

Date: September 17, 2012



**TO: Board Members – Vancouver Park Board**  
**FROM: General Manager – Parks and Recreation**  
**SUBJECT: Empire Fields, Plateau Sports Park and Greenways Concept Plan**

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## RECOMMENDATION

*THAT the Board approve the final proposed concept plans for the Empire Fields, The Plateau Sports Park and Greenways at Hastings Park as shown in Figure C1, C2 and C3 of Appendix C.*

## POLICY

The Board approves major changes in Vancouver parks including the design and development of parks.

## BACKGROUND

In December 2010, Vancouver City Council adopted the Hastings Park/Pacific National Exhibition (PNE) Master Plan. The Plan proposes to transform the Hastings Park of today into a greener, year-round destination for park use that includes an amusement park, the annual Fair and places for festivals, culture, sport and recreation, leisure and fun.

Outlined in the Plan is a strategy to almost triple the amount of park space, currently 27 acres, to an eventual total of 76 acres, as a major park for the east side of the City. The Master Plan is also an opportunity to significantly improve the sustainability and ecological performance of the Hastings Park and PNE, consistent with City Council's [Greenest City](#) Action Plan priorities and the Park Board's Strategic Goals. The multi-purpose nature of the Plan reflects the challenging balancing act that the Master Plan achieves:

‘A Fair in a Park’ – a significantly greener and more publicly accessible Hastings Park which renews Vancouver's historic annual fair and amusement park, while ensuring economic vitality and long-term sustainability.

In addition to the adoption of the Master Plan in December 2010, City Council endorsed green space implementation priorities including but not limited to: Creekway Park, the reinstatement of the Empire Fields, The Plateau Sports Park, and a network of park Greenways that will give residents access to the entire site year round. The Park Board

approved the concept plan for Creekway Park - Connection to New Brighton on April 30, 2012.

Funds for the design and construction of these implementation projects were approved in the 2011 Capital Budget and the 2012-14 Capital Plan, and the firm of PFS Landscape Architects was retained in keeping with City procurement practices in 2011, to design the park.

On February 20th 2012, staff briefed Park Board Commissioners on the design direction for the implementation projects, and the community engagement initiatives mid-process. Following this briefing two additional open houses and 10 stakeholder meetings were held.

The purpose of this report is to inform the Park Board of the public consultation process results and to recommend final concept plans for The Empire Fields, The Plateau Sports Park and the Greenways at Hastings Park.

The location of these projects is shown in Appendix A of this report.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Project Process**

The consultants and City staff, including Park Board operations, worked together on the project in three phases. Public consultation events occurred at all stages as outlined below.

- 1) Research, Assessment and Information Gathering
- 2) Schematic Design and Options
- 3) Finalized Concept

The Hastings Park/PNE planning group is advised by Technical and Steering Committees that include Park Board Development, and Operations staff as well as guidance from the project Steering Committee, which includes in its membership the General Manager of the Park Board. The Park Board staff role on the project is to ensure the design and construction meet Park Board standards which are City standards, for park design and development.

### **Public Consultation**

The Hastings Park Open Space Advisory Group (OSAG) has been established to provide on-going stakeholder input into the open space projects being implemented as a result of the Hastings Park/PNE Master Plan. The OSAG is comprised of a broad range of on-site, community, and city-wide representatives who have experience or a specific interest in the initial park developments. Representation includes (but is not limited) to following group or interest areas:

- Circus West

- Cycling and walking (commuting or leisure)
- Hastings Park Conservancy
- Leaside Tunnel users
- Pacific National Exhibition
- Residents from Hastings/Sunrise Neighbourhood
- Vancouver Field Sports Federation
- Vancouver Sports Network
- Youth

Since the project inception the OSAG has met 6 times to review park design and public engagement plans for these projects, and provide feedback to City staff and consultants. The OSAG's input has augmented additional public feedback gathered at three open houses held at the Pacific Coliseum in October 2011, and in February and June 2012.

**Table 1: 2011/12 Public Consultation Activities**

<i>Date</i>	<i>Meeting Type</i>	<i>Attendees</i>
May 18	OSAG	OSAG members
September 07	OSAG	OSAG members
October 13	OSAG	OSAG members
October 26	Open House	Residents and stakeholders
November 28	OSAG	OSAG members
February 8	OSAG	OSAG members
February 22	Open House	Residents and stakeholders
April 18	OSAG	OSAG members
June 16	Open House	Residents and stakeholders

The notification process for each open house involved: advertisement in the Vancouver Courier; pamphlets to 11 local elementary and secondary schools; posters at two local community centres and local businesses; emails to the Hastings Park project mailing list and social media (Facebook and Twitter). Comments were received through questionnaires and a survey hosted on the project website and distributed at each open house.

An initial open house was held on October 26, 2011 to kick off the design phase of the initial early implementation priorities. The purpose of the open house was to introduce the project and gather initial input on:

- Empire Field - synthetic turf for community use
- Park Greenways for pedestrians and bicyclists
- Connection to New Brighton Park through Creekway Park (day lighted stream)
- Plateau Park - a multi-use sports park

Based on the feedback from the October 2011 Open House, refined concept plans were shared at the open house in February 2012. A number of comments received resulted in plan modifications, including the conversion of a proposed mini-field in the Plateau area from grass to sand, and changes to the Empire fields to better accommodate players, spectators, and operations.

It was also decided that the baseball diamond would be eliminated as the size requirements of a diamond (300 foot outfield) are not compatible with the proposed field configuration, and due to a softball player preference for a natural grass playing surface. Worth mention is that presently the synthetic turf ball diamond at the Andy Livingstone Park synthetic turf fields has limited bookings (only 2 leagues). The direction to remove the softball diamond is supported by The Vancouver Field Sport Federation and Vancouver Sport Network who are enthusiastic about the redevelopment of these fields as a field sport tournament destination in the City.

This open house offered the public the opportunity to select the specific activities they would like to see in the Plateau Sports Park and the design layout of the running path and Greenways.

The final concept plans were shown at the June 2012 open house, and at a final OSAG meeting in June, and was supported by the majority of respondents. Approximately 200 people attended the October Open House, 150 attended the February Open House, and 50 attended the June Open House. All open houses responded with a high level of support with an average of 75-80% in favour of the concepts and designs.

A summary of the consultation responses for the final open house on June 22, 2012 is attached as Appendix B.

## **Empire Fields**

The Empire Fields (named for Empire stadium built here in the 1950's for the British Empire and Commonwealth Games), are located north of Hastings Street and west of Cassiar Street. The grounds were home to the Vancouver Whitecaps soccer team and North American Soccer League in the 1970's and 1980's until the stadium demolition in the 1990's, when the grounds were converted by the Park Board to soccer fields, softball diamonds and a gravel running track for community use.

Through 2009 to 2011, due to the reconstruction of the BC Place stadium, a temporary stadium for the BC Lions and Vancouver Whitecaps was constructed here, through a City, Park Board and Pavco Agreement.

Upon removal of the stadium, the high masts for field lights, the synthetic turf playing field, and various site improvements related to the short-term stadium, remained for incorporation in the restoration plan.

*Empire Fields Concept Plan Description:*

The remaining football field, in a north-south orientation, is a rubber in-fill style synthetic turf field, similar to recent synthetic turf field installations in Vancouver parks. It is proposed to be divided and converted into two full size soccer fields, with additional field markings for junior soccer and ultimate fields.

A central access aisle between the two fields, complete with power and water services, has space for festivals, temporary tents, and tournaments. Locations for goal and equipment storage, player seating, and emergency access are included, and a synthetic turf warm up area and permanent spectator seating for 400 people, are also provided.

The Leaside Tunnel is considered in this plan, and tunnel activities can extend outward into the park. Pedestrians are welcomed through the tunnel via a landscaped path to improve accessible connections for residents living south of Hastings Street. The Vancouver Skateboard Coalition advised staff in this proposed direction.

Empire Fields also includes segregated bicycle routes, and a casual, accessible, rubber surfaced running path encircling the new playing fields. The existing parking lot on Hastings Street that accommodates up to 75 cars will be improved. The existing field house remains unchanged and has room to expand in the future.

The Cassiar Street slope, that is approximately 0.40 ha in size, is planned to be reforested contributing to the Greenest City Action Plan target of planting 150,000 trees throughout the City by 2020.

The recommended concept plan for the Empire Fields is attached as Appendix C – Figure C1.

### **The Plateau Sports Park**

The Plateau Sports Park Sports Park is the name given to the area located between Empire Fields and the wooden coaster in Playland, this area sits approximately 4.5m above field level. The concept plan for The Plateau Sports Park focuses on play, fun, movement, participation, gender equality and lifetime fitness, with flexibility built into the plan to make it resilient and adaptable to changing uses.

The sport and passive use content of The Plateau Sports Park compliments the Empire Fields with four distinct zones (north to south): the Play Zone; the Rec Room; the Beach; and Sport Courts. These four zones are connected with a continuous sculptural element. This interactive element that plays upon the character of the adjacent historical wooden coaster in Playland. This element forms a linear sculptural edge that morphs from seating to gateway to climbable element and will be an iconic component of the Plateau.

*The Plateau Sports Park Concept Plan Description:*

**Play Zone**

The Play Zone is a series of accessible play spaces woven together with small scale pathways. Toddler swings, water and sand play equipment in an enclosed area comprises the pre-school play area. Seating for care-givers is in close proximity. A small pump track for runner bikes compliments this area. For older children climbing nets, hill slides and landforms, provide a diversity of play experiences. There is potential for public art. The children's zone location and content are of particular interest for Vancouver Heights residents who are in need of a neighbourhood park and playground.

**Rec Room**

The "Rec Room" zone is conceived of as a youth and adult playground to support a variety of activities requested by those that participated in the engagement process including ping pong tables, features for parkour and outdoor acrobatics, and outdoor fitness equipment for adults and seniors to complement athletic training and exercise at Empire Fields. The Rec Room is surfaced with a resilient and accessible material that is suitable for dance, yoga, boot camps and other fitness activities. The Rec Room presents an opportunity to support growing areas of recreation not currently provided for in the Park Board system.

**The Beach**

A large contained sand area suitable for up to 4 beach volleyball courts is provided for in this area, feedback from the consultation process indicated the area would be popular for the emerging sports of sand soccer and parkour.

**Sports Courts**

The Sports Courts zone has an enclosed multi-use paved surface for basketball, mini-soccer or ball hockey.

**Pump Track**

A bicycle pump track for beginner and intermediate users is located at the north end of the park site and takes full advantage of the sloping site. Trees, rocks and logs create inviting edges and spaces that create viewing opportunities around the track.

The details for these zones will be approved by operational and risk management staff, and construction of The Plateau may need to be phased, with phasing dependent upon budget. The children's zone and court zone are high priorities for residents who participated in the project consultation opportunities.

The final proposed concept plan for The Plateau Sports Park, is attached as Appendix C – Figure C2.

**The Greenways**

The Greenways consist of temporary and permanent connections around and through Hastings Park. The temporary greenways will be coordinated with the existing conditions

on site and with PNE operations. A total of 5 km of new pathways are anticipated at build-out.

The planned Greenway network provides key connections to the local neighbourhood, to destinations in the park and to the waterfront in New Brighton Park.

The second open house in February showed full support for the connection to New Brighton Park, and public input made recommendations to include way finding signs, lighting and potentially public art along the greenway routes.

The final proposed concept plan for park Greenways, is attached as Appendix C – Figure C3.

### **Park Board Strategic Plan and Greenest City Considerations**

These projects meet several City and Park Board strategic priorities.

The Greenways will provide over 5 kilometers of new pedestrian and bicycle paths, addressing the Transportation Goals of the City's Greenest City Action Plan (GCAP). Biodiversity is increased in the 0.40 hectare (approximate) of indigenous reforestation area at Empire Fields, contributing to Access to Nature goals. Design detail and construction, will ensure sustainable construction practices and waste management to suit the zero waste targets of GCAP.

The proposed concept plans for these implementation projects evolved through a collaborative community engagement processes (with 20 meetings, and 450 participants over 11 months), this has resulted in plans that are flexible, inclusive and accessible. These match the Park Board Strategic Plan callings for Excellence in Resource Management, Parks and Recreation for All and for Engaging People.

### **Funding and Schedule**

The total project budget is \$8.5 million dollars and is provided for in the 2011 and 2012 Capital Budgets. Construction is anticipated to begin in the spring of 2013 with total completion in 2014.

### **SUMMARY**

The final proposed concept plans for Empire Fields, The Plateau Sports Park and new park Greenways are supported by residents and stakeholders. The new park spaces for Hastings Park will be resilient, contemporary and derive inspiration from the Hastings Park vision of renewal and transformation.

These plans reflect the Park Board's flexible, functional and sustainable design directions, and the planning process addresses the Park Board's active community participation and improved engagement objectives. Staff recommends that the Board

approve the concept plans for Empire Fields, The Plateau Sports Park and Greenways as shown in figures C1, 2, and 3 of Appendix C.

Prepared by:

Hastings Park/PNE Planning Project Manager, Community Services Group, City of Vancouver,

and

Director of Parks, Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation

TM/BH/DH/PK

Appendix A – The Empire Fields, The Plateau Sports Park, and Greenways Locations

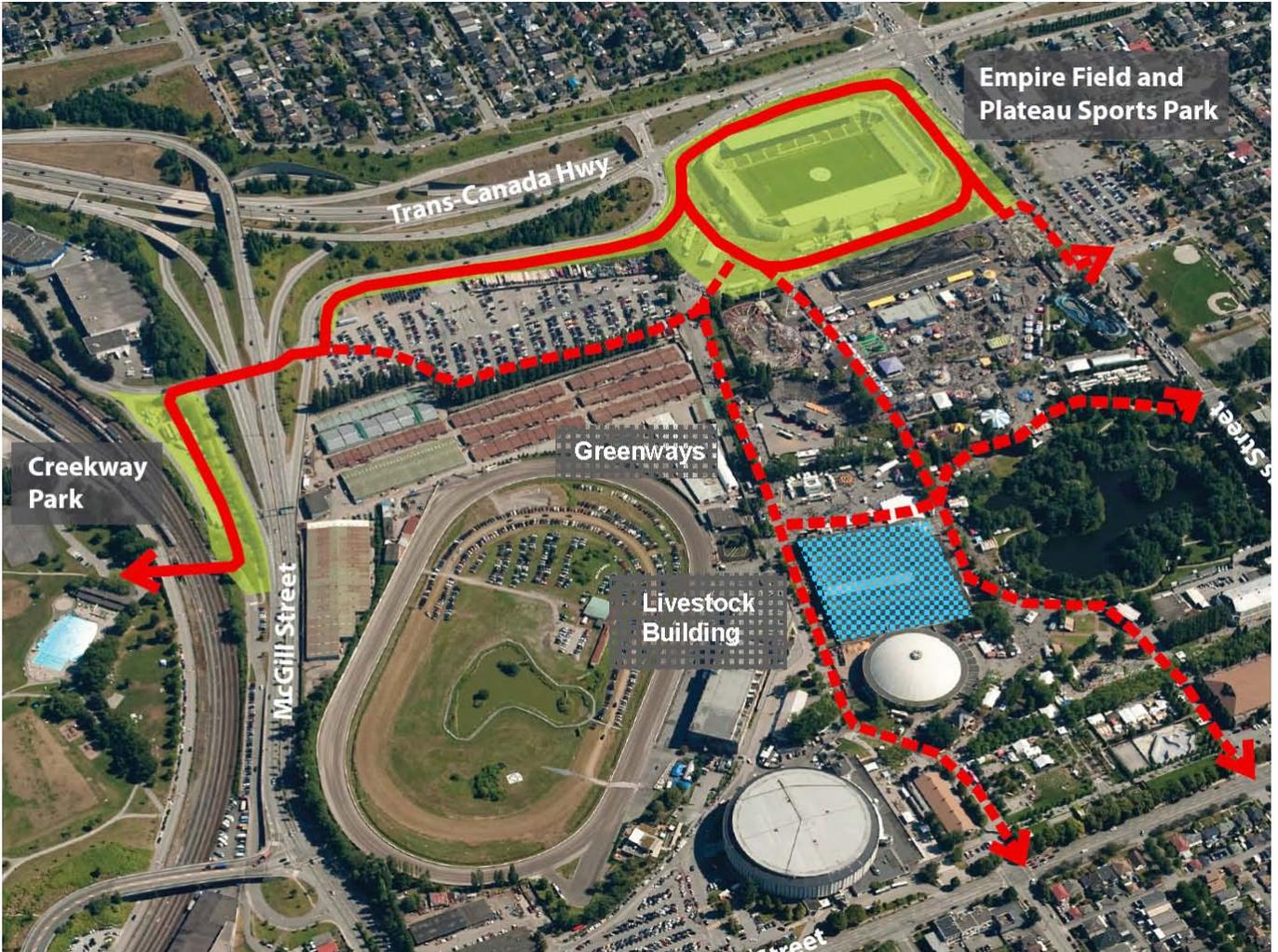
Appendix B – Open House June 2012 Summary

Appendix C – Figure C1 - Concept Plan – Empire Fields

Figure C2 - Concept Plan – The Plateau Sports Park

Figure C3 - Concept Plan - Hastings Park Greenways

# Appendix A - Empire Field, Plateau Sports Park, and Greenway Locations



## Appendix B – Open House June 2012 Consultation Summary:

### Panel 8: Empire Fields

Panel 8 shows the detailed concept detail for Empire Fields (including two synthetic turf fields, a running track, a warm up area, existing field house and washrooms, plus areas for spectators and storage) has been finalized through the input of the 2 previous open houses and stakeholder meetings. Are there any detailed thoughts or comments on these finalized plans?

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### Panel 8: Empire Fields |

#	Response
1.	make plans to expand the field house in the long term
2.	it looks well thought out for families. The running track is such a great addition to the fields.
3.	It is my understanding from attending the open house that high school football lines will not be on one of the fields. That is very disappointing when 3 local high school teams not 5 minutes from the empire and who have a history of playing at empire site from 1971-1990 and in 2010. It is just a simple addition of some lines and a set of posts put on the soccer nets.
4.	I am really excited to know that there will be tracks and paths nearby that I can rollerskate on. These plans look amazing.
5.	Will there be a concession operated out of the field house? will there be food carts in the area providing snacks/etc. Will the change areas/washrooms be improved?
6.	The field appears quite a bit smaller than it was before. The lights appear to be much too tall, and would be better located at a height below the highway level so as not to disturb the neighbours to the east.
7.	Have some kind of covered area, even if it's an overhang off the field house, will be a popular spot when it's raining and you're watching a soccer game. I'm still concerned about how the parking will be handled. It should be for Empire Fields users, not Playland.
8.	Great idea
15.	The plan is comprehensive, quite wonderful I think, -you have considered almost everything imaginable. However, key for me is to get access to Empire Fields soon, -I hate to see my beautiful neighbourhood park continue to be an industrial zone. I had hoped that after the professional sports teams had their way, the rest of us would get back what was taken away from us, but sad to learn that it will still be at least a year. This is after so many years of

seeing Empire stadium become an inaccessible, ugly industrial eyesore.

16. Please include football lines on one of the fields!

## Panel 7: Greenways

Panel 7 shows the layout of the greenways through and surrounding Empire Fields and has been finalized through the input of the 2 open houses and stakeholder meetings.

Are there any detailed thoughts or comments on these finalized plans?

### Panel 7: Greenways |

#	Response
1.	great work!
3.	good
4.	There should be a pedestrian walkway through the Leaside Tunnel. This avoids the necessity of having to cross dangerous Hastings Street when coming from the south. It is not clear if this is in the plan.
6.	I think that the concept and consultation went well on this. It would be difficult to satisfy all the possible interests, but I think the diversity now being offered is going to make this space very well used.
7.	really good
9.	As a cyclist, I often find that the City makes great routes between areas, such as intersections, which help make travel safer. However it is key for safety that well marked routes at continue into and through intersections, which is of course, where the danger lies for cyclists and pedestrians. Therefore, I hope that planning for Hastings Park pathways includes well marked routes into and out of the Park, thinking that all the ways into the Park are across busy streets. Carefully considered cycling and walking access points, versus priority given to automobile access is also a priority for me.

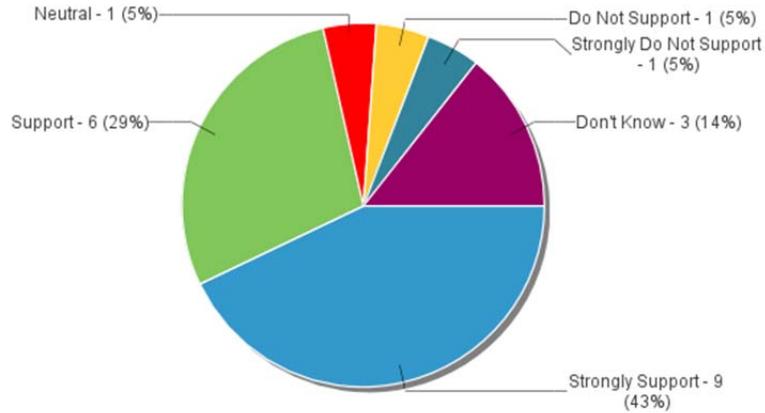
## Question 3. Kids Park Features

Panels 9-11 show Plateau Sports Park and the different opportunities for play, sport recreation and fun within six different areas. These include the Kids Park, Rec Room, Beach, Sport Court, Bike Skills Park, and Leaside. Please indicate your level of support for the following areas of the Plateau Sports Park.

3. Kids Park features:

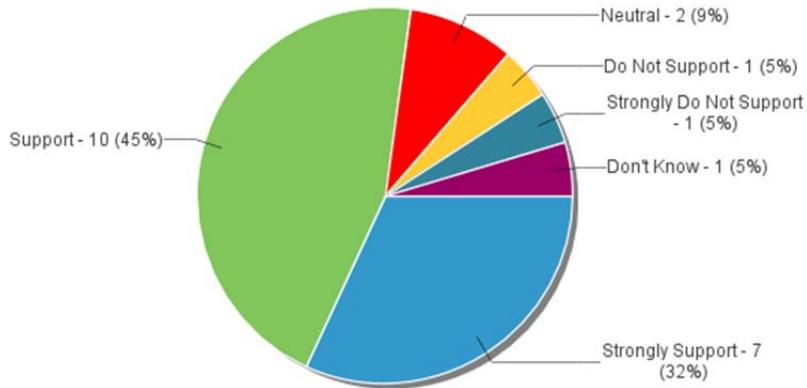
- a. Pump Track
- b. Pre-school Play Area
- c. Slide Zone

d. Hills and Valleys



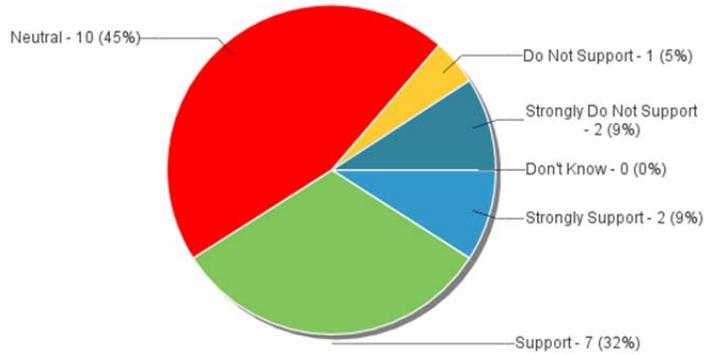
**Question 4. Rec Room**

Adult playground with resilient surface for parkour, yoga, dance, bootcamps, crossfit, circus arts, ping-pong tables, adult fitness equipment, and exercise bars.



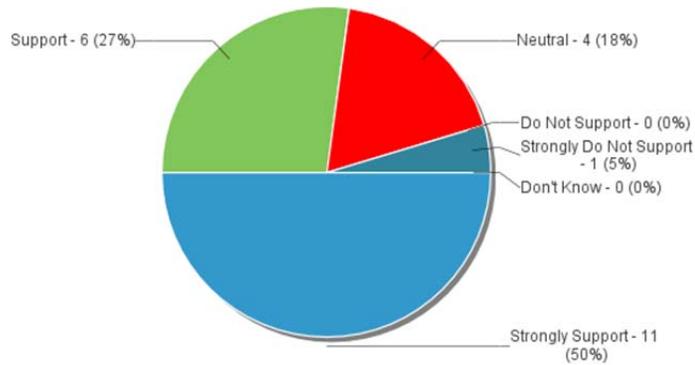
**Question 5. Beach**

Sand courts for beach volleyball, beach soccer, sand castles and beach badminton.



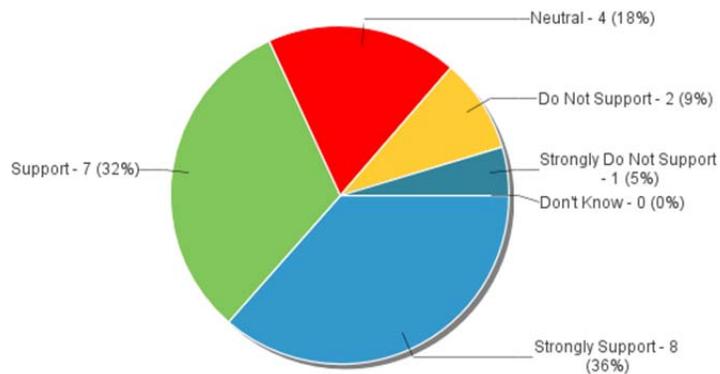
### Question 6. Sports Court

Hard surface for basketball, ball hockey, soccer, and other sports and games.



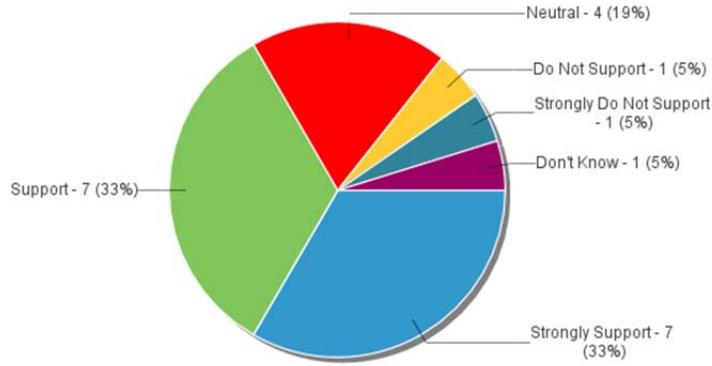
### Question 7. Bike Skills Park

A beginner to intermediate bike park with hills, a pump track for riders of all ages.



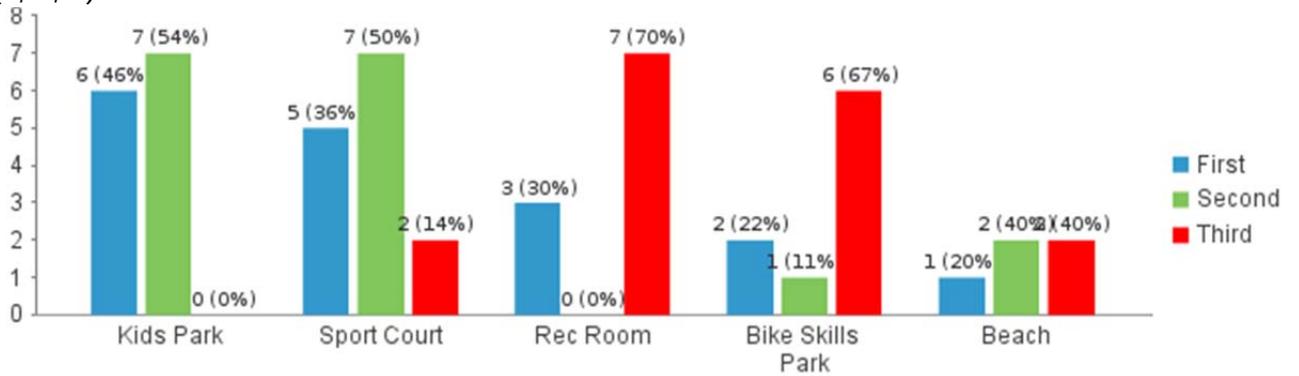
### Question 8. Leaside

Improved pedestrian connections around and through the Leaside Tunnel Additional space for stunt features on the north end of the tunnel.



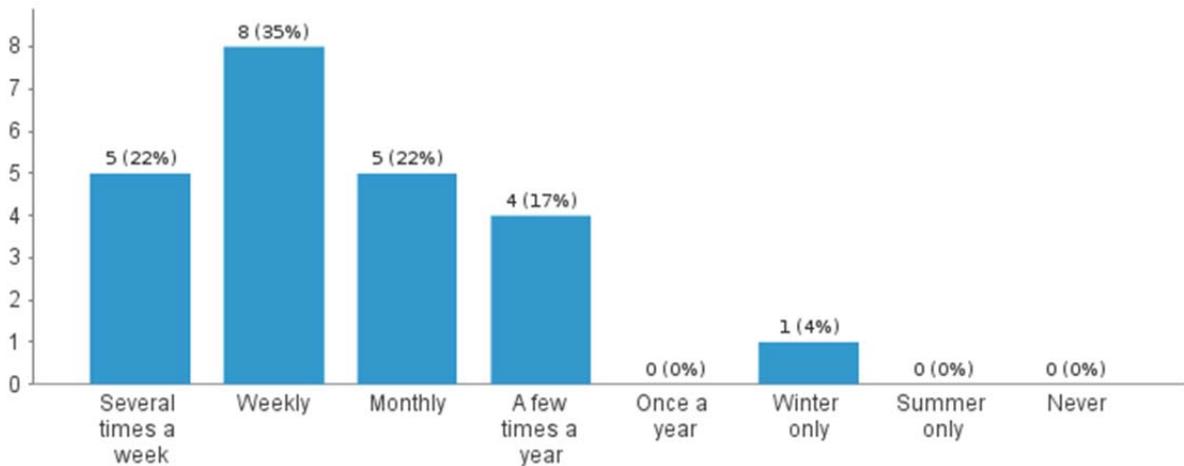
### Priority Ranking

Construction of the Plateau Sports Park may need to be phased depending on final design and construction costs. If construction had to be phased, what would you build first, second and third. Please indicate your top three priorities in order of preference (1, 2, 3)

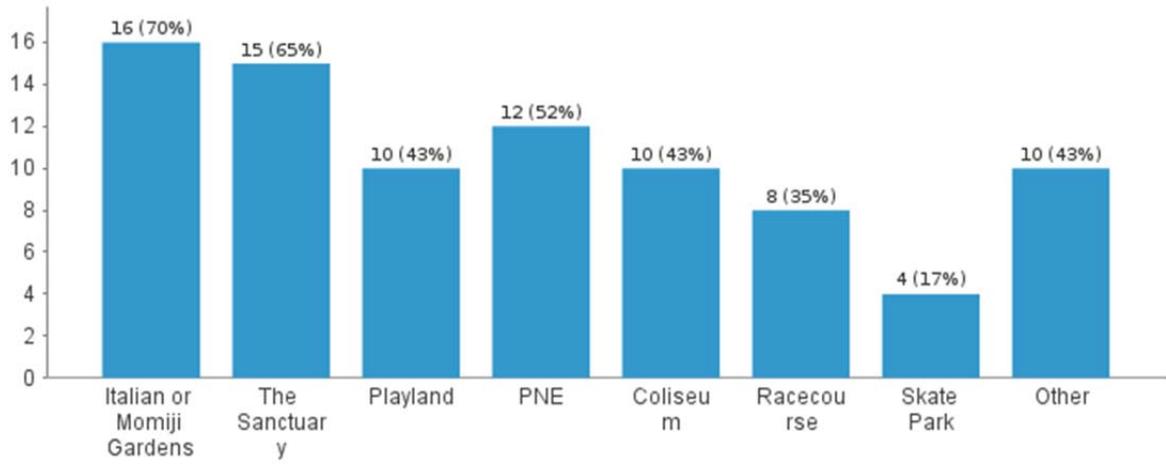


### Tell us about yourself:

#### How often do you visit Hastings Park?



**What do you do when you are in Hastings Park? Choose all that apply.**



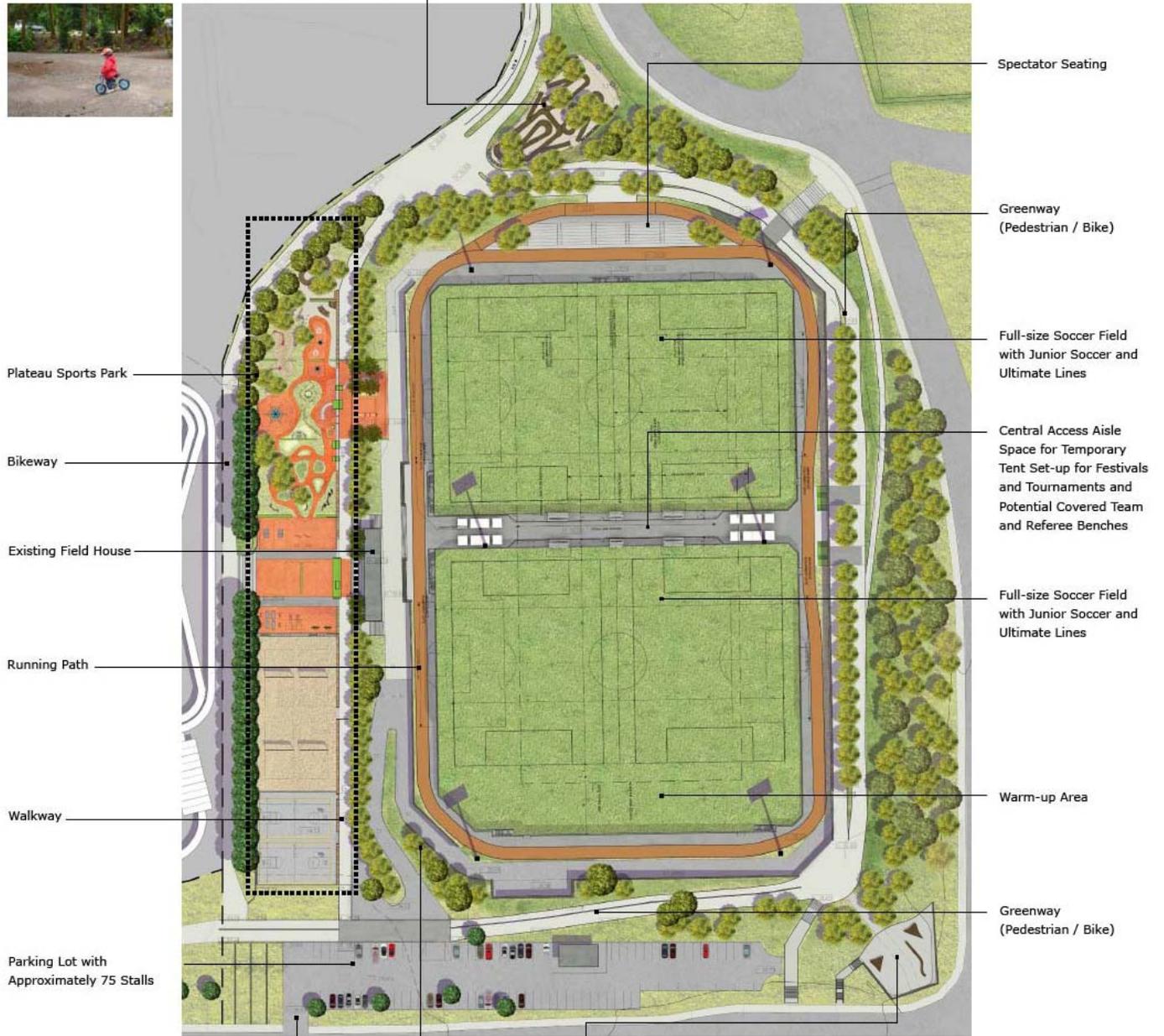
# Appendix C

## Figure C-1 Empire Fields Concept Plan



### Bike Skills Area

- Pump tracks tailored for beginner and intermediate levels
- Designed with inviting spaces that create viewing opportunities



Plateau Sports Park

Bikeway

Existing Field House

Running Path

Walkway

Parking Lot with Approximately 75 Stalls

Right-in / Right-out Access from Hastings Street

Vehicular Access to Fields

### Leeside

- Tunnel activities will extend outward to the limit of existing retaining walls
- A controlled pedestrian path connects the greenway to the tunnel through a landscaped area
- An area for additional DIY stunt features is created.



Spectator Seating

Greenway (Pedestrian / Bike)

Full-size Soccer Field with Junior Soccer and Ultimate Lines

Central Access Aisle Space for Temporary Tent Set-up for Festivals and Tournaments and Potential Covered Team and Referee Benches

Full-size Soccer Field with Junior Soccer and Ultimate Lines

Warm-up Area

Greenway (Pedestrian / Bike)

## APPENDIX C - FIGURE C2

### THE PLATEAU SPORTS PARK SPORTS PARK CONCEPT PLAN



## APPENDIX C

### FIGURE C3 GREENWAYS CONCEPT PLAN

