

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

TO: Shane Bourke, City Manager	DATE: June 23, 2025
FROM: Brian Glavin, Chief Operating Officer	MEETING: Council Committee of the Whole
REPORT WRITER: Kase DeVries, M.Sc., Director of Environment and Parks	
SUBJECT: Bear Paw Driving Range	

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Committee receive this report for information.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL / COMMITTEE DIRECTIONS

At the June 11, 2025 Council meeting the following motion was passed:

“Committee direct Administration to bring back a report with cost estimates for the South Bear Creek Driving Range to maintain the current facility and/or rebuild it.”

At the June 2, 2025 Council meeting the following motion was passed:

“Council direct Administration to meet with Nitehawk to find the best option to reopen the driving range, and bring a report back to a future Council Committee of the Whole meeting.”

BACKGROUND

In 2023, a structural analysis of the safety net poles was completed by ISL Engineering. This report determined that all the poles were in poor condition, requiring replacement within 1 – 3 years. In 2025, a repeat analysis was completed that determined that all poles had deteriorated further and need immediate attention. The Par 3 course and campground are unaffected.

During the 2025 Council budget deliberations, \$42,500 in capital funding was approved to decommission the Bear Paw Driving Range, with the decommissioning planned to commence this summer.

ANALYSIS

The Bear Paw Driving Range has reached the end of its life with the existing facility infrastructure. This presents a decision point for the City to assess the recreation needs and long-term plan for

investment in the South Bear Creek Area, as recommended in the Grande Prairie Area Joint Recreation Master Plan (2016). As part of the City's broader commitment to long-term recreational planning, the Parks and Open Space Master Plan would support identifying potential future uses for the South Bear Creek Plan area, including the Bear Paw site. An update to this plan would help guide strategic decisions by evaluating recreational needs, environmental considerations, and infrastructure opportunities within the area. This approach ensures that any future redevelopment of the driving range is consistent with community expectations and integrated with the overall vision for South Bear Creek.

The Bear Paw Driving Range is located over a former landfill site, the nature of this type of site limits how it can be utilized and increases construction complexity. The Phase 1 and 2 costs were sourced from three qualified engineering firms. Construction costs were estimated using an assumption that engineering and design costs usually represent 10-15% of construction costs for higher complexity projects. As the construction costs are hypothetical at this point, it is possible that estimates could come in lower with more certain site conditions after Phase 1. The work completed in Phase 1 will be useful in any scenario as it will provide usable information for other future uses, even if we do not proceed with rebuilding the driving range. Administration has identified the following phased approach to rebuilding the existing Bear Paw Driving Range facility:

Phase 1	Environmental, Geotechnical, and Geophysical Assessment	\$30,000
Phase 2	Engineering and Design	\$95,000 - \$170,000
Phase 3	Construction	\$630,000 - \$1.7M

Phase 1

A combined environmental, geotechnical and geophysical assessment is a key step in evaluating the existing state of the site and supporting future design work, including the rebuilding of the driving range or introducing other recreational amenities.

The scope of work would include identifying the extent of the former landfill cell, determining the depth and structure of the landfill cap, evaluating what would be required to support the installation of new pole and netting infrastructure, and assessing any environmental considerations for the site.

Phase 2

An engineering consultant is required to complete the structural analysis and design of a new driving range facility, taking into account the site-specific requirements of building on a former landfill. This engineering consultant would also manage and oversee the installation of the driving range poles and netting, ensuring that all poles are installed to a standard that meets the structural and environmental requirements.

Phase 3

Based on the final design, construction would proceed with the installation of new netting and support poles. It is anticipated that a combination of steel and wooden poles may be utilized to achieve the increased height required to protect adjacent properties.

Relationship to City Council's Areas of Focus / Strategic Priorities

Quality of Life – Fostering a community in which our residents love where they live and embrace their environment.

Environmental Impact

An environmental, geotechnical, and geophysical investigation will provide information on subsurface conditions, contamination risks, and cap integrity. This is necessary to ensure any future redevelopment is environmentally safe, compliant, and feasible.

Economic Impact

A clear understanding of the site's redevelopment potential will help guide future investment decisions.

Social Impact

Improvements to park spaces enhance overall quality of life by encouraging outdoor activity, community gathering, and social connection. Assessing the site's potential use is an important step toward ensuring it continues to serve the community well.

Relevant Statutes / Master Plans / City Documents

- Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act
- Landfill Standards and Guidelines for Alberta (2010)
- Parks and Open Space Master Plan (2012)
- Code of Practice for Landfills
- Grande Prairie Area Joint Recreation Master Plan (2016)

Risk

Not completing the geotechnical assessment will result in unknown site conditions that could result to higher long-term costs or environmental liabilities should further development occur at the site.

Alternatives

- That Committee recommend Council approve \$30,000 from the future expenditures reserve to execute an environmental, geotechnical, and geophysical assessment at the Bear Paw Driving Range.
- That Committee refer an update of the City Parks and Open Space Master Plan to 2026 budget deliberations, with emphasis on future uses of the South Bear Creek area.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Environment and Parks consulted with Recreation and Engineering and Transportation Services to review the feasibility of continued use of the site. Administration consulted with multiple industry professionals, including engineering firms, driving range designers, and geotechnical firms to determine budgetary cost estimates for the design and construction of the Bear Paw Driving Range.

BUDGET / FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no Budget / Financial Implications with the recommendation. Costs associated with each phase are presented in the Analysis.

SUMMARY / CONCLUSION

The wooden poles at the Bear Paw Driving Range have reached, or are soon to reach, the end of their usable life. This presents a decision point to evaluate recreation needs by either replacing the driving range or considering other opportunities for long-term investment in the South Bear Creek area through an update to the 2012 Parks and Open Space Master Plan, with emphasis on the future use of the South Bear Creek area.

Administration has coordinated internally and consulted externally to assess the current state of the facility infrastructure. An environmental, geotechnical and geophysical investigation is required to determine the site's redevelopment potential and support any future rebuilding of the Bear Paw Driving Range.