

REPORT

Parks and Recreation

To: Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council
Date: May 5, 2024

From: Dean Gibson,
Director of Parks and Recreation
File: 2689993

Item #: 2025-127

Subject: **Artificial Turf Field Location- What We Heard: Engagement Summary Report and Next Steps**

RECOMMENDATION

1. *THAT the attached report titled “Artificial Turf Field Location Pop-up Engagement: What We Heard Report”, dated March 2025, be received for information; and*
 2. *THAT staff proceed with a technical feasibility study, focused solely on the Ryall Park south location and including options for integrating a perimeter walking track/path into the artificial turf field design, as outlined in this report.*
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PURPOSE

This report provides an overview of the Engagement Summary Report and, based on the feedback received on two potential sites, outlines the next steps to conduct a feasibility study for an artificial turf field and ancillary amenities at Ryall Park south.

BACKGROUND

To meet the growing need for year-round sports fields in New Westminster, the Parks and Recreation Department is planning to develop a third artificial turf field through the conversion of an existing grass field. Funding for planning and design is allocated for 2025-2026, with construction expected in 2026-2027. Following an initial review of eight potential locations, the Community Sports Leadership Group shortlisted two sites – Terry Hughes Park and Ryall Park – for community feedback and technical assessment.

The consultation process began with two stakeholder meetings involving the Community Sports Leadership Group, comprised of representatives from various sports and educational organizations. The first meeting established the project framework, including field size, site selection, and evaluation criteria. The second meeting reviewed and confirmed the evaluation results, confirmed the two shortlisted sites and outlined next steps. Subsequently, two neighbourhood check-in sessions were held, one at each of the shortlisted sites. These sessions were advertised through social media, email notifications and mail-outs to residents within a 250m radius of each proposed location. An overview the engagement process and results are included in Attachment A- Pop-up Engagement: What We Heard Report (March 2025).

DISCUSSION

Neighbourhood Check-ins

The neighbourhood check-in sessions were well attended and provided clear direction with strong support for an artificial turf field at Ryall Park South and little support for one at Terry Hughes Park.

1) Terry Hughes Park Check-In (Monday, February 10, 2025, 3:00-6:00 pm):

Community feedback at Terry Hughes Park emphasized preserving the natural grass lawn. Concerns were raised regarding potential environmental, traffic and parking, lighting, noise, and health and environmental impacts of artificial turf. Residents preferred retaining the existing green space for informal recreation. Of the 61 participants, 12% were supportive of an artificial turf field, and 88% were not. A total of 97 written comments were received, including input from elementary school students.

2) Queensborough Community Centre Check-In (Thursday, February 20, 2025, 3:00–6:00 pm):

Queensborough residents strongly supported locating the artificial turf field at Ryall Park, citing a need for local sports facilities and suggesting the inclusion of a perimeter walking path/ track for broader community use, including seniors. Concerns about potential environmental impacts, noise, lighting, traffic, and parking were noted, with requests for thorough studies and mitigation strategies. Out of 150 participants, 92% were supportive of an artificial turf field, and 8% were not. A total of 150 written comments were received, with over 100 from elementary school students.

Technical Feasibility Study for Ryall Park Artificial Turf Field Conversion

The original plan communicated to the Sports Leadership Group and through the check-in materials included subsequent technical feasibility studies for artificial turf fields at both shortlisted sites. Given the neighbourhood feedback, staff now propose to:

- Focus technical feasibility study exclusively on Ryall Park due to neighbourhood concerns regarding Terry Hughes Park.
- Evaluate the time and cost efficiency of including a technical feasibility study for a second future candidate site from the Sports Leadership Group's shortlist for future artificial turf field development.
- Explore options for incorporating a perimeter walking track/path into the Ryall Park artificial turf field design.

More specifically, the technical feasibility study for Ryall Park will include a detailed analysis of existing conditions, site characteristics, and potential impacts to determine the project's viability and associated costs for the following potential site improvements to be implemented with construction of the artificial turf field or in a future phase:

- Spectator seating
- Equipment storage
- Washrooms (or provisions for future connections)
- Bottle-filler/drinking fountain
- Change room facilities
- Maintenance/jogging path (minimum 3 metre width)
- Pre-field use staging/warm-up area

A detailed site analysis will also be conducted to thoroughly understand the existing site conditions and potential challenges. This may include geotechnical and soil assessment, environmental impact assessment, archaeological assessment, utility servicing survey, risk identification, lighting and acoustic impact assessments and traffic/ parking impact assessment.

The technical feasibility study will be summarized in a detailed report including recommendations and an order of magnitude cost estimate (ROM) for Council's future consideration.

NEXT STEPS

Subject to Council approval, staff will undertake the following steps to further evaluate Ryall Park South:

- Technical feasibility study for Ryall Park South (Spring/Summer 2025)
- Site fit analysis for primary and supporting amenities, including a perimeter walking track/path (Fall 2025)
- Technical findings and staff recommendation report (Fall 2025)

Following any further direction provided by Council and subject to budgeted funding alignment, staff will proceed with the project's tender and construction phases:

- Draft technical performance specifications (Fall/Winter 2025)
- RFP/Tender, evaluation, and contract award (Spring 2026)

- Construction (2026/2027); Operation (Fall 2027)

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The 2025 - 2029 Capital Plan includes a total of \$5,575,000 for planning, design and construction of one the artificial turf field.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON

Interdepartmental liaison has occurred between staff from Parks & Recreation and the Community Services Department. The Finance Department has reviewed the Financial Implications section of this report.

OPTIONS

The following are options for Council's consideration:

1. That the attached report titled "Artificial Turf Field Location Pop-up Engagement: What We Heard Report", dated March 2025, be received for information; and
2. That staff proceed with a technical feasibility study, focused solely on the Ryall Park south location and including options for integrating a perimeter walking track/path into the artificial turf field design, as outlined in this report; or
3. Provide alternate direction to staff.

Options #1 and #2 are recommended.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 'A' - Artificial Turf Field Location Pop-Up Engagement: What We Heard Report (March 2025)

APPROVALS

This report was prepared by:

James Doan, Manager- Parks Operations and Services
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This report was reviewed by:

Jennifer Miller, A/Deputy Director, Community Services
Dean Gibson, Director of Parks and Recreation
Shehzad Somji, CFO/Director of Finance and Information Technology

This report was approved by:

Lisa Spitale, Chief Administrative Officer