



Corporate Report

NO: R022

COUNCIL DATE: January 30, 2006

REGULAR

TO: **Mayor & Council** DATE: **January 25, 2006**
FROM: **General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture** FILE: **6140 – 20/WAP**
SUBJECT: Requested Capital Improvements at Whalley Athletic Park

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive this report as information.

INTENT

At the Finance Committee meeting of January 13, 2006, Council requested that staff report back on capital improvements requested by Whalley Little League for their home park, Whalley Athletic Park. The intent of this report is to provide Council with information regarding the current status of capital improvements at the park, and background for considering additional funding for requested improvements.

BACKGROUND

Whalley Athletic Park, located in Whalley in the 10600 Block of the West Whalley Ring Road, is home to the Whalley Little League (WLL). The park was developed in the late 1970's, and features four diamonds (one of which is lighted), grandstand seating at the major field, a small concession building, and athlete development structures such as batting cages. In recent years, some upgrades to the park have included weather-proofing the grandstands, reconfiguring the lighting system for greater light intensity, and development of parking spaces along the west side of the park on 133 Street. The City spends approximately \$48,000 annually on maintenance at this large athletic park.

WLL has served the youth of Surrey for five decades, consistently placing well in provincial, national and even international youth baseball tournaments. In 2005, one of WLL's teams reached the Little League World series in Williamsport, Pennsylvania. WLL has been awarded the 2006 Canadian Little League Championships, which will draw athletes and families from across Canada.

Recent Funding from the City

In 2005, Council provided funding of \$100,000 to WLL for upgrades to the concession building. The funds were intended to cover the development of universal access washrooms, increased equipment storage areas, and expansion of the concession area of the building. Staff have been advised that detailed designs for the building upgrades have been completed, but construction has not yet started.

In early 2005, Parks staff met with WLL representatives, and agreed to carry out specified field improvements (e.g. drainage & new clay infield) in the amount of \$50,000, funded through the Parks Division's field renovation budget. Later in the year, staff met with WLL again, at which time the scope of work requested by WLL had increased to include renovation, replacement or construction of other items such as the backstop, outfield fencing, foul ball poles, fence capping, perma-line markers and universal access dug-outs. The value of this work exceeded the available budget by \$47,000, and WLL requested in writing that the City complete this work and take the funding from the \$100,000 originally provided by Council for upgrades to the concession building. The requested work will be completed in time for the start of WLL's 2006 baseball season.

Staff have been advised that WLL has requested an additional \$125,000 from Council as matching funds for the building renovations and other capital improvements that they wish to complete before the Canadian Little League Championships that will take place in early August. It previously had been understood by staff that the main unfunded component of their capital program was concrete bleacher seating.

DISCUSSION

It is anticipated that the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department will be able to restore the \$47,000 taken from the concession building upgrade funds from 2006 Park Development Capital, thereby ensuring that Council's original allocation \$100,000 for this worthy project can be retained intact.

In late January discussions with WLL representatives, staff were advised that recent cost estimates for the concession building renovation greatly exceed their original estimate of \$100,000. The revised estimate from their Architect is \$250,000 to complete the concession building renovation; staff agree that this revised estimate is more reflective of costs than the original estimate. WLL also advised staff that the concrete bleacher seating was unlikely to be completed this year due to finance constraints and time constraints.

WLL has raised \$15,000 towards the building renovation, and they hope to raise much more through sponsorships through the winter and spring. However, at this time, they are still at least \$135,000 short of the funding required to complete the renovations to the concession building.


WLL is confident that they can raise an additional \$10,000 for the concession building renovation. If Council were to commit an additional \$125,000 in 2006 towards the concession building renovation, this would ensure that the renovations would be complete before the deadline for the Canadian Little League Championships in August. Any additional funds that are raised by WLL through sponsorship will be put towards the development of concrete seating.

CONCLUSION

In order to prepare for the 2006 Canadian Little League Championships, a number of renovations to the park, valued at \$97,000, are being carried out by the City's Parks Division this winter and spring.

In 2005, the Whalley Little League secured \$100,000 in Council funding to renovate the concession building; they also raised an additional \$15,000 towards the project through other sources. However, the WLL's Architect estimates that the building renovation work will cost \$250,000, leaving WLL \$135,000 short in funding to complete the work.

The WLL anticipates being able to raise at least another \$10,000 towards the project, but request that the City honour a previous verbal commitment to providing \$125,000 in funding to allow completion of the building in time for the hosting of the 2006 Canadian Little League Championships in August of this year.



Laurie Cavan
General Manager,
Parks, Recreation and Culture