



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services *to Parks, Rec & Culture - May 24, 2006.*
From: Dave Semple
 Director, Parks & Public Works Operations
Re: Garden City Community Park Playground

Date: April 12, 2006
File: 06-2345-20-MNOR1

Staff Recommendation

That the 2006 Garden City Community Park approved capital project # 40832 be directed towards an enhanced children's playground.

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 Dave Semple
 Director of Parks & Public Works

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ROUTED TO:		CONCURRENCE		CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER	
Budgets		Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		<i>[Handwritten signature]</i>	
REVIEWED BY TAG		YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>		REVIEWED BY CAO	
		<i>[Handwritten initials]</i>		YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	

Staff Report

Origin

The concept plan for Garden City Community Park (formerly called McLennan North Community Park) was approved by City Council in 1998. The park features twenty acres of diverse landscapes in the city centre. The Council approved park master plan currently includes a children's water park, an adventure playground, a traditional park atmosphere provided by formal lawns and specimen trees of the Arboretum; the natural character of the large birch-conifer forest; and the swale-wetland-pond system that was completed in the spring of last year.

The park was officially opened by Council to the community in October 2005.

An important feature of the plan is the provision of a playground and water play area in the north portion of the park, alongside Alberta Road. Design work for these developments is about to begin. The purpose of this report is to recommend a modification of the approved concept plan by expanding the scope of work for the community playground, while correspondingly reducing the extent of, or eliminating the water play area.

Analysis

Garden City Community Park is the southeast "jewel" of the City Centre's necklace of parks, that will also include Minoru Park, the waterfront along the Middle Arm, and potentially the Garden City Lands. The park will provide recreational and open space opportunities to a rapidly growing population living with Richmond's town centre, whose number is projected to reach 62,000 by the year 2021. The challenge to ensure a highly liveable and beautiful environment for existing and future residents will be great.

Both the existing Council approved playground and the water play area are considered to be important features of the Garden City Park plan, and similar developments in Richmond's other community parks have proven to be very popular and well-used. Funding of \$ 694,000 has been approved within the 2006 Parks Capital Program for design and construction of these two items.

It is now proposed however, that to maximize benefits to area residents, capital funding for 2006 be used to develop the playground at Garden City Park rather than the water play area. A well designed playground can provide a great range of social interaction and play opportunities, and can be enjoyed during all seasons of the year, whereas use of a water play park in this region is essentially restricted to two months of summer. Provisions for some type of water feature (i.e. a water table; hose bib connections) can still be built into an expanded playground design, so that that type of play experience is not altogether lost.

If it is desirable in the future to construct a larger scale water play area, then space within the site would still be available. In addition to the seasonal restrictions of the proposed water play area, recent developments in Health Act legislation may prevent the successful implementation of a water play area in the park site. Specifically, the possible requirement for a potable water treatment system could impact the viability of a water play area at the park site.

Financial Impact

There would be no financial impact. The approved 2006 Parks Capital Program includes \$694,000 to construct the playground and water play area.

Conclusion

Staff are preparing to implement the next phase of development at Garden City Community Park. It is recommended that the available 2006 Parks Capital funding of \$ 694,000 be used to design and construct an expanded playground, rather than both a playground and a water play area.

The primary benefit to City Centre residents would be that playgrounds can be used at all times of the year, whereas water play areas are limited to the summer months. In addition, the existing and future developments of the picnic areas and rapidly growing population in the City centre will be well served with a destination playground accessible to City centre residents who currently are not served with such an amenity.



Clarence Sihoe
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