

Prince George Civic Sport Facility – Gap Analysis and Strategy

Staff Summary

On May 2, 2019, Tourism Prince George with support from the City of Prince George awarded a contract to Allan Leadership (AL) to prepare a strategic report on sports venues in Prince George. A central focus was to review specific sport facilities to see if they meet provincial and BC Games Standards for hosting the 2022 BC Summer Games.

The Project Scope was as follows:

1. Identify a suitable Beach Volleyball facility
2. Identify areas for upgrades to the Agriplex (Equestrian facility)
3. Identify areas for upgrades to three regional lakes
4. Identify needs for upgrades to baseball and softball facilities (Carrie Jane Gray and Freeman Park)

Allan Leadership viewed the creation or improvement of these sports facilities as first and foremost a “potential” requirement for hosting the 2022 BC Summer Games. “Potential” because the BC Games Society does not officially inform Prince George of the exact participating sports for the 2022 BC Summer Games until December 2020.

The second benefit is to the local residents with the provision of increased recreation options and the third benefit could be the attraction of new competitions to the region.

While it is true that the BC Games Society has not determined which sports will be included in the 2022 Games and any pre-emptive investment is risky, this report can greatly help the 2022 games organization, as there are some steps that can be enacted now.

Background

The reference documents reviewed by AL included, but were not limited to:

- Carrie Jane Gray Park Master Plan, September 2006
- Prince George Exhibition Park Master Plan , 2005
- 2018 Ball Diamond and Sport Field Strategy
- Prince George 10 Year Sport Tourism Strategy, December 2016
- BC Summer Games Standards
- Canada Summer Games Standards
- 2022 BC Summer Games Bid

To deliver the study outcome, AL met or communicated with, a wide range of industry leaders including community stakeholders and user groups, City of PG staff, PG Horse Society, BC Parks and Conservation, BC Games Society, Canoe Kayak BC, Rowing BC, Water Ski and Wakeboard BC, 2016 BC Summer Games Committee, 2018 BC Summer Games Committee, 2020 BC Summer Games Committee, 2019 Western Canada Summer Games, Benman’s Custom Design, Ness Lake Water sports, Horse Council BC, and Prince George Youth Volleyball.

Recommendations

1. Prince George currently lacks a competitive outdoor beach volleyball facility. Beach Volleyball is a usual BC Summer Games sport and therefore in high probability would be required. The recommended location for a new beach volleyball facility is Carrie Jane Gray Park to enhance the sports “hub” that already exists at that site. Prince George has a strong indoor volleyball following and an outdoor facility would meet with ongoing community use as a legacy project.

NOTE: This project was included by Administration in the 2020 City of Prince George Capital Expenditure Program and was approved by Council on January 6, 2020.

2. The upgrades required to bring the Agriplex (indoor riding arena at Exhibition Park) to BC Games standards are limited to footing improvements. Improvements to the adjacent outdoor riding ring involves similar footing improvements and an expansion of the outdoor riding ring itself. This expansion can occur in the existing Exhibition Park footprint with minimal overall changes.
3. The upgrades required to host provincial competitions in water sports are the procurement of temporary infrastructure. The upgrade of an existing towed water sports ramp is necessary. By utilizing regional lakes, no major facility upgrades are required.
4. The baseball and softball facilities (Carrie Jane Gray Park and Freeman Park) are due for upgrades to bring the fields to an ideal level for hosting the BC Summer Games and would provide ongoing enhancements for our community. The majority of these upgrades include backstop, fencing and painting.

Projects #2-#4 would require Administration to provide up to date cost estimates for recommended inclusion into the 2021 Capital Expenditure Program for Council consideration.