



**Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee  
Electronic Meeting**

**Council Chambers, City Hall  
6911 No. 3 Road**

**Tuesday, April 23, 2024  
4:00 p.m.**

Pg. #      ITEM

MINUTES

**PRCS-3**      *Motion to adopt the **minutes** of the meeting of the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee held on March 26, 2024.*



NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING DATE

May 28, 2024, (tentative date) at 4:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

COMMUNITY SERVICES DIVISION

PRESENTATION

Mandy Hadfield, Manager, Sports and Community Events, to present the Volunteer Video in honour of National Volunteer Week.

1.    **DESIGNATED BMX TRACK AND PUMP TRACK FACILITIES**

(File Ref. No. 06-2345-01) (REDMS No. 7597668)

**PRCS-26**

**See Page PRCS-26 for full report**

*Designated Speaker: Kevin Fraser*

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.*

2.    **AQUATICS INSTRUCTOR AND LIFEGUARD SUBSIDY PROGRAM UPDATE**

(File Ref. No. 11-7143-01) (REDMS No. 7625305)

**PRCS-36**

**See Page PRCS-36 for full report**

*Designated Speaker: Kirsten Close*

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

- (1)    *That a subsidy program for aquatics instructors and lifeguards, as outlined in the report titled “Aquatics Instructor and Lifeguard Subsidy Program Update”, dated March 21, 2024, from the Director, Recreation and Sport Services, be endorsed; and*
- (2)    *That a one-time additional level request to continue the subsidy program for aquatics instructors and lifeguards be considered in the 2025 budget process.*

3.    **MANAGER’S REPORT**

ADJOURNMENT



## Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee

Date: Tuesday, March 26, 2024

Place: Council Chambers  
Richmond City Hall

Present: Councillor Chak Au, Chair  
Councillor Michael Cllr. Wolfe, Vice-Chair  
Councillor Laura Cllr. Gillanders  
Councillor Andy Cllr. Hobbs  
Councillor Bill Cllr. McNulty

Also Present: Councillor Carol Day  
Councillor Kash Heed

Call to Order: The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

### MINUTES

It was moved and seconded

*That the minutes of the meeting of the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee held on February 27, 2024, be adopted as circulated.*

**CARRIED**

### DELEGATIONS

1. With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation (copy on-file, City Clerk's Office) Jane Fernyhough and Andrew Wade, representing the Richmond Arts Coalition (RAC), presented their annual report and spoke on 2023 activities and promotional opportunities for community artists.

Discussion ensued with regard to (i) working with the City on sharing artist calls and other artist works, (ii) expanding opportunities to include ethnic art in the community, and (iii) establishing RAC office space in the Richmond Cultural Centre Annex.

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It was moved and seconded

*That the Richmond Arts Coalition annual report presentation be received for information.*

**CARRIED**

## COMMUNITY SERVICES DIVISION

2. **ARTS SERVICES YEAR IN REVIEW 2023**

(File Ref. No. 11-7375-01) (REDMS No. 7569237)

Arts Services staff presented a video summary of 2023 arts activities (copy on-file, City Clerk's Office). Staff advised that the video will be available on the City's website.

Discussion ensued with regard to various arts initiatives including the Art Truck and improving accessibility to community arts programs.

It was moved and seconded

(1) *That the Arts Services Year in Review 2023 as presented in the staff report titled, "Arts Services Year in Review 2023", dated February 2, 2024, from the Director, Arts, Culture and Heritage Services, be received for information; and*

(2) *That the Arts Services Year in Review 2023 be circulated to Community Partners and Funders for their information.*

**CARRIED**

3. **NO. 3 ROAD BARK PARK PROPOSED ENHANCEMENTS**

(File Ref. No. 06-2345-20-N3RP1) (REDMS No. 7583151)

Staff provided a slideshow presentation as a brief overview of the No. 3 Road Bark Park ("Bark Park") proposed enhancements for site users.

Staff reported insight gained through discussions at the public open houses and written comments submitted, noting:

- safety related concerns for many users of the site;
- several that frequent Bark Park regularly like the way it is now with minimal changes;
- dog owners appreciate the opportunity to walk their dogs off-leash on the looped trail;
- many like to walk their dogs off-leash along the dike trail because it is a unique experience allowing dogs to run freely and have access to the river, while others have safety concerns about the free access to the water and would appreciate some control measures limiting access;

2.

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- the cycling trail is a recreational and major regional commuter route used by people cycling the dike trail system and connecting to and from the George Massey tunnel shuttle for cyclists;
- some dog owners would like to see separate small dog areas;
- there are concerns among dog owners and pedestrians about the speed of cyclists through the area, as well as electrical micro mobility devices such as e-scooters and e-bikes; and
- similarly, there are concerns among pedestrians and cyclists about walking/cycling through the dog off-leash areas as well.

After consideration of the comments received during the public engagement period, staff has proposed a number of safety enhancements that take into account the values and concerns of all site users. The following highlights 4 main points of these safety enhancements:

- (1) includes the preservation of the entire site and a portion of the dike trail as a dog off-leash area;
- (2) maintains a looped pathway that is 2m wide where people can walk with their dog off-leash near the river front;
- (3) a speed rail fence along the north side of the multi-use dike trail to provide separation between the off-leash dog area and multi-use trail without impacting the dike crest; and
- (4) introduction of a 4m wide multi-use trail along the south edge of the dike for cyclists, pedestrians, rollers and dogs on-leash that is consistent with the rest of the dike trail, as well as provide a continuation of the existing dike trail system to the west and east of the Bark Park, and

these proposed enhancements also include new directional and adequate signage that includes reminders for e-scooters noting they are not permitted on the unpaved trails.

Considered through public engagement, staff further noted the existence of a Riparian Management Area (RMA) to the north side of the site which is why further interventions within that zone were not considered; not impossible, but would be required to undergo a long period of permitting which may not be granted, therefore other options were presented through public engagement that can be implemented in a more timely manner.

In response to queries from the Committee, staff noted (i) the existing trail pre-existed the RMA and is grandfathered, (ii) the RMA stems from the entire north side to the centre of the pathway and restricts any further adjustments, enhancements or modifications, (iii) there would be implications for any proposed intervention to the site that does not directly contribute to the environment and ecological values of the areas and, going forward with any

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proposed changes would be a significant process (approximately 18 months), (iv) with respect to any opportunities to disturb the division where the trail comes up to the dike, anytime there is a major/minor intervention into the dike crest, structurally speaking, a permitting process with the Province is required, in the meantime, to lessen the conflict at that access point, staff has put down some temporary barriers to slow down cyclists, (v) safety measures outlined in the report should mitigate and solve safety issues at Bark Park, (vi) one of the key elements noted through staff research for dog parks in the region, is physical separation, which is proposed while at the same time balancing the needs for the majority of the area being a dog off-leash area that dogs can do free runs, while preserving areas and segregating it for cyclists for multi-use (dogs on the multi-use path will have to be on leash in that area), (vii) the 4m wide proposed multi-use trail and benches are consistent with the majority of the rest of the dike trail; west of Bark Park is a very similar width and has amenities along it as well, (viii) the 3 options that were presented as part of the public engagement process were also presented to HUB through the Richmond Active Transportation Committee, and (ix) HUB were also given the opportunity to attend the public open houses and complete the survey; through the 3 options in the public engagement process, HUB supported Option A, with the recommended enhancements closely followed with some modifications from additional input received from dog owners.

Discussion ensued with respect to the reporting of any serious incidents that took place at Bark Park. Staff noted (i) information was received through the public consultation engagement process of some instances that happened at Bark Park but no specific reports were received through any process (RCMP, Bylaws or City's customer services system) for any incident directly registered for Bark Park, (ii) when calling 9-1-1, the caller is asked "police, fire, ambulance" and if an ambulance is required, it will be captured with Emergency Health Services, not necessarily with the police unless they are required to attend, in which case the RCMP will create an incident report, (iii) with respect to the enforcement of the Animal Control and Dog Licensing Bylaw, the City contracts the BCSPCA for incidences with dogs (contact information for BCSPCA to investigate, available on the City's website) and (iv) incidents relating to cyclist/human interactions, fall within the jurisdiction of the RCMP.

A brief discussion ensued with respect to the lands surrounding the park and it was suggested that staff and Council visit the park to better understand the complexity of the proposals in the report.

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Judith Hutson, Richmond resident, spoke to her submission (attached Schedule 1), noting safety issues in regards to Bark Park and the Option 6.0 recommendation outlined in her submission. Ms. Hutson further noted the majority of cyclists that go through the park comply with the 15 km/h speed requirement, however some cyclists, cycling groups and e-bikes travel quickly, utilizing the area as a commuter route.

David Tanner, #24 7733 Heather St., spoke to safety concerns noting unless the trail is significantly widened, there will still be the issue of high speed cyclists and e-bikes going across north end of Bark Park.

Nick Gagne, Richmond resident, spoke to the need for safe community spaces without injury to dogs or cyclists, noting (i) making this exclusively a dog park could avoid most conflicts, (ii) the avenue for reporting incidents should be addressed, (iii) signage noting the space is a dog park only, and (iv) the City needs more dog off-leash areas for larger dogs.

Karen Yamada, 57 9111 No. 5 Road, spoke to the impact of witnessing a dog being hit by a cyclist speeding past and the resulting affect on her and her son, noting that adding barriers and effective signage to make cyclists dismount in the area would increase safety at Bark Park, as many cyclists don't appear to be aware that the area is a dog off-leash park.

Julie Roberts, 5851 Goldeneye Place, spoke to an incident with her small dog at Bark Park noting additional signage and barriers would increase safety along the pathways.

Sandra Polsky, 23160 Dyke Road, shared concerns about safety noting that the south pathway should be for pedestrians only.

Mark Smith, Richmond resident, expressed his concerns on the safety at Bark Park, noting that the majority of cyclists are respectful, however Bark Park is a destination park and most cyclists are riding through the park only. He further noted that more adequate signage is needed.

Further to comments and concerns expressed by the delegations, staff noted (i) there are some temporary traffic calming measures in place and are waiting for some additional structures to arrive for installation, and (ii) will look to providing further signage enhancements and locations.

Discussion ensued noting that Bark Park is unique, as it is formally a dog off-leash park with additional uses going through it, and that after the public engagement process, it seems that Options A, B, C and Additional Options 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 do not address the values and concerns of the site user groups. It was further noted that there is no call for tree removal or paved trail as part of the recommended motion, but rather environmental enhancement and habitat compensation works.

As a result of the discussion, the following **referral motion** was introduced:

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It was moved and seconded

*That the staff report titled “No. 3 Road Bark Park Proposed Enhancements”, dated March 4, 2024, from the Director, Parks Services, be referred back to staff for the following:*

- (1) parking lot/west entry improvements, which may include but not limited to: slowing and directing cyclists off the southern dike raised portion with permanent bike barriers, enhanced blackberry control, enhanced fencing and a gravel trail on the northern most side where cars park;*
- (2) staff analysis with costed budget impacts for two additional options:*
  - (a) with an exclusive bike route on the northern-most side of the existing tree line (where it is grass then sloping to the ditch/fence), and*
  - (b) with a widening of the existing lower/future “middle” trail with a chain-link or other appropriate fence separation with bike only traffic on the northern half of the trail, and all other modes to the south;*
- (3) staff be directed to immediately put appropriate barriers, then install wooden barriers that prevent cyclists from using the southern dike raised portion from both entry ends of the Bark Park; and*
- (4) staff be directed to prioritize the two new requested options so that a Committee decision can come in May, design can occur this spring/summer, and work can occur in the summer/fall.*

The question on the referral motion was not called as further discussion ensued noting:

- A barrier with a large visible sign is needed immediately, which should make it near impossible for cyclists to continue on their speed. The challenge will be moving cyclists to the northern side of the parking lot to continue on to their exclusive route through Bark Park.
- Wooden barriers, narrow enough to prevent bicycles from getting through but wide enough to walk through, is ideal. Cyclists could dismount and lock their bikes in the parking lot bike lock area.
- Council would benefit from going to the site and having staff highlight where these markings are especially the 15m RMA boundary, and the implications (if any) of a wider trail/barrier for the grandfathered trail.
- It would be ideal to have a trail on the north side all the way over to Garden City.
- Slowing down cyclists through the area should be addressed immediately and then analyze the resulting effects.



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- Consideration of a multi-use pathway instead of an exclusive bike route.
- Achieving voluntary compliance is the goal.

In response to comments from the Committee, staff proposed (i) immediate measures to address concerns such as signage and additional barricades as highlighted both on the central trail as well as restricting access to the southern trail, and (ii) follow up on-site with Committee/Council to discuss referral items, the RMA, and direction/options going forward.

Staff further noted that DCC's typically fund projects that are directly related to new growth and will flag recommended improvements for review with Finance.

The question on the referral motion was then called and it was **CARRIED**.

4. **MANAGER'S REPORT**

*(i) Poppy Memorial Street Signage*

A brief discussion ensued in regards to adding a poppy to the Francis Road street sign. Staff noted they will undergo steps required.

*(ii) Iona Beach*

It was noted that Metro Vancouver Board has launched a pilot program at Iona Beach that will allow controlled alcohol in the park this summer.

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**ADJOURNMENT**

It was moved and seconded  
*That the meeting adjourn (6:32 p.m.).*

**CARRIED**

Certified a true and correct copy of the Minutes of the meeting of the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee of the Council of the City of Richmond held on Tuesday, March 26, 2024.

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Councillor Chak Au  
Chair

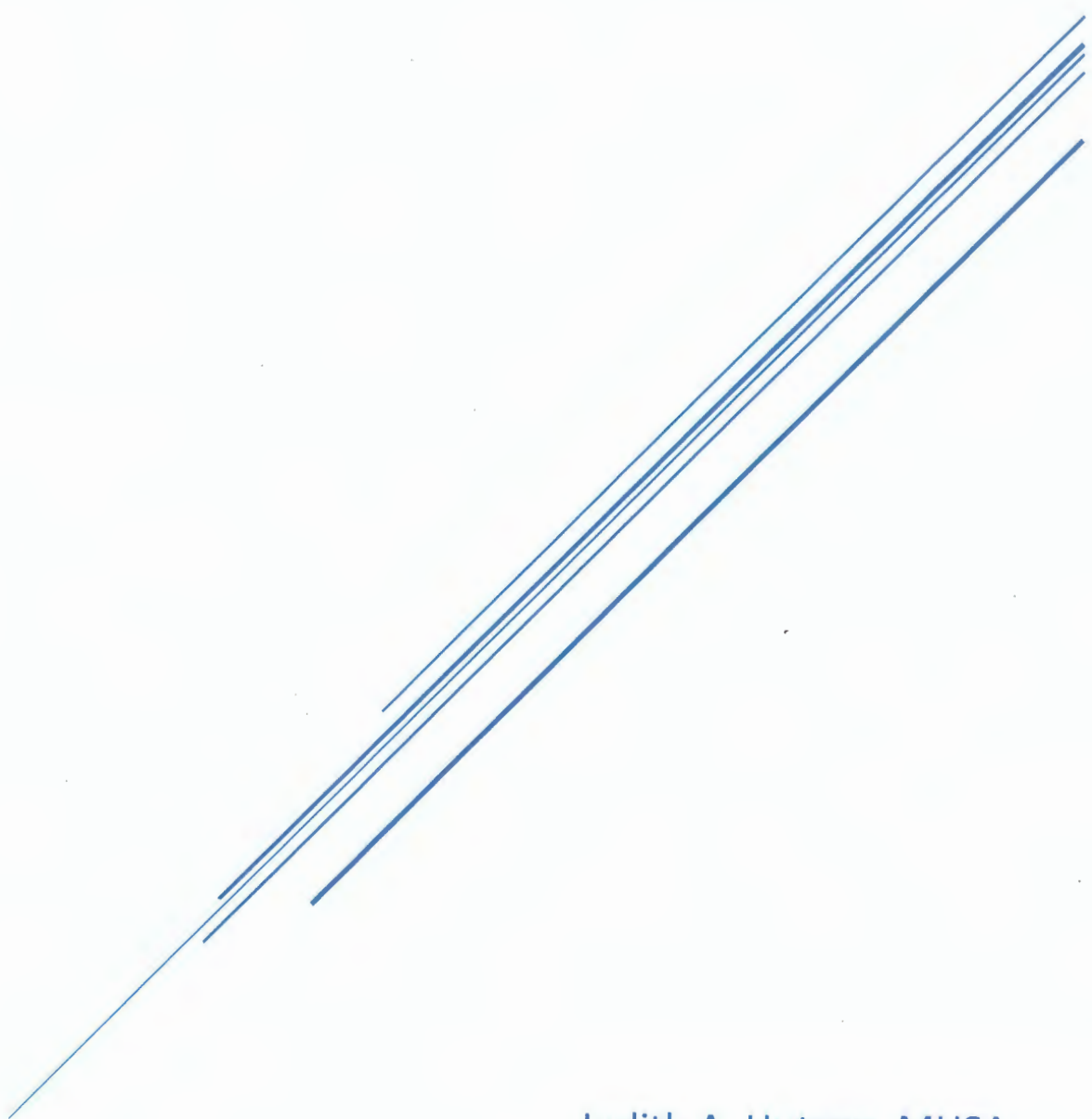
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Lorraine Anderson  
Legislative Services Associate

Schedule 1 to the Minutes of the  
Parks, Recreation & Cultural  
Services Committee meeting of  
Richmond City Council held on  
Tuesday, March 26, 2024.

# BARK PARK RICHMOND SAFETY ISSUES

Review of the City of Richmond Response, March 2024



Judith A. Hutson, MHSA  
Richmond Citizen

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## 1.0 Current state

- Bark Park is an off-leash dog park that is owned and operated by the City of Richmond.
- For more than 4 years there have been major issues with cyclists who use this multi-use path in the off-leash dog park. **This has created a significant safety issue for all users of the park: people (adults and children), dogs, and cyclists.**
- **There has been a change in the type of cyclists who use this multi-use trail.**
  - There has been a significant increase in the number of powerful e-bikes.
  - There has been an increase in the number of powerful cyclists who race through the park.
  - There has been an increase in the number of cycling groups who race through the park.
  - There are other powerful machines that use the park including motorized unicycles, e-scooters, and even motor bikes.
- **There are a large number of cyclists/other motorized machines who consistently break the bylaw requirements.** Bylaw No. 8771 sets a maximum speed of 15km/hour, cyclists/ e-scooters are directed to slow down and yield to pedestrians and dogs. At Bark Park, as per the City's requirement, cyclists are not permitted on the waterside trail and are directed to dismount.
  - Speed is a major issue on all three of the multi-use paths in Bark Park (waterside path, north path, and the narrow path the runs alongside the Crown Packaging site).
  - Slowing down and yielding to pedestrians and dogs is a major safety issue on all three of the multi-use paths.
  - Cyclists routinely cycle on the waterside path even though bikes are not allowed on this path.
- **Staff at the City of Richmond have been formally advised of this significant and escalating safety issue and, to date, have not effectively managed this issue.**
  - The safety issues with the cyclists exploded during the dyke remediation (2022). Formal communications and meetings were held with City Richmond staff to ensure that they fully understood the scope of the safety issues and the need to immediately address these concerns.
  - There has been ongoing formal communication with City of Richmond staff about the increasing safety issues and the need to immediately address these safety issues.
  - A citizen led petition regarding the ongoing safety issues at Bark Park was tabled with Richmond City Council in 2023.
  - Citizens identified these ongoing and escalating safety issues during City of Richmond led consultation meetings.
- **Staff at the City of Richmond have been formally advised that the safety issues at Bark Park increase in scope and intensity in the spring and summer.**
  - There is a demonstrated need to fully resolve this known safety issue as soon as possible.

## 2.0 Safety issues at Bark Park

- Cyclists who refuse to comply with the bylaws are a major safety issue
  - Speed is a major safety issue.
  - Not slowing down and yielding to pedestrians is a major safety issue.
  - Cycling on the waterside path where bikes are banned is a safety issue.
- The change in the volume, types of bikes, and types of cyclists
  - There has been a significant increase in the number of unsafe cyclists who ride through the park.
  - The change in the type of bikes that ride through Bark Park has contributed to the safety issue.
    - This includes a significant increase in the number of heavy, powerful e-bikes that have the capacity to travel up to 50 kph.
  - The increase in the number of large cycling groups that ride through the park.
    - These groups most often exceed the posted speed.
    - Ride in a tight formation.
    - Do not yield to pedestrians or dogs.
    - These groups create an extremely unsafe event when they ride the narrow path that runs alongside Crown Packaging.
- The narrow path that runs alongside Crown Packaging is not a safe multiuse path for pedestrians, dogs, and cyclists.
  - The path is approximately 1.5 meters wide.
  - It is bordered by ditches and a fence. Consequently, there is no place to safely escape an aggressive, fast-moving cyclist/group of cyclists.
  - There are a large number of safety concerns about this path.
  - There are a large number of safety incidents including near misses that occur on this narrow path.
- Verbal abuse and threats
  - When citizens interact with cyclists to ask them to abide by the requirements identified in the bylaw, the interactions are often very aggressive.
    - Cyclists shout and swear at citizens.
    - Cyclists have threatened to harm citizens.
    - Cyclists have threatened to kill dogs.
    - Cyclists have responded by aggressively riding their bikes towards citizens and dogs.
- Dogs have been injured by cyclists
  - Dogs have been hit by cyclists.
    - To date no dog has died but dogs have required medical treatment. **The most recent incident (March, 2024) involved a large group of cyclists, a small dog who was hit by the cyclist, and an aggressive interaction with a citizen.**

➤ People have been injured

- There have been a number of physical interactions where citizens have been harmed by cyclists.
- The injuries sustained by a few citizens have been so significant that they were transported to hospital in an ambulance. **The most recent incident (March,2024) involved a cyclist on an e-bike hitting a dog. The cyclist was taken to Richmond Hospital by ambulance.**

### 3.0 Failure to manage the known safety issues at Bark Park

Once a safety issue is identified it should immediately be assessed, risks mitigated, and the safety issue should be promptly and effectively managed. This is a universally accepted best practice. This has not happened.

➤ The safety issues were not immediately assessed or addressed.

- These issues were identified to the Parks Department as significant safety issues in 2022.

➤ The Parks Department failed to address the known safety concerns during the park “upgrade” following the dyke remediation.

- This was a significant failure. All of these known safety issues could have been addressed at this time.
- “Site user group representatives and the general public were consulted throughout the 2012 - 2023 site improvement process.” **This statement is not accurate.** The City did not initiate any consultation/ engagement about the upgrade. This was a major issue, and this has been raised multiple times with the City.

➤ The Parks Department did not take the time to study and understand the safety issues.

**In order to effectively resolve an issue, you must understand the issue.**

There should have been a detailed assessment of the current state. This assessment should have included a thorough evaluation of identified concerns.

▪ **Bikes**

- What type of bikes access Bark Park?
  - What type of e-bikes access the park?
    - How powerful are they?
    - How heavy are they?
- What other motorized units access the park (e.g., motorized unicycles, etc.)?
- Has there been a change in the mix of bikes that use the park?
- How often do large cycling groups access the park?
  - What is their speed?
  - Do they ride single file?

▪ **Use of the waterside path (where cyclists are banned)**

- How often do cyclists use this path?
- Why do they use this path?
  - Is it an issue with signage?
  - Is it an issue with the City bike path information?
  - Is it because they just want to?
- What happens when they are asked to use the designated path?



- What type of bikes use this path?
  - Has the mix of bikes changed over the past 4 years?
  - Has the volume of cyclists changed over the past 4 years?
- Has there been an increase in large cycling groups that use this path?
- Do large cycling groups move through the park single file or in tight groups?
  - Does this create a safety issue?
- What are the busy times for cyclists on this path?
- What % of cyclists exceed the posted speed limit?
  - How fast are they going?
  - What type of bikes exceed the speed limit?
  - Why are they exceeding the posted speed limit?
- Do these cyclists give way to pedestrians and dogs?
- Is the gravel on the path a safety issue for people and/or cyclists?
- Have there been safety incidents/concerns? And if so, what happened?
  - Where safety incidents/ concerns were identified, were interviews conducted?
    - And what were the findings?
  
- **Wide multi – use path (3 Road to the Crown Packaging fence)**
  - What type of bikes use this path?
    - Has the mix of bikes changed over the past 4 years?
    - Has the volume of cyclists changed over the past 4 years?
  - Has there been an increase in large cycling groups that use this path?
  - Do large cycling groups move through the path single file or in tight groups?
    - Does this create a safety issue?
  - What are the busy times for cyclists on this path?
    - Season (e.g., summer, spring, etc. )
    - Day
    - Times
  - What % of cyclists exceed the posted speed limit?
    - How fast are they going?
    - What type of bikes exceed the speed limit?
    - Why are they exceeding the posted speed limit?
  - Do these cyclists give way to pedestrians and dogs?
  - Is the gravel on the path a safety issue for people and/or cyclists?
  - Have there been safety incidents/concerns? And if so, what happened?
    - Where safety incidents/ concerns were identified, were interviews conducted?
      - Did the incident involve an injury (dog and/or human)?
      - Was an ambulance/ veterinary care required?
      - Was speed a factor?
      - What was done to prevent this from happening again?

- **Thin multi-use path (1.5-meter-wide path that runs between Crown Packaging/ farmers field to Garden City Road).** NOTE: The Parks Department incorrectly identified this narrow multi-use path as an area without conflict.
  - What type of bikes use this path?
    - Has the mix of bikes changed over the past 4 years?
    - Has the volume of cyclists changed over the past 4 years?
  - Has there been an increase in large cycling groups that use this path?
  - Do large cycling groups move through this path in a single file or in tight groups?
    - What is the impact of a cycling group using this path?
    - How big of a safety concern is this, given the narrow width of the path?
  - What are the busy times for cyclists on this path?
    - Season (e.g., summer, spring, etc.)
    - Day
    - Times
  - What % of cyclists exceed the posted speed limit?
    - How fast are they going?
    - What type of bikes exceed the speed limit?
    - Why are they exceeding the posted speed limit?
  - How do pedestrians avoid colliding with the cyclists on this narrow path?
  - Do these cyclists give way to pedestrians and dogs?
  - Have there been safety incidents/concerns? And if so, what happened?
    - Where safety incidents/ concerns were identified, were interviews conducted?
      - Did the incident involve an injury (dog and/or human)?
      - Was an ambulance/ veterinary care required?
      - Was speed a factor?
      - What was done to prevent this from happening again?
- **Parking lot (3 Road entrance)**
  - Are there safety issues with cyclists in the parking lot?
  - Is the gravel on the path a safety issue for people and/or cyclists?
  - Have there been safety incidents/concerns? And if so, what happened?
    - Where safety incidents/ concerns were identified, were interviews conducted?
      - Did the incident involve an injury (dog and/or human)?
      - Was an ambulance/ veterinary care required?
      - Was speed a factor?
      - What was done to prevent this from happening again?
- **Are there other safety issues at Bark Park that need to be addressed?**

- **Overall assessment of the severity of the known safety issues**
  - What are the major known issues?
  - What is the relative severity of each of the known issues?
- **Liability exposure – City of Richmond**
  - What is the liability exposure for the City of Richmond if these known safety issues are not addressed?
- **Management of the known safety issues**
  - From a safety and injury prevention perspective, what actions need to be taken to effectively manage these known issues?

➤ **The Parks Department does not understand the full scope of the safety issues at Bark Park.**

**Without knowing what the full scope of the issue is, it is almost impossible to know what needs to be done to fully address the issue.**

- A glaring example of this is their assessment that the “areas of conflict” does not include the 1.5-meter-wide path that runs alongside the Crown Packaging site. This path, by design, is unsafe for a multi-use trail that includes cyclists, there are a large number of conflicts/ safety issues that occur on this path, and addressing the known safety issues on this narrow path has to be addressed.
- There is no information about the speed infractions at Bark Park.
- There is no information about the change in the types of cyclists.
- No information about key findings about the significant safety events that have occurred at the park.
- No information about what days/ times are considered to be the most unsafe at the park.

➤ **The Parks Department has not done anything to manage the safety issues.**

- Other than the recent (March, 2024) installation of temporary barriers, staff at the City of Richmond have not done anything concrete at Bark Park to manage the known, and escalating, safety issues.
- These temporary barriers have not addressed the known safety issues at Bark Park.

➤ **Known safety issues are not best managed by a public engagement activity.**

- The City of Richmond Parks Department launched a consultation process in the fall of 2023.
- **This approach failed to effectively manage these known safety issues.**

## 4.0 Parks Department No. 3 Road Park Safety Enhancement Project

- The public engagement strategy was fundamentally flawed.
  - **The materials shared at the public engagement events were poor quality and inaccurate including a key false assumption that the “area of conflict” in the park does not include the narrow path that runs parallel with the Crown Packaging Site.**
    - The poster created by the Parks Department to advertise this engagement strategy was tone deaf.
      - It showed a cyclist on the path that bikes are not allowed to be on.
      - Included a dog on leash when this is an off-leash dog park.
      - And included a cyclist without a helmet on.
    - Documents that are shared with the public for feedback need to be accurate. There were a number of issues with the documents shared at these sessions. For example, one of the options is missing a path. This lack of attention to detail is problematic. These documents should have been updated immediately to correct the errors. This was not done.
    - The request to post the updated/accurate information at Bark Park to ensure that all of the park users are aware of this engagement exercise was ignored.
  - Even though the Parks Department was tasked by Richmond City Council **with “examining the safety concerns of users of the No. 3 Road Bark Park and report back, the survey did not have a single question about the safety concerns of users. Another significant fail.**
  - **Options for the public to consider were predetermined by the Parks Department prior to the engagement and did not include an option many citizens wanted to be considered: eliminating the cycling path from Bark Park.**
  - The options that were proposed appear to many as “bike centric” and did not consider that Bark Park is primarily an off-leash dog park. Some stakeholders noted that the options seemed to focus on ensuring that the bikers were looked after at the expense of all of the other park users. Of note, stakeholders commented that taxpayers pay to license their dogs, there are no license fees for bikers; most non-bike users are in the park for 30 – 60 minutes and most bikers are in the park for less than 5 minutes; there are limited number of places in Richmond that dogs can be off leash.
  - **None of the options that were proposed in the survey addressed the known safety issues including the significant safety issues on the narrow path that runs alongside Crown Packaging.**
    - Best practices would dictate that the only options that should be put forward for consideration would resolve the safety issues. None of the options proposed by the Parks Department resolve the known safety issues.

➤ The summary report is missing fundamental information.

- **The Parks Department did not provide any evidence that they had studied the safety issue at Bark Park. This is a major failure.**
  - There is no information in the summary report about the scope of the safety issue at Bark Park. If the scope of this issue is not fully understood, it makes it very difficult to fully address the safety issues. **This is a very significant flaw in this review.**
    - ✓ The report should have included detailed findings about the identified safety issues.
    - ✓ This should have been a major focus of this issue management strategy. It was not.

➤ The summary report minimizes the Park's Departments knowledge about the safety issues

- **The summary report states that there have not been any formal safety reports regarding cyclists, pedestrians, and/or dogs in the last 5 years. This is not true.**
  - The arbitrary test set by the Parks Department is that there were no formal safety incident reports filed with the Parks Services Customer Services System, Bylaws, or the Richmond RCMP. This does not negate the fact that there have been and continue to be major safety concerns.
  - Detailed information about the safety issues at Bark Park have been shared with the Parks leadership team and staff members.
    - ✓ There were 100s of contacts with the Parks Department about the safety issues during the dyke remediation project.
    - ✓ There have been 100s of contacts with the Parks Department about the safety issues during the redesign of the Bark Park, post dyke remediation.
      - The Park Department, contrary to the statement in the report, did not engage with Bark Park users during the redesign of the park (a major failure) and did not address the known safety issues in this redesign (another major fail).
    - ✓ Bark Park stakeholders have shared their safety concerns/incidents with Parks staff at the public engagement events, in the comments in the survey, and in other communications with City staff.

➤ The collection and analysis of the information was fundamentally flawed.

**This compromises the validity of the analysis.**

- The analysis of the information collected during the engagement project did not include information about the public engagement events (e.g. number of participants, verbal feedback, notes posted by citizens on the information boards, etc.), feedback provided directly to the Parks

Department about the safety concerns, or a detailed analysis of the large number of written comments provided by the survey participants.

▪ **Site User Values and Concerns**

**These statements are subjective, do not contain any values to substantiate them, and are not representative of the majority of park users.**

- “Many site users like the site the way it is now and want minimal change.”
  - This is not representative of the feedback. There is a strong desire to have the safety issues addressed.
- “Many people like to walk their dogs off-leash along the dike trail because it is a unique experience, allowing dogs to run freely and have access to the river.”
  - Few dog owners allow/or would want their dogs to have access to the river.
- “Many dog owners, on the other hand, have safety concerns about the free access to the river and would appreciate some control measures to limit access to it.”
  - The majority of dog owners have control of their dogs, and this is not an issue for the vast majority of dog owners.
- “There are concerns among dog-owners and pedestrians about the speed of cyclists and electric micro mobility devices through the area.”
  - There are **major safety concerns**. This statement minimizes these concerns. There are also **major concerns** about the aggressive interactions including threats to kill dogs and harm users. These concerns have been shared with the City of Richmond many times and should have been included in this report.
- “The cycling trail is a recreational and major regional commuter route used by people biking the dike trail system and connecting to/from the George Massey Tunnel shuttle for cyclists.”
  - This is not a user value or concern. And if it is a major regional commuter route, the entire route including the path that runs next to Crown Packaging site, should be addressed. It has not been.

## 5.0 Recommendation from the Parks Department

- The proposed recommendation does not address the known safety issues.
  - Does not include the path runs beside Crown Packaging site. This path is approximately 1.5 meters wide and is not a safe multi-use path for people, dogs, and cyclists.
  - Does not address the issue of cyclist compliance with the speed.
  - Does not address the issue of cyclist compliance with path use.
  - Does not address the safety impact of large cycling groups.
  
- The proposed recommendation does not provide a timely response to the known safety issues.
  - Does not provide a timely resolution to a known safety issue, as the proposal anticipates that construction is “expected to take place in summer/fall of 2024.

## 6.0 Solution that will immediately address the known safety issues

➤ Immediately reroute the cycle paths so that cyclists cannot access the off-leash dog park.

- The Parks Department has identified this as Option 6 – reroute the cyclists.
  - In terms of safety options, it “provides the greatest degree of separation of cyclists...”
  - It is the most cost effective.
  - It is the option that fully manages the known safety issues at Bark Park.

### Option 6 -Reroute the cyclists

Relative Site Impacts	Relative Cost	Safety Enhancement Options	Comments
*	\$ Note: should separated bikes lanes along the roadways be pursued, the cost and roadway modification would be significant.	Provides the greatest degree of separation of cyclists from dogs	<b>Also completely addresses the known safety issues.</b>  In terms of the relative cost, the comment regarding the need to provide separated bike lanes is a red herring. This is not a requirement. And the Finn Road route is currently used by many bikers. It is also the preferred route for many bikers because it is paved.
		Does not provide separation of pedestrians and rollers from dogs off leash.	<b>This is not an identified issue.</b> Also, a red herring.
		Results in minimal site impacts.	<b>This is a very positive attribute and supports an immediate resolution of a significant known safety issue.</b>
		Retains the capacity for people to walk along the dike trail with their dogs off-leash and on a looped trail.	<b>Another positive attribute.</b>  <b>It will also allow safe passage for all park users on the trail that runs alongside the Crown Packaging site. This trail is well used by citizens.</b>
		Results in great change to the existing sites uses by removing cycling all together.	The change is needed to address a significant and known safety issue. This is not a great change. <b>Bark Park, as the name suggests, is primarily an off-leash dog park.</b>



		Results in cyclists sharing lanes with vehicles due to limitations to widen the roadway and add bike lanes.	<p>Cyclists share the roadway on the majority of roads in Richmond. <b>It is not reasonable nor feasible to provide a designated bike lane on every road in Richmond. Cyclists currently use this roadway (which is not that busy and parts of the roadway have a 30KM speed requirement).</b></p> <p>This is another red herring.</p>
		Does not align with Metro Vancouver's Transport 2050 Regional Cycling Network plan which identifies a cycling connection through/ along the No. 3 Road Bark Park as part of the regional greenways network.	<p><b>The rerouting of the cycling path along Finn Road will support the connection for the regional greenways network. This requirement can be met.</b></p> <p>The Metro Vancouver Transport Regional Cycling Network plan would also not knowingly support a cycling connection that was not safe.</p>
		Requires approximately one kilometer of additional travel for cyclists.	<b>This is not an issue.</b>

➤ Safety is not negotiable.

- The safety issues at Bark Park have been known for years, the issues are escalating, and it is imperative that these issues be fully addressed immediately.



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

## 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

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

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

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.



Kevin Fraser  
Research Planner 2  
(604-233-3311)

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



# City of Richmond

## Report to Committee

**To:** Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee      **Date:** March 21, 2024

**From:** Keith Miller, Director, Recreation and Sport Services      **File:** 11-7143-01/2024-Vol 01

**Re:** **Aquatics Instructor and Lifeguard Subsidy Program Update**

### Staff Recommendations

1. That a subsidy program for aquatics instructors and lifeguards, as outlined in the report titled "Aquatics Instructor and Lifeguard Subsidy Program Update", dated March 21, 2024, from the Director, Recreation and Sport Services, be endorsed; and
2. That a one-time additional level request to continue the subsidy program for aquatics instructors and lifeguards be considered in the 2025 budget process.

Keith Miller  
 Director, Recreation and Sport Services  
 (604-247-4475)

REPORT CONCURRENCE		
<b>ROUTED TO:</b>	<b>CONCURRENCE</b>	<b>CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER</b>
Finance Department Community Social Development Human Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>SENIOR STAFF REPORT REVIEW</b>	<b>INITIALS:</b> 	<b>APPROVED BY CAO</b> 

## Staff Report

### Origin

At the Regular Council meeting held on October 11, 2022, Council endorsed the following resolutions:

*That a subsidy program for lifeguard training courses be developed on a trial basis as outlined in the staff report titled “Instructor/Lifeguard Recruitment Initiatives”; and*

*That \$33,750 be allocated from the Council Contingency account for the lifeguard subsidy program.*

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the impact of the trial and to seek Council’s approval for the continuation of the aquatics instructor and lifeguard subsidy program.

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.*

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

*6.4 Support vulnerable populations through collaborative and sustainable programs and services.*

This report supports the Recreation and Sport Strategy 2019–2024, Focus Area #6 Community Capacity Building:

*Collaborations, partnerships and volunteerism are strengthened to expand the reach and impact of recreation and sport in Richmond.*

*6. Develop and implement career awareness, preparation and development strategies to attract and educate new leaders.*

This report also supports the 2021–2031 Collaborative Action Plan to Reduce and Prevent Poverty in Richmond, Strategic Direction #1 Reduce and Prevent Poverty:

*1.4 Expand work experience, mentorship, and upskilling opportunities for residents at risk of or living in poverty*

### Background

Coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic, the City experienced a shortage of lifeguards and swimming instructors (lifeguards). This was largely a result of reduced training and certification courses being offered during that time. One of several initiatives implemented to increase access

to qualified lifeguard candidates was the introduction of a subsidy program for Richmond residents who face financial barriers to completing the training required to become a lifeguard.

Becoming a lifeguard involves extensive training and successful completion of several courses in lifesaving, lifeguarding, first aid and swimming instruction. The maximum time commitment to complete all courses required to become a lifeguard is currently 180 hours, at a total estimated cost of \$2,500. As the courses are progressive and taken in sequence, the cumulative training typically takes three to six months on average to complete.

### **Aquatics Instructor and Lifeguard Subsidy Program Trial**

The “Instructor/Lifeguard Subsidy Program” (the Program) trial was launched in May of 2023 to address the lifeguard shortage by enabling Richmond residents from low-income households to pursue a career as an aquatics instructor or lifeguard. The Program aligns with the criteria used by the City’s Recreation Fee Subsidy Program to assess financial need. Once approved, the Program provides each candidate with a 90 per cent subsidy for each course.

In addition to being a Richmond resident, applicants must meet the following criteria to be eligible for the Program:

- Financial eligibility requirements that align with the Recreation Fee Subsidy Program;
- Successfully completes an in-person swim assessment, including:
  - Evaluation of swimming strokes and fitness, and;
  - Ability to swim 400 metres continuously using recognizable swimming strokes;
- Demonstrates motivation and commitment to completing all training courses required to become an aquatics instructor or lifeguard; and
- Demonstrates interest in a career or position in aquatics.

In addition to the financial screening and skills assessment, each applicant is interviewed to determine their suitability and commitment to completing the required courses. Once approved, staff monitor the candidates throughout their participation, and all graduates are given a job interview and considered for a position in aquatics with the City of Richmond.

The Program is being promoted on the City’s website, to Recreation Fee Subsidy Program participants, at the Community Services Pop Ups, and through community organizations, including Richmond School District No. 38.

### *Aquatics Instructor and Lifeguard Subsidy Program Trial Results*

A program of this nature has a limited target audience and, as already noted, takes time, extensive effort and commitment to complete. Since its launch last May, the Program trial has yielded favourable results, as listed in Table 1 on the following page.

**Table 1: Subsidy Program Trial Results – May 2023 to March 2024**

Subsidy Program Trial Results	
Total No. of Applicants	20
No. of Applicants Approved	16
No. of Applicants Under Review	0
No. of Candidates in Program	13
No. of Candidates Completed Program	3
No. of Candidates Hired	2*
Total Spent to Date	\$11,600
Total Projected Cost (to December 31, 2024)	\$14,000
Total Estimated Cost for Current Candidates	\$25,600

\*One additional candidate is currently going through the hiring process.

The results indicate that there is interest in the Program and, while preliminary, it is anticipated that most, if not all, candidates completing the Program will be offered employment with the City.

**Proposed Continuation of the Aquatics Instructor and Lifeguard Subsidy Program**

Due to the success of the trial and continued interest in the Program, it is recommended that the City continue this initiative through 2025, in accordance with the following eligibility criteria:

- Applicants must meet financial eligibility requirements that align with the Recreation Fee Subsidy Program;
- Applicants must successfully complete an in-person swim assessment, including:
  - Evaluation of swimming strokes and fitness; and
  - Ability to swim 400 metres continuously using recognizable swimming strokes;
- Applicants must demonstrate motivation and commitment to completing all training courses required to become an aquatics instructor or lifeguard; and
- Applicants must demonstrate interest in a career or position in aquatics with the City of Richmond.

Upon approval and acceptance into the Program, the following conditions will apply:

- Candidates will be provided a 90 per cent subsidy on courses required for employment as an aquatics instructor and lifeguard with the City; and
- Candidates must complete the required training within 18 months of approval.

Furthermore, staff recommend a limit of 20 candidates per year, as this is a number we anticipate being able to provide employment for. If approved, staff will continue to review and evaluate the impacts of the Program over the next 18 months, including an assessment of future staffing needs in Aquatics, as well as emerging staffing needs in other areas of the City.

While there is no longer a critical shortage of trained lifeguards in British Columbia, the City of Richmond continues to be in need of additional aquatics instructors and lifeguards. To that end, there is proven interest in the Program and continued investment in training for those that would not otherwise be able to afford it, thus increasing the City’s access to committed and trained aquatics professionals. The Program aligns with several Council approved strategies, including

the Recreation and Sport Strategy (2019–2024), and the 2021–2031 Collaborative Action Plan to Reduce and Prevent Poverty in Richmond.

Lifeguarding is an exciting job that promotes teamwork, develops leadership and communication skills, and encourages fitness and well being. It is a position that requires skill, commitment and extensive training, and comes with flexible employment. Lifeguarding can be considered as a career option, or as excellent training for careers in a variety of fields including local government, education, firefighting, or health care.

### **Financial Impact**

There are enough funds remaining from the previously approved allocation from the Council Contingency account for the Program through 2024.

Operational costs for the Program are projected to be \$45,000 in 2025. Upon Council endorsement to continue the subsidy program, a one-time additional level of \$45,000 to support the Program costs beyond 2024 will be submitted for consideration with the 2025 budget process.

### **Conclusion**

A subsidy program for aquatics instructors and lifeguards has proven to be of interest to residents of Richmond. An ongoing commitment to the Program will provide significant financial support for residents from low income households to attain the training required to achieve meaningful employment as a lifeguard. Furthermore, the Program will support the recruitment of aquatics instructors and lifeguards by providing the City with a greater number of committed and trained professionals to support the delivery of quality aquatic services across the City.



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