet to be confirmed. The timing for school replacement will be determined by the Richmond School District No. 38. This lack of certainty therefore somewhat restricts the ability to plan the site beyond the near future. When more information is received regarding building life cycles and replacement schedules, then park studies for the long term future can proceed

### **Financial Impact**

There is no financial impact that results from endorsing the Vision and Development Plan. Costs of individual development projects will be addressed during the annual Parks Capital Program budgeting process.

The first priority of the development plan – construction of the basketball court complex – is estimated to cost \$350,000. The South Arm Community Association will contribute \$230,000 towards the project, with the City of Richmond providing the balance. Staff propose that construction begin in the summer of 2010, and are therefore recommending that \$120,000 for this project be included in the 2010 Parks Capital Program.

### **Conclusion**

South Arm Community Park is greatly valued by the South Arm community as an important place for recreation, socialization, learning, and play. The purpose of the Vision Plan is to direct the continual development at the site, so that the opportunities to create a vibrant and lively centre of community life, are maintained, increased, and enhanced.

The draft Vision and Development Plan has jointly been produced by the South Arm Community Association and City of Richmond staff. The next steps in the process are to begin discussions with Richmond School District No. 38 regarding the future of Whiteside Elementary and McRoberts Secondary schools, and to begin detailed design for the basketball court project.



Clarence Sihoe  
Park Planner  
(604-233-3311)





**LEGEND:**

- ① **South Arm Community Centre #1**
  - a two-story 21,000 square feet facility built in 1975. The building includes a game room, gymnasium, shower rooms, and also the Community Police Station
- ② **South Arm Community Centre #2**
  - a two-story 31,000 square feet facility built in 1992. It contains a daycare, game room, sports facilities, seniors room, and a fitness centre.

- ③ **South Arm Community Hall**
  - a one-story 6,500 square foot facility constructed in 1966, and is a free standing structure. The building is use primarily as a day care facility.
- ④ **The South Arm Outdoor Pool**
  - this facility was constructed in 1971



**SOUTH ARM  
COMMUNITY PARK – EXISTING SITE**  
January 2009

CITY OF RICHMOND - PARKS DIVISION  
SOUTH ARM COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION



South Arm Park - Potential Locations for Artificial Turf Field







## South Arm Park Plan QUESTIONNAIRE

The Parks Recreation and Cultural Services Department of the City of Richmond and the South Arm Community Association, are together preparing a new vision plan for South Arm Park.

We are seeking your input to the planning process by filling in this questionnaire. The plan will guide short-term projects and long-term developments of the site.

**FACILITIES...** South Arm Community Centre, South Arm Community Hall, Community Police Station, South Arm Pool, Mc Roberts High School, Whiteside Elementary.



**SPORTS ACTIVITIES...** Soccer Fields, Baseball Diamonds, Basketball Courts, Tennis, Lacrosse/Ball Hockey Box, Rugby.



**PARKS...** Playgrounds, Trails, Benches, Trees, Picnic Shelters





The Parks Recreation and Cultural Services Department of the City of Richmond and the South Arm Community Association, are together preparing a new vision plan for South Arm Park.

We are seeking your input to the planning process by filling in this questionnaire. The plan will guide short-term projects and long-term developments of the site.

1. Where do you live?

South Arm	West Richmond
Steveston	Cambie
City Centre	Not in Richmond

Address OR Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

2. How often do you visit the Park?

	Park facilities	Community Centre facilities
3 or more times/week		
Weekly		
1 or 2 times/month		
Occasionally		

3. How do you typically travel to South Arm Park or facilities? (Please check)

Walk	Bus
Bike	Other
Drive	

4. When you visit the Park, what activities do you participate in? (Check all that apply)

Soccer	Playing at Playground
Baseball	Walking
Tennis	Picnic Area
Hockey	Basketball
Rugby	Lacrosse

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

5. What facilities within the Park do you use? Check all that apply.

South Arm Community Centre	Community Police Station
South Arm Community Hall	Picnic Shelters
South Arm Pool	McRoberts High School
Park Washrooms	Whiteside Elementary
Tennis Courts	Other

6. What do you like about the existing Park?


7. What do you dislike about the existing Park?


8. What improvements would you like to see made within the Park?


9. Do you feel safe within the Park? If no, why not and in what location is there a problem?


10. Other comments?


11. Would you like to participate in a focus group to talk about the future of South Arm Park area?

☐ Yes    Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ No

Thank you very much for your participation. Please return this questionnaire to South Arm Community Centre (8880 Williams Road), Fax to 604-718-8065 or e-mail to southarm@richmond.ca. If you have any questions, please call Scott at 604-718-8060. PLEASE RETURN BY MAY 16, 2008.







Terra Nova Rural Park - Community Garden



Terra Nova Rural Park - Sharing Farm



Terra Nova Rural Park - Slough Boardwalk

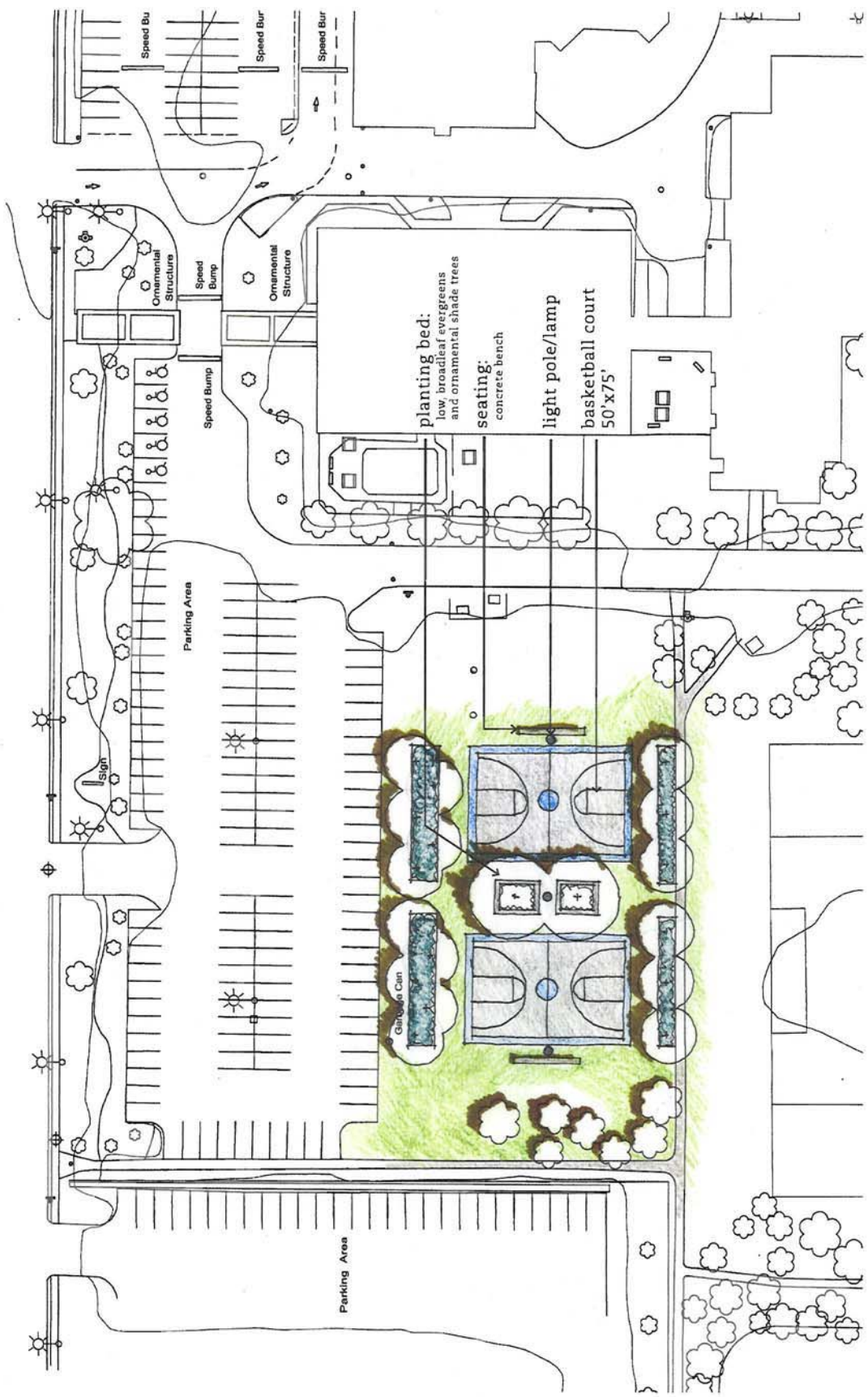


Garden City Community Park - Play Environment



Paulik Neighbourhood Park - Ornamental Garden







**SOUTH ARM  
COMMUNITY PARK – BASKETBALL COURT CONCEPT No. 3**  
Preferred Option

CITY OF RICHMOND - PARKS DIVISION  
SOUTH ARM COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION





## **SOUTH ARM COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION**

8880 Williams Road, Richmond, British Columbia V7A 1G6 • Telephone 604-718-8060  
Fax 604-718-8065

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July 16, 2009

Serena Lusk  
Manager Parks, Design and Programs  
City of Richmond – Works yard

Dear Ms. Lusk:

**Re: Contribution to South Arm Community Park**

For the past year the South Arm Community Association has been working with the City of Richmond Parks and Recreation in developing the South Arm Community Park Plan. As the first phase of the South Arm Park Plan, the Parks Department and our building committee have been looking at creating an outdoor gathering area to incorporate 2 basketball courts that can also be used for ball hockey, natural and formed seating areas, increased trees and a natural performance area for outdoor concerts.

I am pleased to inform you that the South Arm Community Association Board passed a motion on Wednesday June 17, 2009 to contribute \$230,000 of the projected \$340,000 for the proposed project. This contribution is to include covering the basketball playing surface with Sport Court.

In addition to spontaneous recreation opportunities, the basketball courts will enable the Richmond Youth Basketball League (RYBL), administered through South Arm Community Centre as of September 2008, to include an outdoor summer league in 2010. Also, schools and organizations will be encouraged to host local and lower mainland tournaments in the park.

South Arm Park has been victimized by numerous fires and graffiti in 2009. This new gathering area will go far in stimulating a safe, vibrant community through positive activities.

This project is consistent with other partnerships the City has been involved with over the last few years. South Arm Community Association's contribution provides a substantial investment in the community and toward building a significant City asset.

I look forward to hearing from you regarding the advancement of this project.

Sincerely,

Karen Adamson, President

CC Derrick Dang, Cathy Carlile, Elizabeth Ayers, Scott Schroeder, Ian Shaw



CITY OF RICHMOND - PARKS DIVISION  
SOUTH ARM COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

POTENTIAL LOCATIONS FOR  
ARTIFICIAL TURF FIELDS

SOUTH ARM  
COMMUNITY PARK -  
october 2009



- LEGEND:
- ④ Potential Artificial Turf Location
  - ② Potential Artificial Turf Location
  - ③ Potential Artificial Turf Location

