

Parks & Recreation Master Plan will guide facility development

As local sports groups get a feel of the two new ball diamonds on the Hallmark Lands near Industrial Parkway South, the Town is revising its blueprint for future sports development.

The new diamonds were identified as a need within the Town's current Parks & Recreation Master Plan, but new features in the sports and recreation field could be dictated by a revised plan currently in development.

'We're a changing community and, therefore, there are changing needs,' says Al Downey, Aurora's Director of Operations. '[Changing needs are] the reason you do a review every five years.'

In the weeks and months ahead, the Town aims to hold 'stakeholder interviews' and public information sessions to get a snapshot of current needs and future wants ahead of the draft plan being presented to the incoming Council in the first quarter of 2023.

'That will help us ' as well as Council ' identify service levels where we may have some gaps, where we met some of our targets, but I think that is going to set the framework for any future [facilities] and what those future facilities might look like. Part of the work that the consultant was doing is we always look at best tips for particular parks. We only have a finite amount of land, so some of the discussions around this is repurposing and that is always part of the discussion'and will be reviewed as well. There are some facilities that we may be looking at modifying or repurposing in order to maximize recreational use.'

'We are very open to discussions with regards to maybe some of the things that we don't have or we would like some attention to, whether those are sports fields or whether those are facilities. We're looking at gym expansion. There's always a request at some point for a curling rink or a cricket pitch and some of those things we don't presently provide. Whether we have those opportunities or not, some of the existing groups, whether they be football, rugby, soccer, or baseball, whoever, often come in and say, 'This is a great what we have right now, but we might need some additional things.'

'We are also trying to tie that into sports tourism. There is definitely a push to try and provide some sports tourism activity within the Town, so when we look at facilities we look at it through a lens of what other opportunities could these facilities provide [to users] outside of Aurora?'

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter