

Coquitlam

For Committee

March 29, 2022

Our File: 12-6100-30/SSTR1/3

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To: City Manager

From: General Manager Parks, Recreation, Culture and Facilities

Subject: **Sports Field Strategy Update – Early Findings**

For: **Council-in-Committee**

Recommendation:

That the Committee receive the report of the General Manager Parks, Recreation, Culture and Facilities dated March 29, 2022 and entitled “Sports Field Strategy Update - Early Findings” for information.

Report Purpose:

This report is intended to share early findings from the initial research and community engagement phase of the Sports Field Strategy Update.

Strategic Goal:

The Sports Field Strategy Update was a “C” priority on the 2021 Business Plan and supports the City’s strategic goals of *healthy community and active citizens, sustainable services, environment and infrastructure, and achieving excellence in City governance.*

Executive Summary:

In 2013, Council approved the 2013-2023 Sports Field Strategy. Flowing out of the Strategy was an ambitious implementation of various initiatives related to sports fields throughout the City. The City has since completed the majority of the projects identified in the 2013 Strategy, and has surpassed expectations for the development of new fields.

The Sports Field Strategy Update research and consultation phase, including the engagement of 472 residents and 16 organized sport groups was initiated in 2021 and is now complete. Early findings from this phase include the status of and desires for the current field inventory, anticipated future investment and funding needs in sport field infrastructure; community field use and participation; the allocation process; and enhanced communication and engagement.

PCS
RCA

A benchmarking and inventory analysis showed that Coquitlam currently provides comparable or higher levels of sport field types per capita as other cities in the region. Respondents from the Community Survey and the User Group Questionnaire listed their top priority for future field investment as appropriate lighting, washrooms and other field site amenities. The second priority was the improvement of Coquitlam's natural surface fields, many of which are at the end of their lifecycle. Some sport groups would like to see additional grass and artificial turf fields, while others requested specialized fields for their particular sports. Both respondent groups rated "ensuring adequate funds for repairs and upgrades" and "providing quality fields" as their two top service level priorities. An additional priority for community respondents was ensuring access for casual use.

A spatial analysis showed that half of Coquitlam residents live within a short walk to a City maintained sports field and many other residents live close to a school field or public park. The City's natural surface fields and grass areas are highly valued and many Community Survey respondents expressed interest in accessing these spaces for casual use and recreation level participation. Methods to expand programs and ensure residents are aware of existing casual and organized opportunities will be continued by the City's online field-use schedule and *Spotlight on Sport* initiatives.

The sport groups confirmed that the current allocation process is generally working well. The majority of groups are seeking more prime hours on premium grass or artificial turf fields at sites with support amenities, such as washrooms and parking. The specific sports, seasons, and time periods desired will be considered in the Strategy Update. Sport groups value their relationship with the City and stress that consultation and collaboration should continue to occur between all stakeholders. Recommendations to enhance communication will be included in the Strategy Update and stakeholders will be at each stage of its development and implementation.

Feedback from Council-in-Committee and the stakeholders on the early findings will inform and be considered as part of the Draft Sports Field Strategy Update. Should Council endorse the Parks Infrastructure Asset Management Plan and subsequent Corporate Asset Management Update and related funding strategy later this year, the sports field portion of this work will also be incorporated into the Sports Field Strategy Update and presented for Council review and approval in the first half of 2023.

Background:

On March 9, 2020, staff presented a report entitled, "Sports Field Strategy Update: Terms of Reference" to Council-in-Committee that outlined the goals of

the current 2013-2023 Sports Field Strategy and the implementation actions that have been completed to date. Committee emphasized the need to engage the community and user groups in the study, provide clarity about who is and is not using sports fields, and identify the barriers to participation, including what factors contribute to decreased youth participation in organized sport. Staff were also asked to explore unstructured play, learn-to-play and recreational league opportunities for youth and adults, and gather data relating to the use of fields when not allocated to sport groups. Committee noted that community sport organizations would like to see increased participation by all ages and all levels.

With Committee's approval on March 9, 2020 to proceed with the Sports Field Strategy Update, staff hired the consulting team, RC Strategies, to develop a Key Findings Report and to prepare a Sports Field Strategy Update document. The significant research and engagement of Phase I entailed a review of the City's current field sport allocation practices and field provision, a population and demographic analysis, compilation of current trends and best practices and a benchmarking exercise. Concurrently, staff and the consultants initiated a comprehensive consultation process that included a community survey open to all residents, a stakeholder questionnaire, and small group discussion sessions with the regular field sport groups. This was followed by an analysis of sport field capacity and allocation, fees, programming, the sport field and infrastructure inventory and field proximity through a mapping exercise. This report provides a summary of the findings to date.

Discussion/Analysis:

Sports Field Strategy (2013-2023) Implementation Status

The current (2013 – 2023) Sports Field Strategy created a vision and a set of strategic directions to guide the provision of sports field infrastructure, optimize the use of field assets, strengthen relationships with stakeholders, and maximize benefits to the community. The Strategy's capital and operational projects identified for implementation from 2013 to 2023 are highlighted in Attachment 3.

With the exception of renewing a few grass fields, implementation of the 2013 – 2023 Sport Field Strategy and associated public investments and supportive partner agreements and policy work were completed, and in fact surpassed. The achievements include growth in sports field inventory through park capital projects, the replacement and renewal of fields, the development of a Master Joint User Agreement with School District 43 (SD43) and an update to the Facility Allocation Policy. A complete listing of the goals and associated actions, with the years of completion, is provided in Attachment 3.

In addition to the projects identified in the Strategy, the City exceeded the capital delivery of new sports fields anticipated in the Strategy over this time period with the construction and opening of the following new fields: Victoria Park Field (2016), Rochester Park Field (2017), Burke Mountain Pioneer Park Field (2018), and Smiling Creek Field (2018). The City will also open the new artificial turf field at Centennial and the new grass sports field at Cottonwood Park by spring 2022 that are also additional sports fields beyond the capital implementation plan articulated in the 2013-2023 Sports Field Strategy.

Sports Field Strategy Update Process and Timeline

The timeframe for the Strategy Update reflects the completion of the current Sports Field Strategy 2013 -2023 and the initiation of the new Sports Field Strategy 2023 – 2033. In July 2020, staff retained the consulting services of RC Strategies to support the review and update, based on a proposed timeline and process (Attachment 2 slide 17).

In addition to understanding the needs and costs to finance new field assets, sport fields are one component of corporate asset management planning and staff will be developing a detailed assessment of park asset replacement costs and timelines to be presented to Council. The asset management and replacement plan for sports fields has not been reviewed comprehensively since 2013. There is a need to update this work, which will feed into a larger corporate asset management review led by the Finance department later this year. For this reason, staff intend to focus on the asset management review in T2 as the outcomes of this work are key to informing the development of the Sports Field Strategy Update.

Summary of Findings

Research Consultation

Significant community interest in the Sports Field Strategy Update resulted in a very successful engagement process with 472 residents participating in the Community Survey and 16 sport organizations completing the User Group Questionnaire and/or participating in discussion sessions (some groups participated in one of the engagement opportunities while others participated in both).

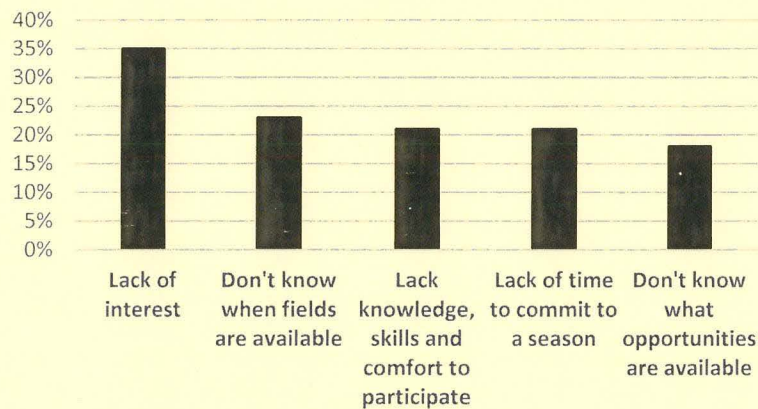
Community Survey	User Group Questionnaire	User Group Discussion Sessions
•472 respondents •93% Coquitlam residents	•13 sports groups	•11 sports groups

Community Participation in Field Sport

In the Community Survey, 54% of respondents said they have household members actively involved in field sport and there is significant interest expressed for recreation-level field sport for adults and more pick-up fun for children and youth.

Barriers to Participation

A significant number of Community Survey respondents acknowledged they experience barriers to participation in a field sport. Besides a lack of interest, other barriers to participation included a lack of knowledge about field availability for casual use¹, a perceived lack of skills to participate in leagues, uncertainty about the availability of recreational level programs, and limited personal time to commit to a league.



Studies show that many youths leave organized sport due to time, cost and performance pressures and often times will not return as adults. The Community Survey results suggest that more residents would be participating in field sport--either learning or returning--for fun, fitness, skill development, and social connection if they were aware of opportunities that met their needs as noted by the *Sport for Life* athlete development model².

While quantitative data on casual use of sports fields was not available, the qualitative comments in the Community Survey show that respondents want to access fields for casual use and expressed a desire to have a clearer understanding of when fields are available. Respondents noted natural sports fields and casual use grass areas provide a health and wellness value.

¹ The updated City website now includes a sport field schedule which is available to the public and user groups.

² The City's Spotlight on Sport initiative continues to develop and deliver programs in response to this need.

Investment & Service Level Priorities

The Community Survey and the User Group respondents identified the same top three investment priorities, summarized below:

Community Survey Investment Priorities		User Group Investment Priorities	
Increased lighting			
Enhancement of support amenities, such as washrooms			
Improving the quality of natural surface fields			
Addressing geographic gaps		New specialty types of fields	
More premium natural fields		More artificial turf fields	
More artificial turf fields		More premium natural fields	
Maintain infrastructure at current levels		Maintain infrastructure at current levels	
New specialty types of fields		Addressing geographic gaps	

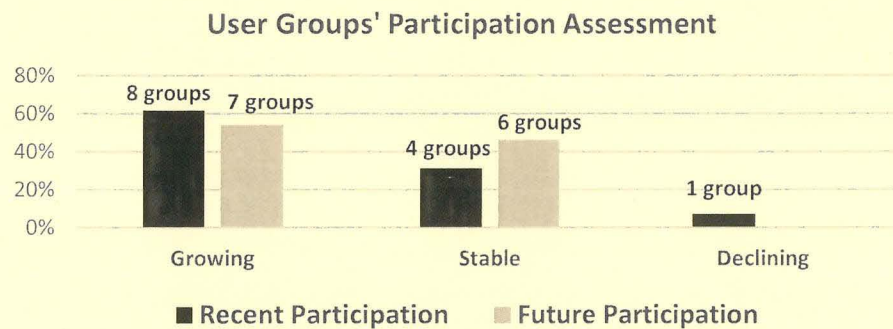
In terms of service level priorities, both the User Groups and Community Survey respondents recognize the need for investment in field repairs and upgrades to ensure quality fields are available for teams and leagues. The enhancement of natural surface fields, many of which are due for end of lifecycle replacement, rated in the top three priorities by both respondent groups. Both respondent groups rated sport tourism at a lower priority level than the other service areas; however, 10 of the 13 user groups that participated in the questionnaire indicated that this service area is “important” and that the inventory should be adequate to attract and host events and tournaments. In the development of the Draft Strategy, sport tourism will be further explored within the larger context of the City’s Economic Development Strategy.

Community Survey Service Priorities		User Group Service Priorities	
Ensuring adequate funds for repairs and upgrades			
Providing high quality fields for teams and leagues			
Casual use access		Maintaining collaborative relationships	
Maintaining collaborative relationships		Casual use access	
Sport tourism		Sport tourism	

Population and Participation

A regional benchmarking and inventory analysis showed that Coquitlam currently provides comparable or higher levels of sports field provision per capita relative to other municipalities in the region. While steady increases are forecasted in the City’s general population, B.C. Stat projections do not suggest that the child and youth cohorts will increase significantly in the foreseeable future. In the User Group Questionnaire, eight groups said they had been growing over the past few years; four groups said their numbers had remained

stable; and one identified a decline. Projecting forward, seven groups expect continued growth and six expect their participation to remain stable. The latter groups' assessment aligns most closely with the submitted membership statistics, which show consistent participation levels over the last several years.



An estimated maximum of 8,000 individuals (~5,000 Coquitlam residents – 63% of participants³) are currently involved in organized field sport in the City with the fields allocated at approximately 70% of practical capacity. If participation continues at the same percentage of the population, it is likely that when an increase of 30,000 residents is reached the inventory will need to accommodate 167 additional hours of prime time field capacity weekly. It is anticipated that this additional demand will be accommodated by current latent capacity in the sport field system as well as through the addition of fields identified in the Parks, Recreation, and Culture Master Plan (PRCMP) and other park planning initiatives as they arise. The Strategy Update will provide high-level recommendations on ways that the City can meet the needs of anticipated participation growth.

User Group Top Requests

While the sports groups are generally very satisfied with the allocation process the majority are seeking more prime hours on premium grass or artificial turf fields at sites with support amenities, such as washrooms and parking. More clarity is needed concerning the specific sport, season, and time period these groups desire. Additionally, sports such as field hockey, ball, and rugby have requested specific types of fields and amenities. All the relevant data, feedback, population projections, and applicable trends will be carefully analyzed in the Strategy with recommendations for facility development.

Communication and Support

Communication was a clear theme in the key findings. The user groups wish to continue working with the City to achieve mutual goals through enhanced information sharing. Although it was agreed that the relationship between the

³ Estimate based on the membership statistics submitted.

City and users works well, some gaps in communication were revealed in the discussion sessions. Recommendations in the Draft Strategy Update may include a communication plan to ensure relevant information is shared consistently between all key stakeholders.

The groups also expressed a desire for increased City support in building board and volunteer capacity, help seeking grant funding, and assistance with physical literacy development for participants. The City has been engaged in this work through the volunteer hub and *Spotlight on Sport* initiatives. The Strategy will describe other methods the City and stakeholders can work together on to ensure a range of opportunities are available to meet the interests and needs of Coquitlam residents of all skill levels and ages.

Next Steps

The results of the study suggest that the updated Strategy should contain a plan for future field needs, including the ongoing renewal of grass fields, optimized use of facilities, the addition of support amenities at updated sites, and renewal of existing amenities. Barriers to participation will also be examined, with opportunities for more casual use and recreation programming for all ages. The Strategy Update will also identify methods to further enhance communication with the groups, and support for board, volunteer and program development. Finally, the update will address funding for field renewal and sustainability in coordination with the City's corporate infrastructure and asset management review.

Staff intend to use the early findings to inform a key findings report that would be presented to SRAC and CFSA for feedback and to sport groups who participated in the questionnaire and discussion sessions. Highlights will be available on the City project web page for those interested in reviewing the findings.


Staff will then consider the Committee, stakeholder and public feedback in the overall analysis in order to develop a Draft Strategy for Committee consideration in early 2023, which will include a future capital and refined sports field management plan. The lifecycle replacement analysis for all park assets, including sports fields, is a key piece to the overall corporate asset management review being led by Finance this year, which needs to be completed prior to the development of the capital implementation component of the Strategy. The review of user fees will occur in the context of the outcomes of this financial review. This review will therefore drive the timeline for completion of the Strategy to early 2023. The final draft 2023 – 2033 Sports Field Strategy will be presented to Council for approval by mid-2023.

Financial Implications:

This project is on track to be completed within the budgeted amount of \$40,000 from the PRCF Planning Studies capital account. The City allocates \$790K in general revenue annually towards sports field infrastructure management. This funding allocation will be reviewed, as part of the aforementioned financial review and updated Strategy. In addition, an update on the Parks Infrastructure Asset Management Plan, including sports field replacement, will be brought forth to Council in the spring. The related updated information will then form part of a corporate asset management update scheduled for completion this year. This update will identify the funding gaps associated with each asset category, including parks and sports field infrastructure, and will be accompanied by a proposed funding strategy for Council endorsement.

Conclusion:

The Sports Field Strategy Update research and early engagement phases are now complete, including an analysis of the sport field inventory, capacity, allocation, facility trends, benchmarking, demographics, recent rates of participation and expectations for the future. The early findings highlight satisfaction with the current field inventory and sport programming, priorities for field site investment, the barriers experienced by some residents to lifelong participation in field sport, and opportunities and challenges described by organized sport groups. This information will be incorporated into a Key Findings Report which will ultimately form the framework for the updated Sports Field Strategy (2023-2033).



Lanny Englund

Attachments:

- 1 – Sports Field Strategy Update - Engagement Infographic (CEDMS #: 4202089)
- 2 – Presentation: Sports Field Strategy: Early Findings (CEDMS #: 4182006)
- 3 – Sports Field Strategy (2013-2023) Implementation Status (CEDMS #4394929)

This report was prepared by Pam Bailey, Coordinator Plans and Policies and Chris Siddaway, Community Partnerships and Policy Manager; and reviewed by Darryl Lal, Manager Policy and Business Services; Kathleen Reinheimer, Manager Parks; Brian Forrester, Sport Services Manager; Kathleen Vincent, Manager Communications and Civic Engagement; and Gorana Cabral, Manager Financial Planning.

Sports Field Strategy

What We Heard

The City engaged with Coquitlam residents and stakeholders in the fall of 2020 to obtain feedback on sports field use to inform the City's Sports Field Strategy.

Stakeholders engaged with the City in a variety of ways.

Aware

1,079

visited the project page at letstalkcoquitlam.ca



Informed

10

subscribers to the project newsletter



10

downloads of related documents



Engaged

472

respondents to the community survey



13

organization responses to user group questionnaire



11

stakeholder discussion sessions

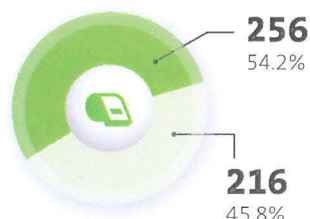


We sought feedback from both users and non-users of sports fields.

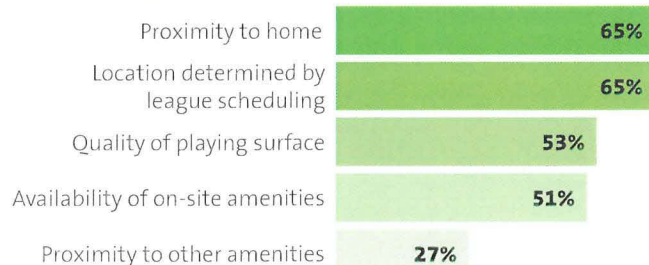
54%

participate in sports field activities

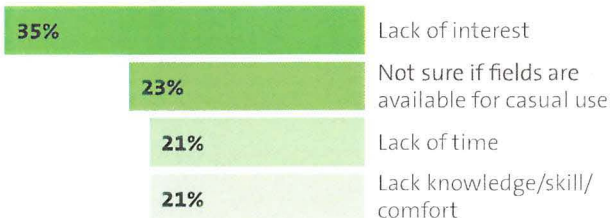
Respondents who are not interested in traditional field sport would like increased access to fields for other casual/self-organizing play and wellness activities.



Top 5 factors influencing sports field use

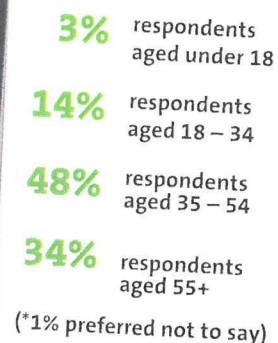


Top 5 barriers faced in using sports fields



22% of respondents indicated they do not experience these barriers.

Who participated?



User Groups told us what's working

Quality of playing surfaces

92% satisfied or somewhat satisfied

Level of ongoing maintenance and upkeep

100% satisfied or somewhat satisfied

On-site amenities (parking, washrooms, spectator seating, etc.)

77% satisfied or somewhat satisfied

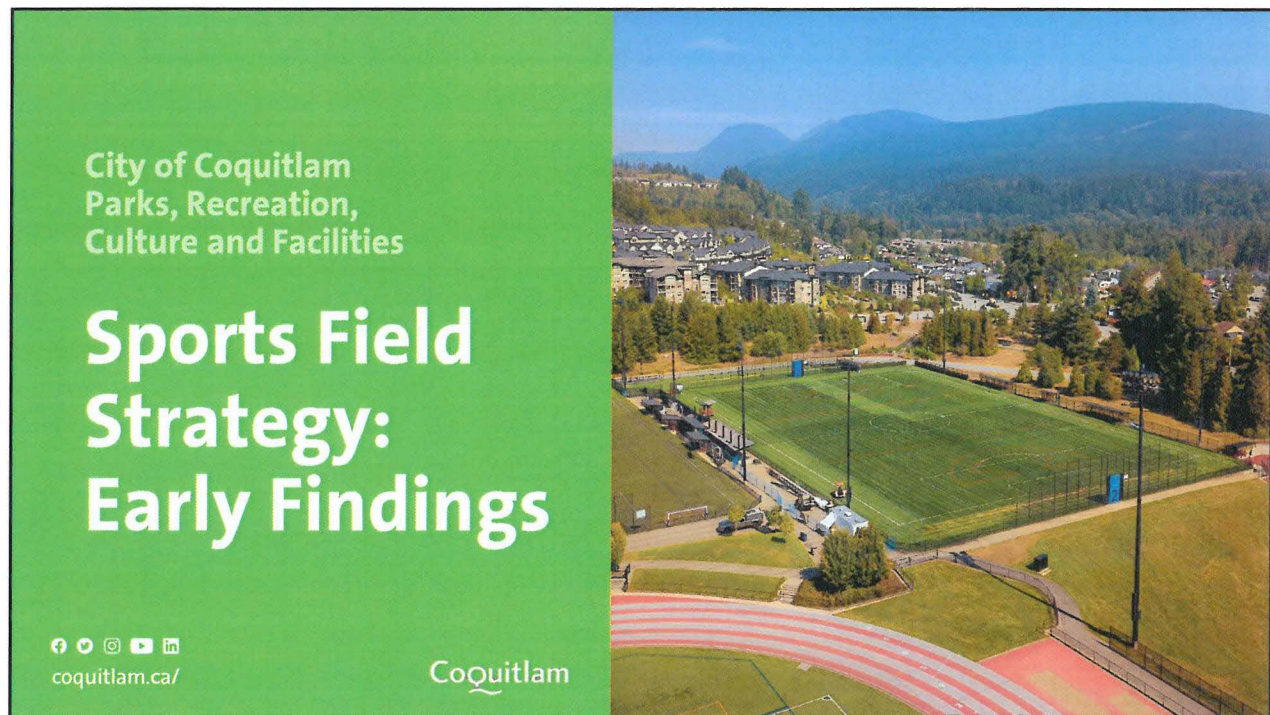
City field allocation and booking process

100% satisfied or somewhat satisfied

Investment Priorities

Both community respondents and user group respondents identified the same top 3 investment priorities.

- Lighting**
 - Amenity enhancements** (e.g. washrooms, spectator seating and parking)
 - Enhancing quality of natural surface fields**
- Community respondents also identified addressing geographic gaps as a priority
- User groups also identified more premium and specialty fields as a priority



Background: 2013-2023 Sports Field Strategy Update

Strategic Themes

- i. Sustainability
- ii. Multi-use sites
- iii. New Development Opportunities
- iv. Building Relationships
- v. Optimizing resources

Coquitlam Sports Field Strategy 2013 – 2023

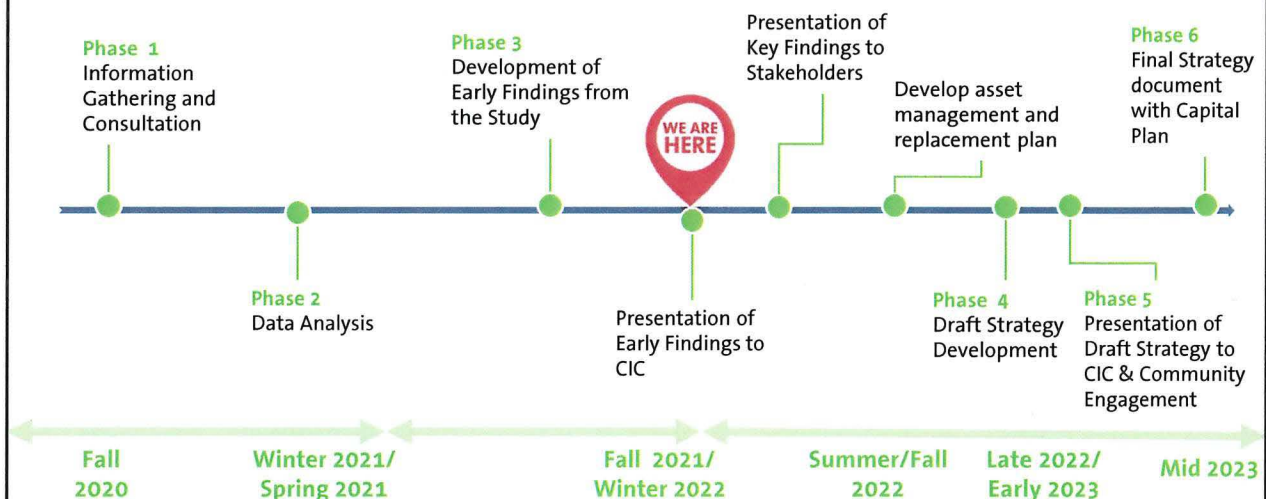


Sustainability | Multi-Use | New Development Opportunities | Building Relationships | Optimizing Resources

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2

Strategy Update Timeline



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3

Inventory, Benchmarking & Allocation

Overall, fields booked at 70% of practical capacity.

- Combo fields: 75% of practical capacity
- Rectangular fields: 58% of practical capacity
- Ball diamonds: 97% of practical capacity



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4

Community Survey Findings

472 Responses

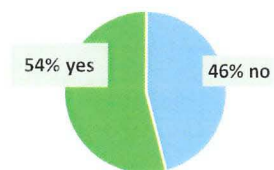
Respondents participate primarily as casual users in most sports.

Top field activities cited:
Casual/recreational play and relaxing with family & friends



Top organized sport was soccer

Community Survey Household Members
Participating in Field Sport



- No one in household participating in field sport
- Household members participating in field sport

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5

Community & User Group Satisfaction

User Groups told us what's working

Quality of playing surfaces

92% satisfied or somewhat satisfied

Level of ongoing maintenance and upkeep

100% satisfied or somewhat satisfied

On-site amenities (parking, washrooms, spectator seating, etc.)

77% satisfied or somewhat satisfied

City field allocation and booking process

100% satisfied or somewhat satisfied

Who participated?

3% respondents aged under 18

14% respondents aged 18-34

48% respondents aged 35 - 54

34% respondents aged 55+

(*1% preferred not to say)

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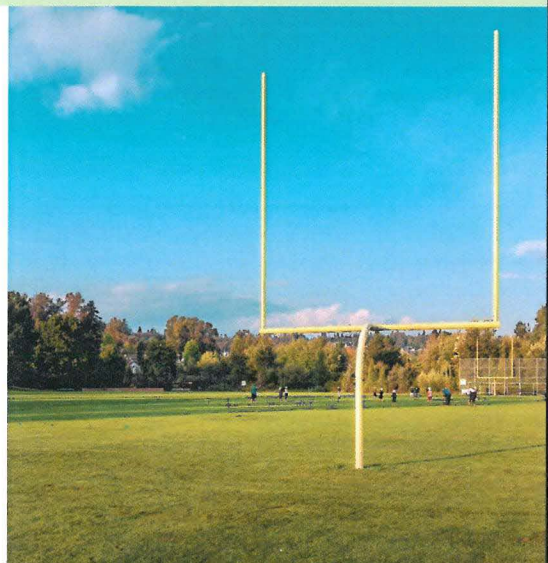
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Community Field Use



Top 5 factors influencing sports field use

Proximity to home	65%
Location determined by league scheduling	65%
Quality of playing surface	53%
Availability of on-site amenities	51%
Proximity to other amenities	27%

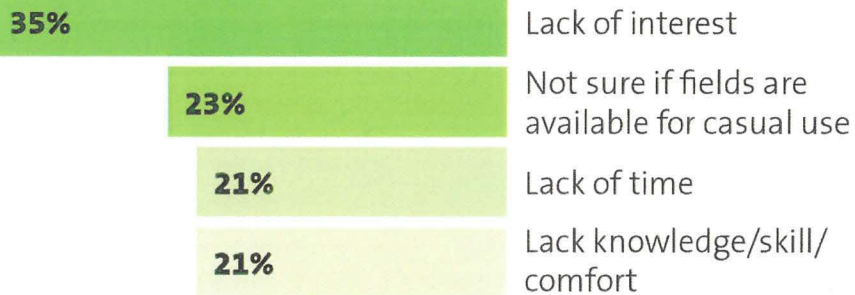


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7

Top Barriers to Community Participation

Top 5 barriers faced in using sports fields



22% of respondents indicated they do not experience these barriers.



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Community Survey Themes

- Interest in Recreation Level Sport
- Interest in Casual Use
- Interest in Other Field Uses



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9

Respondent Groups Shared Priorities

Investment Priorities

Both community respondents and user group respondents identified the same top 3 investment priorities.



Lighting



Amenity enhancements (e.g. washrooms, spectator seating and parking)



Enhancing quality of natural surface fields



Community respondents also identified addressing geographic gaps as a priority



User groups also identified more premium and specialty fields as a priority

Future Need

8,000

individuals (~5,000 residents) **currently** involved in organized field sport in Coquitlam

30,000

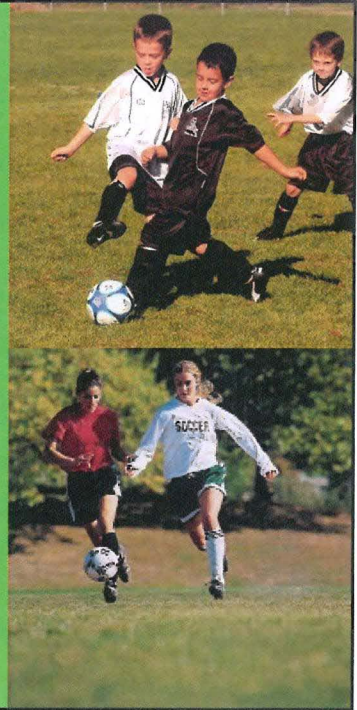
more residents = ~1,000 more participants or ~167 additional hours of prime time field capacity



Thank you & Questions

    
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Sports Field Strategy 2013-2023 Implementation Status

CAPITAL PROJECTS

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Strategy Goals	Convert grass field to artificial turf at Town Centre North	Replace artificial turf at Charles Best	Replace grass with artificial/grass mix at Mackin Park North & South	Replace 1/5 grass fields on City land	Replace artificial turf at Fridge	Replace artificial turf at Mobilio	Replace 1/5 grass fields on City land	Replace artificial turf at Cunnings	Replace 3/5 grass fields on City land	Replace artificial turf at Percy Perry
Implementation	TC North Field and Ball Diamonds redeveloped	Charles Best artificial turf replaced	Synthetic/grass mix not viable. Mackin North Field replaced. South deemed to be in good condition and deferred.	Mountain View (Hartley) renewal	Fridge artificial turf replaced	Mobilio artificial turf replaced	Further grass field renewals deferred until the completion of strategy update and capital planning.	Cunnings artificial turf replaced	Further grass field renewals deferred until the completion of strategy update and capital planning.	To be considered as part of 2023 Capital Plan.

OPERATIONAL PROJECTS

Themes & Goals	Actions	Implementation	Themes & Goals	Actions	Implementation
Sustainability	Reconfigure underused ball diamonds	If not scheduled for game play, fields have been configured with a grass in-field, which is more appropriate for casual/ practice use.	New Development Opportunities	Develop new grass fields in Northeast	Victoria Park – 2016; Smiling Creek - 2018 (joint use); Burke Mtn. Pioneer Park -2018
	Trial new equipment and materials	Processes/systems updated as needed to maintain standards.	Building Relationships	Work with schools and clubs to increase participation	Spotlight on Sport. Try-It sports sessions. Sports Fairs. Family & Youth Sport Drop-In at outdoor sites.
	Other grass fields developed/renewed through neighbourhood planning	Victoria Park Field - 2016; Rochester Park Field - 2017; Burke Mtn. Pioneer Park Field and Smiling Creek Field - 2018; Cottonwood Park softball diamond and soccer field by Fall 2022.		Bridge sports and events at multi-use sites	To manage appropriate use of fields, development of purpose-built event sites, such as the Town Centre Park Plaza and lawn, for informal use and events.
Multi-Use	Add infrastructure to multi-use sites	City has an asset replacement plan in place; ongoing upgrades to fieldhouses and washrooms, such as the Mundy Park Fieldhouse. New washrooms at field sites, i.e. Victoria Park, Mackin North.		Engage/invest community in increasing profile for outdoor sport	Multi-sport education and awareness; support for group governance and capacity-building.
	Improve multi-sport collaboration/investment at TC as the premier sport hub	Through the allocation process, staff work with groups to maximize and share usage, where appropriate. The field house is identified in the Town Centre Park Master Plan for future redevelopment.		Work with SD43 regarding access, use, agreements, volunteers	The SD43 Master Joint Use Agreement developed in 2016.
	Work with SD43 to explore multi-use sites	Charles Best renewal - 2015; Cunnings Field renewal - 2020; Burke Mtn. Joint Use Site - planning for future artificial turf, grass field		Review Allocation Policy	The Allocation Policy updated and adopted by Council in 2017.
New Development Opportunities	Develop Gilleys Trail Park Concept Plan; new grass fields at Gilleys Trail.	Long term land acquisition. Planned for future.	Optimizing Resources	Explore artificial turf field replacement reserve via user contributions	Potential options for user contributions explored with the CFSA in 2017. Decision deferred until the Sports Field Strategy Update.
	Partner with SD43 at new sites to enhance amenities	Smiling Creek Elementary grass field – 2018; Centennial artificial turf field - Spring 2022; Burke Mtn. Joint Use Site (future)		Support clubs with grants, sponsorships and fundraising	Share information with groups about available funding sources, such as the Spirit Grant.