



Varsity Park Recreation Upgrades Donation

Date	June 16, 2021
To	Operations and Community Services Committee
From	City Planning & Community Development
Service Area	Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services
Item No.	OCS21-22

RECOMMENDATION

The Operations and Community Services Committee recommends that City Council:

1. Approve acceptance of the donation of \$140,000 for the construction of a basketball court, winter water service, trees and site furnishings in Varsity Park.
2. Delegate authority to the Executive Director, City Planning & Community Development, or designate, to negotiate and approve a Donation Agreement(s) between the City of Regina and the Arcola East Community Association regarding the donation as further described in this report, any amendments to the Agreement that do not substantially change what is described in this report and any ancillary agreements or documents required to give effect to the Agreement.
3. Approve these recommendations at its meeting on June 23, 2021.

ISSUE

The Arcola East Community Association (AECA), in partnership with the Hawrylak School Community Council (HSCC) and East Zone Board (EZB), are proposing a basketball court, picnic area, tree plantings and pleasure skating facility be added to Varsity Park in southeast Regina. The AECA has offered to provide funding for these upgrades of \$140,000. Council approval is required to accept this donation, as it exceeds \$100,000.

POLICY IMPACTS

The Official Community Plan – Design Regina

This project aligns with *Design Regina: The Official Community Plan Bylaw No 2013-48*. The project clusters several new recreation amenities in Varsity Park, creating an opportunity for residents to meet and socialize while participating in active and passive recreation opportunities.

The Recreation Master Plan

The investments proposed by the community, in combination with the investments by the City of Regina (City), to refurbish the existing tennis courts and spray pad will expand the number of recreation options provided at the park. It will also extend recreation opportunities year-round by providing the pleasure skate surface in the tennis court area over the winter months. The resulting multi-use, multi-season recreation area is consistent with the *Recreation Master Plan* which directs administration, that *“Where appropriate, public recreation opportunities, facilities, and spaces will be grouped with other sport, culture and recreation opportunities to achieve economic efficiencies, expand use, and maximize the provision of sport, culture and recreation opportunities at centralized locations.”*

The proposed project is further aligned with the Recreation Master Plan, which addresses the role of partnerships in the provision of recreation opportunities.

Winter Cities Strategy

Administration has identified that there is a gap in the provision of outdoor skating in southeast Regina. While this pleasure skate surface will not completely eliminate that gap, it is one measure that will provide additional service to the area until a location can be found for another boarded rink.

FINANCIAL IMPACTS

An additional \$7,000 per year in operating funding is required to maintain the additional amenities. Request for the additional operating budget will be made through the 2022 budget process.

Required operating funding will be split in the following way:

1. \$2,000 for Facilities Maintenance to maintain the proposed basketball court asphalt.
2. \$5,000 for Parks Maintenance to maintain and operate the winter water service and flood and operate the proposed pleasure skate.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

Accessibility will be taken into account when the detailed design of the space is done.

OTHER OPTIONS

Council has the option of not accepting the donation from the AECA, due to the additional long-term capital maintenance and operating costs associated with the infrastructure.

COMMUNICATIONS

In March 2021, the AECA notified the 30 households that back or front directly onto Varsity Park of the proposed upgrades to the park. Residents were asked to provide feedback on the proposal directly to the AECA. Feedback received was split between those supporting the project and those opposed. Reasons for the opposition were related to the location of the courts and related noise that two additional basketball hoops might cause. Based on the feedback received the AECA believes that although there was some opposition to the project from neighbours, the benefits to the community as a whole outweigh that objection. Based on this, the AECA provided notice to Administration that they would like to proceed with the development and are willing to commit \$140,000 to fund the improvements fully.

The City then met with the AECA, the HSCC and the EZB to review the feedback. A modified plan for the site was created, considering the feedback from some of the neighbours opposed. Administration sent copies of the revised plan to the 30 residents, notifying them of the AECA's decision to proceed with the donation and of the proposed changes to the plan in response to their feedback. The original and revised plans are included in Appendix A and B.

Residents were invited in the letter to provide additional feedback via a community-wide survey on the proposed amenities through BeHeard Regina. Although there are a number of residents in support of the project, there are residents adjacent to the site that do not support the addition of recreation amenities and instead would prefer a passive park space with no recreation amenities. The community survey received 288 responses and the following provides a brief summary of the results:

- 160 of 288 (56 per cent) respondents indicated that they use the current park daily, weekly or monthly in the summer and 69 in the winter.
- 240 (83 per cent) respondents indicated that they would use the park more often if the planned upgrades occurred.
- The pleasure skating rink was the most popular proposed amenity with 198 of 288 respondents indicating that they would use it daily, weekly or monthly.

Of 288 responses received, 126 respondents provided verbatim comments. The following provides a high-level summary of those comments:

Comment	Number of Responses
Support the proposed park updates	28
Support the updates, but requested additional amenities	80
Noted traffic concerns	3
Requested more parks	2
Do not want any updates due to noise, teen hang out, additional park usage	5
Comments about accessibility	4
Support only the spray pad and rink	1
Comments not applicable to this project	3

Details of the survey responses are included in Appendix C. Administration concurs with the AECA, that moving forward with this project creates substantial benefits for the community at large. Administration also believes that partners have taken the appropriate measures to address the concerns expressed by adjacent neighbours.

DISCUSSION

Administration is implementing planned capital upgrades to the existing lighting and surfacing of the tennis courts and the existing spray pad in Varsity Park in 2021. Staff from the Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Department were approached by the AECA, the EZB and the HSCC, each wanting to partner with the City on the project. They have worked with staff to develop a concept plan for the site and have agreed to fund the construction of a basketball court, picnic area, trees and install infrastructure that would allow the newly resurfaced tennis courts to double as a pleasure skate location in the winter.

These additions to the park and its existing amenities will create a year-round neighbourhood recreation hub at Varsity Park, which is aligned with the Recreation Master Plan. The AECA has agreed to provide \$140,000 in capital funding for the construction to take place at the same time that the tennis courts and spray pad are being upgraded this summer.

As indicated in the Communications section, residents who back and front the park were asked to provide feedback on the initial design (Appendix A) by the AECA before a decision was made to proceed with the project. Of the 30 residences, 15 provided feedback indicating that they were not in favour of the project for many reasons, including increased noise of the additional basketball courts and the skating rink and concerns regarding the location of the planned amenities in the park. In response, Administration redesigned the proposed layout of the amenities, moving them closer to the centre of the park, reduced the proposed total number of basketball hoops in the park from four to two (one already existed in the park), and eliminated the shared lighting between the tennis courts and the basketball courts (Appendix B). Administration also proposed planting 13 trees adjacent to

the new amenities to provide visual screening and the conversion of the existing basketball half-court to a picnic area.

To move forward with this project and in accordance with *The Regina Administration Bylaw No. 2003-69*, Administration is seeking approval to accept the donation of these assets into the City's asset inventory.

This project is being constructed by contractors hired through a competitive procurement process by the City with project management support from the Land, Real Estate & Facilities Department.

DECISION HISTORY

Section 35 of *The Regina Administration Bylaw, Bylaw No. 2003-69* establishes that Council must approve the acceptance of the assets as a revenue donation to the City since the cost of the project is over \$100,000.

Section 25(l)(m) of *The Regina Administration Bylaw No. 2003-69* authorizes the Executive Director of Financial Strategy and Sustainability to establish a Donation Policy. Clause 4(5.1) of the Donation Policy states that City Council approves donations valued in excess of \$100,000 and donations requiring endorsement of any kind.

Respectfully Submitted,

Respectfully Submitted,



Laurie Shalley, Director, Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services



6/1/2021

Diana Hawryluk, Executive Director, City Planning & Community Dev.

6/8/2021

Prepared by: Chris Sale, Senior City Planner

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A - Initial Design

Appendix B - Revised Design

Appendix C - Survey