



# SPORT FIELD STRATEGY

Park Board Committee Meeting  
Monday, June 10, 2024



To present the “Sport Field Strategy”, a document to guide planning, management and maintenance decision-making for Vancouver’s sport fields over the next 10+ years, to the Board for decision.





# RECONCILIATION MISSION, VISION & VALUES

## MISSION

### Decolonize the Vancouver Park Board

The Park Board recognizes the institution's colonial history and upholds the Board's commitment to the 11 Reconciliation Strategies.

## VISION

An evolvable organization in which every employee and Commissioner recognizes the humanity in themselves by recognizing and respecting the humanity of First Peoples; and an organization that sets a worldwide example in treating Reconciliation as a decolonization process.

## VALUES

These values are your compass to help guide the way you work, interact with colleagues, external partners and the public.



### PATIENCE

Colonialism didn't happen overnight. Untangling it takes time. We will pace ourselves for the marathon, not the sprint. We will adjust deadlines to ensure things are done well and respectfully.



### CLARITY

We will focus on how colonialism functions to exclude, not on how to include.



### PRAGMATISM

All staff are inheriting a system not of our making. The Park Board Reconciliation Team (PBRT) is here to assist colleagues with examining the ways colonialism continues to damage others. Blame is unproductive.



### LEADERSHIP

We will nurture and sustain each other, demonstrating Indigenous principles in the way we function as a team.



### LEARNING

We consent to learn in public. We will make mistakes. We will sit with those mistakes, be transparent about them, and use them both to learn and to teach. Our mistakes will be diagnostic tools.

- Project Introduction
- Engagement Summary
- Strategy Outcomes
- Proposed Capital Plan Projects and Sequencing
- Next Steps and Recommendation

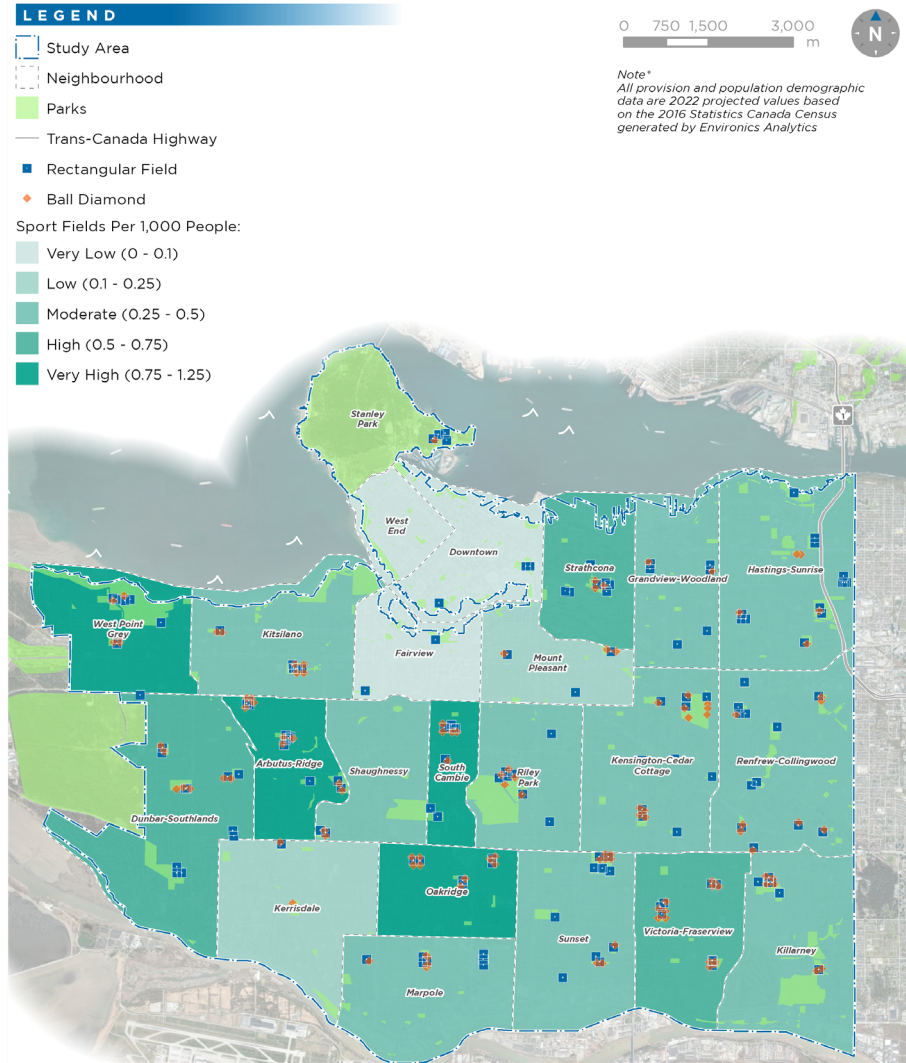


# Project Introduction



# Context and Background

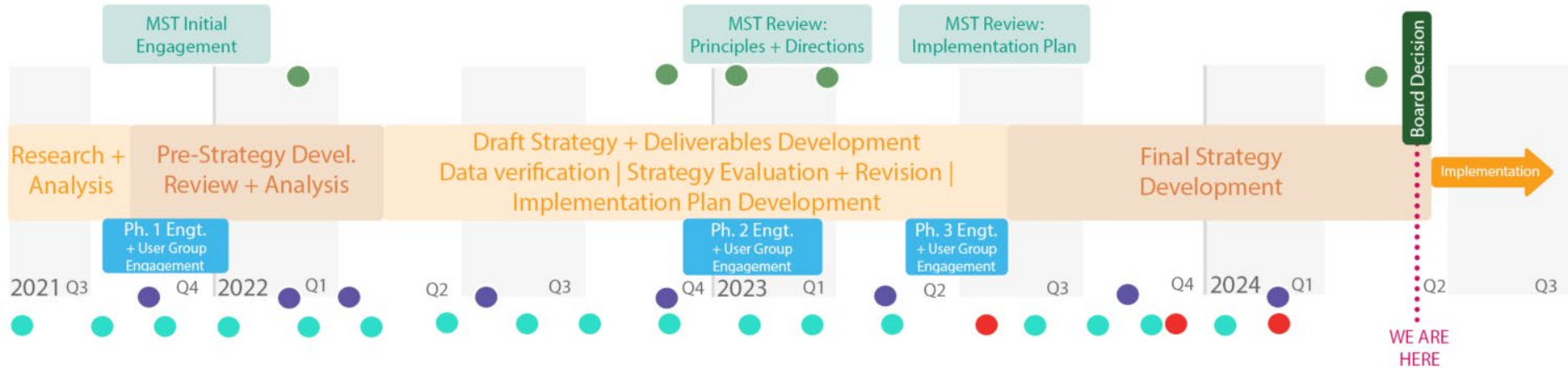
- 151 rectangular fields and 116 ball diamonds for a total of 267 sport fields.
- Located across 79 parks, approximately a third of the parks in the system.



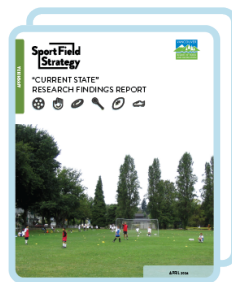
- The Strategy responds to direction from VanPlay
- Last city-wide review of sport fields (2002)
  - Similar challenges e.g. maintenance shortfalls, aging inventory, growing population
  - Resulted in 4 joint synthetic turf projects with VSB
- 3 Board motions around sport fields (2017 – 2019)



# Project Process Overview



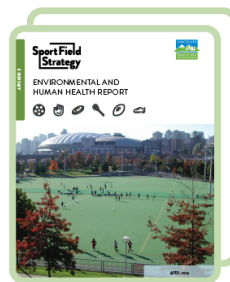




## **“CURRENT STATE” RESEARCH FINDINGS REPORT (APPENDIX A)**

This document contains the detailed analysis and research on:

- The current sport field inventory (types, condition, key attributes, level of service, etc.).
- Bookings data.
- Trends and leading practices.
- Benchmarking.
- Key spatial characteristics.



## **ENVIRONMENTAL AND HUMAN HEALTH REPORT (APPENDIX B)**

This document summarizes available research & considerations from the literature review conducted by subject matter experts on the project team.



## **“WHAT WE HEARD” REPORT 1, 2, AND 3 (APPENDICES C, D, AND E)**

These report documents contain findings from the three phases of project engagement.

- Phase 1 explored activities, perceived needs & gaps, key values, and important future considerations.
- Phase 2 reviewed draft Strategy guiding principles, directions, and site selection criteria.
- Phase 3 reviewed potential “Big Moves”.

- **Enough park land dedicated to sport fields** city-wide, **surfacing type** and classification **needs to be better aligned** with user needs.
- **Synthetic turf fields** do a significant amount of “**heavy lifting**”.
- **Usage could be better spread** across more natural turf rectangular fields and ball diamonds.
- Financial **recovery rates vary** across field classifications. E.g. Synthetic turf fields recover more than 100% of annual costs through revenues while Class A and B natural turf fields recover just 8-10%.
- **Fees** are **consistent with regional** providers but **lower than** other comparable sized **urban centres** in US and Canada.



# Engagement Summary



# Engagement Overview: 3 Phases of Engagement



**2,186** survey responses across three surveys *\*Translated into six languages*



**408** responses to quantitative survey - A statistically representative sampling of Vancouver residents



**10** “pop up” events in parks



**23** stakeholder and user group/permit holder discussion sessions with 38 participants.



**74** permit holder user groups engaged through a series of surveys and questionnaires fielded throughout the project process



**3** workshops/special meetings with the VFSF, in addition to regular project updates at bi-monthly meetings

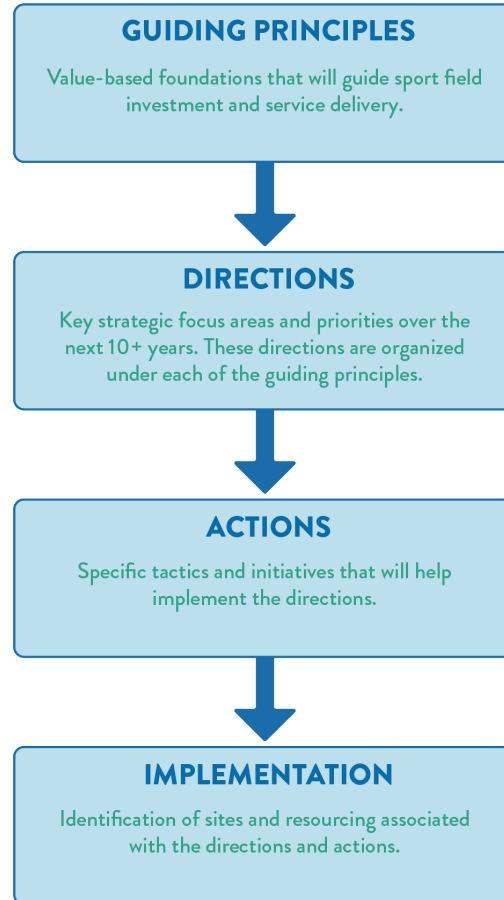


- **Amenity upgrades** e.g. more or better washrooms, change areas, seating areas, and **overall quality of the field surface** are a priority for residents and user groups.
- Most residents and approx. half of user groups indicated that **synthetic turf fields** should be prioritized for future investment. *Phase 2 introduced research findings on synthetic turf fields.*
- Residents value opportunities for **casual (“spontaneous”) play** and want quality sport field surfaces available for these activities **close to where they live** and also identified **need for "hub" facilities**.

- Phase 2 and 3: provided opportunities for review of key aspects of the Strategy.
- Phase 2 focused on higher level direction and approach, and phase 3 was more specific on type of projects, including sites.
- Key findings will be referenced in the next section of the presentation.

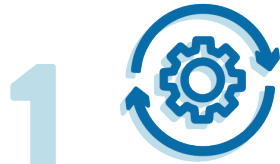


## Strategy Outcomes





## GUIDING PRINCIPLES



1

Optimally  
manage the  
sport field  
system.



2

Provide great  
sport field  
experiences for  
all.



3

Make the best  
value of capital  
and operating  
resources.



4

Leverage the  
broader benefits  
of sport fields.

Over 80% of survey respondents confirmed all the **draft guiding principles** are important.

## DIRECTIONS



1. Implement a renewed Sport Field Classification System.



2. Seek opportunities to apply a revenue generating lens.



3. Implement an equity model for allocation, booking, and permitting of fields.



4. Facilitate spontaneous use of select rectangular sport fields and ball diamonds for residents.



5. Focus available capital resources on field quality and adding functional capacity.



6. Work with local First Nations and the urban Indigenous population to increase the ways in which the sport field inventory reflects Indigenous culture and sport needs.



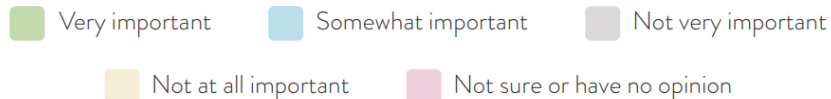
7. Enhance collaboration with key local and regional partners in the planning, delivery, joint use and maintenance of sport fields.



8. Continue to leverage opportunities from sport hosting.

# Eight Directions – Level of Support

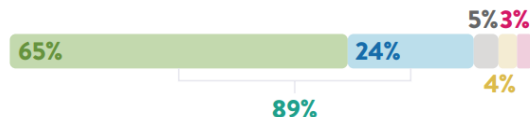
## HOW IMPORTANT IS IT TO ACHIEVE EACH STRATEGY DIRECTION?



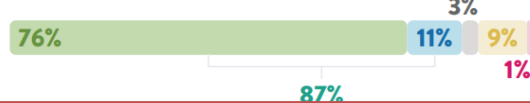
Direction 5: Focus available capital resources on field quality and adding functional capacity.



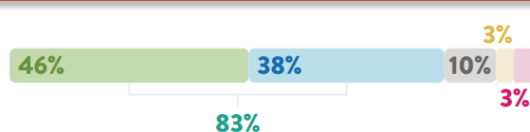
Direction 3: Implement an equity model for allocation, booking, and permitting of fields.



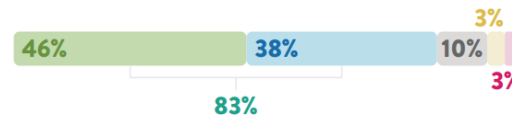
Direction 6: Renew and increase supply of synthetic turf.



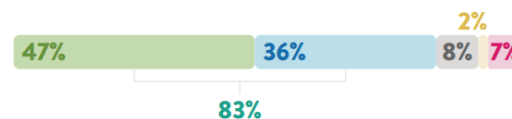
Direction 8: Enhance collaboration with key local and regional partners in the planning, delivery and maintenance of sports fields.



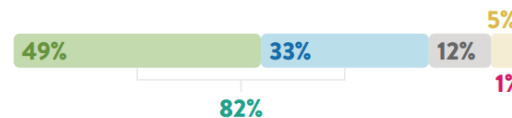
Direction 8: Enhance collaboration with key local and regional partners in the planning, delivery and maintenance of sports fields.



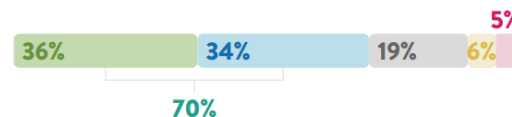
Direction 1: Implement a renewed sport field classification system.



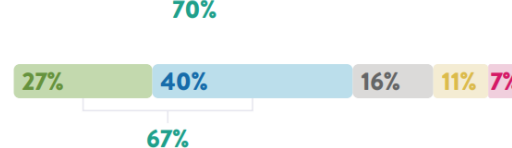
Direction 4: Facilitate spontaneous use of sports fields and ball diamonds for residents.



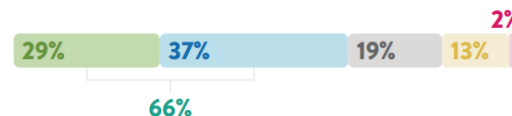
Direction 9: Continue to leverage sport hosting opportunities.



Direction 7: Work with local Nations and the urban Indigenous population to increase the ways in which the sport field inventory reflects Indigenous culture and sports.



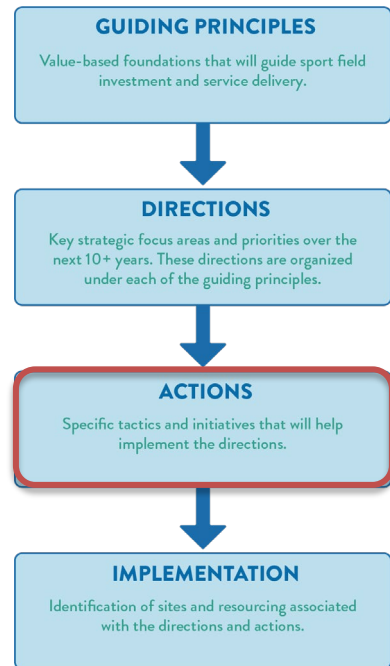
Direction 2: Seek opportunities to apply a revenue generating strategy lens.



All draft directions and actions were supported by at least two-thirds of respondents.

Note: this slide includes 9 draft directions, which were reduced to 8 following phase 2 engagement (6 was absorbed into 5)

- E.g. Introduces renewed **field classification system**, recommends development of **equity model for field allocations** and creation of sport **renewal reserve fund**.
- Implementation plan provides **roadmap** for these actions, including resource requirements, and outlines:
  - need for **rights holder engagement** with Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, and **engagement** with the urban Indigenous population throughout Strategy implementation
  - opportunities for **partnerships**, including VSB and VFSF

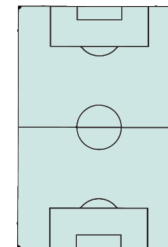




- 2019: staff were directed to **review scientific findings** related to **synthetic turf fields**. This resulted in a **pause** on new fields and renewal delivery.
- Review concludes that **both synthetic turf and natural grass turf surfaces are safe for sport use**.
- Community engagement supports** continued use to meet year-round community sport needs.
- Synthetic turf fields can accommodate **~4X** Class A field usage. This can free up scarce, valuable park space for other park uses and **reduces need to purchase land to expand sport field system**.

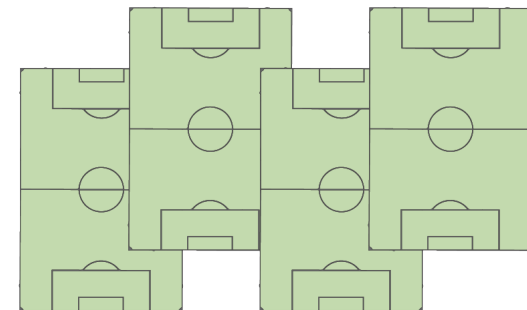
**1 SYNTHETIC TURF = 4+ NATURAL TURF FIELDS  
IN BOOKABLE HOURS OF PLAY**

Synthetic Turf



**1 = 4**

Natural Turf



- Strategy recommends new allocation and management policy development as a short-term action
- **An allocation policy:**
  - ...is a comprehensive, transparent, contemporary, fair and equitable guide, which embodies best practices (e.g. Canadian Sport for Life, Safe Sport) and related trends and changes in sports with a goal to optimize facility utilization.
  - ...provides expectations and frameworks for seasonal and tournament management, for conflict and dispute resolution and for fiscally responsible facility operations and administration
  - ...provides clarity and ensures adherence to the obligations and commitments necessary from both the Park Board and its user groups/permit holders.

- What are the benefits?
  - Provides optimal practice and game time for each sport based on their registration numbers applied to a mutually agreed upon standard of play
  - Optimizes facility use
  - Facilitates access to sport spaces for new and emerging sports so they can establish and grow their programs
  - Clarifies how special event, regular play and unstructured use are balanced and prioritized

*Ensures that the right users are being aligned with the right fields at the right times.*



# Proposed Capital Plan Projects and Sequencing



## 5 “Big Moves” - Proposed Capital Project Types

1. Renew existing synthetic turf fields
2. Convert select all weather (gravel) fields to synthetic turf fields
3. Create hub sites
4. Establish dedicated ball diamond and rectangular field parks
5. Establish sport-specific priority fields



## 5 “Big Moves” - Proposed Capital Project Types

“Big Move”	Support	Oppose	
1. Renew existing synthetic turf fields	87%	11%	Highly supported
2. Convert select all weather (gravel) fields to synthetic turf fields	86%	12%	Highly supported
3. Create hub sites	84%	11%	Highly supported
4. Establish dedicated ball diamond and rectangular field parks	58%	29%	Lower support: <i>deferred until after allocation work, engagement at that time</i>
5. Establish sport-specific priority fields	35% - 66%	25% - 39%	Lower support: <i>subject to additional discussion with VFSF, sport by sport consideration</i> 26

- **Overall screen criteria: site test fit**
- **Site Specific:**
  - Pre-development condition
  - Existing complementary infrastructure
  - Impacts on existing uses and programs
  - Transportation access
  - Utilization context
- **System Wide:**
  - Supported by planning and policy
  - Geographic distribution and gaps
  - Equity gaps and considerations

Most respondents were supportive of all **draft site selection criteria**.  
*Utilization context was added after engagement.*

- The site selection criteria have been used to help analyze and prioritize the “big move” sites.
- They should be used as criteria for testing and recommending sites for major and minor capital projects including locations for partnerships, unsolicited proposals and donations.



# Proposed Capital Projects Sequencing - Context

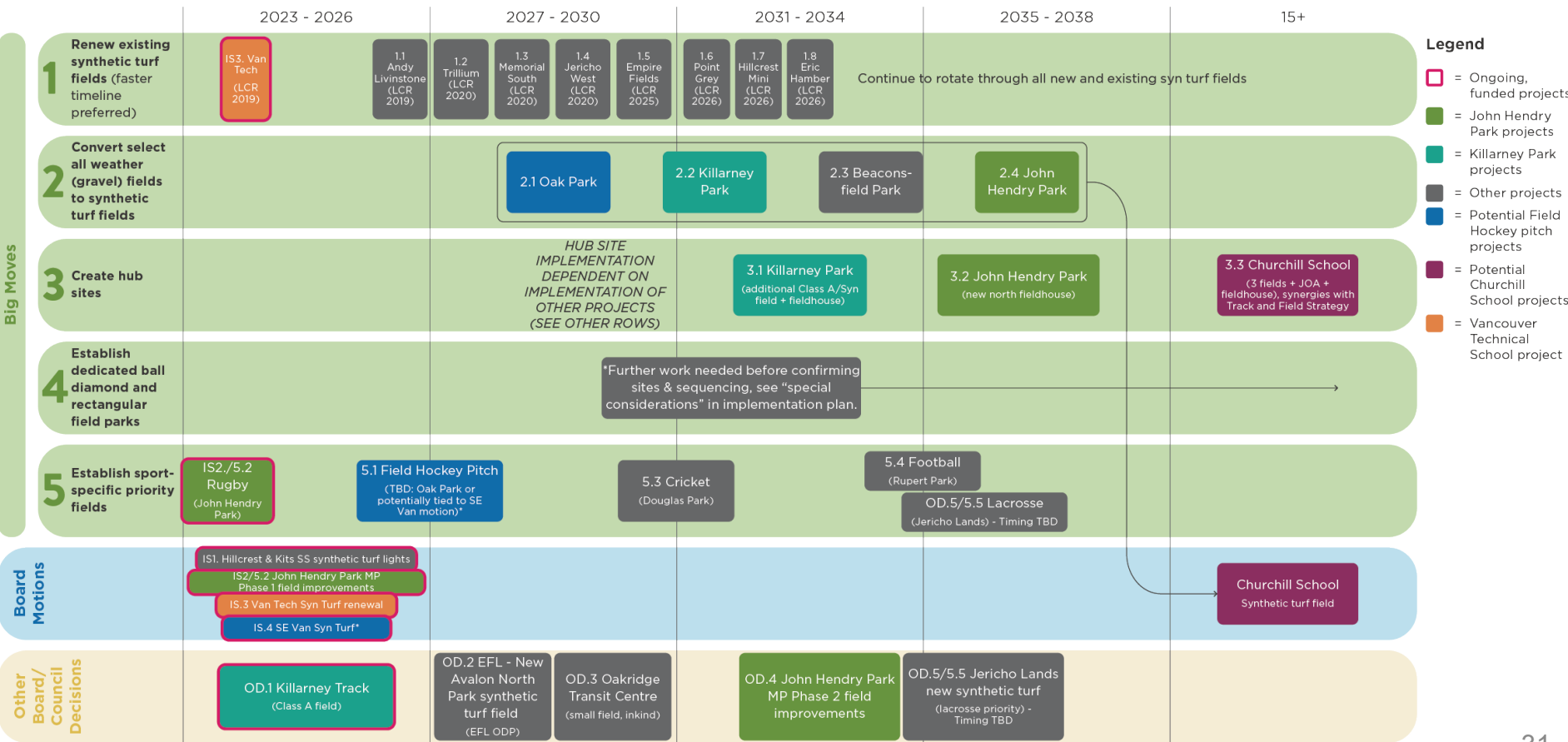
- Inclusion in the SFS **does not guarantee funding**. **Renewal funds** (greatest funding type need) **are scarce**.
- Projects will be considered in **future Capital Plan processes** with projects from different City service areas.
- Last 3 capital plans allocated ~\$36M for natural + synthetic sport fields and track and field (\$17.5M in 2023-26), typically included **funding for 1-2 major projects**.
- 2027-2030 Capital Plan: SFS identifies need to request funding for 4 synthetic turf field site renewals (target one site/year going forward).
- SFS references ongoing, instream sport field projects, outside SFS, and recognizes there is **no unallocated funding** for sport field projects within 2023-2026 Capital Plan. Track and fields, field lights, natural surface field renewals, and replacement of synthetic turf at Van Tech are all funded and in-progress.



- Strategy recommends consideration of **alternative funding mechanisms** e.g.
  - creation of a sport field **renewal reserve** (Action 2.C) and
  - fundraising initiatives and partnerships, including via unsolicited proposals process (Action 8.C) or Think Big Plan opportunities.
- The implementation of capital projects is presented as a **sequencing plan**, recognizing funding levels are unknown and not guaranteed.
- Projects recommended for consideration up to 2034 in capital planning processes or for partnership opportunities highlight the need for **\$64-\$83M**.



# Proposed Capital Projects Sequencing Plan



- Legend**
- = Ongoing, funded projects
  - = John Hendry Park projects
  - = Killarney Park projects
  - = Other projects
  - = Potential Field Hockey pitch projects
  - = Potential Churchill School projects
  - = Vancouver Technical School project

note: "ongoing" projects, and OD.3 have confirmed funding sources. All others are contingent on future capital planning. This diagram is intended to highlight sequencing and inter-relationships.  
 \* SE Van Syn Turf is an active board motion, outside of the SFS, details pending



# Proposed Distribution and Sequencing of Sport Field Capital Projects

## Sequencing Plan:

- ▲ Instream (IS) - Ongoing
- Instream (IS) - Long Term Renewal
- Other Decisions (OD) - Ongoing
- Other Decisions (OD) - Medium Term
- Other Decisions (OD) - Short Term
- ✳ Big Moves (#) - Short Term
- ✳ Big Moves (#) - Medium Term
- ✳ Big Moves (#) - Long Term
- ✳ Big Moves (#) - Timing TBD (External)

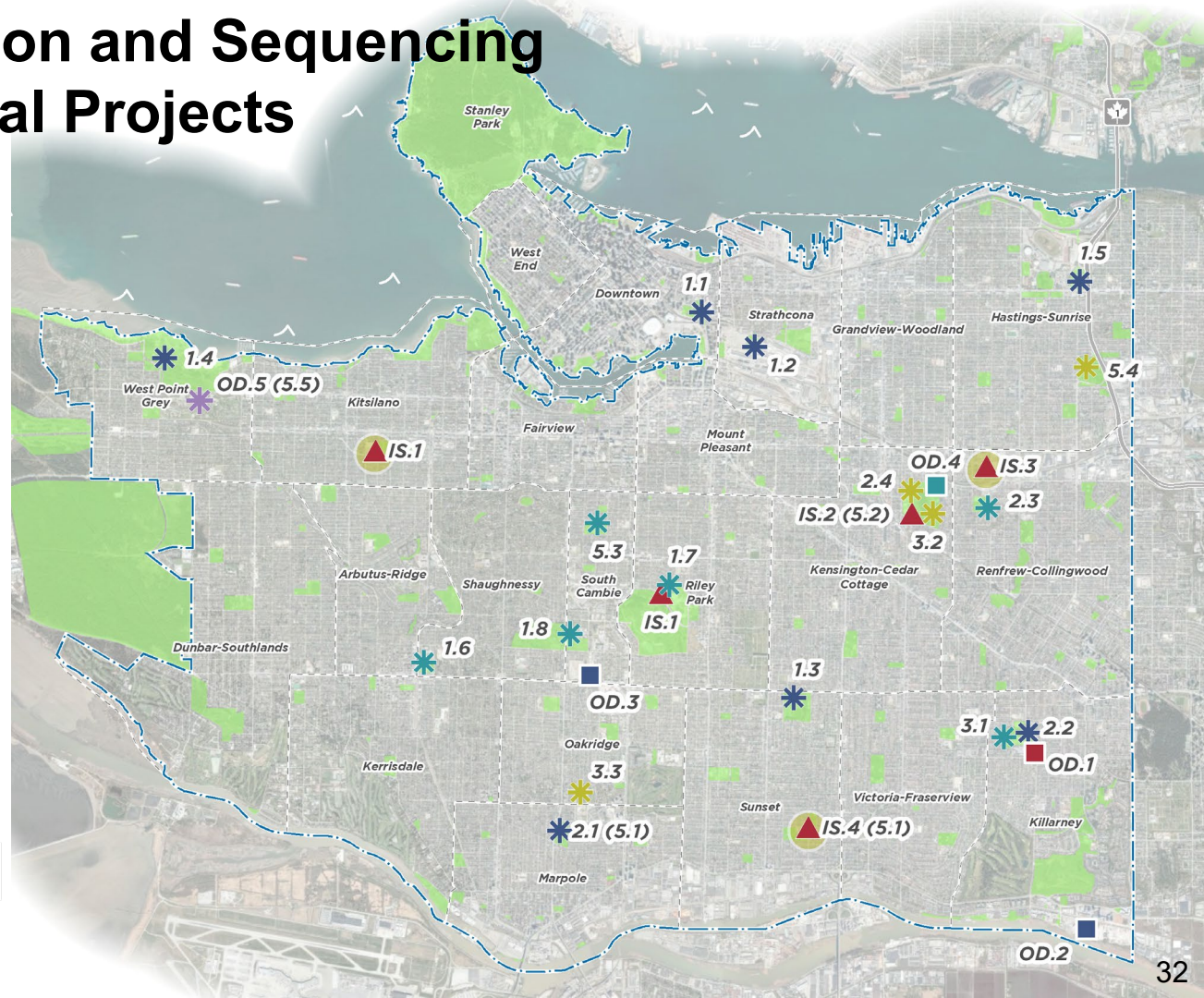
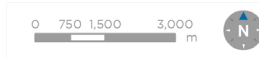
### #1.x Renew existing synthetic turf fields

### #2.x Convert select all weather (gravel) fields to synthetic turf fields

### #3.x Create hub sites

### #5.x Establish sport specific priority fields

*Note: Locations for Big Move #4 are not shown. These will be determined following the implementation of the proposed new allocation framework (see special considerations for more information).*





- Historically, ongoing maintenance and minor upgrades of Vancouver's sport field system have been **under-funded**.
- Current capital plan is providing **one time funding** to address minor upgrades; however, additional ongoing operating funding is required, and the Strategy identifies the **need for sustainable annual funding**.
- To support the Strategy as outlined and to meet industry standards, Park Operations requires a total annual budget of \$3.6M, to address the current **annual shortfall of \$1.8M**.
- As identified in the implementation plan, **staff resourcing**, at a minimum, is required to implement the 41 operational and administrative actions. Where they will have staffing implications or incremental budget request implications, these **will be quantified through budget processes** closer to the time of implementation.



## Next Steps and Recommendation

- Pending Board decision, staff will conduct a Council briefing, for information and to inform future funding requests from the Strategy.
- Pending Board decision, staff will integrate the Strategy's implementation plan into upcoming discussions related to operating budgets and capital planning processes.
- Staff will report back to the Board prior to making any substantive changes to current operating policies suggested in this Strategy.
- Where current resourcing allows, staff will initiate work on the implementation plan's short term actions.



- THAT the Vancouver Park Board approve the “Sport Field Strategy”, as outlined in this report and attached within Appendix A, to guide the planning, management, maintenance and operational decision making for Vancouver’s sport fields over the next 10+ years.
- THAT the Vancouver Park Board direct staff to report back to the Board through the four-year Capital Plan and Annual Capital and Operating Budget processes to confirm specific project priorities and investments.
- THAT staff be directed to report back to the Board prior to making any substantive changes to current operating policies as suggested by this Strategy.
- THAT the Vancouver Park Board direct staff to provide a briefing to City Council, for information, per recommendations within the City’s Office of the Auditor General’s report of November 27, 2023.
- THAT the Vancouver Park Board consider past Board motions dated 2021 or prior regarding sport fields superseded, by virtue of approval of this report and attached Appendix A.



