



Artificial Turf Fields Under Construction

April 15, 2011 - Campus Bulletin

If you're headed east on Arboretum Road, you're sure to notice the blue chain-link fencing that's been planted around the grassy area and parking lots across from Alumni House and the Child Care and Learning Centre. Construction is underway to update outdoor playing fields as part of the University's Athletics Master Plan for the redevelopment of sports facilities.

The project (http://www.pr.uoguelph.ca/pr/athletic_multiplex_project_sign.jpg) involves the construction of two artificial-turf soccer fields with lighting to accommodate night events, as well as a natural-turf rugby field and a natural-turf practice half-field, complete with all related pedestrian, spectator and user amenities. It's being funded by student fees approved in a 2010 referendum.

A network of asphalt pathways, entry plazas and pedestrian lighting will allow access from the existing parking areas and campus connections. Parking is temporarily disrupted by the security fencing, but there will be no permanent loss of parking.

The multiplex design will provide a site for premier varsity, intramural and community athletic events in a park-like setting.

"It's designed to be a place where you want to spend time, sitting by a tree, walking or running," says Tom Kendall, athletics director. "It fits nicely into the Arboretum concept. That's what will be great about the area; it's not just four athletic fields stuck on the side of a road."

Construction is scheduled to be completed by Aug. 1. The new fields will be primarily for soccer, but they'll also be used for intramural sports and will be available for public rental.

These will be the second and third artificial turf fields on campus; the first opened last August. Located at the east end of campus across from the Cutten Club, it's used for rugby, football, soccer and intramural sports.

"This is a very exciting project and gives us a lot of flexibility," Kendall says. Currently, Guelph's outdoor field-sport season lasts only about 2 1/2 months. "We overuse the fields so much in the fall that we have to give them time to recover, which means we cannot use them in the spring and summer."

Artificial turf fields can be used nearly year-round by U of G teams and for public recreation, he says. "There are no artificial turf fields in the city of Guelph, which means they really struggle providing fields for minor soccer and other sports. This gives us a great opportunity to allow the community to use our facilities."

Stormwater will be collected from the artificial surfaces, stored in a cistern and used to irrigate the natural turf areas. The natural grass fields are designed so that water flows directly into the adjacent woodlot/wetland. U of G's Athletics Master Plan also includes the construction and renovation of a student fitness and recreation complex, and renovations to Alumni Stadium. Money is being raised to support the new facilities as part of the University's BetterPlanet Project campaign.