



Your Community, Your Association, Your Voice

February 23, 2021

Mayor Nenshi and City Councillors:

We are writing today as the representatives of the Rutland Park Community Association to request that Council direct Administration to **STOP** all further investigations into the potential disposition of any part of Richmond Green Park (including the upper baseball diamonds). **All of Richmond Green Park needs to be maintained as park/green space.**

All of Richmond Green (Park and Golf Course) falls within Policy Area A of the Revised CFB West Master Plan; both are part of the northern planning area. They have been identified as special places/areas. Currie parks and paths have been designed to provide direct access through to this green space. **With LOC2014-0109, we were given a firm commitment that both of these areas would be preserved as green space, as per concerns raised by the Currie Barracks Advisory Group.**

With an anticipated population of up to 12,000 people in Currie, both spaces need to be preserved to accommodate the massive density that has already been approved for Currie. Recent Westmount Campus re-designations also mean a significant increase in population density being added to the surrounding policy area.

This park space, including the 22.1 ha of the Richmond Park/Richmond Green Golf Course, has been factored into Stormwater Management as a catchment area as part of the Master Drainage Plan. Stormwater Management Systems for Currie were developed based on including this space for water absorption.

As directed in the revised CFB West Master Plan, pg 109 section 12.3.4 “any reconfiguration of an existing park area should NOT reduce either the overall recreational functionality of the area or the total amount of open space”. Administration is proposing that the current Roads Depot site would be sufficient to replace the upper baseball diamonds should the ball diamonds be sold. The Roads Depot site is already designated S-R, and as it is undeveloped, would already be seen as open area/designated for recreational use. Accordingly, removing the baseball diamonds would mean a net loss of open space.

Somewhere along the line, there has already been a significant loss of open space in the policy area. The revised CFB West Master Plan indicates that Currie Barracks will provide 35 acres of local parks and open space in addition to 80 acres of local and regional park land. Canada Lands is now advertising only 23 acres of local parks. Alexandria Park has now been completed at 13.5 acres. The only other large tract of green space for the 12000 residents of Currie will be Parade Square, which will likely be a sports field. **Richmond Green Park needs to be maintained in its entirety to provide recreational space for the future residents of Currie.**



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In addition to serving as baseball diamonds, this space is used as a walking circuit for our seniors (and other residents) and those who work and/or reside in Care West, cross country training site for our students, Frisbee site for families, tobogganing hill for residents from surrounding communities, a picnic and reading site, and a fitness boot camp site. (Administration has been directed to ascertain current public utilization rates—the golf course has been closed for over a year, so this should be taken into consideration. The existing baseball diamonds are typically active spring through summer, and our tobogganing hill is active during the winter season.)

Regarding the potential disposition of the baseball diamonds, we recently conducted a short survey of our residents. Despite the compressed timeframe available (the survey was open for only 3 days) we received 672 responses, 525 of which were residents from within our communities of Currie Barracks, Lincoln Park and Rutland Park. **There was overwhelming support for the baseball diamonds/green space, with 90% of respondents preferring to keep the existing park space as opposed to potential development.** Full survey results can be found here--
<https://www.rutlandparkcommunity.com/richmond-green>

Residents would love to see upgrades to the existing park space and have also provided suggestions for this as part of their survey feedback.

We are extremely concerned regarding the seeming lack of transparency surrounding this whole process. The original intent was to look at the potential of selling off Richmond Green Golf Course. We were aware of the potential challenges facing this type of disposition due to underground potable water reservoirs below the golf course. Despite this, we have made numerous inquiries with both our Councillor and our NPC to keep updated. You must appreciate our surprise when in mid December a soil sample drill rig was witnessed operating on the west side of Richmond Green Park. **On Dec 16 we discovered, by word of mouth, that the City was already determined to sell off the baseball diamonds as part of a process that originally had nothing to do with Richmond Green Park.**

Citizens tend to view golf courses and public park space as two completely separate entities. While a number of people might be supportive of selling off a golf course, most citizens would be averse to selling off public parks. Why have these unrelated activities been lumped together for approval? The original discussion in chambers centered around the merits of private versus public operation of golf facilities. We believe that this initiative is not receiving proper care and attention from Council as it is has effectively been presented as a change in operator of a golf facility.

Reservoir expansion is required in the area around the golf course, as well as an additional 2nd entrance road for Currie; this will require major disruption/reduction to all of the lower green space and parking lot (tennis courts to be preserved). **Nothing should be done with the baseball diamonds, or any other portion of Richmond Green Park until all of the future planning for the site is addressed holistically.** As loss of any park space will have a major impact on our communities, at the very least we would like to see the full scope of Administration's proposals for the Richmond



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Green Park space (including the baseball diamonds) moved to Q4 as originally directed, so that this can become an election issue as we look for a new Councillor. **Pushing this discussion/potential land use amendment through during Q1 and bringing it to Council in June/July suggests further lack of transparency on the part of Administration, especially when City Golf is projected to break even in 2022.**

Richmond Green Park is a regional park and was one of the original major parks noted in our City LUB 2P80 (included with such parks as Nose Hill, Edworthy, Bowness, Fish Creek, Stanley, Carburn, etc.) **Selling off any of the park space sets a dangerous precedent with regards to all of our other major/regional parks!** Selling off parts of a major park to provide a one-time funding source for City golf is extremely short-sighted and unfathomable. Our major parks need to be protected and preserved for both current and future Calgarians.

The recent pandemic has shown us that we will need MORE public green space, not less. Your 2020 Year End Climate Review indicates that you are working “on recognizing Calgary's natural infrastructure as key assets to manage for resilience and climate adaptation.” **The 2020 Municipal Development Plan has a Natural Infrastructure Policy 2.6.1 d. to “Prioritize ecological protection for natural areas, open spaces and parks”.** Road access and reservoir augmentation in Richmond Green Park will already be detrimental to the urban canopy in the area, and further development in the baseball diamonds would be contradictory to City policy. **Once green space like this is lost it is highly unlikely, if not impossible, to reacquire at a future date.**

On behalf of our residents and on behalf of Calgarians, **we respectfully request that Council direct Administration to STOP all further investigations into the potential disposition of green space at Richmond Green Park** (including the upper baseball diamonds).

Thank you for your time and your support.

Sincerely,

Leanne Ellis

RPCA VP Development and Traffic

Craig Marceau

RPCA President