

# District 69 Track and Field Facility Feasibility Study

Prepared for School District #69 and Regional District of Nanaimo

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## ABSTRACT

This report has been prepared with funding from the School Community Connections program, managed for the BC Provincial Government by the Union of BC Municipalities. The report looks at the issues and options for developing a new track and field facility to serve the residents of District 69.

## Table of Contents

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>  | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>BACKGROUND .....</b>   | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>CURRENT SITUATION .....</b>  | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>LEARNING FROM OTHER TRACK AND FIELD FACILITIES IN BC.....</b>          | <b>15</b> |
| <b>THE OPTIONS .....</b>  | <b>19</b> |
| <b>RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>   | <b>32</b> |
| <b>APPENDIX A - BACKGROUND DOCUMENT REVIEW AND AREA DEMOGRAPHICS.....</b> | <b>34</b> |
| <b>APPENDIX B – CONSULTATIONS .....</b>                                   | <b>46</b> |
| <b>APPENDIX C – SURVEY OF OTHER TRACK AND FIELD FACILITIES.....</b>       | <b>50</b> |

## List of Figures

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Figure 1 - Ballenas Secondary School Track .....                             | 9  |
| Figure 2 - Oceanside Track and Field Club - Membership Growth - 2003/7 ..... | 10 |
| Figure 3 - BC High School Athletics Participation - 2003/7 .....             | 11 |
| Figure 4 - BC Athletics Membership - 1996/2007 .....                         | 11 |
| Figure 5 - BCAA Membership by Age, 2007 .....                                | 12 |
| Figure 6 - Prince George's Track and Field Facility .....                    | 15 |
| Figure 7 - Option 3A .....   | 22 |
| Figure 8 - Option 3B .....   | 23 |

## Executive Summary

This report has been prepared with funding from the School Community Connections program, managed for the BC Provincial Government by the Union of BC Municipalities. The report looks at the issues and options for developing a new track and field facility to serve the residents of District 69.

A community track is a basic sport facility: many athletes – soccer, football, baseball, etc - use it to train; community groups use it for 24 hour relays for charity fundraising; the elementary school track teams go there to get inspiration; and the community uses it for casual walking.

The Regional District of Nanaimo and School District 69 started discussions about potential School Community Connections projects in November 2007, and agreed to investigate the potential for a new or upgraded track and field facility to serve the District. Approval for phase two of the project was received in March 2008, and Yates, Thorn & Associates Inc. was retained to manage the project and to fully investigate all aspects associated with developing a new track and field facility.

Historically, there were two track and field facilities in District 69, located at the two secondary schools, Ballenas and Kwalikum. The district's primary current track and field venue is at Ballenas Secondary School. It probably dates from or shortly after the construction of the school in 1977. It has a red cinder base and is approximately 400m in length. The track is in poor condition.

There are currently three main user groups of the Ballenas Secondary School track and field facility: the Oceanside Track and Field Club, the school itself, and casual use by occasional and largely individual runners and joggers.

In 2006, the Regional District of Nanaimo received the recommendations of a Recreation Services Master Plan. The principal outdoor facility recommendation was to consider the development of a sports complex, a track and field facility, and regional trails. The consultants did note with regard to the track and field facility that it *could be located at the proposed sport complex, or it could be located at a secondary school site, such as Ballenas.*

As part of the planning for the new facilities, the learning from other track and field facilities was gathered. This learning is summarized as follows:

- Successful tracks are municipally owned - School District tracks are not well maintained.
- Most are built for an event, therefore to event standards.
- Operating costs are low, but capital replacement cost is high – the track surface has 8/12 year life.
- Tracks are used for many functions beyond athletics - community walkers, charity events - location boosts uses e.g. city centre
- Rental income is from major events and rental of the field (where charges levied), not from track and field.
- Eight lanes are standard.
- A field in the middle limits use for field events - especially if it is artificial turf.
- Events at almost any level, and certainly provincial and up, require many more amenities than generally provided.

In addition to the key criteria of cost to construct and maintain, and ease of implementation a set of guiding principles were developed:

- Do it right! – Ensure that the facility is well planned and executed.
- Build it such that it has event potential

- Design it so that community access is maximized
- Make sure that there is a clear financial plan for the long-term replacement of the track surface
- Focus that the needs of the track and field community are paramount
- Ensure that the facility meets the needs of District 69 schools.

Four options, some with variants within them, were identified:

- Option 1 – Upgrading the current Ballenas Secondary School Track and Field Facility
- Option 2 – Rebuilding a Secondary School Track as a Training Track
- Option 3 – Replacing the Existing Track at Ballenas Secondary School with a full eight lane competition track
- Option 4 – Building a new track at a new outdoor sports complex

All these options offered different levels of facility for different costs. Option 1 could be completed for approximately \$709,000; option 2 for \$1.5m, option 3 for closer to \$2.5m; option 4 would also cost approximately \$2.5m, but would require considerable additional financing to acquire and provide infrastructure to the new site.

While not part of the initial terms of reference for the project, additional work was authorized to determine whether there was a site possible for option 4, a new outdoor sports complex. Two site identification focus groups were held at which a 'long list' of sites was brainstormed and evaluation criteria determined. Following this analysis it was agreed that a site for a new outdoor sports complex could be found in one of four areas of the District: close to the south end of Parksville; close to the two highway 19 intersections; and in the Church Road area, currently zoned for industrial uses.

Funding for a new track and field facility can come from a variety of sources:

- The School Community Connections program can provide up to \$125,000 as long as this contribution is no more than 25% of total project costs.
- The School District could contribute to the overall project if it is on their land.
- The local governments in the region (Regional District, Cities of Parksville and Town of Qualicum Beach) could contribute although this would likely require a referendum or similar to approve a capital expenditure of this magnitude.
- There are several provincial/federal programs for capital project funding.

The study recommendations are as follows:

- 1. That two strategies be developed, one for a short term approach and one for a long term approach.**
- 2. That the short term approach be option 1, namely using the funding within the SCC program to upgrade the current Ballenas Secondary School track, with the other local government and community partners contributing \$375,000 to the SCC \$125,000, and that the project be scaled as far back as necessary to meet this financial target.**
- 3. That the long term approach be to continue with the planning and acquisition of land for a new outdoor sports complex, with a track and field facility being one of the first facilities to be developed in that sports complex.**

It should be noted that no funding is currently committed to this project by either the Regional District or the School District.

## Background

Every four years, local participation in sport increases in the wake of the Olympics. This year, as the Canadian team returns from Beijing, and the athletes spread out across Canada to talk about their experiences (a requirement of federal carding), local residents will start phoning the Oceanside Track and Field Club, looking for athletics programs for themselves or their children.

At the other end of the spectrum, others in the community, especially women, will round up a few friends and look for a safe, well lit, easy on the feet place for casual walking.

The track teams at the high schools also need a place to train and compete and, while there were originally tracks at both schools, both are in poor condition or, in the case of Kwalikum Secondary School, virtually non-existent. Even the track at Ballenas Secondary School is cinder and grass and very much at the end of its functional life. For competitive athletics, which is still a key high school and elementary school sport, there is really no substitute for a quality track...which reflects back to the Olympics, for, without the facilities for the early stages of training and competition, our emerging athletes will never even make the team, let alone thrill us all by 'medaling'.

A community track is a basic sport facility: many athletes – soccer, football, baseball, etc - use it to train; community groups use it for 24 hour relays for charity fundraising; the elementary school track teams go there to get inspiration; and the community uses it for casual walking.

## School Community Connections Program

The School Community Connections program was established by the Provincial government in 2005. The Premier publicly announced the funding on April 2, 2005, stating:

*We need to make better use of our school spaces so they benefit B.C. communities. The School Community Connections program will help school boards and local governments revitalize schools as centres for community learning and activity.*

The School Community Connections Program was developed to encourage partnerships between schools and local governments to greater utilize school facilities for broader community purposes. It is designed to promote sustainable and innovative collaboration between school boards and local governments and take into account the needs of the community as a whole.

The School Community Connections Program is jointly managed by the BC School Trustees Association and the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM), on behalf of the Ministry of Education.

Its program objectives are:

- To encourage and facilitate the co-location of services for students, their families and the larger community within school facilities;
- To make greater utilization of available or new school facilities; and
- To encourage collaborative, long-term facilities planning that takes into account the needs of the community as a whole.

The program is divided into three components.

1. Making the Connection – which provides up to \$5,000 per potential "Connections" Partnership to assist school boards and local governments to make initial contact, to identify and assess the viability of embarking on a joint initiative involving the use of school facilities for broader community use.

2. Developing the Connection – which provides up to \$40,000 per "Connections" Partnership to support the planning of a proposed use of a new or existing school asset for broader community use. The program covers planning costs associated with program assessment, delivery models, and other planning activities associated with the project<sup>1</sup>.

3. Completing the Connection – which provides up to \$125,000 per "Connections" Partnership to support the implementation of the agreed project by providing highly leveraged funding for start-up costs, including minor capital costs. Funding is intended to provide up to 25% of implementation costs with the balance provided by local government, school boards or other stakeholders. The timeline for completion of the District 69 phase 3 project has been set by the program administrators at UBCM at December 2010.

## Process

The Regional District of Nanaimo and School District 69 started discussions about potential School Community Connections projects in November 2007, and agreed to investigate the potential for a new or upgraded track and field facility to serve the District. Approval for phase two of the project was received in March 2008, and Yates, Thorn & Associates Inc. was retained to manage the project and to fully investigate all aspects associated with developing a new track and field facility.

This investigation included the following:

- Initial conversations with the Project Manager and steering committee.
- A set of key stakeholders were identified and interviewed by telephone.
- Background materials, including 2006 census data and longer term population projections, were reviewed and base data on participants and other uses for the track and field facility were gathered.
- A community meeting was held in mid-June, a press release provided to the local media and a brief survey distributed to householders in the immediate vicinity of Ballenas Secondary School.
- Local demand was projected.
- Options were identified, including Ballenas and Kwalikum Secondary Schools and those involving a new outdoor sports complex, and assessed against agreed criteria.
- Site sketch plans for the two options at Ballenas Secondary School and a generic order-of-magnitude cost estimate prepared.
- Potential revenue sources, in addition to School Community Connections funding, were identified.
- A draft report was prepared at the end of August, and two public open houses held in October. Comments from these open houses were documented.
- In February 2009, a verbal report was provided to the District 69 Recreation Commission, who approved expanding the study to examine the site options for a major outdoor sports complex (recommended in the 2006 Recreation Services Study) which would include a track and field facility.

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<sup>1</sup> Funding for this report was provided through this component of the program.

- This report was finalized in May 2009 and forwarded to both the Regional District of Nanaimo and School District 69 Boards for discussion and consideration of its recommendations.

## Consultation

Consultation with the public was achieved in a number of ways:

- Close working was maintained with a steering committee of school district and regional district officials.
- A public meeting was held at Ballenas Secondary School in mid-June. The purpose of this meeting was to update the community on the progress that had been made and to get feedback from those who attended.
- At this same time, a flyer/survey form was developed and distributed through the school and by delivery to local householders. Its main purpose was to advertize the public meeting, but it also gave an opportunity for people to record their views regarding the potential of upgrading the existing track and field facility.
- Meetings were held with a variety of key stakeholders such as the principals of the two secondary schools and representatives of the two municipalities.
- Two open houses were held in October 2008 at which the results of this planning process were shared with attendees (see notes in Appendix).
- Following these steps, it was agreed to carry out a more extensive assessment of site potential for a major outdoor sports complex. This included two focus groups which were held in April 2009. Notes from those focus groups has been incorporated into this report.

The survey results and the notes from the open houses are detailed in Appendix B.

The points raised in the survey responses cover the range of topics discussed at the first public meeting. They were as follows:

- The track and field facility needs adequate facilities such as stands, change rooms, washrooms, etc.
- There will not be enough space for these.
- That if it is built at Ballenas Secondary School, that it should be done 'right'.
- That it will interfere with the school's football program.
- That fixing up the field is a higher priority.
- That Kwalikum Secondary School needs its fields fixed up as well.
- A new track would encourage more kids to be physically active.
- A track is a basic community facility if we want to produce Olympic athletes.
- A track and field facility would provide opportunities for meets and events which have an economic value, from youth development meets to the Seniors Games.
- Concerns re maintenance in the short and long term.
- Concerns re access by motorbikes, dogs, etc and other vandalism.
- Losing control of the track to other sports groups especially if the infield is grass or artificial turf.
- Opportunity to serve all schools in the district.
- As a facility it would be used by a wide range of groups and programs.
- The school is not the best location – better to start afresh somewhere else.
- Older people would use the track for exercise.
- Concerns re parking and traffic if large events held.
- Need for a better transit system to get people to the facility and to link it to other schools and recreation centres, and in particular to connect it to the Electoral Areas.
- Cost of upkeep of new facility.

## Current Situation

### Current Track and Field Facilities

Historically, there were two track and field facilities in District 69, located at the two secondary schools, Ballenas and Kwalikum.

#### **Kwalikum Secondary School**

The track at Kwalikum Secondary School has definitely passed the end of its lifespan, is no longer used, and is gradually returning to a natural grass condition. It is on a sloped site, bounded by the E&N right of way to the north, and the school to the south. It is hard to tell whether it was ever a full 6 or 8 lane track, but the current site is not wide enough for a full 8 lane track. If it were to be considered as the location for a full 8-lane track and field facility, it would require considerable slope stabilization on both its sides, which would be prohibitively expensive.

#### **Ballenas Secondary School**

The district's primary current track and field venue is at Ballenas Secondary School. It probably dates from or shortly after the construction of the school in 1977. It has a red cinder base and is approximately 400m in length. We say 'approximately' since the track has no curbs and therefore just merges with the grass in-field on its inside and the outfield on its outside. Lane markings are added as required. The track is not well drained and regularly develops holes and dips which require continual filling, which in turn just adds to the unevenness of the surface.

There are a number of field sport amenities: shot put circle, long jump and high jump pits, cages for other throwing disciplines. The throwing cage and the long jump pit have recently been relocated as part of a larger project to increase the size and usability of the school's north play field.



Figure 1 - Ballenas Secondary School Track

There is also a metal storage container adjacent to the track which provides storage for the wide range of track and field equipment that belongs to the Oceanside Track and Field Club.

This track and field facility is clearly at, or past, the end of its useful life.

### Current Users

There are currently three main user groups of the Ballenas track and field facility: the Oceanside Track and Field Club, the school itself, and casual use by occasional and largely individual runners and joggers.

The Oceanside Track and Field Club has a long history and over the past few years has seen a resurgence in membership.

The club serves all of the District 69 area. It is one of about 20 Track and Field Clubs on Vancouver Island, and is almost the only one with no facility sufficient to host a Junior Development Meet. Athletes needing a higher level of facility must travel to Nanaimo or Port Alberni to develop their training.

Both secondary schools have an athletics program and send teams to Island and BC meets and championships. The number of students participating in athletics in the province has increased slightly over the past few years. It is considered a fundamental sport to all athlete development.

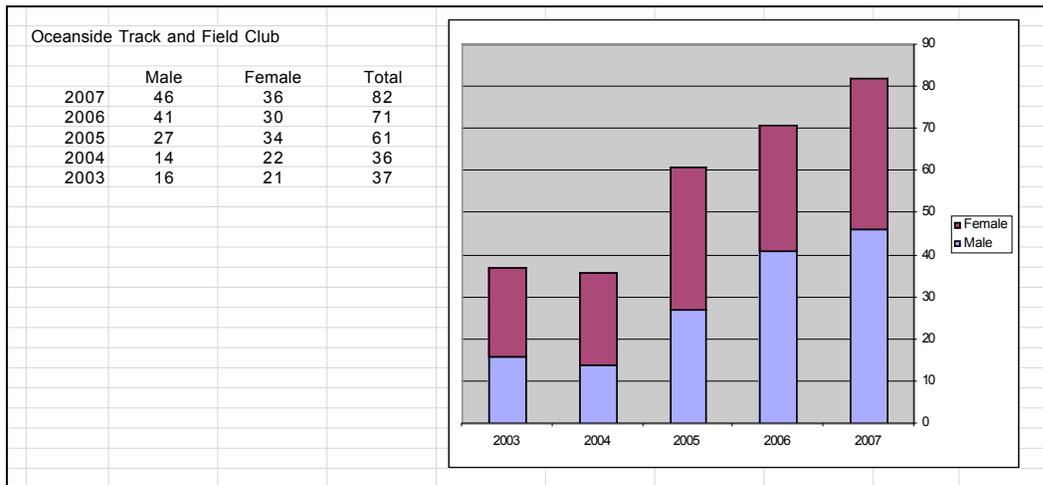


Figure 2 - Oceanside Track and Field Club - Membership Growth - 2003/7

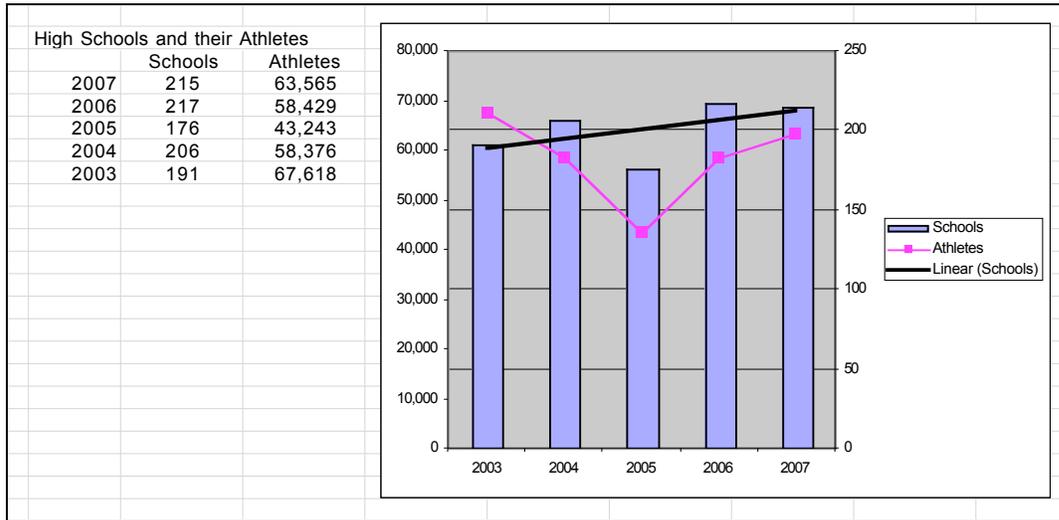


Figure 3 - BC High School Athletics Participation - 2003/7

High school sports provides students with a taste of athletics and allows many students to participate competitively in a sport which may not be their primary interest, or an area where they have a high skill level. Around 60,000 students each year get this experience

Competitive athletics is confined to a much smaller number of athletes. In BC the membership of BC Athletics, the sport governing body for track and field, is a little over 4,000. The members of Oceanside Track and Field Club are part of this number. They are roughly divided between the genders.

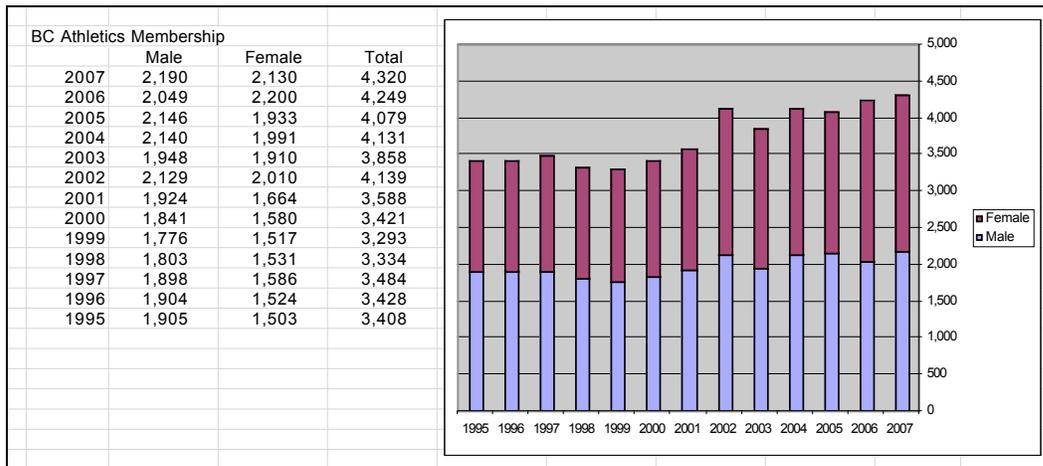


Figure 4 - BC Athletics Membership - 1996/2007

Oceanside Track and Field Club membership ranges from 9 to 18 years of age. The BC Athletics membership largely covers the same age range, peaking around 11 to 13 years of age. It should be noted that BC Athletics membership also includes a large number of those aged over 20 years, especially over 35 years. These masters athletes are found in other clubs in District 69, namely the Running Club and Parksville Golden Oldies Sports Association (PGOSA).

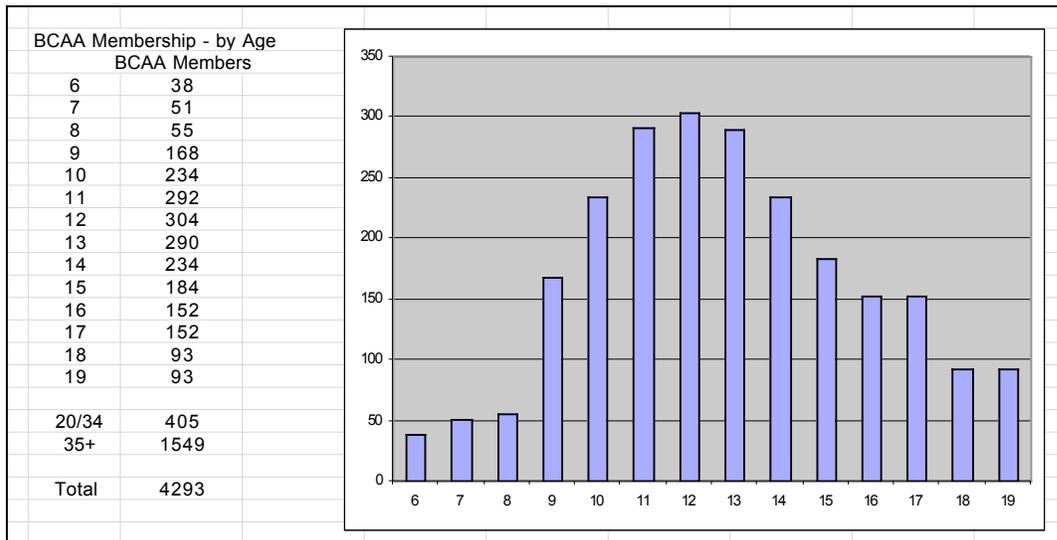


Figure 5 - BCAA Membership by Age, 2007

It is these over 20 and over 35 athletes who make up the third, and very small, part of the user base of the present track and field facility. In District 69 they are members of the Oceanside Running Association (the Orcas). This club has 170 members, but they are more likely to run on the roads and trails as opposed to the Ballenas track, although the club members would undoubtedly use the track for individual training purposes. The members and coaches of BC Special Olympics are also intermittent users of the track, although it is, if possible, even more unsuitable to their needs than it is for able bodied athletes.

### School Plans

Ballenas Secondary School has currently almost 1000 students and its PE facilities are inadequate for this number. In particular, it has only one quality field, that being the one inside the track. During the late 1990s, there was little potential to increase the field space since eight portable classrooms were located on the north field. However they were removed in the fall of 2002, and the school established the Ballenas Playing Field Project. The first aspect of this project was to upgrade the track infield and this was accomplished by fall 2003 at a cost of \$150,000; funders were School District #69, Regional District of Nanaimo, City of Parksville and local community sports groups including Oceanside Track and Field Club.

Since that time only minor improvements have been made, although the school, in conjunction with other groups including the Track and Field Club, have submitted plans for the upgrading of the north field. This will give the school two playing fields and will significantly increase playing time, and reduce wear on the track infield pitch. In the opinion of the school, the changes required are as follows:

- Current field area expanded by 35m in the E/W direction and 20m in the N/S direction. This will give a field of approximately 100 by 105 metres. This expansion will require adding an edge to the track, and some extension of the sprinkler lines.
- Removal of the Ballenas equipment storage shed and relocation of the Oceanside Track and Field Club storage container. A new storage shed will need to be built in the SE corner of the field.
- Relocation of the long jump pits and shot/discus circles. This has already been completed.

The improvement of the north field is a high priority for the school.

Kwalikum Secondary School is around 800 students and also struggles to accommodate its students on its school fields. It does not have a strong athletics program, and students interested in athletics tend to join the Oceanside Track and Field Club.

## The Current Planning Environment

### Recreation Services Master Plan

In 2006, the Regional District of Nanaimo received the recommendations of a Recreation Services Master Plan. The principal outdoor facility recommendation was:

***22. Consider the following facilities – a sports complex, a track and field facility, and Regional Parks trails – as Region-wide facilities, to be provided as conveniently as possible to all Oceanside residents.***

While no priority was noted by the authors between these facilities, and no priorities have been adopted by the Regional District of Nanaimo Board to date, the consultants did note with regard to the track and field facility that

*This is a facility that could be located at the proposed sport complex, or it could be located at a secondary school site, such as Ballenas.*

The consultants noted the lengthy time frame that is usually needed to develop a major outdoor sports complex, and identified the steps necessary. To date, the only discussions that have occurred have been when the Master Plan was received by the Regional Board.

There have been discussions in the community, among some of the sport groups, regarding the need for the sports complex. These groups believe that there is not sufficient land for it at any of the schools or the existing parks; that it should be multi-sport in nature and should include the track and field facility; and that there are areas of land that are well located for such a sports complex. The potential for such an outdoor sports complex was further explored as part of this study and is commented on later in this report.

### Local Government Official Community Plans

The Official Community Plans for all the local government units in District 69 are consistent both with each other and with the Regional Growth Strategy. They focus on small parks, trails and environmental protection. Some, such as Qualicum Beach Official Community Plan suggest that another community park may be needed in the future, but they all stress that trails for walking and biking are the highest priority. Working collaboratively with the School District is noted as a high priority, both in terms of school buildings for community schools, and fields for community sports.

All the Official Community Plans include the protection of the environment and of agricultural land as priorities.

### Demographics

The 2006 census indicates that the region as a whole is growing faster than projected, especially in the four electoral areas. The population is also aging rapidly; the 2006 population is skewed even more toward the 45+ age groups than previously, with these age groups making up 56.8% of the total population in 2001, whereas by 2006 they made up 62.8%. The number of households with children declined from 19.3% of all households in 2001, to 17.3% in 2006. These demographic shifts have several implications for this project:

- The need to ensure community accessibility as school enrolments decline.
- The need to design the facility in such a way that it is physically accessible.
- The need to involve the sports groups who serve older athletes (e.g. PGOSA) in all aspects of design and development.

## Learning from Other Track and Field Facilities in BC

As part of the research for this study, 12 communities with track and field facilities were contacted and requested to provide answers to a set of questions. Ten communities responded, either by phone, or by email. These responses were helpful in defining 'guiding principles' for the design and development of the Oceanside Track and Field Facility.



Figure 6 - Prince George's Track and Field Facility

The ten communities for which data was obtained were as follows:

- Oak Bay - Oak Bay High School
- Saanich - Claremont High School
- Kelowna - Apple Bowl
- Kamloops - Thompson Rivers University
- Port Alberni – Alberni Valley Multiplex
- North Cowichan - Cowichan Sportsplex
- Nanaimo - Rotary Bowl
- Coquitlam – City Centre Stadium
- Abbotsford - Exhibition Park
- UVic - Centennial Stadium

The learning from these other tracks was as follows:

*Successful tracks are municipally owned - School District tracks are not well maintained.*

Of the ten track and field facilities, five were municipally owned, three were school district tracks, one was at UVic and the North Cowichan track was owned and operated by a not-for-profit society. Satisfaction levels were highest for the municipal tracks and the new North Cowichan track, and lowest for tracks owned by educational agencies. These also tended to be the oldest and the ones in poorest condition.

*Most built for an event, therefore to event standards - only one built as a 'training track' and that Track and Field Club not happy.*

There is a tension between building a track and field facility for an event and the additional costs, both capital and operating, that are involved...versus building a simpler 'training' track with lower levels of amenities and lower costs. The reality from the survey, where there was only one 'training' track, seemed to be that this latter approach was not very satisfactory...everyone was unhappy, both those training and those who could not hold events there.

Only the North Cowichan track was built recently, with the others being installations of previous decades, with most recently upgraded.

*Operating costs are low, but capital replacement cost is high – the track surface has 8/12 year life.*

Track and field facilities have low operating costs which are offset by low revenues, but the track surface has a lifespan of 8 to 12 years, and that requires a major capital upgrading on a regular basis. In some cases, the surface has gone longer than that (UVic's is now 16 years), but many require replacement long before that: the North Cowichan track was replaced this year, after only 8 years. The catalyst for replacement is often, as in North Cowichan's case, the hosting of a major event.

It is noteworthy that all the municipal facilities have been regularly upgraded and updated, while the two school board and the university track and field facilities have not been.

*Tracks are used for many functions beyond athletics - community walkers, charity events - location boosts uses e.g. city centre*

All tracks noted use by the general public, and in this regard, those located where access was easiest received the most use of this kind.

*Rental income is from major events and rental of the field (where charges levied), not from track and field.*

Accessibility was important for events which, where they were allowed or encouraged, made the greatest contribution to operating revenues. Youth programs were often given free use of the facility, as were Track and Field Clubs.

Access for events was greatest when ownership was with the not-for-profit sector, which was the case with the North Cowichan track, although the city centre location of the Coquitlam track also made it an attractive event venue.

*Eight lanes are standard.*

All tracks that were built for events had eight lanes; only the Oak Bay 'training' track did not.

*A field in the middle limits use for field events - especially if artificial turf.*

The track is a single purpose facility, but the 'training' that athletes and the general public could do on it makes it a very well used facility. On the other hand, the infield is multi-purpose for both athletic field events and for field sports. The

preferred surface for many field sports is artificial turf, and that surface does maximize use. However it also limits the use of the infield for athletic field events and either requires the field sport facilities (pits and throw cages) to be located off the track infield (a requirement if artificial turf), or can have a deleterious effect on high quality grass infields.

For several track managers, these conflicts were such that they opposed the use of artificial turf in the infield.

*Events at almost any level, and certainly provincial and up, require many more amenities, seating, etc.*

Event hosting moves a track into a different league in terms of required amenities: not just washrooms and change rooms, but stadiums and bleachers, pole vault and steeple chase pits and electronic timing (equipment or hook ups). The costs multiply, both capital and operating/maintenance.

Having said that, there is a range of lower profile events that require more minimal facilities: junior development meets, and likely the Seniors Games.

The comments from the Oak Bay High School correspondent makes a good postscript to this survey in answer to the question, *what don't you like and would do differently if you started again:*

*Full 8 lane track facility with all jump areas and throws areas located inside the track. Spectator areas, washrooms, etc. Proper storage for equipment. We are limited to the number of athletes we can take into our club as the facility is so small. If you are going to build a track facility, do it right and have 8 lanes and all event areas or you will compromise the programs and events which you can hold. For Summer Games you must have an 8 lane track with full facilities or you cannot even bid on the Games. Have a track club involved with or attached to the facility as they will look after the facility and the equipment. If it is a community track, then no one cares about maintaining it as it is always someone else's problem [e.g. Swangard Stadium in Burnaby].*

## Design Parameters and Guiding Principles

While recognizing that cost to construct and maintain, and ease of implementation are key decision-making principles, this review indicates that there is a set of additional guiding principles that should guide decision making concerning a new track and field facility for District 69. These are presented as follows, not in priority order:

### *Do it right!*

This is going to be the only opportunity that the region has to build a track and field facility within the foreseeable future, and plans should be developed so that a full facility can be provided. Many people indicated that too often public agencies cut corners in the planning and design process such that the resultant facility met no one's satisfaction.

In this situation, this implies two criteria:

- Adequate facilities from the start to operate a full sports program that includes track and field as well as certain field

sports. The minimum requirements are an 8 lane track, full field facilities (pits, cages, etc) and a quality grass infield.

- Adequate space for the facility to grow over time and to add those facilities that can be phased. This would include a stadium or permanent seating, with change rooms, washrooms, officials rooms, etc as part of the structure.

*Ensuring event potential*

This ties in with a need for adequate facilities and in particular means developing 8 lanes rather than something less. If there are 8 lanes, then Island Junior Development Meets can be held. Provincial level events will require more facilities than that, and that can come later if desired.

*Community access*

The location chosen for the track and field facility should be easily accessible to all citizens of District 69. This means:

- Close to the trail system for ease of use by casual users.
- Good parking for those arriving by car from elsewhere in the district.
- Centrality in geographic and time terms.

*Clear financial plan for the long-term replacement of the track surface*

An adequate fiscal framework must be developed such that the track surface can be replaced at regular 10/12 year intervals.

This also implies an organizational structure such that fund-raising can be achieved.

*Primacy of track and field*

In developing this facility, it would be easy to see it 'taken over' by other sports. However it should be regarded as a track and field facility first and a venue for other sports second, and this should be built into its operating agreements.

However it was made clear in the public meetings that local clubs work well together and will find ways to resolve any use issues.

The desire and expectation of the Oceanside Track and Field Club in the short term is to have a better facility than they currently have, not necessarily a top of the line facility, which they recognize may only be achievable in the long term.

*Meeting the needs of District 69 schools*

If a school location is selected, the development of the track and field facility should not negatively impact their other programs, both PE, extra-curricular and related to any other learning needs.

## The Options

While the Recreation Services Master Plan identified two options for a new track and field facility, one being to replace the existing track at Ballenas Secondary School and the other being to integrate a new track into a new outdoor sports complex, other sites in District 69 were reviewed to determine whether they were suitable for the project.

Some of these other sites included:

- Kwalikum Secondary School – while this did at one time have a track, its steeply sloped site and limited field width make it expensive if not impossible to build a new full size track on the site of the old track. However the site may be suitable for a smaller training track.
- Other schools – such as Springwood Middle and Arrowview Elementary; but none were determined to have adequate space for the development of a track and field facility.
- Other parks – such as Springwood Park and Qualicum Beach Community Park, but again none had adequate undeveloped land.
- Undeveloped land – there are a number of parcels of land with potential for land use change, where one possible land use option for part or all of the site is public recreation. However most of these sites are in the Agricultural Land Reserve and their removal would require local government policy change. None appeared to meet the criterion of ‘ease of implementation’.

The planning research indicates that there are several options that can be pursued each of which will move the project in a positive direction. Also, as is most often the case, different levels of resource input mean different levels of facility quality and customer satisfaction – the more you spend, the more you get.

Essentially there are four levels of investment which would result in four different levels of facility:

**Option 1** - A minimum investment level of \$709,000 would allow the current track at Ballenas Secondary School to have curbs (inside and outside) installed, for the track to be resurfaced with track based asphalt, with a limited level of lighting installed. This would not meet any track meet standards, but would allow community use both by the OTFC, other recreational runners, and the general community for walking and exercise. It would be adequate for intra-school use but not for inter-school use. This level of investment is also close to the parameters of the SCC program which funds projects up to \$500,000<sup>2</sup>.

**Option 2** - An investment of around \$1.5m would allow a quality training track to be developed. This would have curbs, a quality track surface and all other aspects of a full track, except it would be only four or five lanes, or six lanes on the straight-away and three on the back and curves. It would be a good training track, but could not host track meets. It would do all that the level 1 track would, plus providing a better surface for athlete training. This track would certainly fit on the Ballenas Secondary School site, and with some required additional work and cost, fit on the Kwalikum Secondary School Site.

**Option 3** - An investment of \$2.0m to \$2.5m would allow a full eight lane track to be installed. This would fit on the Ballenas Secondary School site with two orientations. If option 3A is used, the work on option 1 would form the base for this track, thus reducing this eventual cost.

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<sup>2</sup> The School Community Connection program funds up to \$125,000, but requires this to be met 3 to 1 from other sources.

**Option 4** - For the same investment in the track and field facility, a start could be made on a major outdoor sports complex with the track facility being the first investment into that park. However there would be many other costs (land acquisition, development of infrastructure) in the short term, as well as the major investment in building the other elements of such an outdoor sports complex.

In the next section of the report, these options will be evaluated, and considered in relation to the six guiding principles laid out previously, as well as the two other key criteria of ease of development and cost.

### **Option 1 – Upgrading the Current Ballenas Secondary School Track and Field Facility**

The current Ballenas Secondary School track is in very poor shape and would be significantly improved if curbs were installed to clearly define the track, the sub-surface was rebuilt to improve drainage, and to provide a smooth surface on which to lay an asphalt track. Low level lighting for community evening use could also be added.

This option would cost in the region of \$709,000, and the maximum funding available through the School Community Connections Program of \$125,000 would provide around 17% of these costs. The balance of the project funding would need to be found through local fund-raising, or from local government funds, although none are currently budgeted for this purpose. If such funds are not forthcoming, it may be necessary to scale back this option to an even more utilitarian level.

How would this approach meet the set of guiding principles?

Guiding Principle #1 - Do it right!

When this guiding principle was enunciated at the early planning meetings, this was not the option that people had in mind. In fact it is the very reason that people articulated this principle. However that was before participants realized what a new track and field facility would cost. Even so, this approach should not be seen as the long term solution; more one that is expedient in the short term while other options are pursued as the long term solution. However if the selected long-term option is 3A, then this option would form the base for that option.

Guiding Principle #2- Ensuring event potential

Events could not be hosted on this configuration.

Guiding Principle #3 - Community access

Community access would be positive, especially if low level lighting were included in the plans. This kind of surface is acceptable for public use.

Guiding Principle #4 - Clear financial plan for the long-term replacement of the track surface

The long term replacement will not be an issue with this surface, although there will be annual maintenance costs.

Guiding Principle #5 – Primacy of track and field

Essentially this option would keep the status quo at Ballenas Secondary School, with the Oceanside Track and Field Club as the primary after school users of the facility.

#### Guiding Principle #6 - Meeting the needs of District 69 schools

Ballenas Secondary School would gain a minimally improved athletic facility, and would still have its two fields as at present.

### Option 2 – Rebuilding a Secondary School Track as a Training Track

This approach would see a top quality training facility created, with a five lane track, or some similar configuration. It would in all respects be equivalent to option 3 A and B tracks, except for only having a limited number of lanes. It could be located at Ballenas Secondary School (option 2A) or, possibly, at Kwalikum Secondary School (option 2B), although in the latter, additional infrastructure improvements such as field and track drainage would likely be required.

How would this approach meet the set of guiding principles?

#### Guiding Principle #1 - Do it right!

Again, this is not the full model that early meetings had envisaged, but it is a quality training facility that the community would be proud of. Its only deficiency relates to its inability to host events.

#### Guiding Principle #2- Ensuring event potential

This would not be a track where events could be hosted. Even lower level events (e.g. school track meets) have many heats and the limitation of five lanes would make the timing of the event unmanageable.

#### Guiding Principle #3 - Community access

Community access would be on a par with option 1 for the general public, although there would be better quality and better use from competitive athlete training.

#### Guiding Principle #4 - Clear financial plan for the long-term replacement of the track surface

This would be problematic. The frequency of replacement would be the same as with a full eight lane track but the revenue raising potential from events would be quite minimal.

#### Guiding Principle #5 – Primacy of track and field

Essentially the situation with this new track would be the same as at present, whether it were located at Ballenas Secondary School or at Kwalikum Secondary School.

#### Guiding Principle #6 - Meeting the needs of District 69 schools

If it were located at Ballenas, that school would gain an improved athletic facility, and would still have its two fields as at present. Likewise at Kwalikum Secondary School, the track could be installed around the existing sports field.

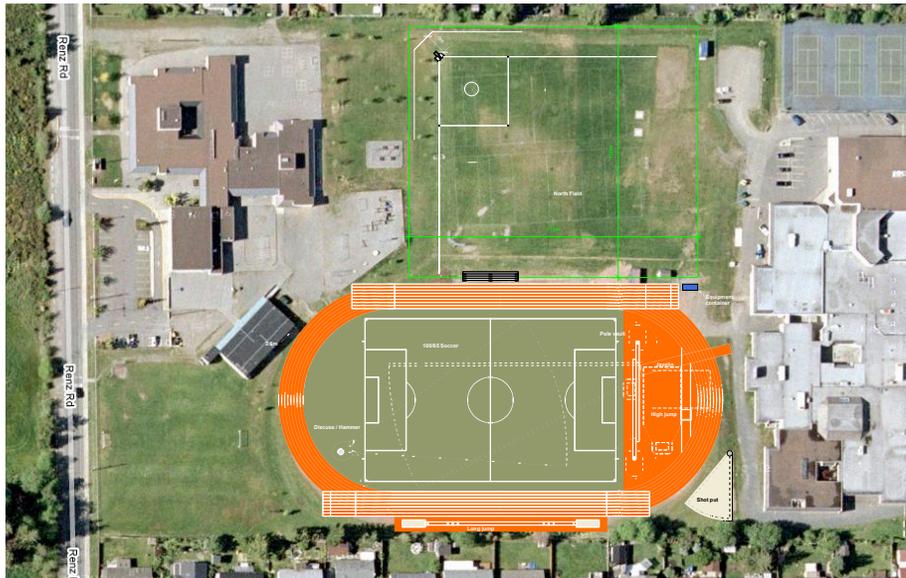
### Option 3 – Replacing the Existing Track at Ballenas Secondary School

There are two options for siting a new track and field facility at Ballenas Secondary School, and these are shown and described below. We shall call them as options 3A and 3B.

#### Option 3A

The first option is to place a new track over the footprint of the current track. The new track, if eight lanes, would be slightly larger than the current track since its lanes will be better defined. It would include provision for field events within its curtilage, with high jump/pole vault and javelin run ups (crosses track) at one end on artificial surfacing, and discus and hammer at the other end on grass. A track start is provided on both sides of the track, and a shot put area is provided just outside the track. The long/triple jump run up is double ended and is on the east side of the track.

A full size natural turf soccer field is located in the centre of the track and field facility.

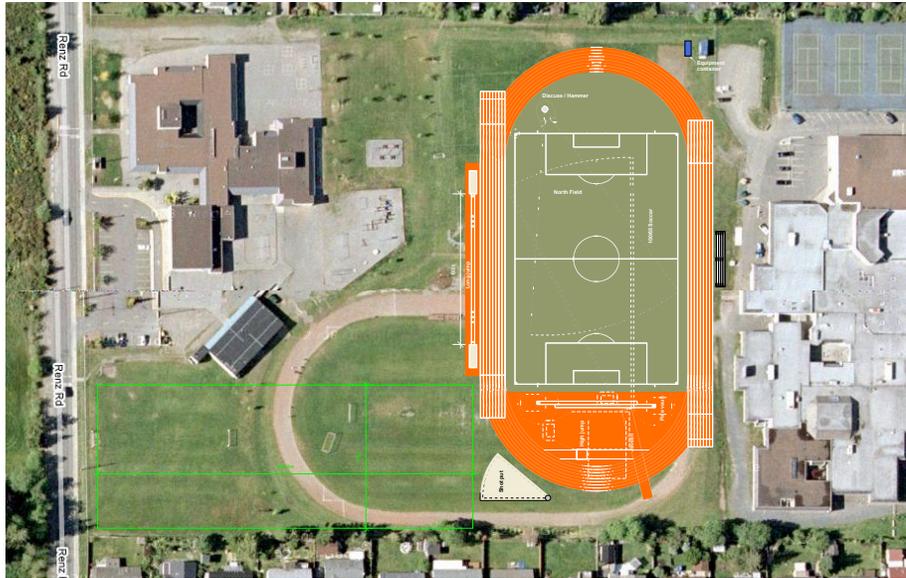


**BALLENAS SECONDARY SCHOOL**  
RE-CONSTRUCTION PROJECT – OPTION 1  
SCALE 1:1000

Figure 7 - Option 3A

### Option 3B

A second option on the Ballenas Secondary School site is to turn the track through 90 degrees and to run it along the rear of the school. All the options for jumps and throws would be very similar, but the whole facility would have more room around it, allowing for slightly greater distances from the surrounding houses, as well as distance from Winchelsea Elementary School.



**BALLENAS SECONDARY SCHOOL**  
RE-CONSTRUCTION PROJECT – OPTION 2  
SCALE 1:1000

**Figure 8 - Option 3B**

This option would require a rethinking of the other fields around the school, since the current north field would be covered by the track and field facility. However a roughly equivalent field can be created by enlarging the current Winchelsea field into a full size field, although its maximum possible width at 57m would not meet the minimum requirements for many sports for competitive purposes. This option would be dependent therefore on the sharing of fields between the two schools, which of course happens to an extent already.

### Meeting the Guiding Principles

The following comments can be made about how these two options meet the guiding principles outlined earlier.

#### Guiding Principle #1 - Do it right!

There is enough space to start the project and to maintain it at that level of sophistication, but the Ballenas Secondary School site is small for this scale of facility and growth beyond the basic plan will be difficult. This is firstly because of lack of space and secondly because the addition of further amenities will come at the expense of school facilities.

Of the two options, 3B offers more future potential, as there is a location along the far side of the track for amenities including seating.

#### Guiding Principle #2- Ensuring event potential

The current plan for the facility would include 8 lanes and a full range of field event facilities, so event potential is present. As noted above, moving beyond this level will be more difficult: temporary seating and access to the school for washrooms/change rooms would be possible on an event-by-event basis, and would probably be adequate for most events that the community is likely to go after, such as the Seniors Games.

#### Guiding Principle #3 - Community access

On this criterion, the site has some strengths and some challenges. The strengths are that it is central within Parksville and walking/biking routes do, or are planned to, bring people to the school. However parking will be problematic during school hours, and spill over into the surrounding residential area should be avoided. A low level of track lighting will be advantageous for casual community users; indeed lighting beyond this level is not required.

#### Guiding Principle #4 - Clear financial plan for the long-term replacement of the track surface

It should be noted that various stakeholder groups expressed a concern that the School District did not have the resources to either adequately maintain or replace the track surface when required, therefore locating the track and field facility on school property was somewhat problematic. The research of other tracks bore out this concern.

This concern could be addressed by developing a joint development and operating agreement between the local government partners and the School District specific to this facility; or by including the School District in the existing District 69 Sports Field Service Agreement.

#### Guiding Principle #5 - Primacy of track and field

Both of these options allow the Oceanside Track and Field Club to continue in its current role vis-à-vis the school and the community. There will likely be pressure to upgrade the infield if option 3B is selected, although as long as the surface remains as grass, it is unlikely that the school will allow many other teams to practice or play on the surface. This will also allow the field events to have a degree of primacy equal to what they have now.

If the infield is upgraded to artificial turf, this will have to be used by many other sports, and it will be lost to the Oceanside Track and Field Club, although most field events could be accommodated on the school's north field. It is generally felt that, for a variety of reasons, artificial turf is not the right option for the infield. If that is required, then the set of options around a new outdoor sports complex would be the ones to pursue.

#### Guiding Principle #6 - Meeting the needs of District 69 schools

On this criterion, option 3A does better than option 3B, since the school's primary concern is for two good quality fields, and option 3B largely obliterates the existing north field. However it should be noted that the school's priority is for an upgrade to create two quality fields, rather than doing anything with the track and field facility.

## Option 4 – Build New Track at New Outdoor sports complex

The fourth option is to build a new track and field facility as a part of a new outdoor sports complex. Using the South Surrey Athletic Park as an example of what they proposed, the Recreation Services Master Plan consultants suggested that the components of this new outdoor sports complex might be:

*...a four diamond, lighted softball / fast pitch complex, complete with change rooms, restrooms, concession and restaurant; several soccer and rugby fields, lighted baseball diamonds, tennis courts, and a 400 meter running track, in addition to an Olympic-size arena and a new recreation centre, and a Rotary Club field house.*

While the scale of this facility may be well beyond the aspirations of the District 69 population (which is very much smaller and older than that of South Surrey), it does indicate that the running track would be one of many facilities planned into this park, and not necessarily the first to be developed.

Neither the Recreational Service Plan nor subsequent planning has identified a location for an outdoor sports complex. However early discussions with key stakeholders indicated that there is considerable land and numerous sites that could serve this purpose. Consequently two site identification focus groups were held at which a 'long list' of sites was brainstormed and noted electronically, and evaluation criteria determined.

The overall process summarized as follows:

### Review of Long List of Sites

In the two workshops, 31 separate sites were identified and detailed under a separate report for *In Camera* review by the District 69 Commission due to private land ownership issues.

### Selection Criteria

There are of course many factors that determine a good location for a track and field facility. However it was decided to approach these in two sets: those factors that are very site specific (see sidebar); and those that are somewhat broader and which can be used to whittle the long list to a short list.

These broader criteria are as follows:

Overall location within the region

- Centrality within the region allows everyone equal access to the facility
- Shortness of journey and speed of access is important in determining the amount of use; if it is located at a distance, it will not be used, and people will find alternatives
- Shortness of journey reduces vehicle gas use and emissions
- Proximity to the urban area will engage more of the general public in using the track facility for casual use walking
- Proximity to the highway will encourage sport tourism use, and proximity to the urban areas will encourage sport tourists to use community facilities such as restaurants and hotels.

Speed of development

#### Site Factors

- Access
- Environmental considerations
- Infrastructure and servicing (especially availability of water and power)
- Adjacent land issues, such as lighting impacts
- Topography and micro-climate
- Soil conditions

- If the land selected is in the Agricultural land Reserve (ALR) it will take a lengthy process to extract it.
- If the land is currently zoned for park uses, the approval process will be swifter, although there may be competing visions of 'park' which cause controversy.

#### Cost factors

- Given that the track and field facility will be roughly equal in cost, no matter where it is located, the question becomes 'are there any factors which will cause one site to be more expensive either to develop generally or for the facility to be built?'
- Also, if the land is in government ownership, either Crown land, or owned by RDN, the two municipalities, or the School District, then its cost will be significantly less than if it is currently zoned for agricultural use, with some anticipation that it could be rezoned for housing, or industrial use.

#### Applying the Criteria

In order to assess the strength of these site groups in relation to the criteria, each criteria was scaled as follows:

##### Overall location

1. Well away from the main population centres.
2. Close to an intersection, but on the south side of Highway 19; or farther away from one of the two communities (north of Qualicum Beach, south of Parksville).
3. Centrally located within the region, close to either highway intersection or generally between Parksville and Qualicum Beach urban areas

##### Speed of development

1. Likely to be contentious due to other users or interests
2. In the ALR
3. Generally likely to be more easily developed.

##### Cost factors

1. Land mostly in private ownership
2. Land in public ownership

#### What this tells us

Most sites are not in public ownership, although some could be acquired through the development process. Others are zoned for industrial purposes and could be converted to outdoor sports complex use quite easily.

The 'speed of development' criterion is more intuitive, and the 'overall location' criterion is the easiest to assess.

A number of sites in close proximity to the following Areas scored well in this analysis:

- Parksville South End Area
- Parksville Highway Exit Area
- Qualicum Beach Highway Exit Area
- Church Road Area.

Clearly therefore, there are sites which could, within a reasonable timeframe, and with local government support, become available for an outdoor sports complex.

How would these sites fare in relation to the guiding principles?

Guiding Principle #1 - Do it right!

The outdoor sports complex would have sufficient land, such that a full size track and field facility with all the required amenities could be built.

Guiding Principle #2- Ensuring event potential

Again this follows from the previous discussion. A primary purpose of facilities in the outdoor sports complex would be to host events which bring economic impact to District 69.

Guiding Principle #3 - Community access

All these sites are accessible, mainly by car, although it is unlikely to be as accessible to community walkers and joggers as the Ballenas Secondary School site.

Guiding Principle #4 - Clear financial plan for the long-term replacement of the track surface

It is hard to comment on this as no plans are currently in place. However the sports complex would be developed as a local government facility<sup>3</sup> rather than a school facility, and the review of other track and field facility indicated that this model led to better long term maintenance than was achieved within the school district model.

Guiding Principle #5 - Primacy of track and field

If the track and field facility is the first amenity to be developed on this site, this principle would be observed.

Guiding Principle #6 - Meeting the needs of District 69 schools

In many ways, a new track and field facility in an outdoor sports complex would allow the school to get better access to its existing fields unencumbered by the present track, as well as having access to a higher quality track and field facility for events such as elementary and high school meets and high school athletics season. There would be a cost involved in bussing Ballenas Secondary School students to the track for these events, but this is a cost item that is likely to be in the School District budget for getting other high school and other students to a track at Ballenas Secondary School.

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<sup>3</sup> This includes the North Cowichan model of local government owned, but not-for-profit operated.

## Comparing the Options

There is no objective way to compare these four options. However the following points can be made:

Option 1 is a short term solution and would need to be accompanied by a long term solution to be proposed as a strategy. It does however fit with option 3A since it will form the foundation on which a track surface can eventually be laid.

Option 2 is a way of creating a track with a quality surface, but not one that is usable for track meets.

Options 3 and 4 are the only ones that are really positive long term approaches, in as much as only they deliver facilities that 'do it right', or provide for event potential and its economic spin-offs.

All options deliver an improvement for the Oceanside Track and Field Club.

Options 2, 3, and 4 all will require considerable capital investment and will likely take a considerable time to implement.

The School District, perhaps ironically, would opt for option 4 over option 3 (certainly 3B) since their prime concern is two good fields not a new track.

Many District 69 sports organizations, such as Youth Soccer, would opt for option 4. Their view is that the expenditure of funds on a track and field facility would detract from the region's main goals of starting the process of developing the sports complex and providing additional high quality fields for other sports such as soccer which is the fastest growing sport in the community (and in Canada as a whole<sup>4</sup>). Other sport priorities would need to be explored and priorities established with respect to the needs of the community including baseball, softball, field lacrosse, football, etc.

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<sup>4</sup> Kids' Sports, Statistics Canada, 2008 - Canadian Social Trends, Vol. 85 (11-008-XWE),

## The Costs of a track and field facility

Costing for Option 1 - Conversion of the existing granular surface track to an asphalt base track.

Assumption: Good soil conditions

Costs are from a recently completed running track facility tender

| <u>Item</u>   | <u>Budget</u>    |
|---|------------------|
| (all figures rounded to the nearest thousand)   |                  |
| Excavate to 300mm depth & dispose off-site 1,600m <sup>3</sup> @ \$15/m <sup>3</sup>      | \$24,000         |
| Compact 5,300m <sup>2</sup> exposed base @ \$4/m <sup>2</sup>                             | \$21,000         |
| Place/compact 200mm lift of 16mm minus granular, 1060m <sup>3</sup> @ \$45/m <sup>3</sup> | \$48,000         |
| Install 400 l.m. of ACO trench drain @ \$320/l.m.   | \$128,000        |
| Connect ACO to existing manholes (lump sum)   | \$5,000          |
| Install 480 l.m. of concrete curbing for outer edge @ \$105/l.m.                          | \$50,000         |
| Place 90mm dual lift of track base asphalt, 5,200m <sup>2</sup> @ \$65/m <sup>2</sup>     | <u>\$338,000</u> |
| Sub-Total   | \$614,000        |
| Construction Contingency @ 10%  | <u>\$61,000</u>  |
| Sub-Total   | \$675,000        |
| GST @ 5%  | <u>\$34,000</u>  |
| Total   | \$709,000        |

### Notes:

1. If a standard concrete curb is substituted for the ACO drain channel (and the ACO drain channel is included in the future budget for completing the facility, then \$100,000 can be saved from this budget.
2. All throws and jumps event areas would cost \$153,000 in addition to the above.

## Cost Estimate for Options 3 and 4:

**PRELIMINARY COSTING SPREADSHEET FOR BALLENAS RUNNING TRACK**  
 Prepared by Athletica Sport and Recreation Design Inc.

**Facility elements**

|  |         |  |                       |
|--|---------|--|-----------------------|
| 100m x 65m grass playing field           | 8725 m2 |  | \$450,000.00          |
| IAAF 8 lane running track & field events |         |  | \$1,453,160.00        |
| Fitments                                 |         |  | \$193,000.00          |
| Site utilities                           |         |  | \$110,000.00          |
| <b>Total above</b>                       |         |  | <b>\$2,206,160.00</b> |
| 10% construction contingency             |         |  | \$220,616.00          |
| Consulting Fees (all disciplines)        |         |  | \$120,000.00          |
| <b>TOTAL COST</b>                        |         |  | <b>\$2,546,776.00</b> |

**INFIELD**

|  |          |                     |                     |
|--|----------|---------------------|---------------------|
| <b>SIZE</b>  | 8,725 m2 |                     |                     |
| 100m x 65m sand based grass playing field includes drainage and irrigation | 1 l.s.   | \$450,000.00 / l.s. | \$450,000.00        |
|  |          |                     | <b>\$450,000.00</b> |

**IAAF 8 LANE RUNNING TRACK****BASE**

|   |          |                 |              |
|---|----------|-----------------|--------------|
| Excavation and offsite disposal of native material to 800mm depth | 5,208 m3 | \$25.00 / m3    | \$130,200.00 |
| Compaction of native material                                     | 6,510 m2 | \$5.00 / m2     | \$32,550.00  |
| Import, place, and compact sub-base material to 560mm depth       | 3,646 m3 | \$30.00 / m3    | \$109,380.00 |
| Import, place, and compact 150mm of 19mm minus gravel             | 977 m3   | \$40.00 / m3    | \$39,080.00  |
| Lay two lifts of track asphalt (40/35)                            | 6,510 m2 | \$50.00 / m2    | \$325,500.00 |
| Perimeter concrete curb   | 480 l.m. | \$100.00 / l.m. | \$48,000.00  |

**DRAINAGE**

|  |          |                 |              |
|--|----------|-----------------|--------------|
| Install pre-manufactured drain channel with eight in-line catch basins | 400 l.m. | \$300.00 / l.m. | \$120,000.00 |
|--|----------|-----------------|--------------|

**SYNTHETIC RUNNING TRACK SURFACE**

|                                  |          |              |              |
|----------------------------------|----------|--------------|--------------|
| Poured-in-place full pour system | 6,510 m2 | \$95.00 / m2 | \$618,450.00 |
|----------------------------------|----------|--------------|--------------|

**SITE RESTORATION**

|                                 |          |              |                       |
|---------------------------------|----------|--------------|-----------------------|
| Fine grading and seeded topsoil | 2,000 m2 | \$15.00 / m2 | \$30,000.00           |
|                                 |          |              | <b>\$1,453,160.00</b> |

**FITMENTS**

|  |          |                    |                     |
|--|----------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Long/triple jump pits                            | 2 l.s.   | \$15,000.00 / l.s. | \$30,000.00         |
| Long/triple jump takeoffs & blanking boards      | 8 l.s.   | \$2,000.00 / l.s.  | \$16,000.00         |
| Long/triple jump canvas covers                   | 2 l.s.   | \$2,000.00 / l.s.  | \$4,000.00          |
| Pole vault box                                   | 2 l.s.   | \$2,000.00 / l.s.  | \$4,000.00          |
| Shot put circle                                  | 1 l.s.   | \$5,000.00 / l.s.  | \$5,000.00          |
| Shot put landing area granular material          | 1 l.s.   | \$10,000.00 / l.s. | \$10,000.00         |
| Shot put landing area perimeter curb             | 1 l.s.   | \$10,000.00 / l.s. | \$10,000.00         |
| Discuss/hammer cage                              | 1 l.s.   | \$35,000.00 / l.s. | \$35,000.00         |
| Discuss/hammer ring including hammer insert ring | 1 l.s.   | \$7,000.00 / l.s.  | \$7,000.00          |
| Steeplechase w/ cover                            | 1 l.s.   | \$20,000.00 / l.s. | \$20,000.00         |
| Steeplechase adjustable hurdles                  | 1 l.s.   | \$12,000.00 / l.s. | \$12,000.00         |
| 200 seat bleacher                                | 200 seat | \$200.00 / seat    | \$40,000.00         |
|  |          |                    | <b>\$193,000.00</b> |

**SITE UTILITIES**

|                                       |        |                    |                     |
|---------------------------------------|--------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Storm water connection                | 1 l.s. | \$30,000.00 / l.s. | \$30,000.00         |
| Water connection to site              | 1 l.s. | \$30,000.00 / l.s. | \$30,000.00         |
| Water connection to event areas       | 1 l.s. | \$20,000.00 / l.s. | \$20,000.00         |
| Power connection                      | 1 l.s. | \$20,000.00 / l.s. | \$20,000.00         |
| Power connection to both finish lines | 1 l.s. | \$10,000.00 / l.s. | \$10,000.00         |
|                                       |        |                    | <b>\$110,000.00</b> |

Certain caveats must be applied to this estimate:

- This is a preliminary estimate to provide an order-of-magnitude costing for planning purposes. It is expressed in 2008 dollars. It includes a construction contingency of 10%. As an estimate it could be refined following a geotechnical site assessment.
- The cost is unlikely to vary much between the various options, although since no site is known for option 4, it is impossible to state this with any certainty.
- Having said that, the upgrading that the Ballenas Secondary School infield received (value about \$175,000) several years ago could reduce the costs with option 3A.
- Equally, there are ways in which the eventual construction cost can be reduced somewhat, such as by limiting the upgrading of the existing field or by working with local suppliers to provide construction materials at a reduced cost (e.g. gravel).

However, this is a multi-million dollar project, and it is more likely that delays will increase the cost rather than lead to lower cost.

### Potential Funding Sources

Funding for a project such as this can come from a variety of sources:

- The School Community Connections program can provide up to \$125,000 as long as this contribution is no more than 25% of total project costs.
- The School District could contribute to the overall project if it is on their land, although there are restrictions related to which sources of funds they use and their relationship to the School Community Connections contribution.
- The local governments in the region (Regional District, Cities of Parksville and Town of Qualicum Beach) could contribute through the District 69 Sports Field Services Agreement<sup>5</sup> that covers specific park and recreation facilities. This would likely require a referendum or similar to approve a capital expenditure of this magnitude.
- There are several joint provincial/federal funding programs which are directed at capital projects such as this and application could be made to those programs, although in this respect, this project would be competing with other local government priorities.

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<sup>5</sup> There are other models which could be used, including other agreements that the Regional District is involved in.

## Recommendations

It is recommended:

**That two strategies be developed, one for a short term approach and one for a long term approach.**

**That the short term approach be option 1, namely using the funding within the SCC program to upgrade the current Ballenas Secondary School track, with the other local government and community partners contributing \$375,000 to the SCC \$125,000, and that the project be scaled as far back as necessary to meet this financial target, or community fundraising make up the difference.**

**That the long term approach be to continue with the planning and acquisition of land for a new outdoor sports complex, with a track and field facility being one of the first facilities to be developed in that sports complex.**

Rationale:

Most parties who were consulted as part of this project, and this includes the Oceanside Track and Field Club, recognized that option 4, a new outdoor sports complex, is the best long term solution. However many had the fear that long term would be either 'not in my lifetime' or 'never'; hence the focus on Ballenas Secondary School and option 3.

During this project, there has however been a real desire on the part of many parties to see the outdoor sports complex planning move forward, and this approach provides both for the short term upgrading of Ballenas' current track and the long term development of the outdoor sports complex.

The short term approach should, if funding allows or if alternate funding can be obtained, also include upgrading of the north field at Ballenas Secondary School, so that the school and community have an overall facility that will have a life span of the five to eight years that it might take to develop the outdoor sports complex.

Implementation:

### Short Term – Implement Option 1

Approval in principle should be sought from the Regional District and School District, and a detailed funding plan agreed. Once this is in place, an application for phase 3 funding should be submitted.

Work should proceed to prepare plans for the upgrading of the Ballenas Secondary School track, and the order of magnitude estimate revised accordingly.

It should be noted that the School Community Connections funds are only available for a limited time, and the agreement with UBCM states that the project should be complete by December 31, 2010. Time is of the essence over the next few months.

### Longer Term – Implement Option 4

The site assessment that has been started in this report should be continued, focused on the four identified preferred site areas. Specific sites should be identified within each of these broader areas, evaluated, and work undertaken to obtain the site.

Once the site is obtained, a planning process will be required to design the amenities, with a priority being given to the track and field facility.