

More courts in the works in Coquitlam

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Photograph By FILE PHOTO

New tennis courts are expected in Burquitlam and northeast Coquitlam in the next five years as part of a facilities strategy city council approved Monday.

The document outlines short-term projects, which include three new courts at Cottonwood Park and two at either the middle or high school site slated for Burke Mountain. The five courts are expected to cost \$700,000.

But due to a maintenance backlog at a handful of existing courts, staff said they will need an additional \$1.56 million to renew and extend the life of that infrastructure over the next five years. For example, it is estimated that work at Eagle Ridge will cost \$675,000 while Poirier will be \$315,000 and Blue Mountain will cost \$300,000. Outstanding maintenance at Hickey is expected to cost \$120,000 while Bramble requires \$150,000 in work.

Coun. Craig Hodge said the city may have to consider a one-time funding boost in the upcoming budget to deal with the maintenance backlog. Currently, \$480,000 is allocated annually for facility maintenance, which he noted was not enough to do the outstanding work while keeping up with the usual repairs and upkeep that is required throughout the year.

Parks and recreation general manager Raul Allueva echoed Hodge's comments, noting that the annual maintenance budget is helpful but "there is a gap that is identified."

"When I hear that we don't have enough courts, I think what we are seeing is that... [players] are picking favourite courts over others," Hodge said. "By bringing others up to standard, we can delay the need to build new courts."

The tennis and pickleball facilities strategy also has several long term goals to increase capacity in Coquitlam.

Between 2023 and 2037, the plan calls for spending \$4.8 million for work that includes redeveloping the courts at Town Centre (\$1.5 million), building additional courts in northeast Coquitlam (\$300,000) and renovating existing courts that are at the end of their lifecycles (\$2 million).

Several councillors also expressed interest in potentially building another covered tennis court facility that could be used year-round.

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