REQUEST FOR FUNDING – SYNTHETIC SPORTS FIELD INSTALLATION – JJ HOLLAND PARK

Committee
Finance and Governance

Presenter
Cr Shanahan

Purpose
1. To seek a further $300,000 from the 2009-10 capital works budget to enable the installation of the multi purpose synthetic sports field at JJ Holland Park, Kensington.

Recommendation
2. That Council approve the allocation of a further $300,000 to enable the installation of the multi purpose synthetic sports field at JJ Holland Park, Kensington.
REQUEST FOR FUNDING – SYNTHETIC SPORTS FIELD INSTALLATION – JJ HOLLAND PARK

Divisions Community Development and City Design

Presenter Graham Porteous, Manager Recreation Services

Purpose

1. To seek a further $300,000 from the 2009-10 capital works budget to enable the installation of the multi purpose synthetic sports field at JJ Holland Park, Kensington.

Recommendation from management

2. That the Finance and Governance Committee recommends Council approve the allocation of a further $300,000 to enable the installation of the multi purpose synthetic sports field at JJ Holland Park, Kensington.

Background

3. Due to the ongoing drought conditions, current water restrictions, and an increase in demand for sports fields, the condition of Council’s sports fields has declined over the last five years. The ability to maintain them at the levels required to sustain all formal and informal demand is severely compromised. In winter 2009, sporting clubs requested 620 hours of use per week, however, only 350 hours were able to be allocated with clubs receiving an average of only 25 per cent of their requested training requirements.

4. For the fourth consecutive year Council will be unable to provide pre-season training on any formal sports fields in the lead up to the winter 2010 season. This restriction of use, while necessary to sustain the sports fields for competition use, can have a negative impact on community health, both physically and socially.

5. The installation of a limited number of synthetic sports fields can assist in managing the ongoing impact of climate change whilst meeting the increasing demand for use of Council’s sports fields. The installation of a single synthetic sports field will allow up to four times the use of a natural sports field.

6. Other methods include improved horticultural management including the planting of drought tolerant turf species on sports grounds, improved water management strategies such as the Royal Park wetlands, and ongoing management of use by sports clubs through the considered allocation of training and playing times.

7. A major benefit of any synthetic sports field is to provide a multi purpose training venue for a range of sports. The proposed site at JJ Holland Park would be required to cater for existing weekend competition uses; junior and adult soccer in winter and junior and adult cricket in summer.
8. Discussions are currently taking place with the Victoria Racing Club regarding the potential for a partnership on their proposed sewer mining project at Newmarket Reserve. This will potentially provide water for Newmarket Reserve and JJ Holland Park. While additional water could be effectively utilised within the whole of JJ Holland Park, the synthetic surface would remain a priority, in the context of increasing demand for use of sporting ovals.

Key issues

9. A tender process has been undertaken to select a preferred contractor to install a synthetic sports field at JJ Holland Park. Input into the development of the tender specification was provided by:

9.1. Specific technical and operational advice from external consultants experienced in synthetic turf installation;

9.2. Sport and Recreation Victoria (who are developing a ‘synthetic sports surfaces manual’);

9.3. Onsite visits to existing facilities with synthetic surfaces;

9.4. Assessment of tender specifications provided by other councils and State Government who have installed surfaces (as well as consultation on their processes and outcomes); and

9.5. Council’s Capital Works and Recreation Services branches.

10. The specification required tenderers to submit pricing for up to four different options. The options in order of standard consisted of: AFL/Cricket Australia community standards for football and cricket; FIFA (International Football Federation) 2; FIFA 1; and Multisport. The standards are based on a number of criteria including but not limited to player and ball surface interaction, durability, safety, multi-purpose level, and environmental standards.

11. An internal panel assessed 28 different synthetic turf sports field options from seven organisations who submitted tenders. A preferred surface has been selected which meets the AFL/Cricket Australia community standards for football and cricket on synthetic surfaces and also complies with FIFA standards for soccer. This surface provides the most flexibility to meet training and competition use for the majority of user clubs. The next preferred surface would only meet FIFA standards for soccer, and not the AFL and cricket standard. Installing a FIFA 2 standard compromises the ability for AFL and cricket to be played at a competitive level with the sports governing bodies unlikely to sanction the surface for play.

12. As stated earlier, the site is currently used for junior and senior cricket in summer, and Council has no other venues that could meet the existing competition demands of this site. Football Victoria did not sanction AFL practice matches on the recently installed FIFA standard field at Whittlesea last season. This field also caters for school and junior cricket, community cricket training, and is used sparingly as a match venue for community cricket in the event normal venues are unavailable. The field does not meet the AFL/Cricket Australia community standards.

13. Consideration was given to a smaller surface area as a means to reduce costs. However, this would restrict the ability to program the space for multiple use by approximately 50 per cent. It would also seriously compromise the capacity to provide for current levels of use for both cricket and soccer.

14. The preferred surface contains a round sand infill only. Most of the other options incorporate a recycled SBR rubber material as a key component of the infill system. The community consultation process identified community concern about the use of recycled rubber and associated potential environmental issues. The rubber infill also retains and radiates more heat in hot weather conditions.
15. The preferred tenderer warrants the synthetic turf and infill materials to be free from defects for 8 years. This is commensurate with all other tenders. The preferred tenderer has included in their price the first 2 years of maintenance, including the training of Council’s open space contractor to perform the maintenance Council will require under the existing contract. It is estimated that with the recommended maintenance regime and appropriate management of use, the lifespan of the product will be between 10 and 12 years. Again, this is commensurate with all other tenders.

16. Council would be the first municipality in Victoria to install a synthetic sports field that complies with the newly developed AFL/Cricket Australia standards and lead the industry in the provision of sustainable, multi use synthetic sports fields for community use.

Time frame

17. As per 2009/2010 Annual Council Plan, this project is required to be completed by 30 June 2010.

Relation to Council policy

18. Council Plan – Goal 1 – A city for people:

18.1. Create an environment that is inclusive and accessible and encourages participation; and

18.2. Support increased participation in physical activity through sport and recreation services.

19. The Active Melbourne Strategy, adopted by Council in 2006, has as its vision:

19.1. Opportunities will be available for all members of the community to participate in physical activities that contribute positively to their health and wellbeing.

20. Annual Council Plan 2009/2010:

20.1. Action 5.1.2.1 (KSA) Continue to implement drought proofing to ensure water security for Melbourne’s Parks and Gardens.


Consultation

21. A number of meetings have been held with key stakeholders from the Kensington community, including all tenant sporting groups and the Kensington Association. There is widespread support from key stakeholders for the installation of a synthetic sports field in JJ Holland Park.

22. During the consultation process some members of the community expressed concern in relation to the use of recycled SBR rubber material as an infill material, particularly in relation to human ingestion and leaching of materials into the environment.

Government relations

23. Recreation Services Branch has worked closely with Sport and Recreation Victoria (SRV) on this project. An application for a $250,000 grant from SRV for this project has been successful. This grant will be provided in the 2010/11 financial year.

Finance

24. At this stage of the 2009/10 budget cycle there is currently no under expenditure on capital works projects that could be reallocated towards funding this project.

25. The current total cost of the project, including contingencies and all fees (based on the preferred tender submission) is $1.3 million. The current budget allocation of $750,000 and confirmed SRV
funding of $250,000 (Total $1 million), means that a further $300,000 is required to enable this project to proceed.

26. The preferred surface and the second preference would both require additional funding from the 2009/2010 capital works budget. This report recommends the AFL/Cricket Australia community surface which will require an additional allocation of $300,000. The second preference (FIFA 2 standard) would require an additional $50,000.

27. In the event the requested funding is not approved, Recreation Services Branch would request to carry forward the existing Council funding into the 2010/11 financial year, and seek a further $300,000 from the 2010/11 budget allocation process.

28. Details are contained in the following table:

<table>
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<th>EXPENDITURE</th>
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<td>Installation cost</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contingencies and fees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Cost</td>
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<table>
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<th>REVENUE</th>
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<td>Council budget</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sport and Recreation Victoria grant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Revenue</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shortfall</td>
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Conflict of interest

29. No member of Council staff, or other person engaged under a contract, involved in advising on or preparing this report has declared a direct or indirect interest in relation to the matter of the report.

Legal

30. There are no direct legal issues arising from the recommendation from Management.

Sustainability

31. The installation of a limited number of synthetic sports fields provide Council with the ability to meet some of the demand that cannot currently be satisfied and allows current use to be transferred from existing natural sports fields, enhancing the sustainability of these surfaces. Synthetic sports fields require no irrigation or other horticultural inputs that natural sports fields require.

32. The existing natural turf sport field does not currently receive any irrigation under the water industry approved water allocation system. The field has not received irrigation for a number of years. In the event this sport field (approximately 6,500m2) was being irrigated, with no restrictions, it is estimated that approximately 100,000 litres of water would be used per week to keep the field in reasonable condition for use.
The 2009-10 budget included a provision of $750,000 for this project. The recommendation in the report is seeking a further amount of $300,000 above and beyond the current budget allocation.

Further financial details are provided in the body of the report.

Phu Nguyen
Acting Manager Financial Services
There are no direct legal issues arising from the recommendation from Management.

Section 98 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, (‘the Act’) qualifies that while Council may by instrument of delegation, delegate to a member of its staff any power, duty or function of a Council under the Act or any other Act, it may not delegate the power to approve any expenditure not contained in a budget approved by the Council.

Kim Wood
Manager Legal Services