



The Corporation of the City of Cornwall
Regular Meeting of Council
Report

Department: Planning, Development and Recreation
Division: Parks and Recreation
Report Number: 2023-32-Planning, Development and Recreation
Prepared By: James Fawthrop, General Manager, Planning, Development and Recreation
Meeting Date: April 24, 2023
Subject: Cornwall Youth Space

Purpose

To provide Council with information on a proposal to develop a “Youth Space” at 504 Fourth St. E. (former site of the Bob Turner Memorial Centre)

Recommendation

That Council approve the development of a teen focused Youth Space(s) at Lamoureux Park or Mattice Park or combination of both parks.

Financial Implications

There are no immediate financial implications as the Cornwall Police Service is pursuing \$600,000 of funding from the Building Safer Communities Fund for the development of a Youth Space and have not requested municipal funds to support the project. However, in the longer term the City will be responsible for maintaining the proposed Youth Space, which will result in additional costs in the municipality’s future operating budgets.

Strategic Priority Implications

The development of a Youth Space in a City park aligns with Council’s 2019-2022 Strategic Priority Mission Statement, *“To provide services that enable a financially and environmentally sustainable community which will care and provide for the needs and values of its residents.”* As well as the Vision

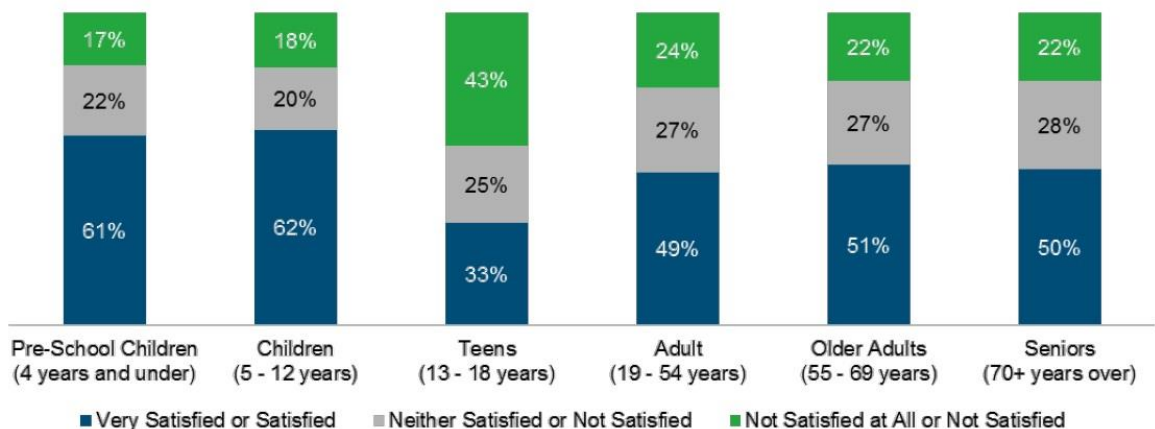
Statement, “The City of Cornwall is recognized as a welcoming and healthy community with strong municipal government providing effective services and infrastructure.” This initiative also aligns with Pillar 1, “Developing waterfront through ownership, partnerships for business, recreational opportunities, Item 2 - Sports and recreation opportunities,” of the 2019-2022 Council Strategic Priorities.

Background / Discussion

At the Meeting of Council on March 27, 2023 delegates from Cornwall Police Services (CPS) (Cst. Casey McGregor and Carmen Cousineau) and the Optimist Club (Terry Muir) presented a proposal to develop a “Youth Space” in Cornwall with the goal of engaging local teenage youth to help address the rising trend in the number of “youth related occurrences” (negative interactions requiring CPS intervention) observed by CPS. The delegation requested permission to use the City owned property at 504 Fourth St. E. as the site for the proposed Youth Space. The presentation proposed the following potential amenities for the Youth Space: basketball court, ball hockey court, gazebo, electricity and Wi-Fi, skateboard park, graffiti wall, and neutral meeting space.

Through public consultation the City’s Recreation Master Plan identified public satisfaction levels amongst teens (aged 13-18) as lower than other demographic age groups, but also qualified those findings as not uncommon amongst municipalities and identifies, “teens as a challenging age group for most recreation departments to serve”. The chart below (Figure 10) identifies the community’s satisfaction levels with Cornwall’s parks and recreation opportunities amongst various age demographics communicated by residents as part of the updated Recreation Master Plan’s community engagement survey:

Figure 10: Satisfaction with Parks and Recreation Opportunities by Age Group



The Recreation Master Plan supports the development of more teen focused recreation amenities within the City's park system. Several of the proposed park amenities (skateboard park, multi-use court, outdoor public art) are listed as recommendations within the Master Plan and the skateboard park is identified in the Recreation Department's 10-Year Capital Forecast.

However, the proposed concept of developing a park to only serve a specific demographic of the community is not consistent with the municipality's goal of inclusion and contradicts the opening statement of the Recreation Master Plan, "Inclusive and affordable recreation and parks opportunities are essential to the health and wellness of Cornwall's residents and our broader community."

Current Condition of the Property

The property at 504 Fourth St. E. is currently the home of Joe St. Denis Field and was the site of the former Bob Turner Memorial Centre (BTMC). The property also has a temporary public washroom and two temporary change rooms located on the west side of Joe St. Denis Field near Marlborough St., which are opened only during football program activities. After the demolition of the BTMC, this temporary public washroom and two change rooms were established in 2013 by repurposing used portable classroom structures. The washroom and change room facilities were intended to be temporary alternatives until such time that Joe St. Denis Field is either relocated or redeveloped.

The concrete slab from the former BTMC currently remains onsite as well as the former asphalt parking lot and asphalt tennis court surface. The project proposes to locate the Youth Space on the combined footprint of the former BTMC, parking lot and tennis court.

Administration has reviewed the site and assessed the condition of the existing surfaces (concrete slab, asphalt parking lot and tennis court surface). The condition of the concrete slab was determined to be very poor and not suitable to be retained as part of the proposed redevelopment project. The concrete slab is crumbling and has multiple



exposed refrigeration pipes. The existing asphalt parking lot and tennis court surfaces were determined to be in poor condition as well. Due to the condition of these surfaces, Administration recommends that any redevelopment plans for this property include the removal and/or replacement of these concrete/asphalt surfaces, as they are not suitable for reuse. The estimated cost to remove the existing concrete slab and asphalt surfaces is approximately \$250,000.



Any plans to redevelop the identified area should also consider the potential presence of contaminated soil beneath the concrete slab where the former BTMC ice rink and ice plant were located. The former BTMC ice refrigeration system used hazardous materials in the ice plant room as part of the refrigeration process and a network of piping throughout the ice rink floor which conveyed a brine solution to distribute the cold temperatures. Any leaks or spills of these substances over the course of the BTMC operation could have resulted in contamination of the soil beneath the existing concrete slab surface. The potential cost to remove and dispose of any contaminated soil encountered could be substantial. If 504 Fourth St. E. is to be considered as a potential location for the proposed Youth Space, Administration recommends that an environmental



investigation be completed prior to incurring any significant project related expenses to confirm the presence or absence of contaminated soils, and if present estimate the cost of remediation.

There is also existing fencing that separates the property from the adjacent neighbouring properties. This fence is in poor condition and would require replacement as part of the proposed redevelopment project to maintain proper separation between a developed Youth Space and the private properties.

Due to the estimated \$250,000 cost to remove the existing deficient concrete and asphalt surfaces, the cost to replace the existing fencing, and the risk of incurring significant additional costs for environmental remediation, Administration is concerned that a significant portion of the funding would be spent on site preparation, limiting the funds available for the installation of teen focused amenities.

Strategic Plans for the Subject Property

Recreation Master Plan (2009 and 2021 Update)

Prior to the closure and demolition of the Bob Turner Memorial Centre, the 2009 Recreation Master Plan, originally identified the potential relocation of the football field as an option for future consideration. The 2009 Plan states that the local football club requested improvements to the field and clubhouse and identified the poor condition of the field as being due to extensive use. The City has since constructed temporary change rooms and washroom facilities on site using three portable classroom structures.

Today, the condition of the field remains an ongoing challenge. In order to improve field conditions, field use is limited to only the local minor football association programming and a charity high school football game in the fall. The overhead field lighting is in poor condition, does not provide adequate light levels and requires replacement. As well, the scoreboard is approaching its end of life and will require replacement in the near future. Staff have been hesitant to proceed with capital infrastructure investments at the field, such as new overhead lighting and a new scoreboard due to the uncertainty surrounding the future use of the property.

The relocation of Joe St. Denis Field is also identified in the recently adopted Recreation Master Plan Update (RMP, April 2021) as recommendation #38:

Install a multi-use artificial turf field with lights at the Benson Centre. The field should be thoughtfully located to benefit from the shared parking and



support amenities within the recreation centre. This project should coincide with the removal of the football field from Joe St. Denis Park, for which future use options should be evaluated further.

Some local sports organizations are supportive of an artificial turf field as this would extend their playing seasons, allow for play during all weather conditions, and create new opportunities (e.g., soccer, youth flag football league). However, the Cornwall Minor Football Club (CMFC) has stated that they would prefer to maintain the current field location as well as its natural turf condition and maintain the current restrictions on its use. The CMFC is aware of the field's deficiencies and have been in ongoing discussions with City Administration for a number of years seeking to improve field turf conditions and has identified the need for new overhead field lighting and a new scoreboard. Each season the CMFA and its members volunteer considerable amounts of time to improve the field conditions by applying topsoil over dressing, seeding, and watering.

Recent trends for municipal football fields in the public recreation sector favour artificial turf over natural grass turf, as artificial turf fields can accommodate at least three times as much play as typical grass fields.

There is an opportunity to consolidate some recreation amenities at the Benson Centre, which would improve operations and convenience, and free-up existing sites for other purposes. The lands immediately north of the Benson Centre were originally intended to support two grass soccer fields. Preliminary investigations suggest that this area has sufficient space to accommodate one large multi-use field that can be used for a variety of sports, which should be designed to maximum dimensions and have football/rugby uprights to allow the greatest flexibility. In addition, the City has recently acquired lands on the west side of the Benson Centre for future expansion of recreation amenities onsite.

The updated RMP (April 2021) prioritizes its recommendations and specifies an approximate timing for each recommendation. The specified order of priority and timing of the recommended actions contained within the updated RMP are organized into the following categories:

- High Priority: Immediate attention is strongly suggested during the timeframe recommended. (2021 to 2023)
- Medium Priority: Attention is required when high priority actions have been initiated or completed, or when suitable partners have been identified for funding. (2024 to 2026)
- Lower Priority: Attention is required when high and medium priority actions have been initiated/completed. (2027 and beyond)

Recommendation #38 within the updated RMP, identified the relocation of Joe St. Denis Field to the Benson Centre site as “medium priority”.

Also, recommendation #33 of the updated RMP recommends the development of a neighbourhood park at the subject site after the future relocation of Joe St. Denis Field is completed. The RMP identified the City’s historic “square mile” area as being deficient for neighbourhood park access, as many residents in this area do not have access to a neighbourhood park within 800m of their home.

Housing Revitalization Plan (2020)

The Council approved Housing Revitalization Plan identified 504 Fourth St. E. as a potential site for future affordable housing.

As part of the affordable housing long-term development plan, a centrally located area within the site will include the development of a new neighbourhood park, which would align with the recommendations of the RMP and would serve the residents of the new housing development as well as existing residents in the surrounding area.

When planning a housing community development, other affordable construction factors should also be taken into consideration, such as:

- Densification of the exiting property (including height limitations)
- Utility constraints
- Alignment with Official Site Plan requirements

To consider utilizing additional land for more park space, above what is recommended in the RMP, would:

- Reduce the # of units that could be developed on the subject property (which does not align with the Housing Revitalization Plan).
- Reduces the opportunity to potentially partner with other non-profit/social service resources (to provide onsite resources to tenants).
- Create additional costs related to site plan design and potential complications and development delays, to ensure that the site is fully reviewed for multi-use development (beyond just community housing).

Suitability of 504 Fourth St. E. for the proposed Youth Space

When evaluating the suitability of any proposed location for the Youth Space, factors such as public washroom access, parking availability, impacts on nearby residents (light, noise, traffic, etc) and park users must be considered.

As mentioned earlier in the report, there is a temporary public washroom on the property, however it's located on the opposite side of Joe St. Denis Field near Marlborough St., over 100m from the proposed Youth Space location. This washroom is currently only accessible during football programming activities. Activity in the park is generally limited to football programming. With no staff presence onsite, this public washroom is vulnerable to vandalism, thus requiring access to be limited to times when there is a public presence in the park. Administration is concerned that even if the washroom was accessible at times beyond football programming, its location is too far away for some of the users of the Youth Space. With the absence of any recreation staff or figure of authority onsite, it's anticipated that some youth will choose to urinate outside along the east fencing, which will generate complaints from neighbours.

The project proponents identified "good visibility" as an important factor when determining site suitability for a proposed Youth Space development. It should be noted that the area of 504 Fourth St. E. being proposed for the Youth Space currently has good visibility from Marlborough St. and Fourth St. E. property frontages due to the presence of Joe St. Denis Field. However, in the future if the field is relocated as per the Recreation Master Plan recommendation, and the existing field area is redeveloped for social housing as per the Housing Revitalization Plan recommendation, then the proposed Youth Space area will no longer be visible from Marlborough St. and will also have significantly reduced visibility along Fourth St. E.

Another factor to be considered is the potential impacts to the immediate neighbours as well as the surrounding neighbourhood. The proposed Youth Space at 504 Fourth St. E. would be a considerable change to the current and past uses of the property, creating the potential for new impacts on the neighbours. Since the BTMC demolition in 2013, the subject area of the property has remained vacant. Prior to 2013 the space was occupied by the BTMC, a parking lot and tennis court. Introducing a Youth Space in this area, will introduce recreation activities immediately adjacent to six residential properties and one commercial property. Potential impacts of the Youth Space on the neighbours could include noise, lighting, traffic, and parking.

The presentation stated that public consultation had been undertaken with stakeholders, a youth focus group, with individuals with lived experiences, and a community survey conducted. Following the presentation, Administration was contacted by one of the immediate neighbours who expressed concern with the proposal specific to fencing, lighting, traffic and site access. The neighbour confirmed that he had not yet been contacted by anyone regarding the proposal.

He advised that he did not necessarily object to the project but would like an opportunity to express his concerns and understand how they could be mitigated/addressed.

During previous meetings with Administration and during the presentation to Council, the proponents also mentioned consultations with the Cornwall Minor Football Club (CMFC), the current primary user of Joe St. Denis Field. The proponents advised that the Club was supportive of the project at the proposed location. However, in recent discussions with Administration, the President of the CMFC confirmed that he had not been contacted regarding the proposal. It appears that past discussions between the proponents and the Club may not have taken place with persons with the proper authority to speak on behalf of the Club. The President advised that he does not have any specific objections to the proposed project at this time but would welcome future discussions with the proponents to better understand the project and identify any potential impacts on the Club's activities.

Based on the comments from the neighbour and the President of the CMFC, Administration recommends that should the 504 Fourth St. E. continue to be considered as a location for the proposed Youth Space, more formal consultation take place with neighbours as well as the CMFC to identify and mitigate any potential impacts.

Previous Meetings with Proponents

The project proponents met with representatives of Administration on two occasions prior to the presentation to Council to discuss the proposal. During those meetings Administration expressed the following concerns with the proposed 504 Fourth St. E. location:

- Conflicts with strategically planned future uses of property for social housing and a neighbourhood park,
- Condition of existing concrete and asphalt surfaces not suitable for reuse,
- Poor access to public washrooms,
- Potential impacts to surrounding neighbours (noise, traffic, parking, lighting).

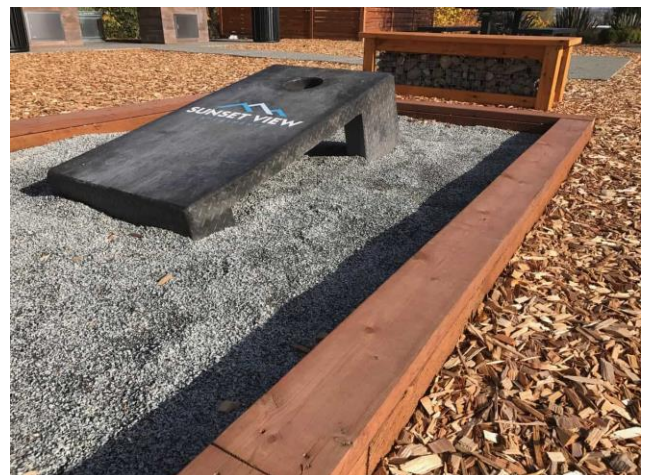
As a result of the above-mentioned concerns, Administration suggested that the proponents consider alternate locations for the proposed Youth Space and consider aligning their plans with recreation initiatives currently underway.

Mattice Park

One of the alternate locations proposed for the group's consideration was Mattice Park. Mattice Park currently offers residents recreation services that include an outdoor public pool complete with accessible washroom/changeroom and wading pool, a playground structure, two tennis courts and a basketball court. Mattice Park is located within the area that CPS identified in their presentation as being frequented by their targeted "at risk" teen demographic.

The 2023 Municipal Budget included a \$200,000 capital project to reconstruct the existing basketball court at Mattice Park. During budget deliberations, the addition of overhead lighting for the new basketball court for an estimated cost of \$100,000 was given consideration but ultimately not approved. Since a basketball court is listed as one of the amenities desired by the teenage demographic, Administration suggests that a portion of the project funding be used to add lighting to the new basketball court as well as create an outdoor shaded seating area, with power outlets and public wifi.

Also, within the past year, the former Croquet and Culture Club building has been removed from the park, creating available space in this area to potentially support some of the identified teen focused recreation amenities (graffiti wall, community garden, outdoor chess/games tables, etc.).



The sketch below identifies the area of Mattice Park that Administration is proposing as an alternative location for the proposed Youth Space.



Lamoureux Park

Another alternative location that was suggested by Administration is between the splashpad washroom and the Rotary Club Outdoor Gym in Lamoureux Park. This area of the park has access to parking and public washrooms, as well as a playground structure, splashpad, outdoor gym, water bottle refill station, and a contractor operated canteen. Lamoureux Park is also centrally located in the community and was identified by CPS as a popular “hang out” location for the targeted “at risk” teen demographic until some were issued notices of trespass due to poor behaviour at the bandshell.



The Recreation Department and Parks and Landscape staff recently installed two graffiti walls in this area of the park at the request of the Cornwall Art Hive. This past summer, the Cornwall Art Hive successfully offered free art programs in this area of Lamoureux Park. Administration recommends that should this area be considered for a Youth Space, that the proponents look to establish a partnership with the Cornwall Art Hive to expand their art activities to better serve the teen demographic.

Administration has recently been advised by a staff member of St. Matthew's Secondary School that they regularly take students to the Rotary Club Outdoor Gym as part of their physical education program, and that many students expressed a desire to further develop their physical fitness activities.

Administration suggests that fitness program offerings at the Rotary Club Outdoor Gym be considered as part of the Youth Space project, providing youth with free instruction on how to use the fitness equipment and promote circuit training programs of increasing levels of difficulty.

Administration suggests that a Youth Space in this area of the park could include an outdoor shaded seating area, and electricity to charge personal devices, offer free wifi, bicycle repair station, site furnishings, expand public art activities (additional graffiti walls, new public art installations) and outdoor games tables (chess, table tennis, foosball).



The sketch below identifies the area of Lamoureux Park that Administration is proposing as an alternative location for some of the proposed Youth Space amenities.



Conclusion

Considering that the funding for the development of a Youth Space is limited to \$600,000, Administration recommends that the proposed Youth Space be located in either Lamoureux Park or Mattice Park or combination of both, and align it's project with existing recreation initiatives in order to maximize the benefit for the targeted group of "at risk" teens.

Accessibility Impact

Administration recommends that should the development of a Youth Space proceed, that the Municipal Accessibility Committee be consulted throughout the design and planning phase of the project to ensure that the project aligns with the municipality's accessibility mandate.

Document Title:	Cornwall Youth Space - 2023-32-Planning, Development and Recreation.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Apr 19, 2023

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

James Fawthrop - Apr 19, 2023 - 8:58 AM

Tracey Bailey - Apr 19, 2023 - 9:26 AM

Mark A. Boileau - Apr 19, 2023 - 3:20 PM