Minute No. 457
Report - Executive Policy Committee - June 4, 2003

Item No. 2 **Expenditure from the East Kildonan-Transcona Community Committee Land Dedication Reserve Fund - East Winnipeg Sports Association**
File EP-2 [c/r PR-2(33)]

COUNCIL DECISION:

Council concurred in the recommendation of the Executive Policy Committee and adopted the following:

1. That funds in the amount of $50,000.00 be allocated from the East Kildonan-Transcona Community Committee Land Dedication Reserve Fund to the East Winnipeg Sports Association to obtain matched funding from the Province of Manitoba for the development of the ballparks.

2. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to effect the intent of the foregoing.

Report - Executive Policy Committee - June 4, 2003

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by His Worship Mayor Murray,

That the recommendation of the Executive Policy Committee be adopted by consent.

Carried

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On June 4, 2003, the Executive Policy Committee concurred in the recommendation of the East Kildonan - Transcona Community Committee and submitted its recommendation to Council.

COMMUNITY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On May 20, 2003, the East Kildonan - Transcona Community Committee recommended to Executive Policy Committee that funds in the amount of $50,000.00 be allocated from the East Kildonan - Transcona Land Dedication Reserve Fund to the East Winnipeg Sports Association to obtain matched funding from the Province of Manitoba for the development of the ballparks.

Draft – compare with delivery May 20, 2003

Good evening, my name is Scott Van Alstyne. I would like to speak with you on the concerns the Board of Directors of Park City West Community Centre has about the proposed baseball complex for Transcona.

Before I begin I want to give you some background on myself. I have been a resident of North Kildonan and Transcona for almost 40 years. I am the married father of a 6-year-old daughter who plays soccer and ringette and of a 9-year-old boy who plays hockey, soccer and baseball. Besides my full time job I serve as Vice-President on the Board of Directors of Agriculture in the Classroom – Manitoba Inc., which is a non profit organization that helps bring the agriculture message to children and there teachers in Manitoba. I also serve on the organizing committee of Amazing Grains. Amazing Grains is a program that allows approximately 3000 children province wide to participate in a hands on farm program. I have coached girls softball and hockey at North Kildonan Community Centre and I am currently coaching hockey and soccer at Park City West Community Centre. For the past two years I have served on the Board of Directors of Park City West Community Centre and it is in that capacity that I appear before you this evening.

Park City West Community Centre is the largest community centre in Transcona and I believe one of the top 5 in the city of Winnipeg in regards to catchment area. As with most community centres, we have had a struggle in attracting volunteers but that is changing. Two years ago, we had 9 new people volunteer for our Board of Directors. Their enthusiasm and the renewed enthusiasm of the "veteran" board members has sparked a change at our club. We have introduced and re-introduced events at our club in an effort to bring the community back to our community centre. In the last couple of years we have hosted successful Breakfasts with Santa, mini-soccer jamborees, hockey tournament, Friday night family skates, bingo, craft sales, adult volleyball, pre-teen dances as well as numerous other sport and recreation programs. As a Board we abide by the objectives of our constitution:

3.1 To plan and implement recreational and leisure programs for all ages and skill levels of area residents.

3.2 To administer funds, maintain records and prepare budget and financial reports for audit and presentation to the annual members meeting of the club.

3.3 To co-operate with other organizations and with the Community Services Staff of District 4 to provide recreation and leisure opportunities.

3.4 To provide delegates to and support the programs and policies of the District 4 Community Centres Board and The General Council of Winnipeg Community Centres.

At Park City west, we have 70 children registered for fastball and 55 for softball. By comparison, we have over 500 registered for soccer, 40 for inline hockey and over 300 for hockey and ringette.

Before any more money is spent on the proposed baseball complex, our board feels there needs to be some questions raised and answered;

1. What effect will the construction of this baseball complex have on the existing recreation facilities including Kinsmen Centennial Pool, Roland Michener and Ed Golding Arenas, Southside, East End, Oxford Heights and Park City West Community Centres, baseball diamonds, soccer pitches, playground equipment, wading pools, pleasure skating rinks etc.?
2. Will the annual maintenance of existing community parks, baseball diamonds, soccer pitches, playground equipment, community centres and other recreational facilities suffer as a result of the expected cost and person hours required by this complex?

Transcona is nicknamed the “Park City”. Before anymore money is spent on a baseball complex on the city limits, we need to update, upgrade, refurbish, renew or rebuild our existing recreation and leisure facilities so the children of Transcona can enjoy their parks and open spaces in the Transcona community.

Thank you.

I would be happy to answer any questions at this time.

TO:	East Kildonan-Transcona Community Committee	**FROM:**	Jason Bell, Superintendent of Park Services – East Area
FILE NO.	**Item 25, Minute 31: PR-2 (33) (Vol. 2) East Kildonan-Transcona Community Committee Meeting of December 3, 2002**		
REF:	H:\WORD FILES\TRANSCONA03\BALLDIAMONDSTUDYTRANSCONAADDENDA.DOC	**DATE:**	2003 05 11

RE: Addenda to Baseball Complex Proposal for Transcona Ward (2003 03 10)

As additional information to the previously submitted memo on this subject, I would like to forward two hard copy pages of facts and comparisons compiled by Mr. Steve Mymko of the Transcona regarding conditions of ball diamonds in the North Kildonan, Elwood and Transcona wards. I am also including a hard copy of a list of all the ball diamonds in the North Kildonan and Elmwood wards as compiled by my technician, Murray Paterson.

Mr. Mymko's comparison between the community center and park ball diamonds in North Kildonan and Elmwood Wards versus those in Transcona show some definite differences in restrictions upon and amenities available at the diamonds in Transcona. Although the overall number of diamonds in Transcona is greater than those available between city-owned and school division owned in either of North Kildonan or Elmwood, these two wards have the benefit of having had more land set aside for ball diamonds, resulting in fewer instances of overlaps between adjacent ball diamonds, soccer pitches or other park and street fixtures. Particularly, the community centers in Transcona were built on smaller parcels of land than in the other two wards, and this has resulted in smaller diamonds, greater restrictions on the playability of the diamonds existing, and fewer diamonds overall at the clubs in this ward.

As displayed on Mr. Mymko's comparison sheets, the community centers in North Kildonan and Elmwood wards have the benefit of parking lots, washrooms and canteens at many of the ball diamonds that are scheduled for league play. This is primarily because these community center sites are larger than those in Transcona, allowing more diamonds without any restrictions in play to be built on these sites. This is merely a consequence of the land and money that was available for the development of Transcona over decades past, but it does allow the other two wards the ability to schedule multiple diamonds on any given site with little chance that play on one diamond will be impeded by the adjacent diamond. It should be noted that as in Transcona, the park sites in North Kildonan and Elmwood wards typically do not have washrooms, canteens or parking lots.

Being that this memorandum is not intended to be a detailed analysis of the ball diamonds and associated amenities in these three wards, I offer this information as a reasonable basis for

comparison between the three wards. Specifically, it should serve to highlight that there is a marked difference between the associated amenities available, the number of diamonds available as well as those diamonds with no restrictions on play that are available in the North Kildonan and Elmwood wards versus the Transcona ward.

If I can provide clarification on any of the information provided in this report, or any questions arise about this issue, please feel free to contact me at 986-2682 or by email.

Sincerely,

Jason Bell
Superintendent of Park Services – East Area
Parks and Open Space Division
Public Works Department

TO:	East Kildonan-Transcona Community Committee	**FROM:**	Jason Bell, Superintendent of Park Services – East Area
FILE NO.	**Item 25, Minute 31: PR-2(33) (Vol. 2) East Kildonan-Transcona Community Committee Meeting of December 3, 2002**		
REF:	H:\WORD FILES\BALLDIAMONDSTUDYEKTRANSCOMCOM.DOC	**DATE:**	2003 03 10

RE: Baseball Complex Proposal for Transcona Ward

As a precursor to the three-point request from Councillor Wyatt and the East Kildonan-Transcona Community Committee, I will provide some information on the current conditions of the ball diamonds in the Transcona ward. It should also be mentioned that this condition assessment also references conversations and site visits with Councillor Wyatt and local resident and ball player/coach Mr. Steve Mymko.

Currently, within the Transcona ward there are 29 ball diamonds. Two of these diamonds are on two different privately owned sites, and three other sites comprised of three diamonds belong to the Transcona-Springfield School Division. The remaining 24 diamonds are on twelve sites, four of which are Community Centres and two others that operate under special use agreements. Of the 29 diamonds, only eleven are booked for adult league play and there are a number of conditions that limit the playability of these sites. A description of each site and its constraints or advantages is listed below:

Bayview Park

- City-owned parkland at the corner of Bayview Drive and St. Martin Place.
- Two diamonds, both scheduled for adult league play.
- Both diamonds renovated in 2001 and have skinned infields but no player's protection wings or player's benches.
- The outfields overlap, and the SW diamond outfield is too short for adults, resulting in damage to a number of private residences to the south on McMeans Avenue.
- The parking is on street or along the alley, causing some vehicular congestion for the neighborhood.

Arts Action Centre

- City-owned parkland at 120 Dowling Avenue East.
- One diamond and it is scheduled for adult league play.
- Diamond is in good condition with a skinned infield and player's benches.
- The left outfield is too short for heavy hitters who can hit the recreation building on the southeast corner of the site. The rule of play dictates that if the ball lands on the roof of the building, it is considered a homerun.

- The majority of the parking is on the surrounding streets or alleys.

Bernie Wolfe Park
- City owned parkland adjacent to Bernie Wolfe School.
- Three diamonds, only two of which are booked for youth play (no adult bookings).
- The northeast diamond has rudimentary base paths and the outfield is interrupted by a drainage swale.
- There are no player's protection wings or benches, and the outfield also interferes with the southwest diamond and the middle-west diamond.
- The middle-west diamond is not programmed.
- The southwest diamond is the best on the site, however its outfield is constrained by the swale, the running track and a walking path.
- The infield is skinned, but there are no player's protection wings.
- Parking is either on street or in the school parking lot.

Harold Hatcher Park
- City owned Parkland adjacent to Harold Hatcher School
- Two diamonds, both booked for youth (under twelve).
- Both diamonds received new backstops and skinned infields in 2000 through Winnipeg Development Agreement project grant money.
- The outfields are short on both diamonds, and a swale constrains the outfield of the northwest field.
- Parking is usually contained in the school parking lot.

Crocus Park
- City owned parkland east of Redonda St. and north of Victoria Ave. West.
- Three diamonds, but only the south diamond is booked for adult league.
- The south diamond was built in 2002 with Land Dedication Reserve money. It has a skinned infield, new backstop, player's benches and protective wings, and a regulation depth outfield.
- The north diamond and the middle diamond were renovated in 2000 and are also in good condition, fully fenced and skinned with player's boxes, but are sized for youth play only.
- There is some on site parking, but with soccer and skateboarding facilities as well, parking fills up quickly, and the side streets are then utilized.

Kern Park
- City owned parkland at Wabasha St., south of Whittier Ave. East.
- Two diamonds, both booked for youth play.
- Both diamonds are in good condition with skinned base paths and player's benches, but the outfields are too short for adult play.
- On street parking only.

Transcona Stadium Complex

- City owned parkland adjacent to Roland Michener Arena.
- Two diamonds, but neither is available for adult league play.
- The northeast diamond is in good shape, but the left field is constrained heavily by the arena building.
- This diamond is really only acceptable for children/t-ball.
- The "stadium" in the southwest corner is managed by the Transcona Minor Baseball League and is in good shape with the field needing minor improvements.
- The bleachers, stadium lights and washroom building/clubhouse could use some improvements.
- Parking is contained in two off site lots for this facility, which has two diamonds, a soccer pitch, an indoor and outdoor pool as well as an arena.

Transcona Optimist Recreation Centre

- City owned parkland, but the Transcona Nationals Football club manages the site.
- There are three diamonds, all booked for adult play, but there are encroachments on each diamond.
- The infields are generally in good condition.
- The outfields overlap with the football fields which all have priority usage.
- The southwest diamond outfield is too short for adult play.
- The washrooms are not open until football starts in July.
- There is some onsite parking.

Oxford Heights Community Centre

- City owned parkland operated by the community center.
- There are two diamonds, both of which are not booked for adult play.
- Both outfields overlap each other, and are constrained by the property limit. As such only two pairs of children's teams could reasonably play at the same time.
- The on site parking lot onsite is adequate.

East End Community Centre

- City owned parkland operated by the community center
- There is one diamond and it is booked for adult play after June.
- The base paths are not skinned, there are no player's protection wings or benches, and the left outfield is constrained by the south property edge along Pandora Ave., allowing heavy hitters to send the ball into the street.
- The field does not drain well and after heavy rain it is too wet to play on for days.
- The on site parking lot is adequate.

Park City West Community Centre

- City owned parkland operated by the community center.
- There is one diamond, but it is booked for youth play.
- The diamond is in excellent condition, but the outfield is too short for adult play.

- The on site parking is adequate.

South Transcona Community Centre
- City owned parkland operated by the community center.
- There is one diamond, but it is booked for children's play.
- The base paths are not skinned, and the outfield is constrained by the fence for the wading pool.
- The diamond is on need of renovation and the outfield is too short for adult play.
- The parking on site is adequate.

Arthur Day School
- Transcona – Springfield School Division property that is not booked by the City of Winnipeg.
- There is one diamond; it is in poor condition, and is not booked for adult play.
- The on site parking is adequate.

Ecole Regent Park School
- Transcona – Springfield School Division property that is not booked by the City of Winnipeg.
- There is one diamond, and it is booked for adult play.
- The solar orientation is poor as the diamond is in the northwest corner facing southeast.
- The outfield overlaps with the soccer pitch to the east.
- There are no player's protection wings or benches.
- The on site parking is adequate.

Radisson Collegiate/John W. Gunn School
- Transcona – Springfield School Division property that is not booked by the City of Winnipeg.
- There is one diamond that is booked for youth play.
- The diamond is not well developed and the outfield is too short for adult play.
- The on site parking is adequate.

Novamet Property
- Novamet Development private property at Pandora and Ravenhurst, which is not booked by the City of Winnipeg.
- There is one diamond and it is booked for adult play.
- The diamond is poorly developed, with the outfield constrained by vegetation, uneven topography and poor drainage.
- There is inconvenient parking along the street.

Cargill Grain Property

- Cargill Grain Company private land, east along Dugald Road, which is not booked by the City of Winnipeg.
- There is one diamond and it is booked for adult play, but has not been used lately.
- The outfield is uneven and weedy at this site.
- Parking is generally along the side of Dugald Road.

This brief assessment of the current conditions of the ball diamonds in Transcona corroborates some of the concerns that have been expressed to me by Mr. Mymko on behalf of the adult ball teams in the Transcona ward. Their league has incurred financial burden to repair private property when they have had to use diamonds that do not have a regulation depth outfield. They have also experienced difficulty in rescheduling rained out games as a number of the adult sized fields have poor or slow drainage. The desire for better ball diamond amenities, such as on site parking, washroom facilities, better backstops with player protection wings, benches and skinned infields are commonly expressed in other areas of the city as well. However, the lack of such amenities does contribute to neighborhood concern about parking congestion on their front streets and along their alleys, physical property damage and instances of ball players urinating in the public park or against private property. Also, Mr. Mymko has mentioned that for the past number of years there has been a minimum of four teams requesting to join the adult slow pitch league in Transcona, but that there are not enough diamonds to accommodate more teams in the ward.

Relative to the identification of undeveloped land that could possibly support the proposed baseball facility, Mr. Mymko, Councillor Wyatt and I looked at a number of vacant lands in the Transcona ward on December 12, 2002. As a preliminary step, a meeting was held on Friday January 24, 2003, with representatives of the Water and Waste Department, Planning, Property and Land Use Department and the Public Works Department with Councillor Wyatt and Mr. Mymko to discuss the issue. The land in question, as discovered on the aforementioned site visits, is south of Dugald Road and west of Murdock Road, directly north of the Transcona Water-Skiing facility. Representatives from Water & Waste thought that the land might have potential for development as sport fields without negatively affecting their drainage requirements, but mentioned that considerable land regrading of the site may have to occur. They also stated that there are plans for the water-skiing pond to be expanded, but thought that both uses could be accommodated. This piece of property seems to be the most promising undeveloped city land for multiple sports fields in the Transcona ward at this early stage of discussion.

Further to this, a rough estimate for the potential cost of a ten-diamond baseball complex was provided to Councillor Wyatt. The preliminary costing for this concept does not have any detailed design or intended site, but does include as a reference the costs that were incurred for the construction of three other baseball facilities built for different calibers of play. This document entitled "*Ball Diamond Facility Project Notes for Councillor Russ Wyatt – Transcona*

Ward" (February 13, 2003) is attached at the end of this memorandum. As a note, it is conceivable that less than one million dollars could be spent to achieve a ten-diamond "neighborhood" facility if there was little site work to be done. However, it is also plausible that more than three million dollars could be spent to achieve a higher caliber complex with more sophisticated amenities, especially if the site required extensive land grading.

The information provided above is the most accurate snapshot of current conditions that can be provided without further analysis of field conditions, usage and neighborhood concerns that could only be found during the baseball season. If the East Kildonan-Transcona Community Committee has a desire to further investigate the current issues and site conditions relative to this matter, they could put forward a request as such to the Standing Policy Committee on Public Works. At the early stage of this endeavour, there are perhaps four points that might be considered for direction to the Standing Policy Committee on Public Works that they could choose to adopt, or revise, as recommendations to the Public Works Department in conjunction with the Planning, Property and Development Department to perform and report back upon.

1. That an assessment and evaluation of the current conditions of the baseball diamonds and related amenities in the Transcona ward be conducted.
2. That a formal needs assessment for a baseball diamond complex in the Transcona ward be conducted, and if warranted;
3. That potential sites for such a complex in the Transcona ward be identified and evaluated for suitability, and;
4. That if such a site is available, then a conceptual plan and preliminary costs for the construction of such a complex should be prepared.

It is my intention that the information contained in this report and the attached document will help the committee in their deliberations regarding baseball diamonds and related amenities in the Transcona ward. If I may provide further clarification on any of these matters, please do not hesitate to ask.

Sincerely,

Jason Bell
Superintendent of Park Services – East Area
986-2682

February 13, 2003

Ball Diamond Facility Project Notes for Councillor Russ Wyatt – Transcona Ward

1) **Whittier Park Baseball Diamond**
   - Constructed in 1992 for approximately $1 million.
   - Premier baseball diamond with lighting, bleachers, irrigation and fencing
   - Operated under a management agreement with St. Boniface/St. Vital Minor Baseball Assoc.

2) **Crocus Park southeast diamond**
   - Constructed in 2001/02 for approx. $35,000.00
   - Neighborhood softball diamond with backstop and skinned infield
   - Utilized existing flat, well drained land with no need for sod in the outfield
   - Maintained by Parks and Open Space staff (East Area)

3) **East St. Paul Recreation Complex**
   - Constructed in 1997 for approx. $1 million
   - Approximately 17ha area (about 40 acres)
   - Maintenance agreement unknown
   - Features four softball diamonds, one baseball diamond, two regulation soccer pitches, two mid size soccer pitches and four mini soccer pitches.
   - Approximately 300 stall gravel parking lot with four bus stalls
   - Ball diamonds have a full irrigation system, and the soccer pitches have valve boxes for a manual sprinkler connection
   - No sod used, just soil and seed. Shacopee clay ball diamond aggregate from Minnesota was used on all ball diamond infields.
   - Irrigation system: $120,000.00 plus GST
   - Ball Diamond Chain Link Fencing $120,000.00 plus GST
   - Ball Diamond Surfacing $130,000.00 plus GST
   - Site Grading and seed $200,000.00 plus GST
   - Concession Building and Washrooms $200,000.00 estimated cost
   - Gravel parking lot and road $200,000.00 estimated cost

Typically, the City of Winnipeg (CoW) would use sod for the construction of soccer pitches, and often the outfield of ball diamonds depending on the amount of site grading necessary. The parking lot described would need to be asphalted under the current CoW bylaw (a parking lot greater than 20 stalls – I believe – must be asphalted) pushing that price to approx. $500,000.00. Add a larger concession and washroom/dressing room building, bleachers, stadium lighting, sod and asphalt, and this could very easily become a $2.5 million dollar project. This assumes there is no cost for land acquisition either.

Therefore, knowing that a ball diamond costs about $125,000.00 to construct with fencing, irrigation, four light poles and two small sets of bleachers, the cost alone for ten diamonds could be about $1.25million. A concession building with adequate washrooms and dressing rooms could easily cost $500,000.00. Site work, land drainage, roads, paths and parking lot could be as much as $1million. Finally, additional amenities such as shade structures, extra bleachers, trees and shrubs for shelterbelts and batting cages and bullpens could add another $250,000.00. With confidence, I can suggest that $3million could easily be spent to produce such a facility – which could be quite useable and look attractive as well. Full sized soccer pitches, with goal posts, irrigation and bleachers cost approximately $95,000.00 each. All of this assumes there is no cost for land acquisition either.

Another aspect that would nee to be addressed is the maintenance of such a facility. A quick rule of thumb would peg the annual maintenance cost of such a complex at 10% of the construction cost – so about $300,000.00 per year to maintain the fields, irrigation system, building, road/parking lot and lighting. This would be money that would have to be allocated annually to the current Parks and Open Space operating budget. There is also the possibility of removing some of the overlapping and unplayable diamonds in Transcona if such a complex were constructed.

I hope this rough estimate of $3 million for a ten-diamond complex will help with your cogitations. I have included the other three sites as tangible examples of different calibers of ball diamond developments. Feel free to call me, Jason Bell, at 986-2682 or on the cel. 794-4270 if I can provide more information.

Moved by Councillor Wyatt,

Whereas the players of various baseball leagues in Transcona Ward have indicated that there is a strong need for a multiple ball diamond facility, including a canteen, change rooms, washrooms, and parking, in the Transcona Ward, and;

Whereas the community has thousands of people playing ball, from all ages and are often with ball diamonds that have begun to show their age and wear and tear, and;

Whereas the existing number of ball diamonds cannot keep up with demand and usage and often conflicts with other sporting events, and;

Whereas the Transcona community has not had a major investment in ball diamonds for a long time, and;

Whereas other parts of the city have modern multiple ball diamond facilities for the enjoyment of residents and none exist in Transcona or surrounding area, and;

Therefore Be It Resolved that the Administration, while working with the Transcona Ward Councillor and baseball/softball players, investigate and report back to East Kildonan-Transcona Community Committee on:

1. possible softball/baseball park locations for a multiple diamond complex, and

2. a multiple diamond complex consisting of at least 10 diamonds with parking, canteen, seating, change rooms, washrooms, and proper ball diamond construction (ie. fields, cages, etc), and

3. costs/budget of such a complex.

Carried

November 21, 2002

Good evening

My name is Steve Mymko and I appear here before you to request your assistance in building a baseball complex in the ward of Transcona to be used by the entire community.
The complex I am proposing should consist of a minimum six baseball diamonds large enough to accommodate all ages. This complex should also have complete washroom facilities a full service canteen and enough parking to support this facility.
I know you are asking yourselves who are you and why does Transcona need such an ambitious project at this time. Well just give me a couple of minutes and I will answer both questions.
The first question of who I am is pretty simple. I am a resident of Transcona who has a 22-year-old son and two daughters ages 15 and 10 years old whom are currently playing softball out of the Oxford Heights Community Club. I have been involved with Minor sports for the past 23 years in the capacity of coaching and have been on executives of various leagues in the Transcona, Elmwood and North Kildonan area. I am currently coaching a Bantam girl's softball team out of Oxford Heights Community club and I am the Vice-President of the Tee-Kay slo-pitch league, which is a 30 years and over 18-team softball league that operates in Transcona.

Why do we need such a facility? That question will take a few minutes to explain but, after you hear my reasons, you will be in agreement with me and hopefully we can start the process of securing land and funding to build this complex that will benefit not only the residents of Transcona but all the citizens of Winnipeg who will be using this facility.

The primary reason that Transcona needs this facility is that the existing facilities no longer meet the demands and standards of our growing community and the players both children and adults, the parents and fans who come out to watch the games and the residents whose homes either face or back on to the diamonds we currently use.

Transcona is home to three community clubs Oxford Heights, Park City and East End and did you know that not one team playing out of these clubs could use a diamond at their home club because there are none. The diamonds that both the kids and adults use are sprinkled throughout the ward and all lack washroom facilities and parking. In other parts of the city specifically EK/Elmwood and North Kildonan, when you play a team from there you play at their club. For instance if the team I coach comprised of 15 and 16 year old girls is playing against Gateway, we would play the game at the Gateway Community Club. It would be the same if we played against Chalmers, East Elmwood, North Kildonan, Valley Gardens, Bronx Park, Melrose, Morse Place or any other team from that area, my team, or any other team from Transcona would play the game at the other team's home club.

What's the common denominator when you go to these places? They all have washrooms, places to park, benches for the players to sit on and offer canteen services. Now as you can imagine when teams from other parts of the city come to Transcona to play, they are horrified to

find out that not one of the diamonds we currently use for both boys and girls baseball offer washroom facilities and canteen services. Some of the diamonds we use don't even have benches for the players to sit on and most if not all of the diamonds are void of parking.
In regards to the first problem of no washroom facilities, I want you to realize that the average amount of time spent at a diamond on any given night for a game is 3 hours. In that 3 hours you can have a group of 50 to 75 people comprised of players, coaches parents, siblings grand-parents and friends at a game. Now what do you do if somebody has to go to the washroom and there is not one available?
In Transcona we have 3 options the first one is to drive to the nearest gas station or restaurant and see if you can use their bathroom. This option might work for somebody watching the game but what about the players. The rule in baseball is once you take yourself out of the game you can't go back in. Now lets say this happens in the first inning of a game, that means because you had to go to the washroom your out of the game. Try explaining that to a 10-year old!
The next option is a made-in-Transcona solution. Many parents who have had their children on a baseball team for a couple of years have learnt to carry an empty pail in the trunk of their cars for emergency purposes. This solution gives us a home field advantage, as many teams that come to visit us are unaware of our lack of facilities and are not prepared with their own buckets so they resort to option one and are out of the game.
Option 3 might work for the boys or men but the girls, ladies and the area residents whose homes surround the field are not too fond of this solution. This is the one where you sneak down the back lane and find somebody's fence or tree - well you know the rest.
You are probably thinking to yourselves how often does this happen? This happens every night from the beginning of May to the End of September as I can attest to having another daughter who plays 9 and 10 year old softball and being involved with the Tee-Kay league.

The next problem we encounter with our baseball diamonds is the lack of parking. Again from the beginning of May till the end of September any of the streets around our diamonds cannot accommodate parking after 6:00 pm due to the fact that the players and parents from the various leagues are parked there. In some instances, which are the case with the Bayview diamonds, we are forced to park in the back lanes, which does not make the area residents too happy. At the Optimist diamonds when football season begins there is simply nowhere to park and you are forced to park on the side streets, again not making the area residents too happy. At the CN Pandora Diamond which the adult leagues use there is a little road to park on but if you park on both sides of it, which you have to do as that is the only place to park, it is impossible for emergency vehicles to get in which we have found out over the years. I could go into the parking problems at each diamond but I am sure you get the gist of it. Also one last problem with having to park on the streets where the diamonds are located is the amount of damage done to vehicles each year. The damage can range anywhere from a dent, to broken windshields, which the adult leagues pay to repair out of their league funds if it occurs to one of the resident's vehicles.

The third problem we have is that the majority of diamonds are not large enough for the adult leagues to be played on. In Transcona we have 5 adult leagues, which are the Sunday Night mixed, the Monday Night over 40 Men's, the Tuesday Night Ladies, The Wednesday Night

mixed and the Thursday Night Men's over 30 Leagues. These leagues consist of 72 teams with approximately 1300 players who are primarily Transcona residents. We use 9 diamonds and of those 9 diamonds at least 4 are too small for the men to play on and 2 are too small for the women. Why do we use these diamonds? They are the only ones we have at our disposal. What do I mean when I say the diamonds are too small? I mean we can't keep the ball in the field of play and in some cases because our diamonds are situated within residential housing we end up causing damage to some of the houses in the neighborhood. Just in the past few years we have had to replace 2 swimming pool covers, repair stucco damage to one house, fix a garage door on another, repair 4 windows and pay various damages to vehicles. These repairs over the years have totaled close to 5000 dollars and in the end add to each and every players registration cost. Why do we pay for them ourselves? Because if we put in a claim with the city they would tell us the diamonds are too small and take them away from us. We can not afford to lose any of our diamonds as for each diamond we would lose it would mean we would have to delete 2 teams from each men's league. This is not an option to us as how can you delete teams that have been around for 25 years. If anything, we would like to add a few teams who have expressed a desire to join the league but at this time we just can't do it because of a lack of proper diamonds. I think it's sad to tell someone you can't play because we don't have the proper facilities. Also another problem with the diamonds being too small is we have had to alter the ground rules of our games to such an extent that at one diamond we use, basically anything hit out of the infield becomes a single. We have gone as far as we can in altering the equipment that we use! We have outlawed certain types of bats and we use the lowest flight restricted ball there is. With these changes it takes a lot away from the game, it would be sort of like playing ice hockey with a sponge puck and a foam stick.

The last problem that we have is that there are no canteen services at any of our diamonds. In this day and age where the adult population is working longer hours it's a chore just to get the kids to the diamonds on time. Most people get off work between 5:00 and 5:30. Now if your child has a game that night they have to be there by 6:00 so that leaves you little or no time to grab something to eat. It would be nice if you could grab a hotdog or a hamburger at the game instead of waiting till 9:30 at night to eat. The same thing is true for the adult leagues; they get home and rush off to be at their diamonds by 6:00 without having a chance to grab a bite to eat.

With all the problems that I explained to you it makes hosting any type of Division, City or Provincial Championships in Transcona impossible. Over the last few years I have had the good fortune of attending numerous City and Provincial Championships with the teams I coach and every part of the city has a facility that can host these events except one - Transcona. Why is this? Because we do not have a facility with enough diamonds, parking, washroom facilities or canteen services. For the adult leagues the problems are the same. We cannot have any kind of tournaments out here because no one wants to come. When teams have a choice between playing a tournament in St.Vital, North Kildonan or any other part of the city or playing in Transcona where do you think they go? Not Transcona because our facilities are 2nd rate and do not offer the basic amenities that people expect.

Not only do the players and their families lose out when we can't host such events, but also the area businesses such as restaurants and hotels fail to receive any spin-off revenue that their counterparts in other areas of city receive. When you host a Provincial Championship other teams from outside the city attend and what do they need? Hotels, food and entertainment. And where do they get this? Usually from the area business that host these types of championships. The same can be said for any type of tournament as the area restaurant and bars tend to benefit from these types of events. Should they not be afforded the same opportunity as their competitors in other parts of the city?

I am not the only one who thinks that Transcona needs this type of facility. I received a call from Jason Bell Superintendent of Park Services East who found out I was proposing this type of facility. He inquired about what I envisioned and I told him that what I would like to see is a minimum 6-diamond complex with complete washroom and canteen facilities. I would also like to see each diamond named after grassroots people who have contributed to making Transcona what it is today, the names of Susan Auch and Terry Fox come to mind. Jason was in support of my idea and stated that this part of the city needed a complex like this. He was aware of the problems we faced and told me that not only does this make sense, but also it would be much easier to maintain and more cost effective than having to go to 9 different diamonds to do maintenance.

To offset some of the maintenance costs, money made from the canteen could be reinvested into the complex. This would create 3 or 4 part time jobs for students.

As I stated before, this is an ambitious project that will require the support of the other councilors on the committee, and by reading some of their election literature I don't think that should be a problem. I read Councilor Lubosch's statement in the Herald the other day that one of his visions for the city is to have good recreational facilities. In this time, I know tax dollars are tight. But, if we can have 500,000 dollar downtown street parties and spend a 100,000 dollars on chairs, or think about spending one million dollars on a washroom for a bridge, then surely the people of Transcona can expect council's support on a permanent complex that not only the people of Transcona can enjoy but the entire city.

In getting this process started so Transcona can receive it's fair share of recreation infrastructure money we circulated a petition and in 2 hours we received about 350 signatures from the players in the men and women's leagues. I present these to you today.

I had the opportunity of taking Councilor Wyatt on a tour of the facilities we presently use. He saw first hand the problems I outlined to you from the run down state of our diamonds to the parking congestion in our neighborhoods when games are being played. He witnessed first hand at the Harold Hatcher and Optimist diamonds that they were too small for us. He saw that many of the fields lacked proper benches and all lacked any type of washroom facilities. He stated to me he was concerned and appalled that Transcona could not offer its residents both young and old the proper recreation facilities other parts of the city are afforded. He not only spoke with me

about the problems we are facing but with other members of the various leagues in his ward. And they all expressed the same concerns. He has stated to me and to his constituents in his election platform that he would fight on our behalves to get Transcona its fair share of recreation facility tax dollars and I hope that the rest of you can see the seriousness of our problem and help him in his fight to secure the dollars and the land to make "The Ball Parks Of Transcona" a reality.

If you have any questions at this time I would be pleased to answer them. Thank you