



COUNCIL REPORT

Report Date: April 22, 2026
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Meeting Date: May 6, 2026
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TO: Standing Committee on Policy and Strategic Priorities

FROM: General Manager of Development, Buildings and Licensing

SUBJECT: Non-Enforcement Resolution Regarding the Operation of Horse Racing to Enable Slot Machines at 2901 East Hastings Street, Vancouver

Recommendations

THAT Council direct that staff not strictly enforce, for a period of up to three years from the date of Council approval, any requirements of the Zoning and Development By-law CD-1 (3B) Exhibition Park District and the conditions of rezoning and the development permit for the racetrack facility at Hastings Park (the Racecourse) with respect to:

- (i) securing ongoing horse racing operations to the existence of the slot machines on the site; and
- (ii) related to the ongoing operations of horse racing or horse racing facilities on the site.

Purpose and Executive Summary

This report seeks Council's approval of a temporary non-enforcement resolution to permit the continued operation of slot machines in the existing grandstand building at Hastings Park without the continued operation of horse racing at the racetrack. Requirements of the 2004 rezoning approval to permit slot machines at the site do not permit the slot machines to be operated unless horse racing is also operated. In Q4 of 2025 the Province cancelled all horse racing subsidies to the Operator, with the Operator halting all horse racing activities at the site. With the closure of the racetrack, the City (as landowner) is considering options for the long-term use of the site, which may require a rezoning. While these discussions are ongoing, the Operator, or their successors, are proposing to continue the existing slot machine operations without the horse racing, which is not permitted under the current development approvals.

Staff recommend non-enforcement of the current requirements for up to three years to support business continuity and protect existing jobs related to the slot machine use while long-term planning for the future of the racetrack is underway.

Council Authority/Previous Decisions

- In July 2004, Council [approved](#) in principle a zoning by-law amendment to permit the operation in the racetrack facility of up to 900 slot machines located at 2901 East Hasting Street, Vancouver, subject to a rezoning condition that staff achieve through the operating agreement securing horse racing and the related jobs to the existence of slots on the site.
- In October 2005, Council [approved](#) a public benefits package related to slot machine use on the site and enacted amendments to the CD-1 (3B) District (Exhibition Park) to permit slot machine use on the site. On October 24, 2005, the Development Permit Board gave development approval for 600 slot machines in the grandstand building, subject to conditions to be satisfied including, among other things, securing the public benefits package.
- On November 8, 2007, development permit DE409601 was issued for “Renovation and alterations of the existing racetrack grandstand building to accommodate 600 slot machines” after the applicant satisfied all the conditions, including securing through legal agreements the public benefits package, as required by the Development Permit Board decision on October 24, 2005.

City Manager’s Comments

The City Manager concurs with the foregoing recommendations.

Context and Background

The Racecourse at Hastings Park was established in 1882. The land was transferred to the City from the Province through a trust agreement. The Racecourse is currently operated by Hastings Entertainment Inc. and Great Canadian Gaming Corporation (the Operator) through an operating agreement with the City dated November 1, 2007 (the Operating Agreement), as amended from time to time.

In 2003, Hastings Entertainment Inc. applied to the City to permit slot machine use within the existing horse racing facility, to complement and provide an additional source of revenue to support the horse racing operations. In July 2004, Council approved in principle a zoning amendment for the Hastings Park CD-1 (3B) District (Exhibition Park) to permit slot machine use at the racecourse but prohibiting the broader Casino – Class 2 use. As a condition of zoning approval, Council required the Racecourse Operating Agreement to “secur[e] horse racing and the related jobs to the existence of slots on the site”. Accordingly, under the Operating Agreement, slot machines can only be operated if horse racing is also operated. The City and the Operator entered into the Operating Agreement in November 2007, and a development permit was issued allowing alterations to the existing racetrack grandstand building to accommodate 600 slot machines.

At the end of 2025, the Operator announced they were ceasing operation of the horse racing due to financial reasons. They continue to operate the slot machines.

Discussion

The future of the Racecourse is uncertain. Proposals for alternative uses that do not include horse racing, for example a [sports stadium and entertainment district](#), may require site rezoning and other development approvals.

This report is seeking Council's approval to not strictly enforce the horse racing obligations under the associated zoning and permit conditions for the site, so that the slot machines can continue to operate while plans for the future of the site are explored. Approval of the non-enforcement resolution would support existing employment and business continuity at the site during a challenging economic environment with significant pressures on the entertainment sector.

Financial Implications

When the slot machines are in operation, the City receives the collection of revenues as Host Municipality under the *Gaming Control Act* of British Columbia (a 10% share of net gaming revenues from slot machines at the site, equating to approximately \$1.1 million/annum). In addition, the City collects annual operating fees under the Operating Agreement for licensing the slot machine use at Hastings Park.

The public benefits secured as part of the approval of the slot machine use include: i) payment to the Community Legacy Fund (~\$130,000/annum, subject to CPI), which supports grants delivered through the Hastings Social Responsibility Reserve; ii) payment of a Greening Fee (\$500,000 per annum), which is allocated to the Hastings Park Reserve; and iii) payment of operating costs for the 44-space Kiwassa Neighborhood Childcare Facility (~\$250,000/annum).

Should the non-enforcement resolution not be approved and the City (as regulator) require slot machine operations to cease at the Site, the City would forgo the Local Host Government Revenues delivered under the *Gaming Control Act* and may not be able to collect the payments to the Community Legacy Fund, Greening Fee, and Kiwassa Neighborhood Childcare Facility's operating costs.

Legal Implications

The City does not have a general duty to strictly enforce all its by-laws and policies. The Courts have acknowledged this discretion and have considered resolutions to not enforce by-laws and policies to be supportable, in circumstances associated with by-law and process reviews.

Council may revoke these non-enforcement resolutions prior to their expiry, which is proposed to be three years from the date of Council approval of the recommendations.

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