

COUNCIL MEETING
COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
PARKS, FORESTRY AND CEMETERIES DIVISION

REPORT CS-2025-18
April 22, 2025

SUBJECT: **Baseball Infield Conversion Project Changes**

AUTHOR: **Dave Steven – Manager of Parks, Forestry and Cemeteries**

APPROVING: **Jessica Ruddell – Director of Community Services**

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WELLAND authorize staff to allocate the approved 2023 capital funding for infield conversions, as detailed in Report CS-2025-18 Baseball Infield Conversion Project Changes.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

This recommendation is aligned to Council’s strategic priority of ensuring “**Liveability**” by creating a sense of belonging while enhancing mobility by improving access to recreation and community events, ensuring adequate housing options, encouraging job growth, and improving ways to efficiently move people throughout the city.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report recommends allocating the 2023 approved capital funds for infield conversions based on updated input from user groups. Originally intended for Chippawa Park, Maple Park 1 & 2, and Quaker Road Complex 1 & 2 (Appendix 1), stakeholders have now identified Memorial Park Baseball Fields 1 & 4 and Plymouth Park as preferred sites. This shift reflects operational advantages including proximity to existing red clay fields, enhanced control and maintenance capabilities, alignment with tournament hosting needs, and is expected to be within the approved budget. The upgrades will improve playability, safety, and long-term functionality, while aligning with Council’s strategic priority of livability.

BACKGROUND:

In 2022, City staff met with the president of the Welland Minor Baseball Association (WMBA) to discuss the league’s anticipated growth and their interest in converting existing fields from limestone screenings to red clay. This need was

identified to enhance safety, improve field playability, and attract additional bookings and tournaments.

As a result, capital funding was requested and approved during the 2023 budget process to convert infields at Chippawa Park, Maple Park 1 & 2, and Quaker Road Complex 1 & 2. In the summer of 2024, the City issued RFP24-04 for the Infield Conversion Project. The bids received exceeded the approved budget and in response, staff cancelled the RFP and consulted user groups to revisit site priorities and discuss a phased approach. At that time, it was determined that more discussion was required, and the project was temporarily put on hold until the Annual Sport Field Allocation meeting.

DISCUSSION:

At the Annual Sport Field Allocation meeting on February 27, 2025, user groups were reminded of the approved funding for infield conversions. After further discussion, consensus formed for new preferred locations: Memorial Park fields 1 & 4, and Plymouth Park.

Key reasons for this shift included:

- Proximity to other red clay fields, supporting better coordination for tournaments and bookings.
- Existing fencing and gated access, allowing for better protection of the clay surface and limiting unauthorized use.
- Improved field closure ability during inclement weather, reducing potential damage and long-term maintenance costs.

Based on this input, staff recommend proceeding with the infield conversions at the newly identified locations of Memorial Park fields 1 & 4, and Plymouth Park.

FINANCIAL:

There are no financial impacts to this report.

The baseball infield conversion project was approved in the 2023 Capital Budget under account 10-412-23405, with a total budget allocation of \$120,000. Given bid responses for the initial RFP for five field conversions was outside of the approved budget, and this report recommends moving from five field conversions to three field conversions, it is expected that future bid responses will be within the approved budget.

ATTACHMENT:

Appendix 1 – 2023 Capital Budget Project Submission – Baseball Infield Conversion