



## Report to Council

Department: Community Services  
Division: Community Services  
Date: September 16, 2024  
Prepared by: Jake Morassut, Director, Community Services  
Report Number: Community Services-2024-37  
Subject: Community Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Fund (CSRIF) Application  
Number of Pages: 8

### Recommendation(s)

**That** Community Services Report 2024-37 entitled “Community Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Fund (CSRIF) Application” be received; and

**That** the following resolution be approved by Council for purposes of confirming funding for the Community Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Fund (CSRIF) Application for the further development of the new Essex Centre Sport Fields.

- a. **That** Council approves the submission of an application to CSRIF Application for the development of the new Essex Centre Sport Fields, and
- b. **That** should the Town of Essex be successful in receiving 50% of all eligible CSRIF costs submitted, up to a maximum of \$10,000,000, the project budget is \$16,779,937.04 (including non-refundable tax) and the Town of Essex confirms funding for the remaining \$8,389,968.52 (including non-refundable tax) of the total project cost through the funding model described in Table A of the report Community Services Report 2024-37.

## Purpose

The Community Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Fund (CSIRF) requires that all proposed projects provide a resolution of Council to confirm that Council will commit to funding additional project costs, above funds provided through the CSIRF.

## Background and Discussion

For several years, The Town of Essex explored land options to be able to accommodate the outdoor sport field shortage in Essex Centre. Several of the main user groups (Essex Minor Baseball, Essex Minor Soccer, Essex County Ravens Football, Adult Soccer, and Adult Slo-Pitch leagues) have presented to Essex Council requesting that the Town create additional fields to accommodate their current and future needs. The Town has also received several requests to host more adult slo-pitch leagues, a minor football program and additional soccer leagues in the Essex Centre area; however, the Town has not been able to accommodate the requests due to lack of facility availability.

In 2015, a Parks, Recreation, and Culture Master Plan was conducted, and the plan recommended that the Town look at purchasing property to be able to add outdoor sport fields to accommodate the current needs and potential growth of the community. This shortage of fields was once again realized during the 2023 Community Services Master Plan. For example, Essex Centre previously had 9 baseball diamonds and currently there are only four diamonds. The reduction in baseball diamonds occurred when two new elementary schools were built in Essex Centre and the new schools were built where the current sport fields were located.

Essex Centre is also lacking in soccer fields of all sizes, for all ages, as there are currently only four soccer fields (two full size and two junior fields) which does not meet the demand of current leagues (youth league, 18+ league, and 30+ league) and requests for new leagues in the Essex Centre area.

In addition, with the expansion of Highway 3, Hanlan Street will become a local commuter road within Essex Centre and the extension of Hanlan Street to County Road 23 (Arner Townline) will go through the current soccer fields.

To start the process on consulting with stakeholders on their needs as well as develop an overall cost for the project, the Town hired Bezaire Partners to provide a conceptual layout with enough technical review to ensure a buildable result and a cost estimate. The initial project budget estimate was for \$20,649,659 and Council gave direction for Administration to apply for the Federal Sport Infrastructure grant in 2019; however, the Town was notified it was not successful in receiving any funding.

Administration continued to work with Bezaire Partners to develop a phased in plan and in 2020 Administration presented an option to Council to phase in the project. The Phase 1 budget included adding infrastructure to the site, six soccer fields, two baseball diamonds and the cost to complete Phase 1 of the project in 2020 was \$6,494,184.

In July of 2021, Administration applied to the Canada Community Revitalization Fund (CCRF) to receive up to \$750,000 towards developing Phase 1 of the project. In January 2022, Administration was **notified that the Town's application was being reviewed but confirmation** was required that the remaining funds for Phase 1 were confirmed. Unfortunately, no additional funds were allocated in the 2022 capital budget for the project. Based on further **conversations with the Town's CCRF contact it was suggested that funding would only be** approved if the remaining funds for the project could be confirmed. Based on these discussions, Administration worked with Bezaire Partners to develop a Phase 1A plan that would only include amenities that are required in the near future. Bezaire Partners developed a revised plan/budget, and this information was forwarded on to CCRF for further review.

The Town of Essex was successful in receiving funding for Phase 1A and completed this portion of the project. Unfortunately, the Town has not seen success with seed germination due to the lack of water supply, so future phasing is to include water supply for the fields to

establish the turf, and, with Council approval, upgrade two of the soccer fields to artificial turf fields.

During a recent meeting with the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport, the Honourable Neil Lumsden, Minister Lumsden stated there is a large focus on the tourism component of this grant, so it is imperative to ensure the Town of Essex is aiming for uniqueness and longer seasonal uses of the complex. The rationale behind the addition of the artificial turf fields is because it will allow for extended use, outside of the traditional seasons, which is beneficial for sport tourism and aligns with our Climate Adaptation Plan (Objective 5.1 – Investigate modifying season start, end and duration dates as well as general schedules for recreational programming, where possible, to try to avoid spring flooding and summer heat and Introduce more Fall Season outdoor programming). In addition, the artificial turf fields could be utilized for other sports than just soccer, which can include football, lacrosse, flag football, field hockey, etc.

With the exclusion of the PickleBarn area, the Town has been provided with an estimated \$16,779,937.04 (including non-refundable tax) to complete the remainder of the project. This would include the below amenities, in accordance with the attached image of the park:

- General Site Work
- Sports Facilities (baseball, soccer, and artificial turf)
- Parking and Access Roads
- Pedestrian Pathways
- Maintenance Yard and Building
- Canteen/Washrooms
- Play areas
- Electrical/Lighting

# Financial Impact

The Community Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Fund (CSIRF) can provide up to 50% of the total eligible project costs up to a maximum of \$10,000,000. The CSIRF requires that all remaining project costs need to be confirmed to ensure the project will proceed. The remaining phases of the project include site work, sports facilities, parking, access roads, pedestrian pathways, maintenance yard and building, canteen/washrooms, play areas and electrical/lighting with a budget for this work of \$16,779,937.04 (including non-refundable tax). Should the Town receive the maximum allowed funding from CSIRF, the Town of Essex would be responsible for \$8,389,968.52 (including non-refundable tax) as per the proposed budget. Administration is recommending these funds come from the sources described below.

Table A: Proposed Funding of Essex Sports Fields			
	Proposed Funding Sources		
Project Cost	Grant Funding	Land Acquisition Reserve	Development Charge Reserve
<b>\$16,779,937.04</b>	\$8,389,968.52	\$779,157.89	\$7,550,971.67

The above project is mainly attributed to **growth and is therefore considered a “Development Charge eligible project”**. It is included in the current draft Development Charge Bylaw to be adopted in October 2024. The reserve balance does not currently support the entire proposed funding amount but could be internally financed in the interim and repaid as the development charges are collected.

Sufficient balance for the amounts to be funded from the Land Acquisition Reserve may be pending timing of sale of Town owned surplus properties and therefore may require the need to be internally financed and repaid (with applicable interest) as proceeds are realized.

The Town would use the Landfill Reserve to internally finance the costs as described above. The balance is sufficient and projected to remain sufficient for the cashflow requirements detailed above, though out the budget years 2025-2027 of the project.

The model above does not include any forms of external debt, nor does it factor in naming right revenues which would be forthcoming and used to offset additional costs of operating the larger complex.

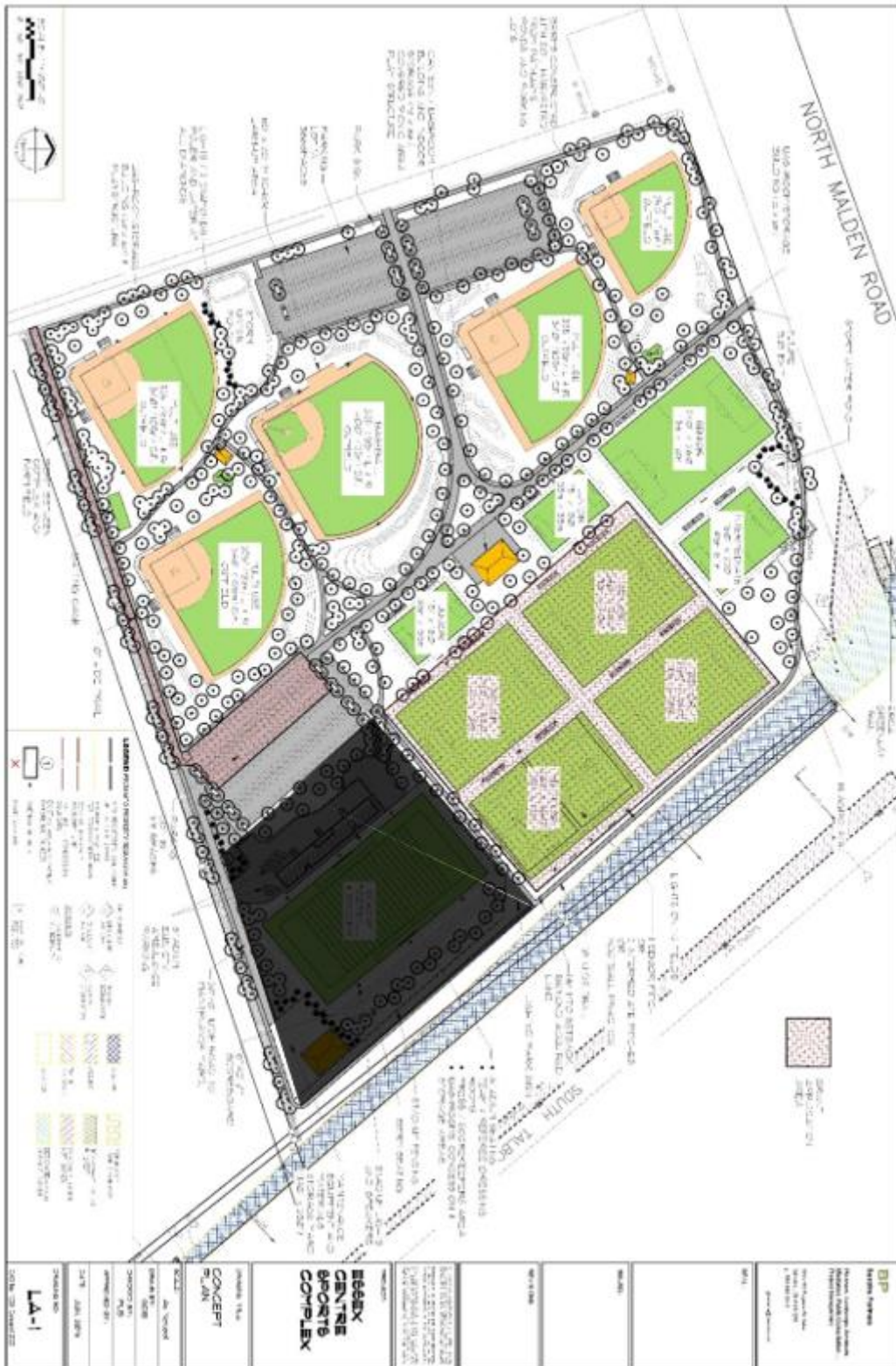
## Consultations

Bezaire Partners

Kate Giurissevich, Director of Corporate Services

Doug Sweet, Chief Administrative Officer

Appendix A – Essex Centre Sport Fields Layout



## Link to Strategic Priorities

- ☒ Embrace asset management best practices to build, maintain, and continuously improve our municipally owned infrastructure.
- ☒ **Leverage our Town’s competitive advantages to** promote jobs and economic investment.
- ☒ Take care of our natural environment and strengthen the sense of belonging to everyone **who makes Essex “home”**.
- ☒ Deliver friendly customer service in an efficient, effective, and transparent manner while providing an exceptional working environment for our employees.
- ☒ Build corporate-level and community-level climate resilience through community engagement and partnership and corporate objectives.



## Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Community Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Fund - Community Services-2024-37.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Sep 12, 2024

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:



**Kate Giurissevich, Director, Corporate Services - Sep 12, 2024 - 9:14 AM**



**Doug Sweet, Chief Administrative Officer - Sep 12, 2024 - 9:18 AM**