

Emergency & Community Services Committee  
 Hamilton City Council  
 71 Main Street West  
 Hamilton, Ontario.  
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August 8, 2022

Re. Staff Report - Item 8.1 Recreation Master Plan

The Golden Horseshoe Track & Field Council advocates on behalf of the sport of Athletics and is comprised of over a dozen member organizations within the City of Hamilton and several adjacent regions and was founded by Canada's longest established track & field organization, the Hamilton Olympic Club (Est. 1926).

In response to the staff presentation of Item 8.1 on today's agenda (Recreation Master Plan) please consider the following points being raised on behalf of Hamilton's Athletics community. The points being raised are based on growing trends in the sport of Athletics both locally and across the province of Ontario and is not adequately reflected within the latest consultant's report.

Over the past three years we have seen an unprecedented level of interest in outdoor physical activity opportunities and despite the impacts of COVID 19 pandemic, our program groups have been at full capacity and we've hosted a record number of competitions in addition to launching three new community programs in para-athletics, yoga and walking club. This past season, we have seen two new club programs being launched locally and the Ray Lewis Track & Field Centre being recognized as the only public facility of its kind within the region that has the capacity of hosting a major championship event.

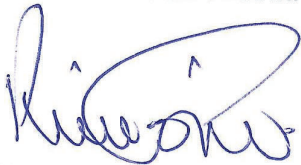
As we look to expand and provide further community benefits, there is a growing need for additional, barrier-free, access to public facility space that would support our strategic vision and address the needs of Hamilton's underserved communities.

The most recent City of Hamilton Recreation Master Plan is very concerning and seems to contradict the increasing needs of Hamilton's Athletics community as shown in previous Recreation Studies listed in the attached summary. As clearly stated in the latest Monteith Brown report, ***"running or walking on Athletics Tracks is the 4<sup>th</sup> most popular outdoor sports activities behind swimming, playing at playgrounds and spray pads"*** which would seem to reflect a strong community need for additional outdoor track facilities.

There seems to be an inaccurate assessment that other private assets under the control of local school boards and McMaster University are available to adequately support community needs however, this alternative is incorrect and posses several barriers involving hours of availability, cost for access, lack of program equipment and proximity in relation to areas of greatest community need.

The staff recommendation that ***“neighbourhood and community-level tracks in deteriorating condition should be evaluated and considered for removal if they become unsafe”*** would have a significant negative impact on our ability to expand our programs and services and in particular address the needs of underserved populations within our community.

Request is made for consideration of the recommendations listed on page three involving the revision of staff recommendation #54 as detailed in the Recreation Master Plan.



Kevin Gonci  
Chairman  
Golden Horseshoe Track & Field Council

#### Attachments

1. List or Recommendations.
2. Summary of Recreation Studies – Athletics.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the strategic vision of Hamilton's Athletics community and growing need to create barrier-free access to public outdoor facility space that would greatly benefit Hamilton's underserved populations, the following recommendations are made:

1. That members of Emergency & Community Services Committee consider the revision of recommendation #54 being made within the City of Hamilton Recreation Master Plan to include the following:
  - a. That further consultation between Hamilton's Athletics community and City Staff be conducted to more accurately identify the strategic need of retaining some of the track assets mentioned within the consultant's report believed to include (1) Sackville Hill Park, (2) HAAA Grounds, (3) Bobby Kerr Park, and (4) JC Beemer Park.
  - b. That the operational and maintenance requirements to maintain these facilities in a safe state, be maintained until a comprehensive assessment can be conducted to assess the feasibility of retaining these assets in the city inventory.
  - c. That an Athletics-based feasibility study be completed to assess the value and need of retaining these assets within the city inventory and that any associated costs associated with completing this study be assumed by Hamilton's Athletics community.
  - d. That the proposed feasibility study considers the costs and benefits of installing an all-season, surface at two current sites (1) Sackville Hill Park and (2) HAAA Grounds in order to address current community needs.



## **City of Hamilton Recreation Studies – Athletics**

### **2008 City of Hamilton Use, Renovation and Replacement Study of Hamilton Recreation and Public-Use Facilities**

- Identifies that the largest group demographically in Canada is the adult “baby boomer” population (currently 40 to 59 years of age) who will reach retirement age over the next 5 to 20 years.
- Makes reference to the Canadian Community Health Survey, 2000/2001, the most popular physical activities for adults involve (1) walking for exercise (65%) and (2) jogging/running (11%).

### **2011 City of Hamilton Outdoor Recreation Facilities & Sports Field Provision Plan**

- Page 188 – “Indoor running/walking tracks are the most popular due to their ability to accommodate year-round access” .... “Should community and competitive demands warrant, the city may consider developing an indoor track in a future indoor recreation facility”.

### **2016 City of Hamilton Indoor Recreation Facilities Update**

- Reports that there were “multiple submissions” expressing interest for an indoor running track in addition to a recently completed Feasibility Study commissioned by Sport Hamilton which establishes a strong community need/benefit for an indoor track facility.
- 32% of survey respondent groups reported that they regularly use indoor recreation facilities outside of the City of Hamilton due to a lack of availability, locally.
- 44% of survey respondents indicated that they would have a need for new indoor recreation facilities within Hamilton in the next 5-10 years and this need includes an indoor track & field facility.

### **2022 City of Hamilton Recreation Master Plan**

- Running or walking on Athletics Tracks is the 4<sup>th</sup> most popular outdoor sports activities behind swimming, playing at playgrounds and spray pads.
- There are five recognized running tracks within Hamilton’s parks system, including the competition-level track and field facility at Mohawk Sports Park. The remaining tracks are primarily utilized for casual community use, such as walking and running.
- several area schools provide high quality outdoor tracks that support student athletics, organized clubs, and community access.
- Neighbourhood and community-level tracks in deteriorating condition should be evaluated and considered for removal if they become unsafe.
- No additional outdoor running tracks are recommended, though more looped hard-surface walking paths should be established within the parks system.