

To: COUNCIL

Meeting Date: 10/8/2024

Subject: **Accessibility Improvements to the Kin 1 Softball Field-
Conceptual Design Update**

Submitted By: Shane Taylor, Manager of Recreation Placemaking Capital Projects

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Report No.: 24-110-CD

File No.: A/00557-30

Wards Affected: Ward 1

RECOMMENDATION(S):

THAT Report 24-110-CD Accessibility Improvements to the Kin 1 Softball Field-
Conceptual Design Update be received;

AND THAT Council endorse the Conceptual Design Plan (Base Scope);

AND THAT no further work on the design be completed until sufficient funds are
obtained to complete the project;

AND FURTHER THAT an application to the Jays Care Foundation funding initiative be
paused until sufficient funds to cover the costs of the entire project can be obtained.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Purpose

Staff are seeking Council endorsement of the conceptual design for accessible
improvements to the Kin 1 Softball Field and to seek direction on an application to the
Jays Care Foundation.

Key Findings

Accessibility and overall improvements to the Kin 1 Softball Field located in Riverside
Park include new paved accessible parking, hard surface accessible pathways, shaded
accessible dugouts, accessible seating, concession dining area accessibility
improvements, new fencing, lighting improvements and new artificial turf infield.

Additional considerations and options are included as part of this report including accessible washrooms.

Financial Implications

Capital Project A/00557-40 Accessible Ball Diamond Construction is currently unfunded as part of the 2025 Budget process in the amount of \$2,525,000. It is noted that this estimate remains a conceptual Class D level cost estimate (+/- 30%).

Capital Project A/00557-41 Riverside Accessible Ball Diamond Washroom is currently unfunded as part of the 2025 Budget process in the amount of \$500,000. It is noted that this estimate also remains a conceptual Class D level cost estimate (+/- 30%)

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT:

Strategic Action

Objective(s): INCLUSION - Deliver accessible, diverse and inclusive services, programs and infrastructure for all ages and abilities

Strategic Action: Provide age-friendly services that are accessible to all

OR

Core Service

Program: Not Applicable

Core Service: Not Applicable

The planned improvements to Kin 1 Softball field will benefit all ages, abilities and users who currently make use of this field. This location is the current home of the Buddy League and the planned improvements will allow for increased accessibility and inclusion of users.

BACKGROUND:

The Kin 1 Softball Field is home to the Waterloo Region Challenger Baseball Buddy League. Buddy League is an adaptive baseball program that provides children and adults (5+) with the opportunity to play baseball in a safe, supportive and friendly environment. The Kin 1 field has been identified as needing renewal, which provides an

opportunity to ensure this space can continue to be enjoyed by all ages, abilities, leagues and patrons.

Design for the project was initiated following the 2024 budget approval. Early consultation has been undertaken with the Buddy League and the City's Accessibility Advisory committee on the initial design concepts as presented herein. Some key considerations, challenges and options are discussed further in sections below.

ANALYSIS:

Staff are seeking Council endorsement of Conceptual Design Plan (Base Scope). Concept design figures are included in Appendix A and are discussed further below. Other optional items, which are not recommended to being advanced (Optional items 1 to 4) have been included for discussion purposes at conceptual level. High level pre-design cost estimates are provided for these items, in case Council would like to further explore these options as part of a future detailed design to augment the base scope of work. Additional key considerations are outlined in sections below for Council information, including the existing septic tile field in the Kin 1 outfield, potential for an accessible washroom and permitting considerations.

Conceptual Design Plan (Base Scope)

Conceptual Design Plan (Base Scope) is provided in Appendix A. This concept includes the following primary features:

- Paved accessible parking improvements (1400 sq. m, approximately 20 paved parking spaces)
- Hard surface accessible paths of travel
- Shaded accessible dugout area
- Accessible fan bleacher seating area.
- New field fencing including backstop fencing
- Lighting improvements including LED conversion
- New accessible artificial turf infield
- Sight line improvements through berm removal/modifications

Jays Care Funding Potential

The "Field Of Dreams" funding program, made possible by TD and managed by Jays Care, is an initiative dedicated to supporting capital improvements for athletic facilities across Canada, with a particular focus on safety, accessibility, and creating child-friendly spaces. Over the past decade, Jays Care has invested nearly \$15 million into 163 local baseball diamonds across 10 provinces and two territories, fostering inclusive

spaces where communities can connect, and children and youth facing barriers can thrive. The program, which begins accepting applications each September, is open to charitable organizations, nonprofit baseball associations, municipalities, and First Nations. It offers flexibility in the application process, accommodating proposals even if certain documents, like permits or audited financial statements, are still in progress. While funding does not extend to sports equipment or amenities such as playgrounds and washrooms, it does cover the construction and refurbishment of key facilities, including covered dugouts and accessible bleachers.

Listed in the table below is a summary of the types of expenses which are eligible under the Jays Care grant funding program. Based on review of publicly available media release examples comparable projects (such at the field of dreams in Antigonish Nova Scotia), funding in the range of \$150,000 may be possible. The remaining funding will need to come from City funding, corporate donations or fundraising efforts. At this time the balance would be \$2,875,000 for total project costs.

Table 1: List of Potentially Eligible and Ineligible Expenses for the Field of Dreams Grant Program

POTENTIALLY ELIGIBLE EXPENSES:	INELIGIBLE EXPENSES:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covered Dugouts • Child Friendly Spaces • Accessible Improvements and Upgrades • Equipment (safe and durable) • Bleachers (with restrictions) • Batting Cages (repairs due to hazards) • Labour and Materials associated with supply and installation of the above. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facility Maintenance • Scoreboards • Bleachers / Grandstands (large-scale) • Playgrounds • Washrooms • Sports Equipment • Batting Cages (new builds).

Optional Scope Items

The following items are being included for information/discussion purposes. They are independent items which could be added to a supplemented Council recommendation for inclusion in the base scope, to be advanced further in detailed design if there is

desire to see them included as part of the project. Currently they are not part of the recommended base scope of work.

Optional Item 1 - Artificial Turf Outfield

Artificial Turf outfield was investigated at high level based on early questions received from members of Council based on feasibility and cost. It should be noted that Buddy League representatives have not requested artificial turf outfield and have indicated that they would be satisfied with natural turf outfield. Based on high level parametric estimates (square meter pricing), artificial turf outfield would add an additional \$600,000 in City funding requirement to the project. Advantages of artificial turf include longer play season (less susceptible to wet weather closures). Another consideration for the artificial turf would be the relocation of the existing septic tile field (outlined further in sections below). With natural turf outfield, the septic tile field could remain in the existing location, providing further cost savings). For reasons outlined above, artificial turf outfield is not being advanced to detailed design, unless Council adds additional recommendation for this to be considered further through detailed design.

Optional Item 2- Scoreboard Improvements and Replacement

The existing scoreboard, installed in 1989, has not been in use for over 15 years and is currently non-functional. After discussions with the original vendor, it was confirmed that there are no options for renewing or refurbishing the scoreboard, as no modern tech service provider would offer service or maintenance for it. Years of exposure to outdoor conditions have likely rendered its electronic components inoperable. Additionally, the scoreboard does not meet AODA standards for color contrast, as it uses an outdated amber display that has since become obsolete. The current standard for scoreboards is white LED lights on a black background. The cost for removal of the scoreboard is estimated at \$10,000, while replacing it with a new, compliant model would cost approximately \$95,000. Based on these factors and feedback from the facility's leagues, which indicated they do not require a scoreboard, the removal of the scoreboard is planned under the base scope of work. However, if Council wishes to explore alternative options, staff can incorporate them into the detailed design phase.

Optional Item 3 - Batting Cages

The existing batting cages at the Kin 1 field are nearing their end of service life, and currently not in use. The existing location presents safety concerns, as they are relatively remote/hidden behind large established trees. If they were to be renewed, an alternate location should be considered. Buddy League and other leagues provided feedback that they do not currently have use for the batting cages. Two (2) potential

locations for new batting cages have been identified as shown in Appendix B. New batting cages have a preliminary cost estimate of \$130,000 and would not be eligible for Jays Care grant funding as noted in sections above. Currently new batting cages have been excluded from the base scope of work but could be added if there is desire to see this portion of the facility be renewed. Through consultation with Cambridge Girls Softball, the suggestion was made to move the Batting Cages to a new field or facility that aligns better with Cambridge Girls Softball.

Optional Item 4 - Seating Shade Structures

A provisional item has been included in the project scope for the installation of two cantilevered shade structures. These structures are intended to provide shade over the accessible bleacher seating units located closest to the dugouts. The proposed design consists of a simple, two-post structure with a mono-slope roof.

It is important to note that the shade structures are not planned for installation directly behind home plate. This decision was made to avoid obstructing the views from the existing press box, which would be compromised if the structures were placed in front of the viewing platform.

The estimated cost for the installation of these two shade structures is approximately \$145,000.

Additional Considerations

The following items are still under review, and will be subject to further investigation, and in the case of the new washroom, subject to funding and grant opportunities.

Accessible Washroom

The existing washrooms located in the Dukes Dugout do not meet current accessibility standards which present potential barriers to some users. An accessible washroom for this location has been submitted as part of the annual budget process as a new Capital Project A/00557-41 for consideration. Currently the project is listed as un-funded. Funding could be partially offset by grant programs such as the “Inclusive Community Grant” which is released each Spring for projects moving to construction. It provides funding up to \$60,000 for this type of upgrade if successful. Remaining funding would need to be City funding.

Currently a vendor supplied washroom is being investigated, and two (2) potential location options have been identified as shown in Appendix B. A vendor supplied washroom unit would be a new type of installation for the City of Cambridge, and these units are currently being screened against the City’s Facility Accessibility Design

Standards (FADS). A sub-committee of the Accessibility Committee is being considered to help facilitate this review.

Septic Tile Field Located in the Outfield

The Dukes Dugout Building is serviced by a septic system as there is no gravity sewer in this area of the park. The leaching bed for the septic system is situated in the Kin 1 ball diamond outfield and was originally installed in 1983. A detailed review of the leaching bed is ongoing, to determine whether upgrades should be considered at this time, in tandem with the field upgrades. Considering it receives seasonal loads only, it is possible that the leaching bed may continue to function as intended for many years to come. Considering it is over 40 years old, it has been recommended to have the leaching bed tile laterals inspected by camera to confirm whether any imminent upgrades should be anticipated. This work is planned for November 2024 and will confirm whether replacement is recommended. If a new septic leaching system is recommended, the preliminary cost estimate ranges between \$100,000 and \$150,000 which will be dependent on geotechnical conditions of the site, and the relocation potential options being investigated.

Ministry of Transportation Ontario (MTO) Permitting Requirements

The Kin 1 field falls within the MTO permit control area under the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act. Initial permit pre-consultation has been undertaken to discuss the main considerations of the permit. MTO staff expressed their main concern being the potential for baseballs to exit the field onto highway 401. There is an existing 12 m (40ft) netting fence along the backside of the outfield which was installed to mitigate this risk as part of highway 401 expansion in 2016. Analysis has been submitted to the MTO as part of the pre-consultation process to demonstrate the adequacy of the existing netting, and that the level of play is not changing for this field as part of the project. MTO staff have indicated that they cannot comment until the final permit application is submitted and reviewed. The permit application will be submitted once the plans have sufficiently been advanced in detailed design.

Press Box Platform

Consideration has been given to the existing press box platform. Based on preliminary review it appears to be in fair condition and can be maintained as part of the project. Making the existing structure accessible is not considered to be feasible, and if desired,

a new platform with substantial ramping would need to be investigated further. The renewal of the press box is not included in the concept design base scope of work.

EXISTING POLICY / BY-LAW(S):

There is no existing policy/by-law

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is a Capital Project A/00557-40 Accessible Ball Diamond Construction in the amount of \$2,525,000 in the 2025 proposed Budget which remains unfunded. It is noted that this estimate remains at a conceptual Class D level which means the cost estimate is +/- 30% in today's dollars. Grant funding potential is discussed as part of this report and is a high-level estimate only. Currently the project is listed as 25% grant funded as part of the Capital Budget submission.

Capital Project A/00557-41 Riverside Accessible Ball Diamond Washroom is also unfunded in the amount of \$500,000. It is noted that this estimate is also at a conceptual Class D level cost estimate (+/- 30%) in today's dollars.

For a summary of the estimated project budget with optional considerations, see Appendix C.

Total project(s) estimated cost is \$3,025,000. At this time potential project funding eligibility would be \$150,000 leaving a balance of \$2,875,000 which would need to be funded from City contributions, donations or other fundraising efforts.

It is the staff's recommendation that applying for funding through the Jays Care Foundation remains premature until a funding source(s) is found to commit towards completing these projects.

PUBLIC VALUE:

Leadership:

The planned improvements would create a unique facility within the Region of Waterloo, providing an inclusive softball play environments for all ages and abilities. The project will continue to make use of collaboration and feedback from the leagues who make use of this facility, including the Buddy League. A future funding application could be submitted to the Jays Care Field of Dreams program as part of this project once approved as part of the capital program. The project team will continue to look for opportunities to leverage additional funding from potential project partners.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE INPUT:

Advisory Committees Consulted:

City Staff presented early design concepts to the City's Accessibility Advisory Committee at their July 22nd, 2024 meeting. Full minutes from that meeting can be found in Appendix D. The committee provided comments to consider during detailed design including accessible viewing area incorporation into bleachers. Response was provided to the committee that bleachers will be accessible, so that mobility devices can be integrated into the sitting area without being directly in front of the bleachers (similar model to that installed as part of Fountain Street Soccer Complex). Committee members also commented that an accessible change table would be desirable if the accessible washroom scope moves ahead.

PUBLIC INPUT:

Further consultation will take place with the public once the project has been approved as part of the annual budget process.

As noted in sections above and below, early consultation has been undertaken with the leagues who make use of the existing facility, including Buddy League.

INTERNAL / EXTERNAL CONSULTATION:

The concept design has been shared with the leagues who make use of the facility in Summer 2024 including:

- Cambridge Girls Softball Association
- PT SloPitch
- Buddy League – Adaptive Baseball
- National Softball Association of Canada
- Tri City Slo Pitch
- Cambridge Old Timers Slo Pitch

A “pop up” style public consultation session was held August 17th, 2024 in tandem with a Buddy League event. All user group comments received are included and summarized in Appendix E.

CONCLUSION:

Staff are seeking Council endorsement of the conceptual design Base Scope for the Kin 1 Softball Field Accessible Improvements, prior to proceeding to detailed design. The capital project for construction will be reviewed as part of the annual budget deliberations. Upon Council approval of the project staff will proceed to look at external funding opportunities.

REPORT IMPACTS:

Agreement: **No**

By-law: **No**

Budget Amendment: **No**

Policy: **No**

APPROVALS:

This report has gone through the appropriate workflow and has been reviewed and or approved by the following as required:

Director

Deputy City Manager

Chief Financial Officer

City Solicitor

City Manager

ATTACHMENTS:

When naming attachments please use the following format:

1. 24-110 CD - Appendix A – Conceptual Design Option 1 (Base Scope)
2. 24-110-CD - Appendix B – Optional Items Plan
3. 24-110-CD – Appendix C – Cost Summaries (Base and Optional Items)
4. 24-110-CD - Appendix D – Cambridge Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

5. 24-110-CD - Appendix E – League Consultation Summary and Comments