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**To:** Richmond City Council  
**From:** Councillor Harold Steves  
Chair, Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services  
Committee  
**Re:** **Draft Framework – Outdoor Sports Field Strategy**  
**Date:** October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2005  
**File:** 11-7200-01/2005-Vol  
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The Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee, at its meeting held on Tuesday, October 25th, 2005, considered the attached report, and recommends as follows:

**Committee Recommendation**

- (1) *That the draft "Field Strategy - Strategic Goals, Objectives- Our Playbook for Action" and framework" (as detailed in the report dated October 12th, 2005, from the Director of Parks Operations), be endorsed and utilized for the development of the 2005-2015 Outdoor Field Sport Strategy.*
- (2) *That the draft "Field Strategy - Strategic Goals, Objectives- Our Playbook for Action" and framework" (as detailed in the report dated October 12th, 2005, from the Director of Parks Operations), be forwarded to the Sports Council for input.*
- (3) *That the following be referred to the General Purposes Committee for discussion:*

*"That all acquisition of lands at Garden City Road be used for Parks and Recreation purposes only".*

Councillor Harold Steves, Chair  
Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Committee

Attach.

VARIANCE

Please note that staff recommended the following:

*That the draft "Field Strategy - Strategic Goals, Objectives- Our Playbook for Action" and framework" (as detailed in the report dated October 12th, 2005, from the Director of Parks Operations), be endorsed and utilized for the development of the 2005-2015 Outdoor Field Sport Strategy.*

## **Staff Report**

### **Origin**

#### ***Sports Field Strategy Development***

Since the Fall of 2004, staff have been working closely with Richmond's field sport community in the preparation of an outdoor field sport strategy. As part of the 2005 Council endorsed Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Master Plan it recommends that staff working with the field sport community:

***“Develop, adopt and advance the 2005-2015 Sports Fields Strategy to ensure the broadest possible public awareness, development and access to the City’s sports fields by all segments of Richmond’s community and to ensure equitable allocation of City-owned sports fields. (PRCS Master Plan 2005).”***

The purpose of this report is to seek endorsement of the proposed vision and guiding principles developed for the 2005-2015 Draft Field Sport Strategy.

### **Analysis**

#### ***The Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Master Plan - Sports***

*Richmond has a proud sports tradition and reputation as Canada's most physically active community. The City will continue its tradition of working with others to provide programs and services that promote active living and wellness. The PRCS Master Plan identified the need to provide a strategic Service Plan for Sports that looks at all the sports needs, indoor and outdoor; the completion of feasibility studies for future capital facility development; and the development of a Parks and Open Space Strategy. The development and adoption of an Outdoor Sport Field Strategy, as one component of an overall Sport Strategy as well as Parks and Open Space Strategy, has been identified as a priority for Major Parks Capital 2005-2010.*

#### ***The Outdoor Sports Field Strategy***

The development of the sports field strategy has involved consultation with Richmond's 29 field sport associations and identifies the City of Richmond's role in field sport delivery to include three key areas:

The City of Richmond's role in field sport delivery is threefold:

1. To provide outdoor sport facilities such as sports fields, ball diamonds, running tracks, etc. for the use of outdoor field sport participants;
2. To collaborate with outdoor field sport groups to facilitate the growth and development of a variety of affordable sport activity choices for people of all ages in the community; and
3. To maintain and manage the use of School District and City owned school and park outdoor sport facilities.

### ***Guiding Principles***

In April 2003, Richmond City Council adopted six guiding principles for the future of Richmond's Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Delivery System. These guiding principles stated that the PRCS Delivery system must:

- Ensure the City's ability to meet community needs
- Ensure that Customer Service is Enhanced
- Values and Encourages Community involvement
- Values Effective Partnerships
- Ensure Financial Sustainability
- Develop a Policy Framework for Decision Making

These guiding principles have been followed in the development of the Draft Field Sport Strategy to ensure that a consistent approach to all Parks, Recreation and Cultural service planning for the future is consistent system wide.

### **Draft Field Sport Strategy Vision**

The City of Richmond has a vision of being *the most appealing, liveable and well-managed community in Canada*. Many citizens of Richmond support this vision with their commitment to sport and recreation as a vital part of their lives.

The recently completed Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Master Plan for the years 2005 – 2015 presents the following community vision to build on the City's vision:

***“Richmond! Striving for a connected, healthy city where we cooperate to create and enjoy a dynamic and sustainable quality of life.”***

In order to create an environment that encourages participation for Richmond residents in outdoor sport activities, an inclusive vision is required. The vision for field sport in Richmond is to create an environment where:

***“Everyone can play.”***

### **Field Strategy - Strategic Goals, Objectives- Richmond's Playbook for Action**

The following goals and objectives were identified with input from members of the field sport users groups, city staff and the Richmond Sports Council. The goals from eleven categories with supporting objectives.

#### **Goal #1. To ensure public awareness of the City's outdoor field sport facilities for all citizens.**

When citizens are made aware of the value that the City's outdoor sport facilities contribute to making the health and prosperity of the community, they are much more willing to support initiatives to build more facilities and increase field sport participation in the community. Current field users and newly formed field user groups need information such as how to book fields, where fields are located and what guidelines govern the use of community sport field facilities. The objectives of this goal are to:

- Educate the community on the outdoor sports facilities that exist in Richmond.
- Promote how residents can book outdoor field sport facilities.

**Goal #2. To ensure access to the City's outdoor field sport facilities for all citizens.**

In order to achieve our vision of "Everyone Can Play", it is necessary to increase the City's capacity for meeting outdoor field sport demands that cannot currently be accommodated on existing outdoor sports facilities. This increased capacity also needs to address the rapid growth that is occurring in some field sport activities, and provide space for the development of sports that are popular amongst some ethnic groups. Alternative funding strategies should be explored in order to build the capacity needed to accommodate field sport demands in a timely manner. The objectives of this goal are to:

- Increase capacity for accommodating residents wanting to play field sports.
- Provide playing fields that can be accessible to community field sport groups during periods of inclement weather.
- Explore alternative funding strategies to help fund the costs of building and maintaining field sport facilities.
- Eliminate barriers that prevent some residents from participating in field sport activities in the community.
- Increase ability for casual and drop-in neighbourhood access to outdoor sports facilities.

**Goal #3. To provide high quality sports surfaces for field sport user groups in the community.**

The expectation of Richmond field sport users is to have consistent high quality playing surfaces on which to train and compete. Playing surfaces that are damaged or poorly maintained provide inferior playing conditions and may be hazardous to participants. To provide consistent high quality playing conditions requires a program of regular monitoring, damage prevention and repair work.

To achieve this goal will require increased funding for sport surface maintenance. Consideration should also be given to encouraging some affiliated Richmond field sport groups to take on a greater stewardship role of their allotted fields and diamonds. The objectives of this goal are to:

- Provide safe high quality playing surfaces for field sport users in the community.
- Provide playing surfaces that enable year round play in activities such as soccer that are now played year round.

**Goal #4. To encourage outdoor field sport participation opportunities for all Richmond residents**

Field sport activities can play a significant role in achieving the 2010 challenge - increase by 20% the number of Richmond citizens being active by 2010. When residents are made aware of the opportunities for participation and enjoyment of field sports in their community, they are far more likely to participate in field sport activities. The objectives of this goal are to:

- Educate the community on the value of participating in outdoor field sports.
- Promote how residents can get involved in field sports in the community.
- Increase community participation in outdoor field sports by 20% by 2010.
- Support the philosophy of the playground to podium Canadian Sport Long Term Athlete Development model:

- Active Start - Males and females 0-6
- *FUN*damentals - Males 6-9/Females 6-8
- Learning To train - Males 9-12/Females 8-11
- Training to Train –Males 12-16 Females 11-15
- Training to Compete – Males 16-23/Females 15-21
- Training to Win – Males 19+/Females 18+
- Active for life Enter -at any age.

**Goal #5. To ensure guidelines are developed that promote and support field sport in Richmond.**

Participation in field sport activities can be a very healthy and enjoyable experience for players and coaches, and provide exciting entertainment for spectators. However, on some occasions, the behaviour of some groups or individuals can cause problems that negatively effect other participants, park users and adjacent residents. Park use guidelines are needed to control the conduct of field sport participants using school and park property. The objectives of this goal are to:

- Develop guidelines that promote safe, responsible and respectful use of community field sport facilities

**Goal #6. To ensure that every team will have a place to play and practice.**

Providing access to facilities for all citizens wanting to play field sports requires allocation procedures that both maximize the use of these valuable community assets, and also protect these facilities from excessive damage caused by overuse. The objectives of this goal are to:

- Develop a sport field allocation procedures that ensure that all residents get access to field sport facilities for games and practices , regardless of their sport, age, ability or gender.
- Develop standards for determining actual user demand which can be used to forecast future need for new fields and to reduce hoarding and underutilization of allotted field time.
- Develop allotment procedures that maximize the use of all field types.
- Develop procedures that reduce the overuse of natural turf fields.

**Goal #7. To encourage and facilitate innovative and cooperative partnerships for the delivery of outdoor field sports programs in the community.**

There are many stakeholders involved in the provision of field sports in Richmond. Partnerships with these stakeholders should be explored as a means of enhancing community field sport facilities and programs. The objectives of this goal are to:

- Encourage individuals, groups and businesses to contribute financially towards the development and maintenance of future field sport programs.
- Encourage stewardship partnerships with Richmond sport field user groups.
- Facilitate opportunities for training coaches, officials and field sport athletes.

**Goal #8. To ensure field sport development in Richmond is integrated with the City's economic, tourism and official community plans.**

An active and engaged field sport community provides many social, economic and health benefits to the City. Accommodating future growth in field sport and requires that field sport development is provided for in future land acquisition, economic development, tourism and official community plans. The objectives of this goal are to:

- Phase out field sport activities in select neighbourhood park sites.
- Acquire adequate park land to meet the future field sport demands.
- Include field sport initiatives in the City's economic, tourism and community development plans.

**Goal #9. To recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of Richmond's athletes, coaches, officials, sport builders and corporate supporters.**

Much of the community's field sport activities and programs are provided by not-for-profit organizations comprised of volunteers. The contribution of volunteer effort and resources keeps field activities affordable for our citizens and cost effective for the City. In order for field sports to develop in the community, these organizations and their "stars" should be recognized and celebrated. The objectives of this goal are to:

- Facilitate a variety of programs and events that recognize the accomplishments of Richmond's athletes, coaches, officials, sport builders and corporate supporters.

**Goal #10. To encourage and facilitate field sport tourism in Richmond.**

Field sport events draw thousands of visitors to Richmond every year. These visitors spend money on accommodation, meals, entertainment and shopping. Sport tourism spending is a huge benefit for local businesses. It also draws people to the community who may return to live and work. In order for sport tourism to grow in Richmond, there is a need to add and strengthen the sport tournament hosting infrastructure, and to provide support and incentives to field user groups involved in hosting sport tourism events. The objectives of this goal are to:

- Increase Richmond's capacity for hosting field sport tournaments.
- Support the development of a Richmond sport tourism policy.
- Provide incentives that encourage field users to host tournaments.
- Partner with groups and agencies to facilitate the growth of field sport tournaments.

**Goal #11. To provide opportunities for community field sport groups to provide input into future field sport strategies, policies, and priorities.**

One of the guiding principles endorsed by City Council is continuing community involvement in all aspects of the parks, recreation and cultural services system. Opportunities will be provided for Richmond field users to participate in public consultation and participation processes to ensure that their facility and program needs are sustained or enhanced. The objectives of this goal are to:

- Work with the Richmond Sports Council to get their assistance in implementing the Richmond Field Sport Strategy.
- Involve Richmond field sport groups in policy and procedure changes that will effect them.

The draft vision, strategic goals and objectives included in this report are presented to identify the wide spectrum of outdoor field sport opportunities and challenges in Richmond today, and to provide context for the recommended response to the Richmond Soccer Alliance proposal. Attachment I provides a general overview of the draft Field Sport Strategy for information. Staff will be preparing a detailed report in November of 2005 outlining a recommended action plan and process for public consultation regarding the Draft Outdoor Field Sport Strategy.

As part of the 2005-2010 Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Master Plan, the following framework for addressing community need was developed. This report presents the foundation for future recommendations and actions that will affect future service delivery. At present, staff working with the community have reached the stage of “identify gaps/service demands.” With the endorsement of the recommended framework presented in this report, advancement to the remaining stages of the process for addressing community need will be made possible. The Framework for addressing community need is detailed in figure 1 below:

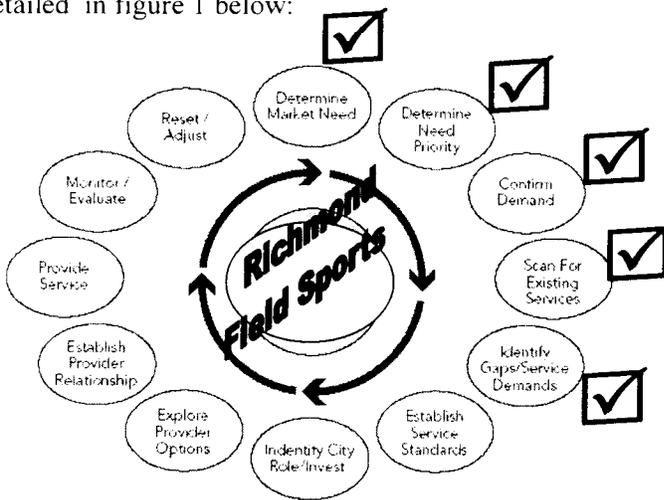


Figure 1: Framework for Addressing Community Need

### Financial Impact

There are no financial implications as a result of this report.

### Conclusion

Field sport is an integral part of life in Richmond. There are approximately 10,000 citizens involved as participants in 29 organized sport groups plus 2,500 volunteers (coaches, managers, coordinators) and 17,500 spectators and supporters (parents, family, friends). This is roughly 18% of the Richmond population in 2005. There are over 1 million hours of participation in organized sport each year. These numbers do not reflect casual usage of sport facilities or the school use of City facilities for sport practices and games.

A lifetime of healthy recreation activities are available to residents 4 years old to seniors. There is also a wide variety of ability choices, from recreational participation through elite level competition, and opportunities for people with special needs.

Richmond Sports groups are dedicated volunteers who recruit players coaches and officials, coordinate player registration and league scheduling, train players, coaches, officials and volunteers and organize activities, events and tournaments that bring out-of-town visitors to the community. A network of sports user groups under the not for profit society the Richmond Sports Council provides advisory, liaison and support to Richmond field sport associations on an annual basis.

The City of Richmond builds and maintains fields, provides land on which fields are built and allocates the use of park and school playing fields. This partnership has kept the cost of providing field sport services to the community quite cost-efficient for the City and affordable to participants.

Participation in field sports in Richmond has undergone considerable changes over the past decade. Some historically popular sports such as youth baseball and football and adult fast pitch softball have experienced considerable decline in participation. Other sports such as girls soccer, ladies recreational soccer and masters age soccer and slow pitch softball have ballooned in popularity. Some newer sports such as ultimate Frisbee and field lacrosse are increasing in popularity and demanding access to an already overused supply of sports fields.

The changing ethnic make-up of the Lower Mainland is spurring growth in sports that are popular amongst some ethnic groups. Cricket, field hockey and kabaddi are growing in participation in neighbouring communities, and may soon be demanding field space in Richmond as well.

The Draft framework for the Richmond Sport Field Strategy provides a foundation for the development of an innovative and forward looking strategy that will identify and address outdoor field sport needs for a ten year period. Approval of the draft vision and strategic goals and objectives will advance the development of the 2005-1015 Richmond Outdoor Field Sport Strategy. The fundamental challenge in field sport delivery in Richmond for the next decade and beyond will be: "How to meet the ever increasing demand for sports fields, so that everyone who wants to play, can play."



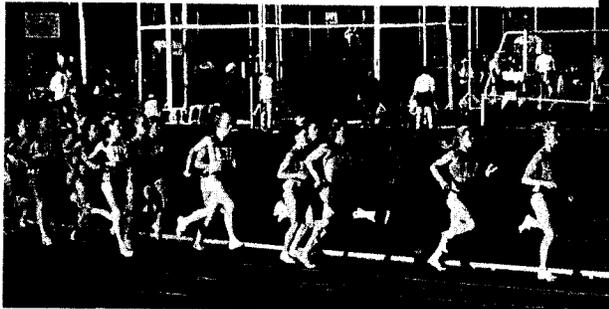
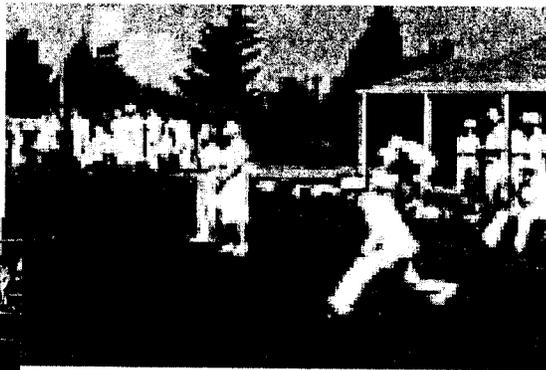
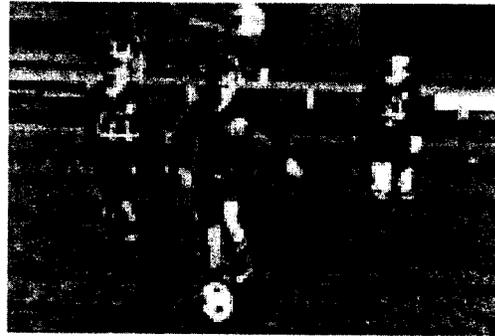
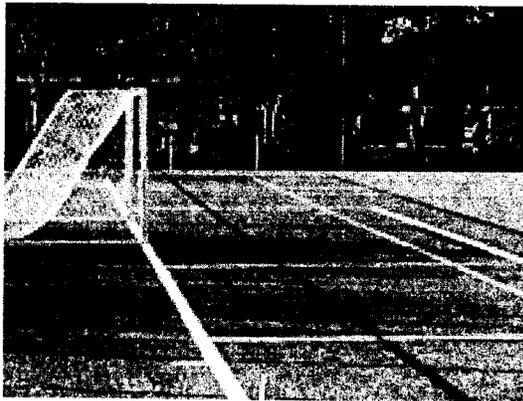
Mike Redpath  
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# RICHMOND OUTDOOR FIELD SPORT STRATEGY 2005-2015

## DRAFT OVERVIEW



## 1.0 OUTDOOR FIELD SPORTS IN RICHMOND

Outdoor field sports are one component of the City of Richmond's sport service delivery system. Other sport opportunities provided for the citizens of Richmond include aquatics, arenas and indoor sport activities.

Outdoor field sports include sports such as soccer, rugby, football, field hockey, cricket, softball, baseball, lawn bowling, field lacrosse, touch football, flag football, track and field and ultimate Frisbee .

Field sports are typically organized and provided by groups of community volunteers. Schools and colleges also provide field sport activities as part of their physical education classes and/or school athletic programs.

The City of Richmond's role in field sport delivery is threefold:

4. To provide outdoor sport facilities such as sports fields, ball diamonds, running tracks, etc. for the use of outdoor field sport participants;
5. To collaborate with outdoor field sport groups to facilitate the growth and development of a variety of affordable sport activity choices for people of all ages in the community; and
6. To maintain and manage the use of School District and City owned school and park outdoor sport facilities.

In April 2003, Richmond City Council adopted six guiding principles for the future of Richmond's Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Delivery System that stated that the PRCS Delivery system must:

- Ensure the City's ability to meet community needs.
- Ensure that Customer Service is Enhanced
- Values and Encourages Community involvement
- Values Effective Partnerships
- Ensure Financial Sustainability
- Develop a Policy Framework for Decision Making

This plan has been developed to address community needs for sports fields and to provide the City of Richmond with a decision making framework for the delivery of outdoor sports fields for the next ten years. To achieve this goal in an environment where the population is growing rapidly and resources are limited, has required considerable research, analysis and discussion with stakeholders.

The results include:

- Development of a vision, mission and strategic goals as the basis for decision making.

- Preparation of a set of field sport facility use standards and sport field allocation guidelines which outline the desired level of service.
- Creation of a Richmond Sports Field Action Plan which outlines the goals, objectives, timelines and expected outcomes for future sport field delivery services.
- Development of a Capital Projects Schedule that indicates the priorities and estimated costs of sport field development projects over the next five years.

## 1.1 The Vision

The City of Richmond has a vision of being *the most appealing, livable and well-managed community in Canada*. Many citizens of Richmond support this vision with their commitment to sport and recreation as a vital part of their lives.

The recently completed Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Master Plan for the years 2005 – 2015 presents the following community vision to build on the City's vision:

**“Richmond! Striving for a connected, healthy city where  
we cooperate to create and enjoy.”**

In order to create an environment that encourages participation for Richmond residents in outdoor sport activities, an inclusive vision is required. The vision for field sport in Richmond is: to create an environment where

**“Everyone can play.”**

## 1.2 The Value of Sport

Sport provides opportunities for individuals and communities to “Live, Connect and Grow”. All desired outcomes of the Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Master Plan.

Sport can shape individuals and it can shape a nation; it has impact on the lives of many and can teach values including fair play and respect for self and for others. Skills learned while participating in sport are valuable life tools. To appreciate the value sport brings to Richmond, imagine our community without it.

Field sports provide many social benefits to a community. It provides an opportunity for participants and their families to meet and socialize with others in the community. Children, youth and adults meet people of other races and cultures and develop friendships through a shared interest in sport. Adults participating in sport socialize and make friends while improving their fitness level. Spectator events such as junior hockey, senior lacrosse or professional soccer, baseball and football games provide opportunities for youth to interact with adults and socialize with other youth in a safe, controlled environment. Seniors participating in sport stay active, improve their health, meet new people and socialize with friends



*“When we get it right, sport can bring joy; making our spirits soar and bring us together.”*

### 1.3 “To Live”

Field sport participation provides significant health benefits to the community. Sport provides a variety of activities in which participation enables participants of all ages to have fun while improving their level of fitness.

In light of the alarming increase in childhood inactivity and obesity throughout North America, participation in sport gets kids off the couch, away from the television and video games and having fun while exercising their bodies. A 2002 study cited in the International Journal of Obesity reported that from 1981-1996, the number of overweight children in Canada had increased from 11% to 33% in boys and 13% to 27% in girls. Also, during the same time period, the number of obese children in Canada has increased from 2% to 10% of boys and from 2% to 9% of girls.

Canadian children are becoming progressively more obese, weaker and less flexible and that 63% of children ages 5 to 17 are not active enough to achieve optimal growth (BCRPA Active Communities Presentation June 24 2002). Through participation in a field sport activity, our youth will enhance their health during critical years of growth and development, lower the risk of chronic diseases in adulthood and help to develop a lifelong fitness lifestyle.

Adult participation in sport is preventative health care. Regular participation in physical activity is effective in achieving physical, mental and social health, increases productivity and lowers health care costs. A report by the BC Healthy Living Alliance estimates the cost of physical inactivity in BC is conservatively \$422 million and that 39% of adults in BC are not active enough to achieve the health benefits associated with an active lifestyle.

Physical inactivity is a major risk factor for coronary heart artery disease, stroke, hypertension, type 2 diabetes, colon cancer, breast cancer and osteoporosis. Initiatives such as new sport and fitness facilities that facilitate adults of all ages in Richmond to be active are a positive investment in the health and productivity of community residents.

For older adults, regular participation in sport activities greatly improves physical health, quality of life and longevity. “Regular activity may reduce the severity of chronic disease and perhaps extend the lifespan by a few years. The benefits are a reduction in demands for acute and chronic medical services, lower indirect costs of illness, and less costly dependence during retirement.” (The International Conference on Exercise, Fitness and Health 1988).

***“You don’t stop playing because you grow old, you grow old because you stop playing.” George Bernard Shaw***

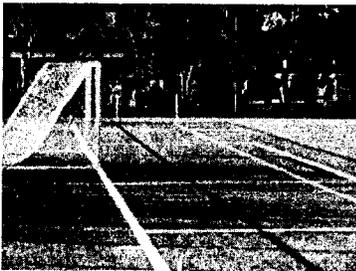
## 1.4 To Connect

Field sports are inclusive and contribute to a sense of community. They engender a strong community spirit, shared pride and social interaction. Richmond has participants in field sport from four year olds to seniors. There are females and males.

Participation covers all levels of ability from recreational to elite to special needs and is representing a growing cross section of Richmond's many cultures. Statistics Canada reported in 1998 that 55% of active Canadians belonged to a local club, community league or other local amateur sport organization. This was an increase of 20% since 1992.

Sport also helps develop a sense of belonging to new immigrants. When Canada's elite athletes achieve international success, (such as our men's and ladies hockey teams at the 2002 Winter Olympics) it can unify the country, when local amateur sports teams win provincial, national or international championships, it can unify communities. Richmond has a long history of producing top calibre school and community sports teams and Olympic and professional athletes. These athletes serve as positive ambassadors for the community and role models and mentors for youth in the community.

***77% of Canadians reported that seeing Canada's top athletes perform well at the Olympics was important to their sense of belonging to Canada (Ekos, 1999).***



***“Sport is one way in which social exclusion can be tackled. Important evidence suggest that participating in sporting activities increases people’s sense of integration into their local community in both urban and rural areas.”***

Sport engenders volunteerism, a vital part of our vibrant community. Richmond's field sport associations are primarily operated by volunteer boards most of which are affiliated with provincial and national sport organizations. The volunteer base of our community sport programs makes sport cost efficient. The involvement of the City is primarily in supply and servicing of facilities.

Volunteering with community sport organizations is a good way for parents to meet new people, learn new job skills and contribute their time, effort and skills to provide positive youth activities in their community.

“The government has recognized that voluntary activity is a key element in creating and sustaining an active and inclusive society, and that sport is one of the main ways in which people choose to put something back into their communities.”

## 1.5 To Grow

Richmond City Council recently adopted the vision for Richmond to be the best place in North America to raise children and youth.

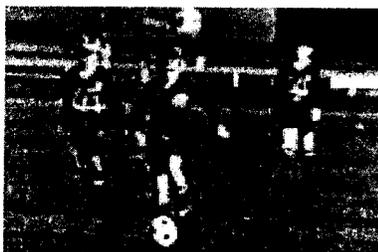
Field Sports provide many benefits for youth. Through participation in field sports, Richmond youth have fun, socialize, get exercise, and channel their energy into positive, socially acceptable and beneficial activities. Sport participation builds healthy individuals by developing self-discipline, self-motivation, self-esteem, determination, dedication, commitment, leadership, responsibility, creativity and physical fitness. Sport can also play a key role in teaching lessons on the value and importance of team work, cooperation, group synergy, mutual respect and fair play.

Participation in field sports provide positive lifestyle choices and alternatives to destructive behaviour such as drug abuse and crime. Most youth feel a strong desire to be associated with a group of their peers. Team sports fulfill this need in a positive way, gangs fulfill this need in a negative and destructive way. “It costs more than 100 times more to incarcerate a child than it does to provide recreation programs”. (National Park Service 1989).

Learning is also positively influenced by participation in sport. A 1989 study conducted by the California National Parks Service concluded that youth involved in athletics stay in school longer, complete their education, are less likely to start smoking and develop a more positive self-image.

For many youth, field sport provides the opportunity to be influenced in a positive way by an adult role model. For some youth, their coach is the only positive adult role model that they know. Coaches teach sports skills, life skills and serve as mentors for youth in the community.

Field sport also provides youth with opportunities for volunteer work experience and part-time work in jobs such as refereeing, umpiring and working in concessions.



*“There is a growing awareness of the social cost of failing to invest in youth. Research confirms that recreation makes a significant impact on the healthy and competent development of youth.”*

## 1.6 Sport and the Economy

Sport is an economic magnet which draws thousands of visitors to Richmond every year. Tournament visitors spend money on accommodation, meals, entertainment and shopping. The average spending per person by out-of-town visitors attending sporting events is \$167.00/day (Research Services Tourism BC January 2004) Sport tourist spending is a huge benefit to local businesses, especially youth tournaments where entire families attend.

For example, the economic impact to the local economy of the annual Thanksgiving Weekend Youth Soccer Tournament hosted by Richmond Youth Soccer and Richmond Girls Soccer Club is estimated at \$575,000. In 2004, 211 teams participated, of which 128 teams were from outside Richmond. This tournament is just one of hundreds of sport tournaments, meets, games and events that attract out-of-town visitors to Richmond each year.

Sport can bring economic wealth to the community in many other ways. Sport participants need sporting goods, which may create spin-off manufacturing businesses as well as retail outlets in the community. In 1996, the average Canadian household spent \$644 on sporting goods and services (Statistics Canada Survey of Household Spending).. There may be a resultant increase in employment when sport participation increases or if new spectator sports are established in a community.

There can be major savings in health care costs when sport is valued, supported and promoted. Employee productivity has been shown to increase when people are active and involved in sport. "If just 10% fewer British Columbians were physically inactive, the province could save an estimated \$16.1 million every year in avoided hospital, drug, physician and other direct costs. Added to an estimated \$19.9 million in productivity gains, total economic savings to BC from a 10% reduction in physical inactivity amount to \$36 million per year." (GPI Atlantic Report March 2004).

## 1.7 Field Sport in Richmond

Field sport is an integral part of life in Richmond. There are approximately 10,000 citizens involved as participants in 29 organized sport groups plus 2,500 volunteers (coaches, managers, coordinators) and 17,500 spectators and supporters (parents, family, friends). This is roughly 18% of the Richmond population in 2005. There are over 1 million hours of participation in organized sport each year. These numbers do not reflect casual usage of sport facilities or the school use of City facilities for sport practices and games.

A lifetime of healthy recreation activities are available to residents 4 years old to seniors. There is also a wide variety of ability choices, from recreational participation through elite level competition, and opportunities for people with special needs.

For the past 25 years, field sport in Richmond has been operated through a partnership between the Richmond Sports Council (a coordinated voice of organized field sport groups) and the City of Richmond. Richmond Sports Council's member groups of dedicated volunteers recruit players coaches and officials, coordinate player registration and league scheduling, train players, coaches, officials and volunteers and organize activities, events and tournaments that bring out-of-town visitors to the community.

The City of Richmond builds and maintains fields, provides land on which fields are built and allocates the use of park and school playing fields. This partnership has kept the cost of providing field sport services to the community quite cost-efficient for the City and affordable to participants.

Participation in field sports in Richmond has undergone considerable changes over the past decade. Some historically popular sports such as youth baseball and football and adult fast pitch softball have experienced considerable decline in participation. Other sports such as girls soccer, ladies recreational soccer and masters age soccer and slow pitch softball have ballooned in popularity. Some newer sports such as ultimate Frisbee and field lacrosse are increasing in popularity and demanding access to an already overused supply of sports fields.

The changing ethnic make-up of the Lower Mainland is spurring growth in sports that are popular amongst some ethnic groups. Cricket, field hockey and kabaddi are growing in participation in neighbouring communities, and may soon be demanding field space in Richmond as well.

The fundamental challenge in field sport delivery in Richmond for the next decade and beyond will be: "How to meet the ever increasing demand for sports fields, so that everyone who wants to play, can play".



## 1.9 Mission for Outdoor Field Sport in Richmond

The mission for outdoor field sport in Richmond is to:

- Ensure public awareness of the City's outdoor sports facilities for all citizens
- Ensure access to the City's outdoor sports facilities for all citizens.
- Provide high quality sports surfaces for field sport user groups in the community.
- Encourage sport participation at all ages and abilities.
- Ensure policies are developed that promote and support field sport in Richmond.
- Ensure that every team will have a place to play games and practice.
- Encourage and facilitate innovative and cooperative partnerships for the delivery of outdoor sports programs in the community.
- Ensure field sport development in Richmond is integrated with the City's economic, tourism and official community plans.
- Recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of Richmond's athletes, coaches, officials, sports builders and corporate supporters.
- Encourage and facilitate field sport tourism in the community.
- Provide opportunities for community field sport groups to provide input into future field sport strategies, policies, procedures and budget priorities.

*Journalist Wendy Long reported on a True Sport-Philia dialogue which took place in Vancouver – “the groups recognized fun and play as core values for a True Sport community which also promotes a spectrum of activities that promote personal growth, health, participation, inclusion, aspirations of excellence and, ultimately, the betterment of society.” On the importance of creating True Sport communities: “Intrinsic in that creation is a bevy of related advantages such as increased economic benefit, environmental awareness, cooperation, building leadership, safety, citizenship, inclusion of marginalized groups and individuals, better health and quality of life”.*

## 2.0 Context of the Field Strategy

The focus of the Outdoor Sport Field Strategy is on outdoor field sports. A wide range of outdoor sports opportunities exist in Richmond. Outdoor Sports include activities involving physical exertion and skills that are governed by a set of rules or customs and often undertaken competitively, as an active pastime, or recreationally.