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**SUBJECT STADIUM DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND POTENTIAL
INTERIM IMPROVEMENTS**

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To introduce potential interim (2021 and 2022) improvement options to Council for the City of Nanaimo's medium sized stadium site.

Recommendation

That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council include the Stadium District improvement projects in 2021 and 2022 of the 2021 – 2025 Financial Plan.

BACKGROUND

At the Finance and Audit Committee meeting held 2021-MAR-17, a report was presented regarding the development of a medium sized stadium site at the Nanaimo District Secondary School (NDSS) Community Field. At that meeting, Council passed a motion 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 Serausmen 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 motion was approved by Council at their Regular Meeting held 2021-MAR-29.

The report presented on 2021-MAR-17 (Attachment A) included mention of the need for interim requirements to assist several groups in partial sport seasons through the fall of 2021 and into early 2022 (dependent on COVID restrictions). These interim requirements include:

- Safety requirements
- Increased seating capacity
- Plaza development
- Perimeter fencing
- Future conceptual designs

- Temporary washrooms and change rooms
- Shared Amenities in the Stadium District between the three venues
- Shared amenities could include ticketing, change rooms, washrooms, food services area, parking, security, etc.

Following the interim improvements, a phased implementation plan will be presented with conceptual designs taking place in 2022. |

DISCUSSION

To achieve a high functioning stadium precinct that meets the sport and cultural activities and spectator needs for the City of Nanaimo, a number of projects need to be completed. Interim improvements will allow for functionality with an end result that will be an excellent and high utility facility that will provide for the current and future needs of both the athletes and the spectators.

All improvements to the site improve all three venues for hosting high level competitions and events at provincial, national, and international levels. Hosting these events will be an economic driver for Nanaimo and advance sports tourism in the community. Nanaimo has great sports facilities but have limited ability to host the larger, higher profiled events. Investment in the Stadium District will allow the community to emerge from the pandemic with a vibrant outdoor recreation space. It is anticipated that outdoor sports and activities, including programming and competitions, will be return faster than other sports. Infrastructure upgrades could be designed with the new protocols in mind, such as participant traffic flow and social distancing. Additionally, upgrades will incorporate inclusive and accessible design to accommodate diverse user groups.

The priorities of the proposed projects are based on the following:

- **Safety:** Ensuring that the stadium precinct is safe by providing for:
 - Safety netting to prevent errant balls from hitting people;
 - Security for people arriving and departing events by providing lit access corridors and site security fencing.
- **Functionality:** Ensuring that athletes and spectators are not limited in their use of the facility due to the lack of amenities by providing for:
 - Sufficient number of seats to meet the needs of the events to be held at the facility (phased installation to minimum of 1,200 to meet the requirements of events such as BC, Western Canada, and Canada Summer Games);
 - Change rooms for athletes and officials;
 - Event office for use during events;
 - First Aid Room to attend to injured athletes or spectators;
 - Storage areas for equipment and event equipment;
 - Media / Press and coaching booth
 - Washrooms for spectators
 - Food services for spectators (through food truck areas)
 - Roof over seating at NDSS Community Field (both Serauxmen and Rotary Bowl seating areas are covered);
- **Enhancement of public spaces:** Ensuring that the spaces created add to the enjoyment of the stadium precinct by providing for:
 - Landscaping of spaces such as at the entry point to the precinct from the parking lot and the central stadium plaza;
 - Additional public spaces for playgrounds and outdoor basketball courts;

- Wayfinding signage throughout the stadium precinct to allow patrons to orient themselves onsite and find their way around;
- **Phasing Practicalities:** Some phases must be completed before others, such as:
 - Safety must be ensured with netting installation before increased use of the stadium precinct can be provided;
 - When community football moves its operations over to the NDSS, seating for events must be provided;
 - Parking access walkways must be provided before seating can be installed.

Below are projects that will, through a phased development, start to complete the priorities noted above that will result in a high activity sport and social facility that will well serve the needs of the City's sporting and cultural communities.

The following options could be considered for additions to the 2021-2025 Financial Plan to support the development of this stadium site, beginning in 2021:

1. Conceptual Design: \$50,000
 - a. Continued development of the concepts in collaboration with all of the community stakeholders will be crucial to establish a realistic phased approach to the improvements required at this site to realize Nanaimo's first stadium site.
2. Safety Netting along Serauxmen Stadium: \$650,000.
 - a. The stadium development site consists of three sporting venues and will include common plaza areas. It has the ability to have multiple events happening at once. A required safety feature to ensure that all of the fields and public spaces are able to safely operate at once, is the addition of safety netting along the top of the backstop and along the right foul line (1st base). This would prevent foul balls from entering the proposed plaza area directly behind the stadium, but also the centralized plaza and entrance that is envisioned for this stadium. Foul balls would also be stopped from making their way to the track and field area or the artificial turf field (Attachment B).
3. Bleacher Seating: \$650,000
 - a. Seating is key for the public's enjoyment of the events that will be held at the various venues of the stadium. The intent, over time, is to expand the seating capacity throughout this site, but initial focus will be at the NDSS Community Field and the Serauxmen Stadium. There are grandstands at the Rotary Bowl that provide ample seating at this time.
4. Perimeter Fencing: \$150,000.
 - a. In order to be able to hold ticketed events, a continuous perimeter fence and centralized accesses and exits must be established in various areas of this site. Some areas are already fenced and this additional fencing would complement existing. This work could be added to the contractor that will be doing the outfield fencing at Serauxmen Stadium this year as it was priced as a provisional item in the most recent tender and would provide the best value for dollar (Attachment C).

5. Plaza Development: \$350,000.
 - a. A centralized plaza and entrance area between the three venues adds to the social aspects of events that will be held at these locations. The current central area needs to be redesigned and some civil works need to occur to support the concept of this as the medium stadium site (Attachment D).
 - b. This development would include pathway lighting and a retaining wall to maximize plaza space. Infrastructure would be put into place to accommodate current and future amenities including an area for food trucks.

6. Press / Media and Coaching Booth: \$150,000
 - a. In order to host provincial and national events it is essential that a media and coaching booth be constructed. This booth would have the ability to conduct live streaming for events, game and practice filming, and would also be where the scoreboard for NDSS Community Field would be operated from. Constructing the booth adjacent to the track and field booth at the top of the north grandstand of Rotary Bowl will save significantly on construction costs and place the booth at an ideal height and virtually on centre field.

7. Temporary washrooms and change rooms: \$500,000.
 - a. A permanent facility design will be developed through the conceptual phase. In the interim, temporary washrooms and change rooms would assist all three venues in hosting events throughout development. While the improvement plan is being developed, the increased use and capacity of this combined venue requires additional washrooms for the public and change rooms for the athletes. The funding would allow for the purchase or rental of the temporary amenities.

DEVELOPMENT OF PHASED IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Staff are in the process of meeting with School District #68 and community stakeholders to ensure that changes at the site accommodate the many different users of the three facilities as well as accommodating the needs of the students and staff of NDSS. These same groups were included in the Phase 1 of REIMAGINE Nanaimo and the stadium development was an element of those discussions. All project elements listed above have received positive feedback through both processes and will be integrated with conceptual plans.

A detailed Implementation Plan for the Stadium District is being developed that will include other amenities, including:

- Permanent stadium building at centralized location with washrooms, change rooms, officials rooms, first aid room, etc.;
- Paving of parking lot off Third Street to maximize available parking;
- Roof for seating to protect spectators from weather elements;
- Development of family picnic zones, beer gardens, food truck zones and event set up space. .|

OPTIONS

1. That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council approve include the Stadium District improvement projects in 2021 and 2022 of the 2021 – 2025 Financial Plan.
 - The advantages of this option: Will move the project timelines forward for development of the medium size stadium allowing for teams to carry out modified seasons for 2021 and 2022.
 - The disadvantages of this option: None at this time.
 - Financial Implications: The 2021 – 2025 Financial Plan will be amended to include these projects. Funding sources would be Special Initiatives Reserve (\$550,000) and the Community Works Fund (\$1,950,000).

2. That the Finance and Audit Committee provide alternative direction.

SUMMARY POINTS

- In March 2021, Council supported moving forward with the development of a medium sized stadium at NDSS Community Field.
- The development of a stadium that unites the Field, the Rotary Bowl and Serausmen Stadium would be implemented through a phased development plan.
- Interim improvements in 2021 would allow groups like the VI Raiders and the NightOwls to move forward with partial seasons in 2021 and hopefully full seasons in 2022.
- Options for interim improvements include Concept Plan funding, Safety Netting along Serausmen Stadium; Perimeter Fencing, Plaza Development, bleacher seating and temporary washrooms and change rooms.

ATTACHMENTS:

- ATTACHMENT A: Link to report presented on 2021-MAR-17
ATTACHMENT B: Proposed safety netting along Serausmen Stadium
ATTACHMENT C: Overall Site Views for fencing considerations
ATTACHMENT D: Conceptual design of central plaza area
ATTACHMENT E: Link to City of Nanaimo Stadium Report

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