



Report to: General Committee

Date of Report: January 2007

SUBJECT: Milliken Pumping Station & Reservoir Expansion in Milliken Park – Loss of Soccer Fields
PREPARED BY: Allan Seabrooke, Director, Strategic Services

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the report titled “Milliken Pumping Station & Reservoir Expansion in Milliken Park – Loss of Soccer Fields” be received;

AND THAT staff investigate a partnership opportunity with the York Region District School Board with respect to the three outdoor sports fields planned for construction at the new School for Athletics and Healthy Active Living and report back to Committee;

AND THAT staff proceed with further investigations into developing a detailed conceptual site plan and detailed costing for the construction of artificial turf soccer fields on the “Southeast Community Centre Property” and report back to Committee;

AND THAT staff work with stakeholders on an ongoing basis to investigate and analyze future opportunities at Milliken Park for overall park use including potential sport field re-development.

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Town of Markham presently leases a portion of the Milliken Park lands from the City of Toronto, which contains four soccer fields and one baseball diamond. The City of Toronto planned expansion of the Milliken Reservoir and Pumping Station will result in the loss of these fields following the conclusion of the 2008 playing season for three to four years.

Given the full utilization of the four soccer fields by the Unionville-Milliken Soccer Club, and use for 12 tournaments throughout the season, the fields require replacement prior to the start of the 2009 season.

A number of options have and are being investigated by staff, including the construction of two artificial turf fields at the “Southeast Community Centre Property”. We are also investigating a partnership opportunity with respect to the three outdoor sport fields planned for construction by the York Region District School Board.

Staff are seeking Council’s direction to proceed with pursuing these options.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to provide background information on the Milliken Pumping Station and Reservoir expansion in Milliken Park, that is resulting in the loss of soccer fields and to seek Council direction on two initiatives to mitigate the effect of the losses.

BACKGROUND:**Milliken Pumping Station and Reservoir Expansion – Milliken 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 (see Attachment A).

The existing in-ground 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 the use of four soccer fields and one baseball diamond. The construction will commence at the conclusion of the 2008 soccer and baseball season (approx. October 31) and will result in the loss of these fields for a period of at least 3-4 seasons.

The City of Toronto has involved the public, beginning with the first Open House held on June 14, 2006, in Markham. A subsequent Open House was held on September 19, 2006. At the Open Houses, City of Toronto staff explained the need for the project, the EA process being followed, a project overview, and received feedback from the public on the overall project. The majority of feedback received related to the loss of recreation facilities in the park and more specifically the significant loss of soccer fields utilized by the Unionville-Milliken Soccer Club for league play and tournaments.

OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:**Impact & Loss of Soccer Fields**

There will be four soccer fields and one baseball diamond that will be lost from 2009 for a minimum of 3-4 years. The loss of the baseball diamond can be dealt with; however, there is a significant impact on the soccer clubs that use Milliken Park and the 12 major tournaments that are hosted annually at this facility. The four soccer fields in question are permitted for a total of 3,927 hours (2006). The most significant impact is for the Unionville-Milliken Soccer Club that is the main user of Milliken Mills Park.

Staff, including a number of members of Council, has met with Unionville-Milliken Soccer Club representatives to discuss potential solutions and progress, which are articulated in this report to Committee.

Discussion of Potential Options

To mitigate the loss of the four soccer fields at Milliken Park, staff are recommending consideration to constructing two artificial turf fields at the "Southeast Community Centre Property". The property is located east of Markham Road and south of the CNR Rail line. Specifically, it is an "L" shaped property fronting Karachi Drive on the west and north sides, with a section of the west part of the property also fronting on New Delhi Drive. This parcel of land was purchased from Costco for the purpose of constructing the future Southeast Community Centre.

It was agreed as a condition of the purchase of the property from Costco that the Town share the cost of constructing the roadways, sidewalks and street lighting, as well as municipal services under the new roads proposed in the subdivision plan that abuts the Town's lands (the Southeast Community Centre Site – See Attachment B). It would be necessary to complete the construction in 2007 of the road and associated infrastructure to enable road access to the soccer fields. Staff has had initial discussions with Costco and will be bringing forth a report to Committee in the near future with respect to the Town's share of the cost for the road and associated municipal infrastructure.

Two artificial turf fields with lights will provide sufficient hours to replace the number of hours lost from the four fields at Milliken Park for regular weekday league play. It should be noted that the "Southeast Community Centre Property" is outside the Unionville-Milliken catchment area; however, club officials have indicated that they could apply for a waiver from the soccer district to have these games played outside their district boundaries.

The artificial turf, while offering a higher quality sports field, will also enable clubs to extend their seasons with use as early as March and as late as November. This is desirable for the soccer clubs to continue to compete at the "rep" level where other communities such as Mississauga and Vaughan have installed artificial turf fields.

In terms of the significant tournaments held at Milliken Park, the two artificial turf fields will undoubtedly provide an improved quality offering, but cannot totally replace use of the four Milliken Park fields. Other fields in Markham would have to be used in conjunction with these two fields to host the larger tournaments.

In addition to this initiative, staff has had preliminary discussions with the York Region District School Board to investigate a partnership opportunity for the three outdoor sports fields being constructed at the School for Athletics and Healthy Active Living (See Attachment C). The Board is constructing one artificial turf field and two natural turf fields on this new school site, which is slated to open in the fall of 2008. If a satisfactory partnership can be crafted to provide community use in the evening and weekends for these fields, this would also provide much needed additional soccer fields in the Unionville-Milliken catchment area. The three fields would require lights to facilitate evening community use.

Lastly, in the event that the first two options cannot be achieved, staff has investigated the feasibility of leasing land and constructing temporary soccer fields if land can be leased for a reasonable term of ten years or more. This is not a preferred option, but does provide another potential alternative. Land could also be purchased for construction of sport fields; however, most available land is located outside the Unionville-Milliken Soccer Club boundary.

Future of Milliken Mills Park

The Milliken Reservoir and Pumping Station expansion by the City of Toronto effectively doubles the size of the existing reservoir. The amount of land that the reservoir will then occupy is substantial and the resulting impact on the remaining use areas of the park will require future site analysis. This is a topic for future discussion and can only be assessed with certainty when construction is well underway at the reservoir and the resulting impact can be both visually and functionally analyzed.

Impact on Southeast Community Centre Future Plans

The draft Parks, Recreation, Culture and Library Master Plan establishes priorities and policies to guide the delivery of facilities and services to the year 2021. This plan recommends the construction of a new major multi-purpose community centre and outdoor recreation amenities at the proposed Southeast site. In general, the new community centre would include some combination of the following amenities:

- Indoor pool
- Fitness area
- Gymnasium
- Program space
- Youth & senior space
- Ice arenas

The final decision on the combination and sizes of amenities would be based on the circumstance, partnership opportunities and costs and benefits presented by the various delivery options. There are two phases contemplated including a 2009 construction of ice pads followed by the remainder of the Southeast Community Centre construction in 2014. The land has been purchased for this proposed community centre as noted earlier in the report.

Due to the circumstances of losing four soccer fields staff wish to further investigate, as soon as possible, construction of the outdoor sport fields at this site in Phase 1, with two artificial turf fields as depicted in the attached diagram (See Attachment D). There is sufficient land to construct these two soccer fields while placing only one limitation on the future options related to the potential remaining amenities at the Southeast Community Centre. The limiting options is that four ice pads due to the parking requirements could not be built, along with the other stated amenities; only two ice pads.

The remaining phases of the Southeast Community Centre will be determined based on a combination of factors including the outcome of the Canadian Sports Institute project, an analysis of actual vs. projected population growth, trends in recreation participation and registered users in key sports within the facility, overall community input, potential partnership opportunities and available finances.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

As noted in the report recommendations, staff are seeking direction to proceed with developing a site plan and costing for construction of the two artificial turf fields at the Southeast property. The final cost is dependant on the quality of artificial turf specified, site amenities provided and specific site preparation costs; however, other turf field project costs are in the \$750,000 to \$1,000,000 range per field.

The potential costs with respect to the partnership opportunity with the York Region District School Board and their three fields are unknown at this time until further discussions occur.

BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

Strategic Services
Asset Management

RECOMMENDED**BY:**

Allan Seabrooke
Director, Strategic Services



Jim Sales, Commissioner,
Community & Fire Services

ATTACHMENTS:

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| Attachment A | Milliken Pumping Station & Reservoir Expansion Class EA – Proposed Construction |
| Attachment B | Future Southeast Community Centre & Costco Site |
| Attachment C | Conceptual Site Plan – Markham Centre Secondary School for Athletics and Healthy Active Living |
| Attachment D | Proposed Markham Southeast Community Centre Layout – Options 2, November 24, 2006. |