



RECREATION GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

Date: Wednesday, February 10, 2021
Time: 1:00 PM
Location: <https://www.rockyview.ca/>

Pages

A. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

B. UPDATES/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

D. APPOINTMENTS

E. GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Division 4 - Langdon Quad Diamond Operational Model

2

File: N/A

F. OTHER BUSINESS

G. ADJOURN THE MEETING

RECREATION, PARKS AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

TO: Recreation Governance Committee
DATE: February 10, 2021 **DIVISION:** 4
FILE: N/A **APPLICATION:** N/A
SUBJECT: Langdon Quad Diamond Operational Model

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

During the January 27, 2021, meeting the Recreation Governance Committee received the presentation for the Langdon Quad Diamond Operational Model, and a motion was passed stating that *item E-2 be tabled to be considered by the Recreation Governance Committee at a Special Meeting to be held on February 10, 2021.*

On July 23, 2019, Council approved funding for the construction of a quad diamond facility in the Langdon Joint Use Site. Rocky View County has been managing the construction of the facility and anticipates an opening for summer 2021. As the facility nears completion, determining the appropriate operational model for this amenity is required. An independent consultant was engaged to complete a situational analysis to review the operational and maintenance requirements of the facility, and to recommend an appropriate facility operational model. The Langdon Quad Diamonds Operating Model Assessment Study was prepared for RGC's consideration.

ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION:

Administration recommends that the County operate and manage the facility for the first two years to establish a baseline for operational requirements and costs, in accordance with Option #1.

BACKGROUND:

The Recreation and Parks Master Plan identifies a facility operations framework to assist with determining the appropriate operational model for any given facility. This framework includes a situational analysis to identify operational characteristics of the facility, outlining the level of service required by the facility, such as technical expertise, necessary certifications, and preferred resources.

As the construction of the quad diamond facility nears completion, it is critical for the County to determine the operational model for the facility. As it is the first recreational facility constructed by the County, this site would set a precedence for future facilities in the County with regard to ensuring proper maintenance and usage.

The County retained HarGroup Management Consultant to complete this analysis and to determine possible operational models for the Langdon quad diamond facility. The study examines the market definition and expected user-base of the facility, and provides various scenarios for potential operators, outlining projected revenue and expenses.

Four types of operating models were developed based on the findings of the analysis and review of the operating requirements of the quad diamond facility:

1. *Community Group (NT)* – A community group operates all aspects of the facility (administration and maintenance) and principally rents the diamonds to user groups for league play, practices, and tournaments.

Administration Resources

Althea Panaguiton, Recreation, Parks and Community Support



ROCKY VIEW COUNTY

2. *Community Group (T)* - A community group operates all aspects of the facility (administration and maintenance) and rents the diamonds to user groups, but also employs other revenue-generating initiatives, such as tournament organization, and event development and deployment.
3. *County* – The County is responsible for all aspects of the facility (administration and maintenance) and principally rents the diamonds to user groups for league play, practices, and tournaments.
4. *County - Contractor* – the County operates the administration of the facility, but contracts much of the maintenance to an independent contractor.

Further details outlining the advantages and disadvantages of each operating model is shown on page 20 of the Langdon Quad Diamonds Operating Model Assessment Study (Attachment 'A').

Based on the estimated budgets for each operating model, it is anticipated that the County would be required to provide some level of financial contribution to support the ongoing operation of the facility. This is estimated to range between approximately \$30,000.00 and \$38,000.00 for the first three models, with a higher deficit should the County contract out maintenance of the facility.

Upon evaluating the various operating scenarios, the findings of the study recommend that the County assume operation of the Langdon Quad Diamond Facility using the County operating model. As per the study, in the short-term, it is expected that the facility will operate at a deficit regardless of the operator, and that the deficit amount is expected to be similar whether the operator is the community group or the County. By adopting the recommended approach, the County, rather than the community group, would assume the risk associated with the facility operation. Further, this approach does not preclude community groups from organizing tournaments to raise funds for its organization or community. Additionally, this would provide opportunity for the County to develop systems and processes that will assist future County-owned facilities.

It should be noted that for the 2021 season, most of the maintenance of the quad diamonds is already accounted for as part of the agreement with the construction team, with the exception of daily maintenance requirements and events/tournament preparation.

In addition to the recommendation noted in the study, it is recommended that the County operate and manage the facility for at least the first two years. This provides an opportunity to establish a baseline for operational requirements and costs. Once these parameters are in place, the operational model can be re-evaluated for effectiveness and feasibility.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:

It is anticipated that the facility will generate a deficit of at least \$30,000.00, which will be assumed by the County, to be sourced through the Langdon Special Tax. Further budget implications will be determined based on which operating model is approved. The Langdon Quad Diamonds Operating Model Assessment Study outlines estimated revenue and expenses for each operating model.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

The implementation of the Langdon Quad Diamond operational model expands community services delivery. The operations of the facility will increase the programs available to the community of Langdon, benefiting residents of Rocky View County.



OPTIONS:

- Option #1: THAT Administration be directed to operate the Langdon Quad Diamonds for the next two years and report back to the Recreation Governance Committee.
- Option #2: THAT Administration be directed to complete an expression of interest to determine potential operators for the Langdon Quad Diamond facility.
- Option #3: THAT alternative direction be provided.

Respectfully submitted,

Concurrence,

"Theresa Cochran"

"Al Hoggan"

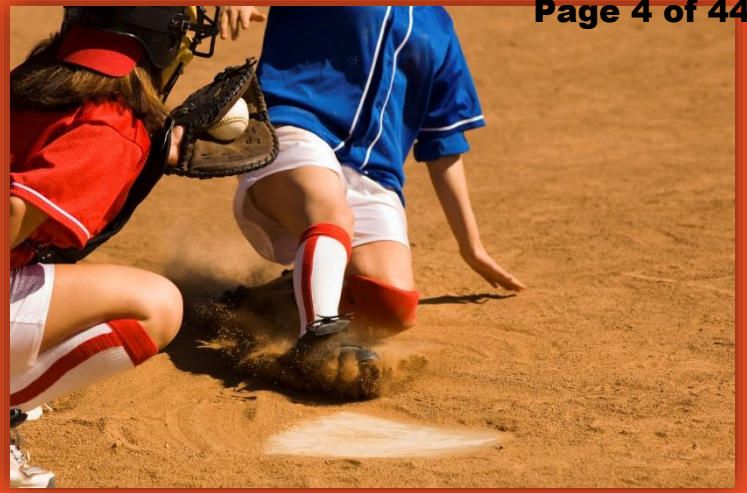
Executive Director
Community Development Services

Chief Administrative Officer

AP/rp

ATTACHMENTS:

ATTACHMENT 'A': Langdon Quad Diamonds Operating Model Assessment Study



Langdon Quad Diamonds Operating Model Assessment Study

January 2021



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Introduction

Rocky View County constructed a quad diamond facility in Langdon that will be operational in the Summer 2021. The County engaged HarGroup Management Consultants Inc. to research and identify how the facility might be operated. This report presents the operating models that were examined and recommended for the Langdon Quad Diamond Facility (LQDF).

In the past, recreation facilities within the County have been operated by non-profit community groups. However, there are various operating approaches that Municipalities use to manage public recreation facilities. The County's new Recreation and Parks Master Plan provides a framework for assessing operational models for future facilities developed in the community. This framework has been used to consider how the LQDF might be operated.

A set of objectives were developed to guide the assessment study. Based on these objectives, a methodology was organized and implemented for the study.

- A situational analysis was conducted to assess market, operational, and economic attributes of ball diamond facilities. Various data were used for this analysis including interviews conducted with stakeholders and representatives of similar facilities within Alberta.
- A set of operational specifications were developed that address distinct characteristics needed for the LQDF.
- Four operating models were identified and examined for application at the LQDF. Benefits

Study Objectives:

- Examination of the operational model with consideration for the usership.
- Analysis of the market definition and user-base of the quad diamond facility.
- A situation analysis identifying operational characteristics of the facility, outlining the level of service that is required by this facility such as, technical expertise, certifications necessary, and resources preferred.
- Identification of revenue and expenses to operate the quad diamond facility.
- Evaluation of possible operator of the facility (County-operated, private contractors, volunteers, non-profit associations).
 - A breakdown of the advantages and disadvantages included with each type of operator including the costs associated with each option.
- Complete an Expression of Interest to gauge potential opportunities to attract possible facility operators (If deemed appropriate at this stage of the assessment).
- Complete the analysis of the most appropriate model for this facility and synthesize the findings outlining recommendations.

and challenges for each model were examined to identify recommendations for operating the LQDF.

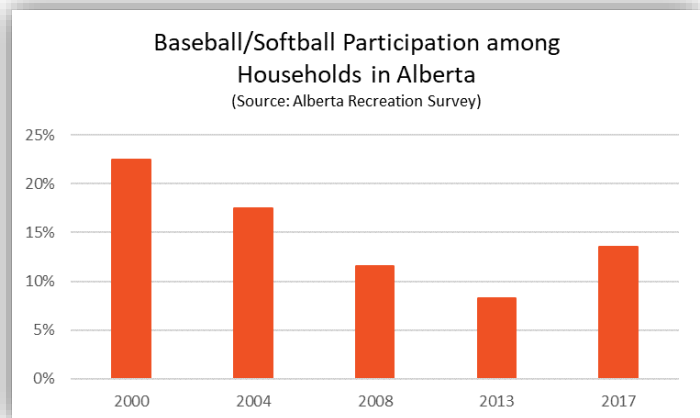
This report presents the contextual findings and conclusions of the assessment study.

Situational Analysis

Baseball and softball are popular spring and summer activities. Many Albertans participate in these activities and nearly all communities throughout the province have ball diamond amenities available for residents to enjoy these sport activities.

Based on the recent Rocky View County Recreation Needs Assessment Study 2020 (see appendices), baseball and softball are also popular within the County and there is evidence to suggest that involvement is fairly high among households in the Langdon area (e.g., approximately one in four households have a member participating in these activities).

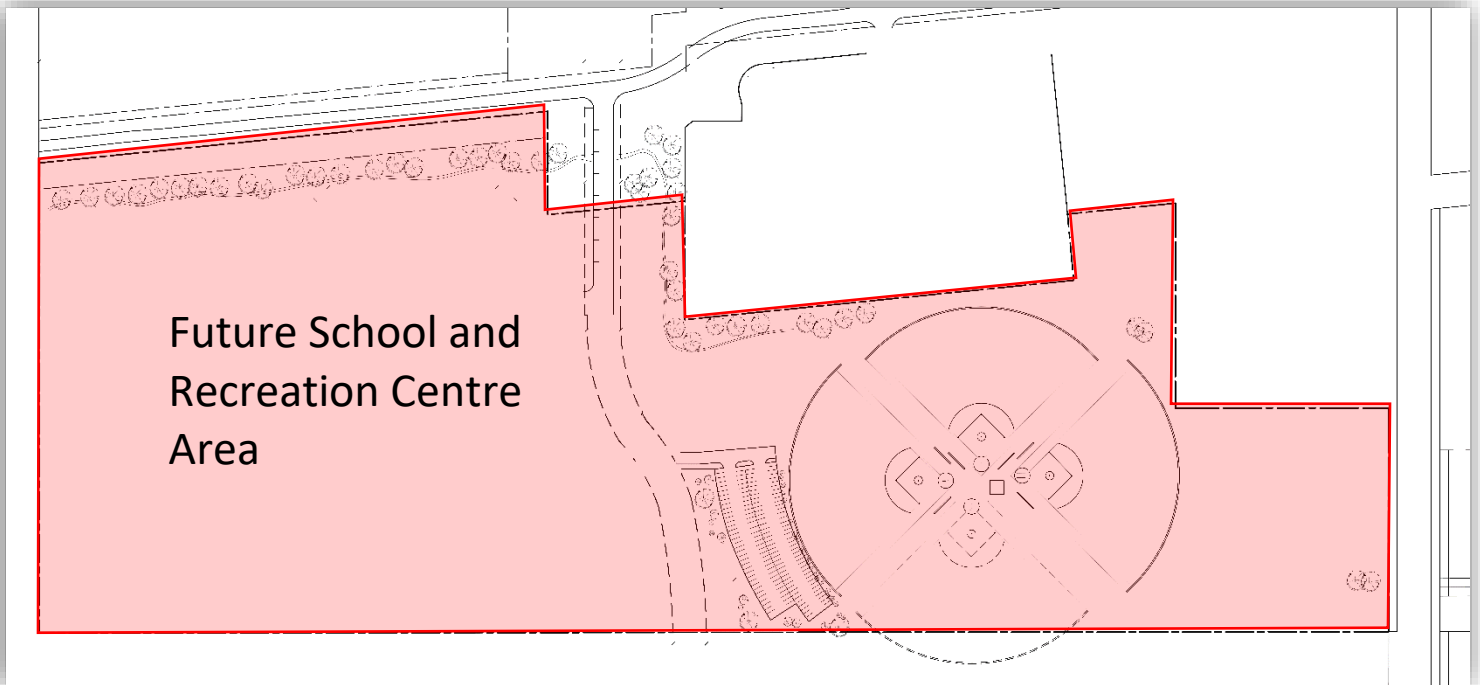
The LQDF is a needed addition within the Langdon community. Currently, two ball diamonds with shale infields are located in Langdon and are used almost every night during the playing season between May and September for both little league baseball and adult softball activities. The quad diamond facility will provide four additional diamonds with shale infields into the local inventory.



Baseball and softball (including fastball and slo-pitch) activities require distinctive specifications for ball diamond amenities for pitching areas (mound heights and length between mound and home plate), base paths, and distance of home plate to home run fence. The LQDF has been designed and constructed to be multi-purpose and address the specifications of the different games. Both baseball and softball can be played at the facility. For example, there is infield infrastructure to accommodate two baseline distances and temporary mounds can be put in for baseball.



Illustrated drawings of the Langdon Quad Diamond Facility



Conceptual drawings presenting the Joint Use Site with Quad Diamonds and Future School and Recreation Centre Area

The composition of the LQDF with four diamonds in one location will make it appealing for hosting baseball and softball tournaments. The facility is enclosed by fencing to contain tournament activities and the home run fence is 300' away from home plate, which will be appealing to all types of softball (slo-pitch) tournaments including beginner to high performance.

The ball diamonds are located on a joint use site that is owned by the County and Rocky View Schools. Future development at the site is expected to include a school and a recreation centre. Representatives from other communities interviewed for this study suggested that having other recreation facilities onsite or near diamond facilities helps to increase the appeal of quad diamond facilities for tournaments (e.g., providing other recreation opportunities, washrooms, etc.).



Markets and Users

Municipally owned ball diamond amenities typically serve local and non-local markets. Local markets are defined as organizations or groups that serve residents who play baseball or softball and live within the community where the amenities are situated. For the LQDF, the current local market will be the Langdon Little League and the Langdon Softball Association, both of which have players who live in Langdon and its surrounding area. Non-local markets will be baseball and softball organizations or groups that manage and coordinate activities (e.g., games, practices, and tournaments) for players living outside of Langdon and area.

The Langdon Little League had about 220 players participating in baseball in 2019.¹ The Langdon Softball Association had 200 players who played in softball leagues.



¹ Note: The 2019 participation statistics are used due to the 2020 playing season being affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Ball Diamond Users in Langdon (2019)		
Organization	Teams	Players
Langdon Little League	8 T-ball 8 Coach pitch 4 Minor 3 Major 1 Junior	220
Langdon Softball Association	24	200

Representatives of both organizations suggest that past participation has been limited due to the lack of ball diamond amenities and more players are expected in upcoming seasons due to the new diamonds being available at the new LQDF. Further, Langdon has had a growing population, which is expected to continue in the future (see appendices). This growth will likely increase the number of baseball and softball players in the community.

The Langdon Softball Association organizes its league play at the two existing diamonds and arranges its games to enable Langdon Little League use during prime-time hours (e.g., before 7:00 pm on weeknights). To accommodate all of its players, the Langdon Little League also uses open fields within the community, a grass diamond at the local school, and diamonds located in Indus, Carseland, and Calgary.

During weeknights, the LQDF is expected to be mostly used by the Langdon Softball Association for its league games and the Langdon Little League for games and practices for teams involving older players (e.g. Major and Junior teams with players aged 9+). For the most part, it is expected that the Langdon Softball League will use three of the diamonds and the Langdon Little League will use one over the next few years.

The shifting of play to the LQDF will enable the Langdon Little League to use the two existing shale infield ball diamonds in Langdon for its younger league divisions both during weeknights and on weekends. Langdon Little League may also use the

the LQDF periodically to organize special events to expose younger players to the facility.

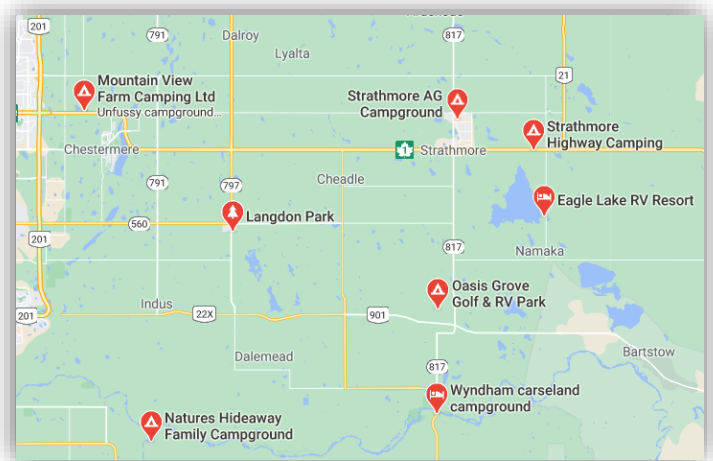
Discussions with representatives that operate similar Municipally owned and operated ball diamond facilities suggests that local markets typically have priority of use over non-local markets, especially on weeknights. Baseball and softball organizations from communities such as Calgary, Chestermere, Strathmore, etc. may also be interested in use of the LQDF for league play or practices, however local groups should have priority of use over these non-local users.

In the future, other local user groups might establish such as other minor baseball organizations, other softball groups, fastball teams or leagues, etc. The County's policy regarding Public Benefit will need to apply to ensure access to the LQDF if new organizations develop.

On weekends, the LQDF may also be used by the Langdon Softball Association and Langdon Little League for games or practices. However, most of the time, the LQDF is expected to be used for weekend tournaments. Based on interviews conducted with representatives of comparable facilities in Alberta, this kind of scheduling is typical for diamonds similar to the LQDF (e.g., a quad diamond facility or several diamonds situated in one location). Tournaments typically start on Friday evening and end on Saturday, unless held on long weekends when the tournaments are three-day events.

In addition, these representatives and those that organize softball tournaments throughout the province indicated that washrooms, concession facilities, and local temporary accommodations such as motels, hotels, campsites, or fields that allow onsite camping make ball diamond facilities more appealing for tournaments. Although there are no permanent washrooms or concession facilities currently available onsite at the LQDF, portable toilets and event tents could be used by organizers to support tournaments. Further, washrooms and concession facilities might be built in the future with additional servicing and site development at the LQDF.

While there are no local motels, hotels, or campgrounds currently available in Langdon, such facilities are located within a 20-minute drive of the LQDF. It is unclear if onsite camping will be available due to the lack of a leveled field (potential liability issues) and the location being a joint-use site and preparation for the construction of a future school possibly beginning as early as 2021. However, the paved parking lot at LQDF might provide temporary overnight opportunities.



Camping Locations Near Langdon

Tournaments may be organized by both local and non-local groups. For instance, the Langdon Little League and Langdon Softball Association could organize tournaments at the LQDF and should be given priority over non-local groups. There may also be other local groups that have interest in organizing tournaments including the eventual operator of the facility.

Non-local groups are also likely to want to organize tournaments that draw players and teams from outside the local area to participate. There is at least one softball organization that specializes in organizing tournaments that has expressed interest in the LQDF as a venue for their events.

Actually, based on discussions with local and non-local groups, the LQDF is expected to be a popular venue for both baseball and softball tournaments.

Competitive Facilities

The Langdon Little League and Langdon Softball Association currently use diamond facilities in Langdon, Indus, Carseland, and Calgary for league games and practices. Shifting their play to the LQDF is likely to result in less use of diamond facilities in Carseland and Calgary. Any organizations not located in Langdon and area will have further access to these diamonds should demand require it.

Competition is more of an issue for the tournament market than for facilities used by local user groups for league play.

Tournaments can be held at single diamond and multi-diamond facilities. There are hundreds of single diamond facilities located and available in the region and these are not appealing to many tournaments, especially those that have higher numbers of teams involved. For the purposes of this study, the analysis will consider facilities with at least three diamonds available at a location, such as quad diamond facilities, as these are most likely to represent competition for the LQDS.

For the most part, local organizations, whether minor baseball or minor and adult softball leagues or teams, use local diamond facilities to organize tournaments. Some local organizations might use facilities in other communities, if local facilities are not available or local amenities do not have sufficient numbers of diamonds to host a tournament. The latter situation may occur for organizations in Chestermere, Strathmore, or Calgary that might consider the LQDF as a viable option for their tournaments. In these circumstances, the competitive facilities for the LQDF are those situated in the Calgary region and are identified in the map on the subsequent page of this report.²

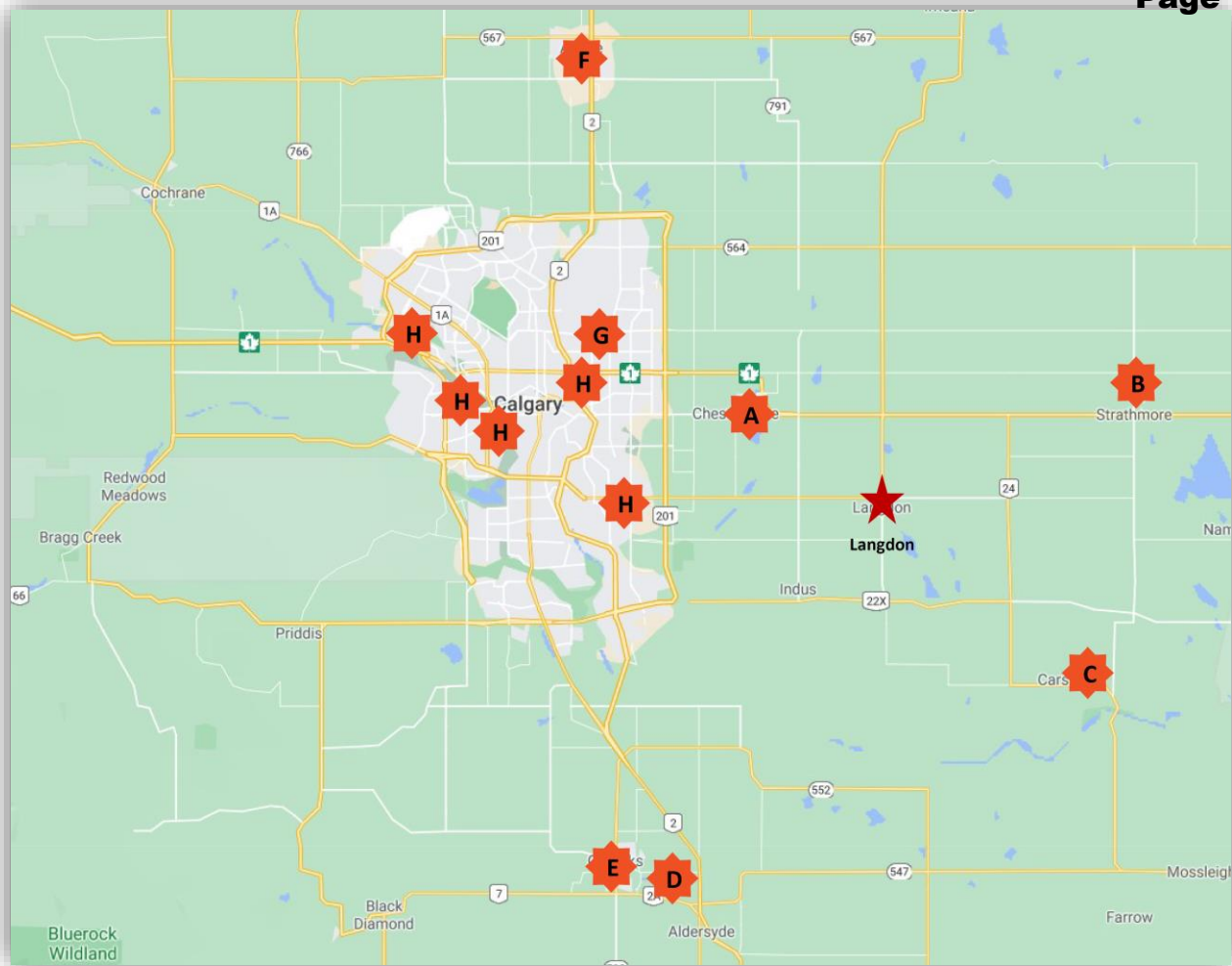
All of the facilities have washrooms available (either permanent or portable toilets) or the diamonds are located close to recreation facilities where washroom access is available. A few have onsite camping available or are near campgrounds (more of an issue for adult softball than minor baseball or softball tournaments). A few facilities have concessions that may be available to rent when hosting tournaments.

Some of the facilities are owned and operated by Municipalities (Calgary Athletic Parks, Airdrie, and Okotoks), while others are operated by Agricultural Societies (Indus Recreation Centre, Carseland Millennium Ball Diamonds, Strathmore Ag. Ground Ball Diamonds). The facilities are rented to local and non-local organizations that provide league play and tournaments for residents.

Two facilities, On Deck Okotoks and Jaycee Slo-Pitch Park, are operated by organizations that specialize in organizing softball leagues and tournaments. These facilities have at least 7 diamonds on site and were established to accommodate large scale (mainly softball) tournaments in the region. On Deck Okotoks is operated by NSA Canada (National Slo Pitch Athletic), a business corporation, which organizes slo-pitch leagues and tournaments throughout Canada. Jaycee Slo-Pitch Park is operated by the Calgary Slowpitch Society and provides league play and tournaments at the facility. Both of these facilities are available for rental by other organizations.

The Chestermere Regional Recreation Centre is operated by the Chestermere Regional Community Association, a not-for-profit charity. Local baseball organizations and the Chestermere Adult Slowpitch provide league play opportunities and the diamonds are available for rent by non-local organizations for tournaments.

² Note: Ball diamond facilities on the subsequent page represent those locations with at least 3 diamonds on site. There may be other facilities, however the ones noted in the map were identified through discussions with stakeholders and through desk research.



Locations of Notable Competitive Facilities in the Region - Tournament Facilities

Locations and Facilities

(note: facilities identified in the study through desk research and interviews with stakeholders)

A	Chestermere Regional Recreation Centre - Chestermere 3 diamonds, near recreation centre	G	Jaycee Slo-Pitch Park - Calgary 10 diamonds (softball), 3 concessions
B	Strathmore Ag. Ground Ball Diamonds - Strathmore 4 diamonds, on site camping, near recreation centre	H	Deerfoot Athletic Park - Calgary 4 diamonds
C	Carseland Millennium Ball Diamonds - Carseland 4 diamonds, concession building, on site camping		Glenmore Athletic Park - Calgary 3 diamonds (1 baseball/2softball), near ice arena
D	On Deck Okotoks (private facility) - Foothills County 7 diamonds (softball), on site camping, restaurant		Optimist Athletic Park - Calgary 7 diamonds (2 baseball/ 5 softball) and 2 little league diamonds, near ice arena
E	Okotoks Recreation Centre - Okotoks 4 diamonds (at least 1 baseball), near recreation centre		Pop Davies Athletic Park - Calgary 5 diamonds (softball)
	Seaman Stadium 3 baseball fields, part of baseball complex for Okotoks Dawgs (a baseball academy and collegiate team)		Shouldice Athletic Park - Calgary 8 diamonds (softball), concessions, near ice arena
F	Chinook Winds Regional Park - Okotoks 8 diamonds (4 baseball and 4 softball), near recreation facilities		

Almost all of these diamond facilities are busy between May to June, however there are opportunities to book new tournaments. Demand for facilities by tournament organizers is influenced by the specifications of the amenities such as having at least 280' + home plate to home run fence distances. The LQDF has diamonds with a length of 300' distance, which is likely to make them desirable, especially for softball games involving higher performance players who can hit balls long distances.

Weekend demand can be affected by the amount of use facilities book for local league play. For example, some leagues run from April to June, which can open up the availability of diamond facilities during summer months. Based on discussions with the Langdon Little League and Langdon Softball Association, this pattern of demand is similar in Langdon, and these organizations would organize their schedules accordingly.

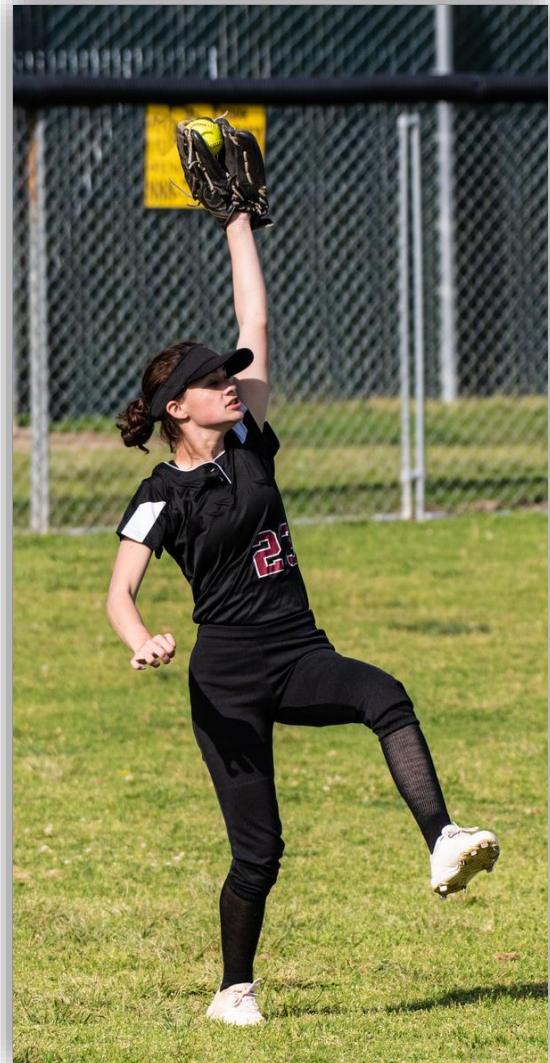
Regional and provincial competitions are organized by Provincial sport bodies such as Baseball Alberta and Softball Alberta. These events occur throughout the province and facilities may have an opportunity to periodically host these events.

There are organizations that organize softball tournaments in the Calgary region, throughout Alberta, as well as the country as a whole. Examples of these organizations include Calgary Sport and Social Club, NSA Canada, and Slo-Pitch National. Interviews conducted for this study suggest that there is interest to host tournaments at the LQDF. It has several appealing features including the length of field between home plate and home run fences, the height of outfield fences, and its location within the region. Some diamond facilities provide exclusive rights to use to these organizations, but this kind of arrangement can limit use of the facilities to members of those organizations for

tournament play (rather than being more accessible to the general public).³

Based on information gathered for this study and interviews conducted with similar facilities around the province, it is expected that the LQDF will attract tournaments most weekends from both local and non-local markets, while accommodating local league play during weekdays, particularly during May through June.

Being located close to Calgary appears to be beneficial as there are a lot of teams and organizations that want to organize tournaments. Nonetheless, to ensure that there are tournaments at the LQDF, it will need to be marketed and promoted in the marketplace.



³ Note: the Langdon Softball Association is affiliated with NSA Canada.

Types of Operating Approaches

Through the research conducted for this study, two types of operating models for diamond facilities owned by municipalities were identified.

- *Municipally Operated* - The Municipality itself manages bookings and accounting (payments for rentals) and maintains the diamond facilities. In some cases, contractors may assist the Municipality with maintenance by providing specialized services (e.g., fertilization, pest control, portable toilets, etc.) or consultation (e.g., outfield and infield restoration and repair). For instance, in several interviews, representatives indicated that specialists from Olds College, Horticulture, had been consulted about turf grass management.
- *Community Group Operated* - A community group is contracted by the Municipality to provide administration and maintenance services for a diamond facility. Examples identified in the research include Agricultural Societies, sport organizations (baseball or softball associations), and community associations. These organizations were contracted for all aspects of operation and typically had adequate inhouse staffing levels for administration and maintenance.



Based on interviews conducted for this study with comparable facilities, it was more common for Municipalities to operate the diamond facilities than community groups. When asked why the Municipalities had not contracted the facility's operation, various explanations were offered:

- The most common response was that there had never been interest expressed by community groups to operate the diamond facilities.
- One representative indicated that within the Parks department there is horticultural and turf management knowledge and resources available to effectively maintain the diamonds and address challenges that might arise such as pest control or damage to the amenities. This representative indicated that temporary staff are hired to provide basic maintenance of the diamond amenities during the operating season, while full-time Parks staff provide support and perform or address more complex maintenance tasks and issues.
- Another representative indicated that since diamond facilities require daily maintenance that some community groups (volunteer-based) do not want to assume the responsibility of hiring and administering paid staff that is necessary to manage the facility and ensure the diamonds are maintained at standards that have been set by the Municipality.
- It was also suggested by other representatives that the Municipality can apply arms-length objectivity about how the diamond facilities are operated:
 - Maintenance staff determine if diamond facilities should be open after inclement weather such as rain or snow as sport organizations are more likely to want to use the amenities even if they are not suitable for play.
 - Municipalities should make decisions about bookings and scheduling to mitigate bias or preferences for schedules and booking times.

Some Municipal representatives indicated that teams or leagues that regularly use the diamond facilities are provided opportunities to conduct additional maintenance such as infield dragging or racking. Essentially, coaches or managers are provided access to some equipment so that they can provide supplementary maintenance, if necessary.

Some of the reasons community groups operate Municipally owned diamond facilities include the groups being the only or main user, costs to operate are lower (mainly if Municipalities have unionized staff), and there is limited bureaucracy to respond to market conditions (e.g., quickly reduce prices if necessary).

Community groups operating municipally owned diamond facilities, at least those similar in scope to the LQDF in terms of number of diamonds, maintenance requirements, and level of investment, typically have paid staff that are responsible for other amenities or functions within the organization. These groups may have volunteer boards that govern the organization; however, these boards are supported by multiple paid staff who have the capacity to effectively plan, coordinate, develop, and maintain the diamond facilities. Issues can arise during the preparation of the amenities at the beginning of the season, weekly during the playing season with market development and bookings, and maintenance and repairs, and shut down at the end of season that need to be addressed. Having both full-time paid management and front-line staff within the organization enable these groups to respond to these issues efficiently and effectively.

Interested Stakeholders

As part of this assessment study, consideration was given to potential interest within the community and among private contractors to operate the LQDF, either in whole (administration and maintenance) or in part (maintenance only). Through these investigations, there was enough interest identified among several organizations to suggest that a widely promoted Expression of Interest may attract potential applicants to effectively gauge the market for possible operators of LQDF.

An Expression of Interest should solicit:

- Applicants interest in administration and/or maintenance of the facility.
- The capacity, capabilities, and resources within the organization to operate the facility.
- Experience operating facilities of similar scope and size of the facility.
- In house expertise or certification in horticulture, turf and soil management, and pest control practices.
- Methods and procedures employed for quality control, continuity, market development and engagement.



Existing Diamond Facilities in Langdon and Other Areas in the County

There are currently two shale infield diamonds at Langdon Park in Langdon. These facilities are managed by the Langdon Community Association, which is responsible for booking and scheduling the diamonds and maintaining the infields.⁴ Any surpluses or deficits from operating the diamonds are the responsibility of the Langdon Community Association. The County's Cemetery Services cuts and maintains the grass at the diamonds.

The Langdon Community Association has expressed interest in operating the LQDF. In discussions with representatives of this group, it was assumed that the current arrangement for the two existing diamonds would transfer to the LQDF in that they would be responsible for administration as well as maintenance of infields and Cemetery Services would maintain the grass.

This arrangement is different from other diamond facilities and sports fields operating in the County. For instance, there are two diamonds at the Indus Recreation Centre, which is responsible for all the administration and maintenance of the amenities, as well as surpluses or deficits that may result. This arrangement also applies to the Springbank Park for All Seasons, which operates two diamonds and soccer and football fields, and the Chestermere Regional Recreation Centre that operates three diamonds and soccer fields. There are also parks located throughout the County that are operated by community groups, which are responsible for all aspects of operations and do not receive assistance from Cemetery Services. These circumstances and approaches should be considered in the development of an operating model for the LQDF.

In addition, the operation of future facilities in the County generally should be considered. It is expected that diamond facilities similar to that of the LQDF may be developed in other areas of the County such as in the urban hamlets of Harmony, Conrich, Glenbow Ranch, Balzac West, and Cochrane

Lakes. It would be advantageous to apply consistency and fairness in how existing and future facilities are developed and operated throughout the County.

The LQDF was initiated by community groups in Langdon such as the North Bow Community Facilities Board and Langdon Community Collaborative, which includes the Langdon Community Association, Langdon Softball Association, and the Langdon Little League.⁵ These community groups raised funds (approximately \$46,000 from fund raising and left over amounts from Operational Grants and the Langdon Tax Levy) and applied tax levies and facility reserves (about \$388,500 from Langdon Tax Levy, Regional Tax Levy and Joint Regional General Facilities Reserve for Indus and Langdon) to support the capital costs of the LQDF. The remaining funds for the project were sourced from General Regional Reserves of the County.

It is also worth noting that the Langdon Community Association representative suggested that the organization that is ultimately responsible for the LQDF might also operate the two diamonds at Langdon Park to take advantage of economies of scale and shared resources.



⁴ Note: the infield are maintained by members of the Langdon Softball Association.

⁵ Note: the LQDF was originally proposed by the North Bow Community Facility Board, which recently dissolved to become part of the Langdon Community Association.



LQDF Business Case

In 2017, a business case was developed for the LQDF (*Langdon Community Campus, Quad Ball Diamonds Facility Business Case*). Some of the findings in the business case have been reflected in previous sections of this Situation Analysis in terms of markets and users.

Preliminary operating budgets were presented based on an operating model that the ... "Langdon Softball Association operations⁶ of the facility (License of Occupation to be managed by the North Bow Community Facility Board and sublet to the Langdon Softball Association).⁷

Presentation of the business case to County Council further suggested that these initial estimates were based on an 'enterprise' model that would be revenue positive and no ongoing support would be anticipated from the County.⁸

The business case and its findings have been reviewed and considered within the analysis of this assessment.

Further Development of the LQDF Required

While the diamond facility was constructed in 2020, it is expected that the fields will need time to become established (e.g., for optimal grass germination and establishment). Current estimates suggest that four weeks after ground thaw will be needed for the grass to become properly established. As such, the facility will likely not be ready for use until the end of May or into June. This delay will affect how the diamond facility is operated in 2021 in terms of its availability for use.

In addition, the company that built the facility will be responsible for many aspects of its maintenance until the end of the 2021 season (e.g., October) as part of its construction agreement. Therefore, maintenance requirements for 2021 will be different than future years. These circumstances have also been considered in this assessment.

⁶ Note: it is assumed that term 'operations' was meant to be 'operates'.

⁷ Source: *Langdon Community Campus, Quad Ball Diamonds Facility Business Case*, 2017, page 15.

⁸ Source: Quad Ball Diamond Facility Business Case, Rocky View County, Council Presentation, March 2017.



Operational Requirements

There are various requirements that will be necessary to define assumptions and expectations for an operating model of the LQDF. This section of the assessment summarizes these requirements.

Operating Season

Baseball and softball seasons typically occur between May and September in the Langdon area. Depending on the weather, the minor baseball season can begin in April with tryouts and practices, while adult softball begins around the beginning to middle of May.

With other diamond facilities in Alberta, maintenance staff typically begin to prepare for the season in April spending several days getting the infields and outfields ready, making repairs, and ensuring the amenity is safe for play.

The beginning of the operating season can be delayed if the ground has a late thaw, snow remains on the ground, or the fields become soaked from rain.

Leagues typically have spring and summer seasons. The spring season occurs in May and June and the summer season can run from July to September.

Tournaments begin in early May and can run through to September or October depending on weather.

At the end of season, maintenance crews prepare the facility for shut down.

Operational Hours

Since the LQDF does not have lights for evening play, the fields will typically be available for rent from at least an hour after sunrise and before sunset (see appendices).

Play during weekdays usually begins around 5:00 pm. This means that during May, August, and September, one game can be accommodated during weekdays, while two games can occur in June and July.

Booking and User Engagement

Scheduling and bookings usually begin in January and February for tournaments and when leagues have their registrations and know how many players will be involved.

It is common for regular users of diamond facilities to have first rights of refusal to book schedule times.

Some operators of diamond facilities have engagement meetings prior to the beginning and after the conclusion of the playing seasons to communicate issues and become informed about issues or concerns of user groups.

Pricing

Diamond facilities throughout Alberta use various pricing schedules or schemes to charge user groups (see table at bottom of page).

In some cases, hourly rates are charged for local groups, while in other cases they are charged for each game they play. In a few cases, leagues are charged for each team that uses diamonds.

Some facilities charge local users rates that are lower than non-local users. For other facilities, the rates are the same no matter the user group.

For tournaments, facilities can charge hourly, daily, per game, or entire facility rates (e.g., per quad rates).

For the purposes of this assessment, the following pricing schedule will be used (prices have been developed based on analysis of all schedules presented in the table below):

- Local youth - \$250 per team per season
- Local adult - \$500 per team per season
- Local tournament - \$1,150 a weekend for the quad
- Local tournament - \$1,350 a long weekend for the quad
- Non-Local Tournament - \$1,250 a weekend for the quad
- Non-Local Tournament - \$1,450 a long weekend for the quad



Pricing for Selected Diamond Facilities in Alberta (2018 to 2021)																		
		Airdrie		Blackfalds			Calgary	Devon	Leduc	Medicine Hat		Okotoks		Red Deer		Strathmore	Three Hills	
				Local Non-Profit	Local	Non-local				Affiliate	Public	Local	Non-Local	(Edgar Athletic Park)			Local	Non-Local
		Local	Non-Local				Class B Field								CASPA Rate	Public Rate		
per diamond	Hourly			9.30	15.50	18.60			35.50	21.00	28.00					35.00		
	Hourly - youth						40.24	13.00				17.62	32.03					
	Hourly - adult						80.90	26.00				24.04	32.03					
	Daily			74.40	124.00	148.80			178.00							250.00		
	Daily - youth							73.00									50.00	
	Daily - adult							138.00									75.00	
	1 game													38.00	42.00			30.00
	2 game													68.00	77.00			
	Tournament per weekend	169.00	338.00															90.00
	Hourly - Premier facilities - Youth											70.38	127.97					
Hourly - Premier facilities - Adult											95.98	127.97						
per quad	One Day Tournament													625.00	675.00			
	Weekend Tournament (including Friday evening)			446.40	744.00	892.80								1,100.00	1,200.00	1,100.00		
	3 Day (Long) Weekend Tournament			669.60	1,116.00	1,339.20								1,500.00	1,600.00			
Other	Camping area rental													100.00	100.00			
	Concession (day rate)			49.50	82.50	99.00												
	Concession (weekend rate)			148.50	247.50	297.00												
Organized Groups	T-Ball/Mini																	75.00
	Youth under 11 years of age								354.00									
	Youth per Team							232.00	473.00								150.00	
	Adult per Team							425.00	709.00								200.00	
	Youth per Player	28.00																
	Adult per Player	39.50																

Maintenance

Maintenance standards have been developed for the LQDF based on information provided by the engineering and landscape architectural firm that designed the facility, input provided by the building contractor through a quote to maintain the facility, and interviews conducted with similar facility operators in Alberta.

The table below shows the tasks and procedures that have been defined for the LQDF throughout the playing season including field pre-season preparation and year end take down and daily, weekly, monthly, and periodic inspections, maintenance, and repair between April and September.

This schedule represents minimum standards and estimated hours to conduct maintenance at the LQDF. Based on the average weekly hours of approximately 26.5 to 36.8 depending on the month, it is reasonable to assume that one full-time equivalent maintenance position could be hired during the season.

Maintenance staff should have experience and training on sport field maintenance and turf management. Certification in these areas, as well as equipment operation would be beneficial assets, especially if the operating organization lacks internal resources to supplement the knowledge and skills of general labour positions.

Maintenance Standards and Schedules

	Month	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP		Contingency		
	Days	15	31	30	31	31	30	Subtotal	±10%	Total Range	
	HRS									Low	High
Daily: (2 to 3 hours)	2.5	37.5	77.5	75	77.5	77.5	75	420	42	378	462
Grounds inspection and repair											
Cleaning/repair of base locations - ground anchor sleeves											
Plates - home and pitching											
Outfield											
Fencing											
Garbage and litter removal											
Watering - infield and outfield											
Dragging and grooming (grading, brooming, raking)											
Line caulking											
Weekly (2 to 3 hours)	3	6	13	13	13	13	13	72	7	65	79
Mowing											
Tournament Preparation/Follow-up (1 to 2 hour weekly)	1.5		7	6	7	7	6	33	3	30	36
Inspection/Repair											
Monthly (8 to 10 hours)	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	60	6	54	66
Mound and plate repair											
Lip repair											
Parking lot upkeep/maintenance											
Periodic											
Rain rescue/damage	10	5	10	10	10	10	10	55	6	50	61
2 months (8 hours monthly)	8	8		8		8	8	32	3	29	35
Fertilizing											
Weeding, pest control											
Yearly (24 hours)	12	12					12	24	2	22	26
User Group Engagement/Top dressing/Year End											
Total Hours		79	117	122	117	125	134	696	70	626	765
Average Hours Per Week		36.8	26.5	28.5	26.5	28.3	31.3				

The organization that operates the LQDF should be responsible for the maintenance of the entire facility including infields, outfields, dugouts, common areas, parking lot, and other components (either by maintaining it fully with internal resources or contracting out the maintenance to another organization). In some respects, all aspects of the facility are integrated, and management of the maintenance function should be seamless. Due to the complexity of the facility such as turf development, soil composition, pest control, surface safety, moisture rescue and damage, etc., it would be better to have one organization responsible for and controlling the management of its maintenance.

This reasoning also considers that to fully appreciate the financial implications of the facility, all costs for its operation should be accounted for and this is best done by one organization. This method has been successfully employed with other recreation facilities in the County that assume full responsibility of operations.

Further, as the Langdon community grows, it is expected that other sport fields will need to be managed and it may be beneficial for the organization responsible for the LQDF to also operate these other outdoor amenities.

In addition, it would be worthwhile considering that as other similar facilities develop in the County, the knowledge and expertise obtained at the LQDF could be beneficially applied and transferred in other areas or communities.



Operating Models

Based on the findings of the situational analysis and operating requirements specified in the previous sections of this report, four different operating models have been developed and assessed for the LQDF. Two of the models involve contracting operations to a community group, while the other two involve the County operating the diamond facility.

For three of the models, the operator of the LQDF, whether it be a community group or the County, would principally rent the facility to user groups that provide league play or tournaments to their players.

The fourth model involves a community group being more entrepreneurial in its approach for use of the facility by organizing tournaments or other programming to generate revenue to cover operating expenses.

Estimates of the financial implications for each of the operating models is presented in the next page.

Operating Models

- *Community Group (NT)* - A community group operates all aspects of the facility (administration and maintenance) and principally rents the diamonds to user groups (including itself, if a sport group) for league play and practices and tournaments.
- *Community Group (T)* - A community group operates all aspects of the facility (administration and maintenance) and rents the diamonds to user groups (including itself, if a sport group), but also employs other revenue generating initiatives such as organizing tournaments and developing and delivering other revenue generating initiatives.
- *County* - Recreation and Parks department is responsible for all aspects of the facility (administration and maintenance) and principally rents the diamonds to user groups for league play and practices and tournaments.
- *County - Contractor* - Recreation and Parks department operates the administration of the facility, but contracts much of the maintenance to an independent contractor.



Estimated Operating Budget

	\$			
	Community Group (NT)	Community Group (T)	County	County - Contractor
Revenues				
Local Youth Leagues	750	750	750	750
Local Adult Leagues	16,000	16,000	16,000	16,000
Local Organized Tournaments	3,450	12,300	5,750	5,750
Non-Local Organized Tournaments	15,800	6,750	13,300	13,300
Facility Advertising	4,500	5,500	2,500	2,500
Tournament Revenues		30,000		
Total Revenues	40,500	71,300	38,300	38,300
Expenses				
Administration Salaries and Benefits	1,300	23,500	3,600	3,600
Maintenance Salaries and Benefits	21,700	21,700	27,100	14,300
Independent Contractors/Internal Services			2600	57,000
Professional Services	5,000	7,500		
Maintenance Materials and Supplies	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000
Temporary Washrooms	7,000	7,000	7,000	7,000
Insurance	7,500	7,500	5,000	5,000
Equipment Costs (amortization/rental/fuel/interest)	14,200	14,200	10,850	7,500
Other	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Total Expenses	76,700	101,400	76,150	114,400
Subtotal - Surplus/Deficit before Lifecycle Replacement	(36,200)	(30,100)	(37,850)	(76,100)
Lifecycle Replacement	88,300	88,300	88,300	88,300
Estimated Surplus/Deficit after Lifecycle Replacement	(124,500)	(118,400)	(126,150)	(164,400)

Assumptions to the Estimates:

- Budgets represent a full year of operation using 2021 dollars.
- Pricing as presented in the previous section of this report (see appendices for how pricing has been applied to revenue estimates.).
- Approximately 15 weekends are available for tournaments with limited onsite camping being available.
- Adverting revenues is a general estimate based on experiences of similar organizations.
- Tournament revenues for the Community Group (T) option assume 10 tournaments managed by the organization with a net surplus of \$3,000 per tournament (+\$1,150 for renting the facility). This estimate does not include food and beverage sales and expenses due to lack of concession.
- Staff costs are based on: community group - \$20 per hour for maintenance staff and \$25 for community group administration staff, \$25 to \$31.50 per hour for maintenance staff and \$50 for administration staff.
- Contractor expenses based on available quotes.
- Maintenance Materials and Supplies - Approximately \$12,200 is budgeted for fertilizers, \$200 for software, \$3,600 for shale and, potentially, water.
- Temporary toilet expenses are based on a quote for 6 portable toilets and servicing throughout the season.
- Professional services involve purchasing accounting services for audited financial statements.
- Equipment costs are based on approximately \$72,000 for all maintenance equipment and \$42,000 for just infield maintenance equipment. The equipment is estimated to have a 10-year life with a salvage value of 20% and an interest rate of 3%. Fuel is charged at \$20 per hour and equipment rentals (e.g., aerator at \$100 per hour).
- Other expenses are a general estimate for software, office supplies, etc.
- Lifecycle replacement involves a capital cost of \$2,435,985 for the facility, a garage at \$54,000, and scoreboards at \$27,000. The life of the facility is estimated at 40 years with an annual inflation rate of 1.77%.

The estimated budgets prepared for the different operating models suggest that each will likely require some level of contributions from the County to support operations. For three of the models, it is expected that operating deficits will be fairly similar ranging from approximately \$30,000 to \$38,000. The fourth model, County-Contractor is likely to result in a much higher deficit, although these estimates are not based on a competitive Request for Proposals process.

Each of the operating models present different benefits and risks. However, based on the development of operational requirements presented earlier and the qualitative comparative analysis presented on the subsequent page, it becomes apparent that the operating organization would benefit if it has additional capacity and capabilities such as other paid staff.

The diamond facility will need maintenance on a daily basis (or at least five times per week during the playing season). Days around weekends will be most important as this is the time when the diamonds will experience the greatest use from tournaments. If an organization has only one maintenance staff person who misses any of these days, there may be higher costs and player safety may be affected. While volunteers might be able to cover for potential employee absences, it's not an ideal situation as these volunteers may be distracted by other priorities. Ultimately, it would be beneficial for the operating organization to have other employees that can cover for staff that may be away from work.

As well, ball diamond facilities, particularly those that have multiple diamonds and are located near residential areas such as the LQDF will likely need to have individuals who can engage and communicate with the community to mitigate concerns about nuisances or noise. Senior representatives of an organization should address these types of issues rather than relying on maintenance crews. As such, an organization that has staff who can address these kinds of circumstances would be more advantageous than one that does not.

In terms of operating models, there are distinct aspects of each that are worth noting:

- *Community Group (NT)* - This is a less complicated approach to operations in that it mainly involves rentals to user groups. A trade off for its simplicity is that this operating model is less likely to generate revenue than the other community group approach. There are some similarities between this approach and the County operating model in terms of its straightforwardness. It would be more beneficial as an approach to consider if the operator could generate non-earned revenues to support operations and there were excess staff resources available that could perform the administrative tasks and fulfill the maintenance requirements (e.g., existing seasonal staff)
- *Community Group (T)* - There is more risk associated with this operating model in terms of developing a market and organizing and coordinating tournaments (or any other programming that might be developed). It is expected that this approach will take several years to fully develop and costs for administrative staff will be higher in the initial years of operation until the tournaments become known and established. There are a few similar operations in the region such as the On Deck Okotoks and Jaycee Slo-Pitch Park. Both of these facilities have more diamonds (7 and 10 respectively), temporary accommodations available in the immediate area (either camping or motels/hotels), and other amenities onsite such as concessions to sell food and beverage services. They also have large numbers of teams involved in their leagues, which represent ready markets for tournaments. It is also worth noting the ownership of On Deck Okotoks has many affiliate leagues in which it can market its tournaments. Similar to the other community group operating model, this approach would benefit from economies of scale if the organization operated other facilities or programs.

Comparison of Operating Models		
Operating Model	Potential Advantages	Potential Disadvantages
Community Group (NT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expected to pay lower staffing costs compared to other models. Community groups are responsible for 50% of lifecycle maintenance expenses (may need to access funds from other sources). If the organization operates other amenities (e.g., ice arenas), staff may be available for maintenance crew. Would be able to fund raise or access grants to support operations. (If a local group) May have invested interest in the community and success of facility. Likely to be responsive to community interests if a local community group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires engagement of professional accounting services expenses for accountability and controls. If the organization does not have other staff, there may be challenges covering work absences, delays in responding to user groups, etc. Would need to purchase or have access to all maintenance equipment. Defined standards of service would need to be agreed upon (between the County and operator) and monitored. May not have access to internal resources or supplementary sport field maintenance knowledge/expertise within the organization unless experienced staff are hired (potentially resulting in higher costs).
Community Group (T)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community groups are responsible for 50% of lifecycle maintenance expenses (may need to access funds from other sources). Administration staff are likely to be accessible and available to customers (additional capacity required for tournament organization). There may be additional opportunities for community groups using this approach to generate additional revenues. If the organization operates other amenities (e.g., ice arenas), staff may be available for maintenance crew. Would be able to fund raise or access grants to support operations. (If a local group) May have invested interest in the community and success of facility. Likely to be responsive to community interests if a local community group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Likely has the highest risk associated with generating revenues and minimizing expenses. Need for accountability and control systems if cash is handled (e.g., payment for food and beverages). If the organization does not have other staff, there may be challenges covering work absences for maintenance staff. Requires engagement of professional accounting services expenses for accountability and controls. Would need to purchase or have access to all maintenance equipment. Defined standards of service would need to be agreed upon (between the County and operator) and monitored. May not have access to internal resources or supplementary sport field maintenance knowledge/expertise within the organization unless experienced staff are hired (potentially resulting in higher costs).
County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources and knowledge/expertise may be available from other departments (e.g., Cemetery Services, Asset Management, Purchasing, etc.) to support operations. Accountability and controls are inherent from internal resources and systems. Administration will be coordinated by existing staff that will be available to respond to user groups. Staff from the department or other departments are available to cover work absences. Resources are available to quickly cover emergency expenses, capital costs, etc. Would build capacity and capabilities within the department that can then be transferred to other operations. The County has defined standards of services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will need to demonstrate success to local user groups and community to build support for operating the facility. There may be expectations among residents that surpluses would be used for other purposes (e.g., leave the community). Less likely to have direct knowledge of community issues if staff do not live in the community. Temporary or seasonal staff would need to be hired for maintenance (potential lack of annual continuity e.g., needing to hire new maintenance staff each year). May be less responsive to potential issues that arise including increasing costs (e.g., red tape). Lack of experience and knowledge for operating ball diamond amenities among existing staff within Recreation and Parks department.
County-Contractor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources and knowledge/expertise may be available from other departments (e.g., Cemetery Services, Asset Management, Purchasing, etc.), as well as from contractor to support operations. Termination of relationship with contractor is likely easier than with a community group if service expectations are not met. Accountability and controls are inherent from internal resources and systems. Administration will be conducted by existing staff who are likely to be available to respond to user groups. Staff from the department or other departments may be available to cover work absences. Resources are available to quickly cover emergency expenses, capital costs, etc. Would build capacity and capabilities within the department that can then be transferred to other operations. The County has defined standards of service, which could be specified in a contractual arrangement with a private contractor to ensure same levels of services are provided. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expected to be the costliest operating model (highest expenses). Capacity and capability of operations is developed by an outside organization. Will need to demonstrate success to local user groups and community to build support for operating the facility. It may be challenging to hire seasonal part time staff to conduct basic maintenance. There may be expectations among residents that surpluses would be used for other purposes (e.g., leave the community). Less likely to have direct knowledge of community issues if staff do not live in the community. Temporary or seasonal staff would need to be hired for maintenance (potential lack of annual continuity e.g., needing to hire new maintenance staff each year). May be less responsive to potential issues that arise including increasing costs (e.g., red tape). Lack of experience and knowledge for operating ball diamond amenities among existing staff within the Recreation and Parks department.

- *County* - The County operating model benefits from the resources that are available within the Municipality such as staff within the Recreation and Parks department, as well as other departments such as Cemetery Services, Asset Management, Purchasing, Financial Services, etc. As well, if an emergency occurs or repair is needed and funds are required, the department has available resources to address the expense. In contrast, this approach would be a new venture for the department and existing staff do not have experience operating a diamond facility. This could be overcome by working and consulting with representatives of other departments that have experience with maintaining ball diamonds and other parks areas. Should the department take on the operation of the facility, it will need to ensure it is successful to gain the confidence of the community, which is going to be difficult given that some other local organizations wish to operate the facility. On a final note, a recommendation in the recent Recreation and Parks Master Plan suggests that the department should develop systems to help facility operators in the County attract additional bookings. This initiative would assist in beginning this process within the department. It may also benefit in the development of other facilities in the County.

It is not recommended that the County take on the role of organizing tournaments. While there may be local residents that engage in these events, many of the participants will be non-County residents and teams. The mandate of the Recreation and Parks department emphasizes serving County residents and communities and organizing tournaments at the LQDF may be a bit beyond this scope.

- *County - Contractor* - The County could contract a private company to perform maintenance

tasks and, possibly, book user groups of the ball diamond facility.⁹ Companies such as these would bring valuable knowledge and expertise to the operations. Over the next year, some of the maintenance of the facility will be conducted in this manner. However, it is expected that the cost associated with this operating model would be higher than the other approaches. Conducting an Expression of Interest followed by a Request for Proposal process would determine if the assumed costs of this approach are appropriate.



⁹ Note: Recreation and Parks could conduct the booking function itself or contract it out.

Based on the analysis presented above, it is recommended that the Recreation and Parks department consider operating the LQDF itself using the County operating model. In the short-term, it is expected that the LQDF will operate at a financial deficit no matter which operating model is adopted. Further, the financial deficit levels are expected to be similar if the Recreation and Parks department operates the facility or if a community group does. By adopting the County approach, the Parks and Recreation department assumes the risk associated with the facility's operation rather than the community group.

This approach does not preclude community groups from organizing tournaments at the LQDF. Indeed, local user groups will have first rights of refusal for booking the LQDF. Should a community group want to organize tournaments to raise funds for its organization or the community at large, it can do so. Further it allows community groups to organize tournaments without the concern of operating the facility, especially if the facility operates at a deficit.

A further benefit of this approach is that the Recreation and Parks department can begin to develop systems and processes that will help in the development and operation of other facilities in the County.

It should be noted, however, that the Recreation and Parks department will need to purchase equipment to operate the park. In the first year, this expense will be mitigated by having the company that constructed the facility conduct a major component of the maintenance.



Concluding Remarks

The LQDF is an exciting development for the Langdon community and the County as a whole. It is a necessary addition for the Langdon community given the growing population and involvement in baseball and softball activities among local area residents.

This assessment has examined four different models for operating the LQDF. There are various benefits and risks associated with each operating model identified for the LQDF. Even so, the analysis presented in this report suggests that the Recreation and Parks department should consider operating the LQDF itself.



There are various reasons for this presenting recommendation:

- It is expected that the LQDF will operate at a financial deficit no matter which operating model is adopted, at least over the next few years. By operating the LQDF, the Parks and Recreation department assumes the risk associated with the facility's operation rather than expecting community groups to bear this responsibility.
- There are opportunities for community groups to generate funds by organizing tournaments or developing and delivering other programming. Local user groups will have first rights of refusal for booking the LQDF and, if a community group wants to organize tournaments, it can do so without the concern of operating the facility. In this way, the community group can raise funds for its organization or the community and not be impeded by operating deficits associated with the LQDF.
- A recommendation in the recent Recreation and Parks Master Plan suggests that the department should develop systems to help facility operators in the County attract additional bookings. By operating the LQDF, the department can begin to develop marketing and booking systems and processes that will help other facilities in the County.

- In 2021, much of the maintenance at the LQDF will be conducted by the company that constructed the facility. Over the next year, the Recreation and Parks department can work closely with the County's Capital Projects and the company to ensure that appropriate maintenance methods are developed and adopted and that it is ready to apply similar practices in the 2022 season.

Other recommendations developed from the assessment include:

- The operator of the LQDF should be responsible for the maintenance of the entire facility including infields, outfields, dugouts, common areas, parking lot and other components.
- Local markets should have priority of use over non-local markets at the LQDF.
- Youth organizations should pay rates that are lower than adult organizations to encourage participation among children and youth in the community.
- In the future, new local groups that start up should have access to the LQDF, just as existing organizations have access.
- Tournaments organized by local user groups should be given priority over those organized by non-local user groups.
- The operator will need to market and promote the LQDF to attract tournaments to the facility.
- There appears to be sufficient interest to conduct an Expression of Interest process for organizations that might be contracted to operate the facility.
- Safety of users and visitors should be a principal priority at the LQDF (e.g., need for daily inspections of infields, outfields, and amenities at the facility).



Appendices

Project Methodology

Interviews were conducted with representatives of the following organizations:

- Town of Blackfalds
- Town of Devon
- Town of Innisfail
- Town of Ponoka
- Town of Redcliff

(The above communities were selected due to population size, facility components; proximity to major urban centre; and availability of representatives to be interviewed)

- Langdon Little League
- Langdon Softball Association
- Langdon Community Association
- Binnie
- Benchmark Projects
- Slow Pitch National Alberta
- Bow Valley Agricultural Society
- Rocky View County, Capital Projects
- Rocky View County, Cemetery Services
- Rocky View County, Transportation/Asset Management

Additional information gathered from the following communities:

- City of Airdrie
- City of Calgary
- City of Leduc
- City of Medicine Hat
- City of Red Deer
- Town of High River
- Town of Okotoks
- Town of Peace River
- Town of Strathmore
- Town of Three Hills

The consultants conducted a site visit of the facility, Langdon community, and surrounding area.

Review of the following information:

- 2020 Baseball Alberta Handbook.
- Alberta Recreation Surveys, 2000, 2004, 2008, 2013, 2017
- Bow North Recreation District, Household Survey Report, 2018.
- Canadian Fast Pitch Championship Play, Age Categories & Distance Table.
- Canadian Slo-Pitch Championships Age Categories & Distance Table.
- City of Calgary, Sport Field Strategy, 2016.
- City of Red Deer, Outdoor Sports Fields, Inventory, Assessment, and Analysis, 2014.
- Field Maintenance, A Basic Guide for Baseball & Softball Fields of all Levels, Baseball Tomorrow Fund, 2012.
- Langdon Community Association, Financial Statements, 2019.
- Langdon Community Campus, Quad Ball Diamonds Facility Business Case, 2017.
- Lease Agreement for Langdon Park, Langdon Community Association and Municipal District of Rocky View No. 44, 2002.
- North Bow Community Facility Board Presentation, Langdon Community Campus, March 6, 2018.
- North Bow Community Facility Board, Campaign Planning and Preparation, Final Report, 2013.
- North Bow Community Facility Board, Langdon Baseball Diamonds Project, July 23, 2019.
- North Bow Community Facility Board, Langdon Quad Complex, Facility Concept Designs 2017.

- North Bow Community Facility Board, Recreation Facility Needs Assessment and Feasibility Study, Interim Needs Assessment Summary Report, 2005.
- Rocky View County, Area Structure Plan, Langdon, 2016.
- Rocky View County, Boulder Creek Conceptual Scheme, 2003.
- Rocky View County, Bridges of Langdon Conceptual Scheme, 2016.
- Rocky View County, Capital Projects, Langdon Quad Diamond Complex, Budget Status Review, Nov. 2020.
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- Rocky View County, Community Survey 2010, Supplemental Analysis, Bow North/Langdon, 2010.
- Rocky View County, County-Wide Recreation Assessment Study, 2019
- Rocky View County, Langdon Crossing West Conceptual Scheme, 2005.
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- Rocky View County, Mornington Conceptual Scheme, 2011.
- Rocky View County, North Bow Community Facility Board Quad Diamond Business Case Presentation, March 7, 2017.
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- Town of Blackfalds, All-Star Park Master Plan, 2016.
- Turf&Rec, Ball Diamond Maintenance Management, 101, 2017.

Pricing Information:

- Arnes, Commercial Aerators and Rakes Pricing Schedule, 2020.
- Arnes, Commercial Brush Cutters, Pricing Schedule, 2020.
- Arnes, Commercial Lawn Mowers Pricing Schedule, 2020.
- ASAP Sites Services, Portable Toilets Rentals, Pricing, 2020.
- Langdon Community Group, CFEP Small Funding Stream, Equipment Pricing.
- Marcoclay, Diamond Maintenance Tools, Pricing Schedule, 2020.
- Marcoclay, Drag Mats, Pricing Schedule, 2020.
- MVP Athletic Supplies, Field Equipment and Maintenance, Pricing Schedule, 2020.
- Porta Potty Rental - Cost, Complete Guide, Prices, 2020.
- Sports Turf, Bannerman Diamond Edger, Pricing Schedule, 2020.
- Sports Turf, Bannerman Diamond Master Leveller and Surface Restorer, Pricing Schedule, 2020.

Binnie File No. 19-0780-01

Langdon Quad Diamond Complex

MAINTENANCE

Rocky View County

August 2020

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ROCKY VIEW COUNTY

MAINTENANCE
LANGDON QUAD
DIAMOND COMPLEX

1.1 NATURAL TURF MAINTENANCE

1.1.1 Natural Turf Maintenance Standards

This is similarity in terminology, maintenance standards, and recommended equipment regarding natural turf maintenance programs within Canada as majority of the natural turf standards are based on terminology from golf industry. Most standards / recommendations appeared to be minimal and at best remotely related to maximizing playing season and quality of the turf life cycle potential.

As a result, we have developed a maintenance program including standards, procedures, and equipment categories reflecting focused 'best practices' to:

- Maximize field life expectancy
- Ensure a place in an increasingly competitive market from other facilities higher end sports fields
- Enhance user experience and safety

Best management practices and annual operating effort for natural grass fields are illustrated below and align to the core standards list Refer to tables -

This summary chart demonstrated the different maintenance standards for each category of field and Maintenance frequencies will vary in consideration of the below points for a sustainable maintenance model that should be adopted by the County generally are as follows:

Table 1 – Recommendation Natural Turf Maintenance Standards

Operation Activity	Field Type
Classification	Unirrigated & Unlit
Mowing	1 per week
Aerate	1 per year
Field Marking	Daily, based on user group requirements
Fertilization	2 times per year based agronomist recommendations
Gypsum Application	Once per month until Sodium levels are reduced, Soil testing needs to be completed on monthly basis based agronomist recommendations
Soil Testing	Completed by Agronomist (Pick Sport Turf) or equal Three Times as year



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Topdressing & Overseeding	2 times per year
Irrigation & Drainage (Repairs)	0 per week
Weed Control	1 per week
Shale Dragging	Daily, based on user group requirements
Litter Pick Up	1 per 7 days

1.2 NATURAL TURF GRASS MAINTENANCE PRACTICES

1.2.1 Mowing

Turf maintenance heights range should be 7cm (2.75") and grass trimming is typically carried out once a week.

Where fields are irrigated, the frequency of the watering should be adjusted according to rainfall, temperature, and requirements of the turf species.

Leaf Removal has been addressed in other municipalities and mulching of leaves is promoted and practiced where possible.

1.2.2 Compaction management (Aeration)

Coring, slicing, spiking, drilling, vertical mowing, and injecting water into the soil are methods used to deal with soil compaction.

The reason why compaction management area important are because compaction breaks down soil structure and reduces the amount of pores space for air exchange, which is necessary for root growth and microbial activity. It also reduces the amount and rate that water can infiltrate into the soil and percolate down through the soil profile. Compaction is more likely to occur on fine-textured soils and less likely a problem on fields with coarse textured soils.

Management options include various cultivation practices such as coring, slicing, spiking, grooving, water, and air injection, drilling and solid tine cultivation. These operations still must be done at the correct time, at the proper depth when soil conditions are not wet and are required more often on high use fields.

Core cultivation (often referred as aerification) removes a core of soil, leaving a small hole which allows for better water and air movement into the root zone. Fertilizer and amendments can more easily reach the root zone resulting in a deeper more extensive root system.



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Coring with hollow tines or spoons removes a soil core which can be collected or left on the soil surface. Tines can be placed in various spacings and can range 6.35mm to 19mm (¼" - ¾") in diameter and penetrate the soil 75mm to 150mm (3-6"). Keep in mind that the size and spacing of tines influences the area of impact. Soil cores left on the soil surface should be allowed to dry and then dragged with a mat to break them up. This process mixes soil into the thatch layer where microorganisms can begin to decompose the thatch. This would be a good time to apply lime or fertilizer if needed.

Solid tines disturb the soil surface less than coring, but they compact the bottom and sides of the holes.

Spiking uses solid tines to punch holes into the soil when less soil surface disruption is desired. This action actually causes compaction at the bottom and sides of the hole and is not as effective as hollow tine coring in improving soil physical properties. However, it is effective on heavily compacted areas especially when improving soil aeration is desired.

Deep drilling can create channels to a 300mm (12") depth with metal bits up to 25mm (1") in diameter. This kind of cultivation is often used to improve subsurface drainage on highly compacted areas of football and soccer fields. Fields may benefit from deep tine aerification once or twice a year if the drill goes deep enough to go below the depth of compaction.

Vertical mowing uses blades that cut vertically into the turf canopy to sever lateral stems. This practice helps to increase turf density, remove thatch at the soil surface and prepare the turf for overseeding.

Injecting high pressured water into the soil through small-diameter nozzles opens channels for roots to grow with limited disruption of the surface.

1.2.3 Field Marking / Line painting

Field Marking/Line Painting would be occurring as indicated in Table 1 – Recommendation Natural Turf Maintenance Standards.

1.2.4 Fertilization

The overall goal for the fertilization for sports field is to provide adequate nutrition that promotes turf density and in turn improves field safety and playing conditions. Fertilization and topsoil testing to ensure that proper amount of nutrients are being applied to turfgrass to ensure that application is not applied in under amount or other amounts to the sports fields.

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Many factors will influence the ultimate fertility program you develop including grass species, soil type, time of year, intensity of field use, performance expectations, specific sport, budget, equipment, available labor, etc.

Soil testing

Soil testing is an important routine management practice and an essential tool when developing a fertilizer program that promotes good turf growth while protecting the environment.

1.2.5 Topdressing

Topdressing is the application of a uniform thin layer of soil or finely granulated organic materials applied over the turf surface. It is used to level the playing field when minor variations or depressions are apparent, help to amend physical soil properties and create a better growing environment for the turf and help reduce thatch.

1.2.6 Overseeding

Overseeding is the periodic application of seed to an existing turfgrass stand to improve turf density. The reasoning for overseeding must be done on a routine basis on high-use fields, as this give the turfgrass the chance to improve density, more uniform, and safe playing surface. As the overseeding of the field provides sports field team with ability to apply more aggressive types of the cultivator of perennial rye, Kentucky Blue Grass to the field to fill in high wear patterns on the fields which include goal mouths and centerlines of the field.

1.2.7 Irrigation

The sports field should have the irrigation system reviewed or inspected on weekly basis to ensure that field is not being overwater or leaks within irrigation system. Irrigation system should be inspected weekly to ensure no leaks and that preventative repairs can be made. Overall water management program for the field itself is to ensure the field is not be under or over water during week. If a smart technology which could be moisture sensor, central control system or smart irrigation controller is used with irrigation system, it can reduce the amount of the water used for sport field irrigation.

1.2.8 Drainage

The sports field should be reviewed on weekly basis for any drainage and overland drainage issues. This should be conducted during grass cutting.

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1.2.9 *Weed Control*

Weed Control needs to be occurred with correct herbicides and application methods on as needed basis, example around bleacher areas, general weed control in fields. Good fertility program will make these costs marginal.

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Over-seeding - Recommendation		
SUPPLIER	SEED MIXTURE	APPLICATION RATE
PICKSEED	FUTURESPORT	2 kg / 100m ²
PICKSEED	SPORTS TURF STADIUM	3 kg / 100m ²
PICKSEED	SPORTS TURF	2 kg / 100m ²
Or approved equal and based on agronomist recommendations		

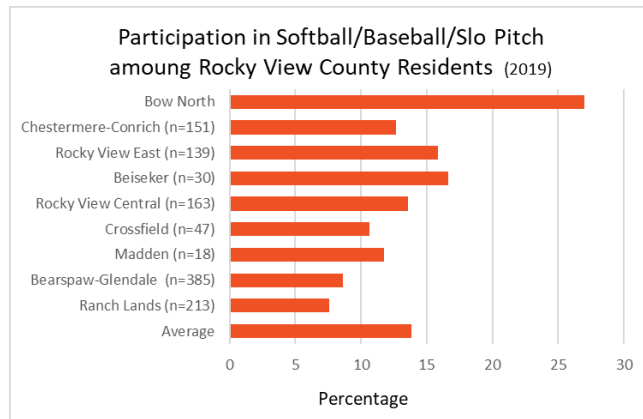
Fertilizing - Recommendation	
ELEMENT	FERTILIZE
Ratio	2:1:2
Nitrogen (N)	18
Phosphorus (P)	9
Potassium (K)	18
Application Rate	50 kilograms of actual nitrogen per hectare
Quantity of Nitrogen per season	300 kilograms per season
Or approved equal and based on agronomist recommendations	

Topdressing Material Recommendation	
SOIL TYPE	PERCENTAGE
SAND	80%
TOPSOIL	20%
The topdressing material should be sandy loam mixture at minimum requirement.	

Over-seeding – Seed Mixture Ratio	
SEED	PERCENTAGE
PERENNIAL RYEGRASS	40%
KENTUCKY BLUE GRASS	60%

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**Data from the Rocky View County,
County-Wide Recreation Needs
Assessment Study, 2019 and Bow
North Recreation District Household
Survey, 2018.**



Source: 2019 Rocky View County Rocky View County Recreation Needs Assessment Study and 2017 Bow North Recreation Needs Assessment Survey

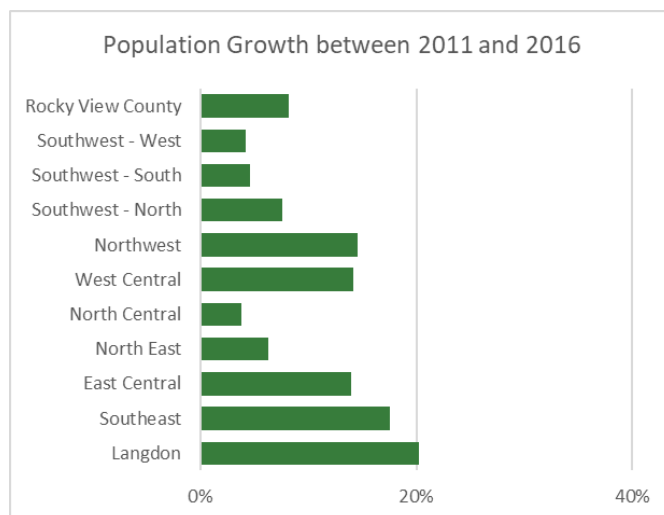
Typical Sunset Times in Calgary Region

Month	Beginning of Month	End of Month	Average Sunset
January	4:41	5:26	5:03
February	5:26	6:14	5:50
March	6:18	8:09	7:13
April	8:10	8:58	8:34
May	8:59	9:41	9:20
June	9:42	9:54	9:48
July	9:54	9:23	9:38
August	9:21	8:23	8:52
September	8:20	7:15	7:47
October	7:13	6:11	6:42
November	6:09	4:33	5:21
December	4:32	4:40	4:36

Source: <https://www.timeanddate.com/sun/canada/calgary>

Population and growth in Langdon

Population of Langdon in 2018 - 5,364 (Municipal Census)



Source: Statistics Canada, Community Profile, 2011 and 2016

Revenue Estimate Assumptions

Pricing:

- Local youth - \$250 per team per season
- Local adult - \$500 per team per season
- Local tournament - \$1,150 a weekend for the quad
- Local tournament - \$1,350 a long weekend for the quad
- Non-Local Tournament - \$1,250 a weekend for the quad
- Non-Local Tournament - \$1,450 a long weekend for the quad

Local Leagues:

- Local Youth Leagues - 3 teams (2 during spring season and 1 during summer season) x \$250 per team
- Local Adult Leagues - 24 teams total with 16 teams playing each of the spring and summer seasons (or 32 teams registering in total for both seasons) x \$500

Tournaments:

	<u>Community Group (NT)</u>	<u>Community Group (T)</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>County - Contractor</u>
Local Organized Tournaments	3 x \$1,150	(6 x \$1,150) + (4 x \$1,350)	5 x \$1,150	5 x \$1,150
Non-Local Organized Tournaments	(8 x \$1,250) + (4 x \$1,450)	(5 x \$1,350)	(6 x \$1,250) + (4 x \$1,450)	(6 x \$1,250) + (4 x \$1,450)

Maintenance Equipment and Estimates

Base Boxes	\$ 2,400
Utility Vehicle 1	\$ 10,000
Utility Vehicle 2	\$ 20,000
Shale Mesh and Nail drags	\$ 1,800
4 Wheel Chalker	\$ 800
Hoses and sprinkler cart	\$ 5,000
Mowers	\$ 20,000
Leveller and Surface Restorer	\$ 10,000
Other tools	\$ 2,000
	\$ 72,000

General Analysis of Local Use of Fields

			Practice	Game	Total
			hrs	1.0	1.25
			#	1.0	1.0
T-ball to 5 minor currently use open field	Tball Teams	7	7	4	11
	Coach Pitch Teams	3	4	7	11
	Minor teams	5	5	16	21
			18	30	48
			hrs	1.25	2
			#	4.0	2.0
Major Teams to All Star	3 Major Teams	3	15	12	27
	1 Junior Team	1	5	4	9
	1 All Star Team	1	5	4	9
			25	20	45
			hrs	1.5	
			#	0	2
Adult Softball	Teams	16	0	24	24
Total Use of Fields					117
Total weekly hours of use per field					
2 fields (Langdon)					58
4 fields (Langdon and Indus)					29
6 fields (Langdon)					19
8 fields (Langdon and Indus)					15
			days	hrs	
Prime Time Hours	Mon - Friday 5 to 9	5	4	20	44
Available Per Field	Sat - Sun 9 to 9	2	12	24	
Total weekly hours surplus/deficit of available fields					
2 fields (Langdon)					-29
4 fields (Langdon and Indus)					59
6 fields (Langdon)					147
8 fields (Langdon and Indus)					235
Total weekly hours surplus/deficit of available fields if weekends used for tournaments					
2 fields (Langdon)					-85
4 fields (Langdon and Indus)					-53
6 fields (Langdon)					-21
8 fields (Langdon and Indus)					11

