



THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF AMHERSTBURG

OFFICE OF COMMUNITY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES

MISSION STATEMENT: *Committed to delivering cost-effective and efficient services for the residents of the Town of Amherstburg with a view to improve and enhance their quality of life.*

Author's Name: Heidi Baillargeon	Report Date: November 30, 2021
Author's Phone: 519 736-5712 ext. 2128	Date to Council: December 13, 2021
Author's E-mail: hbaillargeon@amherstburg.ca	Resolution #:

To: Mayor and Members of Town Council

Subject: Skate Park Update

1. **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that:

1. Council **APPROVE** the Skate Park be moved permanently to the Libro Complex in the northwest corner of the property located at 3295 Meloche Road.
2. Council **DIRECT** Administration to proceed with issuing an RFP to retain a specialized consulting design firm to prepare design drawings for a multi versatile Skate Park facility at the Libro Complex based on the most recent survey that closed December 6, 2021.
3. Council **APPROVE** funding from the Parks Capital Reserve Fund in the amount of \$75,000 for retaining a specialized Skate Park design consultant to prepare design and construction drawings suitable for tender for the new multi versatile Skate Park.
4. Funding for the construction of the Skate Park be **DEFERRED** to the 2022 capital budget deliberations.

2. **BACKGROUND:**

On August 13, 2018, Council adopted the Parks Master Plan (PMP) prepared by Monteith Brown Planning Consultants by resolution #20180813-271 which stated:

Resolution #20180813-271

That:

1. The report from the Manager of Planning Services dated July 24, 2018 regarding the Parks Master Plan Draft for Approval **BE RECEIVED**; and,
2. The Parks Master plan, as appended to that report, **BE ADOPTED**.

Included in the PMP adopted by Council was Recommendation 50 which stated:

Relocate the existing skate park components to a new site in Urban Amherstburg once Centennial Park is decommissioned. Undertake a site evaluation exercise to determine a preferred location.

Also included in the PMP was Recommendation 73 which stated:

Relocate any major outdoor recreation amenities currently housed at Centennial Park to the Libro Credit Union Centre. This may include: a skateboard park, ball diamonds (4), tennis courts, and basketball courts.

In September 2019, Monteith Brown was hired to assist the Town in the development of the Libro Centre Expansion Master Plan (LCEMP), as was recommended in the PMP. This exercise was undertaken to assist the Town in further developing a secondary plan for the amenities that should be considered for relocation to the Libro Centre site (Libro).

Consultations included:

- Mayor's Youth Advisory Committee on November 28, 2019
- Public consultation January 11, 2020
- Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee on March 11, 2020
- Seniors Advisory Committee September 8, 2020
- Accessibility Advisory Committee as well as stakeholders and user groups September 24, 2020

All advisory committees consulted were supportive of the LCEMP, which included an area for the skateboard park at the Libro.

On September 29, 2020 Council adopted Resolution # 20200928-308 in anticipation of the decommissioning of Centennial Park (PMP – Recommendation 50):

Resolution #20200928-308

That:

1. Administration **BE DIRECTED** to come back to the 2021 Budget with all costs associated with the new skate park;
2. The Libro Centre, 320 Richmond (former St. Bernard's School) and Jack Purdie Park **BE CONSIDERED** as the locations for the new skate park; and
3. The public **BE CONSULTED** on the 3 locations being considered.

In November 2020, during 2021 Budget deliberations, Council approved funding of \$75,000 for the relocation of the skate park based on budget issue paper PARKS-CAP-2, which outlined the following:

The Libro Secondary Plan has specifically identified a site for an extreme sports precinct which includes the installation of a skate board park. The Plan has been publicly vetted, presented to user and stakeholder groups, presented to applicable Committees of Council (Mayor's Youth Advisory, Senior's Advisory, Parks & Recreation and Accessibility) but has not been officially reviewed and adopted by Council.

The project in light of the imminent loss of the facility to which capital funds would be required in 2021 to relocate, would be for the relocation of the existing park without additional amenities. This would be done in consultation with the stakeholder groups to ensure functionality of the park and that it met current user needs. The location of the skateboard park was identified at the Libro Centre, which resides in Urban Amherstburg, and the project was set to include:

- Site preparation and installation of a concrete surface
- Installation of the existing ramps and jumps

Administration completed a comparative site evaluation process of the 3 sites contemplated by Resolution # 20200928-308.

Prior to the 2020 Budget process Administration requested a comparative site assessment by Windsor Police Service (WPS). The WPS assessment recommended the Libro site as the most suitable location for the skate park based on proven applications through universally recognized principles of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED).

The report conclusively states the Libro location offers exceptional natural surveillance capability through ongoing observation from a multitude of directions via passing vehicles (including police), cyclists and pedestrians. The suggested location mentioned good lighting on a highly visible corner which would both deter unlawful activity and facilitate ease of reporting. The report from Windsor Police states this location offers excellent attributes to promote and maintain safe usage with low probability for negative impacts to the community. (See **Appendix A** Comparative Site Assessment by WPS)

Subsequent to the 2021 Budget process, on December 14, 2020 resolution 20200928-308 was reconsidered and the following motion adopted:

Resolution #20201214-479

That:

1. The Libro Centre, 320 Richmond (former St. Bernard's School), Jack Purdie Park and the north end of Centennial Park **BE CONSIDERED** as the locations for the new skate park; and
2. The public **BE CONSULTED** on the 4 locations being considered.

As a result, Administration began the work to design the options for the public consultation meetings to consider relocation of the skateboard park to 320 Richmond, Jack Purdie and Centennial Park. Administration was in the process of beginning the

public consultation meetings for the skateboard park, when at the February 22, 2021 meeting Council adopted resolution 20210222-057 as follows:

Option 2 – That Administration **BE DIRECTED** to proceed with public consultation for the rezoning of a portion of Jack Purdie Park in accordance with the highest and best use for the subject lands in accordance with the Town's Official Plan regarding Housing First Policy.

Based on that Council Resolution, the previously directed public consultation on possible relocation of the skateboard park to Jack Purdie Park or Centennial Park was suspended for a more fulsome public consultation that will provide residents with the highest and best uses for those parks overall. Options for highest and best use of Jack Purdie Park and Centennial Park would include consideration of incorporating the skate park in the respective options presented to the public. Bezair and Associates were engaged to assist Administration in developing concepts for the parks as directed by the resolution.

At the April 12, 2021 Council meeting, Councillor McArthur requested an update for the skate park options. Council was advised by the CAO that renderings were expected to be available at the end of April. In light of the timing of the exercise Council requested that a temporary home be found for the skate park until the fulsome public consultation could occur. With this direction, Administration focused on a temporary location without encumbering any of the lands at the Libro, Jack Purdie or Centennial Park in an effort not to jeopardize the public consultation process to address the highest and best use of park land at Jack Purdie and Centennial. In addition, Council is awaiting the results of these public meetings to approve the Libro Master Plan as directed in Council Resolution #20210125-016.

Administration examined the possible use of two temporary sites for the skatepark relocation: 300 Victoria Street (former location of Fighting Island Boxing Club) and 320 Richmond. Upon completion of the review, 320 Richmond was determined to be the most suitable location for the temporary home because the 300 Victoria Street property is planned for disposal and is not of sufficient size to accommodate the skatepark equipment.

At the May 25, 2021 Council meeting a further update was requested on the status of determining a temporary skateboard park relocation site. At that meeting it was affirmed by the Director of Community and Protective Services that the parking lot to the east of 320 Richmond would be the most suitable location for temporary skate park and the aim would be to have the site available for the 3rd week in June; however, the cost to do so was not known or discussed at that time.

At the June 14, 2021 Council meeting, Council directed Administration to temporarily relocate the skateboard park to 320 Richmond St. until a permanent location was approved. A 2021 capital project related over-expenditure for construction of an asphalt pad to temporarily house the skateboard park as an extension to the parking lot at the rear of the HUB building was approved at a total cost not to exceed \$75,000 including net HST, funded by a transfer from Reserve – Capital New.

The Skate Park was moved to the rear of the building at 320 Richmond St. as an extension to the parking area and opened for Canada Day, July 1, 2021.

In order to temporarily relocate the skate to the interim location, the full provision of approved funding in the amount of \$75,000 was used. This provides a clear indication that the approved allotment of \$75,000 will not provide sufficient funding to relocate this facility to a future location.

3. DISCUSSION:

The temporary installation of the Skate Park at 320 Richmond St. was popular however, shortly after its installation, tenants and customers, including seniors and young children were experiencing bullying and aggressive behaviour from youth in the area.

Vandalism and unlawful behaviour escalated to a point where tenants and patrons using the facility no longer felt safe, resulting in a loss of comfort and enjoyment. As a result, a site assessment for public safety and security was requested and conducted by Windsor Police in October 2021. (See **Appendix B-** Site Assessment for Public Safety and Security for 320 Richmond Street)

The site assessment was carried out using Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principals. The report indicated that the park in its temporary state created a series of safety and security concerns for users of the building as well as the surrounding neighbourhood.

Although the temporary location at 320 Richmond offered good natural surveillance from residents on Victoria St. passing pedestrians, vehicles and cyclists the features of the skate park themselves created limited overall observation capacity. Thus, pockets of visually discreet space allowed for the influx of undesirable behaviour to establish and continue without easy detection.

There was considerable evidence of unlawful behaviour in the form of graffiti and extensive amounts of litter, drug use paraphernalia, lighters and refuse throughout the confines of the skateboard park. The inner corner of the building has been a source of some individuals climbing the fenced utility pipes to unlawfully gain access onto the roof of the building. Windsor Police recommended moving the ramps and jumps, adjust lighting, and install motion lights and CCTV recording cameras to address the situation.

On November 20, 2021, the Skate Park was dismantled, removed and placed in storage until a permanent location is determined due to health and safety concerns raised by tenants at 320 Richmond.

Administration has developed the following plan of action:

1. Finalize the Skate Park Public survey and post the results online.
2. Initiate an RPF to obtain a specialized design consultant to work with the community and Administration to design a multi versatile Skate Park facility based on public survey comments that closed December 6, 2021. In order to proceed, Council would need to approve preliminary phase 1 funding for consulting and design services. Any unused portion of this funding would be rolled into phase 2 in terms of construction for the facility.

3. Host a public consultation session in 2022 to obtain feedback on proposed design options and potential phasing.
4. Bring the Skate Park Capital project forward in the 2022 Capital Budget deliberations for consideration with the potential installation and implementation in 2023 or as budget allows.

The public survey recently issued was aimed at obtaining input on both the design features of the skate park and feedback regarding a permanent location. The survey closed December 6, 2021. Results are attached under (**Appendix C – Survey Responses / Comments and Ideas for New Skate Park**)

Survey Results are summarized below:

- The majority of respondents, 63.7% were over 30 years old
- Respondents (43.1%) indicated the ideal skate park should be all inclusive and able to be used by BMX, boarders, scooters, mountain bikes and roller blades
- Preferred top 10 features identified (in order of preference):
 1. Half pipe
 2. Ramps
 3. Cement skate bowl
 4. Quarter pipe
 5. Rails
 6. Pump track
 7. Shelter
 8. 4-way tie: Benches, Pools, Bike repair station, & Snake run
 9. Bleachers
 10. Transfer / Trees (tied)
- Other amenities requested include:
 - Lighting
 - Garbage / recycle containers
 - Washroom access
- The most popular location was the H. Murray Smith Centennial Park (24 people or 41.4%), with the Libro Centre 2nd (21 people or 36.2%) and Jack Purdie Park last (13 people or 22.4%).

The popular vote for the Skate park location in the most recent survey conducted stated the H. Murray Smith Centennial Park was preferred location over the Libro Centre. That being said the difference is relatively small (3 people or 5.2% of respondents). Administration does not recommend locating the Skate Park at Centennial Park based on all the variables associated with skate park design and due to the close proximity to 320 Richmond and the vulnerable populations using this facility. Recent unlawful conduct by youth in the area was apparent when the Skate Park was temporarily relocated behind the building at 320 Richmond. Locating it across the street in Centennial Park would not be advisable as this activity is sure to continue.

Jack Purdie Park is situated in a heavily populated residential neighbourhood with housing backing onto the park in all directions. Administration does not recommend locating the skate park at Jack Purdie Park for the same reasons it was problematic at

320 Richmond. Locating it so close to residential housing will surely create a host of issues similar to that of the HUB for families living in the area.

A facility of this nature belongs in a park where there is sufficient space to accommodate a range of design features, that is highly visible and where an adequate buffer exists between the facility and surrounding residential housing. (See **Appendix D** – Proposed Skate Park Location)

Administration therefore recommends the North West corner of the Libro property located at 3295 Meloche Road as the permanent location for the skate park for the following reasons:

1. It is supported by the Parks Master Plan Recommendation 73 which stated:

Relocate many major outdoor recreation amenities currently housed at Centennial Park to the Libro Credit Union Centre. This may include: skate board park, ball diamonds (4), tennis courts, and basketball court.
2. The Libro Secondary Plan has specifically identified a site for an extreme sports precinct which includes the installation of a skate board park. The Plan has been publicly vetted, presented to user and stakeholder groups, presented to applicable Committees of Council (Mayor's Youth Advisory, Senior's Advisory, Parks and Recreation, and, Amherstburg Accessibility Advisory Committees) but has not been officially reviewed and adopted by Council.
3. The site is located in a prominent and highly visible location with built in natural site surveillance due to unobstructed views off Meloche and Simcoe.
4. The site will be in close proximity to the new Fire Station which provides additional eyes on the park 24/7 and built in close proximity to Emergency Medical Services should someone get hurt using the facility.
5. There is sufficient space to accommodate a versatile design capable of handling multiple design features with room for expansion.
6. There is a power source in place and some lighting existing.
7. There are washroom facilities located here.
8. There is access to water.
9. There are staff on site to attend to issues that may arise and general maintenance of the facility.
10. The site is connected to a larger complex geared toward sport excellence and offers adequate parking especially if this facility were to attract tournaments and or special events.
11. The site is located away from residential housing and is not in close proximity to other town assets creating a natural buffer.
12. The site is located in an area that is essentially flat with good drainage which does not require a substantial amount of re-grading in order to accommodate the installation of an initial pad.

For these reasons, Administration is seeking direction from Council on:

- The permanent location of the Skate Park in Amherstburg;
- Approval to issue an RFP for professional Skate Park Design Services; and,

- Funding in the amount of \$75,000 to initiate Phase 1 including public consultation, professional design and consulting services, all remaining funding would be allocated toward the construction cost of the project.

4. RISK ANALYSIS:

The removal of the temporary Skate Park at 320 Richmond was necessary in order to help mitigate some of the health and safety concerns brought forth by users of the HUB. The community is waiting for a decision to be made regarding the permanent location of the Skate Park. Should Council decide not proceed with an approved location for the Skate Park there is a medium to high risk this would be poorly received by the community resulting in negative political backlash and mistrust. In order to mitigate this risk Administration is recommending a location be selected.

Proper planning, design and public consultation can be a lengthy process. In order to proceed with the project Council must approve the project, its location and funding for design and construction. Should council defer this project at the 2022 budget deliberations the community will be without this amenities for a longer duration of time.

5. FINANCIAL MATTERS:

On average Skate Parks cost anywhere from \$50 to \$60 dollars per square foot. In order to proceed with the project, public consultation and the issuance of an RFP for specialized design and consulting services is required. Administration is recommending funding in the amount of \$75,000 for this phase from the Parks Capital Reserve.

Should Council wish to proceed, Administration will work with local users and the successful proponent to develop an amenity that suits the needs of the community.

6. CONSULTATIONS:

Windsor Police Services
Parks Division
Financial Services Division
Facilities Division
Fire Department
Recreation Division

7. CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, Administration is seeking Council's approval and direction regarding the permanent location for the Skate Park. The northwest corner of the Libro property located at 3925 Meloche Street would be an ideal location due to proximity to neighbours, space availability, and access to hydro, water and onsite staffing and proximity to emergency services once the new Fire Station is built.

For these reasons the Libro Centre located at 3295 Meloche Rd provides the best for this facility and follows the recommendations as outlined in the Parks Master Plan, the Libro Secondary Plan, as well as the recommendation from the Windsor Police Services.




Heidi Baillargeon
Director of Parks, Recreation, Facilities and Culture

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Skate Park Update.docx
Attachments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Appendix A Comparative Site Assessment by WPS.pdf- Appendix B Site Assessment for Public Safety and Security for 320 Richmond Street.pdf- Appendix C Survey Responses Comments and Ideas for the new Skate Park.pdf- APPENDIX D - PROPOSED SKATE PARK LOCATION.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Dec 8, 2021

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Tiffany Hong



Tony Haddad



Valerie Critchley