

Sunshine Coast Sports Field Strategy

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LEES
+
ASSOCIATES

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Agenda

- Project Overview
- Key Findings Highlights
- Engagement Highlights
- Strategic Directions
- Next steps



Project Overview

- Develop a Sports Field Strategy for the Sunshine Coast
 - Collaboration between SCRD, Sechelt, Gibsons, shíshálh Nation, and SD #46



Developing the Strategy



- Understand current state



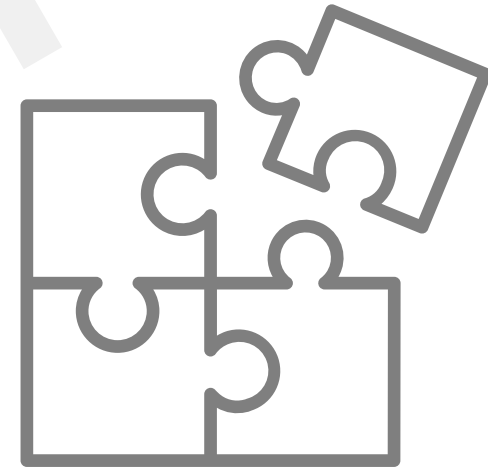
- Determine community needs



- Identify vision and guiding principles



- Establish key directions and goals





Existing Bylaws, Policies and Procedures

- Includes parks use bylaws, fees and charges bylaw, allocation policies, rental policies and joint use agreements
- Specifics vary by jurisdiction
- Only Sechelt and SD46 have allocation priorities outlined
- Current field booking procedures vary by jurisdiction

Current State



Field inventory

- 33 sports fields in 26 locations
 - 1 location with ball diamond only
 - 8 locations rectangular fields only
 - Overlapping fields may have 1, 2 or 3 ball diamonds
- 18 of these are SD46 fields
 - intended primarily for educational purposes and school athletic programs
 - generally unavailable for community booking during regular school hours
 - often are not regulation size or of sufficient quality for many uses
 - All SD46 ball diamonds are overlapping rectangular fields



Current State



Existing field classifications

- Developed internally by staff to guide distribution of field bookings.
- Based on field size, condition and amenities; some fields do not fit single classification
 - “Rep Soccer” (Class A)
 - “Adult Soccer” (Class B)
 - “House Soccer” (Class C)
 - “Practice Field” (Class D)

Classification	Count
A	2
B	3
A,B	5
A,C	1
B,C,D	1

Classification	Count
C	8
D	7
C,D	4
N/A	1
Baseball Only	1

Current State



Field conditions

- Staff have indicated that most sports fields are in poor condition. Concerns include:
 - poor drainage
 - inconsistent irrigation use due to water restrictions
 - poor playing surfaces
 - inadequate maintenance constrained by resources
 - lack of amenities
 - limited resources
 - lack of irrigation systems for sports fields is a significant challenge.





Demand and booking analysis

- Natural grass fields typically designed for 300 to 600 hours of use per year.
- Booking data indicates most fields exceed the 600-hour annual use guideline.
- 11 of the 15 fields are booked for more than 1,000 hours annually.
- Top five most-used fields exceeded 1,700 hours in 2024
 - Brothers Park #1, #2 and #3
 - Hackett Park
 - Shirley Macey #2

Current State - Key Findings



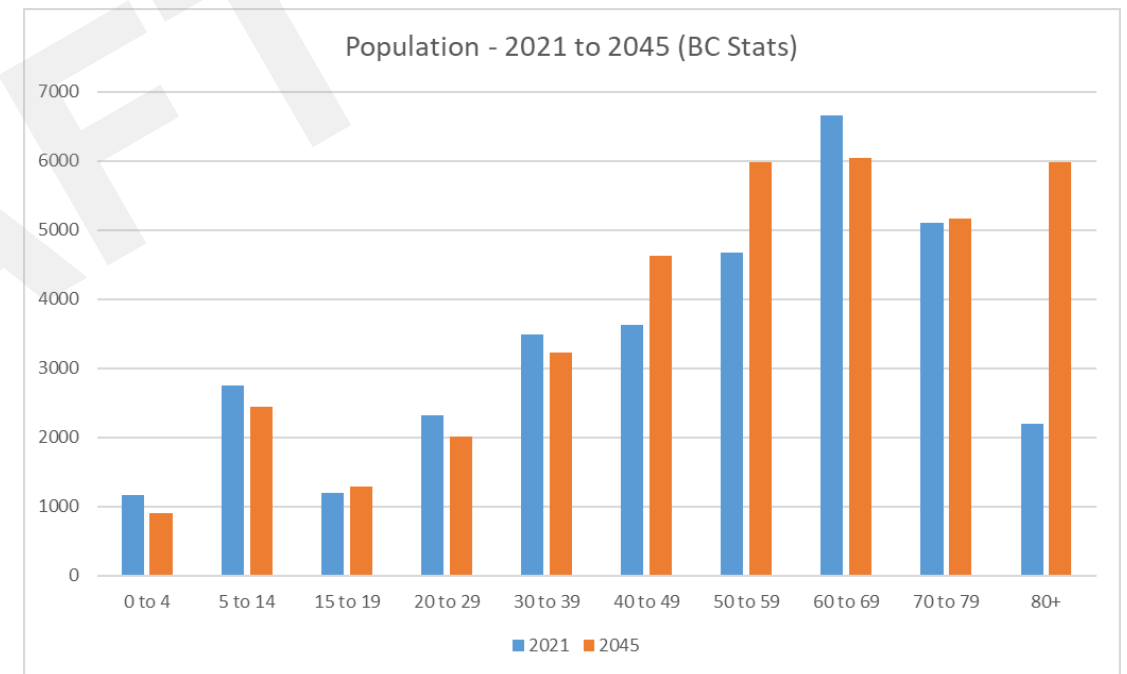
- There are opportunities to improve field allocation, booking procedures and field usage tracking.
- Charging fees for the use of sports fields is standard practice in other jurisdictions.
- Need clearer field classification definitions and more details to help guide future management and maintenance.
- Booking data suggests that the fields are overused, operating beyond their sustainable capacity.
- Fields are in poor condition, which may be tied to overuse.

Community Needs



Community Profile

- Current population: 32,191 people
- Higher proportion of seniors aged 65 years and older to BC average
- Lower proportion of youth aged 0-14 relative to BC average
- Average age: 50.4 years
- Population expected to grow by 17% by 2045
 - Overall decrease expected in ages 0-19 – sports field needs are not likely to increase significantly, even with population growth



Community Needs



Benchmarking

- Comparable communities - Cowichan Valley and Comox Valley
- Typically benchmarking does not include school fields



Rectangular grass field and ball diamond provision are currently sufficient within the region.



*Availability of fields **above average** for both the 2021 population and the 2040 population projections.*



No artificial turf field in the region, while both comparison communities have at least one.

Community Needs



Engagement – What We Did



- User Group Workshop and/or Questionnaire
 - 15 organizations invited; 10 organizations participated



- Online Survey
 - 690 responses



- Community Pop-Ups
 - Sunshine Youth Soccer Cup
 - Gibsons Night Market
 - Canada Day in Sechelt

Community Needs



Engagement – What We Heard

- Existing field conditions are an issue
- Field access with equitable and efficient booking system(s) is desired
- Widespread support for field upgrades, including artificial turf conversions, improved drainage systems, additional lighting
- Upgrading existing facilities or adding new facilities such as a multi-use complex were seen as essential to support growing participation and to enable tournament hosting
- Education around field etiquette and shared responsibility to preserve field quality and safety, especially in relation to off-leash dogs

Draft Vision and Guiding Principles

Values identified from key findings:

- Ongoing working group collaboration
- Improved quality of sports fields with corresponding maintenance
- Improved booking and allocation systems / policies
- Equitable access
- Upgraded sports fields and associated amenities
- Long-term vision to support “Sports for Life” – participation across all ages and skill levels
- Value of sports fields – community health, athletic development

Draft Vision and Guiding Principles

Draft Vision

The Sunshine Coast is home to a vibrant network of equitably distributed sport fields that promote active living and support both recreational and competitive play.

Strategically coordinated maintenance and investments in sports fields and amenities, supported by an efficient and equitable booking system, will ensure these fields serve as inclusive venues that contribute to community health and well-being, support enhanced learning opportunities and nurture participation across all ages and skill levels.

Draft Vision and Guiding Principles

Draft Guiding Principles

- *Foster regional collaboration between all government bodies and the school district by engaging with partners, building consensus, and aligning with shared priorities.*
- *Strive for efficiency in service delivery through coordinated, responsive, and community-focused approaches.*
- *Align investments in sports fields and amenities with field classifications to ensure facilities are safe, accessible, and adaptable to changing needs.*
- *Consider environmental impacts and promote sustainable practices, including responsible water use.*
- *Promote accessibility, equity, and reconciliation to create welcoming spaces for all sports participants and spectators.*

Strategy Development



Primary Roles and Responsibilities

WHO	FOCUS	SUPPORTING ROLE(S)
Government Partners	Providing facilities to standard levels of service	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supporting user groups who deliver programs and help fundraise
School District	Providing facilities that support educational use and community use	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shared-use agreements for community access outside school hours• Supporting student athletic development
User Groups	Providing programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fundraising for facility amenities above standard levels of service (i.e. competition-level facilities)

Strategy Development



Goals

- *Leverage relationships and collaborative partnerships to enhance sports fields on the Sunshine Coast.*
- *Improve the quality of sports fields on the Sunshine Coast.*
- *Promote community well-being and equitable access to sports fields.*



Draft Goals and Recommendations



Goal 1: Leverage relationships and collaborative partnerships to enhance sports fields on the Sunshine Coast.

- *Recommendations under this goal focus on:*
 - *Building on the existing cooperation among the Working Group;*
 - *Partnerships with the School District and Local Governments for field improvements and ongoing operations/maintenance;*
 - *Fostering continued engagement with sport user groups;*
 - *Leveraging other partnerships or sponsorships to fund investments in sports fields and associated amenities and,*
 - *Continuing to strengthen partnerships and building community capacity.*

Draft Goals and Recommendations



Goal 2: Improve the quality of sports fields on the Sunshine Coast.

- *Recommendations under this goal focus on:*
 - *Guiding strategic investment and management decisions through field classifications, service levels and maintenance standards;*
 - *Adopting modern asset management practices;*
 - *Establishing formal arrangements to share maintenance resources, and*
 - *Considering capital investment opportunities to address demand and improve field conditions.*

Draft Goals and Recommendations



Goal 3: Promote community well-being and equitable access to sports fields.

- *Recommendations under this goal will focus on:*
 - *Developing shared allocation policies;*
 - *Establishing updated, coordinated booking practices;*
 - *Implementing fees for field use to manage use and generate revenue, and*
 - *Reviewing and improving accessibility (i.e. parking areas, access pathways, washrooms, seating, etc.).*

Questions? Comments?



Next Steps

- Final Strategy

