



November 23, 2023

MEMO TO : Park Board Commissioners

FROM : Tiina Mack, Director Planning and Park Development

SUBJECT : **John Hendry Park Sports Fields – Board Briefing Memo**

Dear Commissioners,

This memo updates Commissioners on the status and next steps of the sports field renewal at John Hendry Park and responds to an outstanding Commissioner Enquiry.

BACKGROUND

In December 2022, the Park board approved a Motion to advance the renewal of sports fields (two little league diamonds and one multi-sport field) as outlined in the John Hendry Park Master Plan. Staff updated the Board on the Sports Field Development Program at the October 16, 2023, Board Meeting which considered that in March 2023, the Trout Lake Little League (TLLL) was successful in their bid to host the 2025 Provincial Championships in July of 2025. The league submitted the bid prior to consulting with staff.

Commissioner Enquiry October 10, 2023.

Q1: Can the northern and middle fields be moved in time for the 2025 BC Provincial Little League? This would require the complete upgrades identified in the CARRIED amendments.

Due to the scale of field relocation and seasonal dependencies for working at John Hendry Park, staff cannot complete this work before the 2025 Provincial Championships. In addition to rebuilding and relocating all park infrastructure 10m to the east to accommodate a relocated BC Parkway as identified in the John Henry Park Master Plan (fields, drainage, irrigation, fencing, backstop) as shown in APPENDIX A, this would also require coordination with the TLLL to relocate their infrastructure as well (batting cage, outfield fencing, scoreboard).

Q2: What would be the required budget to complete the shifting of the diamonds 10m.

The current anticipated cost for the relocation of the two diamonds is \$3.5M. The timeline for this work would be July 2024 through 2025, due to the scale of changes required and the challenges of working in Trout Lake during the winter with the underlying peat soil conditions. Specific details of the relocation and renewal of the fields are outlined in the Masterplan (APPENDIX A). The \$3.5M cost includes the coordination and relocation of TLLL owned infrastructure but does not include the replacement or renewal of assets owned by TLLL. This work could not be completed in time for the provincial tournament and funding is not available.



Q3: What would be the budget and timeline be to complete the upgrades without shifting the diamonds and renewing them in their current location.

There are two options outlined in this memo that address field improvements without relocating the fields. Depending on the scope of work, costs range from \$75,000 to \$500,000. Both can be finished in time for the 2025 season/Provincial Championships.

DISCUSSION

Process to Approve Major Event Permits

Groups seeking permits for new or special events like provincial or national championships do not currently have written guidelines to follow. Some groups seek the advice of Park Board staff while others secure events and then approach elected officials for accommodation. Some groups have been successful in being accommodated while others are not.

The pending Park Board Outdoor Field Allocation and Management Policy (OFAMP) is anticipated to be implemented by 2026. The OFAMP will clarify how special events and tournaments are to be accommodated on sport fields in the future. Recreation staff will also take a proactive approach notifying permit holders to submit a request so staff can assess feasibility of capital maintenance requests before permit holders commit to hosting. Application and approval processes and timing, expectations of the host group, approved tournament hub sites, disruption to regular season permit holders, etc. will be fairly and sustainably addressed and communicated.

Future tournaments which could trigger a capital development consideration should be referred to capital development planning cycles or to the new unsolicited proposal process which was adopted by the Board on July 6, 2023.

Response to December Motion

In response to the December motion related to renewing the sports fields at John Hendry Park, staff developed timelines and costs for the project. The course of action that best addresses the Motion is to invest \$500,000 to repair the fields, replace the fencing and backstops, and make significant improvements to irrigation and drainage. An investment of this degree will significantly improve field quality and includes a grass infield. The cost for the grass infield with irrigation provision is \$36,600. This course of action was presented to the Board on October 16, 2023, Sports Field Development Update. To prioritize the field renewals at John Hendry Park, several other planned field rehabilitation projects will be de-prioritized including: minor/medium sized ball diamond renovations at Elm, Nanaimo, Memorial South, Hastings, Hillcrest North, and Carnarvon Parks.

An alternate course of action for consideration is to advance much smaller improvements only to the diamonds: the scope of work would include re-grading the uneven outfield surface, re-seeding where required, and the addition of grass within the infield as required by tournament hosting requirements. This smaller scope of work can be completed in time for the TLLL to host the 2025 Provincial Championships at a cost of \$75-\$85,000. These estimates do not include backstops or outfield fencing as it would be more cost effective to replace the backstops and fencing at the same time as the fields are relocated as per the John Hendry Masterplan, rather than duplicating this cost. This scale of the above-described smaller investments would address field playability in



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the short term, while not precluding a larger renewal of the fields. The larger renewal would be considered for prioritization in a subsequent capital plan that aligns with the John Hendry Masterplan and may result in a longer-term benefit to more user groups and the public.

Additionally, the multi-sport field in the northeast portion of John Hendry Park will be renovated for safety and playability, as directed by the Board. The cost for this work, which includes stripping existing grass, leveling the field surface, and straightening the rugby goals is approximately \$300,000.

The underlying peat soil conditions are likely to cause uneven play surfaces again at both the ball diamonds and the multi-sport field within several years of this renewal in all options discussed above.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tiina Mack". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Tiina Mack (she/her),
Director, Planning and Park Development

amb/tm/is/jk

Copy to: PB Leadership Team
Ian Stewart – Manager of Park Development
Alexandre Man-Bourdon – Senior Project Manager
Harry Khella – Operations Manager

Appendix A: John Hendry Park Master Plan

The John Hendry Park Masterplan, adopted by the Park Board in May 2022, outlines a range of programs and renewal opportunities to be implemented over future capital plans. The masterplan was developed over a seven-year period and included extensive public engagement throughout its development. One of the key and most supported recommendations outlined in the masterplan is the shifting of the BC Parkway from the west side of the sports fields to the east side of the sports fields. The relocation better separates the bike path from other uses reducing conflicts including those between cyclists and pedestrians, dogs, parking areas and better connects to bike routes on 13th Ave.

Shifting the BC Parkway requires the relocation of the northern two little league diamonds approximately 10m to the west to allow room for the bikeway along the east edge of the park. The resulting relocation of the little league diamonds triggers a total renewal of the little league diamonds – new backstops, fencing, grading, drainage, etc. The relocation of the fields would also potentially require moving amenities owned by the Trout Lake Little League (TLLL) including a storage container, batting cages, umpires' box, and scoreboard.



Image from JHP Masterplan highlighting shift of fields, relocation of BC Parkway, and identifies field improvement scope