



## **DISCUSSION**

WLL has stated that while games can be played on Diamond No. 1, they would prefer to have the field renovated in order to be able to attract and retain higher calibre teams, such as the Fraser Valley Chiefs of the BC Premier Baseball League. The Chiefs roster is made up of 80% Surrey residents, but the team presently plays all of its home games at the New Westminster Queens Park Stadium.

Staff have reviewed the condition of Field No. 1 and confirm that the field would afford better playability and performance characteristics if new drain lines were installed and if the aging irrigation system were to be replaced. These works would require taking the field out of play from August to the Spring of 2008. There will also be a need for repairs to the turf and infield areas as a result of the renovations. Whalley Little League is prepared to have the field closed for renovation. The cost of renovating Field No. 1 is estimated to be \$135,000.

Staff have estimated the cost of the re-orientation of Field No. 3, complete with drainage improvements, new irrigation, new backstops/dugouts and outfield fencing, to be in the order of \$350,000. Additional investigation would be required as the basis for preparation of a more precise estimate.

The City has provided a significant amount of funding (approximately \$400,000) for improvements to Whalley Athletic Park in the period 2005-2007. The funding allowed for upgrades to the field house, full renovation to the junior diamond, construction of accessible dugouts, and other minor projects in advance of the Canadian Little League Championships in 2006. Based on this recent investment in the facility, no additional work was planned at the park in 2007 due to other competing higher priority demands for Park Development Capital.

### **Project Phasing and Potential Funding Sources**

The improvements to Field No. 1 (WLL's number one priority) will be phased, with the bulk of the work (\$85,000) being undertaken in August/September 2007, and the remainder of the works (\$50,000) completed in early 2008. If Council decides that this project should proceed in 2007, funding could be made available from anticipated Parks, Recreation and Culture Department mid-year savings or, alternatively, from the Council Initiatives Fund. The current balance of the Council Initiative Fund is \$213,000.

Renovations to other ball diamonds and fields at the park should be deferred to future years' capital budgets and be prioritized against other capital items brought forward as part of the new Parks, Recreation and Culture Strategic Plan.

## CONCLUSION

In the past three years, the City has provided \$400,000 in funding for the upgrading of baseball facilities at Whalley Athletic Park. The Whalley Little League has requested as a first priority, additional improvements to Field No. 1 with an estimated cost of \$135,000. The 2007 Parks Development Capital Program does not provide capital funding for this project.

If Council decides that this project should proceed in 2007, funding could choose to fund the project from anticipated Parks, Recreation and Culture Department mid-year savings or from the Council Initiatives Fund.

Other significant field improvements at the Whalley Athletic Park such as the renovations to Field #3 should be considered in future years' capital budgets and be prioritized against other capital projects brought forward as part of the new Parks, Recreation and Culture Strategic Plan that is currently being prepared.

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