



Founded 1876

# VICTORIA HIGH SCHOOL

---

1260 Grant Street, Victoria, BC V8T 1C2

Telephone [REDACTED]

Victoria City Hall  
1 Centennial Square  
Victoria BC V8W 1P6

Attention:  
City Councillors and Mayor

March 3, 2021

I am writing regarding the outdoor amenities at Victoria High School. I have read a handful of public letters requesting that a 400 metre, eight lane competitive track be built to the specifications originally proposed by the Vic High Alumni Association as one of the phases in a stadium revitalization project. While a track may be of high value to the community, a full-sized competitive track is an expensive asset that potentially restricts the expansion and enhancement of other playing surfaces that are of higher interest to the current and future students of Vic High.

Our track and cross country programs are very small programs, attracting less than 10 students per year. While I am hopeful these programs will grow, as the principal of the school and the cross country coach, I am confident a training track or running ring would be sufficient to support our current and future running programs.


In my observations and conversations with staff and students, I have not seen or heard of a significant interest in a full sized track that would be capable of hosting sanctioned competitions. I do see a significant demand for competitive playing surfaces for court and field sports. I continue to advocate for enhancing the indoor and outdoor playing surfaces at the school, and believe modern and functional court and field surfaces best supports the overall health of our students and the school.

As our demographics have shifted and enrollment has risen over the last 6 years, Vic High has seen a significant increase in student participation in our field and court sports. Basketball, Volleyball, and Rugby regularly attract well over 100 student participants per sport. Most encouraging is the universal popularity of these activities across ethnic and socio-economic lines. While it is unlikely that you have received any communication from the many new Canadians whose children pack our gym on a daily basis, access to the courts and fields on which these students find familiarity, joy, and connect with youth in and outside their culture, is as important as the classrooms in which they build their academic competencies.

The Vic High playing fields are indisputably in need of upgrading. The extensive community use of the school's grounds has many benefits for our students, but is not without certain costs. The current extensive public use of our primary playing field has contributed to the dilapidated state of this amenity. Dog feces, holes dug by pets, and metal detectorists and the foot traffic during the dormant growing season contribute to the poor condition of the field. I believe upgraded amenities like a running ring or training track, a field that meets BC school sports requirements, outdoor basketball court and sand volleyball courts will better support school and community and partner use of the school and will not compromise our students' ability to train and compete in athletics.

In summary, I see limited benefit to Vic High's athletic and academic programs from a full-sized track and would prefer to see the school district's resources applied to modern, high quality playing surfaces that are in high demand across the full ethnic and socio-economic range of our student body. While I understand that council must balance the needs of many groups that have an interest in the outdoor amenities on the Vic High grounds, it is my hope is that you will take our student interests into consideration in your current deliberations.

Sincerely,



**Aaron Parker**

Principal

École Secondaire Victoria High School

*"Proud History, Strong Future"*

## Madison Heiser

---

**From:** Victoria Mayor and Council  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 16, 2021 12:35 PM  
**To:** Public Hearings  
**Subject:** Fw: Please stand up for Vic High School and Community

---

**From:** Deborah Scott [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** March 15, 2021 7:53 PM  
**To:** Victoria Mayor and Council <mayorandcouncil@victoria.ca>  
**Subject:** Please stand up for Vic High School and Community

Dear Mayor Helps and Council,

I am Deborah Scott, and presented to you in your December meeting regarding the Vic High upgrading of facilities.

I had hoped to hear back with your thoughts regarding the project. In addition, if you felt there was merit in saving the integrity of the Veteran's Memorial Track and the importance of maintaining the intention of the original facility as a high level sports complex.

Other important Points are:

1. Saving green space in the middle of Victoria, that is accessible, to all for a variety of purposes, open to so many citizens that do not have back yards to be out in.
2. Health and wellness for citizens, just like installing bike paths are a significant cost for future wellness and health, contributing to a high level sports complex where students can pursue their athletic dreams, keep the younger generation of students and young people on the right path in life, breath life into this inner city school and local and city community.
3. Respecting and carrying on the tradition of Vic high honouring their dead veterans by replacing the stadium as a full size traditional stadium meant for students to pursue high level athletics, as well as to host provincial and national competitions.
4. Giving student and young people the gift of high level facilities to follow their passion develop their athletic skill.
5. Protecting the green space around Vic High School.

I hope, the members of council will have a deep - heart to heart about the value of this project and maintaining the incredible space for generations to come.

Sincerely, Deborah Scott

Sent from my iPad

## Madison Heiser

---

**From:** Deborah Scott [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 19, 2021 12:41 PM  
**To:** Public Hearings  
**Subject:** \*\*Updated\*\* March 25th, 2:00pm - Inner City Vic High and Honouring our Veterans - Saving the Original Project for High Level Athletics facilities at Vic High School

\*\*\*Updated.....

Submission: Town Hall Meeting - March 25th, 2021 - 2:00pm

Speaker - Deborah Scott

People need to become aware of the potential and major loss of the Vic High School 'Restoration Revitalization Project' - replacing the delapidated Memorial Stadium built in the 1950's to honour their Veterans who lost their life in WWII. This high level sports facilities, at that time, was a full sized, state of the art track and field stadium with bleachers, specifically for future generations to pursue their dreams and passion for high level sport. For several years the plan has been in the works to replace the Memorial Stadium and field that was built with a full size competitive track and field stadium, state of the art fields for rugby and soccer, as well as a field house. Vic High is an inner city school, has the green space to accommodate this beautiful state of the art facility for generations of students, athletes, and community members to access. In addition, Victoria would be able to host city, provincial and national level competitions, bringing in revenue, tourism and providing a boost to the community and city of Victoria.

I hope we all take step back and see the big picture here, the opportunity to save green space, give the students of Vic High and community an amazing facility, and honour the intention of the Memorial Track for the fallen - our veterans. If this agreement is not upheld, and the project is cancelled due to low income housing, this is a tragic loss and it is gone forever. We all know and understand the need for affordable housing, which is totally important and valid, but to do this at Vic High - I believe is losing so much more than it is gaining. Affordable housing opportunities hopefully are available where the community is enhanced and does not stand to lose such a vibrant and integral part of their history and future.

I encourage everyone to process the big picture and support the fight to save Vic High's sporting history and facilities as well as continuing to honour the veteran with a quality place for young people to follow their sporting passions and potential - in high level sport. There is so much value and merit in saving and continuing to honour the tradition and integrity of the Veteran's Memorial Track project from the 1950's.

I write to you, because I know the value of sport and the positive spin offs it provides. When we look at the Commonwealth Games held in Victoria, we know it was a seed that grew into a beautiful garden...and left an amazing legacy for our community. I see the Vic High Sport Facilities Restoration Project giving our citizens this beautiful garden as well - an amazing facility for years and generations to come. We have this one chance to save this and if we don't it will never again be a possibility. Gone for ever....which is so sad and a huge loss to all.

My vision would be one where this inner city community benefits and has accessibility to this beautiful and multi-faceted high level athletic facility where: (1) Athletes can pursue their passion and goals, train and compete at a top grade facility, and where city, provincial and national competitions can be hosted, (2) The students of Vic High through, their Physical and Health Education classes, sports teams and intramural activities, as well as the general school community to use for their Personal Health and Wellness - can access this literally in their 'backyard,' (3) Provide purpose and opportunity to our young people and keep them on the right path, and finally (4) In the heart of Fernwood having a precious space and facility, will breath life into the local and city communities.

In times when outdoor/green space is limited, and is being lost in communities to developments, this is a crucial decision that impacts everyone. This decision needs to represent the needs of the community, as a first priority, not the financial gains of a development. I believe it will have a tremendously negative impact on the Fernwood community to develop this land. Considering that it has been a 'mainstay' in the history of both the school and Fernwood community members, it would be a substantial and irreversible loss.

As we know, society has become very aware of the health benefits of cardiovascular exercise and its importance. People from all walks of life are engaging in Cardiovascular activities by walking, jogging, and running as their 'go to' for outdoor exercise. Having easy access to a facility at Vic High would be optimal for all of the Fernwood community members. Considering the number one killer, around the world are cardiovascular diseases, Placing a heavy burden on our medical system, it is of the utmost importance to provide people with places they are easily accessible to make it convenient for them to add exercise to their day and positively affect their personal health and well-being.

The history of respecting and carrying on the tradition of Vic high honouring their dead veterans (in a variety of ways for both WWI and WWII - see my presentation below to the Victoria City Council meeting Dec. 2020) by replacing the stadium as a full size traditional stadium meant for students to pursue high level athletics. Giving students and young people the gift of these facilities to follow their passion and goals, and as well to develop their athletic skill. In conclusion, there is value of following through with this amazing legacy for future generations to aspire in athletics and maintain this incredible space, for the inner city high school, community both local and for Victoria to use, for generations to come.

\*My presentation to the Victoria council Meeting. (December 2020)\*

- I am a long-time Physical and Health Education Teacher and Coach at St. Margaret's School for over 30 years.
- I am a Victoria resident who was so fortunate to attend Claremont High School. A school that had a dynamic sports program with great facilities - to train and race on - and during this time as a student/athlete @ Claremont, in my grade 12 year - I won the BC High School Championship in Cross Country as well as the 1500 and 3000 meters in Track and Field.
- **AND this is where, more importantly, I discovered my passion for running.**
- A passion that was I was supported in for the next 20 years - through our great sporting community in Victoria.
- I became a 3 time Olympian, won medals in the Commonwealth and Pan Am Games, was a finalist in 3 World Track and Field Championships, had 3 top 15 places in the World Cross Country Championships and won the prestigious 5th Avenue New York Mile.

I am speaking tonight, to ask the Council to endorse and support the construction of a first-class sports facility at Vic High School, which includes a fully functional 8 lane track and artificial turf - with lights and bleachers, as well as a fieldhouse.

The application to alter the site @ Vic High School, to accommodate a housing development is not a reasonable nor a rational reason to 'dummy down' the facility to a non-functional sports facility. Certainly, housing developments are important but it would make more sense for the developers to alter the 'foot print' and design to avoid interfering with the land that has been designated for several years to be developed into an incredible sports facility for the school, clubs, community, SD #61, as well as the city and province.

**It is absolutely essential that the promise is kept and the original plans for the Vic High Memorial Stadium Revitalization Project be reinstated.**

I know you have received many letters and perspectives focused on the value of this Revitalized Stadium and Sports Facility that will have so many deep and positive spin-offs for so many people in our society including:

- the development of high-level sport in soccer, rugby and track & field,
- the facility at Vic High, would be shared with access for staff, students, high level sports clubs, a venue to host city, provincial and national championship events, as well as serving the community members for health and wellness,
- and finally, a facility for the Fernwood community to be proud of.

**However, I am going to focus on my main ‘focal point’. Specifically, on what I feel is an extremely big part of the picture here - and that is how and why the Vic High Memorial Track came to be.**

Vic High School is steeped in history and the tradition of honouring those who fought in the first and second world wars. After both wars, memorial tributes were implemented to recognize and respect the students and teachers who fought and lost their lives.

- In **1917, the Vining Street Maples** were planted in their honour. In**2011** these trees were replaced and new ones were planted to continue to show respect and dignity to these soldiers.
- In addition, there was a 9 meter banner made, called the '**Banner of Sacrifice and Remembrance**'. On this banner there is a hand sewn maple leaf representing each and every Vic High Teacher and Student who lost their lives in WWI.
- In **1951 after WWII, A Memorial Track was built for future generations to have a quality athletic facility** - a full sized - state of the art - Cinder Track, and playing field with bleachers - that was built to honour those teachers and students who lost their lives fighting in WWII.

**Just like the Maple Trees of Vine Street, needed to be replaced - to carry on the memory, respect and tradition of honouring those who gave their lives for their country in WWI, we have that same responsibility to replace the Memorial Stadium with a first-class facility just like the one they built in 1951. I believe, the intention and significance, at that time, in building a high-quality sports facility - the Vic High Memorial Stadium - needs to be upheld and the original plan of a first-class sports facility needs to be reinstated.**

**\*\*This is not just Vic Highs' history, that needs to be respected and honoured it is the Public's History - as well.\*\***

I feel we have a duty, and it is our responsibility to carry forward the spirit and intent of the Memorial Track while we have this opportunity. This history is significant to our society, and our values as Canadians. I sincerely hope that 20 years down the road we can look back and be proud of the choice that is made for future generations, Vic High students, community clubs, SD 61, the local community and the city. And honour how this facility provided the vehicle for athletic achievement where thousands of athletes found their passion and honed their skills, to achieve excellence in sport. Finally, it will be not only an emotional moment, but a magnificent one to see the Memorial Stadium Plaque, where it should be, at the track as part of the amazing facility for future generations to use. Proudly representing and honouring the Vic High students and staff who died while serving their country.

I ask the council to support the '**Revitalized Stadium and Sports Facility**' not only for all of the positive athletic and community opportunities it will provide, but also because it is steeped in history - not just Vic High's history - but ours as well.

Thank you, so much.

Sincerely, Deb  
Athlete, Teacher, Coach, Health advocate

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPad

I will keep my comments brief as I respect your time on various issues that are currently within your purview.

I am a Fernwood resident and a parent of a future Vic High student. I've been invested in this issue and have been following it intently from the moment the community was first made aware of the land swap deal in June of 2019 by SD61. This whole project and land deal has been a frustrating process to navigate. This recent request for development variances makes me nervous and it highlights all of the interested parties (BCHC, SD61, City) have their own separate procedures and are making decisions without knowing what the other players are considering (or each others' permit needs). The community has known this and after reviewing this topic during the February 18, 2021 Committee of the Whole meeting, it continues to be evident that there are vested interests for each party and a general lack of knowledge of each others' requirements.

Variance Request Areas of Concern:

1. Parking variances: Why not challenge the bylaw that would allow parking on the south side (Grant St) of the track to allow for any potential track expansion on the west side? Grant St. is blocked from Chambers and there is a large area that could be converted to a parking lot.
2. Height variances: Approving this height variance could set a false precedent that the community as a whole supports increased height developments. I am supportive of the variance for **school purposes only**. The population of downtown is growing and we need spaces in schools to accommodate this growth. I am very leary that approving this will give license for the BCHC to make an argument to allow the housing development, being built behind the school, to be built at the same height (or higher). I am also leary that approving this variance will assume community approval on increased height density proposed in the Engage Victoria Project for North Park, Fernwood and Quadra.
3. **Losing school land** that impacts future students **equitable opportunities** as compared to other schools within the SD61. The variance request is before you folks now and we all know of the track discussion, so regardless if this is a school issue or city issue you folks have the ability now to keep some equitable space for the students. They have already lost the land behind the school.

Thank you,  
Corey Kowal