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## 2 new artificial soccer turfs could be on way for Vaughan

Vaughan Citizen

By [Adam Martin-Robbins](#) 

A capacity crowd packed the council chamber at city hall Monday night. And the vast majority of them were players, coaches and parents from the Vaughan Soccer Club who came for one very specific reason.

They were there to let the city's budget committee know they want two artificial turf soccer fields, not just one, built at North Maple Regional Park and they want work to begin on both this year.

“Approving the first phase, with the two turf fields and walking trail, is a long awaited start for this community,” Lucille Abate, past president of the York Region Soccer Association, said. “We stand before you this evening, filling your stands, to urge the city to expedite this process as soon as possible. This park will provide the core services for over 70,000 residents who live in north-east Vaughan.”

Abate noted the soccer club has agreed to contribute \$150,000 toward the project, which expected to cost about \$5.4 million and take 15 to 18 months to complete.

A representative of Vaughan C.A.R.E.S (Committee of Associations to Restore Environmental Safety) also spoke in favour of the project.

City staff, who have been struggling to get the property tax increase down to at least 3 per cent as directed by council, considered going ahead with one field instead of two this year.

After examining it more closely, staff determined that would not result in significant cost savings so they recommended starting work on both fields this year.

The meeting grew heated as councillors discussed that recommendation.

Regional Councillor Gino Rosati had to ask the vocal audience numerous times not to clap or shout from their seats, but his requests went unheeded.

At one point, Rosati warned the crowd he would have security clear the council chamber if the outbursts didn't stop.

Regional Councillor Michael Di Biase drew the ire of some people in the crowd as he asked questions about the project including whether money could legitimately be drawn from the Keele Valley Landfill Reserve fund to help pay for the project.

Ultimately, councillors voted, unanimously, to add both fields to the budget plan for consideration.

“This is a no-brainer,” Maple/Kleinburg Councillor Marilyn lafrate said before the vote. “These fields here are much-needed. One field is coming out of a reserve fund that has been sitting there for this field for almost 10 years and the second field is coming out of another reserve fund, which is dedicated to the Maple community. So, ultimately, this has no bearing or effect on taxation.”

It seems unlikely the second field will get cut before final budget approval given city staff have already developed a plan to reduce the tax increase to 3 per cent without chopping any capital projects and eliminating it would result in limited savings.

Plus, there appears to widespread support for the project among council members.

Still, a few councillors have expressed a desire to see the tax increase reduced even further and that might require some capital projects to be shelved.

The budget committee is scheduled to meet again March 2 at 7 p.m.

