

Bowen Island Municipality

Report

Date: November 15, 2007

To: Bowen Island Municipal Council

From: Christine Walker, Community Recreation Supervisor

Subject: Community Connections Program

Recommendation:

Whereas the Community Connections Steering Committee is nearing completion of Phase 2 for the Community Connections program, and

Whereas the Community Connections Steering Committee is required to apply for Phase 3 of the Community Connections program by December 31, 2007, and

Whereas the Community Connections Steering Committee and the Civic Facilities Working Group have worked together to identify a project for Phase 3 of the Community Connections Program:

That Council approve that:

1. The Municipality enter into Phase 3 of the School Community Connections program with the West Vancouver School District to build a 12,000 square foot all-weather practice field on school property with the agreement that an "Outdoor Learning" space be included in the first phase of Civic Facilities on Lot 2. This recommendation will be subject to the design and cost analysis of the "Outdoor Learning" space, guaranteed funding from the School Community Connections Program of one quarter of the all-weather field project cost, and support from the West Vancouver School District #45, and
2. The Municipality agrees to move \$375,000 from between the Community Parks Reserve and the Recreation and other Community Use Reserve to the 2008 budget for the construction of the Community Connections Phase 3 project of an all-weather practice field.

Background:

The Community Connections Program is funded by the Ministry of Education and the Union of BC Municipalities and is a three Phase program. The program objectives are: 1) To make best use of underutilized facilities (assets); 2) To reduce the costs of delivering community programs; and 3) To develop prototypes that can be used to promote further school-community connections. In addition to the program objectives, each phase has funding associated with it. Phase 1 includes a \$5,000 grant, Phase 2 provides up to a \$40,000 grant, and Phase 3 provides up to a \$125,000 grant towards a project on school property that cannot exceed \$500,000 with the other three quarters funding coming from other sources.

With the West Vancouver School District being chosen to be a part of this project, they made the decision to apply the program to the Bowen Island Community School. The first Phase of the program involved a \$5,000 grant that was used to hire a consultant to assist the school district and the Municipality in identifying and assessing the viability of embarking on a joint initiative involving the use of school facilities for broader community use. During this Phase 1 process, a number of potential project ideas were discussed as possibilities to pursue for the remainder of the funding.

Phase 2 of the program was defined as having a purpose of “supporting the planning materials for a proposed use of a new or existing school district asset for broader community use”. This second phase provided funding of \$40,000 to look at potential projects identified in Phase 1 and analyze them more thoroughly from a planning and feasibility perspective in anticipation of moving on to Phase 3 of the program. The following Steering Committee was established to work on Phase 2:

<i>Municipality Representation</i>	<i>School District Representation</i>
Isabell Hadford – CAO	Ken Beatty – Parent Advisory Council
Christine Walker – Community Recreation Supervisor	Maureen Mackey (Chair) – Community School Association
Catherine Patterson – Bowen Island Community (joined as BIPRC Chair originally)	Sarah Haxby –Community School Coordinator (until August 2007)
	Teal Ander – Community School Coordinator (since September 2007)
	Louise McLay – BICS Principal (until June 2007)
	David Langmuir – BICS Principal (since July 2007)
Andrea Little – Community Connections Facilitator	

When the proposal for Phase 2 of the Community Connection Program was submitted to the Ministry of Education and the UBCM by West Vancouver School District #45 and the Bowen Island Municipality in early 2007, one of the goals was to “*promote sustainable and innovative collaboration and long term planning between the school board and the local government that responds to the needs of the community and enhances the school as a centre for community development, learning and activity.*” Through this second phase process, the Community Connections Steering Committee (CCSC) has incorporated this goal into its projects and recommendations.

Phase 2 of the Bowen Island Community Connections Program was broken down into two distinct Goals. **Goal 1** was to decide upon a project on school property that could be considered an asset for the broader community use. A number of ideas had been identified as possible projects with the top two being an all-weather practice field and an Outdoor Learning space. It was decided by the group that an all-weather practice field would benefit not only the school during school hours, but also the larger community and sport user groups afterschool, evenings and weekends. The CCSC believed that the Outdoor Learning space was a good match to have alongside with Civic Facilities on Lot 2 as it would also have multiple uses by other community groups. For example, the Bowen Island Conservancy identified in the Civic Facilities Visioning Session it would be important to have an outdoor space for environmental education purposes.

Goal 2 of this Phase focused on the sustainability of the Bowen Island Community School and the Community School Coordinator position. On November 1st, 2007, Council received a copy of the Community Connections Steering Committee report titled “Bowen Island Community School: A Centre for Community Development, Learning and Activity”. This report makes recommendations on four areas: 1) An enhanced partnership between the Bowen Island Municipality and the West Vancouver School District, 2) Integrated Community Planning and Program Delivery, 3) The Community School Coordinator as Community Developer, and 4) A Sustainable Community School Model.

This staff report will be broken into two parts which will address both goals of Phase 2 and give recommendations to Council on ways to proceed.

Goal 1: All-Weather Practice Field - Existing Conditions and Challenges

The Bowen Island Community School field is currently the only space on Bowen Island that is used to run organized, and non-organized, sport activities. The field is on School District #45 property; however, the community has been able to access use of the field during non-school hours (i.e. afterschool, evenings, and weekends) and scheduling of those times has been done through the Recreation Department.

In September of this year, the Bowen Island Football Club started up a program in partnership with the Community Recreation Department. Bowen Island FC is a community based soccer club which was formed in 2007 as a means of encouraging people to participate in soccer on Bowen Island. The Club aims to develop soccer skills and abilities by focusing on small sided games and planning practices which are challenging and enjoyable in a fun, safe environment. For its first season, the club has over 140 families participating from the ages of 4 years old to adults. The biggest surprise with this club has been the participation in the women’s group with over 30 participants attending each week between the ages of 14-55 years, most, first time soccer players. With its success to date and the high number of preschoolers who are coming up, it is anticipated that these numbers will only grow in the future.

In addition to the Bowen Island Football Club, there are also other community members who use the field for a variety of programs. The second largest organized group behind the Football Club is those community members who play the game Ultimate. Island Pacific School has a team that practices on the field and there is now a new group of teens and adults who will be starting to play recreational Ultimate this Fall. As interest in these sports and others grow, there will only be more demand on the use of the field.

Because the community has access to the field, Bowen Island Municipality has contributed in its annual budget to help with the maintenance of the field. This has been approximately \$3,000 annually; however, in 2005 and 2007 the Municipality contributed \$13,000 to aid in much needed field repairs as the field was in such poor condition it was unsafe to play on and was closed for the majority of the winter months because of poor drainage.

This year the Parks and Recreation Departments partnered with Bowen FC and the Bowen Island Golf Association (through Spencer Grundy) to use their expertise and equipment to collectively bring the field into its best condition ever. To help in maintain the field in that condition, Bowen FC purchased new portable goals (that were donated to the Municipality) which could be moved around the field to prevent excess wear on the grass field that would normally be created by permanent structures.

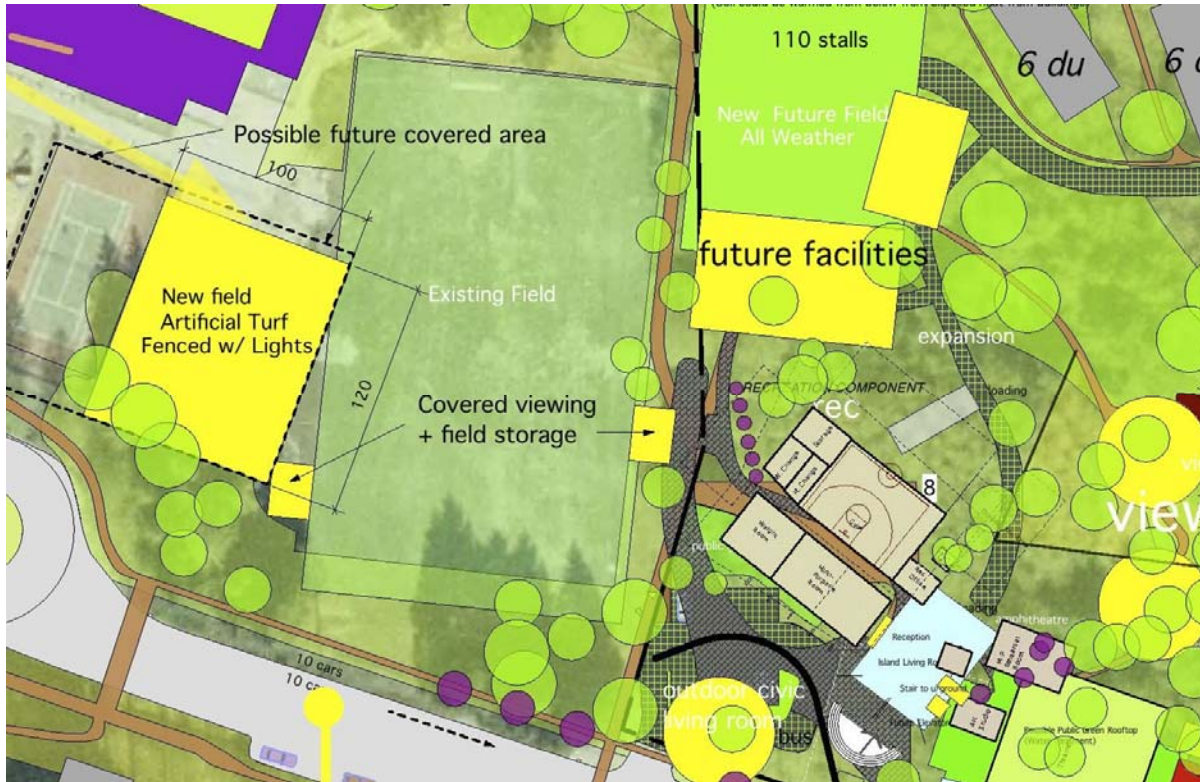
The challenge that exists today is that the existing facility is a grass field and not an all-weather field. In order to maintain the field in good condition, it should not be used in inclement weather where it will deteriorate rapidly.

It is also important to note the limited use of the school gymnasium if the field is closed. Currently, the school gym is programmed throughout the week after school, evenings, and weekends by the Recreation Department, Bowen Island Community School and the community (if there is space open). With programs happening each day in the gymnasium, there is little, if any, time for other groups who would normally use the field outside to move their program inside for one day. In many cases, their programs would have to be cancelled or they would have to find a field in town to use.

With the field closures due to poor conditions, reduced time to play in the winter months because of early darkness and the desire of the community to stay on Bowen and recreate, the suggestion is to use Phase 3 funding of the Community Connections Program to fund an all-weather turf field that can be lit and fenced so that the community can play outside all year round.

All-Weather Practice Field Project:

The project has been envisioned as a 12,000 square foot artificial turf playing surface (100x120 feet) that would be fenced, lit and have a perimeter foundation in place for a future cover. This field is equivalent to the size of a double tennis court, it is multi-purpose, all-weather and can be lit for night time use. In the future, both the tennis court and the playing field could be brought indoors. Below is a diagram showing the size and location being proposed:



Costs:

As part of the Phase 2 work, Alan Boniface will provide a preliminary cost analysis for the application towards Phase 3 matching funding.

Parks and Recreation presently has close to \$1,000,000 in the two reserve accounts of which \$200,000 is presently allocated (although on hold) towards field expansion. In 2006/07, the Parks and Recreation Commission decided to put all capital projects on hold awaiting the outcome of the Civic Facilities Working Group recommendations. This facility will be an element of the Civic Facilities Phase 1 recommendations.

Management and Maintenance:

It is recommended that the booking, maintenance and use of the field fall within the Joint Community School Use Agreement between the West Vancouver School District and Bowen Island Municipality with details to be determined through the review and revision process of the current agreement.

Proposed Timeline:

- November 14, 2007 Civic Facilities Working Group receives a recommendation from the Community Connections Steering Committee to proceed with the all-weather practice field as the Phase 3 project. Civic Facilities Working Group members vote in favour.
- November 19, 2007 Council approves resolution from the Civic Facilities Working Group.
- November 20, 2007 Municipal staff presentation of this project to the West Vancouver School District Board and staff.
- December 2007 Application for Phase 3 funding is completed for the Community Connections Program.
- Spring 2008 Construction begins.
- Fall 2008 The all-weather practice field is open for use.

Outdoor Learning Space

At the Civic Facilities Visioning Workshop in March of 2007, suggestions were made about incorporating an outdoor space into the Civic Facilities planning process that would create a transition from the indoors to the outdoors. This came from a variety of sources but primarily, it was identified that this was a project that the Bowen Island Community School had been considering for a number of years (as an “outdoor classroom”) and one that Sue Ellen Fast from the Bowen Island Conservancy felt was very important.

During the Community Connections Steering Committee’s brainstorming process for determining potential projects for the grant, the outdoor learning space was rated extremely high on the list from the Community School standpoint; however, it was also seen as a space that had potential to have multi-purpose uses for the entire community.

With the work being done on Civic Facilities and both groups understanding the importance and value of working together, they moved towards realizing a new multi-purpose outdoor space that fit within both the Civic Facilities Working Group and the Community School’s vision.

It has been suggested by the CCSC that some of the remaining Phase 2 funding be used to hire Alan Boniface to do a design and cost analysis on where this could be placed near the Civic Facilities. As Alan is currently doing the feasibility study for Civic Facilities, it will be a natural tie to the overall look.

Options and Assessment for Goal 1:

Option 1: Provide funding in 2008 budget so that we are in position to enter into Phase 3 of the Community Connections Program with the School District to build an all-weather turf field on school property with the agreement that an “Outdoor Learning” space be included in the first phase of Civic Facilities (subject to design and cost analysis).

Pros:	Cons:
<p>Small All-Weather Practice Field</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Having the all-weather practice field located beside the tennis courts would provide the opportunity to cover both surfaces (tennis court and field), providing year round use for tennis, soccer, field hockey and other sports. - Increased quality of life and lower overall costs for Bowen residents as there is less time and money commuting. - Using an all-weather turf field in the winter months would allow time for the grass field to recover and strengthen. - Increased recreation participation rate. - Increase in volunteer coaching. - Lower time commitment from both players and coaches due to reduced commuting time. - First actual decrease of green house gas production for Bowen Island with over 1000 vehicle trips eliminated annually. - Boosts local economy by people staying on-island and possibly could be a source of revenue for groups to rent. - Fits within Council’s Strategic Plan in that it can be the first step to Phase One of Civic Facilities planning. <p>Outdoor Learning Space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Bowen Island Conservancy has indicated through the Civic Facilities Working Group that they would benefit from an outdoor learning area; therefore, it would be a multi-use space for the entire community. - Both the Community Connections Steering Committee and the Civic Facilities Working Group support this project. 	<p>Small All-Weather Practice Field</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Because the all-weather turf field would be on school lands, it would not be owned by the Municipality; however, BIM would be responsible for its upkeep. <p>Outdoor Learning Space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Without knowing what the “Outdoor Learning” space looks like and would cost, it is difficult for Council to commit to this project.

With more investigation of costs and scope of work related to the “Outdoor Learning” space, this is an option that would result in the Community Connections Steering Committee accomplishing their goals. It would also be a very positive first step in Phase 1 of Civic Facilities for the Municipality.

Option 2: Do not enter into Phase 3 of the Community Connections Program.

Pros:	Cons:
- No additional monies needed to be spent by the Municipality.	- Would not take advantage of the granting money available through the Community Connections Program. - No needed amenities provided to the community.

At the Nov 14th meeting, of the Civic Facilities Working Group (CFWG), at the behest of the Community Connections Steering Committee, the Civic Facilities Working Group (CFWG) agreed to recommend to Council that the Bowen Island Municipality – as part of the initial construction phase of the new civic facilities – participate in the Community Connections program for the construction of a small artificial-turf field located between the tennis court and the existing grass field at Bowen Island Community School (BICS). The Community Connections Steering Committee has specified that its support for an artificial-turf field is contingent on having an outdoor learning space incorporated into the first construction phase of the new Civic Facilities on Lot 2.

Goal 2: Bowen Island Community School: A Centre for Community Development, Learning and Activity

Goal 2, for the purposes of this staff report, is intended for information only and allowing Council to clarification around the recommendations made in the “Bowen Island Community School: A Centre for Community Development, Learning and Activity” report. The Community Connections Steering Committee will be present at the Committee of the Whole meeting on November 19th to help answer any questions that may assist in the discussions of the Joint meeting on November 20, 2007 between the West Vancouver School District Board and Staff and the Bowen Island Municipal Council and Staff.

As indicated in the memo from the Community Recreation Supervisor dated November 1, 2007 to Council there are a number of challenges that staff and the community face and these have a direct impact on the Municipality. They include:

- The Community School Use Agreement is out of date and has not been reviewed since it was signed in 2001. The agreement “does not specify the responsibilities of the parties in many areas of the partnership nor does it deal with other aspects of the current relationship such as the funding of the community school coordinator position.” It should be noted that the Joint Management Committee has only met once in the last 6 months as the previous Chair resigned and as the current agreement is laid out, there are very few issues cannot be resolved beyond staff communication.
- Currently, there are a number of organizations on the island who program services for the community independently of one another. This has led to some overlapping of services that could have been expanded or refined had they had the opportunity to share resources. Redefining the role of the community school coordinator as a community developer will help to bridge the gap between the numerous service providers on the island and also allow for our community to tap into resources that exist off-island that benefit everyone.
- In many cases, the work that the Community School Coordinator currently does by way of programming is very similar to the work that the Recreation Programmers do, as recreation/leisure/education programs can overlap in a variety of areas. By adding an additional

day of programming time to the Community Recreation Department, some of these valuable programs can continue to be offered and provided to the community.

These challenges will be part of the discussions at the Joint meeting with the School District and Board.

Christine Walker
Bowen Island Municipality Community Recreation Supervisor