



Staff Report for Council Meeting

Date of Meeting: April 13, 2022

Report Number: SRPI.22.057

Department: Planning and Infrastructure

Division: Policy Planning

Subject: **SRPI.22.057 Indoor Soccer Facility
Investigations**

Purpose:

To report back to Council in respect to all matters related to providing an additional soccer bubble in Richmond Hill in 2022.

Recommendations:

- a) That SRPI.22.057 regarding the provision of an additional indoor soccer facility in Richmond Hill be received, and
- b) That staff continue to investigate opportunities and locations for indoor soccer facilities and report back in Q3 of 2022.

Contact Person:

Patrick Lee, Director of Policy Planning

Donald Hearn, Director of Recreation and Culture

Report Approval:

Submitted by: Kelvin Kwan, Commissioner of Planning and Infrastructure

Approved by: Darlene Joslin, Interim City Manager

All reports are electronically reviewed and/or approved by the Division Director, Treasurer (as required), City Solicitor (as required), Commissioner, and City Manager. Details of the reports approval are attached.

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Background:

At the February 23, 2022 Council meeting and March 2, 2022 Special Council Meeting, in response to SRPI.22.021 regarding the Parks Plan, Recreation Plan, and Culture Plan Review – Key Findings and Directions Report, Council heard numerous delegations regarding the need for an additional indoor soccer facility in the City.

On March 9, in response to the delegations, Council directed:

That the Member Motion of Regional or Local Councillor Perrelli, regarding Soccer Bubble in Richmond Hill, be referred to staff for a report back to the April 13, 2022 Council meeting, in respect to all matters related to providing an additional Soccer Bubble in Richmond Hill in 2022.

With regard to indoor artificial turf fields, the Parks Plan and Recreation & Culture Plan Key Directions Report, which was endorsed by Council on March 9, 2022, recommends that the City:

16. Confirm the location for an indoor artificial turf field, including engaging sports field users if needed, and advancing an implementation strategy.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the March 9, 2022 Council resolution requests staff to investigate advancing the implementation of an indoor artificial turf field through this report.

This report identifies the opportunities and challenges related to the development of a second FIFA sized, indoor soccer field.

Discussion:

Need for Additional Indoor Turf Facilities

The 2021 public survey conducted for the Parks, Recreation and Culture Plans determined that approximately 11% of the households in Richmond Hill participate in indoor soccer.

The City currently provides two indoor artificial turf fields at the Richmond Green Sports Centre & Park. The Richmond Green Sports Dome is a FIFA-sized turf field contained seasonally within an air-supported bubble. A smaller permanent indoor turf field is located within the Richmond Green Sports Centre, which is one-quarter of the size of a FIFA turf field.

Utilization data indicates that the existing indoor turf field supply in Richmond Hill is under pressure and operating at near capacity. Presently, during prime time hours (5:00 pm to 11:00 pm weekdays and 9:00 am to 6:00 pm Saturdays and 9:00 am to 11:00 pm Sundays) 96% of the availability is utilized. Staff note that there are 34 different permit requests representing a request for 60 hours of prime time space that cannot be

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accommodated. The City would need to be confident that such demand would continue into the future to justify the construction of an additional indoor soccer structure.

Structural Options for Indoor Turf Fields

There are two general options for an indoor soccer facility. The first is a seasonal bubble over an artificial turf field and the second is a permanent building over an artificial turf field. Each option has advantages and disadvantages.

Seasonal Structure

A seasonal structure is typically an air-inflated bubble over the artificial turf field. The general advantages are lower initial construction cost and flexibility to take the bubble down during good weather months to allow for outdoor play.

Disadvantages include increased maintenance costs related to keeping the structure air-supported as well as costs related to erecting and taking down the bubble each spring and fall.

Permanent Structure

A permanent structure could take three separate forms. The first is a rigid structure with standard walls and roof. The second option is an air-inflated bubble that remains in place all year around. The third option is a hybrid where walls are rigid and permanent however a canvass like material is used for the roof structure. This third option is also a permanent structure however it utilizes less expensive materials.

Advantages to a permanent structure with a rigid roof include generally better neighbourhood visual aesthetics as well as a slightly improved indoor playing atmosphere due to the lack of need for a pressurized air support system. Additionally, change rooms can be part of the overall structure rather than being separated by an air-lock entrance between the playing field and change rooms in the case of a bubble. General indoor sound levels are generally somewhat less with a permanent structure due to the lack of noise created through the air-support mechanical systems. Other advantages include reduced maintenance costs related to running the air-support system and considerable savings in not putting up and taking down a bubble each spring and fall.

Disadvantages to a permanent structure include considerably higher initial construction costs as well as a potential lack of desire to play soccer indoors during months with good weather. Such a situation could leave a valuable artificial turf field “stranded” during summer months where it would otherwise be used if it were to be outdoors when the bubble came down. If a permanent indoor facility were to be used in the summer, air conditioning would be required.

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Land and Site Requirements

A regulation FIFA soccer field is 105 metres by 68 metres. This represents only the playing field area itself and there are additional land needs for change rooms and mechanical support building as well as parking and buffer area. In all, at least 1.25 ha (3.08 acres) will be required.

Beyond the simple land area requirements, an appropriate location will need to account for the sensitivity of its surroundings particularly if residential uses are in close proximity. The field will have to be lit and will illuminate the surroundings during periods when the bubble is not covering (should a seasonal bubble be used). Noise from spectators during the summer will also have to be mitigated. If the bubble remained over the field year-around, or, the field was housed within a permanent building, lighting considerations would be less significant, however, the proximity of such a large building to residential neighbours for the entire year would need to be taken into account.

Any sites that may have the basic land area to fit a soccer structure would need to undergo a thorough facility-fit analysis, soil and geo-technical analysis as well as neighbourhood consultation. Any appropriate location would need to be fully serviced with water, sanitary sewer and electricity.

Locational Opportunities

Staff have undertaken a cursory review of possible locations where a new indoor artificial turf field could be located. The general fit of a facility into its surroundings may be somewhat influenced by the type of structure chosen. In all, certain structures may fit better in a certain type of location.

As noted, at least 1.25 ha (3 acres) will be required. Ideally, such a site should be municipally owned to avoid expensive land purchase costs and preferably located within an existing park or near-future park.

Without more detailed investigations that would include community consultation, it is difficult to identify an obvious, well-suited, near term location for Richmond Hill's next indoor soccer facility at this time. Notwithstanding this, staff outline below some locations that may offer some potential, subject to more detailed investigations.

Richmond Green

Richmond Green is home to two artificial turf, FIFA sized soccer fields. Both fields are located immediately beside each other. The "east field" is utilized a seasonal bubble that is erected and dismantled each spring and fall. During COVID, the bubble has remained in place. The west field remains uncovered for outdoor seasonal play.

At first glance, it may appear that there would be opportunity to create a second bubble over the "west field" at Richmond Green. Given the close proximity of the two field's a second bubble is not possible. The accumulation of snow between the two very closely

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located bubbles would make snow clearing impossible. Also, the current pick-up and drop off area for the existing bubble is highly congested and a second bubble would make the situation untenable.

Other locations within Richmond Green may be possible but would require considerable re-planning of the park. One such possibility would be to eliminate one or two existing baseball diamonds and create a third artificial soccer field with either a bubble or a building over it. Such an investigation would require discussions with other user groups – particularly those who use the diamonds and would require considerable re-planning of Richmond Green to ensure adequate parking, pick-up and drop off as well as suitable vehicle and pedestrian circulation.

Figure 1 to this report shows an air photo of the current arrangement of Richmond Green.

Richvale Park

Richvale Park currently contains a community recreation centre as well four, ball diamonds and a natural turf soccer field. There may be some potential to converting the grass soccer field to an artificial turf field and building a bubble or building over top of it. Full municipal services are available to the site and parking for the recreation centre and existing fields currently exists. Additional parking would need to be created as well as a pick up and drop off area.

The greatest challenge might exist in the proximity of low density residential uses immediately to the south across Avenue Road and to the northeast on Leona Court from the location where the soccer structure would be built. In some instances, the soccer structure would be as close as 25 to 30 metres from existing residents.

A contextually sensitive design would have to be developed and consultation undertaken with the neighbourhood to determine whether this location could be acceptable. Richvale Park is shown on Figure 2 to this report.

Future North Leslie Recreation Centre Property

The City owns a 3.67 ha parcel of land that was purchased for the purpose of the future North Leslie Recreation Centre which is proposed to be constructed around the year 2030. The proposed recreation centre could include a single hockey ice pad (with the possibility of future twinning); an indoor aquatic centre; gymnasium; multi-purpose spaces; aerobic studio and indoor walking track. Some potential may exist to develop an indoor soccer facility on these lands. Such potential would be dependent on having sufficient land area remaining to construct the recreation facility that may house some or all of the aforementioned facilities. Determination of the functional feasibility of this site would require an architect to undertake preliminary designs to ensure that the identified recreation centre functions as well as the indoor soccer facility could both fit on the site.

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Near term (1-2 years) delivery of an indoor soccer facility on this property would be challenged by the lack of municipal servicing to these lands at this time. Both road access and servicing to this site will be dependent upon the developer of the residential lands to the south advancing subdivision works. The subject lands are shown on Figure 3 to this report.

Richview and Raki Subdivision Parks

Within the North Leslie West area (the west side of Leslie Street), there are two residential subdivisions in the planning stages that will accommodate community level parks which would be large enough to facilitate an indoor soccer facility. Both of these plans are draft approved but not registered at this time. Given the uncertainty on timing of the servicing, road construction and assumption of the park once the subdivision plans are registered, near term (1-2 years) delivery of an indoor soccer facility may not be possible.

Further challenges related to the proximity of planned low density residential uses to any proposed indoor soccer facility would also need to be considered. No discussions have taken place with the owners of these subdivisions regarding any indoor recreation facilities within these parks. The Richview and Raki subdivision parks are shown on Figure 4 (Richview is labeled as Park 5 and Raki is labelled as Park 8).

TACC Community Park

Within the North Leslie East area (the east side of Leslie Street) there is a further community park planned that has sufficient land area to accommodate an indoor soccer facility. This subdivision is registered and starting to build out and is complete with roads and municipal services and may offer an opportunity for near term delivery of an indoor soccer facility.

Similar challenges exist with low density residential uses being in very close proximity to the park. No discussions have taken place with the owner of this subdivision regarding any indoor recreation facilities within this park. The TACC Community Park is shown with a red dot on Figure 5.

Financial/Staffing/Other Implications:

There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report. Further investigations to identify a preferred indoor soccer facility may require resources to procure specialists to undertake certain investigations. Staff will report back with requirements if such are needed.

Should a near term indoor soccer facility move forward, the next 10 year budget forecast would need to identify costs. If a target year(s) for design and construction were identified, the annual budgets for those years would need to reflect the anticipated costs.

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As to the general cost of constructing a new indoor soccer facility, there are many variables that would impact the overall project cost. These would include location, site conditions and type of structure to be built. Maintenance and operating costs will also vary depending upon the type of facility.

Relationship to Council’s Strategic Priorities 2020-2022:

The investigation of the development of a new indoor soccer facility relates to Council’s priority of a “Strong Sense of Belonging”. Desired and functional recreational facilities bring residents together to enjoy sports, fitness and well-being. Quality facilities also help residents take pride in their City and its community assets.

Climate Change Considerations:

The recommendations of this report are not related to climate change.

Conclusion:

The greatest challenge to delivering a near term (1-2 years) indoor soccer facility lies in finding a suitable site. Space extensive uses that need to fit into their surroundings present a challenge. Delivering a major project such as an indoor soccer facility within 2 years is highly difficult even if a suitable site was at hand. There are many design and construction considerations for the site and building that would need to occur in a very short period of time.

Staff will need to undertake further investigations into the suitability of the sites analyzed in this report and consider any other sites that may present themselves. Depending upon the site chosen, further decisions can be undertaken around design and better cost estimates can be arrived at and considered through budget processes.

Attachments:

The following attached documents may include scanned images of appendixes, maps and photographs. All attachments have been reviewed and made accessible. If you require an alternative format please call the contact person listed in this document.

- Figure 1, Richmond Green
- Figure 2, Richvale Park
- Figure 3, Future North Leslie Community Centre Lands
- Figure 4, North Leslie (West) Parkland Locations and Sizes
- Figure 5, TACC Community Park

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Figure 1 Richmond Green – Existing Soccer Bubble shown in white.



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Figure 2 Richvale Park – existing senior soccer field shown on east portion of park

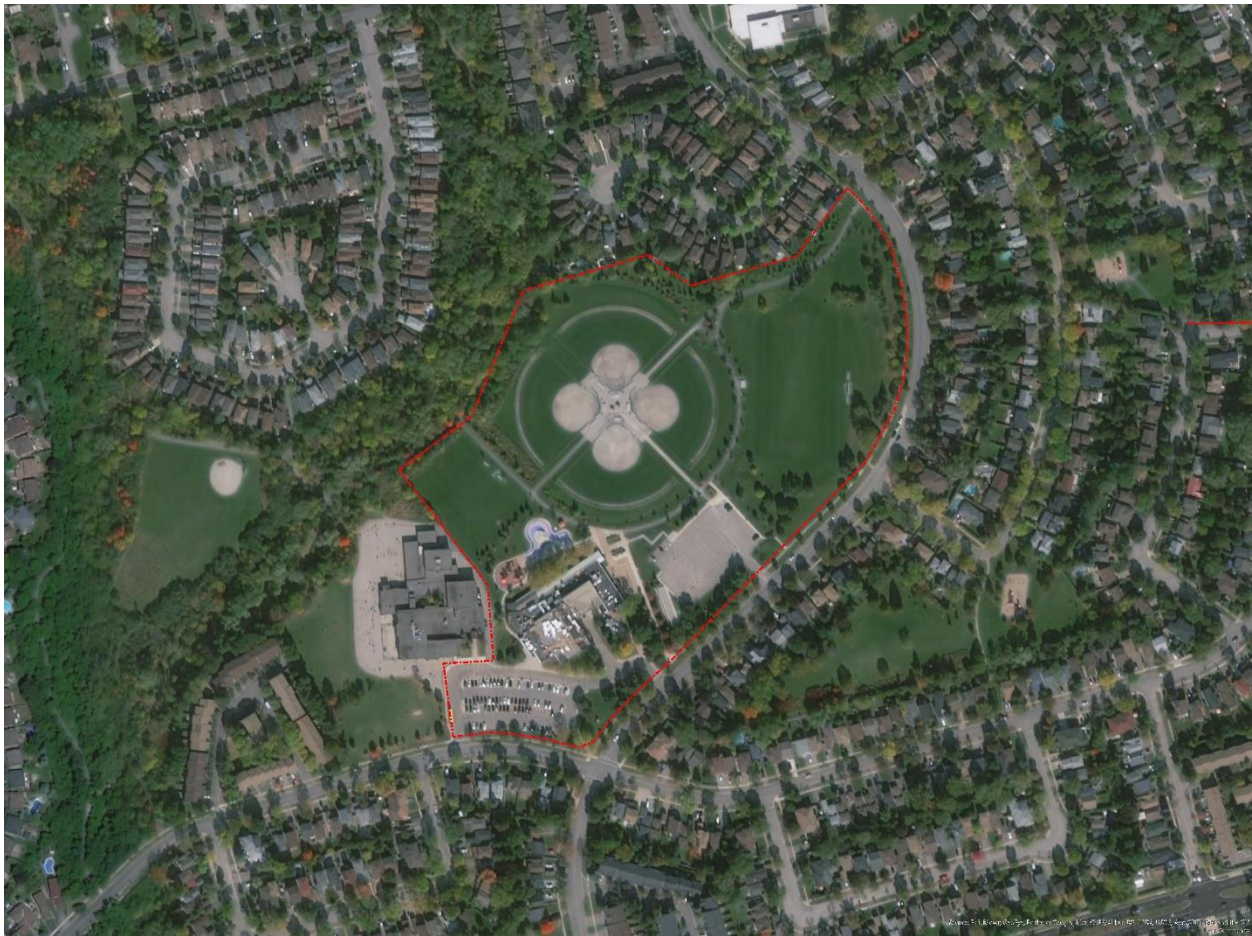
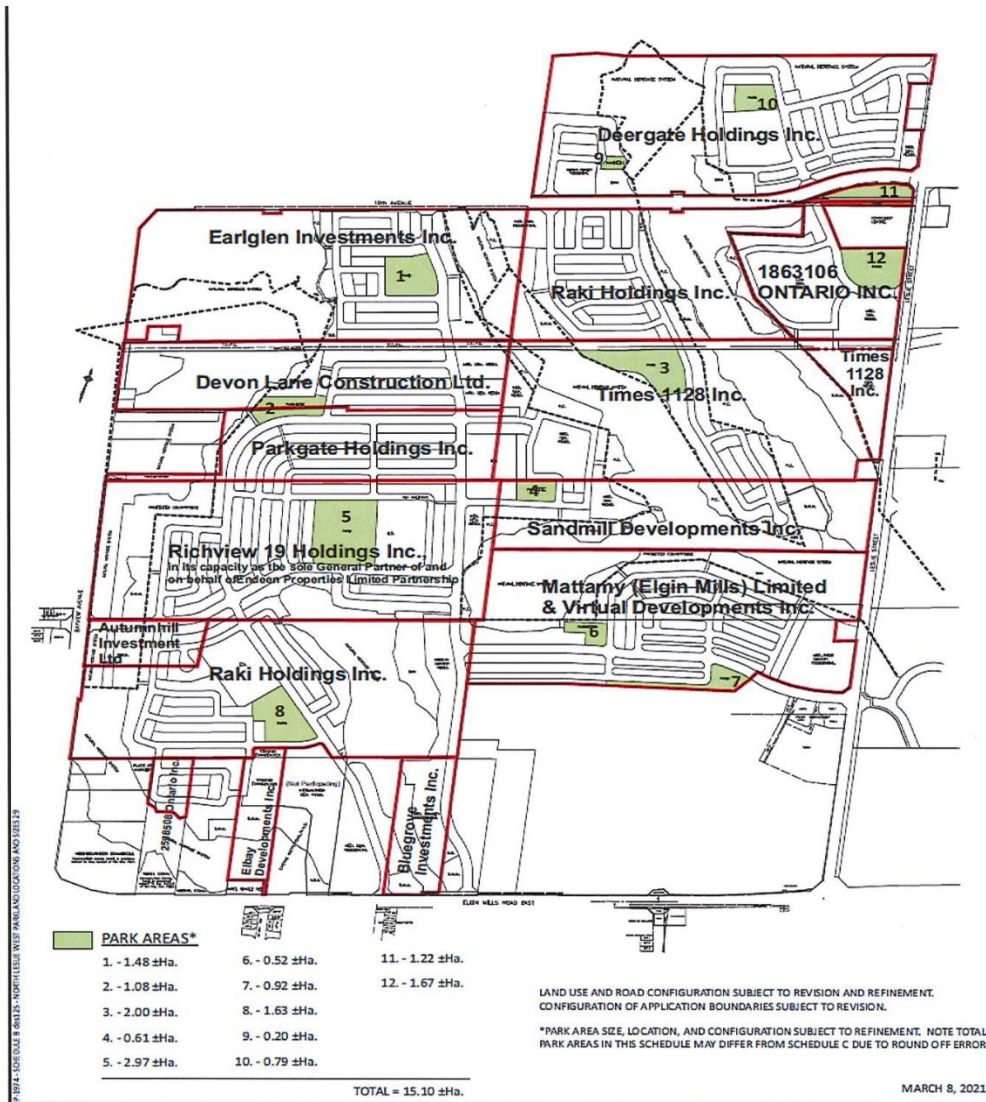


Figure 3 - North Leslie Recreation Centre Lands

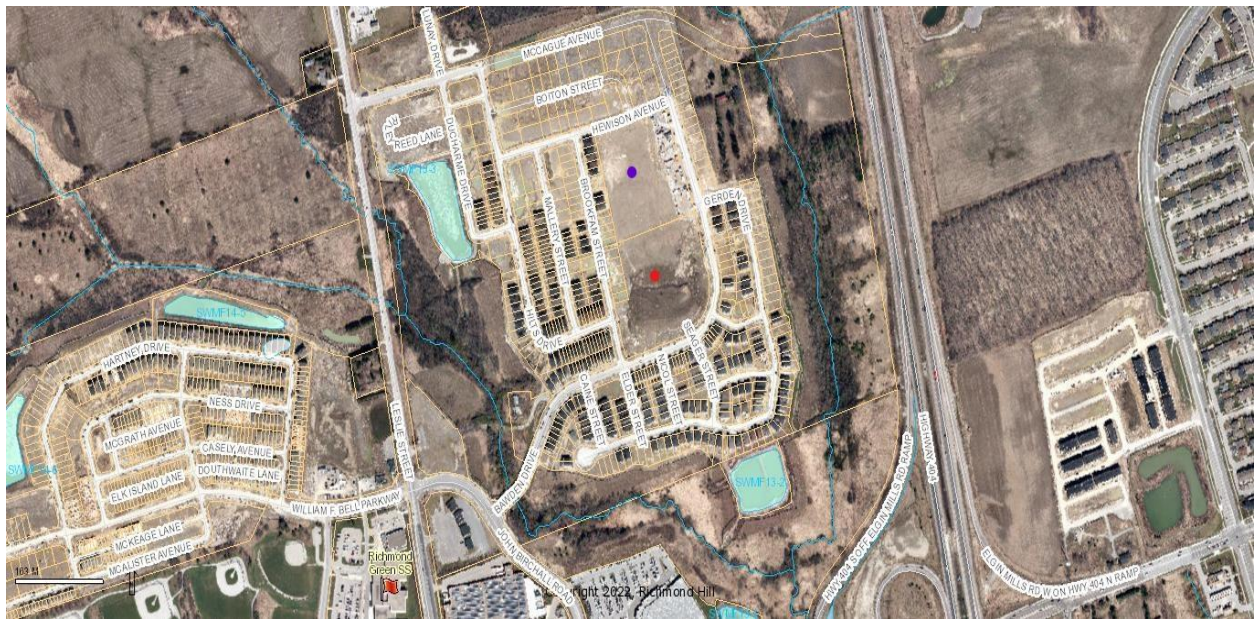


Figure 4 – North Leslie (West) Parkland Locations and Sizes



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Figure 5 – TACC Community Park – shown with red dot



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Report Approval Details

Document Title:	SRPI.22.057 Indoor Soccer Facility Investigations.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Apr 8, 2022

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Patrick Lee - Apr 8, 2022 - 1:50 PM

Tracey Steele - Apr 8, 2022 - 2:24 PM

Kelvin Kwan - Apr 8, 2022 - 2:27 PM

Darlene Joslin - Apr 8, 2022 - 2:47 PM