



Corporate Report

2004

NO: R280

COUNCIL DATE: November 15,

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: Mayor & Council DATE: November 8,
2004

FROM: General Manager,
Planning and Development FILE: 6140-20
(South Surrey)

SUBJECT: South Surrey Athletic Park - Proposed Track
and Field Facility

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning and Development Department recommends that Council receive this report as information.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to provide information to Council regarding the planning and public consultation process, related to the proposed track and field facility on the South Surrey Athletic Park and the timeline to completion of the project.

BACKGROUND

In 1997, a public consultation program was undertaken as part of the process of preparing a Master Plan for the South Surrey Athletic Park (the "Park"). The completed Master Plan included a proposed running track to be located at the south end of the Park, south of 20 Avenue around the existing football field.

In the Fall of 1999, working with representatives of the running track group, it became apparent to staff that construction of a running track at the location originally proposed in the Master Plan would be costly, would require removal of all of the buffer trees on the south edge of the Park and would require a large retaining wall. As a result, staff proceeded to meet with user groups of the Park to further refine the long term vision for the Park, with one of the intentions being to determine the best location for the track and field facility.

It is important to note that one of the objectives on the work of revisiting the Master Plan was that existing tree buffers around the perimeter of the Park would be preserved. These existing tree buffers are 45 metres to 50 metres wide.

During the summer of 2000, several meetings were held between City staff and user groups in the process of preparing a revised Master Plan that included a track facility at a new location. The Parks Recreation and Culture Commission approved the revised Master Plan later in 2000.

The Master Plan includes a multi-purpose centre near the youth park, expanded parking facilities, a synthetic turf sports field and a track and field facility. The proposed multi purpose facility is in the planning stages and will be in the construction phase in 2005. A copy of the Master Plan for the Park is attached as Appendix I.

In late July 2004, Council approved funding for the construction of a running track in the Park, along with lighting for the baseball fields.

Staff has proceeded with activities toward implementing these projects.

DISCUSSION

The implementation of the running track project is being undertaken in three phases as follows:

1. **Phase 1 – Community and Stakeholder Input:**
 - Consultation and reporting;
2. **Phase 2 – Detailed Design:**
 - Prepare construction drawings and tender package; and
3. **Phase 3 – Construction:**
 - Contractor Pre-Qualification, Tendering and Contract Administration.

Phase 1 – Community and Stakeholder Input

Staff, with assistance from consultants, prepared preliminary site plans and an analysis of the proposed running track. With this information in hand, staff followed standard procedures in advertising and holding a public open house to gather public input, related to the proposed running track. Staff has also met with stakeholder groups to discuss the project.

The open house was held on September 14, 2004, in the cafeteria of Semiahmoo Secondary School, with approximately 50 individuals attending. Information displayed at the open house included a site plan illustrating the location of the proposed track and field facility at the southwest corner of the Park, in accordance with the approved Master Plan for the Park. A summary of input received at the open house and the graphics displayed at the open house are attached as Appendix II.

There was some opposition from neighbouring residents to the locating of the track at the southwest corner of the Park. At the same time, other residents and user groups supported the track being constructed at the southwest corner of the Park. In addition, the public and stakeholder groups identified the need for amenities/facilities to support the proposed track, such as washrooms.

Following the open house, on October 27, 2004, the Parks and Community Services Committee (the "Committee") heard three delegations, regarding the proposed running track. The following is a synopsis of the delegations:

1. ***Delegation of Residents of Neighbouring developments, opposed to the location of the track.***

Residents from the residential developments to the south and west of the Park (south of 20 Avenue) advised the Committee that they supported the construction of a running track, but not at the southwest corner of the Park. The following concerns were identified:

- On site parking is insufficient;
- There will be increased traffic in the neighbourhoods to the west and south of the Park, where on street parking problems already exist;
- Sightlines and safety for local track users is a potential problem;
- There will be the potential for increased youth loitering and illegal activity in the Park and in the adjacent neighbourhoods (there are existing problems in the adjacent neighbourhood);
- No washrooms in the immediate vicinity of the proposed track; and
- Increased lighting will be disruptive to the neighbourhood.

These concerns are being addressed in the design of the track as follows:

- On-site parking - There is available space on the Park site, south of 20 Avenue, to construct approximately 80 additional parking stalls to the west of the existing parking lot. This construction would require the removal of some trees along 20 Avenue. However, these trees will need to be removed for safety reasons, in any case, since they suffer from root rot, as documented in a recently completed arborist report. Staff will monitor parking demand after the new track facility opens and forward recommendations to Council, as necessary;

- Sightlines and safety - Fencing will be provided along the south and west boundaries of the proposed track, on the inside of the tree buffers. This will enhance security for patrons of the track;
- Washrooms – With respect to washroom concerns, every effort will be made to include the construction of washroom facilities concurrently with the track and field project; and
- Lighting - Light fixtures will be hooded to direct light toward the track and away from surrounding residential areas. The tree buffers between the track and the adjacent residential areas, to the south and west of the track, will be maintained.

2. ***Peninsula Athletics and Semiahmoo Soccer delegation, supporting the project.***

This delegation highlighted the fact that 3,750 families are currently using the Park, not including those that would use the track. They noted the significant need for the project and strongly supported the project at the proposed location.

- The group noted that a public process was undertaken that started as far back as 1995, which led to a decision to locate the proposed track at the southwest corner of the Park;
- There are only about six day-time track meets per year, including one weekend meet, with potential for Provincial/National meets that would enhance Surrey's image;
- User groups have been collecting funds and would investigate participating financially in the construction of washrooms for the track facility;
- The proposed location offers very good natural viewing areas, due to the slope on each of the east and north side of the proposed track;
- The proposed location provides for the most effective use of the park and its amenities; and
- There are some concerns with safety, but these can be addressed with adequate planning and design.

3. ***Bayside Rugby Association delegation, supporting the project.***

The Bayside Rugby Association representative advised that the rugby fields at the Park are among the best in Canada. The Rugby Association was involved in the entire planning process, which led to a decision to locate the track in the southwest corner of the Park (starting in 1995). The Rugby Association is in full support of the track location, as proposed, as it will allow the current fields within the Park to be maintained and will make use of an area in the Park that is currently somewhat under-utilized. They also noted that locating the track and field facility, as proposed, would improve the Park and the level of safety experienced in the Park, due the increased level of lighting.

Letter and Petition from Residents

A letter, dated October 31, 2004 and a letter and petition, dated November 4, 2004, were submitted to the City from the residents of the Glens neighbourhood, the neighbourhood to the south and west of the Park. A copy of each of the letters and the petition are attached as Appendix III. Also, attached as Appendix IV is a map that illustrates the addresses of those who signed the petition. This is the same neighbourhood, whose representatives appeared as a delegation before the Parks and Community Services Committee on October 27, 2004.

The petition proposes that the track be located to the north of 20 Avenue and to the south of the Rotary Field House, east of the entrance to the Park, off 20 Avenue. This area of the Park currently accommodates two soccer pitches and a parking lot with approximately 120 parking stalls. It is estimated that the relocation of the parking lot would cost in the order of \$250,000 and the relocation of the soccer pitch would cost a net of \$300,000. These costs would be over and above the \$2.2 million cost of constructing the track and field facility. The parking lot is an important part of the Park development and, as such, would need to be replaced. Such additional costs neither offer additional added value nor are within the scope of the funding available for implementing the subject track facility.

Drainage Concern

An owner of a residential property to the west of the Park has expressed a concern that drainage from the Park area will cause flooding on their property or neighbouring residential properties. The consultants retained by the City to design the proposed track and field facility, will be specifically instructed to address drainage as part of the design process. This is a standard part of the design process for City park facility projects.

Security Concern

A chain link fence will be constructed along the south and west limits of the proposed track and field facility on the track side of the tree buffer areas that separate the Park from the adjacent residential areas.

Washroom Facilities

With respect to washroom concerns, every effort will be made to include the construction of washroom facilities concurrently with the track and field project.

CONCLUSION

On the basis that the concerns that have been raised by the residents that live in the neighbourhoods adjacent to the Park can be addressed, through careful planning and design of the project and since locating the track and field facility in the southwest corner of the Park provides the following advantages:

- There is no net loss of premium grass sports fields in the Park;
- The track location is sheltered from dominant winds, which is advantageous for track events; and
- The 40 metre to 50 metre wide tree buffers will be maintained between the Park and the adjacent residential communities to the south and west;

Staff will be proceeding to design and construction of the running track and field project at the southwest corner of the Park, in accordance with the Master Plan for the Park. The project will include fencing along the south and west sides of the track facility and washrooms. The design will also take into consideration the provision of storm water management features. Staff will monitor the parking demand on the site after the opening of the new facility and provide recommendations to Council, as necessary. It is expected that the construction of the track and field facility will be completed by late summer, 2005.

Murray Dinwoodie
General Manager
Planning and Development

JLL:dlg:saw

Attachments:

- Appendix I South Surrey Athletic Park Master Plan
- Appendix II Open House Summary and Display Graphics
- Appendix III Letters and Petition from the Glens Neighbourhood
- Appendix IV Map Showing Location of Addresses of Signatures on Petition

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Appendix I



Appendix II





Appendix III























Appendix IV



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