

TO: MAYOR & COUNCIL
FROM: DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE
SUBJECT: **DRAFT SWANGARD STADIUM REVITALIZATION STUDY**
PURPOSE: To provide the Draft Swangard Stadium Revitalization Study and solicit feedback on the proposed options and next steps.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report from the Deputy General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture titled “Draft Swangard Stadium Revitalization Study” dated August 28, 2023, be received for information.

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER’S COMMENTS

I concur with the recommendation of the Deputy General Manager Parks, Recreation and Culture.

1.0 POLICY SECTION

The study and its full scope correspond with the goals and values in the *Corporate Strategic Plan* (2017), and align with the City of Burnaby’s purpose “to create the city that we all want to live in and be in.”

2.0 BACKGROUND

Located in Central Park, Swangard Stadium (the “Stadium”) officially opened in 1969 and has hosted many functions over the years, including community, cultural and sporting events. Recognizing the changing needs of the growing community and continued interest from private and non-profit organizations in potential partnerships and anchor tenancies, a study was initiated to understand the long-term options for the revitalization of the Stadium.

Cornerstone Planning Group (the “Consultants”) was engaged in October 2022 to complete an assessment of the current site from a high level and identify revitalization options in alignment with stakeholder needs and other City priorities based on the following stages:

- Stage 1: Key Findings & Consultation: including background research, benchmark analysis, environmental scan, facility condition, current state assessment and current users and interested parties’ engagement;
- Stage 2: Visioning & options scoping;
- Stage 3: Draft Strategy report & feedback;
- Stage 4: Final Report.

The study included a review of historical documentation, interviews with City staff, online surveys with current stadium users, interviews with external interested parties, research on growth and trends of the regional landscape, and Rough Order of Magnitude (“ROM”) comparative costing for each of the options explored. Collectively, this information has formed the Draft Swangard Stadium Revitalization Study (the “Draft Study”) (**Attachment 1**) which includes six potential options for consideration as discussed in the report below.

The Draft Study was presented to the Parks, Recreation and Culture (PRC) Commission in July 2023 for input and feedback and staff are now seeking Council’s feedback and input on these options.

3.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

3.1 Key Findings

Swangard Stadium is an important facility and plays a critical role in the City’s delivery of recreation and culture activities. It is also a unique facility within the Metro Vancouver region as the only stadium that features 5,000 permanent seats, competition level Track & Field infrastructure and a natural grass infield.

It is the City’s sole asset large enough to accommodate outdoor sporting activities and cultural events that require controlled access and egress. As a result, utilization of the stadium is high between April and August where demand often exceeds availability. Outside of the spring/summer season, however, utilization of the Stadium is low.

The information gathered also indicates that there is an increasing need for stadium space regionally. The governing body for track and field events (IAAF) is anticipated to increase compliance oversight to ensure competitions take place at “Certified facilities”. Given that there are very few competition Certified Track & Field facilities within the region, this will likely increase the demand and pressure on Swangard Stadium.

While the majority of Stadium bookings are related to sport activities including track and field (42% utilization) and soccer (22%), it is also heavily used for various cultural events and festivals (20%). As the City does not have alternative outdoor event space that features a large fenced in area, Swangard Stadium has become the de facto site for many community events.

The Stadium is also aging and nearing end of life, which will require significant investments to ensure its continued use and functionality. Given this, the Study is timely to help inform investments in the facility based on the intended use of the facility moving forward.

3.2 Revitalization Options

Six revitalization opportunities categorized into two groups, upgrades/enhancements to the existing site and facility and complete redevelopment of the site and facility, were identified and explored. The following table summarizes the focus of each option, which are discussed in more detail in the attached Draft Study.

	Option	Use	ROM Cost
1 - Upgrades / Enhancements	Option 1A	Sport Focus	~\$25M
	Option 1B	Culture Focus	~\$29M
	Option 1C	Multipurpose	~\$29M
2 - Redevelopment	Option 2A	Sport Focus	~\$153M
	Option 2B	Multipurpose	~\$167M
	Option 2C	Anchor Tenant	~\$170M

The first group of options considers relatively minor upgrades and improvements to the current site and Stadium based on different programming focuses. Each of these options includes additional permanent seating ranging from 500 – 1,000 seats, an additional structure for administrative and activity/event support and an increased fence area of approximately 700 m. There are also additional changes that are specific to each individual option such as a grass field to support a sports focus and a stage for a more events focus.

The second group of options considers complete redevelopment of both the site and facility also based on different programming focuses. Each of these options includes the addition of two grandstands, each with a seating capacity of approximately 5,000 along with ancillary spaces such as concessions, support rooms and community spaces, additional underground parking. There are also additional infrastructure upgrades specific to each individual option to support the type of programming, each of which would require additional space to varying degrees at Central Park.

The study also includes a qualitative assessment against 10 common criteria to measure the potential impact of each option. While this assessment provides some indication of potential impacts, it should be noted that the criteria has not been weighted and additional considerations such as cost, community input and visions for the facility, site and Central Park will also be crucial when determining which option(s) to pursue further.

3.3 Option Impacts

As noted above, Swangard Stadium is an important and unique asset for the City. Each of the options explored in the Draft Study have their own individual merits. The first group of options would see continued use of the Stadium as a primarily community asset, while major investments considered in the second group of options would transform the facility into a regional asset. This is a major consideration regarding the future of both the Stadium and whether the City wants the facility to continue to function as a community asset as opposed to a regional facility. Creating a regional asset would also result in reduced green space at Central Park. While the loss of space is relatively limited, Central Park plays an important role in providing open green space in a densely populated neighbourhood.

The facility currently functions as a multi-purpose space for both recreation and culture users, however, it is clear it cannot meet the demands of both of these needs during peak times. The needs of recreation users and culture users are also at odds occasionally (i.e. grass versus artificial turf field). However, there is no other space in the City that can currently accommodate culture users. Should the City consider creating a sports focus within the Stadium, investment in the nearby park such as an outdoor plaza for culture events and activation is likely required as these events would ultimately be displaced.

3.3 Public Engagement & Next Steps

The Draft Study was presented to the PRC Commission in July 2023. There was general support for the study and appreciation for the important role the Stadium currently provides to the community. Much of the discussion with the Commission centred around this and the need to ensure any investments in the facility continue to serve the needs of local community users first and foremost.

There are a number of ongoing and planned initiatives across the City which have important adjacencies related to the Stadium including the planned Central Park Master Plan and the BC Parkway Planning. It will be important to consider each of these options and the vision for the Stadium in the context of these other plans.

Staff are now seeking Council's input on the six options currently identified in the Draft Study, which will subsequently inform changes to the final Study. Staff anticipate that the final Study will narrow the options to be considered, which will then be considered as part of the Central Park Master Plan, planned to be initiated in early 2024. As part of this process, staff will also seek broad public engagement regarding the options for the Stadium as each option has varying impacts on the park.

It should also be noted that should Council wish to pursue any of the Group 2 options, a business case to assess the financial impacts of various use scenarios and operating models for a future Stadium development would also be required

4.0 COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Current and previous Stadium users and other interested parties were engaged as part of this study. Further consideration of the options discussed in this report and Draft Study will require broader community and public consultation, which staff plan to initiate as part of the Central Park Master Plan Process.

5.0 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The options explored in the Draft Study include rough order of magnitude costs ranging from \$25 - \$170 million. Further analysis of these would be considered as part of a feasibility study of any selected option.

Respectfully submitted,

Carmen Gonzalez, Deputy General Manager Parks, Recreation and Culture

ATTACHMENT

Attachment 1 – Draft Swangard Stadium Revitalization Study

REPORT CONTRIBUTORS

This report was prepared by Gloria Kwong, Project Manager.