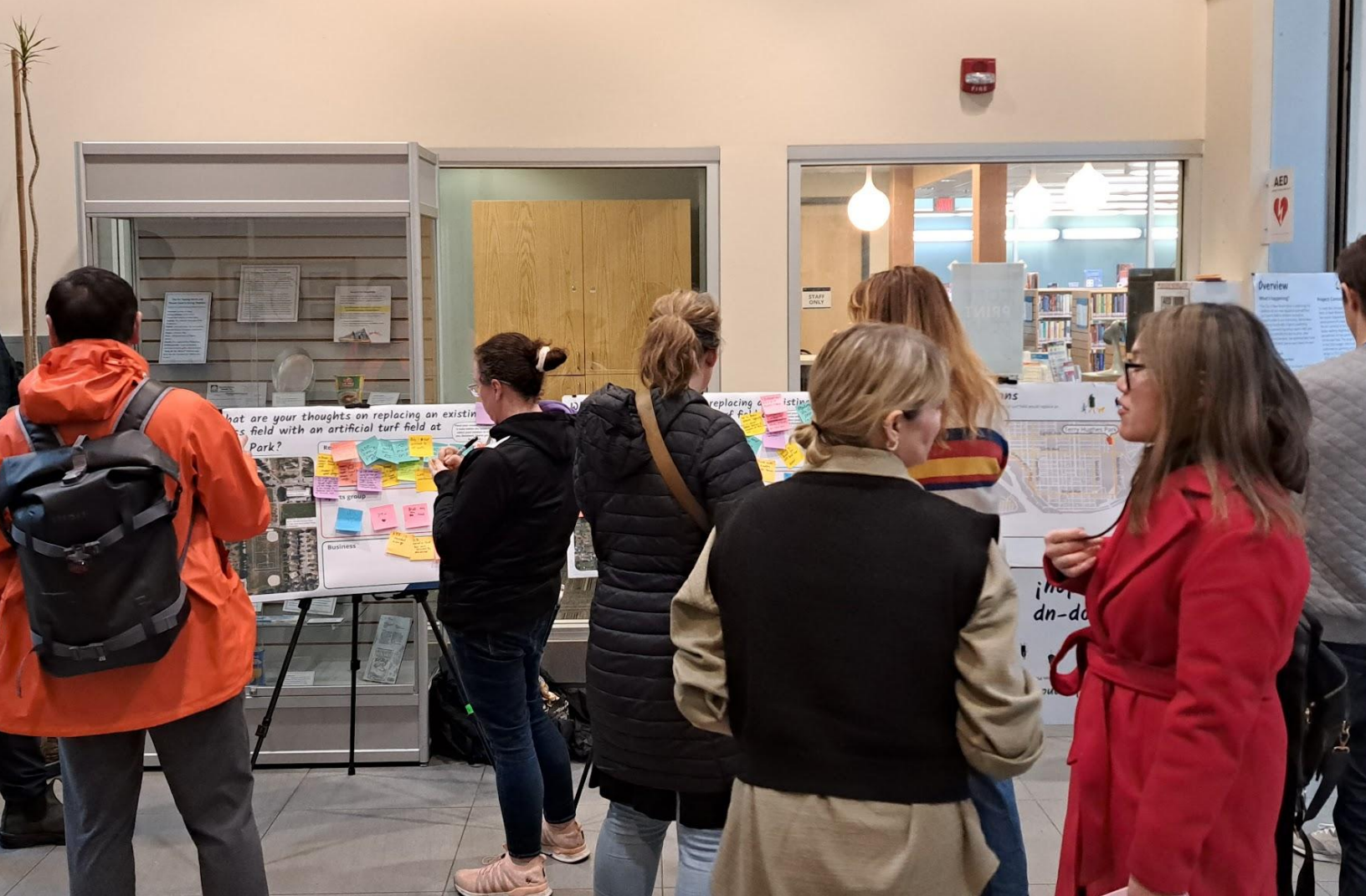


Attachment A
Artificial Turf Field Location
Pop-up Engagement: What We Heard Report
(March 2025)



Parks & Recreation

Artificial Turf Field Location

Pop-up Engagement: What We Heard Report

March 2025

Prepared by Happy Cities for the City of New Westminster

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1 | Introduction



1.1. Overview

To address the increasing demand for sports fields in New Westminster, the Parks & Recreation Department is planning to convert an existing grass field into a new artificial turf field (ATF). The City has allocated funding for planning and design in 2025-2026, with construction anticipated in 2026-2027. From an initial list of eight potential sites, two have been shortlisted for further evaluation. Public engagement efforts—including neighbourhood check-ins and consultations with the Sports Leadership Group, have been conducted to gather community feedback on priorities, concerns, and site-specific considerations. Alongside community input, the final staff recommendation will be informed by a technical feasibility study. The technical feasibility study will assess multiple factors, including:

- **Site suitability:** Ensuring the area is free from obstacles such as overhanging trees, rights-of-way, and existing use agreements that may restrict development.
- **Ground conditions:** Evaluating soil stability and drainage capacity.
- **Utility availability:** Assessing access to water, sewer, and electrical services.
- **Environmental impact:** Identifying potential effects on local ecosystems, including sustainability concerns.
- **Regulatory compliance:** Ensuring alignment with City bylaws, park master plans, and other relevant regulations.
- **Cost-effectiveness:** Comparing projected costs with long-term benefits.

Project timeline



61 participants

Terry Hughes Park



150 participants

Ryall Park

Total engaged

211 participants

Five most important themes:

1. **Strong support for an ATF at Ryall Park** – 92% of participants who attended the Ryall Park pop-up favoured an artificial turf field (ATF) at Ryall Park.
2. **Opposition to an ATF at Terry Hughes Park** – 88% of participants who attended the Terry Hughes pop-up opposed an ATF at this location.
3. **Demand for more local facilities in Queensborough** – Participants at the Ryall Park pop-up highlighted the need for more sports and recreation facilities in Queensborough.
4. **Concerns over green space** – Residents expressed concerns about losing Terry Hughes Park's grass field and green space.
5. **Environmental and health concerns** – Participants raised concerns about artificial turf, particularly the risks associated with exposure to synthetic materials.

2 | What we did

2.1 Promotion and outreach

To ensure intentional community participation, a multi-channel promotional strategy was implemented. Informational flyers were hand delivered to residents within a 250m radius of the field. The same letter was emailed to Residents Associations in each neighbourhood to help create awareness and spread the word. Printed posters were placed in key community spaces, including recreation centres and libraries to further raise awareness. Information was released via the City of New Westminster's official social media platforms to reach a wider audience and encourage engagement.



Email notifications

Email notifications about the engagement were sent to Sports Groups and Residents Associations.



Hand-delivered flyers

Informational flyers were distributed to residents within a two-block radius of both proposed locations.



Social media

Graphic and text information about opportunities to participate in engagement were shared through the City's Facebook, X (Twitter), and Instagram pages.

2.2 Community engagement pop-ups

Two public pop-up events were held to connect with community members and gather their thoughts:

Terry Hughes Park / Glenbrook Middle School

- *Date:* Monday, February 10, 2025
- *Time:* 3:00–6:00 PM

Queensborough Community Centre

- *Date:* Thursday, February 20, 2025
- *Time:* 3:00–6:00 PM

Help us decide...

A new artificial turf field is being considered at one of two potential locations. Let us know what you think at our check-ins...

Terry Hughes Park / Glenbrook Middle School
Monday Feb.10, 3:00-6:00pm

Queensborough Community Centre Thursday Feb.20, 3:00-6:00pm

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3 | Learnings summary

A wide range of people in New Westminster gave input about the potential location of a new artificial turf field. The following section outlines what we heard through two pop-up engagement sessions.

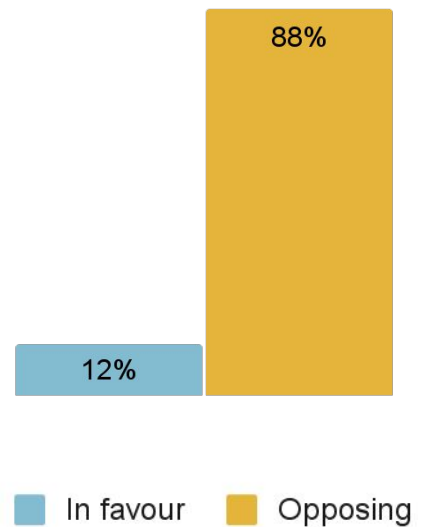
3.1 Pop-up 1: Terry Hughes Park / Glenbrook Middle School

Overview

This pop-up event took place outside Glenbrook Middle School on Monday, February 10, 2025, from 3:00 to 6:00 PM, strategically timed to engage with parents and children after school and work hours.

Community feedback indicates considerable opposition to replacing the grass field at Terry Hughes Park with artificial turf. The existing softball diamond is frequently used by the sports leagues who require higher fences, making its removal a significant loss for them. Residents expressed a preference to retain the grass area as it serves as a valuable open green space for the community and accommodates a variety of activities including walking, resting, picnics, bocce, and badminton.

Concerns were raised about the environmental impact of artificial turf, as well as potential issues related to increased parking in the area, lighting, and noise. Given these factors, some community members suggested alternative locations, such as Ryall Park, as more suitable sites for an artificial turf field.



Total participants: 61

A total of 97 written comments about the proposal were received, including elementary school students.

Some participants submitted multiple written responses, which may have influenced the overall count of feedback received.



3 | Learnings summary

Key themes

Community feedback reflects strong support for preserving the grass field, with concerns raised about the environmental, logistical, and health impacts of an artificial turf field. This section outlines key themes from community feedback on the proposed artificial turf field (ATF) at Terry Hughes Park, including the frequency of mentions for each theme.

Preservation of the grass field (54 mentions)

Many residents emphasized the importance of maintaining the grass field, citing its benefits for relaxation, family activities, and connecting with nature.

Environmental concerns (36 mentions)

Concerns were raised about the environmental impact of artificial turf, including microplastics, urban heat island effect, and long-term sustainability.

Usage for informal activities (25 mentions)

The open grass field is highly valued for informal activities such as picnics, dog walking, and impromptu gatherings, contributing to overall community well-being. There are concerns that these activities would be pushed aside due to the increased programming of an artificial turf field.

Health and safety concerns (21 mentions)

Many residents highlighted the potential physical risks of artificial turf, including injuries and discomfort, as well as the mental and emotional benefits of having access to green space.

Parking and traffic issues (19 mentions)

Several community members expressed worries about increased traffic congestion and parking shortages if an artificial turf field were implemented.



Neighbourhood perspectives

Opposition to an artificial turf field

There is strong opposition to replacing the grass field, with numerous written responses against the project. The primary concerns include:

- **Loss of a well-used softball diamond:** The existing field is heavily used, particularly by sports leagues that require higher fences, making its removal a significant loss for softball.
- **Preservation of community green space:** The current location serves as a vital recreational and gathering area for the community, with activities such as picnics, bocce, badminton, and unstructured play. Many residents prefer grass for walking and relaxation.
- **Environmental and neighbourhood concerns:** Opposition is driven by concerns over the environmental impact of artificial turf, including noise pollution, light pollution, heat retention, and sustainability. Additional issues include increased parking demands, traffic congestion, noise, and the intensity of sports field lighting.
- **Alternative locations suggested:** Some residents proposed Ryall Park as more suitable sites for an artificial turf field.

In support of the artificial turf field

A smaller number of responses expressed support for an artificial turf field. Supporters highlighted the following benefits:

- **Improved usability:** Artificial turf allows for year-round sports play, even in rainy or winter conditions.
- **Enhanced sports performance:** The surface would better accommodate competitive sports by providing a consistent playing field.
- **Lower maintenance requirements:** Artificial turf requires less upkeep compared to grass fields, making it a cost-effective option in the long term.

Overall neighbourhood response

Feedback shows a **significant preference for maintaining the grass field** at Terry Hughes Park. Concerns about environmental impact, loss of green space, and neighbourhood disruptions outweigh the perceived benefits of artificial turf. The findings suggest that any future considerations for artificial turf should take into account alternative locations and address the neighbourhood's concerns.



3.2 Pop-up 2: Queensborough Community Centre

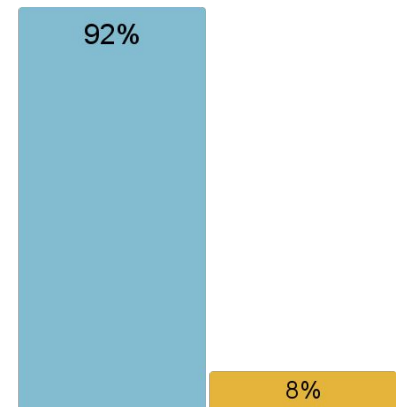
Overview

This pop-up was held at Queensborough Community Centre on Thursday, February 20, 2025 running from 3:00–6:00 pm to catch community centre users after working hours.

Queensborough residents strongly support locating the artificial turf field at Ryall Park, citing a shortage of local sports facilities that currently require travel to other parts of New Westminster. The proposed field would provide year-round access with lighting, lower maintenance than a grass field, and expanded sports opportunities, especially for youth. Additionally, community members suggested incorporating a dedicated track to benefit seniors and promote broader community use.

Recommendations included ensuring the field is regulation size, properly lit, and supported by free street parking. While enthusiasm for the project is high, concerns were raised about environmental impacts, noise pollution, light pollution, and parking, with calls for thorough studies and mitigation strategies.

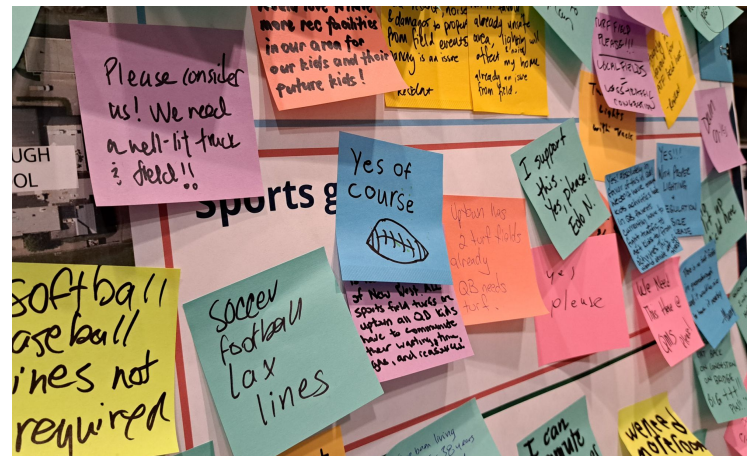
Overall, the Queensborough community is eager to see an ATF at Ryall Park, emphasizing its potential to enhance local recreational opportunities.



■ In favour ■ Opposing

Total participants: 150

We received 150 written comments from the community, including 100+ from elementary school students. Some participants submitted multiple written responses, which may have influenced the overall count of feedback received.



3 | Learnings summary

Key themes

This section outlines key themes from community feedback on the proposed artificial turf field (ATF) at Ryall Park, including the frequency of mentions for each theme.

Demand for local sports facilities (64 mentions)

Queensborough currently lacks dedicated sports fields, requiring residents to travel outside of the community for games and training. An ATF would address this gap by providing a local venue for soccer, football, and lacrosse, fostering community-based sports participation.

Growing community needs (55 mentions)

As Queensborough continues to expand, residents emphasized the need for additional recreational facilities to support the growing population. Families specifically highlighted the importance of investing in sports infrastructure to enhance local opportunities for youth and community engagement.

Year-round, safe usage (38 mentions)

The ATF would enable consistent use throughout the year, regardless of weather conditions. Proper lighting would ensure safety for evening activities, making the facility more accessible for children, youth, and seniors.

Intergenerational community space (26 mentions)

Community members proposed incorporating a track around the ATF to provide a dedicated space for seniors and those seeking low-impact exercise. This addition would contribute to an inclusive, intergenerational recreational hub that serves all age groups.

Reduced traffic and commuting (20 mentions)

The lack of local sports fields requires families to travel across the bridge to access sports facilities in New Westminster, increasing traffic congestion and travel time. Establishing an ATF in Queensborough would reduce this burden, improving convenience and accessibility for local residents.

These findings demonstrate strong community support for an artificial turf field at Ryall Park, with an emphasis on local accessibility, safety, inclusivity, and long-term infrastructure planning.



Neighbourhood perspectives



Strong neighbourhood support for an Artificial Turf Field

There is significant support from the Queensborough neighbourhood for the development of an artificial turf field (ATF) at Ryall Park, as the area is currently underserved in terms of sports facilities. The primary reasons cited include:

- **Lack of local facilities:** The absence of a turf field in Queensborough forces residents to travel across the bridge to access sports facilities in other parts of New Westminster.
- **Year-round and evening usage:** An ATF would provide a reliable playing surface in all weather conditions, with lighting for evening games and activities.
- **Lower maintenance requirements:** Artificial turf requires less upkeep than a grass field, reducing maintenance costs and increasing usability.
- **Increased sports opportunities for youth:** A turf field in Queensborough would enable local participation in sports such as soccer, football, and lacrosse, particularly for children and youth.
- **Improved playability:** Due to Queensborough's high water table, grass fields are frequently waterlogged or muddy, limiting community access and organized play. An ATF would enable consistent availability and use.

Neighbourhood concerns and opposition

Despite strong support, some concerns were raised about the environmental impact of artificial turf, as well as potential issues related to noise, lighting, and parking capacity. Residents advocating for further study emphasized the need for mitigation measures to address these concerns. Some individuals opposed the ATF due to preferences for a grass field, citing its environmental benefits, aesthetic appeal, and suitability for general community activities. Health risks associated with artificial turf materials were also mentioned. A small number of responses suggested considering an alternative location due to local safety and property concerns.

Overall neighbourhood response

The **majority of responses supported an ATF at Ryall Park**, citing the need for improved sports infrastructure. Opposition was limited, mainly due to environmental, health, and location concerns. The findings highlight strong community interest, with recommendations for further assessment to address potential challenges.

Additional considerations

Strong desire for a running and walking track:

Numerous participants shared an interest in a surrounding track, with suggestions that it be rubberized. They highlighted the opportunities for intergenerational connections, health and safety aspects, and overall community benefit that a track would bring, while asking, "why wait?" for a second phase of improvement.

Geotechnical considerations: A number of participants noted the high water table and the importance of ensuring an ATF is properly engineered to account for the effects this may have on a field.

