

From: ()
Sent: April 11, 2009 8:59 AM
To: MayorandCouncil
Subject: Proposed additional playing field in Ambleside

2160-03-AMBLI
(12)

Dear Mayor and Council:

We live two blocks above the Ambleside playing fields, and own two businesses in Ambleside.

It was with grave concern that we recently read in the North Shore News of the proposed additional artificial turf playing field in Ambleside Park. We are strongly opposed to such a proposal for the following reasons:

1. Parking

Field A (the gravel field) is currently used as overflow parking during park events. It is not uncommon for this field to be completely filled during popular events. If this field is converted to artificial turf, where will attendees of major events park? As residents in the area, we are already often unable to park in front of our own house during events, as attendees fill the surrounding streets with their cars. By removing overflow parking without a plan, you will negatively affect the ability of a large number of people to attend events in the park, as well as inconvenience surrounding residents.

2. Restriction of Use

There is a worrisome trend in Ambleside Park restricting the use of the public park to smaller sports interest groups. Let's keep in mind that the park is paid for by all tax payers, and should be available for all. We assume that a new artificial turf playing field would be fenced, continuing this trend. What once was a lovely park, is becoming just a sports facility. The grass fields that we jog on are now fenced all baseball season. Wouldn't a simple boundry line on the field suffice? The current artificial playing fields are fenced and threaten fines for unscheduled casual use, where young children once played pick up games. Conversion of natural surfaces to artificial ones lessens the parklike nature of the park. Parks are supposed to be open natural spaces, not fenced in compounds for special sport interest groups.

3. Current Use and Field Capacity

We walk past the artificial playing fields in Ambleside every day in the morning and evening. The fact is, there are regular times both pre-school times and post school times when the current fields are unused. How about using up the existing field capacity before spending millions to build another one? The current gravel field can be, and is used by soccer players. So really what we are considering is an improvement to the surface that would permit hockey and improve soccer useage. In these challenging economic times, spending millions to cater to field hockey players and improve a surface for soccer seems financially irresponsible given existing unused capacity.

4. Noise and light pollution / Impaired water views

Since the addition of the current artificial fields in Ambleside, we, as nearby residents, have been negatively affected by additional noise and light pollution and significant impairment of our water views caused by the tall light towers. All of these items have significant affects on on the property values of all surrounding residents. We assume that the installation of an additional artificial turf field will mean lighted artificial turf field. We are aware that the current gravel field is lighted, but imagine that newer, taller towers would be installed. Yes, taller light towers reduce the glare of field lights, but will destroy the water views now enjoyed by surrounding residents. The pleasant lights of Vancouver have now been replaced by the glare of field lights, which sometimes do not turn off at 10pm as scheduled. We have had our share of these negative externalities cited above, the true value of which may be underestimated by our parks planning staff.

We are both active and keen athletes, and have played at Ambleside Park ourselves. As such we are generally supportive of athletics and athletic facilities, but it is important to realize that Ambleside Park is one of West Vancouver's major parks and is to be enjoyed by all the Public, not just soccer and hockey players. Please consider the major negative externalities and financial expenditure created by the addition of this artificial turf playing field will far surpass the benefits to relatively small sports interest groups. We therefore urge you to reject the proposal for an additional artificial turf field in Ambleside Park.

Respectfully,

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