



Staff Report for Committee of the Whole Meeting

Date of Meeting: May 3, 2023

Report Number: SRCS.23.04

Department: Community Services

Division: Recreation and Culture Services

Subject: **SRCS.23.04 - Indoor Turf Facilities**

Purpose:

To propose a pause on the Indoor Turf Feasibility Study that is currently underway due to new information acquired since the Council direction provided on September 14, 2022 in consideration of SRPI.22.089.

Recommendation(s):

- a) That Staff Report SRCS.23.04 regarding indoor turf facilities be received.
- b) That the 2023 approved capital project for a Feasibility Study to investigate options for an indoor soccer facility at the Richmond Green West Field location be paused to facilitate further detailed analysis of needs and site options.
- c) That \$50,000 from the Feasibility Study capital account be allocated to facilitate the completion of a detailed needs assessment and analysis of alternative siting options for indoor turf fields.

Contact Person:

Donald Hearn, Director of Recreation and Culture, 905-771-2503

Paolo Masaro, Executive Director of Infrastructure and Engineering Services, 905-747-6540

Report Approval:

Submitted by: Tracey Steele, Commissioner of Community Services

Approved by: Darlene Joslin, 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:

On April 13, 2022 Council directed staff to investigate opportunities and locations for indoor soccer facilities and report back in Q3 of 2022.

On September 14, 2022 Council received SRPI.22.089 which provided information on the requirements for indoor soccer facilities, set out a process and timing for development of a new indoor soccer facility, and made the following recommendations that were approved by Council:

- a) That staff report SRPL.22.089, regarding Response to Motion with respect to Indoor Soccer Facility, be received for information;
- b) That staff initiate a Feasibility Study in 2022, including associated site planning, parking study and public consultation, to determine options to facilitate the installation of a new indoor soccer facility in Richmond Green;
- c) That funding in the amount of \$400,000.00 be approved for use in 2022 to facilitate the execution of item (b) above;
- d) That staff prepare a design project with appropriate budget in the proposed 2024 Capital Budget requests to facilitate a new indoor soccer facility in Richmond Green.

The recommendations of SRPI.22.089 were based on an assessment of 5 existing senior soccer field sites within City-owned parks and specifically identified the West artificial turf field at Richmond Green as the preferred site for the City's next indoor turf facility. The initial stage of work toward realization of the new indoor facility was to be a Feasibility Study, which would include a parking study, servicing analysis, geotechnical investigation, topographical survey, tree inventory and preservation plan, public consultation, and building construction options with cost evaluations.

In early 2023 a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Indoor Turf Feasibility Study was released for bid. The RFP outlined a request for consulting services to investigate 2 air support structure options and 2 traditional steel frame options for the Richmond Green West Field. 3 consultant proposals were received in response to the RFP. Award of the project has been placed on hold pending Council direction in response to this report.

Additional Considerations Arising Since September 2022

Since Council directed staff to proceed with the Richmond Green West Field Feasibility Study in September 2022, a number of circumstances have changed. The following opportunities and challenges arising over the last few months have the potential to impact the development of additional indoor turf facilities in Richmond Hill and warrant a reconsideration of the current project plan.

1. The Recreation Plan recommends a Needs Assessment for Indoor Turf

On December 7, 2022 Council approved a new Recreation Plan that included the following recommendation:

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Undertake a study to determine the City's precise seasonal, locational and time allocation needs related to indoor artificial turf fields. The study should evaluate indoor artificial turf needs in relation to outdoor field availability, including understanding the impact on outdoor field use from installing a dome structure over an existing outdoor field and should involve input from sports field user groups.

SRPI.22.089, and the Council directions that gave rise to it and resulted from it, were an effort to fast track an indoor turf project. This fast tracking took place when the Recreation Plan work was still underway and a more fulsome understanding of needs may lead to a preference for an alternative preferred option.

2. Local Soccer Clubs support Investigation of Alternative Options

The primary users of indoor and outdoor soccer fields in the City (Oak Ridges Soccer Club and Richmond Hill Soccer Club) have stated they would support a delay in progress on development of an additional indoor turf field, if there is significant potential that an alternative site option can be identified. Both Clubs have expressed concerns about the Richmond Green West Field site. They note that there are parking and geographic distribution issues related to both of the City's indoor fields being located in the same site. Staff also agree with the Richmond Hill Soccer Club's comment that doming the West Field will exacerbate an existing issue of limited field availability during shoulder seasons.

3. Bill 23 changes warrant a detailed funding source evaluation

On January 30, 2023 Council received Staff Report SRPI.23.018 which described how changes to the *Development Charges Act* resulting from Bill 23 will affect the City's ability to collect Development Charge revenues used for recreation infrastructure projects such as indoor turf fields and community centres. In light of future funding constraints, now more than ever the City needs to be certain that proposed expenditures address a firmly established need with the most fiscally responsible option.

4. Knowledge gained through the Feasibility Study RFP Process

Through work undertaken in association with drafting the RFP for the West Field Feasibility Study Staff have gained significant new knowledge. In particular, staff have learned that a dome over the west field (with an associated clubhouse and additional parking) could cost in the order of 10 to 15 million dollars and a permanent steel structure could be in the 25 to 30 million dollar range. Additionally, it seems unlikely the West Field can be transitioned to be an indoor facility without significant adjustment to the layout of the field. This means that the \$1M that was invested in replacing the West Field artificial turf in 2021 will not realize its full lifecycle adding a further significant cost to the project.

5. York Region School Boards have expressed interest in partnerships

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The City has received correspondence from both the York Region public and catholic school boards expressing interest in partnering on the development of indoor turf facilities on school board sites in Richmond Hill.

Given the above, staff are recommending a pause on work towards implementation of an indoor turf facility specifically at the Richmond Green West Field site and proceeding with detailed needs assessment and analysis of alternative siting options for indoor turf fields. This change in process will potentially result in a delay in realization of the construction of a new indoor facility, but also has potential to realize a new facility more quickly (particularly if a suitable school board site can be determined).

Financial/Staffing/Other Implications:

Council allocated \$400,000 from the Parks and Recreation DC Reserve (\$250,000) and the Cash-in-lieu Reserve Fund (\$150,000). Staff are reluctant to proceed with the expenditure of this substantial sum of funds given the considerations noted above. Instead, it is recommended that a sum of up to \$50,000 be used from this allocation for the completion of detailed needs assessment and analysis of alternative siting options.

Relationship to Council's Strategic Priorities 2020-2022:

This primary intention of this report is to ensure fiscal responsibility. Pausing work on the Richmond Green West Field Feasibility Study will enable the City to conduct a detailed needs assessment and broader analysis of options prior to investing funds toward the development of a single site.

Climate Change Considerations:

Climate change considerations are not applicable to this staff report.

Conclusion:

On September 14, 2022 Council directed "that staff initiate a Feasibility Study in 2022, including associated site planning, parking study and public consultation, to determine options to facilitate the installation of a new indoor soccer facility in Richmond Green."

SRPI.22.089 provided information on the need and facility requirements for indoor soccer facilities, and recommended a process and timing for development of a new indoor soccer facility at the Richmond Green West Field.

Pausing work on the Richmond Green West Field Feasibility Study will enable the City to conduct a detailed needs assessment and broader analysis of options prior to investing funds toward the development of a single site.

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.

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There are no attachments to this report.

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Report Approval Details

Document Title:	SRCS.23.04 Indoor Turf Facilities.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Apr 19, 2023

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

Tracey Steele - Apr 18, 2023 - 3:19 PM

Kelvin Kwan - Apr 18, 2023 - 3:27 PM

Darlene Joslin - Apr 19, 2023 - 9:04 AM