

DATE: September 19, 2024

FILE: 1700-02

TO: Chair and Directors
Comox Valley Recreation Commission

FROM: James Warren
Chief Administrative Officer

Supported by James Warren
Chief Administrative Officer

J. Warren

RE: Artificial Turf Field Borrowing Options

Purpose

To provide short and long-term borrowing options for consideration of funding the construction of an artificial turf field on Georges P. Vanier Secondary School property.

Recommendation from the Chief Administrative Officer:

THAT staff be directed to proceed with the Artificial Turf Field project as generally outlined in the staff report dated September 19, 2024, with \$3,000,000 financed through long-term borrowing over 10 years so that the field may be constructed in 2025;

AND FURTHER THAT staff be directed to bring forward a loan authorization bylaw, and process considerations for obtaining participating area approval of the loan authorization bylaw by way of an alternative approval process.

Executive Summary

- Since 2008 a second artificial turf field has been identified as a need in the Comox Valley. In June 2024 staff were asked to report back with funding options. (Appendix A).
- The Recreation Commission (Commission) approved the Recreation Strategic Plan in spring 2023 and prioritized the development of a second artificial turf field. A full list of decisions can be found in Appendix B.
- Designs options were presented to the Commission for consideration in November 2023, Option A was endorsed by the Commission (Appendix C).
- Although a conceptual design was endorsed in November 2023, short-term borrowing through bylaw approval amendments in early 2024 did not meet the service participant threshold.
- In February 2024, upon consideration of the Five-Year Financial Plan, the artificial turf field was removed from the capital budget until such time that the Decarbonization Strategy was completed, and the Commission could consider

the turf field within the context of other capital projects. Additionally, tax levies were raised to maximize annual reserve contributions.

- The Decarbonization Strategy and Roadmap (DSR) was presented in May 2024 and provided information on expenditures and timelines to meet greenhouse gas reduction targets.
- Staff have advanced asset management best practices through the preparation of a long-range capital plan for recreation facilities including turf fields. This 2025 draft plan is presented within the staff report included with today's agenda.
- By drawing on the analysis of long-range financial planning, staff recommend 10-year long-term borrowing for the turf field capital project. Final detailed design will be completed in 2024 and to maintain overall low cost, staff recommend construction and completion occur in 2025.
- If the Board chooses to utilize an alternative approval process in mid January 2025, and elector approval is obtained, then it may be possible to start construction in the Spring of 2025 and open the field in the Fall of 2025 as outlined in Appendix D. However, if the Board chooses to go to referendum, then construction may be able to start in 2025, but it would have to be completed in 2026.
- The method of public assent has implications on the timing of construction and therefore affects the cost of the project. If construction is completed in 2025, the estimated cost is \$5,944,898, however, if construction is completed in 2026, the estimated cost is \$6,359,658.

Prepared by:

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Concurrence:

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Government and Community Interests Distribution (Upon Agenda Publication)

Comox Valley Schools	✓
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Background/Current Situation

On November 21, 2023, four concept designs were presented to the Commission for consideration, ranging in cost from approximately \$5.1 million to \$7.0 million dollars. Design Option A at a Class D estimate of \$5,718,000, was chosen as it supports a large number of sports while balancing fiscal responsibility.

At the June 25, 2024 Commission meeting, [a summary report](#) (Appendix A) was provided to the Commission outlining the progress on the artificial turf field and the history of decisions that have been made on the project.

At the same meeting (June 25, 2024), the Commission passed the following resolution:

THAT the Recreation Commission direct staff to prepare funding strategies for the second artificial turf field project using short-term and long-term borrowing; AND FURTHER THAT those strategies be presented to the Recreation Commission in fall 2024.

With the decarbonization strategy completed, received and the 2025 long-term financial plan drafted, the commission can begin to consider funding options, project timing and overall affordability. The savings resulting from transfers to reserves has reduced the need for debt and therefore brings less overall tax burden.

Legislative Requirements:

The maximum tax rate for the service is currently \$0.04/\$1,000 of assessed value on land and improvements. Bylaw No. 795 being “Comox Valley Sports Track and Fields Service Conversion Bylaw No. 2353, 2001, Amendment No. 2” (Bylaw 795) was introduced and given three readings by the CVRD Board on December 12, 2023. The amendment provides for an increase to the maximum annual requisition to \$1,697,117 or \$0.06895 per \$1,000 of the net taxable value of land and improvements in the service area. The bylaw currently remains at third reading as participating area approval was not achieved.

Should the Commission support a second artificial turf and move forward with short-term borrowing (option three as described further in this report), Bylaw 795 should be amended by the Board to update the maximum requisition requirements and incorporate the revised approach for participating area approval. The legislative options and considerations respecting this process are described further below.

As Bylaw 795 has not been adopted or rescinded, the Board still has the option to utilize this bylaw to address the need for an increase in the maximum requisition. If any adjustments are required, the Board can rescind third reading and amend at second reading. Participating area approval is currently proposed through director and council consent with two-thirds (or four of the five) participating jurisdictions required for the bylaw to be adopted. While this approach represents the least expensive and most expedient process, with the previous failure to achieve the

necessary consents and with the proposed incorporation of long-term borrowing, a revised approach is now being recommended.

Regional districts can enter long-term capital borrowing through a loan authorization bylaw. In accordance with the *Local Government Act 406/Community Charter 179*, the bylaw must include the purpose of the borrowing, the maximum amount to be borrowed, the maximum duration of the borrowing and the specific service that the loan relates to. Further, such bylaws must receive participating area approval through an assent vote or alternative approval process. Consent on behalf of a municipal participating area is also eligible, however in this instance this does not equally apply to the electoral areas given that the proposed borrowing has not been requested by petition.

Given that there are two bylaws associated with Option three, staff would recommend that for the purposes of obtaining participating area approval they be dealt with as if they were one bylaw. This approach is authorized by the *Local Government Act* and is typically employed to simplify and reduce administration costs as well as improve public awareness and participation.

As noted above, there are two approaches for participating area approval for consideration:

Alternative Approval Process - Local Government Act 406/407, Community Charter 179(1):

Formerly known as the counter petition, an Alternative Approval Process (AAP) allows electors at least 30 days to submit a response form if they are in opposition to the bylaw. If 10 per cent or more of eligible electors submit forms indicating their opposition to the proposal, then elector assent is not obtained, and the AAP fails. The Board may then reconsider the proposal, cancel the proposal or move forward with a referendum to seek approval.

Timeline and cost:

- One month for Board and bylaw approvals
- Three to four months for alternative approval process including Inspector approval, statutory advertising and 30-day AAP period
- Cost and staff resources: ~ \$3,000-\$5,000 plus moderate level of staff time

Assent Voting (Referendum) - Local Government Act 407(2):

Assent voting involves asking electors to cast a vote on the bylaws and is similar in many ways to the process for conducting a general local election. Assent of the electors is achieved if a majority of votes counted are in favour of the bylaw or question. The Chief Election Officer must set the general voting day within 80

days of the bylaws receiving third reading and approval from the Inspector of Municipalities. In addition, at least two advance voting opportunities must be held. There is no minimum requirement for voter turnout, and it is observed that many assent voting initiatives undertaken in isolation from general local elections suffer low turnout results.

Timeline and cost:

- One to two months for Board and bylaw approvals
- Four months for referendum process including Inspector approval, statutory advertising and advanced, special and regular voting
- Cost and staff resources: ~\$60,000 estimated plus significant staff time required

Options

The cost to construct the artificial turf field in 2025 is estimated at \$5,944,898. If \$1,346,165 is utilized from reserve, in addition to \$808,500 from the Growing Communities Fund and \$790,233 from the 2025 requisition, then \$3,000,000 will need to be borrowed in 2025 for construction.

In 2024 the tax rate for the Track and Sports Fields Service Function was \$0.036/\$1,000 – this was an increase from \$0.0071 for 2023. The tax rate increased in 2024 due to an increase in the transfer to reserves to contribute funds for the construction of the second artificial turf field in the future.

Note - the Growing Communities funds expire on March 31, 2028.

1. Long-Term Borrowing - 10 Years

That the Commission pursue 10-year, long-term borrowing through an alternative approval process for the construction of the artificial turf field starting in 2025.

If the CVRD borrows \$3M for a second artificial turf field and increases operational costs annually to \$480,000 to account for lifecycle replacement, reserve contributions, and operational expenditures, the tax rate is estimated to decrease slightly in 2026 by \$0.0047 per \$1,000. This equates to an approximate cost per residential unit of \$25.02 for a property assessed at \$800,000.

At the end of the 10-year term, the tax rate will further decrease by \$0.01373 per \$1,000 of assessed value, or a decrease to taxes of approximately \$11 as the debt servicing requirements will be complete.

	Estimated Total Tax Rate for 601 - per \$1,000 Assessed Value	Estimated Property Tax Impact on \$800,000 Residence
2024	0.03600	\$28.80
2025	0.03600	\$28.80
2026-2034	0.03128	\$25.02
2035	0.01755	\$14.04

Long-term borrowing must be undertaken through the adoption of a loan authorization bylaw which requires elector approval. Such approval may be sought by way of an AAP or assent vote as described above.

2. Long-Term Borrowing - 15 Years

That the Recreation Commission pursue 15-year, long-term borrowing through an alternative approval process for the construction of the artificial turf field starting in 2025.

If the CVRD borrows funds for a second artificial turf field and increases operational costs to account for lifecycle replacement, reserve contributions and operational expenditures, the tax rate is estimated for 2026 to be 0.02791 per \$1,000. This equates to an approximate cost per residential unit of \$22.33 for a property assessed at \$800,000.

At the end of the 15-year term, the tax rate will decrease by \$0.01036 per \$1,000 of assessed value, or a decrease to taxes of approximately \$8.30 as the debt servicing requirements will be complete.

	Estimated Total Tax Rate for 601 - per \$1,000 Assessed Value	Estimated Property Tax Impact on \$800,000 Residence
2024	0.03600	\$28.80
2025	0.03600	\$28.80
2026-2039	0.02791	\$22.33
2040	0.01755	\$14.04

Long-term borrowing must be undertaken through the adoption of a loan authorization bylaw which requires elector approval. Such approval may be sought by way of an AAP or assent vote as described above.

3. Short-Term Borrowing - 5-Years

As introduced above under the Legislative requirements heading that the Commission direct staff to bring forward Bylaw No. 2353 being, “Comox Valley Sports Track and Fields Service Conversion Bylaw No. 2353, 2001” to amend the maximum tax rate to the greater of \$1,697,117 or \$0.06895 of net taxable value on land and improvements to fund the construction of an artificial turf field to be considered for final adoption.

Short-term borrowing does not require elector approval, however, borrowing the funds necessary for the project requires an amendment to the service establishment bylaw to increase the maximum allowable requisition.

If the CVRD borrows funds under the five-year short-term borrowing term for a second artificial turf field and increases operational costs to account for lifecycle replacement, reserve contributions and operational expenditures, the tax rate is estimated to increase in 2025 by \$0.0683 per \$1,000. This equates to an approximate cost per residential unit of \$34.26 for a property assessed at \$800,000.

At the end of the five-year term, the tax rate will decrease by \$0.02528 per \$1,000 of assessed value, or a decrease to taxes of approximately \$20.22 as the debt servicing requirements will be complete.

Year	Estimated Total Tax Rate for 601 - per \$1,000 Assessed Value	Estimated Property Tax Impact on \$800,000 Residence
2024	0.03600	\$28.80
2025 - 2029	0.04283	\$34.26
2030	0.01755	\$14.04

Staff recommends proceeding with Option 1 through an AAP.

Financial Factors

The 2023 budget included approximately \$160,000 in operating dollars for the advancement of a new turf field. As aligned with the Recreation Strategy, the 2024 proposed financial plan included Capital Project No. 1180 New Turf Field; this project was not advanced to the adopted budget.

With the advancement of design, a Class A estimate for Design Option A was received in February. The Class A estimate of \$5,530,138 is \$187,384 less than the Class D estimate of \$5,717,522. As the project is considered, it is important to note that the estimate for cost escalation is five to ten per cent per year. An average of

7.5 per cent per year has been used for the purpose of this report. Overall operational impacts associated with the service area are estimated at \$480,000. It is projected that the project cost could increase as follows: \$5,944,898 in 2025 and \$6,359,658 in 2026.

As highlighted during the 2024 budget cycle, financial pressures exist for regional recreation facilities services. It is therefore important to consider the overall impacts to household affordability when determining funding mechanisms for this single turf project, asset life cycling, and further new amenities. By drawing on conclusions of the draft long-term financial plan (see the 20-Year Capital Plan report included in today’s agenda), Financial Services is recommending drawing debt over a ten-year period. This allows for the distribution of repayment over a longer period, keeping tax requisitions more stable in the future as additional recreation strategy initiatives are implemented.

Project Timing, Borrowing Options & Associated Tax Rates

2025 Construction

Planning the project for a 2025 construction and completion will result in the lowest overall budget implications. As a procurement competition will be required early January (award by end of February), a 2024 budget amendment will be necessary. The budget amendment will come forward to the Commission in October followed by consideration of approval by the Board for amendment to budget bylaw. The following projections can be considered.

2025 Projected Costs	\$5,944,898
SOURCE OF FUNDS	AMOUNT
Growing Communities Funding	\$808,500
Transfer From Reserve # 601	1,346,165
2025 Funding - From 601 current year requisition	790,233
Debt Funding	3,000,000
TOTAL	\$5,944,898

	Five Year - Short Term @ 4.92%	Ten Year - Long Term @ 4.43%	Fifteen Year - Long Term @ 4.21%
Loan Amount	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000
Annual Paydown - Principal	600,000	258,905	155,890
Annual Paydown - Interest	91,500	116,666	127,576
Operational Impact	\$691,500	\$375,571	\$283,466
Tax Rate per \$1,000 Assessed Value			
Debt Servicing - Annual	0.02528	0.01373	0.01036
Annual Maintenance \$480,000	0.01755	0.01755	0.01755
	0.04283	0.03128	0.02791
Average House \$800,000	\$34.26	\$25.02	\$22.33

See Appendix D for a timeline of this option.

2025 and 2026 Construction

The project will be included within the 2025 proposed budget and therefore will gain endorsement by the Commission in February 2025 and the CVRD in March 2025. The following projections can be considered.

2025/2026 Projected Costs	\$6,359,658
SOURCE OF FUNDS	AMOUNT
Growing Communities Funding	\$808,500
Transfer From Reserve 601	1,460,262
2025 Funding - From 601	790,896
Debt Funding	3,300,000
TOTAL	\$6,359,658

	Five Year - Short Term @ 4.92%	Ten Year - Long Term @ 4.43%	Fifteen Year - Long Term @ 4.21%
Loan Amount	\$3,300,000	\$3,300,000	\$3,300,000
Annual Paydown - Principal	660,000	284,795	171,479
Annual Paydown - Interest	111,028	128,334	140,334
Operational Impact	\$771,028	\$413,139	\$311,813
Tax Rate per \$1,000 Assessed Value			
Debt Servicing - Annual	0.02819	0.01511	0.01140
Annual Maintenance \$480,000	0.01755	0.01755	0.01755
	0.04574	0.03266	0.02895
Average House \$800,000	\$35.21	\$26.13	\$23.16

With this project already out of alignment of the original dates of the Strategic Plan, any further delays could result in the field turf replacement cycle for the first field happening concurrently. This will create additional asset management burdens in the future, as well as compromise field quality for sports such as field hockey who prefer an older turf field.

Strategic Considerations - Strategic Drivers								
Fiscal Responsibility	✓	Climate Crisis and Environmental Stewardship and Protection	✓	Community Partnerships	✓	Indigenous Relations	Accessibility, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion	✓

Fiscal Responsibility:

- Partnering with Comox Valley Schools for the development of a second artificial turf field results in a significant cost savings to the project and taxpayers as a result of the donated land.

- Additional grant funds will be sought for this project, though grant opportunities are not always readily available for such infrastructure.

Climate Crisis and Environmental Stewardship and Protection:

- The current artificial turf field has greatly reduced the quantity of water required to maintain the field compared to the former all-weather/sand field
- Though there are concerns that the rubber infill material used on artificial turf fields can migrate off the field, strategies such as boot brushes and curbs/lips around the field will be in place to reduce the risk.

Community Partnerships:

- This service is built on strong partnerships with Comox Valley Schools, the City of Courtenay, and the Town of Comox.
- The CVRD partners with Comox Valley Schools and the City of Courtenay for the operation and maintenance of the track and artificial turf field at Georges P. Vanier Secondary.
- The CVRD, Comox Valley Schools, and Comox Valley United Soccer Club partner to work towards the construction of a fieldhouse next to the existing artificial turf field.

Accessibility, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:

- The construction of a multi-sport artificial turf field may lead to greater opportunities for programs such as the Challenger Baseball program that generally utilizes an artificial turf field in order to increase accessibility for their participants. It will also host a wider variety of sports as more field time will be available to the community.

Strategic Considerations - Regional Growth Strategy Goals							
Housing		Ecosystems, Natural Areas and Parks		Local economic development		Transportation	
Infrastructure	✓	Food Systems		Public Health and Safety	✓	Climate Change	✓

Infrastructure:

- The development of a new artificial turf field on the site of an existing grass field means that new infrastructure will be able to be developed while preserving vacant land elsewhere for other development needs.

Public health and safety:

- The development of a second artificial turf field will mean that an increased number of children, youth and adults will be able to enjoy year-round outdoor sport opportunities.

Climate change:

- As stated above

Intergovernmental Factors

Staff have worked closely with Comox Valley Schools on the development of a new artificial turf field concept. Currently there is an agreement in place between the CVRD and Comox Valley Schools with respect to maintenance, water purchase, and use for the existing field and track. Moving forward through the development of the new artificial turf field will bring an opportunity for another partnership agreement with Comox Valley Schools.

Due to conflicting schedules, staff were unable to arrange a meeting with Cumberland staff over the summer. However, now that these borrowing options are being presented, once the Commission provides direction on the preferred borrowing option, staff will be able to convey that information to Cumberland and proceed with scheduling a meeting.

Citizen/Public Relations

Following the February 13, 2024, decision by the Commission to pause the project until it could be considered after the completion of the DSR, information was sent to stakeholder organizations that attended the September 25, 2023, meeting to provide them with an update on the project.

If the Commission chooses to move forward with an alternative approval process or referendum in the future, then a communications plan will be developed to inform the public of the project and how they can participate as an elector.

Attachments:

- Appendix A – Artificial Turf Field Update Report, June 18, 2024
- Appendix B - Artificial Turf Timeline of Decisions
- Appendix C – Conceptual Design Option A
- Appendix D – ATF 2025 Timeline

DATE: June 18, 2024

FILE: 7910-01

TO: Chair and Directors
Comox Valley Recreation Commission

FROM: James Warren
Chief Administrative Officer

Supported by James Warren
Chief Administrative Officer

J. Warren

RE: **Additional Artificial Turf Field Update**

Purpose

This report provides a summary of the artificial turf field project.

Recommendation from the Chief Administrative Officer:

THAT the Recreation Commission direct staff to prepare funding strategies for the second artificial turf field project using short-term and long-term borrowing;

AND FURTHER THAT those strategies be presented to the Recreation Commission in fall 2024.

Executive Summary

- Since 2008 a second artificial turf field has been identified as a need in the Comox Valley.
- The Recreation Commission (the Commission) approved the Recreation Strategic Plan in spring 2023 and prioritized the development of a second artificial turf field however the short-term borrowing through bylaw approval amendments did not meet the service participant threshold.
- A Decarbonation plan was presented in May of 2024 to provide information on expenditures and timelines to meet greenhouse gas reduction targets.
- Staff are recommending that funding strategies for short and long-term borrowing to fund the artificial turf field be presented to the Commission in the fall of 2024 to implement the Recreation Strategic Plan.
- Bylaw No. 795 being "Comox Valley Sports Track and Fields Service Conversion Bylaw No. 2353, 2001, Amendment No. 2" was introduced and given 3 readings by the CVRD Board on December 12, 2023. The amendment was proposed to enable short-term borrowing for the project by increasing the maximum annual requisition for the service to \$1,697,117 or \$0.06895 per \$1,000 of the net taxable value of land and improvements in the service area. Participating

area approval of the bylaw was proposed to be obtained by director and council consent but the two-thirds requirement was not achieved.

Prepared by:

Concurrence:

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D. DeMarzo

Trish Morgan
Assistant Senior Manager
of Recreation Services

Doug DeMarzo
General Manager of
Community Services

Government and Community Interests Distribution (Upon Agenda Publication)

Comox Valley Schools	✓
City of Courtenay	✓
Town of Comox	✓
Comox Valley United Soccer	✓

Background/Current Situation

Comox Valley Track and Fields Service Function:

Function 601, Comox Valley Track and Fields service, provides funding for the maintenance and capital costs of the all-weather track and sports playing fields. Participants of this service are the City of Courtenay, Town of Comox, Part of Baynes Sound – Denman/Hornby Islands (Electoral Area A) (Vancouver Island portion only), Lazo North (Electoral Area B), and Puntledge – Black Creek (Electoral Area C). The Village of Cumberland does not participate in the service but has indicated that they may consider participating through a short-term service agreement.

Artificial Turf Field History:

In 2008 the Sports Field Inventory recommended the construction of two artificial turf fields to serve the Comox Valley’s population of 63,000. In 2014 one artificial turf field was constructed at Georges P. Vanier Secondary School next to the all-weather track. The Inventory was updated in 2022/2023 with the Sports Fields Strategy, which recommended the construction of a second artificial turf field for the Comox Valley’s growing population of 74,000 which is estimated to increase up to 88,000 by 2030 and up to 95,000 by 2040.

Based on this projected population growth, the Comox Valley could see an increase of up to 125 new teams if the population grows by 15,000. Compared to neighbouring communities, the Comox Valley is falling behind in the availability of year-round outdoor sports infrastructure with only one artificial turf field suitable

for year-round play and lighting to accommodate practices and games past sunset, which can be as early as 4:30 pm in the winter months. While grass fields are important assets to the community and sports groups, they cannot be utilized daily through the “wet months” of the year as their condition can deteriorate rapidly due to overuse which results in increased maintenance and remediation costs.

As a result of these challenges, when the Recreation Strategic Plan was developed in spring 2023, a second artificial turf field was identified as an immediate short-term priority for the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) with Georges P. Vanier being the preferred location.

Artificial Turf Field Project Status:

On November 21, 2023 four concept designs were presented to the Commission for consideration, ranging in cost from approximately \$5,100,000 to \$7,000,000 dollars. Design Option A, at a Class D estimate of \$5,718,000, was chosen as it supports a large number of sports while balancing fiscal responsibility. Appendix B highlights further decisions leading to the February 13th 2024 Recreation Commission decision to delay adding the turf to the capital plan until the decarbonization strategy is complete. This decarbonization strategy was presented in May to the Recreation Commission.

Legislative Requirements:

The maximum tax rate for the service is currently \$0.04/\$1,000 of assessed value on land and improvements. If the maximum tax rate needs to be increased to pay debt payments associated with the borrowing to construct the artificial turf, then the service establishment bylaw (Comox Valley Sports Track and Fields Service Conversion Bylaw No. 2353, 2001) will need to be amended accordingly. Bylaw No. 795 being “Comox Valley Sports Track and Fields Service Conversion Bylaw No. 2353, 2001, Amendment No. 2” (Bylaw No. 795) was introduced and given three readings by the CVRD Board on December 12, 2023. The amendment provides for an increase to the maximum annual requisition to \$1,697,117 or \$0.06895 per \$1,000 of the net taxable value of land and improvements in the service area. The bylaw currently remains at third reading as participating area approval was not achieved.

Should the Commission wish to proceed with the construction of the artificial turf field, one of the following legislative processes needs to be undertaken by the Board in order to secure necessary funding:

A) Bylaw No. 795

As Bylaw No. 795 has not been adopted or rescinded, the Board has the option to utilize this bylaw to address any requirements for an increase in the maximum requisition. If any adjustments are required, the Board can rescind third reading and amend at second reading. Participating area approval is currently proposed through director and council consent with two-thirds (or four of the five) participating jurisdictions required for the bylaw to be adopted. This approach represents the least expensive and quickest process.

Timeline and cost:

- One month for bylaw amendments/readings
- Two months for participating area approval
- Cost - Minimal staff time

B) New Amending Bylaw

The Board could consider a new amendment to the Comox Valley Sports Track and Fields Service Conversion Bylaw No. 2353, 2001. While there are no time, cost or process advantages, this allows for fresh start with the particular approach for participating area approval being included. Such options include:

Electoral Area Director and council consent

- Electoral Area Directors and municipal councils may provide written consent on behalf of their electors for an amendment to a service establishment bylaw.
- Consent by two-thirds (or four of the five) participating jurisdictions is required for the bylaw to be adopted.

Timeline and cost:

- One month for bylaw amendments/readings
- Two months for participating area approval
- Cost – No direct costs and minimal staff time

Alternative Approval Process:

Formally known as the counter petition, an Alternative Approval Process (AAP) allows electors at least 30 days to submit a response form if they are in opposition to the bylaw. If 10 per cent or more of eligible electors submit forms indicating their opposition to the proposal, then elector assent is not obtained and the AAP fails. The Board may then reconsider the proposal, cancel the proposal or move forward with a referendum to seek approval.

Timeline and cost:

- One to two months for Board and bylaw approvals
- Three to four for alternative approval process including Inspector approval, statutory advertising and 30 day AAP period
- Cost and staff resources: ~ \$3,000-\$5,000 plus moderate level of staff time

Assent Voting (Referendum)

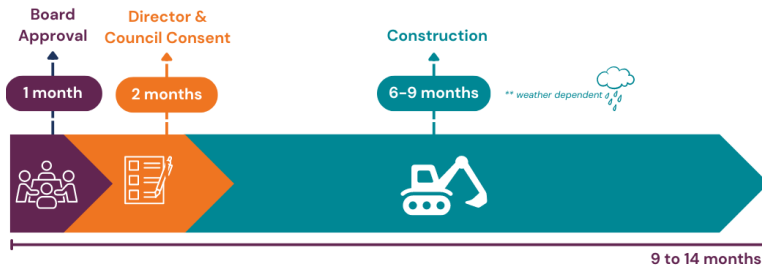
Assent voting involves asking electors to cast a vote on a bylaw or other matter. Assent of the electors is achieved if a majority of votes counted are in favour of the bylaw or question.

Timeline and cost:

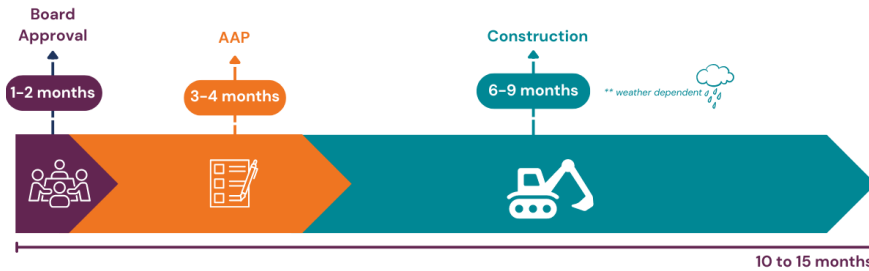
- One to two months for Board and bylaw approvals
- Six to eight months for referendum process including Inspector approval, statutory advertising and advanced, special and regular voting
- Cost and staff resources: ~\$50,000 estimated plus significant staff time required

Further analysis is needed to determine in what year the CVRD may be able to short-term borrow the necessary funds to construct the field, without increasing the maximum tax rate and requisition, based on the amount of funds being put into reserve. More information will be brought to the Commission in September 2024 along with the 2025 budget cycle and review of the Recreation Strategic Plan.

Bylaw Amendment Process



Alternative Approval Process



Assent Voting (Referendum)



Design Status:

In July 2023 a Request for Proposals was issued for the design services for an artificial turf field and cricket pitch, closing on August 11, 2023. The successful consultant, R.F Binnie and Associates, has completed the conceptual design, the 50 per cent schematic design and has provided a Class A construction cost estimate for the preferred design option. The construction tendering process can be initiated once funding has been confirmed and will take approximately six weeks to complete once issued. As noted above, to secure funding, an elector approval process or bylaw amendment may be required.

Options

- 1) That the Recreation Commission direct staff to prepare funding strategies for the second artificial turf field project using short-term and long-term borrowing and that those strategies be presented to the Commission in fall 2024.

Considerations:

- The need for two artificial turf fields was identified as early as 2008, the need has not changed as the Comox Valley has grown over the past 16 years and continued population growth is expected.
- There is strong support for the project by sports groups.

2) That the Commission continue to maximize the transfer to reserves over the four to five years so that the debt necessary to fund the project decreases such that the maximum requisition does not need to be increased in order to pay the annual debt payments.

Considerations:

- The cost of the project may increase on average 7.5 per cent per year.
- By substantially increasing the reserve, the maximum requisition in the service establishment bylaw does not need to be amended.
- The Commission may wish to revisit the Recreation Strategic Plan to consider how the change in the timeline for the artificial turf field may impact the other anticipated projects.

Staff recommends option 1.

Financial Factors

Updated Costing and Cost Escalation:

The 2023 budget included approximately \$160,000 in operating dollars for the advancement of a new turf field. As aligned with the Recreation Strategy, the 2024 proposed financial plan included capital project no. 1180 New Turf Field; this project was not advanced to the adopted budget.

With the advancement of design, a Class A estimate for Design Option A was received in February. The Class A estimate of \$5,530,138 is \$187,384 less than the Class D estimate of \$5,717,522. In the fall, preliminary financial planning information will be brought forward and this will include updated calculations for impacts to households.

As the Commission considers this project and the next budget cycle, it is important to note that the current estimation for cost escalation is five to ten per cent per year. Therefore, at an average of 7.5 per cent per year, it is projected that the project cost could increase as follows:

- \$5,944,898 in 2025
- \$6,359,658 in 2026

These estimates do not include the cost to hold an elector approval process if determined by the Board.

Note that the construction of the cricket pitch has been removed from the budget as Comox Valley Schools plans to construct it in the summer of 2024 between the two lower Vanier grass fields. The \$18,000 allocated by the Commission to the project, will be transferred to Comox Valley Schools.

Further analysis, development of scenarios and consideration of financial impacts will be worked through in preparation for returning to the Recreation Commission in September. A preliminary draft of the 2025 short- and long-term recreation capital plan will be used to gain an understanding of the overall implications to taxpayers. Contemplation of the turf field project will occur along with other recreation capital needs.

Strategic Considerations - Strategic Drivers									
Fiscal Responsibility	✓	Climate Crisis and Environmental Stewardship and Protection	✓	Community Partnerships	✓	Indigenous Relations	✓	Accessibility, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion	✓

Fiscal Responsibility:

- Partnering with Comox Valley Schools for the development of a second artificial turf field results in a significant cost to the project and taxpayers as a result of the donated land.
- Additional grant funds will be sought for this project, though grant opportunities are not always readily available for such infrastructure.

Climate Crisis and Environmental Stewardship and Protection:

- The current artificial turf field has greatly reduced the quantity of water required to maintain the field compared to the former all-weather/sand field.
- Though there are concerns that the rubber infill material used on artificial turf fields can migrate off of the field, strategies such as boot brushes and curbs/lips around the field will be in place to reduce the risk of migration.

Community Partnerships:

- This service is built on strong partnerships with Comox Valley Schools, the City of Courtenay, and the Town of Comox.
- The CVRD partners with Comox Valley Schools and the City of Courtenay for the operation and maintenance of the track and artificial turf field at Georges P. Vanier Secondary.

- The CVRD, Comox Valley Schools, and Comox Valley United Soccer Club partner to work towards the construction of a fieldhouse next to the existing artificial turf field.

Accessibility, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:

- The construction of a multi-sport artificial turf field may lead to greater opportunities for programs such as the Challenger Baseball program that generally utilizes artificial turf fields in order to increase accessibility for their participants.

Strategic Considerations - Regional Growth Strategy Goals							
Housing	✓	Ecosystems, Natural Areas and Parks	✓	Local economic development	✓	Transportation	✓
Infrastructure	✓	Food Systems	✓	Public Health and Safety	✓	Climate Change	✓

Infrastructure:

- The development of a new artificial turf field on the site of an existing grass field, means that new infrastructure will be able to be developed while preserving vacant land elsewhere for other development needs.

Public health and safety:

- The development of a second artificial turf field will mean that an increased number of children, youth and adults will be able to enjoy year-round outdoor sport opportunities.

Climate change:

- As stated above

Intergovernmental Factors

Staff are working closely with Comox Valley Schools on the development of a new artificial turf field concept. Currently there is an agreement in place between the CVRD and Comox Valley Schools with respect to maintenance, water purchase, and use for the existing field and track. Moving forward through the development of the new artificial turf field will bring an opportunity for another partnership agreement with Comox Valley Schools.

Citizen/Public Relations

Following the February 13, 2024 decision by the Commission to pause the project until it could be considered after the completion of Decarbonization Strategy, information was sent to stakeholder organizations that attended the September 25, 2023 meeting to provide them with an update on the project.

If the Commission chooses to move forward with an alternative approval process or referendum in the future, then a communications plan will be developed to inform the public of the project and how they can participate as an elector.

Attachments:

Appendix A – Artificial Turf Timeline of Decisions

Appendix B – Conceptual Design Option A

Artificial Turf Timeline of Decisions

September 26, 2023 - Recreation Commission

THAT the 2023 – 2027 financial plan and capital expenditure program for the Comox Valley Track and Fields Service, functions 601 – 603, be amended to support a complete engineered design and Class A cost estimate for a new artificial turf field by increasing other professional fees in 2023 for sub-function 603 by \$54,476 to be funded by a corresponding increase in the transfer to operating from the service’s Future Expenditure Reserve fund (function 601).

CARRIED

November 21, 2023 – Recreation Commission

1) THAT the design option A as described in the staff report dated November 16, 2023, be approved.

CARRIED

2) THAT a five-year short-term borrowing to fund the construction of a new artificial turf field be approved.

CARRIED

3) THAT staff be directed to prepare an amendment to Bylaw No. 2353 being, “Comox Valley Sports Track and Fields Service Conversion Bylaw No. 2353, 2001” to amend the maximum tax rate to the greater of \$1,697,117 or \$0.06895 of net taxable value on land and improvements to fund design option A, B, or C as outlined in the report dated November 16, 2023 to be considered by the Comox Valley Regional Board for first, second, and third readings and final adoption;

AND FINALLY, THAT participating area approval for the amending bylaw be authorized to be given by electoral area director and municipal council consents pursuant to sections 346 and 347 of the Local Government Act.

CARRIED

December 5, 2023 – Regional Board

1) THAT the remaining Growing Communities Funds be allocated as follows:

- \$808,500 to the New Artificial Turf Field as prioritized within the Regional Recreation Strategy; and,
- \$808,500 to the Sewer Extension South project.

CARRIED

- 2) THAT staff be directed to prepare an amendment to Bylaw No. 2353 being, “Comox Valley Sports Track and Fields Service Conversion Bylaw No. 2353, 2001” to amend the maximum tax rate to the greater of \$1,697,117 or \$0.06895 of net taxable value on land and improvements to fund design option A, B, or C as outlined in the report dated November 16, 2023 to be considered by the Comox Valley Regional Board for first, second, and third readings and final adoption;

AND FINALLY, THAT participating area approval for the amending bylaw be authorized to be given by electoral area director and municipal council consents pursuant to sections 346 and 347 of the *Local Government Act*.

CARRIED

- 3) THAT Bylaw No. 795 being “Comox Valley Sports Track and Fields Service Conversion Bylaw No. 2353, 2001, Amendment No. 2” be given first and second readings concurrently.

DEFEATED

December 12, 2023 – Regional Board

- 1) THAT Bylaw No. 795 being “Comox Valley Sports Track and Fields Service Conversion Bylaw No. 2353, 2001, Amendment No. 2” be given first and second readings concurrently.

CARRIED

- 2) THAT Bylaw No. 795 being "Comox Valley Sports Track and Fields Service Conversion Bylaw No. 2353, 2001, Amendment No. 2" be read a third time.

CARRIED

January 10, 2024 – City of Courtenay

The City of Courtenay resolved at their Council meeting to provide written consent to the bylaw amendment on behalf of their electors.

January 23, 2024 – Recreation Commission

THAT an application to the Active Communities Grant program for the construction of the new artificial turf field for up to \$50,000, be approved.

CARRIED

January 24, 2024 – Town of Comox

The Town of Comox resolved at their Council meeting to provide written consent to the bylaw amendment on behalf of their electors.

February 13, 2024 – Recreation Commission

- 1) THAT the proposed 2024 - 2028 Financial Plan and capital expenditure program for function 601, Comox Valley Track and Fields Services, be amended by delaying the artificial turf field project from the capital plan until the Decarbonization Strategy is complete and the project can be revisited at a later date.

CARRIED

- 2) THAT the 2024 - 2028 tax requisitions remain at the current maximum levy of \$985,970 (based on the 2024 BC Assessment Authority completed role), and that an annual reserve contribution of \$670,068 be made to the Comox Valley Track and Fields Future Expenditure Reserve (#601) for the second artificial turf field capital project.

CARRIED

June 25, 2024 – Recreation Commission

- 1) THAT the Recreation Commission direct staff to prepare funding strategies for the second artificial turf field project using short-term and long-term borrowing;

AND FURTHER THAT those strategies be presented to the Recreation Commission in fall 2024.

CARRIED

- 2) THAT staff be directed to work with the Village of Cumberland to develop a service agreement as an alternative to joining Function 601 Comox Valley Track and Fields Service.

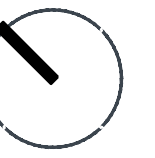
CARRIED

APPENDIX B
ARTIFICIAL TURF FIELD DESIGN OPTION A

Design A \$5,718,000		Borrowing	\$5,200,000
8,790 m ² = 110m x 70.1m		Reserve Contribution	\$500,000
trapezoidal top area of 38.5m side length and 1.4m small base		Rec Grant	\$18,000
		TOTAL	\$5,718,000
2 washrooms	✓	2 dugouts	✓
2 player shelters	✓	perimeter pathway	✓
3 boot brushes	✓	lighting	6 poles
2 reg size soccer goals	✓	fencing	✓
4 youth soccer goals	✓	spectator seating pad	✓
operations storage area	✓	spectator seat walls	none

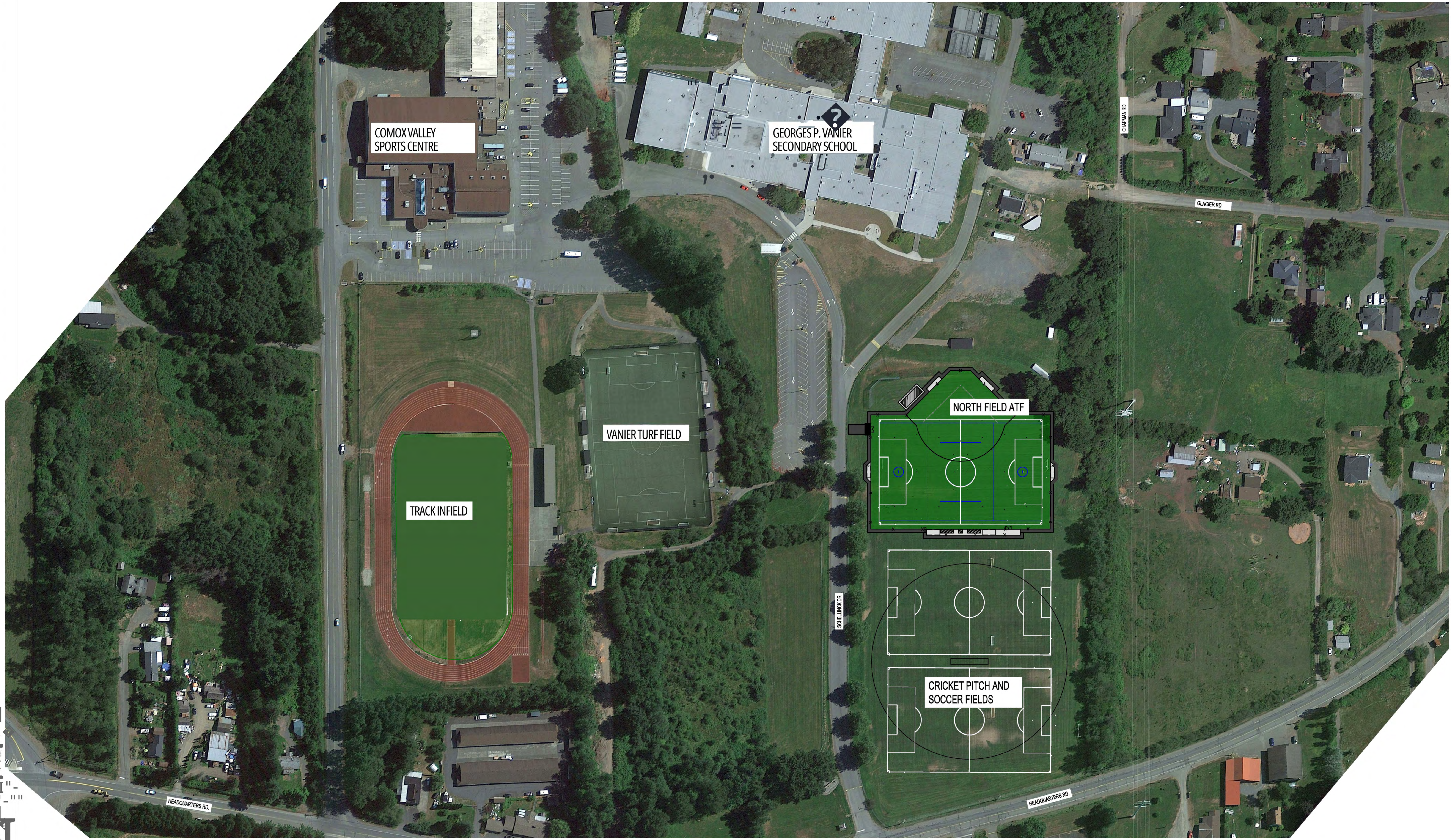
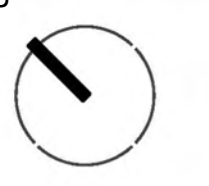
SPORTS			
Baseball	80ft long basepath; 255ft from home to edge of outfield; will need to provide mobile pitcher's mound	Football	Canadian practice only; temp lines needed
Soccer (reg & mini)	✓	Rugby	temp lines needed; not long enough for regulation play; will need mobile goals
Field Lacrosse	✓	Cricket	Cricket between 2 grass full-sized soccer fields
Field Hockey	temp lines needed		

PROS	CONS
A less expensive option that includes baseball, soccer, mini soccer, men's lacrosse; warm-up space & washrooms	No spectator seating, rugby and football fields are modified for practice use only; elevated cost associated with lighting to light the baseball playing field



LINE MARKING LEGEND	
SOCCER	
MINI SOCCER (DASHES)	
MEN'S LACROSSE	
BASEBALL	





CVRD Synthetic Turf Field & Cricket Pitch

Date: October 19, 2023

VANIER ATF FIELD

ARTIFICIAL TURF FIELD #2 TIMELINE

Recreation Commission

- determines whether to move forward with a borrowing option & prep of borrowing bylaw for AAP

Regional Board

- considers borrowing bylaw & if to move forward with AAP
- considers budget amendment to add project into Financial Plan

Alternative Approval Process

- if approved, Alternative Approval Process in January

Procurement Process

- procurement between early February and 3rd week in March
- contract award 3rd week in March

Agreement with Comox Valley Schools

- development of an agreement or amendment of the existing agreement with Comox Valley Schools for the use, care and maintenance of the new artificial turf

Sept
2024

Oct
2024

Nov
2024

Dec
2024

Jan
2025

Feb
2025

Mar
2025

Apr
2025

May
2025

Jun
2025

Jul
2025

Aug
2025

Sept
2025

100% Design Drawings

- completion of 100% design drawings between early October and first week of January 2025

Prep Issue for Tender (IFT) Package

- prepare issue for tender documents between early January and early February

Prep Issue for Construction (IFC) Package

- prepare issue for construction documents between 3rd week in March and end of April

Construction Start

- construction starts May 1 and continues for 20 weeks



Construction Completion

- construction completes in/around September 19 2025