

Construction to begin soon on Stratford's new artificial turf soccer field



By [Mike Beitz](#), The Beacon Herald
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Construction could begin as early as next week on the new artificial turf soccer field in Stratford's south end.

City council approved a roughly \$1 million contract Monday night with Gateman Malloy to install the lit, fenced, premier soccer field at the existing Rotary Soccer Park off Packham Road.

The total budget for the first phase of the project is \$1.2 million, with the Stratford Soccer Association (SSA) kicking in \$700,000, and the city contributing \$500,000 through a combination of reserve funds and development charges.

SSA president Mike Vancea said fundraising efforts are continuing, and will hopefully enable the second phase of the planned multi-purpose fitness park to move forward next year.

Plans for that second phase include a new clubhouse with a large open-air pavilion, accessible fitness trails with outdoor exercise equipment, a family playground and picnic areas.

As construction begins on the first phase, it should help increase visibility around the project, noted Vancea.

"I think it will give a lot of positive momentum for donors, and it will also have a very positive effect on the number of players in Stratford," he said.

Currently, the SSA has about 1,900 members of all ages under its umbrella.

Vancea said he's anticipating an increase in the number of young players in particular with the addition of the new artificial turf field.

"When they understand that we're getting something really cool for the city of Stratford, they'll want to play on it," he said.

Weather permitting, construction of the new 60-metre by 100-metre field is expected to be completed by the end of the year, in time for next season.

"It will be a playable surface in April," said Vancea.

A number of local business have already signed to support the project, including lead sponsor Festival Hydro, which pledged \$225,000 over 15 years.

The new multi-use facility will be called the Festival Hydro Community Park.

mbeitz@postmedia.com