

District of Saanich

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# Outdoor Sports Field Strategy

Round 2

What We Heard Report

Prepared for:



Prepared by:

LEFS  
ASSOCIATES

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Outdoor Sports Field Strategy  
Round 2 Engagement Summary

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

The District of Saanich is developing an Outdoor Sports Field Strategy to guide the future development and management of sports fields and lacrosse boxes in Saanich. The planning process includes a current inventory of Saanich’s supply of rectangular playing fields, ball diamonds, and lacrosse boxes, a review of the District’s current management practices and allocation policy, and engagement with sports fields and lacrosse box user groups, staff from other Capital Regional District (CRD) municipalities, and school representatives. This “What We Heard” Report summarizes the feedback received during the second round of engagement completed in October and November 2025 (see the overall planning process in Figure 1).

The purpose of the second round of engagement was to collect feedback on the Draft Saanich Outdoor Sports Field Strategy. These engagement results will help to guide the refinement of the vision, guiding principles, recommendations, and implementation plan of the Final Strategy.



Figure 1: Outdoor Sports Field Strategy Process

## 1.1 OUTREACH AND PARTICIPATION

Opportunities to participate in Round 2 engagement activities were advertised on the project's web page in the two weeks before and during the engagement activities. User groups were contacted directly via email. Information about the project, including links to the Draft Strategy and online questionnaire, was made available to the public via a page on Saanich's website.

## 1.2 ENGAGEMENT TOOLS

The second round of engagement activities included an online community open house and an online questionnaire. The details of these activities are described below, and the results are summarized in this report.

### 1.2.1 SPORTS ORGANIZATION OPEN HOUSE

An online open house was held in October 2025 to share the Draft Outdoor Sports Field Strategy for sports organizations and other key interest-holders. The event included a presentation of findings from the Strategy's inventory, analysis, and first round of community engagement, as well as the draft vision statement, guiding principles, and key recommendations. Attendees were polled on their level of support for the vision and principles of the Draft Strategy and were given the opportunity to ask clarifying questions.

### 1.2.2 ONLINE PUBLIC QUESTIONNAIRE

The public was invited to share their thoughts on the Draft Outdoor Sports Field Strategy. The questionnaire was hosted on the District of Saanich's online engagement platform, Hello Saanich, during October and November of 2025. Participants were asked about their level of support for the Strategy's vision, principles, and recommendations, as well as any other thoughts on the Strategy in an open-ended comments section.

## 2 ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS

### Who Participated?

The open house engaged 16 attendees.

The public online questionnaire saw 111 respondents. The majority of respondents were from the District of Saanich (83%), with the remaining respondents living elsewhere in the Capital Regional District.

Nearly two-thirds of respondents had a child or children who participated in organized field sports in Saanich, and 46% played themselves. A small majority of respondents used sports fields and lacrosse boxes recreationally (56%). Some respondents volunteered for community sports organizations (49%) or coached for/managed community sports organizations (44%).

The most common field sports played by the children of questionnaire respondents were soccer (47%), baseball (27%), box lacrosse (14%), and softball/fastball (14%). The most common field sports played by respondents were soccer (36%), baseball (18%), softball/fastball (14%), and ultimate frisbee (14%).

### Vision Statement and Guiding Principles

The Draft Strategy's vision statement was well supported across engagement activities, with 67% of open house attendees and 80% of questionnaire respondents noting they strongly agreed or agreed with the statement.

The guiding principles were generally well supported by questionnaire respondents, with more agreement than disagreement with each principle.

Respondents voiced the greatest level of support for the principle: 'Sports fields, lacrosse boxes and supporting amenities consider accessibility, diversity, equity, and inclusion to create a welcoming environment for all sports users and spectators.', with 67% strongly agreeing or agreeing.

Respondents voiced the greatest level of opposition to the principle: 'Saanich's inventory and allocation of sports fields and lacrosse boxes reflect community needs and consider sports facilities within the context of the wide range of demands on the park system.', with 34% of respondents strongly disagreeing or disagreeing. A small majority of workshop attendees were very supportive or supportive of the guiding principles (57%).

When asked if anything was missing from the guiding vision statement and guiding principles, questionnaire respondents wanted to see the following themes emphasized in the final strategy:

- Recognition for community sports organizations
- Consideration for sports fields' impacts on the environment
- Asset renewal and enhanced maintenance practices
- Cost recovery through field use fees

## Recommendations

Questionnaire respondents were supportive of all recommendations highlighted in the Questionnaire, with at least 73% saying they were very supportive or somewhat supportive of each recommendation. The recommendations that received some opposition concerned transitioning to a new, collaborative management model for Saanich's sports fields and lacrosse boxes (14% very opposed or somewhat opposed) and updating Saanich's allocation and fee policy (11%).

## Final Comments on the Strategy

In open-ended comments, several respondents expressed frustration with Saanich's current allocation policy and viewed the Strategy as a step in the right direction in improving equitable access. Several respondents voiced optimism that the strategy would help to modernize Saanich's sports field management practices.

In critiquing the Strategy, the following concerns were raised by respondents:

- Maximum annual playable hours on sports fields may limit field availability.
- Restricted use and future development of illuminated grass fields may limit field availability.
- Home User Groups access would be affected, creating impacts on their ability to deliver sports programming.
- The Strategy does not clearly outline compensation measures for Home User Groups that have invested in infrastructure improvements when transitioning to a new model.
- Saanich may not be able to maintain fields to the same standards as HUGs.

Some respondents recommended measures to improve Saanich's sports field network, including field and amenity upgrades, more intensive maintenance, opportunities for informal use, and additional grass and artificial turf fields, as well as a covered lacrosse box. A few respondents used the questionnaire to advocate for other outdoor recreation activities outside the Strategy's scope, such as pickleball and disc golf. Some expressed general grievances about the use of public funds for sports fields.

A few respondents commented that the questionnaire was difficult to follow and lacked sufficient information about the Strategy to make informed decisions.

### 3 CONCLUSION

Based on the feedback received, participants saw the Saanich Outdoor Sports Field Strategy as an opportunity for positive change in the management of the District's sports fields and lacrosse boxes. The Strategy's vision, guiding principles, and recommendations were well-received by engagement participants. Some participants voiced concerns about the capacity of Saanich sports fields under new management practices and the role of Home User Groups in a revised sports field management model. Overall, participants saw the Strategy as a sound framework for building a more sustainable, equitable, and accountable sports field system.