Comox Valley REGIONAL DISTRICT

Staff Report

DATE: November 2, 2021

FILE: 4710-01

TO: Chair and Members
Comox Valley Recreation Commission

FROM: Russell Dyson
Chief Administrative Officer

Supported by Russell Dyson
Chief Administrative Officer

R. Dyson

RE: **Recreation Services – Sports Fields**

Purpose
To provide the Comox Valley Regional District Recreation Commission (Commission) with background information about the 2008 Sports Field Study report, discussed at the last Commission meeting.

Recommendation from the Chief Administrative Officer:
THAT this report be received as information.

Executive Summary
The Yates, Thorn & Associates 2008 Sports Field Study report, released in June 2008, recommended a possible strategy is artificial turf fields be installed in the Comox Valley. Since that report, School District No. 71 (SD71), senior recreation staff from the City of Courtenay, Town of Comox and the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) worked in conjunction with the Comox Valley United Soccer Club (CVUSC) to build one artificial turf field facility with the grand opening being completed in September 2014.

Since the completion of the artificial turf field, the Comox Valley has seen and continues to see, changes in demographics, potential rise of other field sports like field hockey, ultimate frisbee, adaptive sports, lacrosse and football whom all would benefit from access to an artificial surface and additional lit play surfaces.

- Sports fields affect all local municipal recreation departments, citizens and community contributors and stakeholders;
- SD71 and local municipal recreation departments are open to partnerships but background work would be advantageous to understand what the community's needs are and how to allocate them appropriately;
- Accessibility to recreational facilities and opportunities is a key factor from the Commission Strategic Plan.

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Background/Current Situation

Over the years there has been discussion of developing sport-specific centers. In other municipalities where this practice has been adopted there have been a number of significant and positive observations made:

- Overlapping seasons of play are no longer in competition for field time;
- Field surfaces are more easily and predictably cared for and, sport-specific clubhouses are built and enhance the culture of the sport;
- Community pride is more evident – care of grounds and facility, hosting of special events, volunteer improvements to grounds, buildings, fences and walkways.

In 2001, the Comox Valley Strathcona Regional District and its partner municipalities approved Phase 1 of the Regional Play Fields Strategy, resulting in the construction of multi-use fields at Vanier, Highland and Mission. These fields have been a tremendous benefit to the entire Comox Valley.

In 2007, the Comox Valley Strathcona Regional District commissioned a study on upgrading playing fields and determining Phase 2 of the Regional Play Fields Study. The study identified four (4) strategies and recommendations. They included the following:

- Strategy #1 – Select a location for a major soccer and field sports complex with two artificial turf fields and appropriate amenities.
- Strategy #2 – Upgrade neighbourhood fields and ball diamonds across the Comox Valley with a view to making an increasing number of quality fields available in all communities.
- Strategy #3 – Use the standards in this report to identify a level for each field and ball diamond and then upgrade amenities at each facility to the appropriate standard.
- Strategy #4 – Request the Planning Departments of each local government agency to include discussion with all resort developers about the potential for developing a tennis resort with the tennis club component as a publicly accessible amenity with an orientation for higher-level play and competitions.

A final outcome of this study was the build of one artificial turf field located at 3001 Vanier Drive which, did not fully meet any of the strategies listed above. A survey of the municipalities and SD71 indicates there has been little positive change in existing field status and quality since 2008.

In 2021 the CVUSC requested dedicated field usage from CVRD member municipalities and a second artificial turf field be built in partnership with the CVRD. This was followed up by a presentation from the CVUSC to the City of Courtenay in September and letters received by the Town of Comox from citizens.

In October 2021, the inter-municipal recreation leadership group met to review the CVUSC's concerns of the lack of sports fields for use. The group noted a number of solutions are possible, and an update to the 2008 Sports Field Study would help understand the demand and change in projections that may have occurred since the study was completed. It is believed the projected demographic changes from the 2008 Sports Field Study are inconsistent based on school growth numbers provided by SD71 which show a notable increase in students in many local schools. Furthermore, there was general agreement the field allotment process should be reviewed to ensure fields are being used to their fullest capacity.

CVRD staff have provided an invite to CVUSC to appear as a delegation at the Recreation Commission meeting in November as directed by the CVRD Board.

Options

1. To work directly with local clubs to begin the process for a new artificial turf field including the site location, financing and partnership opportunities.
2. Update the 2008 Sports Field Study to confirm demand and prioritize a strategy.
3. To not support working directly with local clubs to begin the process for a new artificial turf field including the site location, financing and partnership opportunities

Financial Factors

There are no financial concerns generated by this report. The sports and fields budget at the CVRD could support a consultant update to the 2008 Sports Field Study of about $10,000 if required.

Legal Factors

The CVRD is required to provide funding for the maintenance and capital costs of the all-weather sports track and sports playing fields as per the established bylaw for this service and operating agreement.

Regional Growth Strategy Implications

- Public Health and Safety: Support a high quality of life through the protection and enhancement of community health, safety and well-being.
    - Objective 7A-5: Support the promotion of healthy lifestyles and invigorating community spirit through physical activity.

Intergovernmental Factors

SD71, the City of Courtenay, Town of Comox and CVRD have worked together with the soccer club in the past resulting in the artificial weather turf. It is envisioned this partnership would continue and be further expanded to include CFB 19 Wing Comox.

Sports fields affect all local municipal recreation departments, citizens and community contributors and stakeholders.

Interdepartmental Involvement

The Recreation Services Department has taken the lead but will work with the Communications Department to provide information and updates to the community and staff.

Citizen/Public Relations

It is important that the residents in the Comox Valley have access to recreational facilities and opportunities that are affordable and promote and maintain a healthy, active lifestyle.

Attachments: Appendix A – 2008 Sports Fields Study

COMOX VALLEY REGIONAL DISTRICT

COMOX VALLEY SPORTS FIELD STUDY

PREPARED BY
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APRIL 2008

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Executive Summary

The Comox Valley has a growing population of over 60,000 residents. It is known for its quality of life and this serves as a major attractor for new residents. Recreation is part of that quality experience and many residents, of all ages but especially child and youth, participate in a range of sports. A report was prepared in 2000 which laid out a series of developments designed to improve the quantity and especially the quality of sports fields and ball diamonds in the Valley. This study, eight years on, lays out a revised approach that builds on the established strategies.

This report looks at the supply of and demand for time on the sport field or ball diamonds.

The supply is provided by the current inventory of fields and diamonds. Issues that impact the ability of the fields and diamonds to deliver playable hours include their quality, their amenities (such as lighting), which sports are played on them, and the policies that close fields in winter to avoid overuse and in summer for regeneration of the grass. The Comox Valley only has one all-weather field, and is one of the few major municipalities to have no artificial turf fields.

The demand for playing time comes from a range of sports, with soccer being the major user of sports fields, and slopitch being the major user of ball diamonds.

The report compares the supply and demand and looks at all other pertinent factors. It also proposes a set of standards for fields and diamonds, and considers the potential for sport tourism – where sport events are used as attractors of tourists.

The report also looks at tennis and horseshoes, two other sports which use the Valley's parks.

The report identifies the following findings:

⇒ The need for outdoor sports facilities must be defined within the broad civic societal, economic and environmental context if their importance is to be fully communicated to the public and decision makers.

⇒ Soccer has continued to grow during the last decade and their demand for field time exceeds the current supply.

⇒ The finding of the 2000 report, that quality is more critical than quantity, still holds good…except perhaps more so.

⇒ There are conflicts in time usage between field and ball diamond sports, and these are exacerbated by the expansion of spring and summer soccer.

⇒ The Comox Valley is not able to take advantage of sport tournaments and other opportunities due to a lack of facilities.

⇒ Both field sports and ball sports could make good use of A level facilities and these would also allow the Comox Valley to tap into the potential for sport tourism.

⇒ The quality of local neighbourhood fields and diamonds needs to be improved in order for them to add to the Valley's overall move toward Smart Growth.

⇒ Amenities are lacking at many parks, which compromises use by many publics.

⇒ A tennis court upgrading strategy needs to be put in place, with particular linkages to the opportunities offered by major resort development in the Valley.

⇒ The addition of higher quality facilities must be accompanied by contributions from the user groups to the capital costs, to the ongoing operations, and to a commitment to use these facilities for tournaments which bring economic impacts to the Valley.

Four strategies and related recommendations are proposed and, in the final section of the report, are set into a timeline and order-of-magnitude costs attached to them. The four strategies are as follows:

⇒ Strategy #1 – Select a location for a major soccer and field sport complex with two artificial turf fields and appropriate amenities.

⇒ Strategy #2 – Upgrade neighbourhood fields and ball diamonds across the Valley with a view to making an increasing number of quality fields available in all communities.

⇒ Strategy #3 – Use the standards in this report to identify a level for each field and ball diamond and then upgrade amenities at each facility to the appropriate standard.

⇒ Strategy #4 – Request the Planning Departments of each local government agency to include discussion with all resort developers about the potential for developing a tennis resort with the tennis club component as a publicly accessible amenity with an orientation for higher level play and competitions.

Introduction

The Comox Valley includes many of the province's fastest growing communities. From a current figure of around 62,000 (2006), the population is projected to increase over the next 10 years to over 70,000. This will place pressures on all public services, such as recreation and park services, including playing fields and tennis courts.

The Valley has a population that is both older than the provincial average and which is continuing to age, resulting in more adult players and fewer youngsters. The patterns of participation are also changing, which also impact the demand for different types of sport fields. And more sport participation by women and girls leads to different facility needs.

The overall context is also changing:

- The Comox Valley population is becoming more active, as the link of activity levels to health and quality of life is taken to heart by individuals. Indeed, much of the in-migration to the Valley has been by people in search of a more healthy lifestyle.

- The land issue is also significant. Good flat land for new playfields is hard to find, not to mention expensive to acquire. How can the community get more use out of existing fields (municipal and school), while upgrading their quality to that more in demand by the increasing adult players.

- There is increasing recognition that sport events can be significant contributors to the local tourism economy; thus quality facilities add economic as well as social or recreational value.

The public stakeholders – the three municipalities of Courtenay, Comox and Cumberland, the Regional District, and the School District – have been working to implement a plan prepared in 2000 for the upgrading of sports fields[1]. This report was commissioned to continue and refocus this process of orderly and appropriate development.

Assignment

The terms of reference for this study noted the following matters that needed investigation, comment and recommendations:

In overall objective of the study is :

⇒ *To make recommendations on upgrades to existing sport fields as well as recommending new sport fields and tennis courts for the future.*

More specifically, it was requested that the study:

⇒ *Review previous sports field studies*

⇒ *Determine current conditions of sport fields*

⇒ *Identify usage numbers of existing sport fields and tennis courts*

⇒ *Identify possible trends in sport field usage*

⇒ *Use projected population growth and demographic estimates to determine possible site locations and types of sport fields and tennis court*

[1] Tennis courts were not included in the terms of reference of the 2000 study.

⇒ *Plan for new sport fields and tennis courts for the next ten (10) years, and identify where these facilities should be located*

⇒ *Recommend any required changes of use of sport fields*

⇒ *Identify standards of sport fields required as well as tennis courts*

⇒ *Determine the cost in 2008 dollars of upgrading the fields and tennis courts to the recommended standard.*

⇒ *Review the financial impact to sport tourism in the Comox Valley area as a result of the upgrades or addition of sport fields.*

Process

The project started in November and the following activities were undertaken:

⇒ Meetings with a steering committee composed on representatives of the three municipalities, the School District, and the CSRD which acted as the coordinator for the project.

⇒ An inventory of all playfields, ball diamonds and tennis courts was undertaken – this is presented as Appendix A.

⇒ Discussions were held with representatives of user groups. This dialogue continued through the duration of the project, gathering information as required. Base information is contained in Appendix B.

⇒ A stakeholders forum was held in February to present initial data and findings of the study.

⇒ The draft report was submitted in late February 2008 for discussion with the steering committee. The report was finalized in April 2008.

Reviewing the 2000 Study

A study was undertaken in 2000 by Catherine Berris Associates entitled *Comox Valley Communities Regional Playing Field Strategy and Implementation Plan*. It addressed the needs for fields and ball diamonds but not tennis courts.

The report covered the following broad topics:

⇒ A Field Classification System was proposed, focused on size and quality. The latter included amenities, soil/sand base, and required maintenance levels.

⇒ Administration, including scheduling, fees, and policies.

⇒ Usage patterns of fields by the user groups.

It identified a series of 'playing field issues', including:

⇒ The number, type and quality of fields

⇒ Conflicts due to expanding seasons

⇒ Coordination and administration

⇒ Maintenance.

It identified the main issue as quality not quantity, noting that additional property was not required. Their overall assessment was noted as:

The primary playing field needs are suitable facilities for field sports, especially in winter evenings, upgraded fields for adult ball use, and general improvements to fields and facilities.

The strategy and implementation plan included a series of recommendations for coordination and administration, general field recommendations, and specific field recommendations.

Costed implementation focused on three major projects and 12 minor projects, spread evenly between short, medium and long term time horizons. All three major projects have been completed since 2000:

⇒ Mission Road Fields have been developed.

⇒ New fields and amenities at Highland.

⇒ Major upgrades to Vanier (although these were scaled back due to budget issues.

Of the minor projects, some work has been undertaken but many of the projects were small and their impacts can now scarce be noticed. The overall plan was costed at $5.38m

Other recommendations addressed funding, coordination and the opportunities for partnerships.

Demographics – Current and Projected

Demographics, according to David Foote[2], are 65% of everything. Sport participation changes in relation to two key variables: how many people there are, and what sports they like to participate in.

The Comox Valley population is currently around 62,000, and is projected to rise to around 70,000 by 2015. The most recent PEOPLE population projection estimates the Valley population (LHA 71) at 72,000 by 2016.

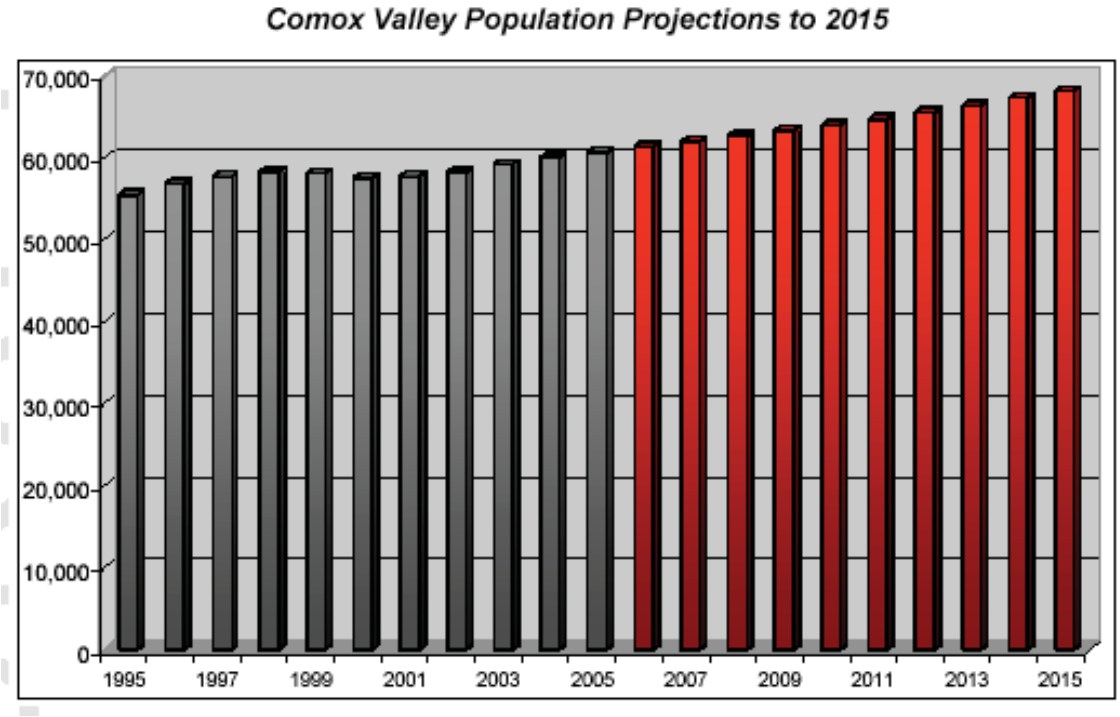

Figure 1 - Comox Valley Population Projections to 2015

The structure of the population is also critically important. The Comox Valley structure is shown overleaf, and indicates that it currently has more under 20 year olds and over 40 year olds than the BC average, with a really small percentage of people in the 20 to 40 age group. This age structure is reflective of the kind of community that attracts older workers, but provides neither adequate work nor affordable housing to make it attractive to the 20/40 year olds: those teenagers who live in the Valley want to get away, while those who want to come cannot afford until their 40s to be able to do so.

[2] Foote, D. (1996) - Boom, Bust, and Echo

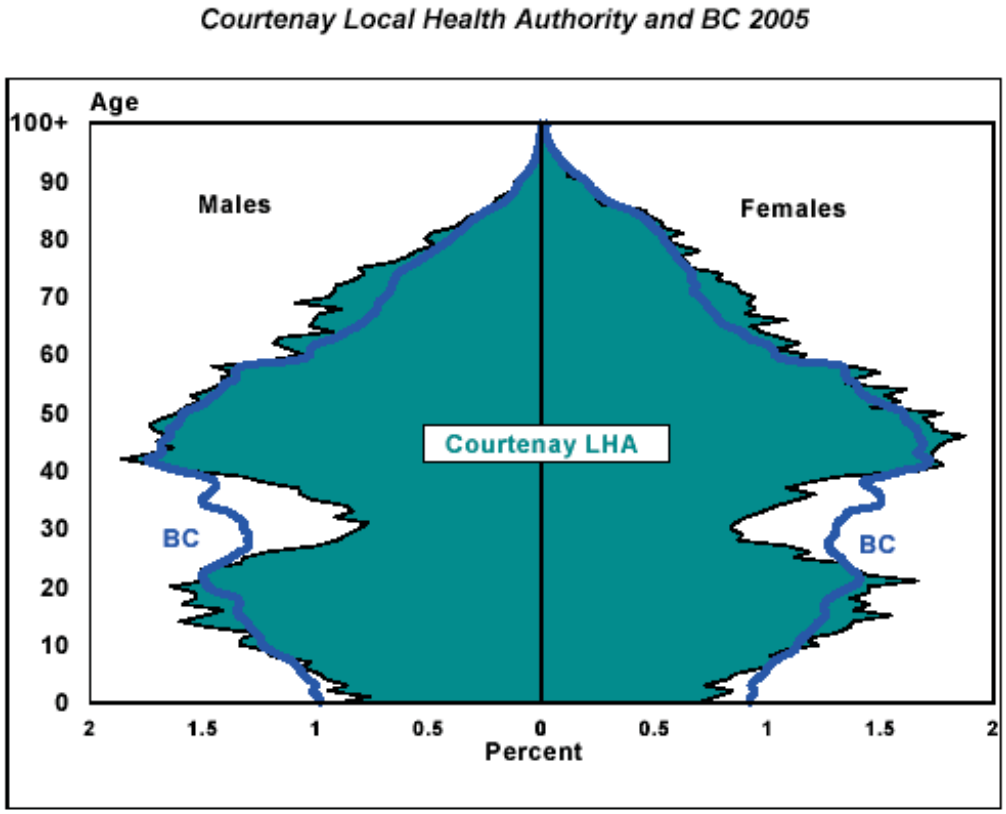

Figure 2 - Age Structure, Courtenay LHA and BC - 2005

The critical age group for sport participation is that aged 5 to 17 years

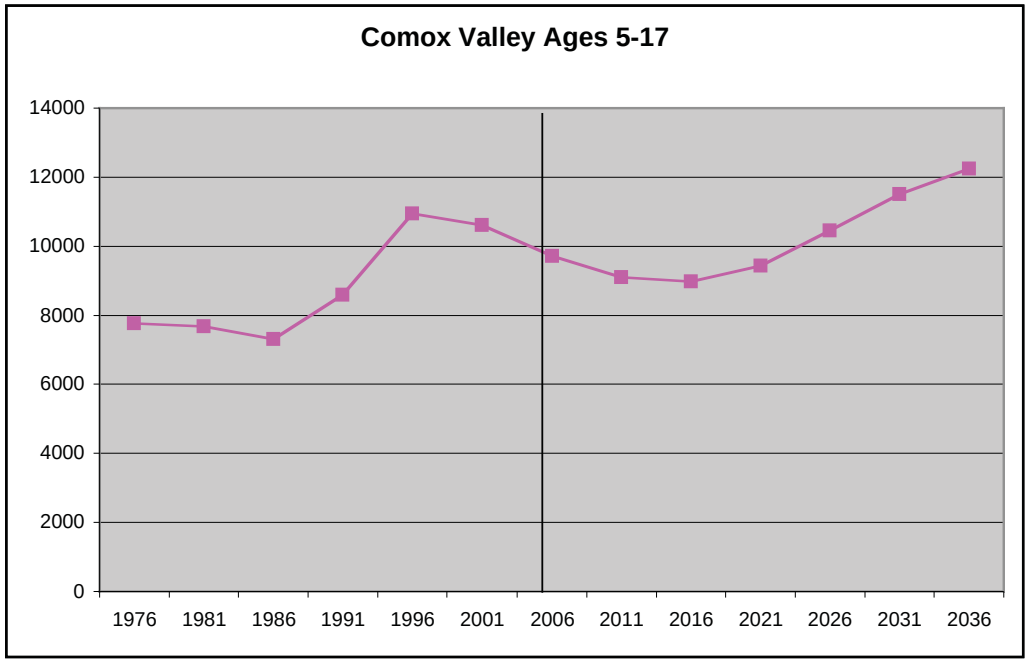

Figure 3 - Population Aged 5-17, Comox Valley (LHA 71)

It is clear that the size of this age group has varied considerably over the last 30 years, and is currently on a downswing, with a return to its current level not likely until 2021. It should also be remembered that this is the average age for this age cohort: the younger ages within this cohort started declining around 1996, whereas the older age groups (15/19) will not be rebounding in size until 2025. The future holds a much reduced 5/17 aged cohort than in the past, so sports will be drawing from this smaller cohort for their main participation group.
It should also be noted that the projected growth in the older, teenage age groups is prefaced on the assumption that the 0/4 year age group has reached its 'bottom' in 2006, and rises from there. To the best of our knowledge, the number of births in BC (there is no reliable local data) has yet to show any significant increase, although demographers remain hopeful.

Year	Ages 0-4	Ages 5-9	Ages 10-14	Ages 15-19
1976	2021	2466	3190	3300
1981	2581	2626	2908	3441
1986	2834	2781	2758	2743
1991	3143	3552	3230	2857
1996	3519	4196	4327	3767
2001	2732	3619	4296	4409
2006	2622	3220	3904	4139
2011	2729	3079	3587	4042
2016	3068	3244	3504	3769
2021	3574	3570	3668	3679
2026	3852	4095	4004	3853
2031	3961	4385	4543	4195
2036	3953	4497	4846	4740

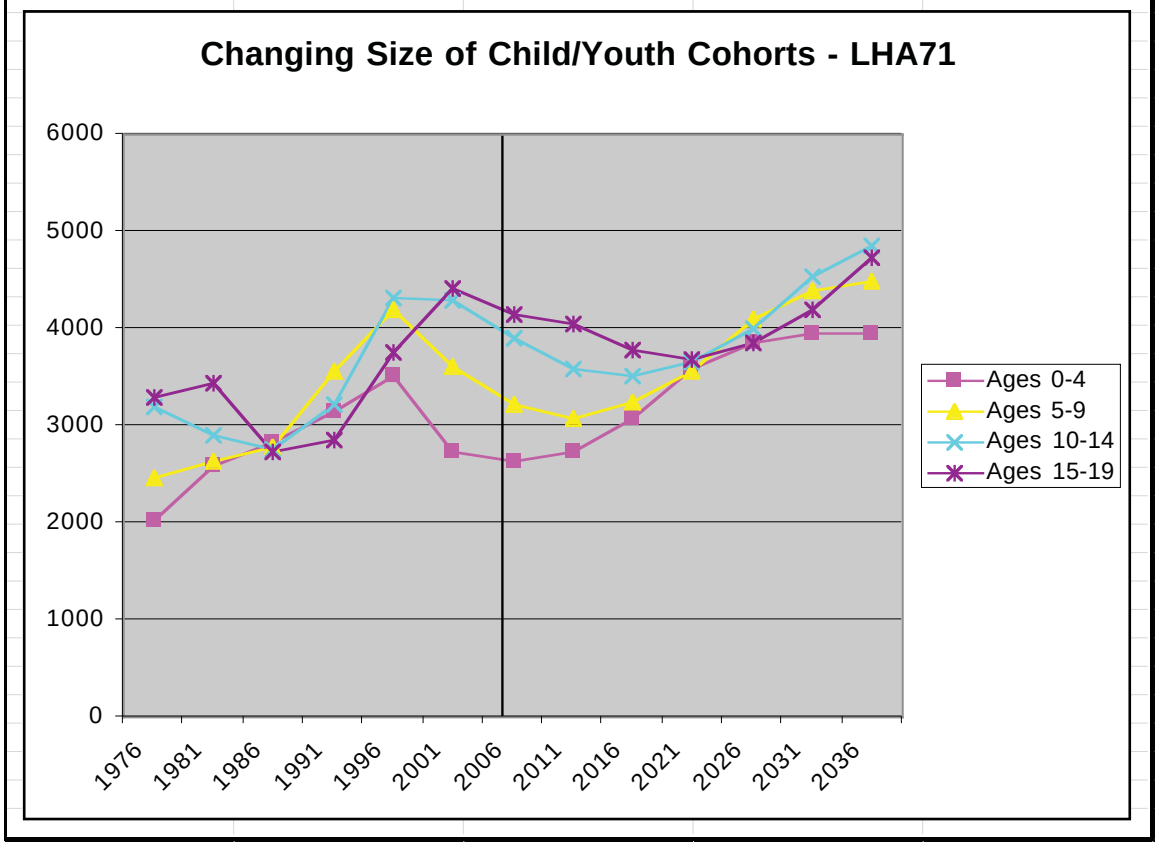

Figure 4 - Age Groups 0 to 19, Comox Valley (LHA 71)

The age patterns of sports in the Comox Valley also differ significantly, some attracting primarily children and other masters/seniors. The data below has been provided by the sports concerned.

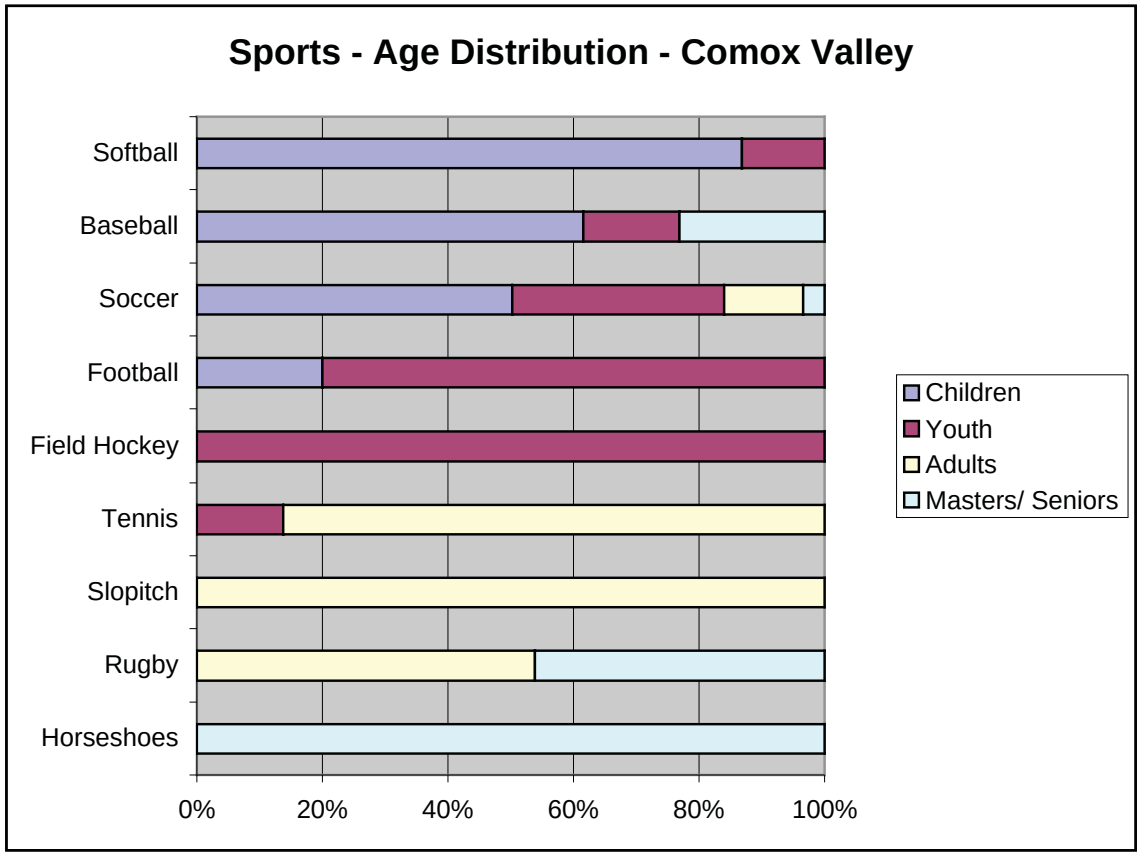

Figure 5 - Age Structure of Sports in Comox Valley

The reliance of most of these sports on the 0/19 age cohorts is marked.

The Current Inventory of Sports Fields

Sports fields and tennis courts in the Comox Valley range in size and quality, and a variety of information about the current inventory is detailed in Appendix A and summarized in the following tables. The parks and school sites have, for the purposes of this study, been divided into major parks, which are the locations for the majority of sport activity, and other parks and schools with sports fields.

The four local government agencies and the school district are all owners of sport fields. The fields on the Comox Air Force Base are owned by the Department of National Defense.

Many of the major sport field complexes are formed by merging school district and municipal land holdings. Most of these have collaborative maintenance agreements and many have been upgraded recently. The noted sizes of many of these sites include school and other buildings and, with parks, land that is in a more natural condition. However the larger sized sites that can be achieved through collaborative land sharing provide the opportunity for the kind of multi-field sports environment that are the current standard for all sports. This is more frequently achievable with larger schools, normally secondary schools. These larger complexes are as follows:

Comox Village Park/School – there are several fields, diamonds and tennis courts grouped around the Comox Recreation Centre, and directly across the road, through some trees, are the grounds of Village Park Elementary.

Mission Road Park and Courtenay Middle School – these fields and diamonds were developed by the Regional District about five years ago when the school was built; the land was provided by the School district and the regional district funded the development. The outfield of one diamond overlaps the soccer field which is on School District property.

Valley View Park/Elementary School – this park/school development is also a recent development. Isfeld Secondary is adjacent to this development, adding to its scale although its fields are often reserved for school use.

Highland Park and Secondary – in Comox, this facility includes ball diamonds and fields.

Lake Trail – there is one field adjacent to the school, which is scheduled to become a secondary school in September 2008. In addition, there is an area of roughly developed land at a lower level and known as Lower Lake Trail.

Vanier School – while this land is all owned by the School District, it is a similar joint development, this time between the School District and the Regional District.

The other major field complexes are owned and operated by the municipalities:

Courtenay - Bill Moore Park, Lewis Park, Woodcote Park and Martin Park.

Cumberland – Cumberland Village Park.

	Location	Ownership	Size (acres)	Length (m)	Width (m)
Major Parks with Fields and Diamonds					
Comox Village Park/Elem.					
Village Park (CCC)	Comox	Comox	9.0	122	72
Village Park Elementary	Comox	School Board	4.16	105	75
Bill Moore Park	Courtenay	Courtenay	7.0	108	60
Lewis Park	Courtenay	Courtenay	10.0		
Mission Road Park/Courtenay Middle					
Courtenay Junior	Courtenay	School Board	10.5	92	74
Mission Road Park	Courtenay	Courtenay	2.0	76	63
Valley View Park/Elementary					
Valley View Elementary	Courtenay	School Board	4.71		
Valley View Park	Courtenay	Courtenay	7.3		
Field 1				91	60
Field 2				91	60
Field 3				82	57
Isfeld Secondary					
Field 1				72	45
Field 2				85	47
Woodcote Park	Courtenay	Courtenay	3.0	98	64
Highland Park and Secondary					
Highland Park	Comox	Comox	8.0		
Highland Secondary	Comox	School Board	8.62		
Field 1				230	110
Field 2				145	80
Lake Trail - Lower/Puntledge Park School					
Lake Trail - Lower	Courtenay	School Board	14.2		
Puntledge Park	Courtenay	School Board	5.13		
Field 1				140	75
Field 2				110	85
Lake Trail - Upper	Courtenay	School Board	4	90	60
Cumberland Village Park	Cumberland	Cumberland	7.75		
Vanier Sr/District Track	Courtenay	School Board	30.9		
Field 1(sand/soccer)				105	70
Field 2 (sand/soccer)				105	70
Field 3 (soil/rugby)				105	60
Field 4 (All weather)				100	60
Field 5 (inside track)				95	60
Martin Park	Courtenay	Courtenay	2.0		

Figure 6 - Sports Fields in Major Parks/Schools - Location, Ownership and Field Size

Most of the sites with smaller fields are owned by the school district or by local community associations. Most have one or at most two fields, mostly of poor quality for sport play. The Regional District fields are adjacent to community halls. The only other fields are two owned by Comox municipality (Aspen Park serves as a school field for Aspen School, which has no field of its own), and Anderton Park which is the region's premier tennis venue[3].

	Location	Ownership	Size (acres)	Length (m)	Width (m)
Other Parks and Schools					
Airport Elementary	Comox Base	School Board	6.08	67	51
Arden Elementary	Courtenay	School Board	4.87	85	50
Aspen Park	Comox	Comox	7.5	140	81
Anderton	Comox	Comox			
Black Creek Community Hall	Area C	Community Assoc.			
Brooklyn Elementary	Comox	School Board	9.35		
Field 1				130	70
Field 2				80	48
Cape Lazo	Comox	School Board	8.4	100	64
Comox Elementary	Comox	School Board	1.92	85	35
Courtenay Elementary	Courtenay	School Board	8.43		
Field 1				76	40
Field 2				76	40
Cumberland Elementary	Cumberland	School Board	2.32		
Cumberland Junior	Cumberland	School Board	7.44		
Fallen Alders	Area A	Community Assoc.			
Fanny Bay Field	Area A	Community Assoc.		93	65
Glacier View Elementary	Courtenay	School Board	4.68		
Huband Park/Elem.					
Huband Park	Area B	Regional District			
Hubard Park Elementary	Area B	School Board	4.35	100	52
Miracle Beach Elementary	Area C	School Board	2.7		
Robb Road Junior	Comox	School Board	6.22	85	60
Royston Elementary	Area A	School Board	8.89		
Union Bay Field	Area A	Community Assoc.			

Figure 7 - Sports Fields in Other Parks/Schools - Location, Ownership and Field Size

Most of the major parks have adult sized fields, while most of the other parks and schools have fields that support only children's sport. On major field complexes, there are a total of 21 sports fields, of which six are not full size and the other 15 are all full size. There are 24 diamonds, with 15 being full size and 9 undersized.

Regarding the inventory of other parks and schools, it should be noted that what actually constitutes 'a field' or 'a diamond' is harder to determine. Most of these parks and school sites offer opportunities for informal play and pick up games, as well as elementary school PE. Some of them have backstops and soccer goals, and some are close to full size for some sports. But only a few are included in the municipal inventories of 'fields for booking', and some really are more 'fields' than 'sports fields'. Having said that, in this part of the inventory there are three full size fields and four full size diamonds. In terms of children size fields, there are probably 11 fields worthy of inclusion in the overall inventory and 13 diamonds.

In many cases, fields and diamonds are overlapping which means that their use is seasonal. In some cases, the skinned portion of the diamond (or the bases where not skinned) is not on the field, but the outfield overlaps the sports field. With the smaller school fields, it is only the backstop itself, and maybe home plate, which is not directly overlapping. This raises a number of

[3] DND also has several fields on its base land, but they are not included in this analysis as they are primarily used by DND groups, and are therefore only marginally available for community use.

issues which will be addressed throughout this study, regarding field quality and conflicts between sports in the spring and fall (and to some extent with summer sport camps). Diamonds also overlap in their outfields which is a problem with older players (ie not a problem for T-ball); it is also a problem that is becoming more acute as bats get more powerful and as development creeps closer to the ball fields (eg Highland).

Within the broad description of 'fields' and 'diamonds' each sport has additional requirements and in most cases the fields and diamonds are adapted to their specific use. This is shown on figures 8 and 9:

⇒ Rugby is a small sport and uses Lewis Park's field when available, as well as one of the fields at Vanier. The Over 40's team uses Miracle Beach Elementary School field for its practices.

⇒ Field hockey is mainly a school based sport, but its community leagues use Highland Park.

⇒ Football's 'home' is Bill Moore Park, with school football happening at Isfeld and Vanier. They also use Woodcote Park but this is mainly a soccer field.

⇒ Soccer is the largest field sport in the Valley and uses most of the major field complexes as well as many of the school and smaller fields for the younger levels of youth soccer.

⇒ Baseball operates its T-ball divisions out of Comox Village Park, while youth and adult teams use Bill Moore, one of the diamonds at Highland, and Martin Park (too short for adult teams). Some youth baseball also uses Aspen Park and Comox Elementary.

⇒ Softball uses the new Mission Park diamonds and the ones at Valleyview. They also use the Upper Lake Trail and Cumberland Village Park and Cumberland Junior School diamonds.

⇒ Slopitch is based at Lewis Park, Valley View and Highland.

Both Slo-pitch and softball also use as many of the school and minor diamonds as they need.

Two other sports have specialist requirements:

⇒ Horseshoes uses primarily the pitches at Cumberland Village Park and at Lewis Park.

⇒ Tennis has a six court complex at Anderton Park and four courts at Lewis Park. Both these facilities are lighted and have some kind of club house. There are two court complexes at Highland, Cumberland and Comox Village Parks, and little used single courts at the Regional District's community halls.

Major Parks with Fields and Diamonds	Fields		Diamonds	
	Children	Youth/Adult/ Masters	Children	Youth/Adult/ Masters
Comox Village Park/Elem.	2		6	
Bill Moore Park		1		2
Lewis Park				3
Mission Road Park/Courtenay Middle	1	1		2
Valley View Park/Elementary	1	2		3
Isfeld Secondary	1	1		
Woodcote Park		1		
Highland Park and Secondary		2		3
Lake Trail - Lower/Puntledge Park School		2		
Lake Trail - Upper	1		1	
Cumberland Village Park			1	2
Vanier Sr/District Track		5		
Martin Park			1	
Total	6	15	9	15

Other Parks and Schools	Fields		Diamonds	
	Children	Youth/Adult/ Masters	Children	Youth/Adult/ Masters
Airport Elementary	1			
Arden Elementary		1	1	
Aspen Park	1		2	
Anderton				
Black Creek Community Hall				1
Brooklyn Elementary	2		1	
Cape Lazo		1		
Comox Elementary			2	
Courtenay Elementary	2		2	
Cumberland Elementary	1		1	
Cumberland Junior	2		1	
Fallen Alders				1
Fanny Bay Field	1			1
Glacier View Elementary			3	
Huband Park/Elem.		1		
Miracle Beach Elementary	1			
Robb Road Junior				
Royston Elementary				
Union Bay Field				1
Total	11	3	13	4

Figure 8 - Numbers and Sizes of Fields and Diamonds

Major Parks with Fields and Diamonds	Rugby	Soccer	Rec Soccer	Field Hockey	Football	Slopitch	Softball	Baseball	Horse-shoes	Tennis
Comox Village Park						*		*		*
Bill Moore Park					*			*		
Lewis Park	*					*	*		*	*
Mission Road Park		*					*			
Valley View Park/Elementary		*				*	*			
Isfeld Secondary		*			*					
Woodcote Park		*	*		*					
Highland Park and Secondary		*	*	*		*		*		
Lake Trail - Lower			*							
Lake Trail - Upper		*					*			
Cumberland Village Park							*		*	*
Vanier Sr/District Track	*	*			*					
Martin Park								*		

	Rugby	Soccer	Rec Soccer	Field Hockey	Football	Slopitch	Softball	Baseball	Horse-shoes	Tennis
Airport Elementary										
Arden Elementary										
Aspen Park			*					*		
Anderton										*
Black Creek Community Hall										*
Brooklyn Elementary										
Cape Lazo - 2002										
Comox Elementary								*		
Courtenay Elementary										
Cumberland Elementary										
Cumberland Junior										
Fallen Alders										*
Fanny Bay Field										
Glacier View Elementary										
Huband Park										
Miracle Beach Elementary	*									
Robb Road Junior										
Royston Elementary										
Union Bay Field										*

Note: shading indicates use of all fields/diamonds on an as-needed basis.

Figure 9 - Distribution of Sports

In calculating the need for sports fields and ball diamonds, it is important that the availability of time provided by the current inventory be evaluated.

Sport fields

Some of the factors that must be included in this evaluation for sports fields are as follows:

⇒ Field capacity – grass gets worn by overuse and field use must be balanced against the capacity of field turf to regenerate itself. While no hard and fast figure can be given for this since many other factors are at play, 10 to 20 hours per week is the upper limit during the months when the grass is not rapidly growing. This has a number of implications, not least of which is that there is no reason to light grass fields that are used for year round practice and competition; if a field is saved for competition only, and this competition includes night games, then lighting may be justified. Of course artificial turf fields do not have this restriction: they can be used essentially 24/7, with some minimal restrictions for maintenance.

⇒ Need for field resting – grass also needs to be allowed to grow during the summer months when regeneration is at its peak. Thus fields should either be closed completely for a two month period, or used as an outfield of a ball diamond.

⇒ Field closures – fields that are built with a full sand base can stay open most if not all of the winter. But if the soil base is not well drained, then the heavy rains of November/February will cause the fields to be waterlogged, and extended play will ruin the field. Snow obviously has the same impact, as has frost and frozen soil conditions. Comox Valley fields are closed on average for several weeks each year; this likely amounts to two weeks for sand based fields and four weeks for soil based fields.

⇒ School use – those fields which are school fields have the added problem from a community use viewpoint that school use starts the 'wear' process and the hours per week that the field is available is diminished. This is less so for elementary schools where student impact is less, but can be considerable at secondary schools where fields are often in use for 30 hours per week with curricular and extra-curricular sports, effectively removing them from the community sport inventory.

⇒ Intensity of use – rugby and football are harder on the fields than soccer or field hockey.

⇒ Other activities – several of the region's parks and sports fields are used for events, mostly sport tournaments but also community and other festivals. In particular, Lewis Park is extensively used for ball tournaments.

After taking these issues into account, the following guidelines can be established for field use:

⇒ Grass fields have the capacity for 20 hours per week maximum. This should be diminished by the following factors:
  - o Soil based fields will be idle for 5 weeks (20%) out of a 28 week season due to rain/snow.
  - o For sand based fields this is about 10%.

⇒ School fields should be regarded as having only 10 hours of capacity, allowing for about the same for school use. The closure reduction should also apply to school fields.

⇒ Fields that are used for rugby and football should be diminished by a further 20%.

⇒ All grass fields should be allowed to be idle during the summer for a locally determined period. Use as a ball diamond outfield will satisfy this requirement.

Hour Per Week Assumptions		
	Sand-based	Soil-based
Community fields	20	20
with % closure reduction		
10%	18	
20%		16
If used for rugby/football	14	12
School fields	10	10
with % closure reduction		
10%	9	
20%		8
If used for rugby/football	7	6

Figure 10 - Theoretical Hours Per Week

The capacity of sports fields in the Comox Valley inventory is as follows:

Park	Comment	Capacity in Hours per week
Comox Village Park/Elem.	One school and one community field used mainly for soccer, both soil based	24
Bill Moore Park	One soil based field used for football	12
Mission Road Park/Courtenay Middle	Two sand based fields used for school and soccer	18
Valley View Park/Elementary	Three sand based fields used for school (assume one only) and soccer	45
Isfeld Secondary	Two sand based school fields, one used for football and one for soccer	16
Woodcote Park	One sand based community field used for soccer	18
Highland Park and Secondary	Two sand based fields used for school and soccer	18
Lake Trail - Lower/Puntledge Park School	Two soil based community fields, used for soccer, but with higher than average closures	26
Lake Trail - Upper	One soil based school field used for soccer	8
Vanier Sr - grass	Three sand based fields, two of which are used by the school, plus one soil based field used for rugby and football as well as soccer	30
Vanier Sr – inside District Track	One sand based field used for soccer	18
Vanier Sr – all weather	One all weather field	40
Total Hours		273

Figure 11 - Capacity of Major Park/School Sports Fields

Airport Elementary	One soil based school field	8
Arden Elementary	One soil based school field	8
Aspen Park	One soil based school field	8
Brooklyn Elementary	Two soil based school field	16
Cape Lazo	One sand based school field	9
Courtenay Elementary	Two soil based school field	16
Cumberland Elementary	One soil based school field	8
Cumberland Junior	Two soil based school field	16
Fanny Bay Field	One soil based community field	16
Huband Park/Elem.	One soil based school field	8
Miracle Beach Elementary	One soil based school field	8
Total Hours		121

Figure 12 - Capacity of Other Park/School Sports Fields

Ball diamonds

⇒ Skinned ball diamonds have a capacity for use that can be defined as 40 hours per week (4 hours on the five weekday evenings and 10 hours/day at weekends).

⇒ The limitation on community ball diamonds relates to their overlap of grass sports fields for their runways.

The capacity of ball diamonds in the Comox Valley inventory is as follows:

Major Parks with Fields and Diamonds
The 15 ball diamonds which are sized for youth/adults/masters each have a capacity for 40 hours of play per week, for a total of 600 hours.
The 9 ball diamonds that are sized for children's play have a capacity of 40 hours each for a total of 360 hours.
Other Parks and Schools
The 4 ball diamonds which are sized for youth/adults/masters each have a capacity for 40 hours of play per week, for a total of 160 hours.
The 13 ball diamonds that are sized for children's play have a capacity of 40 hours each for a total of 520 hours.

There are therefore 960 hours on the major parks and 680 in the other parks.

Later in the report this supply of field hours will be related to the demand from sports groups and other users.

Field Standards

Standards

In order to facilitate the upgrading of existing sports fields in the Comox Valley, the following process needs to be adopted:

⇒ a set of facility construction/amenity standards needs to be agreed upon

⇒ the present condition of all fields in the Comox Valley that are used for sports needs to be assessed

⇒ based on this assessment, and the needs of the community for sports fields, the future standard of each field needs to be agreed upon

⇒ the work necessary to upgrade each field to the agreed standard should be estimated, and that estimate included in the local government and school district long-range capital plans.

In this section of the report, we will provide a framework for this assessment process, and relate it to the assessment of the supply and demand of field time.

A field classification system was proposed in the 2000 report, but it has only loosely been used to guide upgrading. It is based on the following criteria:

⇒ size of field (full size or child/youth size)
⇒ irrigation
⇒ sand or soil base
⇒ presence of washrooms, change rooms, lighting or other amenities
⇒ high, medium or low maintenance requirement.

Sports Fields

The proposed field classification system[4] to be applied to current and future sports fields is as follows:

Classification	Sports	Field Size	Field Standard	Amenity Standard	Level of Maintenance
Artificial Turf Field	Soccer, Rugby, Football	Adult	High	High	High
All weather fields	Soccer only	Adult	High	Medium	Medium
Level A	Soccer, Rugby, Football	Adult	High	High	High
Level B		Adult or Child/Youth	Medium	Medium	Medium
Level C		Adult or Child/Youth	Low	Low	Low

Figure 13 - Standards Framework for Sports Fields

Standards need to be established for each of the above classifications.

[4] This classification system is based on one developed by the provincial government and Sport BC and published in 1990.

Level of Field	Infrastructure	Standard/Quality
Level A Artificial Turf Field	Artificial turf field.	¬ Sized for adult Soccer, Rugby, Football ¬ Infill turf product with hard surface edge ¬ Full Drainage ¬ Fenced
	Amenities: 1. Lighting 2. Fencing 3. On-site parking - for a minimum of 30 cars, or as required by the parking by-law. Parking space for one bus. Asphalt surfacing. 4. Washrooms (flush), Change rooms, Storage - preferably one combined facility, with two team change rooms (gang shower with four heads, four toilets) and one officials change room (one shower, one toilet). Two public accessed washrooms, each with two toilets). User group storage area of 100 sq. ft. Concession facility. 5. Bleachers seating for 200 spectators - on concrete pads	
All weather Field	Limestone screenings surface surfaced field	¬ Sized for adult Soccer only ¬ Full drainage
	Amenities: 1. Lighting 2. Washroom (portable) - as minimal as allowed by by-laws. Preference for access to school washrooms if a joint school field.	
Grass	High quality, sand/ amended soil-based field	¬ Sized for adult Soccer, Rugby, Football ¬ Full Irrigation ¬ Full Drainage ¬ Fenced
	Amenities - all as per artificial turf field: 1. Lighting 2. Fencing 3. On-site parking 4. Washrooms (flush), Change rooms, Storage, Concession 5. Bleachers seating	
Level B	Medium level field with amended soil base.	¬ Irrigation ¬ Partial drainage
	Amenities: *1.* On-site parking for 30 cars, or as required by the parking by-law. 2. Washrooms (flush), - male and female, as minimal as allowed by by-laws. Preference for access to school washrooms if a joint school field site. *3.* User group storage - area of 60 sq. ft.	
Level C	Grass fields, no amended soil base.	¬ Partial drainage ¬ fenced
	Amenities: 1. Washroom (portable) - as minimal as allowed by by-laws. Preference for access to school washrooms if a joint school field site.	

Figure 14 - Standards - Sports Fields

Ball Diamonds

The proposed field classification system to be applied to current and future ball diamonds is as follows:

Classification	Field Size	Field Standard	Amenity Standard	Level of Maintenance
Level A	Adult	High	High	High
Level B	Adult or Child/Youth	Medium	Medium	Medium
Level C	Adult or Child/Youth	Low	Low	Low

Figure 15 - Standards Framework for Ball Diamonds

Standards need to be established for each of the above classifications.

Level of Field	Infrastructure	Standard/Quality
Level A	High quality, sand/soil-based field.	¬ Length to fence ¬ Softball – 90m for slopitch ¬ Baseball – 90m ¬ Full Irrigation ¬ Full Drainage ¬ Skinned base lines
	Amenities: 1. Fenced out-field 2. Lighting, on a site-specific basis 3. On-site parking - for a minimum of 30 cars, or as required by the parking by-law. Parking space for one bus 4. Washrooms (flush), Change rooms, Storage - preferably one combined facility, with two team change rooms (gang shower with four heads, four toilets) and one officials change room (one shower, one toilet). Two public accessed washrooms, each with two toilets). Team storage area of 100 sq. ft. 5. Concession, scorekeepers room incorporated into facility design. 6. Bleachers seating for 400 spectators - on concrete pads 7. Backstops 8. Dugouts	
Level B	Medium level field with amended soil base.	¬ Irrigation ¬ Partial drainage ¬ Skinned baselines*
	Amenities: 1. On-site parking - for a minimum of 30 cars 2. Washrooms (flush) - male and female, as minimal as allowed by by-laws. Preference for access to school washrooms if school field. 3. Storage - area of 60 sq. ft. 4. Bleachers seating for 200 spectators - on concrete pads 5. Backstops *6.* Players benches - incorporated into backstop design	
Level C	For grass fields, a generally unamended soil base.	¬ Partial drainage*
	Amenities: 1. Washrooms (portable) - as minimal as allowed by by-laws. Preference for access to school washrooms if a joint school field site. 2. Backstops	
* If the baseball field overlaps with another field (such as soccer), the skinned base lines and other baseball amenities should only be provided if off the field of play.		

Figure 16 - Standards - Ball Diamonds

Assessing the Inventory Against the Standards

A review of each park against these standards yields the following assessment:

Sports Fields

	Length (m)	Width (m)	Size	Standard	Amenity	Maint. Level	Standard Assessment
Major Parks with Fields and Diamonds							
Comox Village Park/Elem.							
Village Park (CCC)	122	72	Not full size	Low	High	Medium	B
Village Park Elementary	105	75	Not full size	Low	High	Medium	B
Bill Moore Park	108	60	Adult-football	High	High	High	A
Mission Road Park/Courtenay Middle							
Courtenay Junior	92	74	Adult	High	Low	High	A
Mission Road Park	76	63	Not full size	High	Low	High	B
Valley View Park/Elementary							
Valley View Elementary							
Valley View Park							
Field 1	91	60	Adult	High	High	High	A
Field 2	91	60	Adult	High	High	High	A
Field 3	82	57	Not full size	High	High	High	B
Isfeld Secondary							
Field 1	72	45	Not full size	High	High	High	B
Field 2	85	47	Adult	High	High	High	A
Woodcote Park	98	64	Adult	Medium	Medium	Medium	B
Highland Park and Secondary							
Highland Park							
Highland Secondary							
Field 1	230	110	Adult	High	Medium	High	A
Field 2	145	80	Adult	High	Medium	High	A
Lake Trail - Lower/Puntledge Park School							
Lake Trail - Lower							
Puntledge Park							
Field 1	140	75	Adult	Low	Low	Low	C
Field 2	110	85	Adult	Low	Low	Low	C
Lake Trail - Upper	90	60	Not full size		Low	Low	C
Vanier Sr/District Track							
Field 1(sand/soccer)	105	70	Adult	High	Medium	High	A
Field 2 (sand/soccer)	105	70	Adult	High	Medium	High	A
Field 3 (soil/rugby)	105	60	Adult	High	Medium	High	A
Field 4 (All weather)	100	60	Adult	High	Medium	High	A
Field 5 (inside track)	95	60	Adult	High	Medium	High	A
Martin Park							
Other Parks and Schools							
Airport Elementary	67	51	Not full size	Low	Low	Low	C
Arden Elementary	85	50	Adult	Low	Low	Low	C
Aspen Park	140	81		Low	Medium	Low	C+
Brooklyn Elementary							
Field 1	130	70	Not full size	Low	Low	Low	C
Field 2	80	48	Not full size	Low	Low	Low	C
Cape Lazo	100	64	Adult	Medium	Low	Medium	C+
Courtenay Elementary							
Field 1	76	40	Not full size	Low	Low	Low	C
Field 2	76	40	Not full size	Low	Low	Low	C
Cumberland Elementary			Not full size	Low	Low	Low	C
Cumberland Junior			Not full size	Low	Low	Low	C
Fanny Bay Field	93	65	Not full size	Low	Medium	Low	C+
Huband Park/Elem.							
Huband Park							
Hubard Park Elementary	100	52	Adult	Low	Low	Low	C
Miracle Beach Elementary			Not full size	Low	Low	Low	C

Figure 17 - Standard Assessment for Sports Fields

Ball Diamonds

		Diamonds					
Major Parks with Fields and Diamonds		Children	Youth/Adult/ Masters	Standard	Amenity	Maint. Level	Standard Assessment
	Comox Village Park/Elem.	6		Low	High	Medium	B
	Bill Moore Park		2	High	High	High	A
	Lewis Park		3	High	High	High	A
	Mission Road Park/Courtenay Middle		2	High	Low	High	B
	Valley View Park/Elementary		3	High	High	High	A
	Highland Park and Secondary		3	High	Medium	High	A
	Lake Trail - Upper	1		Low	Low	Low	C
	Cumberland Village Park	1	2	Medium	Medium	Medium	B
	Martin Park	1		Medium	Medium	Medium	B
Other Parks and Schools							
	Arden Elementary	1		Low	Low	Low	C
	Aspen Park	2		Medium	Medium	Medium	C
	Black Creek Community Hall		1	Low	Medium	Low	C+
	Brooklyn Elementary	1		Low	Low	Low	C
	Comox Elementary	2		Low	Low	Low	C
	Courtenay Elementary	2		Low	Low	Low	C
	Cumberland Elementary	1		Low	Low	Low	C
	Cumberland Junior	1		Low	Low	Low	C
	Fallen Alders		1	Low	Medium	Low	C
	Fanny Bay Field		1	Low	Medium	Low	C+
	Glacier View Elementary	3		Low	Low	Low	C
	Union Bay Field		1	Medium	Medium	Medium	B

Figure 18 - Standard Assessment for Ball Diamonds

Standards are useful in identifying where certain fields can be upgraded, but they do not lead directly to plans for upgrading. The intermediary step requires an assessment of what fields at what levels the Comox Valley requires. This step will be addressed after the assessment of demand which follows in the next section.

The Demand

Current Participation

The current participation data on sport participants, events held by each sport and the fields used are given in appendix B, and can be summarized as follows:

Rugby	Rugby is a small sport in the Comox Valley. There is one adult club which tries to put out both a men's and a women's side. There is also an Over 40's side which draws players from both Campbell River and the Comox Valley. The adult teams play at either Lewis Park under the lights or at Vanier. The average weekly field requirement per team is 4 hours. The Over 40's train at Miracle Beach School, but use Vanier for their occasional matches. They have entertained a touring Japanese Over 40's rugby team. Their time requirements are more limited – 1 hour per week for their one team.
Soccer	Soccer is the largest sport in the Comox Valley. Several years ago, all the teams and leagues except Men's Recreational Soccer, formed Comox Valley United Soccer. It has 111 teams playing in its winter league from September to March, and 139 teams playing spring soccer from April to June. The two summer months of July and August are not idle: there are numerous camps and higher level play continues. The sport has a roughly even division between males and females. Of the winter participation of 1280, 1070 are children and youth players, and 210 adult and masters ages. The training and competition requirements per team grow from an average of 2.5 hours per week for children to 5 hours per week for youth, adults and masters. There are lots of tournaments and events in soccer. Several are held at present, up to the level of age group provincials. They are weekend or long weekend events and normally involve 8, 12 or 16 teams, sometimes more. There is great expansion potential. Soccer is focused on the Valleyview/Isfeld complex which has a clubhouse as an added amenity, and Highland and Vanier. These serve the youth and adult teams, as well as some of the younger teams. The youngest ages play on the school fields which are poor quality, although well distributed throughout the Comox Valley. Recreational soccer is the men's (mainly) Saturday morning pickup league. Generally there is one venue with one or two matches depending on numbers. Highland and Woodcote are the main venues with other fields used if that is closed. Their weekly use is limited to 3 hours per team.

Field Hockey	Field Hockey is a small sport with currently four community teams and about 60 participants. They use Highland for their matches, and allocate 6 hours per week to training and competition.
Football	Football has an 8 team community league and plays primarily at Bill Moore Park. During its season, 8 hours per week are required for training and competition.
Slopitch	The Comox Valley Slopitch league is the main organization in the Comox Valley and has 72 teams of which 40 are mixed, as well as a 16 team men's league and a 16 team women's league. Slopitch focuses on recreational competition, with each team needing 3 hours per week. Slopitch tournaments are large scale although few are held in the Valley. The Comox Valley has three locations were there are three diamond parks – Highland, although one is a baseball diamond, Lewis and Valleyview. Beyond these three complexes, teams play on many of the smaller diamonds, such as Black Creek Community Field. Most of these are of poor quality, lack amenities or are simply too short. In addition to the main Comox Valley Slopitch League, there are three Comox Valley Masters teams which compete with other Vancouver Island teams in a league which also selects the Island reps for the BC Seniors Games. These teams are in the 55+, 60+, and 70+ categories. There are two other leagues: the Legion League which has 3 teams and the 925 League which has 8 teams. The Legion League host a Labour Day 3 day, 8 team tournament every year. The Legion teams play at Lewis Park, although other venues, such as the Base Field, are used. The 925 teams play mainly on school fields.
Softball	Softball has 32 teams, most of which are mixed youth teams. There are only a couple of girls' youth teams. The younger teams require 4 hours per week, while the more competitive girls' teams require 10 hours per week. Minor Softball uses both the Cumberland Village Park fields and the diamond at Cumberland Junior. They also use the new Mission Park fields as well as some time on the Valleyview fields. The younger teams also make extensive use of school fields for organized and pick up practices. Mens and Ladies Fastpitch also use Cumberland Village Park fields.
Baseball	Baseball is strong in the Comox Valley with 51 teams and 650 participants. Most are in the younger age groups, but there are competitive youth and masters programs. Younger teams need two hours per week and older youth and adults 4 hours per week. There are few tournaments. Comox Village Park and the elementary schools in Comox are the heart of baseball and t-ball in the Valley. The youth and adult teams play at Bill Moore Park and at Highland. Martin Park is also used for practice and some junior games.

Horseshoes	Horseshoes has a small number of dedicated older male players, with Cumberland Village Park being the main venue, although Lewis Park also has a facility.
Tennis	There are 145 members of the Comox Valley Tennis Club. Their main venues are Anderton and Lewis Parks where there are multiple courts and they have specific access times. Both venues are in good condition although the conditions of other venues are poorer. In addition to these club members, there are likely around 800 other recreational players who also access all venues.

For each sport, data was gathered on the number of participants, their age and playing level, the gender distribution, and the average time per week that they devote, on average, to training and to competition. When this data is gathered across all the sports noted above, the total participation is as follows:

Sport/Group: All					
Participation					
	Number of teams in the CV		315	139	
	Number of participants in the CV		3714	1330	
		Children	Youth	Adults	Masters/ Seniors
	Total participating	1483	647	1290	294
	Gender distribution				
	Males	884	395	652	293
	Females	599	252	637	1

Figure 19 - Total Sport Participation

The breakdown by individual sports is as follows:

	Children	Youth	Adults	Masters/ Seniors
CV Kickers Rugby Club	0	0	35	0
CV United Soccer Club	800	270	150	60
CV Saratoga Over 40s Rugby Club	0	0	0	30
CV Recreational Soccer Club	80	320	70	0
CV Field Hockey	0	60	0	0
CV Minor Football	40	160	0	0
Total Participants (Fields)	920	810	255	90
CV Slopitch League	0	0	700	0
CV Minor Softball Association	243	37	0	0
Other Slopitch Leagues	0	0	210	0
CV Baseball (Minor and Men's Masters)	400	100	0	150
Total Participants (Diamonds)	643	137	910	150
CV Horseshoe Club	0	0	0	54
CV Tennis Club	0	20	125	0

Figure 20 - Total Sport Participation by Sport Group

Converting Current Demand to Hours of Field Time

When individual sport data is tabulated, data on time required for training and for competitions for children's sport and for youth/adult/masters sport is as follows:

All			
	Children hours	Y/A/M hours	Total
Training	160	231	390
Competition	194	482	676
Total	354	713	1067

Figure 21 - Demand - Total Hours

The distribution by sport group is as follows:

		Children hours	Y/A/M hours	Total
Fields				
	CV Kickers Rugby Club	0	8	8
	CV United Soccer Club	173	208	382
	CV Saratoga Over 40s Rugby Club	0	1	1
	CV Recreational Soccer Club	0	6	6
	CV Field Hockey	0	24	24
	CV Minor Football	6	51	58
	Total Field Hours	180	298	478
Diamonds				
	CV Slopitch League	0	216	216
	CV Minor Softball Association	111	42	153
	Other Slopitch Leagues	0	42	42
	CV Baseball (Minor and Men's Masters)	63	78	141
	Total Diamond Hours	174	379	553
Other				
	CV Horseshoe Club	0	36	36
	CV Tennis Club	0	0	0

Figure 22 - Demand - Total Hours by Sport Group

These are the current participation levels and weekly requirements for field and diamond time.

How will this change in the future?

Changing Sport Participation

When planning sports fields and tennis courts, which are capital assets which will last for the next 20 years, it is essential that trends in sport participation be incorporated into the process. Local groups often indicate that their sport either has been growing, or that the recent lack of growth is only a temporary phenomena. In addition, hard data on who plays which sports is not easy to find, especially reliable time series data.

Therefore the changing sport participation picture has to be pieced together from a variety of sources. Three sources are presented here:

⇒ Data from the recent Statistics Canada publication on Sport Participation in Canada[5]
⇒ Time Series data from BC School Sports
⇒ Data from individual sport organizations in BC.

Statistics Canada - Sport Participation in Canada

The highlights of this report are as follows, and provide a clear picture of the factors that influence sport participation and how they are changing:

National sport participation rate continues to decline

Decreased sport participation across all age groups

Gender makes a difference

Nova Scotia is the new leader in sport participation

Educational attainment an indicator of active sport participation

Higher income earners more likely to participate in sport

The influence of language on sport participation is minimal

People born in Canada participate in sport more than immigrants

Students participate more actively in sport than any other group

Participation highly concentrated in a few sports

Canadian children aged 5 to 14 prefer soccer

Slightly fewer Canadians belong to a sport club or league

Gender gap among active Canadians participating in tournaments and competitions

Active participation declining while volunteering in sports increasing

Women coaches outnumber their male counterparts in amateur sport

Involvement in amateur sport as spectators almost doubled in 13years

Relaxation ranked the most important benefit of sport participation

[5] Statistics Canada – Catalogue no. 81-595-MIE2008060 – Highlight pages are included as Appendix C.

The declines they note are very substantial: from a 45% participation rate in 1992 to 28% in 2005; in absolute numbers, from 9.6m in 1992 to 7.3m in 2005. BC's declines are, with Quebec, the greatest in Canada – a 10% decline between 1998 and 2005.

Chart 3

Sport participation rates by province, 1998 and 2005

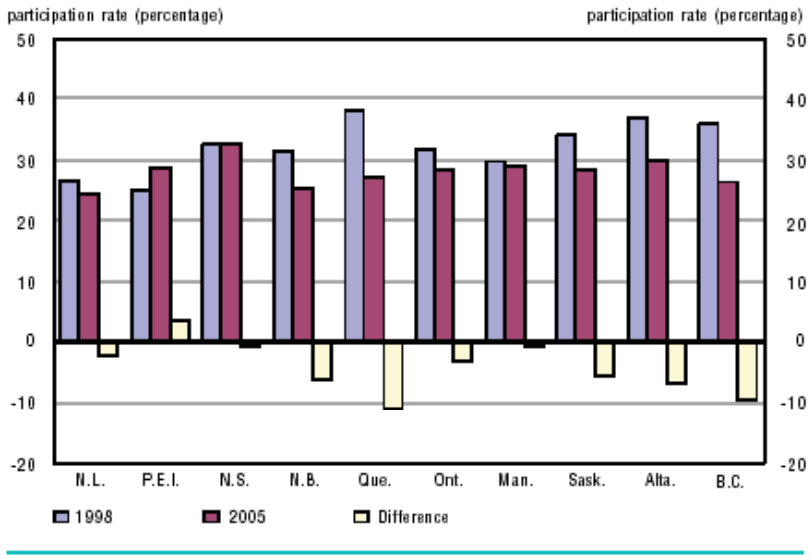

Figure 23 - Data from Statistics Canada Report - 1

Of the top ten most played sports in Canada, soccer, baseball and tennis are included in this study. Soccer has grown since 1998 (the only sport to have done so). Baseball has more than halved in participation

Chart 9

Active participation rates in the top ten sports, 1998 and 2005

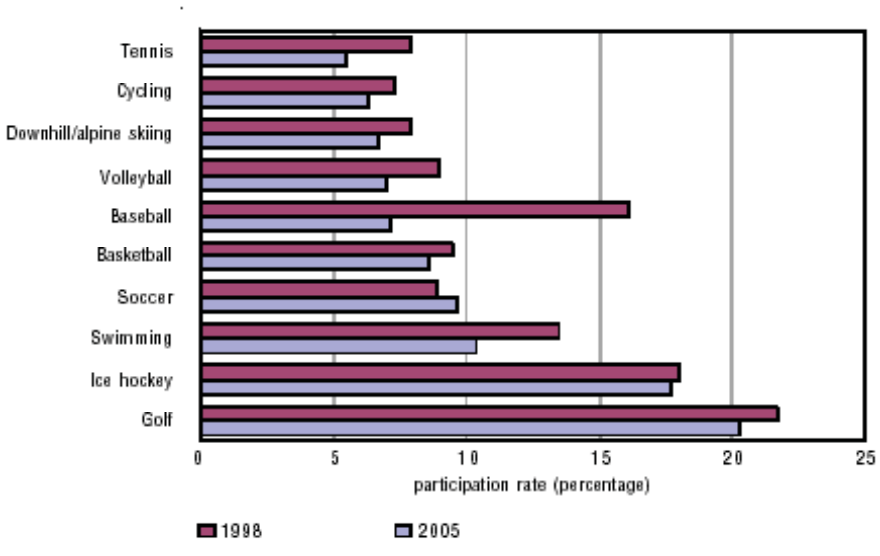

Figure 24 - Data from Statistics Canada Report -2

Soccer, by far the Comox Valley's major field sport, is growing among those aged 5/14 years – from 1998 to 2005, from 35% to 44% for boys and from 28% to 44% for girls.

Table 7
Most practiced sports by children aged 5 to 14[1]

	Participation rates[2]					
	Active children		Active boys		Active girls	
	1998	2005	1998	2005	1998	2005
	percentage		percentage		percentage	
Children aged 5 to 14	**51.7**	**49.8**	**58.8**	**55.4**	**44.3**	**44.1**
Soccer	32.1	44.1	35.3	44.4	27.8	43.7
Ice hockey	23.4	26.1	36.0	33.8	5.8 E	16.2
Swimming	22.9	24.8	17.9	20.5	29.9	30.3
Basketball	13.8	18.9	13.1	17.2	14.8	21.0
Baseball	22.1	13.6	25.9	15.5	16.9	11.2
Volleyball	5.4	10.5	3.0	8.1	8.7	13.5
Gymnastics	2.3 E	6.0	F	1.9 E	4.5 E	11.1
Golf	2.6 E	5.2	3.3 E	6.3	F	3.8 E
Skiing, downhill/alpine	6.7	5.0	6.0	5.6 E	7.7	4.2 E
Karate	5.4	5.0	6.4	6.0 E	4.1 E	3.6 E
Other sports	2.2 E	4.4	2.0 E	3.8 E	2.5 E	5.1 E
Track and field – athletics	F	3.9 E	F	3.7 E	F	4.2 E
Figure skating	5.4	3.8 E	1.8 E	2.1 E	10.4	6.1 E
Tennis	1.9 E	3.6 E	1.7 E	3.8 E	2.2 E	3.3 E
Football	1.2 E	3.2 E	1.9 E	4.3 E	F	F
Equestrian	1.0 E	3.1 E	F	F	2.0 E	5.7 E
Tae Kwon Do	F	3.0 E	F	3.2 E	F	2.7 E
Badminton	2.4 E	2.7 E	2.4 E	2.5 E	2.3 E	2.9 E
Lacrosse	F	2.6 E	F	3.4 E	F	F
Cycling	3.2 E	2.5 E	3.7 E	2.4 E	2.6 E	2.6 E
Ball hockey	F	1.9 E	F	2.5 E	F	F
Curling	0.6 E	1.8 E	0.6 E	1.7 E	F	2.0 E
Softball	1.6 E	1.7 E	1.1 E	F	2.3 E	2.5 E
Ringette	0.8 E	1.4 E	F	F	F	2.9 E
Field hockey	F	1.4 E	F	F	F	F
Snowboarding	F	1.4 E	F	1.6 E	F	F
Rugby	F	0.9 E	F	1.1 E	F	F
Skiing, cross country/nordic	2.6 E	F	2.6 E	F	2.6 E	F
Bowling, 5 pin	1.5 E	F	1.6 E	F	F	F

E use with caution
F too unreliable to be published
1. Includes children aged 5 to 14 regardless of their living arrangement.
2. The percentage is calculated over the population in at least one sport – the 'active population'.
Note: Respondents may report participation in more than one sport.
Source: General Social Survey, 2005.

Figure 25 - Data from Statistics Canada Report - 3

Growth in School Level Sports

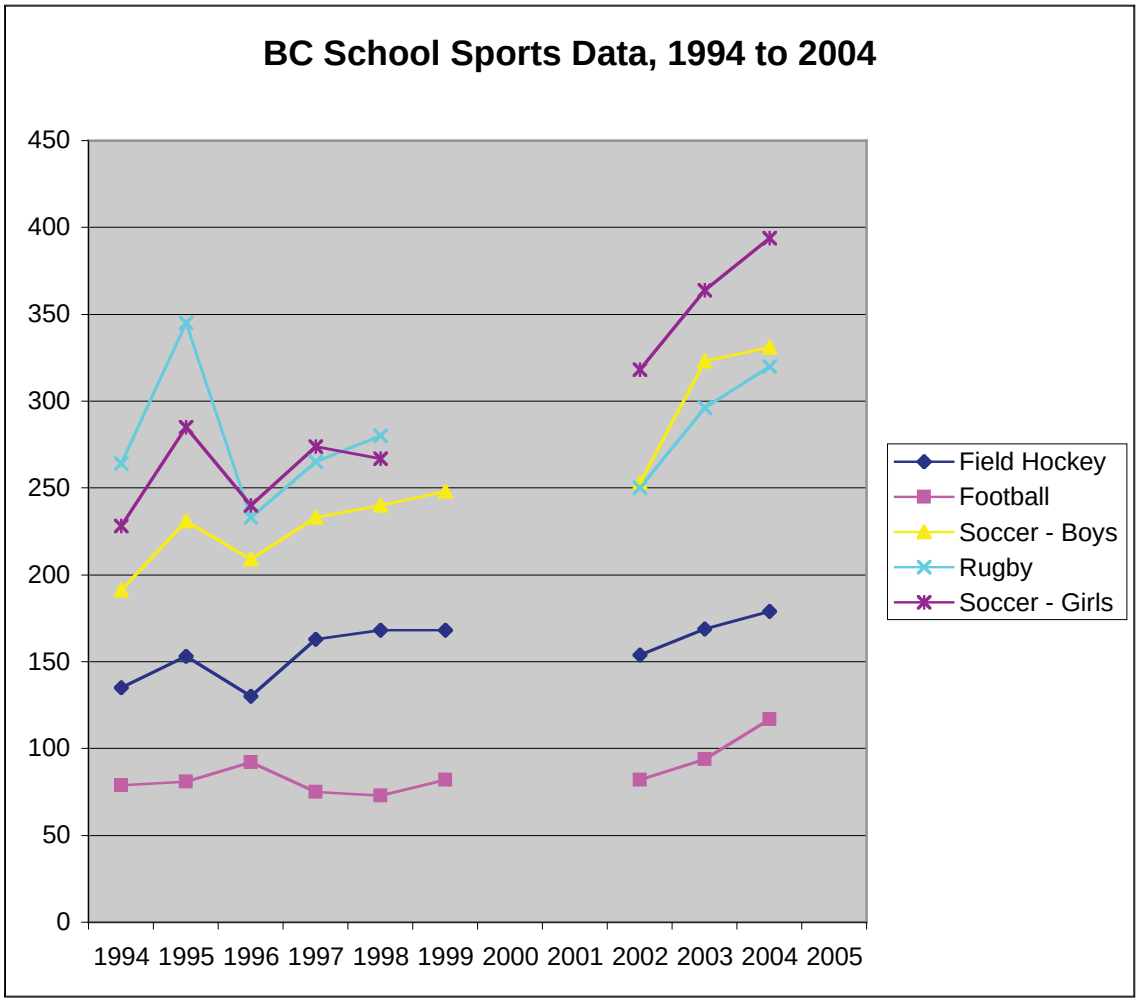

Figure 26 - BC School Sports Data, 1994 to 2004

Data is available from BC School Sports about the numbers of teams registered to play various sports; this data is available for the 1994 to 2004 period, with a break in the middle. It shows:

⇒ Soccer combined is by far the greatest school sport, with more girls teams by 2004 than boys.

⇒ For boys (primarily), rugby is growing.

⇒ Football for boys and field hockey for girls are at a lower level and are more static.

Growth in Individual Sports (as reported by the Sport Governing Body)

Soccer

Soccer BC Registrations - Regular Youth Aged 5/18 years				
	2004	2005	2006	2007
BC	101,000	103,000	103,928	104,000
Lower Island	9,400	9,200	9,300	8,900
Upper Island	6,000	6,900	7,045	6,800

Figure 27 - Growth in Soccer, 2004-7

Youth soccer has been fairly static in both BC and on the Island over the last few years.

Rugby

Vancouver Island	Senior	Junior	Mini	Total
2005	454	240	264	958
2006	603	293	405	1301
2007*	528	456	155	1139

Figure 28 - Growth in Rugby, 2005-7

Data from BC Rugby's 2007 AGM Report indicates that senior/adult rugby is static in numbers, junior/youth rugby is growing, but mini rugby (middle school age) has lost some of its previous growth.

Softball

	2005		2006		2007	
	BC	Dist. 3	BC	Dist. 3	BC	Dist. 3
Fastball	302	12	276	10	244	8
Minor Boys	216	1	184	0	193	0
Minor Girls	1117	33	1068	26	993	29
Minor Mixed	299	11	345	18	248	15
Total	1934	57	1873	54	1678	52

Figure 29 - Growth in Softball 2005-7

Softball has also shown small declines mostly in adult ball, but youth is fairly static as well.

Slopitch

Slopitch has a much more fragmented structure than other sports, reflecting its more recreational flavour. Overall its demographic is more favourable to growth than other sports, having a greater appeal in the adult age group, especially the 25/44 age cohort.

Tennis

The Statistics Canada report notes that tennis has declined from 8% participation to 6% over the 1998/2005 period, and that 403,000 people in Canada play at least once per week, with 186,000 being members of tennis clubs.

Tennis BC on the other hand claim that 13% of BC residents play tennis, that there are 300,000 regular players in BC, and tennis ranked #2 growth sport in 2005.

These are somewhat contradictory!

Conclusions Regarding Growth Patterns

With the aging of the population, and this is occurring more rapidly in the Comox Valley due to in-migration than in other areas, sport participation will decline.

While this is true overall, some sports draw more heavily from the older age groups: slopitch attracts a somewhat younger (18 to 44) demographic, while tennis attracts across a broader, and older spectrum. Both these sports have a strong 'social' component that also attracts adults and newcomers to the Valley.

Much of the increase in youth sport over the last 10 years has been caused by the growth in the 15/19 and 20/24 age groups. This has now peaked and the next 15 years will see a slow but steady decline in this age group.

There has been however a shift from various sports into soccer which, as the Stats Can report notes, is the sport of choice for the 5/14 age group. However this shift is unlikely to increase absolute numbers, but will offset the decline in the overall age group. There is not much more of a winter shift that can occur (soccer already has about 90% of the winter field sport demographic), but it will continue to cut into the summer sport participants, especially among the more competitive age groups.

In summary, therefore, the 10 year growth in particular sports, for estimation purposes, will be as follows:

Rugby	No growth
Soccer	Little growth in the younger age groups and in winter soccer, but summer soccer will grow putting pressure on facilities that also serve as ball diamonds.
Field Hockey	No growth
Football	No growth
Slopitch	Likely to continue growing in the Valley for the next ten years, based on growth of the 18/44 age group. Another 20 teams could be added to the present roster of 80 teams over the next ten years, for a 20% increase in

	required diamond time or 60 additional hours per week.
Softball	No growth, with some decline likely.
Baseball	No growth, with some decline likely.
Tennis	Significant growth potential, as the movement into the Comox Valley in search of quality of life continues among the active 45/65 age group.

Matching Supply and Demand

The current supply of and demand for hours per week on sports fields is as follows:

Supply	In the major parks and schools there is capacity for 273 hours per week of which 233 is on grass and 40 on the one all weather field. In the other parks and schools, where the quality of fields is significantly lower, there is further capacity for 121 hours per week of play. The total hours available in an average week is therefore 394 hours.
Current Demand	The current demand is for 180 hours on children's sized fields and 298 on adult sized fields, for a total of 478 hours.
Projected Demand	Growth beyond the present levels is not anticipated in any sport except soccer, and the growth in this sport is anticipated to be more in the spring/summer game than in the more traditional winter season. There are already 139 teams in the spring league as opposed to 111 in the winter league. This difference adds over 100 extra hours to the field demand, albeit at a time when other sport field users (rugby, football, etc) are not using the fields.
Shortfall	The current shortfall between the supply of 394 hours/week and the demand for 478 hours/week is 84 hours/week. This shortfall is likely being met by overusing the existing fields. The issues would therefore seems to be: ⇒ Inadequate field time for winter play, together with overuse of existing fields to meet this shortfall. ⇒ Quality of fields for winter play – a demand for time on higher quality fields. ⇒ Inadequate field time for the spring/summer soccer season. ⇒ Overlap of fields and ball diamonds during the spring/summer seasons.

The current supply of and demand for hours per week on ball diamonds is as follows:

Supply	In the major parks and schools there is capacity for 600 hours per week of play on full sized (Y/A/M) diamonds and 360 on children's sized diamonds. In the other parks and schools, where the quality of diamonds is significantly lower, there is capacity for 160 hours per week of play on full sized (Y/A/M) diamonds and 520 on children's sized diamonds.

Current Demand	The current demand is for 174 hours on children's sized diamonds and 379 on adult sized diamonds.
Projected Demand	With 60 hours per week additional time needed for Slopitch, 439 hours of adult play are required.
Shortfall	Even with this additional demand, there should be no shortfall of ball diamond time.

Sport Tourism

All groups noted that the lack of facilities was a significant impediment to hosting tournaments, which they felt would be good for the Valley's tourism industry.

The following table indicates the events that have been hosted in recent years and those that were already planned (or close to it) for future years:

Comox Strathcona Regional District
Comox Valley Sports Fields and Tennis Courts - Events

			No. of participants	Length in days	% out-of-town
Actual					
	CV United Soccer Club	Island Cup (annual)	240	2	80%
	CV United Soccer Club	BC Cup Playdowns	240	2	80%
	CV United Soccer Club	Provicial Boys (2006)	870	3	90%
	CV United Soccer Club	Women's Spring Tournament	300	2	60%
	CV Slopitch League	Island tournament	800	4	50%
	CV Horseshoe Club	Empire Days	75	2	50%
	CV Horseshoe Club	July 1st	16	1	100%
	CV Tennis Club	Any Two for Tennis Mixed			
	CV Tennis Club	Ben Bellamy Memorial			
	CV Tennis Club	Nautical Days Open			
	CV Tennis Club	Lewis Park Open			
	CV Field Hockey	Invitational in 2007	60	2	20%
Potential					
	CV Kickers Rugby Club	Saratoga Cup Provincial Finals (BC Finals)	200	3	80%
	CV United Soccer Club	Mini World Cup 2008	1200	3	63%
	CV United Soccer Club	Age Group Tournaments	240	2	80%
	CV United Soccer Club	Provincial Tournaments	870	3	90%
	CV Horseshoe Club	BC Seniors Games		4	
	CV Horseshoe Club	Vancouver Island Championships		4	
	CV Horseshoe Club	International Championships		3	
	CV Minor Softball Association	Prov playdowns or invitationals	120	4	90%
	CV Baseball (Minor and Men's Masters)	Tournament in 2009	330	5	90%

Figure 30 - Sports Events in the Comox Valley

Both lists are surprisingly short, with only one provincial tournament hosted in recent years and with a set of organizations which had not thought very hard (primarily due to lack of facilities) about which events could be hosted…clearly there is much greater potential than noted in the table.

The Valley is missing out on events that could be brought in, and is losing the economic value that teams spend when traveling to events outside the Valley.

It is not possible to give any sense of the value of events foregone, except through giving an economic value for one event held, such as the Island Cup :

⇒ Number of participants – 240
⇒ Number of others (spouses, friends, coaches, parents and children, etc) – assume 240
⇒ Out of town visitors – 480*80% = 384
⇒ Hotel rooms required – 384/2 – 172
⇒ Value of accommodation component – 172*$100 per night*2 nights = $38,400
⇒ Other expenses - $50 per person per day = $17,200
⇒ Organizing and hosting expenses - $10,000
⇒ Multiplier of 1.5
⇒ Total economic impact - $97,900

This indicates that, with even the most modest assumptions, almost $100,000 of new money will come into the community from hosting one soccer tournament.

Before suggesting what kinds of facilities would attract sport tournaments, it is worth noting what are the key event parameters for maximizing economic and social value from sporting events. Some are quite simple, others are more complex:

⇒ Length of event – while most events span one weekend, events of a more educational nature, such as officials clinics, last for longer…with greater economic impact.

⇒ The higher the percentage of out-of-town participants, the higher the economic return.

⇒ Different demographic groups attract different levels of spending – young athletes (12 and under) tend to travel with their families, with consequent higher per athlete spending. The same is true for older athletes, such as travel to the Seniors Games. Teenage athletes, especially boys, tend not to be big spenders, and often do not have family with them, which leads to lower spending levels.

⇒ Young females athletes tend to be accompanied by their parents, while young male athletes are not. Average party size for female events tend to be three times higher than for male events.

⇒ Recreational athletes tend to travel and stay (especially if pre- and post-event packages, spousal packages, etc are part of the event planning), while more professional athletes tend to come for their events only.

⇒ Large spectator events can be deceiving, since many of the spectators are local people, who do not bring 'new money' to the community.

However the fundamental nature of sport events must not be forgotten: they are put on by sport enthusiasts for the love of the game and for the development of local athletes, not as economic generators. Meeting the objectives of the sport, such as for youth development, must be a high goal along with economic return.

It is also critically important to stress that arguments about the economic value of sport events must augment a local need for a facility; the local need and the tourism need must go hand in hand[6].

What type of sport field/ball diamond/tennis facilities would be most likely to attract sport events and sport tourists? The following would be suggested:

⇒ A four-plex ball diamond is now the standard for all softball, baseball or slopitch events. There is no question that the Valley's current ball fields are not destination facilities. An example often cited of what the Valley could aspire to is McGirr Park in Nanaimo.

⇒ A two pitch artificial turf field would allow the soccer community to host more events.

⇒ A tennis facility at a higher level of amenity than the present Anderton Park complex.

[6] A study for the City of Kamloops (YTA 2003) pointed out that the facilities planned in their successful referendum (Nov. 2003) would return the cost of the new facilities in tourism revenues within five years, while still being available to the local residents for 85% of the year.

Findings

The need for outdoor sports facilities must be defined within the broad civic societal, economic and environmental context if their importance is to be fully communicated to the public and decision makers.

The discussion about the need for additional sports fields, ball diamonds and tennis courts can easily focus on their costs and the relatively small number of people who may use them.

The context for this decision making must include:

⇒ The changing nature of childhood, with its loss of 'free play' and its replacement by more structured activities. For many children, their outdoor sports activities may be the only time they get outside in the fresh air to run, kick a ball and play with their friends and team-mates.

⇒ The extension of this inactivity is the childhood obesity epidemic.

⇒ Physical activity is not just kids' play. In a world where the sense of community is disappearing, the role played by recreational Saturday morning soccer and 925 Slopitch is critical in building community, as well as allowing adults to be active, relieve their work and family related stresses, and build social and community contacts.

⇒ Playfields also serve as 'green lungs' in our communities both environmentally, such as the role of Lewis Park within the region's flood protection system, and also socially as an antidote to yet more housing and urban development.

The context also includes an aging population who play less active sport and generally opt for more natural parks, but even for this group, a few minutes spent watching the soccer or catching a few minutes and a hot dog at the ball park contribute to an active and healthy life.

A review of the goals and visions for all the municipalities in the region indicates the kinds of communities that their Councils want to create, and sports fields, ball parks and tennis courts are a key part of the backdrop to these visions.

Soccer has continued to grow during the last decade and their demand for field time exceeds the current supply.

While it was largely true that soccer was the winter sport of choice in the Comox Valley in 2000, its dominance has become even more marked over the last eight years. This position as 'the sport of choice for children' is now true nationally as noted by the recent Statistics Canada report. Soccer in the Valley now runs two programs: the traditional September to March winter leagues, and the April to June spring leagues. It also runs summer camps for both developmental and high performance players.

Its growth has been at all levels, although primarily with girls' soccer and with the spring league, which is now larger than the winter league. Some increases in adult soccer have also been noted, such as in women's soccer.

The improvements to fields have both accommodated this growth and fueled it. Without question, parents would prefer to enroll their kids in sports where the risk of a twisted ankle is less, and the same is true for adults. You have to be fairly dedicated to want to play at Lower Lake Trail in February; less dedication is required for Valleyview, with its quality field, change rooms and showers, and concession.

If the Comox Valley wants to play its part in increasing the physical activity levels of the population by 20%, as is the provincial goal, then there have to be more fields of the Valleyview size, quality and amenity level.

The desire from the soccer community is for artificial turf fields. There are various arguments for such surfacing: it provides a 24/7 playable surface, it is easier on the legs of older players than grass, it is the standard in many areas for high performance play. Arguments against are cost and some environmental/aesthetic concerns.

Certainly the strategy needs to add capacity to the sport field system, and artificial turf is one way of doing so.

The finding of the 2000 report, that quality is more critical than quantity, still holds good…except perhaps more so.

The Comox Valley has no shortage of fields, diamonds and tennis courts, yet the quality of many of them, primarily those on school sites, has been steadily declining over the last ten years or more. It is also true, based on anecdotal evidence, that the expectations of the public have gone up during that same period. Indeed, efforts by the stakeholders to increase the quality of the fields have increased the distance between expectations and reality.

Since the 2000 report, several major complexes have been built or upgraded: Mission Road Park, Valleyview, Vanier and Highland have all seen major improvements, and the user groups are, with the exception of a few niggling issues, extremely happy with them.

Our calculations of supply and demand indicate that there should be considerable spare diamond time. In reality, which we determine from the anecdotal comments of the user groups, this is only partly true. The reason for this is that our calculations include diamonds which the users either do not use, or use in different ways: an example of this latter would be renting both diamonds at Village Park School and only using one because both are too short.

One strategy therefore is still the same as in 2000: to take some of the poor quality facilities and to renovate them into higher quality fields.

There are conflicts in time usage between field and ball diamond sports, and these are exacerbated by the expansion of spring and summer soccer.

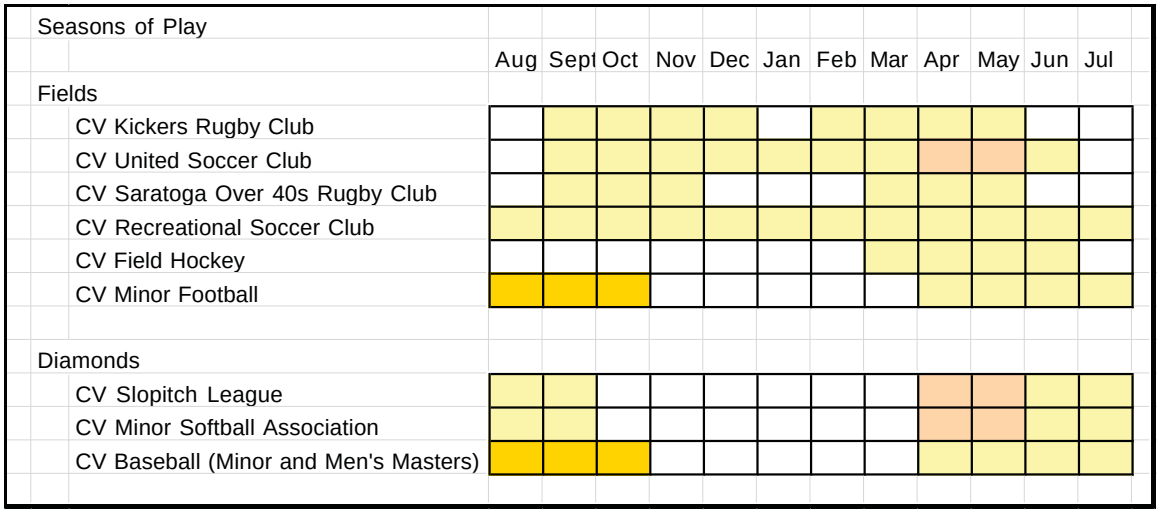

Figure 31 - Conflicts between sports

At one time, soccer and football ruled in the winter and baseball, softball and slopitch in the spring and summer. The outfields of the diamonds, or everything except home plate and the fencing, overlapped the sports field, but this did not matter.

Two conflict zones were noted:

⇒ Primarily at Bill Moore Park, football and baseball, both of which regard that park as their 'home', had time conflicts in the spring and fall.

⇒ The rise of spring and summer soccer, and the very large number of people of all ages who think that it is preferable to playing in the winter. This year, soccer will have about 140 teams looking for field time during the same months that the ball diamonds are being used for ball. The spring season does provide longer hours for evening play, but the grass fields only have a limited capacity to absorb play and need to rejuvenate…which is easier as an outfield for ball than as a soccer field. These are not sports which can easily operate at the same time.

The size and continued growth of soccer make the second of these conflicts the more major one to address.

The Comox Valley is not able to take advantage of sport tournaments and other opportunities due to a lack of facilities.

Over the last 20 years, communities have come to realize that sport events have significant economic impact, bringing 'new money' to the community. The Canadian Sport Tourism Alliance says that this is a $2.4 billion business in Canada, and certainly cities such as Kamloops have made their main tourism brand 'Tournament Capital of Canada'. The Valley's sports organizations host very few tournaments, and this would seem to be primarily because there are not facilities which meet the standards required for event hosting.

In addition, attending sport events is a net outflow from the community because sport team must always travel outside the community to compete.

The local sport organizations generally have an interest and a will to stage such events…and a frustration that they cannot.

Both field sports and ball sports could make good use of A level facilities and these would also allow the Comox Valley to tap into the potential for sport tourism.

There is overlap in the desires of the sports for better quality facilities and the potential to use these facilities to host tournaments that bring economic returns to the Valley.

The standard for ball tournaments is a four-plex. For field sports, the standard is a complex of two adjacent artificial turf fields; this would, given the other A quality grass fields in the community, provide capacity to host up to the provincial level. However both of these facilities take considerable land area, and there are few sites in the Valley which could accommodate them. Unless developed over existing fields or parkland, there is likely not room for two major facilities and preference should be with the soccer oriented facility, given that sport's growth and contribution to youth development.

The quality of local neighbourhood fields and diamonds needs to be improved in order for them to add to the Valley's overall move toward Smart Growth.

The issues of global warming, and society's love affair with the car, have in recent years led to the Smart Growth movement, and its principles are built into at least one municipality's Official Community Plan. Smart Growth is about mixed use developments, greater public transit use, and lessening the use of the car, especially for short journeys. There has been some discussion of what this means for recreation planning, but the tendency is still to build all the facilities into large complexes to which patrons drive in their cars. This is not Smart Growth. If this strategy is to fit into the requirements of Smart Growth, then community or neighbourhood level facilities must be

reinvigorated so that participants and their families can walk or bike to the sports field or ball diamond for that Saturday morning game or evening practice.

In particular this needs to apply to children's sport, and this will require some rethinking on the part of sport organizers: T-ball is centred on Comox Village Park at present, which causes everyone who is interested to drive there. Another implication, as noted by some participants, is that this also discourages some people from participating.

The strategy should also include a strategic upgrading of neighbourhood parks and schools to meet this requirement.

Amenities are lacking at many parks, which compromises use by many publics.

When only men and boys played sports, the fields were surrounded by trees, and public mores were different, amenities such as washrooms and changerooms were not critical. All these factors have changed, and the provision of amenity buildings is essential and top of the list in any public survey. They are also critical for other park users, especially if we want to encourage older adults to walk more as part of active aging.

Amenities also include seating, children's play areas, accessible walking trails, bicycle racks, etc. In many cases, these are already in place. All these amenities will encourage participation and encourage these activities to be family, social and community activities.

A tennis court upgrading strategy needs to be put in place, with particular linkages to the opportunities offered by major resort development in the Valley.

Various attributes of tennis and tennis courts make its situation different from that of sports fields and ball diamonds. Some of these differences are:

⇒ Age focus – tennis is played recreationally by all ages, although it tends to be much more of a lifetime sport than any of the other sports under consideration in this report, with the exception of slopitch. Not only does this give it a broader appeal, but it means that it draws from the adult age groups that are projected to grow over the coming decade.

⇒ Programming and coaching – because tennis only has a maximum of four on a court at once, and is much less a team game, the effective number of participants in any programming or coaching setting requires several courts in one location. The preference is for at least four, and up to eight courts in one location.

⇒ Social side of tennis –the club is the traditional unit of organization in tennis, in part due to the cost of facilities and in part due to the importance of the social component. A club-house/pavilion is an important venue for tennis players.

⇒ It is a single purpose facility – its surfaces need to be protected from other recreational use.

In one way it is also similar to the other sports, in particular soccer: there is an indoor facility which is becoming the standard for year round play, and is often considered to be an essential element in a large municipality's facilities inventory.

The Comox Valley has a number of tennis courts:

⇒ Anderton Park in Comox has six courts and a clubhouse

⇒ Lewis Park in Courtenay has four courts and a shared clubhouse

⇒ Double courts are located at Robb Road close to the Comox Recreation Centre, at Highland School/Park, and at Black Creek Community Hall

⇒ Single courts are located at Fallen Alders and Union Bay Community Halls.

There is a regular upgrading and resurfacing program and the main courts are in generally good condition. Having said that, the Anderton Park courts were not well built in the first place, and it may be better, when next they need resurfacing, to institute a more comprehensive rebuild.

The single courts and to a lesser extent the double courts are neither well maintained nor well used.

Contrary to the previous commentary regarding Smart Growth, higher level tennis, due to its relatively low participation levels and the need to concentrate courts for programming purposes, needs to be concentrated in one or a few centres across the Valley (although existing single courts, if used, should be maintained). These can either be existing centres such as Anderton or Lewis, or new locations, either in parks or in a private sector development.

In fact, the general model in major communities such as Burnaby or the North Shore are for tennis centres to be public-private or public-not-for-profit initiatives. In the Comox Valley, with its focus on resort development, and with more of these in the planning stage, the opportunity to partner in a tennis centre which would serve the higher level public player, act as a sport tourism attraction (both for the independent traveler and for tennis events), and act as an anchor for a resort in the same way that golf does, would be an interesting way to go and should be explored.

If within a period of three years, no progress is made on this approach, consideration should be given for an expansion of Anderton Park to accommodate two additional tennis courts.

The addition of higher quality facilities must be accompanied by contributions from the user groups to the capital costs, to the ongoing operations, and to a commitment to use these facilities for tournaments which bring economic impacts to the Valley.

While some of the proposals in this strategy focus on community level facilities and regular upgrading of public facilities and amenities, several of the strategies focus on high end facilities. These high end facilities have high capital and operating costs, and will need replacing or major upgrading every eight to 12 years (such as an artificial turf field).

These facilities should only be considered by the municipalities if the following conditions are met:

⇒ The user groups agree to contribute to the capital costs. As a rule of thumb, this should be in the region of 10% of the costs of the facility. It should be stressed that this is not a purchase of a share that gives the group particular rights over large amounts of time; it is simply a donation to the public agency, which is likely providing most of the other 90% of the cost. It is understood that some groups are already working toward this contribution.

⇒ There is a rental fee charged for the use of the facility – at the present time, there is a fee for adult use of the fields and diamonds but not a fee for minor sports. There must be a surcharge to these rates to cover the greater operating costs of higher quality facilities.

⇒ There must be a commitment by the groups to the use of the facility as a tournament site and to participating in a strategic approach to building the Comox Valley as a sport host location. The local government partners must also ensure that the strategy returns to the organizing groups a portion of the event economic impact, as opposed to seeing it end up with the hotels and restaurants.

Based on these findings, a set of recommendations are presented in the following section.

Strategies and Recommendations

Four strategies with attendant recommendations are proposed:

Strategy #1 – Select a location for a major soccer and field sport complex with two artificial turf fields and appropriate amenities.

Recommendations

1. Develop a short list of potential sites which would include existing sites such as Lower Lake Trail, Vanier and Valleyview; and new sites such as the current Comox Works Yard (extension of Highland Park) or a new site in the Regional District such as in conjunction with the proposed Sage Hills development.

2. Develop a list of planning principles for the site.

3. Rate each site against the planning principles to select the preferred site.

4. Undertake a planning process to develop a sketch concept and order-of-magnitude cost for the preferred site.

5. Request support from CV United Soccer and other potential user groups in the amount of 10% of the completed cost.

6. Challenge CV United Soccer and other potential user groups to identify a five year plan for event hosting that will deliver 2,000 room nights of accommodation per year which will in turn yield $2.5m in economic impact to the Comox Valley over the five years.

7. Undertake the project once all planning and funding is complete

Strategy #2 – Upgrade neighbourhood fields and ball diamonds across the Valley with a view to making an increasing number of quality fields available in all communities.

Recommendations

1. Initiate a Cumberland Upgrade Strategy that will include:

    a. Upgrade of Cumberland Village Park to a level A ball park with two adult ball diamonds and one youth diamond.

    b. Upgrade the sports fields at Cumberland Jr. School to level B.

2. Initiate a Courtenay Upgrade Strategy that will include:

    a. Upgrade the lower field at Courtenay Elementary into a full size level B field

    b. Upgrade Woodcote Park field into a full size level B field

    c. Upgrade the field at Arden Elementary into a full size level B field

3. Initiate a Comox Upgrade Strategy that will include:

    a. Upgrade the main field at Brooklyn Elementary into a full size level B field

b. Upgrade the two diamonds at Village Park Elementary into one full size level B diamond

4. Initiate a Comox Valley Regional District Upgrade Strategy that will include:

    a. Upgrade the diamond at Black Creek Community Hall into a full size level B diamond

Strategy #3 – Use the standards in this report to identify a level for each field and ball diamond and then upgrade amenities at each facility to the appropriate standard.

Recommendations

1. Adopt the proposed field and diamond designation as follows:

Fields

LEVEL A	LEVEL B	LEVEL C
Artificial Turf To be selected All Weather Vanier Grass Bill Moore Park Lewis Park Mission Road Park Valley View Park/Elementary Isfeld Secondary Highland Park and Secondary Vanier	Comox Village Park Woodcote Park Arden Elementary Brooklyn Elementary (main) Cumberland Junior Courtenay Elementary	C+ Aspen Park Cape Lazo - 2002 Fanny Bay Field C Lake Trail - Upper Airport Elementary Lake Trail – Lower Cumberland Elementary Miracle Beach Elementary

Diamonds

LEVEL A	LEVEL B	LEVEL C
Bill Moore Park Lewis Park Mission Road Park Valley View Park/Elementary Highland Park and Secondary Cumberland Village Park	Comox Village Park Elem. Black Creek Community Hall Martin Park Union Bay Field	C+ Fanny Bay Field C Vanier Sr/District Track Lake Trail - Upper Cumberland Elementary Aspen Park Comox Elementary Fallen Alders Glacier View Elementary Comox Village Park (CCC)

2. Priority upgrading should be directed to:

    a. Vanier – construction of a field house or improved access to the school or sports centre.

b. Mission Road - construction of a washroom/concession/storage building or improved access to the school

c. Construction/upgrade of a washroom/storage building during the field upgrading for all level B fields.

3. Delete from the field and diamond inventory the following fields and diamonds:

Fields

⇒ Aspen Park
⇒ Brooklyn Elementary (second field)
⇒ Courtenay Elementary (second field)
⇒ Comox Elementary
⇒ Huband Park/Elem.
⇒ Robb Road Junior
⇒ Royston Elementary

Diamonds

⇒ Arden Elementary
⇒ Brooklyn Elementary
⇒ Comox Elementary
⇒ Courtenay Elementary (second diamond)
⇒ Cumberland Elementary
⇒ Cumberland Junior
⇒ Glacier View Elementary

Strategy #4 – Request the Planning Departments of each local government agency to include discussion with all resort developers about the potential for developing a tennis resort with the tennis club component as a publicly accessible amenity with an orientation for higher level play and competitions.

Recommendations

1. Work with the CV Tennis Club and Tennis BC to develop an informational report which can be provided to interested resort developers.

2. Include this proposal in the next review of the Official Community Plan.

3. If after three years no action has occurred or seems likely to occur within the then foreseeable future, refocus on an expansion of Anderton Park's tennis facility.

Costing and Implementation

Strategy #1 – Select a location for a major soccer and field sport complex with two artificial turf fields and appropriate amenities.

Recommendations	Priority/Timeframe	Cost
1. Develop a short list of potential sites which would include existing sites such as Lower Lake Trail, Vanier and Valleyview; and new sites such as the current Comox Works Yard (extension of Highland Park) or a new site in the Regional District such as in conjunction with the proposed Sage Hills development 2. Develop a list of planning principles for the site 3. Rate each site against the planning principles to select the preferred site. 4. Undertake a planning process to develop a sketch concept and order-of-magnitude cost for the preferred site.	Year 1	$40,000
5. Request support from CV United Soccer and other potential user groups in the amount of 10% of the completed cost.	Year 2/3	
6. Challenge CV United Soccer and other potential user groups to identify a five year plan for event hosting that will deliver 2,000 room nights of accommodation per year which will in turn yield $2.5m in economic impact to the Comox Valley over the five years.		
7. Undertake the project once all planning and funding is complete	Year 4	$3,000,000

Strategy #2 – Upgrade neighbourhood fields and ball diamonds across the Valley with a view to making an increasing number of quality fields available in all communities.

Recommendations	Priority/Timeframe	Cost
1. Initiate a Cumberland Upgrade Strategy that will include: a. Upgrade of Cumberland Village Park to a level A ball park with two adult ball diamonds and one youth diamond. b. Upgrade the sports fields at Cumberland Jr. School to level B.	Year 2/3	$500,000
2. Initiate a Courtenay Upgrade Strategy that will include: a. Upgrade the lower field at Courtenay Elementary into a full size level B field b. Upgrade Woodcote Park field into a full size level B field c. Upgrade the field at Arden Elementary into a full size level B field	Year 2/4	$500,000
3. Initiate a Comox Upgrade Strategy that will include: a. Upgrade the main field at Brooklyn Elementary into a full size level B field b. Upgrade the two diamonds at Village Park Elementary into one full size level B diamond	Year 2/3	$300,000
4. Initiate a Comox Valley Regional District Upgrade Strategy that will include: a. Upgrade the two diamonds at Black Creek Community Hall into one full size level B diamond	Year 2	$100,000

Strategy #3 – Use the standards in this report to identify a level for each field and ball diamond and then upgrade amenities at each facility to the appropriate standard.

Recommendations	Priority/Timeframe	Cost
1. Adopt the proposed field and diamond designation as follows:	Year 1	
2. Priority upgrading should be directed to: a. Vanier – construction of a field house or improved access to the school or sports centre. b. Mission Road - construction of a washroom/concession/storage building or improved access to the school c. Construction of a washroom/storage building during the field upgrading for all level B fields.	Year 1/3	$1,000,000
3. Delete from the field and diamond inventory the following fields and diamonds		

Strategy #4 – Request the Planning Departments of each local government agency to include discussion with all resort developers about the potential for developing a tennis resort with the tennis club component as a publicly accessible amenity with an orientation for higher level play and competitions.

Recommendations	Priority/Timeframe	Cost
1. Work with the CV Tennis Club and Tennis BC to develop an informational report which can be provided to interested resort developers.	Year 1	
2. Include this proposal in the next review of the Official Community Plan.	Ongoing	
3. If after three years no action has occurred or seems likely to occur within the then foreseeable future, refocus on an expansion of Anderton Park's tennis facility.	Year 4	$500,000