

TO: MAYOR & COUNCILLORS

FROM: GENERAL MANAGER PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE AND
GENERAL MANAGER LANDS AND FACILITIES

SUBJECT: **7564 BARNET HWY (HARRY JEROME SPORTS CENTRE)
FACILITY USE STUDY**

PURPOSE: To provide information on the facility at 7564 Barnet Highway (Harry Jerome Sports Centre) and seek Council's approval for an open market call for proposals to determine the optimal use of the facility moving forward.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council direct staff to proceed with a competitive open-market process for the future use and operation of the City-owned facility as outlined in the report titled "7564 Barnet HWY (Harry Jerome Sports Centre) Facility Use Study" dated June 24, 2025; and

THAT staff report back to Council with the outcomes of the open market call for proposals when the relevant information is available.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Harry Jerome Sports Centre, a City-owned facility, has been leased since 1997 at a nominal lease rate. While the site has supported valuable sport programming for over two decades, the facility has now reached a stage where significant reinvestment is required to sustain, operate, and maintain the facility.

With the lease with the current operator now expired and the site in overhold, staff initiated a facility use study to explore potential future uses, assess required capital and operating investments, and evaluate possible operating models. To help with this review, the City hired a third-party consultant to review facility use options.

Given Burnaby's significant investments in new, strategically located recreation facilities, and the limited accessibility of the Harry Jerome Sports Centre site, the facility is not anticipated to be required for future municipal recreation programming.

Based on that third-party review, staff recommend the City initiate a competitive open market call for proposals to identify an operator and future use model that delivers strong community benefit while minimizing taxpayer burden. This approach ensures transparency, accountability, and responsible stewardship of a civic asset, while maximizing the value of a long-standing public investment.

The proposed open call process will welcome submissions from all interested and qualified parties, including the current operator, and prioritize proposals that support broad community access, financial sustainability, and alignment with City priorities.

1.0 POLICY SECTION

The recommendation to initiate an open market call for future use of the Harry Jerome Sports Centre supports the City's broader objectives of financial sustainability, community service delivery, and transparent decision-making.

This approach aligns with the following Council plans and strategies:

- Burnaby Economic Development Strategy (2007)
- Social Sustainability Strategy (2011)
- Burnaby Strategic Plan (2022)
- Benefits Based Approach (2024)
- Official Community Plan Draft (2025)

2.0 BACKGROUND

The facility, located at 7564 Barnet Hwy, known as the Harry Jerome Sports Centre (HJSC), is a 4,900 square metre (52,700 square foot) air-supported structure owned by the City of Burnaby. Since 1997, the facility has been leased to Volleyball BC under a triple net, nominal lease agreement, including responsibilities for operations, facility maintenance, and structural and capital renewal. This long-standing lease model has supported the facility's operation without direct operating subsidies, but the City has absorbed major capital risks and long-term maintenance obligations during the term.

To support an objective and informed assessment of the facility's current performance and future potential, the City commissioned a third-party consultant to undertake a facility use review (Attachment #1). This review included analysis of user data, facility utilization, program offerings, financial performance, and capital renewal requirements. The consultant also provided comparative benchmarking and identified opportunities and constraints related to different operating models. The findings have helped clarify the role the Harry Jerome Sports Centre currently plays within the broader recreation landscape and informed the recommendation to pursue a competitive, open-market process for the facility's future use.

Volleyball BC delivers a wide range of sport programming, including leagues, training, and tournaments, and until recently when the facility went into overhold, has held the primary lease for the facility. A portion of the site is subleased to the Burnaby Velodrome Club, which operates the indoor cycling track and serves a smaller but dedicated user base focused on track cycling. Volleyball BC also allocates court space at a fee to other user groups, including for pickleball programming, expanding the range of sport access supported through the current lease model. A review of current facility usage indicates that the HJSC primarily serves a regional and provincial audience, with about 25 percent of users residing in Burnaby.

The lease agreement has now expired and is in overhold. This transition point offers the City a timely opportunity to evaluate the facility's long-term use and to pursue a future operating model that enhances public value, reflects community needs, and ensures financial and operational sustainability. Assessments of the building have identified substantial deferred maintenance and infrastructure renewal needs, with significant reinvestment required to extend the facility's useful life.

While Volleyball BC has provided valuable programs at the site for over two decades and has contributed meaningfully to sport development both locally and provincially, it is prudent to reassess the long-term use of the site to ensure it continues to meet evolving Burnaby needs. This includes opening the opportunity for all interested and qualified organizations to submit proposals, in keeping with the City's commitment to transparency, fairness, and the public good.

More broadly, the facility reflects a legacy infrastructure gap. As the City modernizes its community recreation facility network, this site stands apart in terms of building age, accessibility, energy performance, and alignment with contemporary service goals.

While it continues to support valued recreation programming, it requires a comprehensive and sustainable path forward. At the same time, the City is investing heavily in major new facilities, including the Cameron Community Centre and Brentwood Community Centre, to better serve the recreational needs of Burnaby's growing and diverse population, particularly in high-density, transit-connected neighbourhoods in the north quadrants of the City.

3.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

The facility in its current configuration includes six volleyball courts and a 200-metre indoor velodrome. Volleyball usage remains strong, with courts operating at or near full capacity during peak seasons. The velodrome, while unique in the region, experiences more modest and specialized usage, and has lower participation from Burnaby residents. Both components require substantial capital reinvestment to remain viable. Deferred maintenance and outdated building systems have resulted in operational limitations that fall short of modern standards for accessibility, energy efficiency, and overall user experience. Based on third-party assessment, the facility is nearing the end of its functional life without significant capital upgrades. Renewal costs are estimated to range from \$5 to \$19 million over the next 20 years, depending on the nature of future use.

In reviewing potential future scenarios for the site, staff, supported by an independent consultant's facility use and operations review, examined a range of options, including entering into a new lease with updated terms, decommissioning the facility for alternative civic uses, and pursuing a competitive open market call for proposals. While each pathway presents distinct trade-offs, staff recommend the open-market approach to lease the facility as the most prudent, transparent, and adaptive initial step.

This process does not preclude other options from being considered at a later stage. Rather, it represents a responsible starting point to gauge public interest, identify qualified proponents, and explore alternative uses that minimize financial and operational burdens and keep the City out of ongoing operating costs. The City has not historically subsidized the day-to-day operations of this facility, and any future arrangement should ideally maintain this approach to minimize ongoing financial impact. The open call will be open to all parties, including the current operator, and will provide a fair opportunity to propose future uses that reduce the City's long-term costs while aiming to deliver the strongest public outcomes.

To support the implementation of the open-market process, staff have identified several high-level evaluation themes to guide the development and assessment of this open call for proposals.

Following the call for proposals, staff will evaluate submissions and return to Council with a summary of responses, key findings, and a recommended next step.

4.0 COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

To support the facility, use and operations analysis, the City retained a third-party consultant who conducted engagement with existing user groups at the Harry Jerome Sports Centre. The primary organizations consulted during this process included Volleyball BC and the Burnaby Velodrome Club, the two principal long-term tenants of the facility. These groups provided input on current usage, operational needs, programming capacity, and future interest in the site.

In advance of bringing this report forward to Council, both organizations were notified of the upcoming Council consideration and informed that the City would be recommending an open-market process for determining the future of the facility. Staff have maintained regular communication with these user groups throughout the review process to ensure transparency and continuity.

Should Council support the staff recommendation, both groups, along with any other interested parties, will be welcome to submit proposals for future use of the facility, in alignment with the City's goals for equitable access, financial sustainability, and community benefit.

5.0 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Harry Jerome Sports Centre has historically operated under a nominal lease, where the tenant was responsible for all operating, maintenance, and replacement costs. As the lease term has ended, and to inform future options for the facility, the City commissioned a third-party facility use and operations analysis at a cost of approximately \$70,000, funded through the Parks, Recreation and Culture departmental budget. The analysis highlighted significant capital renewal needs, ranging from \$5

million to \$19 million over the next two decades, due to deferred maintenance and the requirement to upgrade core systems.

A competitive open market process will allow the City to evaluate proposals for a new lease that will continue to ensure capital, operational, or maintenance responsibilities are paid by a third-party operator.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Morrison-Clark, General Manager Parks, Recreation and Culture and James Lota,
General Manager Lands and Facilities

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Harry Jerome Sports Centre Use Analysis

REPORT CONTRIBUTORS

This report was prepared by Andre Isakov, Director PRC Planning; and Sarah Alexander, Director Business Operations; and reviewed by John Musil, Manager PRC Policy Planning; Chris Bryan, Manager Public Affairs; and Kevan Cornes, Director Facilities Management.