
Centennial to get artificial turf field

City to build new surface on site of demolished school to serve new secondary, community

Grant Granger / Tri-City News

JUNE 15, 2018 09:33 AM



Crews work on getting rid of the rubble on the site where the city plans to build artificial turf playing surface next to the Centennial secondary replacement project.

Photograph By GRANT GRANGER

A lit, artificial turf field at Centennial secondary is expected to be ready for play in two years.

The project is part of an extensive partnership worked out between the city and the school district.

Coquitlam will build the \$3-million field on the recently demolished Centennial building site at Poirier Street and Winslow Avenue, owned by SD43, according to a report to city council this week. It also said the goal is to complete the project in 2020.

Since the province won't pay for an artificial playing surface at new schools, the city and the district got together to upgrade the school's field to something that can be used by students during the day and the community in the evening and on weekends.

Building a field at Centennial was too good to pass up for the city, according to the chair of its sports advisory committee.

"It was not originally on our list," said Coun. Craig Hodge. "We have a sports field strategy and we had not identified it, but when the opportunity presented itself we thought it would be great. [The district was] essentially putting up the land for free [and an artificial] field will be used wherever we put it."

Hodge said the demand for turf field use is growing. A turf field can stay open virtually year round, while grass fields have to be shut down to protect them. The extra use also warrants adding lights, said Hodge.

"We want to get on with that right away. There's a growing demand for fields, particularly in the bad weather months and the evenings," said Hodge. "As a soccer parent and a soccer coach, I've had many games cancelled for weather [on grass fields]. As they've gotten older and got access to the artificial turf, that isn't an issue."

Hodge made a request at Monday's council meeting to have covered benches at the new field. The soccer community had to fundraise to provide them at Dr. Charles Best secondary when they weren't in the original plans, he said. He'd also like to see a warm-up area for teams waiting to get onto the turf while another game is going on.

However, city parks general manager Raul Allueva said he didn't believe there would be enough space for one before adding, "But we'll see what we can accomplish."

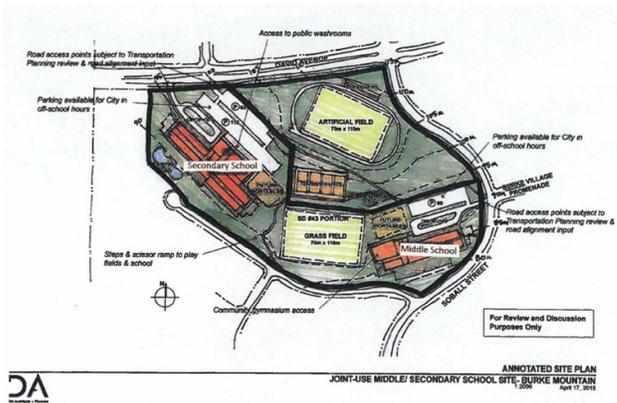
The Centennial turf would be the seventh artificial surface in the city to go along with four fields at Town Centre, Percy Perry Stadium and Dr. Charles Best secondary.

Coquitlam is also buying 1.2 acres of district land at the corner of Glen Avenue and Westwood Street adjacent to Glen elementary for \$3.5 million. The city plans to add the land to the existing Glen Park next door and make \$2 million in improvements to it, including a play area for both the city and the district to use. The city's goal is to have those done by 2021.

That brings the total bill for the city to \$8.5 million. Most of the funding for the field and park improvements will come from development cost charges, casino revenue and bonus density fees, said the report.

The district will use the \$3.5 million to fund improvements to other schools in Coquitlam.

In another agreement with SD43, the city has adjusted some of its priority projects so it can help the district in preliminary planning for a proposed Burke Mountain secondary/middle school project that will include an eighth artificial surface for the city.



A preliminary sketch produced in 2015 for the proposed Burke Mountain secondary and middle schools site. - City of Coquitlam report

Since the David Avenue at Soball Street site is steeply sloped, a coordinated approach between the city and SD43 is important, said the report. To do that, council has approved deferring projects at Galette and Sheffield parks and transferring \$370,000 in funding for them to do site feasibility work and early planning at Burke Mountain. Part of that project site is on city-owned land.

Hodge said developer Wesbild Holdings has already committed \$5 million toward the turf.

Coun. Bonita Zarrillo said she was concerned about the planning partnership. "I want to make sure the city doesn't get caught paying for parts of the school project."

Coun. Brent Asmundson said the city should do anything it can to assist the district, including expediting permits to make sure the funding comes through from the province.

That project still has many education ministry hoops to jump through and isn't slated to open until 2023.