

DELEGATION REQUEST

Name of person speaking: Stefan Szkwarek

Organization you are representing: Comox Valley United Soccer Club

Primary purpose of the organization: Grassroots Soccer

Number of members: 1,200

Mailing address:

1701 Lerwick Rd

Courtenay, BC V9N 6Z8

Contact name: Stefan Szkwarek

Subject matter: Proposal for new lit artificial turf facility (or indoor facility) in the Comox Valley

Specific request of the regional district, if any (i.e. letter of support, funding):

Approval for a location, funding and agreement to pursue this venture

Requested meeting date: 9 November 2021

Audio-visual equipment needed: I will provide a PowerPoint



NEW ARTIFICIAL TURF IN THE COMOX VALLEY

STEFAN SZKWAREK – PRESIDENT, COMOX VALLEY UNITED SOCCER CLUB

9 NOVEMBER 2021



OUTLINE

- Background
- Field Usage and Challenges
- Turf Field– purpose and plans
- How and when will we get this done?
- Conclusion and Ask

BACKGROUND – WHO WE ARE

- Comox Valley United Soccer Club is a non-profit organization offering cradle-to-grave soccer programs (age 4 to 55+)
- Typically the club has approximately 1200 registered players (1000 youth and 200 adults), however, this number fluctuates up to 1500 registrations depending on the season.
 - 40% of our membership comes from the Town of Comox, 70%+ from Comox, East Courtenay and Area B
 - Spring will likely see record numbers of 1200-1300 kids playing (which is awesome)
- COVID has exacerbated the need for more all weather facilities. We have had to squeeze 4-5 teams per slot (60-80 kids) across the winter due to a lack of available facilities (they'd normally get 2-3 practices and a game depending on age and ability)
- This year's weather has further demonstrated the need for more turf.
 - Currently we are looking at multiple field closures, and we simply don't have enough space on the current turf for all of our competitive teams to play. This may mean cancelling games.
- Even without COVID, we often struggle to get the facilities we need to run our programs as other users seem to get priority over us, especially in the spring (slow pitch, baseball, sports and social club)
 - Many other users are looking for Turf but with only one field, us growing and it being maxed out, we need more facilities

BACKGROUND –HOW WE GOT HERE

- The club is very proud to have provided significant investment in local sports infrastructure (approx. \$1M to date, another \$250k planned)
 - VV Clubhouse in 2003
 - Lights at Vanier turf
 - Vanier Turf field contribution
 - Purchased soccer goals at various locations in the Valley (Valley View, Vanier, Highland, Queneesh)
 - Building a field house at Vanier (Future expenditure of approx. 300K)
 - Contributing to relaying turf at Vanier (Future expenditure of approx. 125k)
 - \$40k to conduct a seismic assessment at Valley View for a dual turf field complex (cancelled)

BACKGROUND – PLAN FOR INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

- CVUSC has identified three key infrastructure goals to ensure that quality soccer programming can be made available for our youth and adults alike
 - Construct a Field House at Vanier Turf (change room, washroom and storage facility)
 - Extend our agreement with the SD on use of the turf by contributing funds (approx. \$125K for future maintenance costs)
 - **Build additional soccer capable facilities in the valley to facilitate year round training and play**
 - **Additional Turf(s) (or Indoor facility)**

WHY TURF?

- Kids are in great need of a high quality facility in the RD for ball sports
- Newest Generation Turf enables year round play, indoors or outdoors
- Very low cost of maintenance
- Surface quality remains in tact year round; difficult to maintain grass fields through the winter months which is our primary playing season.
- Facility could potentially be used by other user groups, field hockey, athletics etc. **The SD, other organisations such as lacrosse, field hockey, football et al are motivated to have another facility for use**

DEMOGRAPHICS AND PREVIOUS STUDIES

- Rec Services Report from 2008 did a demographic and field use study. It indicated that approx. 1050 children and youth (U5-U18) would be the peak number for CVUSC and that this number would likely decline.
 - Although this occurred for a few years, we are anticipating that in the spring we will have 1000-1100 VYSL (children) playing and another 150 youth competitive teams playing meaning that we have surpassed those numbers already and are growing.
 - The study also recommended 2 artificial turf pitches with lights be built to cover the needs of the community for the medium-long term but this recommendation was not carried through.
- We are seeing a lot more growth in outlying areas (Cumberland, Area A, Area C), and therefore, centralized locations are being squeezed. In order to better serve the new influx of residents, it is recommended that turf be built in central locations
- We also recommend reviewing and refreshing this study and carrying out its recommendations ASAP.
- Given the growth of the valley, our recommendation is to target building 2 artificial turf pitches so that the community's needs are met.

LONG TERM OPTIONS

- **(1) Build two turf fields adjacent to one another at the Valley View/Mark Isfeld*** preferred**
 - Adjacent to club house (key priority for us)
 - VV is ideal, but the grass is excellent and we would have to relocate baseball
 - Upper/Lower Isfeld would likely be more prudent to convert although there are drainage issues
- **(2) Build a second/3rd Turf at Vanier where the grass pitches are**
 - Already have a turf there and so it centralizes things
 - Not sure of drainage or appetite for more turf at Vanier
 - Not in close proximity to our club house
- **(3) Build a turf field(s) at Highland High School**
- **(4) Explore Turfing Bill Moore**
 - Not currently our site, we would have to be guaranteed access to pursue
 - Lights already exist, so slightly less cost

SHORT TERM OPTION

- Given the reality that a major capital project costing \$2.5-4M would likely take several years, and since we are bursting at the seams on the current turf, a smaller project is likely needed to stop gap.
 - 5 a side Cages (30x20m) with turf and lesser lighting would serve our needs immediately
 - Could put a turf surface with some lights at the ball hockey court at highland; or
 - Build a couple of cages adjacent to the ball hockey/pickle ball courts at highland
 - Much cheaper (100-200K-ish) depending on complexity
 - Could be used by the school
 - This dovetails off of an existing site (highland grass)

WHAT WE BRING TO THE TABLE

- Financial Contributions
- Expertise – we've done this before
- Proven track record of making large contributions to successful community projects
- The will to do this!

GOING FORWARD; HOW AND WHEN

- **How?** Team Effort (Club, Volunteers, RD, SD)
 - Legacy of community coming together to build the turf field etc. Soccer club has a culture of volunteering to build rec facilities for the benefit of the valley and has an extensive volunteer base who are professionals in the construction industry. Businesses and private organizations have a history of supporting youth and recreation.
- **When?** As soon as we can, but....
 - Appreciative of COVID 19 and restrictions etc. we are confident that when the time is right that this could be a really positive community project to rally around. Agreement in principle from the three main stakeholders, development of a plan and a construction schedule.

CONCLUSION AND ASK

- CVUSC is an engaged and committed community partner that has contributed approx. \$1M in capital and in-kind investments to local sports infrastructure and is looking to build on this in the years to come (fieldhouse, turf improvements, additional facilities).
- CVUSC is looking for the following from the Regional District:
 - Work together to define a preferred concept for an all weather facility deemed suitable for year round play (ie set a location)
 - Gain commitment from the town to proceed when a viable concept is determined
 - Funding for the project

QUESTIONS?

