

OPINION

Kilcona deserves to achieve vision

East Winnipeg deserves a world-class park.

For the past 25 years, Kilcona Park has been deteriorating on the edge of the city with most of the amenities planned for the space left on the drawing board.

As it stands, the park offers nearby residents little more than a fenced-in public grassland to explore.

Parks across Winnipeg have been struggling to keep up existing amenities.

Higher profile parks such as Assiniboine Park have even resorted to restructuring their internal boards to try and find ways to generate new cashflow.

But the belt tightening and budget cuts that marked the 1990s, and spelled the end to the ambitious dream that was Kilcona Park, are over now and it's time to start investing once again in our recreation areas.

Much progress has been made in south Transcona at the Buhler Recreation Park.

Now less than a year from completion, this sprawling complex offers the public access to a wide array of sports amenities.

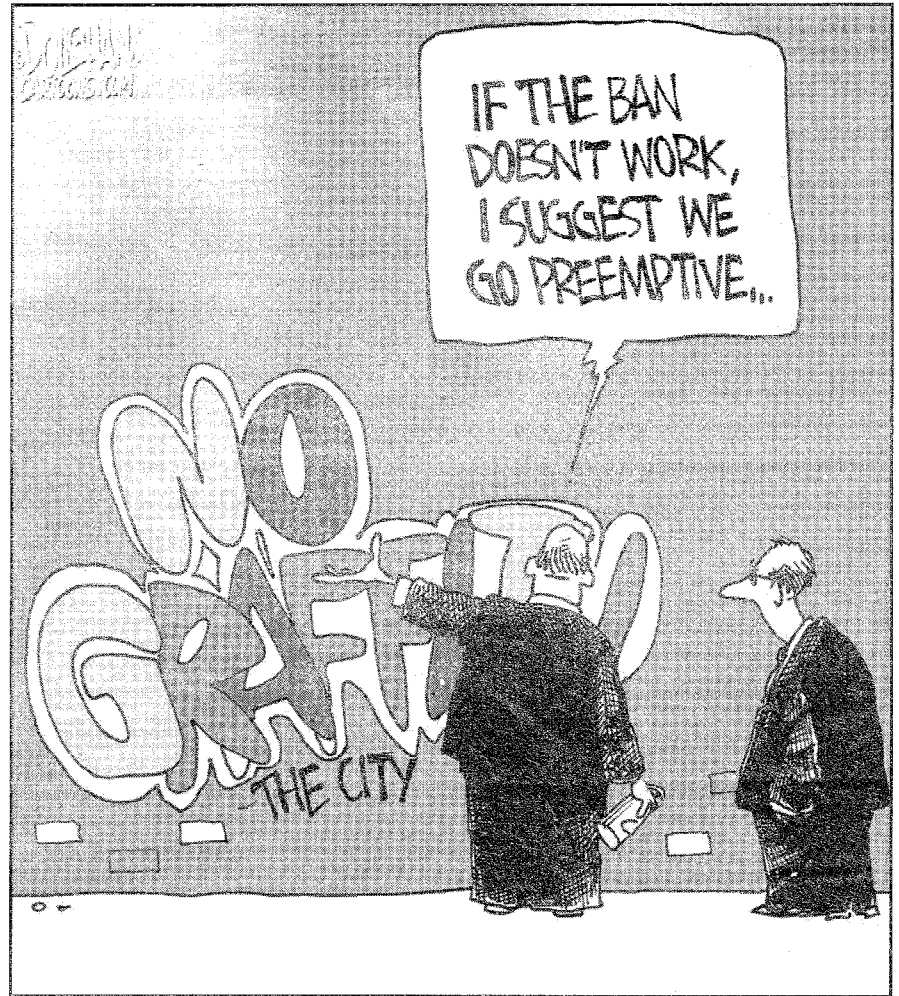
But the original vision behind Kilcona Park called for a world-class space that could be enjoyed by people looking for less structured activities.

Combined, Buhler and Kilcona would provide northeast Winnipeg with the kind of recreation facilities that would be the envy of communities across North America.

Perhaps the key to moving Kilcona forward lies just north of its undeveloped northern edge.

Since Kilcona was developed, East St. Paul has been attracting some of Manitoba's most affluent families and now boasts the most expensive homes in the Capital Region.

Since the park is located almost directly between the communities of Transcona and East St. Paul, perhaps it's time for city councillors to spend some time with representatives



from East St. Paul to find a formula that both communities can support.

A lot of water has flowed under the park's aging bridges since they were first built, so it's probably time to re-evaluate what amenities still make sense – and whether any new ones should be added.

But simply leaving a park half built, and as a result highly underutilized, is simply not a wise use of anyone's tax dollars.