

DATE OF MEETING MARCH 17, 2021

AUTHORED BY RICHARD HARDING, GENERAL MANAGER
PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE

**SUBJECT PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF A MEDIUM-SIZED STADIUM AT
NDSS COMMUNITY FIELD**

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To obtain approval from Council regarding a phased implementation plan for the development of a medium-sized stadium at the NDSS Community Field.

Recommendation

That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council approve:

1. The NDSS Community Field be designated as the medium-sized stadium site for the City of Nanaimo;
2. That a phased implementation plan with options and costing be developed for Council's review and consideration in making NDSS Community Field a medium-sized stadium;
3. That in development of the phased improvement plan, that shared amenities that would benefit Rotary Bowl and Serauxmen Stadium be included; and,
4. That the current Joint Use Agreement with School District #68 be updated to address any changes required of this location being a medium-sized stadium.

BACKGROUND

The need to confirm or focus resources and amenities to one stadium that can host a variety of medium-sized sporting events (such as Junior and High school football, soccer, field lacrosse, rugby and other sports and community events) continues to be a desire and need in the community.

At the Special Meeting held 2020-JUL-27, Council received a report and presentation regarding options for the development of a stadium. At that meeting, Council passed the following motion:

"That Council:

- 1. Receive the draft Stadium Development Report and make available for review and comment by the community; and,*
- 2. Direct Staff to work with Nanaimo Ladysmith School District No. 68 and local sport and stadium user groups on the concept of making Nanaimo District Secondary School (NDSS) Community Field the medium sized Stadium for improvement and use and report back."*

The report recommended that the community, at this point in time and given current demand, focus on a medium sized stadium (3,000-8,000 seats).

DISCUSSION

As per Council's direction, Staff met with SD68 Staff as well as presented the Stadium Concept to SD68 Board of Education on 2020-SEP-02. At that meeting, the Board passed the following motion:

"That the Board of Education of School District No. 68 (Nanaimo-Ladysmith) direct staff to work with the City of Nanaimo on the draft concept of making NDSS Community Field a medium sized stadium as per the draft City of Nanaimo Stadium Report."

Throughout the summer and fall of 2020, Staff provided a number of sessions with user groups and stakeholders on the subject and also included it as part of the REIMAGINE Nanaimo engagement workshops. In addition to NDSS Community Field being the medium sized stadium location, considerable discussion was also had with user groups and stakeholders on how this facility can link with the Rotary Bowl and Serauxmen Stadium and how joint developed amenities can be developed. The following user groups were consulted:

- Nanaimo United Football Club
- 7-Aside Soccer
- Nanaimo Raiders Field Lacrosse
- Southside Minor Football Association
- Nanaimo NightOwls
- Nanaimo Ultimate Association
- Nanaimo Women's Field Hockey
- Nanaimo Minor Baseball Association
- Merriman Soccer Academy and Pacific Coast League
- Nanaimo Track and Field Club
- Nanaimo Sports and Social Club
- McGirr Sports Society
- Vancouver Island University, Athletics Department
- Vancouver Island Raiders Football

Broad support was also evident from the community via the REIMAGINE Nanaimo Phase One engagement regarding the need for improved recreation venues and gathering areas for events.

The Vancouver Island Raiders Football team have been using Caledonia Park as their home venue and have been requesting improvements to the site for many years. If stadium development is approved for the NDSS Community Field, the team would be supportive of moving their home venue (Attachment A).

Based on the review, Staff recommend that NDSS Community Field be designated as the medium sized stadium site as presented in the Stadium Report (Attachment B). All feedback received from SD68, user groups, and the general community was positive and supportive of that location.

Excerpt from the Stadium Report regarding medium sized stadiums:

“A medium-sized stadium is defined as a stadium that seats between 3,000 to 12,000 spectators. This type of stadium can host larger events from small concerts to the RCMP Musical Ride show. They can also host small international events like the Pan-American Junior Championships or the World Field Lacrosse Championships. There is an important difference between a small-sized stadium and a medium-sized stadium that relates to the seating numbers. A medium sized stadium has a large enough number of seats that the focus of the stadium shifts from the field and the player amenities to spectator services and amenities. Parking, food services, washrooms, ticketing, garbage collection and back-of-house operations (television trucks, delivery trucks, event fit-out storage, etc.) take up the vast majority of the operations staff's time than what they spend on the field and players' change rooms. The relationship between how much area the field and field amenities occupy to how much area the seats and spectator services occupy changes as well. The size of the site that a medium sized stadium requires increases significantly from that of a small stadium due to these requirements for spectator services. An example of a medium sized stadium is the 5,000 seat Swangard Stadium in Burnaby.”

To make this a reality, a detailed implementation plan should be developed that provides options, costing, and a phased approach that meets short-term as well as long-term needs for the community.

Shared Amenities in Larry McNabb Sports Zone

The plan should also include development of shared amenities with Rotary Bowl and Serauxmen Stadium to complement events as well as maximizing cost saving advantages with all three venues. Shared amenities could include ticketing, change rooms, washrooms, food services area, parking, security, etc.

Interim requirements:

Although currently in COVID restrictions, a few teams and user groups are still hopeful to have a season or partial season this year (VI Raiders, Nanaimo NightOwls, High School football, etc.). One of the main restrictions of use of NDSS Community Field and Serauxmen Stadium is the lack of seating. To meet this need, Staff will come back prior to summer of this year with options to increase seating capacity at both venues. In addition to seating, some interim work will also need to be done and will be included in this report to facilitate VI Raiders for example to move to this venue.

OPTIONS

1. That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council approve:
 1. The NDSS Community Field be designated as the medium-sized stadium site for the City of Nanaimo;
 2. That a phased implementation plan with options and costing be developed for Council's review and consideration in making NDSS Community Field a medium-sized stadium;

3. That in development of the phased improvement plan, that shared amenities that would benefit Rotary Bowl and Serauxmen Stadium be included; and,
 4. That the current Joint Use Agreement with School District #68 be updated to address any changes required of this location being a medium-sized stadium.
- The advantages of this option: Consolidates the need for a stadium venue for the community of Nanaimo. Utilizes existing infrastructure to maximize benefits to NDSS Community Field, Serauxmen Stadium, and the Rotary Bowl. This venue is centrally located, near major roads, and will form part of the Larry McNabb Sports Zone.
 - The disadvantages of this option: Will require a long-term funding commitment to develop the site through a phased implementation plan.
 - Financial Implications: By designating this as the medium sized stadium, a phased implementation plan will need to be developed that includes costing.
2. That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council not designate NDSS as the stadium site.
- The advantages of this option: Existing venues will continue to function for lower level games and small events.
 - The disadvantages of this option: Does not provide the community with a stadium venue that is needed for a community of this size.
 - Financial Implications: By not working to consolidate to one venue, there will be requests and requirements by sport groups to improve other venues to meet standards and needs (i.e. Caledonia Stadium).
3. That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council direct Staff to look at further options.
- The advantages of this option: Allows for further review and long-range planning.
 - The disadvantages of this option: Stadium development for the community of Nanaimo will be further delayed.
 - Financial Implications: None at this time but may include feasibility work and costs for other locations. |

SUMMARY POINTS

- Following the meeting held on 2020-JUL-27, Staff have met with SD68 staff and Board, user groups and members of the general community. All groups have been supportive in designating NDSS Community Field as the stadium location.
- The medium size stadium would have the appropriate amenities for meeting the needs of several levels of athletics and community events.
- As it is in the Larry McNabb Sports Zone, NDSS Community Field is in a good location and has many of the infrastructure pieces already in place as well as opportunity to improve amenities that would complement other venues as well.

ATTACHMENTS:

ATTACHMENT A: Letter of Support – VI Raiders Football

ATTACHMENT B: Link to Stadium Report, authored by Doug Wournell, Architect AIBC, AIKS |

Submitted by:

Richard Harding
General Manager
Parks, Recreation and Culture |