

launched in 2011, and shortly thereafter, the City committed \$250,000 in matching funds towards the project. Recently, representatives of the alumni group and school met with staff to advise that the required matching fund commitments had been secured. With approximately \$550,000 in total funding now available, the group is seeking assistance with the required next steps, including refining the designs to confirm total costing.

In evaluating the potential capital implications of these projects, staff present for Council consideration, the option of reducing the planned investment in field upgrades at Topaz Park and authorizing the committed expenditure to School District 61 towards the new field at Victoria High School.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to update Council on a potential new approach to implementing two of Council's sport and recreation priorities, the Topaz Park Improvement Plan and Victoria High School sport field project.

BACKGROUND

Topaz Park is Victoria's third largest park (10ha/24.85ac). Located in the Hillside-Quadra neighbourhood, it is the main active recreation park in the city. The park is home to the City's only artificial turf sport field and numerous other amenities, including a lacrosse box, several grass sport fields, leash-optional dog areas, fitness equipment and a playground. It is also a tournament and event venue, hosting a variety of community events each year.

Topaz Park is bordered by Blanshard Street to the west, Topaz Avenue to the south, Finlayson Street to the north, and Glasgow Street to the east. This park is located approximately 350m from the municipal border, and users of Topaz Park may also frequent nearby facilities in Saanich, such as Rutledge Park, Cedar Hill Recreation Centre, and Cedar Hill Park.

Previous Council Direction

In June 2018, Council approved a long-term renewal plan for Topaz Park, which followed extensive engagement with community stakeholders. The improvements proposed for Topaz Park will offer a wider range of activities and facilities and update the park to support broad community use. The plan will deliver an enhanced visitor experience, improved accessibility and safety, and a more effective use of the park footprint.

The Topaz Park Improvement Plan is an ambitious guide, which has been developed for implementation in multiple phases. The topic of this report is the replacement and expansion of the artificial turf sport field. This asset is nearing end of life and expanding the capacity of artificial turf fields is key to meeting community demand. The total capital cost associated with replacing and expanding this facility, from one to two fields, is anticipated to be in the range of \$4 - 5 million. The cost of replacing the existing field is projected to cost \$1.5 - \$2.3 million. At present, the City has approximately \$1 million in a capital reserve fund to be applied towards the replacement of this facility.

As outlined in the 2018 presentation, there are a number of benefits associated with expanding the artificial turf field at Topaz Park, including the convenience of hosting soccer and softball

tournaments in a single park location. The primary objective is sport field capacity, and staff have reassessed the approach for Topaz Park, considering new information regarding progress with fundraising for the sport field project at Victoria High School.

In February 2014, Council approved the following motions regarding the sports facility project at Victoria High School. The vision for this project consists of multiple phases and amenities, including a new sport field with lighting, running track, spectator seating, and a fieldhouse, as represented in the concept plan appended as Attachment B.

That Council:

- 1. Confirms its support for the Victoria High School Sports Facility Refurbishment Project, in principle.*
- 2. Commits to a financial contribution that matches the amount raised by the Victoria High Alumni Association to a maximum of \$250,000, subject to:*
 - a. Community consultation for the project by School District 61 or its designate;*
 - b. Council approval of the final design of the project; and*
 - c. Entering into a joint use agreement between the City and School District 61.*
- 3. Commits to continue working with the Victoria High Alumni Association and Victoria High School to explore other partnerships and move the project forward.*

The Alumni Association has recently confirmed that funding commitments totalling approximately \$300,000 have been secured from alumni, local residents and community stakeholders. The first phase proposal includes a new sport field and lighting system anticipated to cost in the range of \$2 - \$3 million.

ISSUES & ANALYSIS

In recent years, City and School District 61 staff have developed a strong working relationship, with consistent focus on initiatives that meet objectives of both public organizations. The Victoria High School field project offers an opportunity for the City and School District, in partnership with other stakeholders, to deliver a facility that maximizes the investment of public funds. The benefits of such collaboration are evident in recent sport field projects at Oak Bay High School and Esquimalt High School.

Staff have received direction from Council to complete a detailed design exercise for the field replacement and expansion at Topaz Park. The next step required for the Victoria High School field project is a similar exercise, which would include community consultation and identifying the cost of constructing the first phase. Should Council support the recommendation to focus on replacing, but not expanding the existing Topaz Park sport field, less funding would be required than the \$430,000 approved in the 2019 Financial Plan. In fact, the remaining amount is anticipated to be approximately \$250,000, enough to complete the detailed design for the Victoria High School field project. If this expenditure were supported by Council, staff would recommend the City partner with the School District to have one contractor complete the design work for both field projects.

There is also an opportunity to coordinate the development of the two field projects in a manner that mitigates the disruption to user groups during construction. The replacement of the existing field at Topaz Park would be a much less intensive exercise than the planned expansion; meaning it could be completed more quickly and at less cost. The School District would be responsible for the construction and operation of the new field at Victoria High School.

Stakeholder Impacts

Reducing the number of fields planned for Topaz Park will affect organizers who host larger field sport tournaments in this City park. Specifically, this change could impact nine ball tournaments and two annual soccer tournaments, currently held each year at Topaz Park. Such tournaments may, however, be accommodated across multiple sites, including the field proposed for Victoria High School.

OPTIONS AND IMPACTS

Option 1: THAT Council approve an amendment to the Topaz Park Improvement Plan to replace the artificial turf field with a similar size field and collaborate with School District 61 to complete the detailed design and operating plan for the Victoria High School field project. (Recommended)

Reducing the planned artificial turf field design at Topaz Park from two fields to replacement of the existing field, will reduce the City's overall capital investment requirements. Meanwhile, investment in the Victoria High School field project, along with other partners, reduces the financial burden on any one party, while increasing the inventory of high-quality sport fields within the municipality.

City staff and representatives of School District 61 agree there is value in this partnership, and the opportunity to complete this project and ensure broad community access to the new public asset, in the near future.

Once the total project cost is determined, staff would report to Council on the investment needs for construction of the Topaz Park field, as well as the final plan the Victoria High School field and joint-use arrangement.

Option 2: THAT Council retain the Topaz Park Improvement Plan as approved in 2018.

Council may choose to "stay the course" on the Topaz Park Plan and the replacement and expansion of the artificial turf field, and not authorize the \$250,000 expenditure for the Victoria High project at this time.

Impacts to Financial Plan

Council has approved funding for the detailed design for the artificial turf project at Topaz Park and for the improvements in the south area of the park.

2019 Council Approved Actions	2019 New Proposed Actions
Two Artificial Turf Fields (detailed design) \$430,000	Single Artificial Turf Field (detailed design) \$180,000 Victoria High School Field (detailed design) \$250,000 Total \$430,000
South Park Enhancements (detailed design) \$550,000	South Park Enhancements (detailed design) \$550,000

The construction cost for the Topaz field would be the City's responsibility for consideration as part of the 2020 financial planning process. The construction cost for the Victoria High School field would be the responsibility of School District 61.

Accessibility Impact Statement

Accessibility will be a primary consideration of the detailed design exercise for the field project(s). The improvements are intended to provide equitable access to amenities. During the design process, feedback will be sought from stakeholders such as members of the Accessibility Working Group, and others with experience living with disabilities, along with design experts.

2019 – 2022 Strategic Plan

The proposed park improvements support Strategic Plan Objective #5: Health, Well-Being and a Welcoming City.

Official Community Plan Consistency Statement

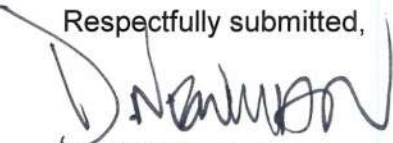
The Official Community Plan contains the following objective with respect to partnerships with stakeholder groups:


(9.17) Support joint use agreements with the school district, other institutions and private sector to make effective and economic use of recreational and school facilities for community benefit.

CONCLUSIONS

The Topaz Park Improvement Plan is based on the results of public engagement, assessment of community needs, direction from other City plans and priorities, technical analysis, and financial considerations. The Plan responds to these inputs and aims to create park experiences that will meet the needs of our growing community, expand park use and functionality. The adjustment proposed in this report will not compromise the Topaz Plan's objectives. The opportunity to gain the additional capacity provided by a second artificial turf field in the city, at Victoria High School, in partnership with other stakeholders, is recommended to meet the community need in a timely and economic manner.

Respectfully submitted,


Derrick Newman
Assistant Director
Facilities Management


Thomas Soulliere
Director
Parks, Recreation and Facilities

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:



Date: May 28, 2019

List of Attachments

Attachment A: Topaz Park Improvement Plan – Artificial Turf Concept Plan

Attachment B: Victoria High School Field Concept Plan