

Background

Current playing fields on SSI are limited to 30 hours per week of intensive use and are not sanctioned for baseball teams over the age of 12. The 2010 Parks and Recreation Master Plan established improvement of athletic fields as a top priority by the SSI Parks and Recreation Commission. The 2008 SSI Official Community Plan supports the expansion of recreation facilities. Despite ongoing attempts to find non-agricultural land reserve suitable for the purpose of playing fields, no available land has been found.

Below is an outline of the efforts made by staff in recent years to acquire land for the purpose of playing fields on SSI:

- August 26, 2013, staff compiled an inventory of available non-agricultural land reserve property, school property, existing Capital Regional District (CRD) property, and vacant land on the island.
- September 23, 2013, PARC reviewed a map which identified potential land on SSI. At that time it was agreed to prepare a public proposal call for available land in the community.
- October 15, 2013, PARC was presented with topographic maps of SSI highlighting properties that met the requirements for grade, size, zoning and location. PARC agreed to proceed with an expression of interest (EOI) for available land.
- November 8, 2013, the expression of interest was sent to the property owners and was publicly posted in the local paper and online.
- July 28, 2014, PARC discussed several properties that were identified through the expression of interest including the Land and identified that each property had limitations and no viable options had been found for available non-agricultural land for the purpose of playing fields.
- February 16, 2015 PARC authorized staff to negotiate and complete a land acquisition of the Land following a number of conditions including a successful application to use the Land for non-farm purposes.

SSI PARC currently leases one property in SSI's Fulford Valley, approximately 1.70 ha. for two undersized youth baseball fields. The owner has advised the SSI Parks and Recreation Commission that the lease will only be extended for two years since the property is for sale. This property would return to the ALR once new facilities are built. The existing SSI baseball fields are small and not sanctioned for teams over the age of 12, resulting in teams having to travel off island. Soccer-playing teens face a problem with not enough time slots on current fields for practice and games.

The Land is in the (ALR) and is relatively flat with about half of the land covered in a Douglas fir dominated forest. The Land is close (1km.) to existing fields on CRD property at Portlock Park, as well as the Parks and Recreation maintenance equipment and shed. The Land is large enough to accommodate at least: two soccer fields, two mid to full size baseball fields, and the supporting infrastructure.

The acquisition of land for additional playing fields has been a top priority for the Salt Spring Island (SSI) Parks and Recreation Commission (PARC) over the last two decades and has been identified in the 2010 Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The 2008 SSI Official Community Plan supports applications by the SSI Parks and Recreation Commission for non-farm use to provide for recreation needs including additional athletic fields and parking next to Portlock Park.