



**City of Kingston  
Report to Council  
Report Number 25-040**

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**To:** Mayor and Members of Council

**From:** Jennifer Campbell, Commissioner, Community Services  
Paige Agnew, Commissioner, Growth & Development Services

**Resource Staff:** Amy Elgersma, Director, Recreation & Leisure Services  
Brandon Forrest, Director, Business, Real Estate & Environment

**Date of Meeting:** January 14, 2025

**Subject:** Request for Direction on Potential Land Lease – Multi-Sport Stadium

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**Council Strategic Plan Alignment:**

Theme: 3. Build an Active and Connected Community

Goal: 3.1 Expand parks and recreation opportunities and participation.

Theme: 5. Drive Inclusive Economic Growth

Goal: 5.6 Consider opportunities to enhance sports tourism.

**Executive Summary:**

As part of Council Strategic Priorities 3.1.2 and 5.6, and through [Report Number 24-015](#) staff have been directed to evaluate opportunities for the innovative adaptation and reuse of aging buildings (Centre 70, Portsmouth Olympic Harbour (POH) and the Memorial Centre) and have been advancing this work through the development of a combined visioning of POH and Centre 70 alongside of design development for the Memorial Centre site based on past community consultation ([ARCP-22-002](#)) and Council's prior endorsement of the Kingston Sports Infrastructure Inventory and Assessment commissioned by Tourism Kingston and Kingston

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Accommodation Partners ([Report Number 23-251](#)). In addition, Council approved [Report Number 24-002](#) directing staff to move forward with the enclosure of the Culligan Water Park located at the Memorial Centre site to make it a year-round aquatics facility.

Within the context of the above directions, City staff were recently approached by Victory Grounds Ventures (VGV) to establish a multi-sports stadium that is domed in the winter and will bring a Canadian Premier League (CPL) soccer team and two semi-professional (League1) soccer teams to Kingston. VGV is interested in entering a long-term lease for a portion of the existing green/field space at the Memorial Centre site to establish this stadium. The stadium would not only be utilized by the above listed soccer teams but would also be available for community user groups and sports organizations. The Memorial Centre site was identified by the proponent due to its location within the core of the City, its walkability and access to transit and its existing recreational and sport use.

If Council were to provide direction to move forward on exploring the stadium at the Memorial Centre it would be understood that:

- Culligan Water Park would be enclosed and function as a year-round aquatic facility as approved by Council;
- There would be no impact on the park, play structure or splash pad areas;
- There would be no impact on the Memorial Wall and associated park area located at the front of the property;
- There would need to be a relocation of the dog park within the field at the back of the property;
- There would be a loss of some sport field uses and impacts to the circular track at the back of the property;
- The existing barns would need to be removed to allow for an extended community use footprint and additional parking capacity. The City would need to work with the Agricultural Fair to identify alternate options;
- The redevelopment/design of the site moving forward would continue to include space for the Year-Round Farmers' Market; and
- There would continue to be sufficient space on the property to implement a future redevelopment that could include two ice pads and community space including an indoor farmers' market as per previous high-level visioning for the site.

The proponent would be responsible for the capital and operating cost of the stadium and would partner with the City to support site alterations at the Memorial Centre property. Should Council direct staff to work with the proponent on this site, more due diligence, including community consultation, would be required before final Council approval. It is important that Council consider this opportunity and provide direction to staff at its January 14, 2025 meeting as VGV must confirm a firm intent to move forward in Kingston to the respective professional leagues by the end of March 2025.

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**Recommendation:****Option 1:**

**That** Council direct staff to work with Victory Grounds Ventures on the development of a long-term lease for a portion of the existing green/field space at the Memorial Centre site to establish a multi-sports stadium that is domed in the winter and to bring a Canadian Premier League Soccer team and two semi- professional soccer teams to Kingston while providing access to the community user groups and sports organizations; and

**That** staff be directed to enter into a 120 day exclusivity period with Victory Grounds Ventures to allow the City time to conduct community consultation and complete due diligence on the potential lease with the assurance that Victory Grounds Ventures is not concurrently exploring opportunities with other communities; and

**That** staff be directed to conduct community consultation on the proposed relocation of the dog park within the field at the back of the property, the loss of some sport field uses, impacts to the circular track at the back of the property, and on the identification of alternate options/locations for the annual Agricultural Fair; and

**That** staff be directed to report back at the March 18, 2025 City Council meeting on the proposed terms of a land lease, that will include consideration of community feedback.

**Option 2:**

**That** Council direct staff to work with Victory Grounds Ventures on the development of a long-term lease for an alternate City-owned property to establish a multi-sports stadium that is domed in the winter and to bring a Canadian Premier League Soccer team and two semi- professional soccer teams to Kingston while providing access to the community user groups and sports organizations; and

**That** staff be directed to enter into a 120 day exclusivity period with Victory Grounds Ventures to allow the City time to conduct community consultation and complete due diligence on the potential lease with the assurance that Victory Grounds Ventures is not concurrently exploring opportunities with other communities; and

**That** staff be directed to conduct community consultation on any potential alternate City-owned properties in consideration of impacts to existing community uses; and

**That** staff be directed to report back at the March 18, 2025 City Council meeting on the proposed terms of a land lease for an alternate City-owned property, that will include consideration of community feedback.

**Option 3:**

**That** Council direct staff not to work with Victory Grounds Ventures on the development of a long-term lease on any City-owned property.

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**Authorizing Signatures:**

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY COMMISSIONER

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**Jennifer Campbell,  
Commissioner, Community  
Services**

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY COMMISSIONER

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**Paige Agnew, Commissioner,  
Growth & Development Services**

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY CHIEF

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

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**Lanie Hurdle, Chief  
Administrative Officer**

**Consultation with the following Members of the Corporate Management Team:**

Neil Carbone, Commissioner, Corporate Services Not required

David Fell, President & CEO, Utilities Kingston Not required

Brad Joyce, Commissioner, Infrastructure, Transportation  
& Emergency Services Not required

Desirée Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer & City Treasurer

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**Options/Discussion:****Background**

In 2022, Council endorsed a preliminary project scope for the Kingston Memorial Centre Community Hub Revitalization Project (Report Number [ARCP-22-002](#)). The scope considered all previous community feedback received on the revitalization needed at the site. A consistent desired outcome of these consultations focused on developing the site as a community hub that would continue to support the needs of many residents in the community as well as become a centre of attraction for various sports tournaments.

The preliminary scope endorsed by Council for the Kingston Memorial Centre Community Hub Revitalization Project included two items that have subsequently been separately advanced. These include:

- YMCA Aquatics and Wellness Facility - Through [Report Number 24-002](#) this intent is now being explored in consideration of the construction of a new aquatic and wellness facility in partnership with the YMCA at the INVISTA Centre.
- Design Options for Enclosing the Culligan Outdoor Aqua Park (for year-round use) - Through [Report Number 24-002](#) the City is now moving forward with the enclosure of the Culligan Water Park with an anticipated completion in spring 2027.

The remainder of the preliminary scope endorsed by Council for the Kingston Memorial Centre Community Hub Revitalization Project includes consideration of:

- Continue the legacy of the site as a memorial to those who died serving in the Canadian Armed Forces;
- Design the project to be a Net-Zero Facility;
- Consider two ice pads;
- Create a Community Services Hub;
- Support an indoor/outdoor year-round Farmers' Market; and
- Support annual agricultural events, and promotion of Kingston Farmers and local farming practices.

The scope Council approved was in no way positioned as a final approval of the revitalization project, and it was not intended to exclude the possibility of future or alternate uses or partnerships on the site. The scope's approval in 2022 was a first step to allow staff to proceed with design development and feasibility considerations. Preliminary design, feasibility and technical considerations are necessary to advance future grant applications, and to explore partnership opportunities to assist in funding various potential aspects of the revitalization project.

It was and remains understood that the design, feasibility and technical considerations would be subject to future community consultation and would require additional Council review, endorsement and approval.

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In May of 2023, Council unanimously approved Kingston's Strategic Plan 2023-2026, which included priority 3.1.2 directing staff to evaluate opportunities for the innovative adaptation and reuse of aging buildings: Centre 70, POH and the Memorial Centre. On December 3, 2023, Council further directed staff to advance this work as a combined visioning of Centre 70 and POH alongside of the development of the design for the redevelopment and revitalization of the Memorial Centre. The alignment of the visioning and design work on these three sites allows for a wholistic consideration of how the City can invest in its aging infrastructure to best community use and with necessary fiscal restraint. This visioning and design work is scheduled for completion by Q2 2026 ([Report Number 24-157](#)) and formal community consultation is expected to begin in 2025.

### **New Opportunity – Multi-Sport Stadium**

In late fall of 2024, staff in the City's Business, Real Estate & Environment Department were approached by Victory Grounds Ventures (VGV) with interest in establishing a multi-sports stadium ("stadium") that is domed in the winter and bringing a Canadian Premier League (CPL) soccer team and two semi-professional (League1) soccer teams to Kingston. VGV is interested in entering a long-term lease for a portion of the existing green/field space at the Memorial Centre site to establish the stadium. The stadium is a modular construction and could be quickly constructed and also more easily removed in future if needed. The stadium would not only be utilized by the above listed soccer teams but would also be available for community user groups and sports organizations. The Memorial Centre site was identified by the proponent as a location of primary interest due its location within the core of the City, its walkability and access to transit and its existing recreational and sport use. If the site was not supported by Council, VGV would be interested in exploring alternate City-owned locations.

### **Option One**

Option one would see Council direct staff to work with VGV on the development of a long-term lease for a portion of the existing green/field space at the Memorial Centre site to establish a multi-sports stadium that is domed in the winter and to bring a Canadian Premier League Soccer team and two semi-professional (League1) soccer teams to Kingston. The stadium would not only be utilized by the above listed soccer teams but would also be available for community user groups and sports organizations.

In option one the City would enter into a 120 day exclusivity period with VGV to allow the City time to conduct community consultation and complete due diligence on the potential lease with the assurance that VGV is not concurrently exploring opportunities with other communities.

Direction to staff to move forward with Option one would require Council to endorse in principal that if the lease and stadium were ultimately approved and implemented on the site, that modifications would be required to the preliminary scope for the site, previously endorsed by Council in 2022.

If Council were to provide direction to move forward on exploring the stadium at the Memorial Centre it would be understood that:

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- Culligan Water Park would be enclosed and function as a year-round aquatic facility as approved by Council;
- There would be no impact on the park, play structure or splash pad areas;
- There would be no impact on the Memorial Wall and associated park area located at the front of the property;
- There would need to be a relocation of the dog park within the field at the back of the property;
- There would be a loss of some sport field uses and impacts to the circular track at the back of the property;
- The existing barns would need to be removed to allow for an extended community use footprint and additional parking capacity. The City would need to work with the Agricultural Fair to identify alternate options;
- The redevelopment/design of the site moving forward would continue to include space for the year-round Farmers' Market; and
- There would continue to be sufficient space on the property to implement a future redevelopment that could include two ice pads and community space including an indoor Farmers' Market as per previous high-level visioning for the site.

In the development of terms for the long-term lease of a portion of the existing green/field space at the Memorial Centre site, staff would undertake additional community consultation on the proposed relocation of the dog park within the field at the back of the property, the loss of some sport field uses, impacts to the circular track at the back of the property, and on the identification of alternate options/locations for the annual Agricultural Fair.

It is important to note that as part of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, it was identified that the number of arenas/ice pads that the City currently owns and operates was, at that time, considered acceptable based on "current" and forecasted participation numbers and utilization rates. Based on the 2021 population and participation/use data, the revitalization plan proposal to twin the ice at the Memorial Centre would result in more ice than is needed and staff were at that time prepared to explore the possibility of decommissioning a single ice pad elsewhere in the City to allow for the development of an additional multi-pad facility at the Memorial Centre. The most likely site for this decommissioning of ice was at the time identified as Centre 70, given the age of the infrastructure and costs associated with rehabilitating that site.

In 2023 Council endorsed updated population growth models that see Kingston growing at a far faster rate than was anticipated in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Given the significant population growth now projected for the City, staff will be reviewing and updating the forecasted facility needs across the recreation and parks portfolio throughout 2025-2026 and taking these into consideration in any future recommendations to Council on the visioning for Centre 70, POH and Memorial Centre sites. Staff are also engaged with Queen's University in discussions on the redevelopment of the Memorial Centre ice and the desire to continue having the Gael's use the site as their home stadium. These discussions will also continue as part of the visioning and design work in 2025.

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### Option Two

Option two would see Council direct staff to work with VGV on the development of a long-term lease for an alternate City-owned property to establish a multi-sports stadium that is domed in the winter and to bring a Canadian Premier League Soccer team and two semi-professional (League1) soccer teams to Kingston. The stadium would not only be utilized by the above listed soccer teams but would also be available for community user groups and sports organizations.

As in option one, in option two the City would enter into a 120 day exclusivity period with VGV to allow the City time to conduct community consultation and complete due diligence on the potential lease with the assurance that VGV is not concurrently exploring opportunities with other communities. With option two staff would conduct public engagement on potential alternate sites and in consideration of impacts to existing community uses at any potential sites.

Option two introduces a greater degree of uncertainty to the potential land lease project. Staff have conducted an initial review of City owned land and given the amount of space needed any options that could be explored would, similar to option one, have an impact on existing infrastructure. Past community feedback and studies have found that recreation facilities that are clustered or that offer multi sport options are preferred venues for hosting local, provincial, national and/or international sport tourism and special events. Through option two, should a suitable alternate site be identified it is unlikely to contribute as significantly to the development of a clustered multi-sport venue.

### Option 3

Option three would see Council direct staff not to work with VGV on the development of a long-term lease for any portion of City-owned property. If this direction were provided, staff would continue with the visioning for Centre 70 and POH and the design for the Memorial Centre as originally intended.

### Next Steps

It is important that Council consider this opportunity and provide direction to staff at the January 14, 2025, meeting of Council as VGV must confirm a firm intent to move forward in Kingston to the respective professional leagues by the end of March 2025. Staff have included in option one and option two, recommendations with direction to bring back to Council at its scheduled March 18, 2025, meeting any potential land lease for Council's consideration. The report would also include feedback received from the associated community consultation(s).

In addition, and depending on the direction provided by Council, staff will need to consider the resulting community impacts and opportunities as part of the combined visioning of Centre 70 and POH alongside of the development of the design for the revitalization of the Memorial Centre. This visioning and design work is scheduled for completion by Q2 2026 ([Report Number 24-157](#)) and formal community consultation is expected to begin early in 2025.



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Should Council endorse a lease at its March 18, 2025 meeting, VGV would be required to seek technical approvals for the proposed project moving forward. Submissions for these approvals would include required technical studies and consideration of site servicing, parking and traffic planning for example. Staff have advised VGV of the timelines and processes for seeking these approvals should Council provide direction to move forward.

**Public Engagement**

Extensive consultation was undertaken as part of the Kingston Memorial Centre Community Hub Revitalization Project, and in the development of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Moving forward, community consultation will continue on the visioning for Centre 70 and POH and on the design work/preliminary planning for the revitalization of the Memorial Centre.

Should Council endorse option one or option two of this report, additional community consultation will be conducted specific to the lease opportunity and its impacts at either the Memorial Centre or at an alternate City-own property.

**Climate Risk Considerations**

The preliminary scope previously endorsed by Council for the Memorial Centre included intent to design the project to be a Net-Zero Facility. Additionally, VGV has indicated that their proposed multi-sport stadium, if ultimately approved, would include significant green technologies to lessen any negative climate impacts. These would be considered as part of any required site plan, building applications or other technical studies/reviews should the project move forward.

**Indigenization, Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Accessibility (IIDEA) Considerations**

A commitment of the City of Kingston Parks and Recreation Master Plan is to strive to eliminate physical, social, financial, cultural and other barriers to accessing recreational pursuits in Kingston, while additionally supporting a range of services, facilities and programs that reflect the diverse interests and cultures within the City. The addition of a multi-sport stadium for use by both professional soccer teams as well as by community user groups and sports organizations aligns with these intents.

**Existing Policy/By-Law**

Parks and Recreation Master Plan (Updated January 2023)

**Financial Considerations**

The proponent, VGV, would be responsible for the capital and operating cost of the stadium and would partner with the City to support site alterations at the Memorial Centre property. These alterations and associated funding would be subject to future approval by Council.

The 2025 design work to be completed for the Memorial Centre will additionally allow staff to develop cost estimates for the future revitalization of the site that can then be included in future capital budget planning. These cost estimates are also necessary to advance future grant

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applications, and to explore partnership opportunities to assist in funding various potential aspects of the broader revitalization project.

The lease of land will be for fair market value and terms are subject to further negotiations.

**Contacts:**

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Brandon Forrest, Director, Business Real Estate & Environment, 613-546-4291 extension 2205

**Exhibits Attached:**

Exhibit A – Stadium Renderings

**Exhibit A**  
**Report Number 25-040**



**Exhibit A**  
**Report Number 25-040**

