

Report to Council



Date: April 12, 2021
To: Council
From: City Manager
Subject: Edith Gay Netting Project
Department: Sport & Event Services

Recommendation:

THAT Council receives for information, the report from the Sport & Event Services Manager dated April 12, 2021, with respect to the netting requirements at Edith Gay Park baseball fields;

AND THAT Council directs staff to submit a 2021 Final Budget request in the amount of \$254,754 to advance the netting project at Edith Gay Park baseball fields as outlined in the report.

Purpose:

To inform Council on the netting requirements at the Edith Gay Park baseball fields and advise on the costs to install the required netting.

Background:

Due to advances in sport technology and athletic performance, there has been an increased frequency of fly balls and homeruns being hit outside of ball fields and into surrounding infrastructure and residential properties. For improved safety and protective measures, it is recommended that the City install netting at high risk locations. With support from Risk Management, a priority list of ball field netting needs has been established and is progressively being implemented through annual budget requests. In 2021, the high-performance baseball field at Lombardy Park (field #5) is scheduled for netting installation.

The Edith Gay Park baseball diamond #3 and the South East Kelowna Park softball diamond (north) are the next ball fields that have been identified for netting. Both fields are situated adjacent to residential properties, and nearby residents have expressed their concerns regarding balls leaving the field of play into their properties.

During the December 10, 2020 Preliminary Budget deliberations, Council adopted a resolution directing staff to report back on the costs to repair the Edith Gay Park baseball diamond netting prior to Final Budget.

Discussion:

Within the City of Kelowna's sports field inventory, there are twenty-eight (28) ball fields, consisting of ten (10) Softball and eighteen (18) Baseball fields. Those fields are classified into four (4) categories:

- 7 "A" Fields (6 Softball/1 Baseball): Full-sized fields with sport lights, shale infields, large backstops, outfield fences and adjacent washrooms
- 2 "Modified A" fields (Softball): Smaller fields with sport lights, shale infields, large backstops, outfield fences and fewer structural amenities
- 13 "B" fields (2 Softball/11 Baseball): Smaller fields with shale infields and large backstops, limited fencing and amenities
- 6 "C" fields (6 Baseball): Small fields with grass infields, small backstops and no fencing or amenities

The Edith Gay Park diamond #3 is a "B" field where elite U18 baseball is played. It is one of three fields able to accommodate this level of play – the other two are Elks Stadium ("A" field) and Lombardy Park field #5 ("B" field). It is a high-demand field that supports over 500 hours of play annually.

Currently, Edith Gay Park diamond #3 has a perimeter fence surrounding the outfield, along with a limited amount of netting in leftfield off of the 3rd baseline. This netting was installed a number of years ago and has reached the end of its service life, requiring major repair. A full replacement of the existing netting system in leftfield is required and further netting is also needed in rightfield to safeguard adjacent properties.

The scope of the Edith Gay Park netting project includes replacing the existing netting system with ten (10) new steel poles, set forty feet (40') above ground and spanning one hundred twenty (120) linear meters, and installing all required netting, cables and fittings. This new protective netting system will prevent balls from leaving the left and right outfields, into neighbouring properties. Appendix A illustrates the location of the new netting system.

Conclusion:

Sport and recreation facilities are important places for people to gather, connect and play together, serving as key placemakers that contribute to a community's vibrancy and ongoing development. Many of these facilities are located within urban settings either by intentional placement or through residential growth around them. It's important to consider the safety measures needed to support these community-based facilities, and ensure a healthy relationship exists between facility users and neighbouring residents.

The Edith Gay Park netting project will contribute to a safe and integrated environment that supports unencumbered play by participants and protects the surrounding infrastructure and residential properties.

Internal Circulation:

Active Living & Culture
Parks Services
Infrastructure Delivery

Financial Services
Communications
Risk Management

Considerations applicable to this report:

Financial/Budgetary Considerations:

The cost to complete the Edith Gay Park netting project is \$254,754. The Sports Field Reserve is largely funded through field user fees and is intended primarily for the development of new sports fields. However, 30% or approximately \$77,000 of the estimated cost can be funded from this reserve and directed towards this project if Council proceeds with the recommendation.

Existing Policy:

Sports Field Reserve Fund (Policy #326)

Considerations not applicable to this report:

Legal/Statutory Authority:

Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements:

External Agency/Public Comments:

Communications Comments:

Submitted by:

D. Nicholas, Sport & Event Services Manager

Approved for inclusion:

J. Gabriel, Divisional Director, Active Living & Culture

Attachments:

Appendix A – Edith Gay Park Netting
Powerpoint – Edith Gay Park Netting Project

cc: J. Gabriel, Divisional Director, Active Living & Culture