

Date: March 27, 2009



**TO: Board Members – Vancouver Park Board**  
**FROM: General Manager – Parks and Recreation**  
**SUBJECT: Updated Shortlist of Potential Artificial Turf Playing Field Sites**

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## RECOMMENDATION

*THAT the Board endorse Memorial South Park, Rupert Park, Beaconsfield Park and Sexsmith School as potential sites for artificial turf playing field installation funded by Citywide Park Development Cost Levy (DCL) Funds, for further technical review and a public process.*

## POLICY

In July 2002, Park Board approved the Playing Field Renewal Plan, the outcome of a study conducted jointly with the Vancouver School Board and the Vancouver Field Sport Federation. The Renewal Plan recommends “that an additional six artificial turf fields be constructed to meet the increasing demand for outdoor field sports.”

The Park Board’s current capital spending program is outlined in the 2009-2011 Capital Plan, approved by the voters in the November 2008 election. The Capital Plan includes an allocation of \$5,500,000 for the construction of the fifth and sixth turf playing fields recommended in the Playing Field Renewal Plan.

## BACKGROUND

At its meeting of January 19, 2009, the Board directed staff “**to work with the Vancouver Field Sport Federation and report back by April 6, 2009 with a shortlist of sites to be considered for the construction of two or more artificial fields to be funded from the 2009-2011 Capital Plan and other sources.**”

This report has been prepared in response to this Board direction.

## DISCUSSION

The allocation for artificial turf playing fields in the 2009-2011 Capital Plan provides sufficient funding, given reasonable site conditions, for the installation of two lighted

synthetic turf fields. This funding allocation is derived from City-Wide Park DCL and which must be targeted to sites within the City-Wide DCL boundaries (see appendix A).

The four sites proposed in this report can all be developed with the source of funds currently available and, in each instance, it is reasonable to expect that development can be completed within the budget allocation. The latter point will be confirmed with further technical review, including geotechnical survey, prior to initiating a public process. Here are the recommended sites:

<b>Site</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Rupert Park	North field running east/west adjacent to Rupert Pitch & Putt
Beaconsfield Park	Existing lit all-weather field near Italian Cultural Centre
Memorial South Park	Field in northwest quadrant of the park
Sexsmith School	Elementary school grounds on south edge of Langara Golf Course

The Vancouver School Board has partnered with the Park Board on two recent synthetic turf installation, and both parties have expressed interest in future joint developments. One of the candidate sites is on Vancouver School Board (VSB) property, and would have to be secured as park by license or lease in order that DCL funding could be applied.

As least two otherwise desirable sites, at Churchill Secondary (a VSB property) and Oak Park, are outside of the City-Wide DCL boundary. Funding for either of these could be derived, with Council approval, from Oakridge-Langara Park DCLs, although this is a longer term prospect. In the opinion of staff, the immediate priority is the timely initiation of new synthetic turf installations with the funding in hand.

A preliminary dialogue on siting preferences has occurred with individual representatives of the Vancouver Field Sport Federation (VFSF), which has scheduled its first meeting of 2009 for April 1<sup>st</sup> when this report will be discussed. Staff will inform the Board of any suggestions which may be proposed by the Federation.

Compilation of this updated shortlist of potential synthetic turf field sites was guided by the following:

1. The assessment of potential field locations conducted in 2003-2004 in connection with site selection for the first in-fill synthetic turfs (Kerrisdale/Point Grey and Vancouver Technical),
2. Learning from the first phase of in-fill synthetic turf installation, and
3. Input from the field sport community.

In 2003-2004 Park Board conducted an in-depth public process to identify and evaluate potential sites for the development of synthetic turf fields. A starting list of 58 sites and a set of evaluation criteria were developed with input both from field users and the public

at large. Application of the criteria (see Appendix B) to the long list of sites generated a short list of 20 potentially suitable locations (see Appendix C).

The experience of developing the first two in-fill fields at Kerrisdale/Point Grey and Vancouver Technical has given staff a deeper understanding of desirable site conditions, which supports refinement of the original selection criteria, as follows:

*Level and stable ground:* Staff have gained a much greater appreciation of how critical a factor this is, and are now aware that few, if any, of the available sites are ideal in terms of ground conditions. Geotechnical survey is essential before a commitment is made to any site, in order to determine whether the project is feasible within budgetary limits. Almost any ground stability issue can be corrected through civil engineering, but the costs of such work can be prohibitive.

*Local neighbourhood acceptance:* Major park developments rarely, if ever, receive universal support, but every field development should have “champions” within the surrounding neighbourhood and a potential local user base. This criterion is most effectively tested in the consultation phase.

*Residential impact:* Illumination from the latest generation of field lighting systems is tightly focused on the playing field, and light spillage is effectively contained around the field margins. Even so, there should be a buffer zone between the lit field and the nearest residences. Most of the selected shortlist sites are therefore set back from the park boundaries with, at some locations, a favourable elevation change as well. The two shortlisted fields with a limited buffer zone have an existing field lighting system in place, which could be upgraded to a higher standard and lower impact in terms of light spill.

*‘Lift’ in playing capacity:* Given a range of options, the preference would be to construct a new synthetic turf field on a site where there is no field currently, or on a little used or poor quality grass field. In practice, the ground conditions at such sites are usually not suitable for synthetic turf. Similarly, staff have been reluctant in the past to convert any of the seven lighted all-weather fields to synthetic, because these fields are heavily used for evening winter training and, when grass fields are closed by poor weather, as back-up for game play. As the synthetic inventory grows, maintaining the all-weather capacity is less of a concern, so the short list includes one all-weather field. The primary users of this field have previously expressed support for a conversion to a synthetic surface.

*Proximity to a Secondary School:* The partnership between the Park Board and the VSB established through the Field Renewal Plan has yielded two new synthetic turf pitches, supporting the programming needs of both bodies. The immediate shortlist includes one further partnering scenario (although not at a secondary school), but other opportunities are open to future consideration.

*Service distribution:* The fields established or in the works at Kerrisdale/Point Grey, Vancouver Technical and Trillium give good coverage respectively to the west, east and

central neighbourhoods of the city. For the next phase of development, service distribution is perhaps less critical, but most of the sites would expand service provision into new areas. The exception is Beaconsfield, which is very close to Vancouver Technical. However, this proximity might be advantageous with respect to tournament hosting.

Given Board approval of this report, staff would do a more in-depth technical analysis of each site, including geotechnical survey at an approximate cost of \$15-20,000 for all four, with funds from the playing field capital account. Public consultations would then be scheduled for the fall, with open houses held in proximity to each of the sites to discuss the development proposals and to receive input at the neighbourhood level.

## **SUMMARY**

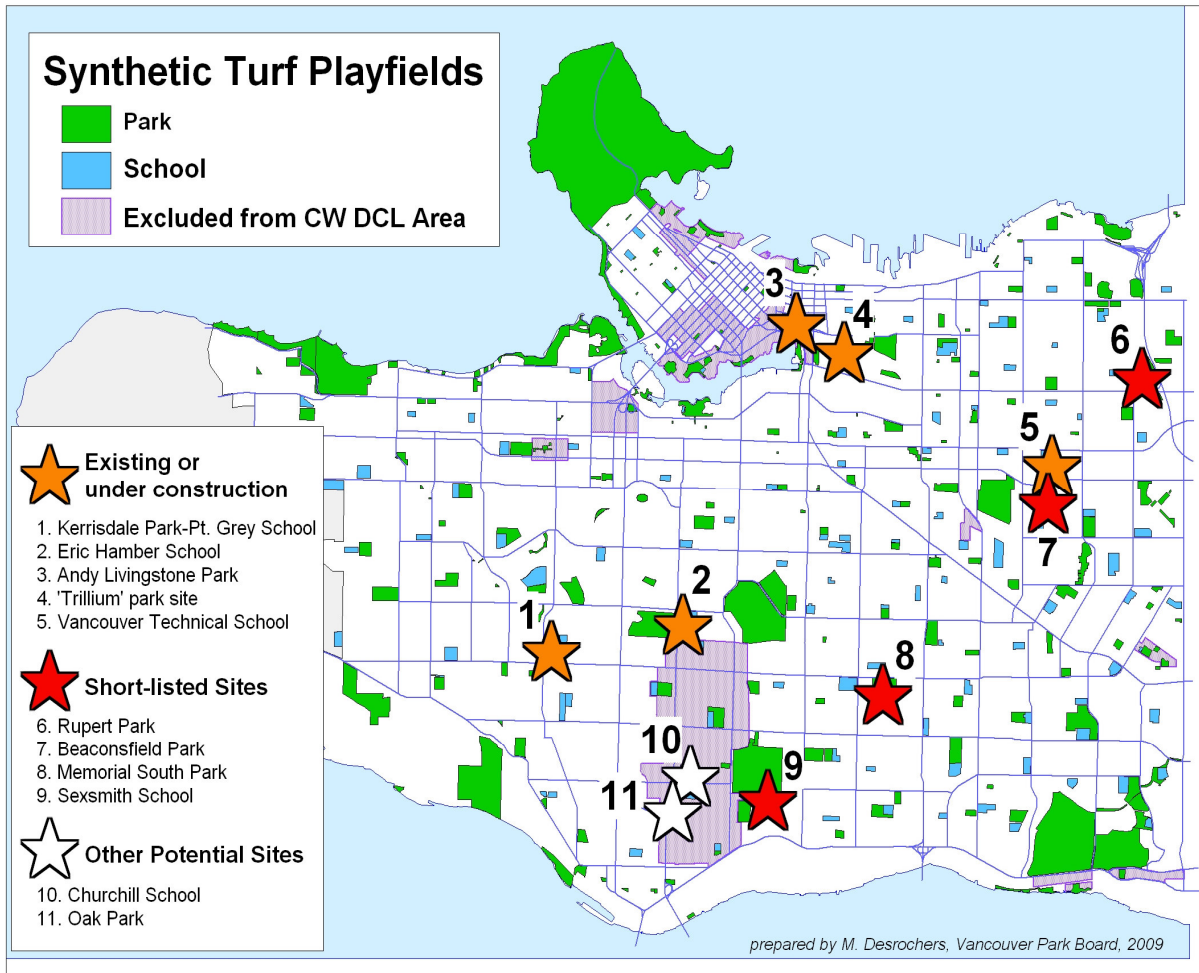
The Board is asked to approve a short list of potential sites for artificial turf playing field installation, as the basis for future feasibility study, including geotechnical survey and pre-engineering studies, followed by a public process.

Prepared by:

Mark Vulliamy  
Planning and Operations  
Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation  
Vancouver, BC

MV:mv

### Appendix A



## Appendix B

### Field Selection Criteria

#### SITE ASSESSMENT: 'MUST-HAVE' CRITERIA

1. Be public open space, either owned by municipal authority or leased over a long term, with no covenants on title or other legal restrictions prohibiting the intended use.
2. Be big enough for one full sized field (minimum 100 x 65 m) with additional room for run-off, spectators, washroom/change facility, parking, etc.
3. Be reasonably level and on stable ground, so that a field can be built within budget, with a minimum of excavation, in-fill or other site preparation required.
4. Not be used for other valued activities or contain facilities which cannot reasonably be relocated elsewhere.
5. Not convert potential undeveloped passive green space to a synthetic field in communities underserved by passive greenspace.
6. Be accepted by the local neighbourhood.

#### SITE ASSESSMENT: "DESIRABLE" CRITERIA

1. Minimal residential impact -- from traffic, noise, and light generated by field operation.
2. Minimal environmental impact -- from tree removal, loss of passive green space, or habitat disruption.
3. Good site access: Connection to cycle routes, access streets and/or public transit.
4. Amenities on site: washroom/change facilities, parking, or other necessary components already in place, or achievable with minimal cost.
5. Proximity to high user demand.
6. 'Lift' in sports field playing capacity (e.g., through replacing a little-used and poor quality field).
7. Proximity to a Secondary School to serve both public and curriculum needs.
8. Service Distribution: (i.e., dispersed across the City rather than in any one area).

## Appendix C

### Candidate sites for synthetic turf installation (from Park Board Report, April 5, 2004)

- Adanac Park
- Beaconsfield Park
- Churchill Secondary School\*
- Clinton Park
- Eric Hamber Secondary School Oval
- Gladstone Secondary School
- Hastings Park
- Hillcrest Park
- Jericho Beach Park
- Killarney Park & Secondary School\*
- New Brighton Park
- Oak Park
- Prince of Wales Park
- Prince of Wales Secondary School\*
- **Point Grey Secondary School/ Kerrisdale Park Oval\***
- Quilchena Park
- Sexsmith Elementary School
- **Trillium Park site (2)\***
- **Vancouver Technical Secondary School\***
- Windermere Secondary School

\* = 2004 shortlist for public process

**Bold** = completed or active project