

Public Hearing Item: 1260 Grant Street/ 1289 Gladstone Ave.

Development Variance Permit Application No. 00249

Alex Niketas

1249 Chapman Street, V8V 2T7

As a proud Victorian and Victoria High School 2012 graduate, I strongly object to Variance 00249. The reason for my objection is based on the reduction of parking stalls and the resulting track field modifications.

The variance proposal would result in the metric track being minimized from an 8 lane metric track to a 2 lane walking path. I cannot in good faith support such motion that would result in the elimination of track events and rugby games from being held at Victoria High School. If this variance passes, track and high school rugby will cease to exist within the City of Victoria.

Moreover, if this variance passes it will go down as another case of Victoria High School being neglected. As a former Victoria High School grad committee and student body member, I experienced the difficult task of trying to improve student resources at an "inner city" school. This attempt to reduce the metric track size through the parking stall modifications would only add to the numerous list of letdowns Victoria High School has faced.

As the City of Victoria looks to build its image as a healthy and livable city, this variance should be easily defeated as it diminishes athletic opportunities and infrastructure that our future generation will come to need. And as a proud Victorian, I believe our athletes deserve to learn and play within their city and not have to cross over city boundaries.

Thank you for your consideration.

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Bianca G [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 25, 2021 1:29 PM  
**To:** Public Hearings  
**Subject:** Comment for proposed changes to 1260 Grant St/1289 Gladstone Ave

Hello,

I would like to object to relaxation of required parking spaces from 283 spaces to 149 spaces. In this regard there is already pressure on parking in the surrounding neighbourhood and vehicles are already parking in areas that are considered residential only, making it difficult for people living in the area to find parking.

Thank you,

Bianca

Resident on Vining St

Public Hearing Item: 1260 Grant Street/ 1289 Gladstone Ave.

Development Variance Permit Application No. 00249

Chris Niketas

1249 Chapman Street, V8V 2T7

As a proud Victorian and Victoria High School 2017 graduate, I strongly object to Variance 00249. The reason for my objection is based on the reduction of parking stalls and the resulting track field modifications.

The variance proposal would result in the metric track being minimized from an 8 lane metric track to a 2 lane walking path. I cannot in good faith support such motion that would result in the elimination of track events and rugby games from being held at Victoria High School. If this variance passes, track and high school rugby will cease to exist within the City of Victoria, further eliminating all the progress made towards athletics at Vic High.

If this variance passes it will go down as another case of Victoria High School being neglected. As a former Victoria High athlete who made it as the only representative for the track and field team to the BC provincials, I experienced the difficulties in training in a neglected athletic environment. This attempt to reduce the metric track size through the parking stall modifications would only add to the numerous lists of letdowns Victoria High School has faced.

As the City of Victoria looks to build its image as a healthy and livable city, this variance should be easily defeated as it diminishes athletic opportunities and infrastructure that our future generation will come to need. And as a proud Victorian, I believe our athletes deserve to learn and play within their city and not have to cross over city boundaries.

Thank you for your consideration.

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Carolyn Thomas [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 25, 2021 1:31 PM  
**To:** Public Hearings  
**Subject:** Re: Development Variance Permit Application No. 00249

Development Variance Permit Application NO. 0029

Dear Mayor and Councilors,

The proposed variance was submitted in August 2020 and has no recorded task of community engagement. The “Notice of Opportunity for Public Comment” is post marked March 12, 2021; I received the request by mail on March 23, 2021. This sequence, along with construction being underway since September of 2020, does not convey a sense of presence, worth and positive regard to and for the residents of Fernwood.

I disagree with the parking variance. Vic High School’s parking is always an issue for neighbours. I understand that as of today the school board states it requires 160 parking spaces and is asking to provide 148. I believe the missing information is the forecasting of expected Vic High growth and how many spaces will be required in 15 years time, along with the school district’s recently changing of the school’s boundaries therefore more students will come from distances that are not walkable and will more students choose to drive.

I hope Mayor and Council take to heart the profundity not only in this decision but forthcoming that you are approving tomorrow’s history today. Therefore the question is what is best for the residents of Fernwood today and for generations to come.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Carolyn

This is my submission regarding the proposed variances. I question the way these variances are being presented. The CRD housing project has not been approved, yet these variances are intimately tied into that possible project which will sit on the former Fairey Tech site if it passes its own public hearing. Vic High lands are limited. Given all the amenities and new buildings being proposed for the site, it seems there's barely enough land to accommodate it all. Thus, these variances are asking us to know what we just don't know right now. Definitely, a Catch 22.

In my experience as a Fernwood resident who attended the community consultations on the proposed CRD housing project, there has been an ongoing and repetitive lack of transparency. If one asked a question of School District representatives, they said that wasn't their bailiwick and offered no answers. Same thing if one asked a question of the City's or the CHRC's representatives. These three entities have acted as three silos. The only answers provided to our many questions were: *That's the math. We can't change anything.* Does this count as neighbourhood engagement?

There seems to be a similar obfuscation about these variances and the fact that they are intimately entwined with the approved seismic upgrade at Vic High and the proposed housing project. There seems to be a great rush to push this through without giving residents the basic information necessary to come to a well-considered Yay or Nay.

I will concentrate my presentation on the issue of equity through a lens that isn't always talked about – the lens of the loss of green space that the CRD housing project and its many spin-offs will entail. Existing plans for Vic High such as the Memorial Stadium Revitalization Project, parking, and the Neighbourhood Learning Centre are all displaced by this proposal. The end result is a loss of green space for the students of Vic High on both the west and east sides of the school. In Vic High's Project Definition Report, there is no mention of using the former Fairey Tech site for purposes other than the needs of Vic High. Plans were withheld from the public during the consultation process in 2019 and they are not always easy to read, nor are they always as accurate and straight forward as one would hope. For example, the "greenway" is not really a greenway. Plans describe it as paved access for emergency vehicles—a proposed use of Vic High land that was negotiated behind closed doors, but it is also possibly in service to the housing project which is, as yet, not approved.

As you know, the catchment area for Vic High includes neighbourhoods of lower income people, certainly as compared, for example, with Oak Bay High. These kids are less likely to have large backyards. Their families are less likely to own boats, swimming pools, or other amenities which give their kids access to outdoor activities. Vic High's land has served Fernwood and the nearby neighbourhoods for years as free and available open space for recreation for both students and neighbours. What I know is, this open space is well-used for all manner of pick-up sports as well as a place we can go to stretch our legs. It would also provide easy access to residents in downtown condos who are truly starved of green space.

According to the City of Victoria's Parks & Open Spaces Masterplan: "Public schools, which provide some of the same functions as neighbourhood and community parks, are under the greatest threat of change and potential loss of open space. Declining school enrolment has led to recent closures, including Blanchard and Burnside Schools. The BC government has recommended that alternate community uses for schools be considered prior to selling the sites to the private sector." In the case of Vic High, we are not talking about selling the land, but we are talking about building it out with a huge loss of green space.

The CRD housing plans are based on a 60-year lease of Vic High lands. 60 years is as good as being sold. Quoting again from the Open Space Masterplan: "While park land is distributed across the city, only four of nine neighbourhoods are above the City-wide municipal park land per capita (2.65 ha/1,000 residents). North Park, Burnside, Downtown, Fernwood, South Jubilee, North Jubilee, and Rockland have less than half the City-wide municipal park land per capita." On top of this, Vic High's green space is considerably smaller than that of other schools.

Given the city's Urban Villages and Corridors plans, the push to densify the neighbourhoods listed above will take away green space already at a premium. "As the urban density and population increase, demand for parks, open spaces, and outdoor amenities such as gathering and social spaces also increases," another quote from the Masterplan.

I'd like to bring up the issue of the promised metric track which, I gather, has now been nixed – another example of lack of consultation – though we know how valuable it would be to students who come to their scholastic motivation through success in sports. It would also serve the many whose overall wellbeing is enhanced by regular physical activity.

We don't know yet whether a public hearing will approve the CRD housing project. It also seems that the architect drawings showing what new buildings will go where are not really the plans. They are merely place holders. If the housing goes through, we will have to situate the NLC, the daycare, and reasonable parking on Vic High's green space. All this might make sense if we could just stretch Vic High's lawns like bubble gum, but we can't. With all these demands, the open space is being sliced and diced, always trying to shoe horn in one more need or desire. If the housing project is not approved, we might again foresee the treed green that was promised when the old Fairey Tech was torn down. The city owns or owned those lots and promised they'd be planted. Instead we've had a rubble field these last many years. This greened area would provide beneficial energy for students to breathe and decompress from school pressures.

Vic High is often referred to as "our inner city school". Isn't it time we do everything in our power to make sure all our kids have access, at least some modicum of access, to green space? No matter what, Vic High students will have nowhere near the access of students in neighbourhoods that are better endowed with green space. Can we protect Vic High's green space at the same time as we build it up and pave it over? This is, without doubt, an equity issue.

Everything being proposed would be of benefit for Vic High students as well as Fernwood and nearby neighbours, but Vic High may not have the space for every heart's desire. In this situation, the needs of Vic High students should be the top priority on land that is for their education. I urge council to really look at all that's being proposed and to study the plans, misleading as they are. Then something may have to give. Lessening the number of parking spaces from 283 to 149 is unrealistic and possibly dangerous. Kids will need to be dropped off for classes, daycare parents will need parking, as will teachers, and daycare workers. We don't want to see parents dropping off kids beside double- and triple-parked cars.

As much as I am committed to protecting green space and the health opportunities it represents for students and local residents, the safety of our kids overrides that. This is an impossible choice – one I'm deeply troubled to have to make – but we must provide enough parking spaces so that we don't trigger a horrific accident. I wish I didn't feel this way, but I chalk such choices up to the silo-ed structure of this process from its inception, the lack of clarity at every stage, and the impossibility of asking questions and receiving answers. I can only request that councillors think very deeply about the possible fallout arising from the task at hand, then say No to the School District's variance application No. 00249 .

Many thanks for the hours all of you put in weighing the issues on a project with so many moving parts. It's not easy to make these decisions, especially with the current time crunch, but one might ask whether this time pressure was necessary.

Respectfully submitted,

Dorothy Field, 1560 Gladstone Avenue, Fernwood, Victoria V8R 1S5

# Office of the Secretary-Treasurer

*Kim Morris – Secretary Treasurer*

March 24, 2021

City of Victoria  
Legislative Services  
1 Centennial Square  
Victoria BC V8W 1P6

BY E-MAIL: [publichearings@victoria.ca](mailto:publichearings@victoria.ca)

Dear Mayor & Council:

RE: **Development Variance Permit Application No. 00249**  
**Opportunity for Public Comment**

For Mayor and Council's consideration relative to the subject permit application, School District No. 61 provides the following and attached information regarding the proposed stadium plan at Victoria High School:

1. Letter of Support from Victoria High School Alumni
2. Information letter from Principal Aaron Parker, Victoria High School
3. School District No. 61 Amenities Recommendations

Yours truly,

**SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 61 (GREATER VICTORIA)**



Kim Morris  
Secretary-Treasurer

/km

Cc: Peter Rantucci, Head of Strategic Real Estate, City of Victoria  
Jim Handy, Senior Planner - Development Agreements, Sustainable Planning and Community  
Development Department, City of Victoria  
Jim Soles, Associate Director of Facilities & Manager of Major Capital Projects, SD61  
Chuck Morris, Director of Facilities, SD61  
Donna Lomas, Chair, Vic High Alumni Association  
Aaron Parker, Principal, Victoria High School

*The Greater Victoria School District wishes to recognize and acknowledge the Esquimalt and  
Songhees Nations, on whose traditional territories, we live, we learn, and we do our work.*



Founded 1876

## VICTORIA HIGH SCHOOL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

1260 Grant Street  
Victoria, B.C. V8T 1C2  
[www.vichigh.com](http://www.vichigh.com)

Victoria BC,  
August 27, 2020

Kim Morris, Secretary Treasurer/CFO  
School District 61,  
Victoria BC

Dear Kim,

Following Monday's meetings by you and school district staff with Ian McKinnon and Roger Skillings, I want to convey to you formally the position of the Vic High Alumni Association as it relates to the outdoor sports and recreation facilities that are being considered by the school district.

The Alumni Association has raised approximately \$166,000 itself and has encouraged other funding partners to add to those sums to the end of creating improved outdoor sports fields and related facilities. Although we had the support of a number of sports facility design professionals to provide initial plans as part of the early community consultation process, we always recognized that the final decisions related to what was needed and how best to design the project rested finally with the school and the school district. Recently, we have spoken informally with some of the individuals who had given particularly large sums to confirm that they are content to see their donations used for outdoor sports facilities that serve those general purposes, even if they varied from the initial vision. They concurred that their intent had been to improve the field and related facilities for the students and the community.

Through the fundraising process, we have kept the alumni informed of our efforts through emails, our FaceBook page by direct mail and through reunions. If the district were to announce its plans for the turf field and associated amenities, we would work actively to let alumni know about the details through these various communications mechanisms. You may rest assured that we will support the revised plans as we understand them. Indeed, we will want to share this news as we will claim some of the credit for supporting and funding this outcome.



My apologies that I was unable to attend the meetings and that there was confusion around the number of meetings on Monday. I look forward to meeting with you in the future and if there is anything that the Alumni Association can do to assist in the project please ask.

Sincerely,

Donna Lomas, Chair

Vic High Alumni Association

(Signed copy by mail)

Cc. Aaron Parker, Principal of Victoria High School, School District 61

Ian McKinnon, Director Victoria High School Alumni Association

Roger Skillings, Member of the Victoria High School Alumni Association

Donna Jones, Vice Chair Victoria High School Alumni Association

Anne McKeachie, Vice Chair Victoria High School Alumni Association



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# VICTORIA HIGH SCHOOL

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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"*

# **VICTORIA HIGH ENHANCEMENTS AND AMENITIES RECOMMENDATIONS**

## **GREATER VICTORIA SCHOOL DISTRICT**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Following public engagement on potential amenities and enhancements at Victoria High, the District has taken into consideration all of the options, supported or suggested by the community, to include in the school's seismic upgrade and the budgets associated with the desires expressed from students, staff, parents, and community.

The District is now recommending amenities and enhancements that prioritize safety, instructional use and reflect the recommendations suggested by the public. These recommendations come after assessing and cross referencing the top three options of current and future students, current and future parents, staff, alumni, and Victoria residents.

The District has \$1.5-1.9 million for additional amenities and must now prioritize within its budget some of the high cost items that are not covered in the seismic project. This document is intended to provide the Board of Education with the District's recommendations, which includes a brief explanation, an outline of estimated costs, and the scope of each project.

### **TOP AMENITIES AND ENHANCEMENTS**

#### **1) New spaces for physical education health and learning - APPROVED**

This ranked as a top three option for many stakeholders because the current spaces in the building have limitations, which also makes it challenging to provide appropriate instruction in an inadequate environment. This amenity is estimated to cost \$200,000 and would include a new fitness health classroom with exterior overhead garage doors, new equipment, new floors, mirrors and a tech package. A weight room would also be added.

#### **2) Astronomy observatory deck - APPROVED**

This option was ranked as a number one priority amongst current Victoria High students, students across the District, and Victoria residents. While discussing this option with architects and staff, it was suggested and agreed upon that the astronomy deck on the roof can serve as a multipurpose deck. In addition to astronomy instruction, the space can be booked for eight blocks of the day for outdoor instructional space. This amenity is estimated to cost \$100,000 and would include elements such as safety railings, seating and landscaping.

#### **3) Memorial Stadium - APPROVED**

Alumni and staff prioritized the memorial stadium as one of their top two options. The current stadium is considered a safety hazard due to aging infrastructure and poor accessibility and lighting on the north side of the property. It is suggested to demolish the north bleachers and to upgrade the main bleachers with new seating. As the current North stadium provides storage underneath, the proposed option would also include a new fieldhouse/storage facility to provide storage, as well as additional lighting to address safety concerns. These upgrades are estimated to cost \$400,000.

#### **4) Theatre - APPROVED**

Overall, improvements to the current theatre ranked as the number one priority across all interest groups. While the District is limited to the upgrades it can provide within the building's footprint, it can provide enhancements to improve the instructional experience. For an estimated \$250,000 the District can improve the current seating and provide new seats in the upper balcony (approximately 100 seats), add black out curtains, and install new LED lights and audio system.

#### **5) Gymnasium Upgrades - APPROVED**

This enhancement was ranked extremely important amongst current and future parents. This amenity would cost approximately \$130,000 to install new floors and replace the existing bleachers in the Andrews gym, install new windows in the Roper gym, and address the heritage track in the Roper Gym. It is important to note that the updated change rooms are already a consideration in the seismic upgrade plans.

#### 6) Track and Field - **NOT APPROVED**

The District is not recommending the track and turf field due to the high cost and concerns from the community about the turf fields impact on the local environment. The option would require all of the amenity funding and more. It limits the District's ability to provide other amenities to students and the community, as set out in these recommendations.

#### COST BREAKDOWN

Amenity/ Enhancement	Interest Groups					Features/ Costs
	Parents (current/ future)	Staff	Students (current/ future)	Community	Alumni	
New spaces for physical education health and learning	✓	✓	✓	✓		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New fitness classroom</li> <li>• Overhead door access to outdoors</li> <li>• Equipment</li> <li>• Spring Floor</li> <li>• Weight room</li> <li>• Tech package</li> <li>• Mirrors</li> </ul> = \$200,000
Multipurpose Roof-Top Deck			✓	✓		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Railings</li> <li>• Benches/seats?</li> </ul> =\$100,000
Memorial Stadium		✓	✓		✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demolish north bleachers</li> <li>• New seating for main bleachers</li> <li>• New fieldhouse/storage</li> <li>• New lighting</li> </ul> = \$400,000
Theatre	✓		✓	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved seating</li> <li>• 100 new seats for balcony</li> <li>• LED lighting system</li> <li>• Sound system</li> <li>• Blackout curtains</li> </ul> =\$250,000
Amenity/ Enhancement	Interest Groups					Features/ Costs
	Parents	Staff	Students	Community	Alumni	

Gymnasium Upgrades (Roper and Andrews Gym)	✓					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tiles on the ceiling/walls</li> <li>• New windows in Roper Gym</li> <li>• New bleachers in Andrews Gym</li> <li>• Seismic repairs to heritage track in Roper Gym</li> </ul> = \$130,000
						<b>TOTAL = \$1,080,000 million</b>
<b>Outdoor athletic / recreation facility</b>		✓				<b>***Staff suggest to create an unique outdoor amenity for students and community with the remainder of monies.**</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sand volleyball courts</li> <li>• Basketball courts</li> </ul>

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Tak Niketas [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 25, 2021 2:00 PM  
**To:** Public Hearings  
**Subject:** Public Hearing Item: 1260 Grant Street/ 1289 Gladstone Ave. Development Variance Permit Application No. 00249

Public Hearing Item: 1260 Grant Street/ 1289 Gladstone Ave.  
Development Variance Permit Application No. 00249

Tak Niketas

1249 Chapman Street, V8V 2T7

I am writing to object to Variance Permit Application No. 00249. As a former basketball and softball coach and alumni of Victoria High School I believe the variance proposed poses a consequential threat to the future of athletic development at Vic High.

The proposed parking modifications will negatively effect the ability to ensure Vic High receives a proper 8 lane metric track. The modifications will also lead to the removal of the rugby pitch. Without a proper metric track and rugby pitch at Vic High, the possibility for future students to participate in track and field and rugby at the school will disappear, forcing students who live in the City of Victoria to find an alternative school across city boundaries. This not only adds increased transportation time for students (also leading to increased carbon emissions) within the City of Victoria, but diminishes the sense of community. We should be encouraging and providing resources for students within the City to stay in the City. Furthermore, by approving the variance will only further add to the decades of neglect Victoria High School has faced.

I encourage all of you to object to this variance, ensuring that students within the City of Victoria are given access to the proper facilities and experiences they deserve.

Thank you,

TN