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# HALDIMAND COUNTY

## Report CDP-21-2024 Alice and Albert Schram Park Mar-Co Clay Infield Enhancement, Dunnville

For Consideration by Council in Committee on October 29, 2024

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### OBJECTIVE:

To approve a community request from the Dunnville Men's Slo-Pitch League to undertake the installation of Mar-Co Clay surface mix on the ball diamond at the Alice and Albert Schram Park in Dunnville.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT Report CDP-21-2024 Alice and Albert Schram Park Mar-Co Clay Infield Enhancement, Dunnville be received;
2. AND THAT the request from the Dunnville Men's Slo-Pitch League to undertake the installation of Mar-Co Clay on the ball diamond infield at the Alice and Albert Schram Park in Dunnville, be approved;
3. AND THAT capital project funding to an upset amount of \$46,500, contributed from the Ward 5 Community Vibrancy Fund, be approved;
4. AND THAT the project and funding approval are conditional upon compliance with Haldimand County Policy 2011-01 and any legislated requirements and permits, including County standards and processes;
5. AND THAT the revised budget, as outlined in CDP-21-2024, be approved.

**Prepared by:** Sheryl Sawyer, Senior Community Partnership Liaison

**Reviewed by:** Katrina Schmitz, Manager, Community Development & Partnerships

**Respectfully submitted:** Mike Evers, MCIP, RPP, BES, General Manager, Community & Development Services

**Approved:** Cathy Case, Chief Administrative Officer

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Haldimand County's Community Partnership Program (CPP) was created in 2011 to support the efforts of community groups to facilitate enhancements to existing County-owned assets or new projects on municipal property. The intent of the CPP is to provide a fair, clear, and consistent process for community partners to gain approval to undertake such initiatives, as well as to seek sources of funding for these projects.

The program is intended to balance the rigour of the review process, necessary to ensure legitimate public interest issues are addressed, with flexibility and respect for the volunteer commitment of groups.

The current request is for permission for the Dunnville Men's Slo-Pitch League to undertake installation of a Mar-Co Clay infield mix on the ball diamond at Alice and Albert Schram Park in Dunnville.

## **BACKGROUND:**

The Alice and Albert Schram Park in Dunnville is a heavily-used baseball diamond with demand for summer play or practice times almost every night of the week and on many weekends for tournaments or special events.

The current request—which is supported by the Ward 5 Councillor—is for approval for the Dunnville Men's Slo-Pitch League to install Mar-Co Clay, an industry-standard playing surface mix, on the ball diamond infield to benefit all users by enhancing player comfort and safety.

## **ANALYSIS:**

### **Slo-Pitch League Activity at the Alice and Albert Schram Park**

Dunnville has a long history of baseball in the community, with organized play dating back many years. At the Alice and Albert Schram Park (named so in 2011), three slo-pitch leagues currently operate – men's, ladies, and co-ed. While annual registrations fluctuate slightly, in 2024 there were 30 teams of 12-15 players each, playing or practicing nearly every night of the week and on many weekends – for a total overall calculation of approximately 450 people using the facility for 300+ hours over the 16-week ball season.

### **Mar-Co Clay Conversion**

The ball diamond infield has not been refreshed for many years. The outfield is in good condition, thanks to seasonal care by Haldimand County's, Facilities, Parks, Cemeteries & Forestry Operations staff. The infield, however, offers opportunity for improvement. The current surface is loose stone screenings, which negatively affects the way the ball bounces and contributes to player injury due to often unstable footing, particularly as players round second and third base. In wet weather, the stone screening infield surface can dry to a cement-like consistency or alternatively to that of small pebbles. Neither of these extreme conditions is conducive to player safety and enjoyment.

Mar-Co Clay offers a baseball-specific blend of clay and sand that is firm and durable after application while offering good drainage and a softer playing surface. Balls bounce truer, and player footing is improved. Multiple County ball fields are surfaced with Mar-Co Clay, including in Caledonia, Jarvis, and Fisherville – with players and maintenance crews reporting excellent results.

The current proposal involves excavating and infilling the existing ball diamond infield to a depth of three inches, cutting and reshaping the sod prior to application of the surface mix, then grading for optimal drainage. Converting the infield to Mar-Co Clay also necessitates replacement of the pitching mound clay and rubber, batters' boxes, home plate and anchors for the bases. The request is coming forward to Council at this time in the hopes of still being able to complete the installation before winter and be ready for next season.

### **Community Need & Benefit:**

The Dunnville Men's Slo-Pitch League is requesting permission to facilitate installation of Mar-Co Clay on the infield at the Alice and Albert Schram Park in Dunnville. The park is a well-used facility, offering baseball programming and recreation for area residents. Keeping the ball diamond in good playing condition supports this important recreation asset in the community and creates consistency with many other ball diamonds in the County.

## FINANCIAL/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

Policy 2011-01 states that the Community Partnership Program (CPP) will encourage and actively support partnerships with not-for-profit community groups. Within the CPP Capital Projects grant stream, Council has the responsibility to approve community capital projects with an overall budget of over \$10,000.

The overall budget for the enhancement of the ball diamond infield at Alice and Albert Schram Park in Dunnville is \$46,500. The request is that this project be funded through the Ward 5 Community Vibrancy Fund.

As a result of this proposed project, the following capital amendment is required:

Project Budget	Current Approved Budget	Proposed Revised Budget
<b>Expenditures</b>		
Mar-Co Clay Installation	\$0	\$46,500
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$46,500</b>
<b>Financing</b>		
Community Vibrancy Reserve Fund (Ward 5)	\$0	\$46,500
<b>Total Financing</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$46,500</b>

In addition to the funding required for the proposed infield enhancement, the Public Sector Accounting Board (PSAB) reporting standards require the County to record the fair market value of contributed assets. This capital enhancement will be amortized over the estimated lifespan of the associated enhanced asset for accounting purposes.

Ongoing additional operating costs (inspections, maintenance and minor repair) will be the responsibility of the County, which maintains the field, and may require an increase in the Tax Supported Operating Budget. Additional capital replacement or repair—through a partnership with the community group(s)—may impact the County’s existing long-range capital funding plan.

## STAKEHOLDER IMPACTS:

The proposed project was reviewed by staff from Community Development & Partnerships, and Facilities, Parks, Cemeteries & Forestry Operations. The Dunnville Men’s Slo-Pitch League was consulted on behalf of ball users. The Ward 5 Councillor has confirmed support of the project through the proposed use of Ward 5 Community Vibrancy Funds. Players will benefit from a safe and comfortable playing surface on the infield of the ball diamond at the Alice and Albert Schram Park in Dunnville.

## REPORT IMPACTS:

Agreement: No

By-law: No

Budget Amendment: Yes

Policy: No

## **REFERENCES:**

1. [Policy No. 2011-01 Community Partnership Program](#)

## **ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Location Map Alice and Albert Schram Park.