

Report to: General Committee

Report Date: March 19, 2007

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**SUBJECT:** York Region District School Board – Markham Centre Secondary School for Athletics & Healthy Active Living – Outdoor Sports Fields

**PREPARED BY:** Allan Seabrooke, Director, Strategic Services ext. 7522

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

THAT the report titled York Region District School Board (YRDSB) – Markham Centre Secondary School for Athletics & Healthy Active Living – Outdoor Sports Fields be received;

AND THAT funds be approved to an upset limit of \$2million to upgrade two planned natural turf sports fields to artificial turf, to provide lights for all three fields, increases in size of the maintenance and washroom building and equipment, in partnership with YRDSB at the School for Athletics & Healthy Active Living.

AND THAT the \$2 million required for this project be funded from Development Charges, 90% of \$1.8 million, and the Ramp-Up Reserve, 10% or \$0.2 million.

AND THAT the Director, Strategic Services be authorized to negotiate a Joint Use & Maintenance Agreement for the sports fields with YRDSB;

AND THAT Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

**FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

Staff recommends that the \$2 million required for this project be funded from Development Charges (DC), \$1.8 million (90%) and the Ramp-Up Reserve, \$0.2 million (10%).

Development Charges are controlled by Provincial legislation and is a funding source used to help pay for select growth-related capital costs in a municipality. DC's are collected for growth-related facilities in the areas of parks, recreation and library services, and pay for 90% of the qualified capital costs with the municipality responsible for the remaining 10%.

In order to smooth the operating impact of new facility openings, such as new community centres, libraries and fire stations, the Town ramps-up the personnel costs of the new facilities over several years prior to the facility opening. The budgeted ramp-up funds included in the operating budget are transferred to the Facility Ramp-Up Reserve in the years before the facility is opened.

In the proposed 2007 Operating Budget there are ramp-up funds proposed for the East Markham Community Centre and Library and two additional fire stations. It is recommended that the \$0.2 million, which is the 10% non-DC position of this project, be funded from the Facility Ramp-Up Reserve in 2007.

The DC funds for this specific project are being allocated from the Urban Design Parks DC. In order to accommodate these fields, it should be noted that a substitution to components of the overall parks development plans will be made to complete this project. These adjustments will not affect service levels.

**PURPOSE:**

To recommend approval of expenditures to an upset limit of \$2 million to upgrade two planned natural turf sports fields to artificial turf; to provide lights for all three fields, to increase the size of the maintenance and washroom building and equipment purchases, in partnership with YRDSB at the School for Athletics and Healthy Active Living. In addition, approval is sought to negotiate a Joint Use & Maintenance Agreement for the sports fields with YRDSB.

**BACKGROUND:**

Parks, Recreation, Culture & Library Master Plan – Need for Additional Outdoor Soccer Fields

The Parks, Recreation, Culture & Library Master Plan establishes priorities and policies to guide the delivery of facilities and services to the year 2021. Contained in this plan, in the Parks & Outdoor Facilities section, is a recommendation to increase the supply of outdoor soccer fields. The addition of soccer fields over the planning horizon is projected as a result of dramatic population increases and increased participation rates in the sport. The plan has projected the need for an additional 27 fields; however, more may be required as demand continues higher than projected in recent years.

The Town has been steadily increasing our existing supply of soccer fields as construction of parks occur; however, the temporary loss of four soccer fields at Milliken Mills Park in 2009 prompted the need to investigate options to mitigate the loss of these fields.

Phase 1 of the Angus Glen Community Park has been accelerated through advance approval in the 2007 budget. This will provide one full size lit soccer field which will be constructed in 2007 and should be ready for use in spring of 2008.

Milliken Pumping Station & Reservoir Expansion – Milliken Mills Park

The City of Toronto has identified that an expansion of the Milliken Reservoir and Pumping Station is needed to enhance the supply and security of drinking water and to service future demands for the approved growth in Toronto and York Region.

The existing inground reservoir is located in the Town of Markham – Milliken Mills Park and is owned and operated by the City of Toronto. The expansion of the reservoir and pumping station

is to occur on City of Toronto land, within Milliken Park, that the Town of Markham presently leases for use of four soccer fields and one baseball diamond. The construction will commence at the conclusion of the 2008 soccer and baseball season (approximately October 31) and will result in the loss of these fields for a period of at least three to four seasons.

There is significant impact on the soccer clubs that use Milliken Park and the 12 major tournaments that are hosted annually at this facility. The most significant impact is for the Unionville-Milliken Soccer Club (UMSC) that is the main user of Milliken Mills Park.

A Unionville-Milliken Soccer Working Group Committee of Council was organized in November 2006 to work with staff and the Unionville-Milliken Soccer Club representatives to discuss potential solutions. The working group has held a number of meetings since to look at options. In January 2007, Council approved a staff recommendation to investigate a partnership opportunity with the YRDSB with respect to the three outdoor sports fields planned for construction at the new School for Athletics & Healthy Active Living and report back to General Committee.

#### York Region District School Board Partnership Opportunity

The YRDSB is in the process of constructing a Secondary School for Athletics & Healthy Active Living on a 30 acre site in Markham Centre, west of Main Street Unionville and north of Highway 407. This unique school will focus on the total integration of academic and sports excellence, and is designed to attract students who are high performance athletes in Canada, as well as those who are interested in sports and recreation related disciplines as a career option. The school is scheduled to open in September 2008, initially for Grade 9 and 10 students, and expanding to other grades each year thereafter.

Within the athletic campus, exterior facilities include an eight lane synthetic 400 metre track circuit, an artificial turf playing field, two natural turf playing fields for soccer, football and rugby, hard surface outdoor play courts, and walking trails. (Attachment A)

Following up on a meeting with YRDSB and members of Council on February 21, 2007, staff met with YRDSB staff on the technical aspects of the proposal to “upgrade” soccer fields on the new school site. Viability is confirmed and from a staff perspective they support our initiative and have requested a proposal for the School Board to endorse.

The basis premise of the partnership proposal being recommended by staff for Council approval is as follows:

- The Town will pay for all “upgrade” costs to improve two proposed natural turf fields to artificial turf.
- The Town will further pay for lighting to be installed in all three fields.
- The Town will pay for additional costs that may be incurred in a maintenance facility and washroom beyond the original scope as required by school usage.
- The Town will negotiate a Joint Use & Maintenance Agreement for the sports fields with YRDSB.

- Residents would have an opportunity to play soccer on three artificial turf fields five nights a week and through an extended season. Two games per field, per evening would be possible with the use of lights. Weekends would also be available for programmed usage.
- The upset limit for this total arrangement is estimated at \$2 million which would be supported through 90% D.C. funds and 10% tax funded.

A meeting was held on March 8, 2007, with the Unionville-Milliken Soccer Working Group and a representative from the Unionville-Milliken Soccer Club where usage and support of the proposed partnership with YRDSB was received. The representative from the UMSC will assist to provide technical advice on the facility to ensure the needs of the soccer community are met.

The artificial turf fields are engineered to perform like natural grass with a number of obvious advantages:

- Outstanding durability, withstands many times the level of wear and tear compared to natural grass fields.
- Provides the athlete optimum range of movement and surface quality that is unaltered over time.
- Reduced maintenance costs. The cost of maintenance is estimated at 1/3 that of natural grass fields.
- No down time regarding field use after yearly seeding or re-sodding of natural fields.
- Ability to accommodate an unlimited number of activities that often conflict on natural grass; including football, soccer, rugby, physical education classes, etc.
- Potential for additional revenue generation from the extended season that occurs on artificial turf and hosting of high level playoffs and tournaments.
- Environmentally friendly construction materials used (i.e. consumer recycled tires for the infill)

Of particular importance to our soccer associations is the ability to extend their season length. This is desirable to enable the soccer clubs to continue to compete at the “rep” level, similar to communities such as Mississauga and Vaughan who have installed artificial turf fields.

**BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:**

Financial Services  
Urban Design

**RECOMMENDED**

**BY:** \_\_\_\_\_

Allan Seabrooke,  
Director, Strategic Services

Jim Sales, Commissioner,  
Community & Fire Services

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment A      Conceptual Site Plan – Markham Secondary School for Athletics &  
Healthy Active Living

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Attachment A