

MEMO

January 31, 2018

Vancouver City Council
Standing Committee on City Finance and Services

RE: Northeast False Creek Plan (“NEFC Plan”) and Viaducts Replacement Project

Transcript of Prepared Remarks

Good morning, Councillors,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Craig Woods, and I am President of the Vancouver Field Sports Federation.

The Field Sports Federation is a volunteer organization that represents over 40,000 adults and youth who play field sports in Vancouver. Field sports include soccer, softball, ultimate, rugby, field hockey, and many others.

We act as a liaison between these sport groups and the Park Board for field development, usage policies, and ongoing maintenance. We gather needs and ideas from field users and package them into recommendations for the Park Board, and we help the Park Board resolve problems and distribute important information related to fields. Collectively, our members contribute approximately \$1M on an annual basis to the Park Board through user fees, and some groups have also contributed significant funding towards capital projects over the past few decades.

I’m here to speak in general support of the NEFC Plan as it stands, and specifically the Plan’s stated goal to retain two artificial turf fields in Andy Livingstone Park.

Participation in physical activity and organized sport provides many physical, mental, social *and* economic benefits to individuals and communities. To realize these benefits, it's essential to have sufficient quality facilities. There continues to be unmet demand for sport fields in Vancouver – both natural grass and artificial turf. Artificial turf is especially important:

- it supports 5 times the usage of a grass field;
- it enables children to stop playing on rough gravel fields;
- the lights enable adults to be active in the evening in Fall and Winter; and
- artificial turf can be used in all kinds of weather, an essential quality in our rainy city.

The two fields at Andy Livingstone are especially important:

- two fields and the proximity to Trillium Park are very desirable for events, an important factor in supporting Vancouver’s Sport Hosting goals;
- finding another two-field site in Vancouver would be next to impossible;
- the proximity to downtown – and the increasing density in that area – enable more people to be active near to where they live and work, rather than having to commute to outlying areas.

One element is missing from the Plan. It doesn't include a clear recognition of the value of organized sport for healthy communities. There are many amazing design principles and goals in the Plan, but a clear recognition of the value of sport appears to be missing. In particular, there is no reference to the Vancouver Sport Strategy that was approved by City Council in 2008. That Strategy provides a roadmap for sport for all Vancouver residents, focusing on the concept of *Sport for Life*.

Field Sport Federation representatives have been participating in the Park Design Advisory Group, and we will raise that Strategy with them. With that Group we appreciate the opportunity to work with other stakeholders on improvements to the Park, including the Chinatown community and multiple First Nations, among others, and we will continue to do.

In closing, Vancouver has a strong history of supporting organized sport activity, from young kids learning to play for the first time, to adults working hard to stay healthy, all the way to major events like the 2010 Olympics, Canada Rugby Sevens, and the upcoming World Cup bid. On behalf of the Field Sport Federation, I want to thank the Council and Park Board for your support of sport in Vancouver. Maintaining the two unique playing fields in Andy Livingstone Park will be an important investment in the health and well-being of individuals, families and our wider community.

Thank you for your time.

Craig Woods
president@vfsf.ca
604-649-7533