

**CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF GEORGINA**

**REPORT NO. RC-2017-0015**

**FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF  
COUNCIL**

**APRIL 26, 2017**

**SUBJECT: WEST PARK – FOLLOW-UP**

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**1. RECOMMENDATION:**

1. That Council receive Report No. RC-2017-0015 prepared by the Recreation and Culture Department dated April 26, 2017 respecting the West Park – Follow-up.
2. That Council direct to improve/rebuild ball diamonds at West Park.
3. That Council approve a total rebuild (Option #1) of West Park including 4 lit ball diamonds.
4. That Council direct staff to report back on the next steps and financial plan for the capital project of rebuilding West Park based on Option #1.

**2. PURPOSE:**

To provide Council feedback from the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority on the proposed improvement/rebuild of West Park and to obtain Council direction improving/rebuilding ball diamonds at the West Park location or to build new at a new location.

**3. BACKGROUND:**

On July 5, 2016, staff provided an overview of the issues and concerns of the current state of West Park. Staff shared a preliminary review of the potential options for repairing, renovating, rebuilding or building new (shown in table below).

	If LSRCA provides Permit, can proceed with:			
	West Park Site			New Site
Option	#1 Total Rebuild	#2 Renovation	#3 Replace/Repair	#4 Build New
	Bring the entire park up to ROC Field equivalent, including full grading/drainage plan (ROC rated 'A' diamonds, West Park currently 'C' diamonds)	Renovate 4 Ball diamonds in 'pinwheel' formation with lights, recycle posts/mesh for batting cages, some grading/drainage ('B' rated diamonds)	Improvements to above ground infrastructure to increase functionality (incl. adding lighting to 2 diamonds), no grading or drainage ('C' rated diamonds)	Build new 4 lit ball diamonds on new site ('A' rated)
<b>Cost Est.</b>	\$7-8mil	\$5mil	\$3mil	\$6mil

NOTE: Options #2 & #3 exclude any soccer field improvements

Staff communicated that in order to do any renovation or rebuild of West Park, a permit from Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (LSRCA) would be needed and it was important to know what level of rebuild the LSRCA would support. Based on the information and discussion, Council passed a resolution directing staff to obtain topographic analysis and to prepare a concept design based on Option #1 'Total Rebuild' to be used for LSRCA's assessment. The outcome of LSRCA's assessment would provide confirmation whether or not they would support a proposal for a total rebuild at West Park.

**4. ANALYSIS:**

E.R. Garden OLS was retained to prepare the topographic survey on West Park in order to understand the current grades and drainage patterns. This information was needed to better understand the level of grading and drainage work and amount of soils that would need to be removed and/or imported to level or raise the property.

Cosburn Giberson Landscape Architects were then retained to prepare a high level design concept and grading concept plan for a total rebuild of West Park. This concept plan (Option #1 Total Rebuild) involved bringing the entire park up to The ROC field equivalent standard including full drainage/grading plan, reconfiguration of 4 lit ball diamonds, improvements to the soccer area (sports field), adding a washroom facility, park amenities including a playground structure, shelters, multi-use courts, trails and parking lots. Attachment 1 shows the concept plan that was used for the discussions with LSRCA.

Through a number of discussions and site visits, LSRCA subsequently endorsed the concept design subject to standard conditions for appropriate engineering and environmental reports being prepared and a permit application fee. These conditions would consist of:

- Confirming that hydrologic function of the wetland is not impacted. This can be demonstrated by maintaining drainage patterns as well as quality treatment. A further water balance assessment may be required once confirmation of the amount of material being excavated and fill proposed is determined.
- Storm water management consistent with LSRCA guidelines

Staff are confident that these requirements could be met if the project was to proceed. Formal approval from LSRCA would take place once direction was given to proceed and the final design was prepared along with the tender ready drawings.

West Park serves as a major destination in South Keswick, both for residents and visitors. Its location is along the Lake to Lake Cycling Route and at Georgina's south western boundary making West Park a potential gateway feature with great potential. The drainage and soil challenges can be turned into a benefit and an educational opportunity for visitors to experience Low Impact Development (LID) and stormwater/wetland management in a park setting, along with the premier sports fields and associated park facilities. A total rebuild of West Park is recommended by Staff and supported by LSRCA and the ball user groups. The total rebuild will correct the problematic site drainage issues, mitigate the annual operating costs associated with standing water and soils settlement/heaving, and solidify the programming expectations for the user groups.

In addition to community desire and LSRCA's support, servicing existing needs with an existing site is logical, versus taking up future parkland dedication for the purpose of servicing an existing need.

It is important to note that the demand for ball diamonds is continuing to increase, some could be attributed to growth, and yet Georgina's population has not increased that much in the last couple of years. Therefore, it can only be assumed that most of the increased interest is being driven from existing residents. Currently, ball registrations for the youth organizations have close to doubled in the last couple of years, putting pressure on the available timeslots of our existing fields. However, with the anticipated population growth for Georgina, staff would recommend that future parkland dedication should be used to accommodate new/additional ball diamonds versus using future parkland dedication for meeting existing needs.

Next steps require direction from Council on agreeing to improve/rebuild the ball diamonds at the West Park location or to build new diamonds at a new location. If Council agrees with staff's recommendation to improve/rebuild the diamonds at West Park, then further direction from Council is needed to confirm what level of improvement/rebuild is approved.

**5. RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:**

This report addresses the following strategic goal(s):

GOAL 2: "Promote a High Quality of Life"

GOAL 3: "Engage Our Community & Build Partnerships"

GOAL 4: "Provide Exceptional Municipal Service"

**6. FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY IMPACT:**

From a funding perspective, since West Park ball diamonds are an existing facility, the construction costs are not eligible for Development Charge funding. Therefore, alternative funding sources (potential grants, tax levy contribution, and long term debt) would be necessary to fund this project. If approved by Council, staff could report back on the next steps and financial plan for the capital project.

**7. PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND NOTICE REQUIREMENTS:**

Staff met with the user groups to receive their feedback. The recommendation from the user groups was to improve/rebuild West Park as a sports/recreation facility and focus on improving the facility in its current location.

**8. CONCLUSION:**

Staff's recommendation is to complete a Total Rebuild of West Park. The total rebuild will correct the problematic site drainage issues, mitigate the annual operating costs associated with standing water and soils settlement/heaving, and solidify the programming expectations for the user groups.

Prepared and Recommended by:

Approved by:

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*Attachment 1: West Park Concept drawing based on Total Rebuild option*