



Westmount Soccer Club
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Mayor Smith
Westmount Councilors
4333 Sherbrooke St W
Westmount, QC H3Z 1E2

By email

September 3, 2019.

Dear Mayor Smith and Westmount Councilors

We are writing to request that the City of Westmount proceed with a project to install an artificial turf field for soccer and other sports.

Soccer is the largest participation activity in Canada and considered the fastest growing sport in the country. Founded just a few years ago, the Westmount Soccer Club (WSC) has seen first-hand the high demand for competitive soccer in our community.

A new turf field would have a major positive impact to our community. Aside from helping attract new families, it would be a significant benefit to the Westmount recreational soccer program, Westmount schools, CEGEPS and other sports organisations as well as to the Westmount Soccer Club. It is our understanding that undertaking this project to upgrade an existing field would not require a significant investment, but would result in a high-quality facility available from early March to October.

As long-standing Westmount residents, we recall that in 2007, the City considered installing a turf field using recycled rubber infill. The proposed project generated unfavourable feedback from the community. Recycled rubber infill has been linked to potential health risks, emitted heat and strong and unpleasant odors. Fortunately, technology has since improved and there are now many options for an artificial turf field, consisting of organic infill material. Therefore, an artificial turf field no longer needs to impact the environment and health of its users and neighbors.

The WSC is an independent parent run organisation with over 250 playing members aged 6-24 on 13 teams. Almost 80% of the members are Westmount residents. A successful soccer program is a huge attraction for young families choosing a new community. As a sport, it is accessible for young players and based on our experience, many of the new families choosing to move to Westmount play soccer as their primary sport.

During the 2019 season, WSC played on the Main and Junior fields in Westmount Park. The City employees work hard to maintain these fields and to keep them playable. However, the demand on the fields, as well as heavy use early in the season when the fields are wet make it very difficult to preserve playing surfaces in suitable condition. Based on the field sizes and distribution of our teams, the Junior Fields are in great demand. Unfortunately, we have one team that must play all their games away from home and the club does not have the correct field sizes for some teams. Our fields are difficult to maintain and not up to par with the facilities of other clubs in the Lac-St-Louis league .

While Westmount has invested in excellent facilities for hockey and summer swimming, it is now the time to upgrade our outdoor facilities. An artificial turf field will not only be a huge benefit to our thriving soccer community but would allow us to host visiting teams with Westmount pride.

More about the Westmount Soccer Club

The Westmount Sports and Recreation Department has for many years operated a recreational soccer program (“House League”) that runs from early May until 24 June. This program is for players aged 5-16. While a very popular program with residents, it is a short season with limited potential for player development. Until 2011, many Westmount residents wishing to play competitive intercity soccer had to join clubs in TMR, NDG, Villeray and elsewhere.

In 2011, a group of parents in our community formed the Westmount Soccer Club with a single team for U12 boys. The Club affiliated with Soccer Quebec in the Lac St-Louis league, offering a full season of competitive soccer. The club grew rapidly due to incredible demand. In 2019, the club has over 250 playing members aged 6-24 across 13 teams. Developing girls’ soccer is a club priority and we now have 56 female players on three teams. Our understanding is that the Westmount Soccer Club is now the largest sports club in Westmount.

You have probably seen our players around Westmount proudly wearing their maroon club jerseys:



The WSC's mission is to develop soccer skills in a fun environment. The Club engages a Technical Director for the summer season who ensures high standards for both coaching and player development. The Club currently affiliates 31 certified coaches and 21 qualified referees. The 2019 season marked the introduction of the first team to play at the higher competitive AA level which is a significant accomplishment.

The Westmount Soccer Club season begins in March with indoor tryouts, followed by practices on rented artificial fields in April once the teams are formed. The competitive season starts in early May until the end of August, with playoff games in September. We are currently only able to host home games from late May until August. Our teams play over 200 games in a season. The club has also adopted an inclusive program that enables players with limited family means to participate.

The Westmount Soccer Club continues to be run by a Board of Directors, mainly parents.

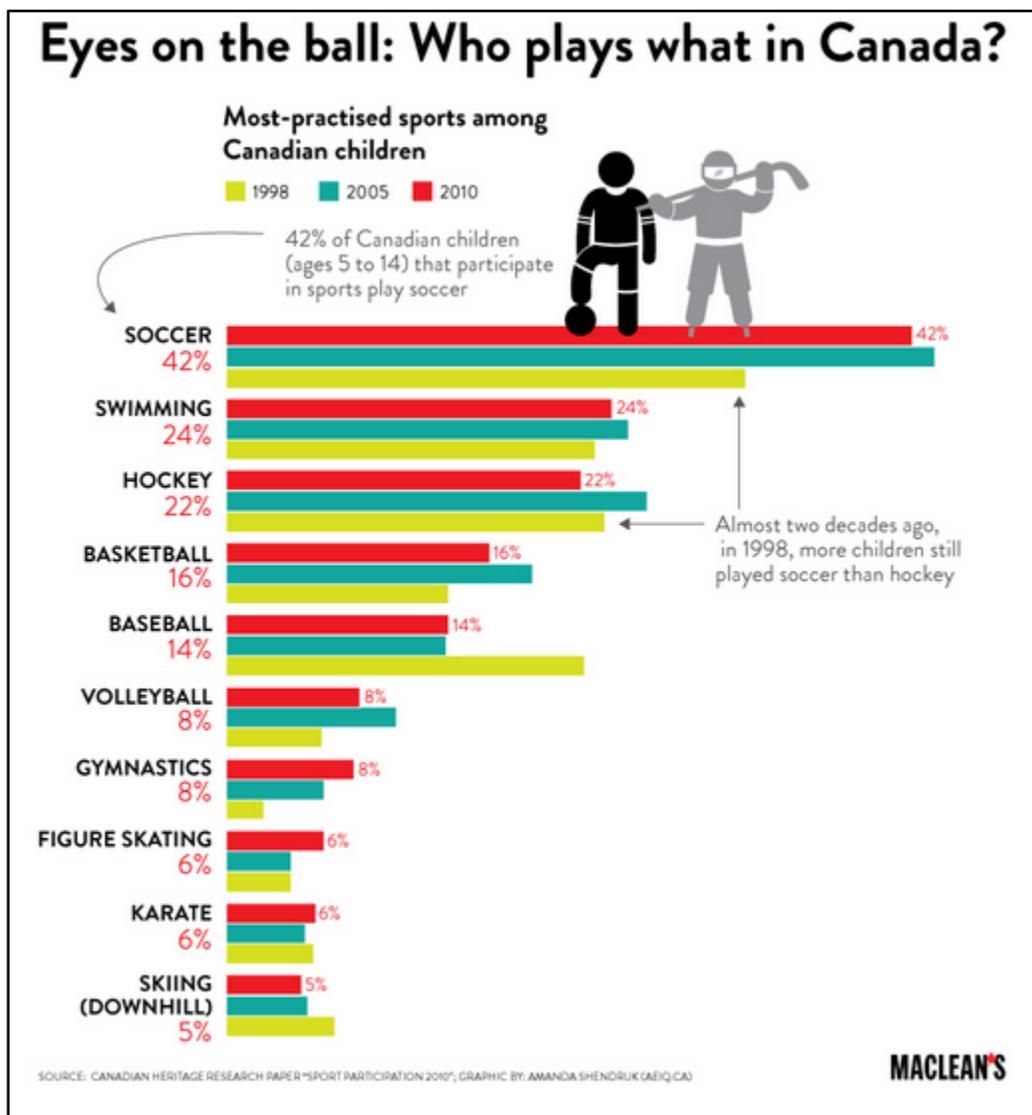
Soccer is A Growth Sport

Soccer is the largest participation sport in Quebec and Canada, with over 800,000 players across Canada. Female participation in soccer is also significantly higher than hockey.

Sports Federation Membership			
	Quebec	Canada	Qc % Female
Swimming	12,452	63,564	N/A
Hockey	94,391	626,090	7%
Soccer	167,832	810,043	36%

Source: WSC, Latest sports federation annual reports

A 2010 study revealed that 42% of Canadian children played soccer and that it is widely accepted as the fastest growing major sport. Canada will be co-hosting the World Cup in 2026 with some games in Montreal. This is likely to further generate interest and participation in the sport.



Benefits of an Artificial Turf Field

The existing Westmount grass fields are used heavily during May and early June when the “House League” and WSC activities overlap. During this time, fields are generally still wet and most susceptible to wear. Despite the best efforts of Westmount’s field maintenance teams, the early wear and tear makes these fields difficult to keep in good playing condition, resulting in uneven wear and unsafe conditions. Additionally, the fields require frequent re-sodding at great expense.

The WSC receives frequent complaints from referees and visiting teams as a result of uneven field conditions. Furthermore, one WSC team must play all games away from home as a result of lack of available field time.

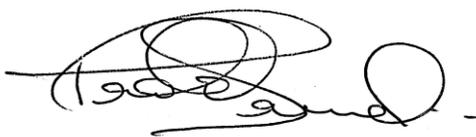
An artificial turf field would be available from early April until late October and has the ability to withstand the wear and tear during the periods of high demand. Artificial fields are reported to last 10 years or more and require limited maintenance. An artificial turf field would allow for a flexible configuration of goals and field sizes. Soccer Canada uses 4 different field sizes to allow players to develop from a 5 on 5 format for younger players up to a full 11 per side field. Westmount currently only has suitable fields for two of the formats, thus limiting player advancement.

The WSC recommends exploring a turf field that uses an organic or non-toxic infill. Recycled tire rubber is currently used on many turf fields as an infill but it has been associated with potential health risks, high surface heat and unpleasant odors. Improved field technology can use an infill from organic materials that addresses these concerns: Cork, coconut peat, olive cores and other non-toxic products can now replace the recycled rubber infill.

Summary

The Westmount Soccer Club believes that an artificial field would be a very valuable addition to the Westmount facilities and addresses a growing appetite for soccer and other outdoor sports. We would be happy to discuss our organisation, expand further on how an artificial turf field would benefit the Westmount Community and demonstrate how the Club can potentially support the City to move this project forward.

Yours sincerely,



Paola Samuel, WSC Fields Project Manager



Doug Hamilton, WSC President