

City Hall Report

Recreation Park Will Be World-Class Facility For World-Class Community

*By Russ Wyatt,
Councillor, Transcona Ward*

Like many great projects, **Buhler Recreation Park** started off as a vision. In the 2002 civic election, I was approached by a fellow who I had never met before. This fellow seemed sincere as he described to me the condition of playing fields in **Transcona** and the need for better facilities. His name was **Steve Mymko** and I liked what he had to say. Immediately following the election, I moved a motion that called for a new outdoor recreation park. Little did I know the kind of adventure that I, along with **Mr. Mymko** and a band of merry men and women, had embarked on. Within a few months, I managed to convince then-mayor **Glen Murray** for **\$50,000** toward writing a business plan that included the entire concept of what we then called the **Transcona Recreation Park**.

The vision was to build a park that has never been seen in **Manitoba**, not to mention **Transcona** – a world-class facility for a world-class community: eight softball diamonds, six soccer fields, a skating pond, a toboggan hill, two hardball diamonds, an outdoor nature classroom for kids, a canteen with washrooms and eating area, over five kilometres of walking paths, parking for 600 cars and a natural forest area all on 60 hectares (150 acres) of city-owned land. The cost was pegged at **\$5.8 million** for a park that would be run by the community and one that was sustainable, with all revenues derived from the facility going back into the park's operation and maintenance.

Normally, such a project would take a community of the size of **Transcona** 10-15 years to build. Our community will do it in four years! The business plan called for each level of government to contribute **\$1.5 million** and the community to raise **\$1.3 million**. This has been surpassed. With the help and support of our **MLAs** and **MP**, the **Province of Manitoba** and **Government of Canada** have both committed **\$1.5 million** through the **Canada-Manitoba Infrastructure Secretariat**. The **City of Winnipeg** has officially earmarked **\$1.5 million** toward the project. City funds will come from the sale of surplus city lands, therefore not taxing our existing capital budget.

With this cash commitment, plus the value of the land of **\$120,000** (as well as **\$85,000** in grants for the business plan and other capital work), the **City's** commitment to **Buhler Recreation Park** is now over **\$1.7 million**. When the plan was conceived, nobody could predict the rise in construction costs, so the extra city funds will be critical. As well, due to the efforts of the community, **\$1.5 million** has been raised privately including **John & Bonnie Buhler's** generous donation of **\$500,000** for the naming rights. Other major donators (**\$100,000+**) include **Transcona Credit Union**, **New Flyer Industries**, **Qualico Homes**, **Manitoba Lotteries** and **The Winnipeg Foundation**.

To complete the project with the new **2006** construction costs, another **\$300,000** will be required. The 10-year naming rights for the sponsorship of each softball diamond and soccer field are being sold, and local businesses are jumping on board to take advantage of this opportunity. **East Winnipeg Sports Association (EWSA)**, the com-

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munity not-for-profit group spearheading the park's development, is making this possible by also allowing area businesses to spread out their sponsorship cost over five years. All donations are welcome and helpful. There is also a **Buy-A-Brick** campaign for individuals who wish to help in this community effort. If you would like to make a donation, call **Steve Mymko at 781-6118**. All donations are eligible for a federal charitable tax receipt and therefore deductible.

The **Park**, other than providing our growing community with new facilities for sport and recreation, brings to the city an added economic benefit: It is estimated that through various tournaments and other special events, **Buhler Recreation Park** will inject approximately **\$10 million** annually in economic spinoffs – both direct and indirect – for our local economy. Construction is now in full swing. It will take the **2006** construction season to build the park and at least eight weeks are needed to allow

the sod to take root. The **Grand Opening** will be in **2007**. Everyone in the community should be congratulated for the Herculean effort that has made this project possible. More work needs to be done but at the end of the day, the slogan of the **EWSA** has truly come to life: This is **"A Park The Community Has Built"**.

Community Accomplishments —

It has been an honour and privilege to serve **Transcona** in the capacity of **City Councillor**. Representing the best community in all of **Winnipeg** is something that I have a hard time to keep secret and would like to take this opportunity to say "thank you". Everything that has been accomplished in these four short years has been done with strong community support and spirit. I would be remiss not to mention some of the other projects going on in **Transcona** (some having been completed or soon to be completed, or works-in-progress), many made possible due to the help and ded-

ication of numerous community volunteers – residents who are the heart and soul of **Transcona**. Space does not permit listing everything, but here are a few examples in no particular order:

Increase in the **Transcona Historical Museum** budget, first a one-time increase of **\$40,000** and then a permanent increase of **\$20,000** per year, plus the **\$48,000** acquisition of a lot next to the **Museum** for future expansion.

Commitment by the **Winnipeg Police Service** to open a new community police centre in **Downtown Transcona** once relocation of **Transcona's** current police station to **Dugald Road** (only 400 metres from **Transcona**) is complete.

New **\$2 million Fire Hall** to be built in **Transcona** at the corner of **Regent Avenue West & Starlight Drive**. Will replace the **Fire Hall** at **Plessis Road & Pandora Avenue** and is part of the **Winnipeg Fire Department's** long-term plan to improve response times as well as to ensure that **Transcona** will always have two fire halls.

Beginning of a first for **Transcona**: A **Citizen-On-Patrol** group, helping residents make our community safer with a

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pilot project in **Kildonan/Lakeside Meadows**.

New sidewalk to be constructed along the north side of **Dugald Road** connecting the community of **South Transcona** to the sidewalk at **Plessis Road**. This came about due to the closure of the **Midway** by **CN Rail**.

New playground structures for **Ecole Margaret Underhill, Joseph Teres School** and **Park City West Community Club** New water slide for **Transcona Kinsmen Centennial Pool** Renewal of **Maple Leaf Park** with special emphasis on drainage Renewal for **Victoria Jason Park** (for-

merly **Crocus Park**) including new soccer field, drainage improvements, trails, signage and trees Renewal in **Harbourview South's Optimist Park** including a new playground structure, trails, drainage work and trees New playground equipment, trails, sod work and trees for **Paulicelli Park** in **Mission Gardens** Major investment in **Morley Kare Park** in **Lakeside Meadows** with new trees, benches, sod and walking paths.

*(City Hall Report is provided as a public service. If you have any questions or comments regarding this article, please contact **Transcona Councillor Russ Wyatt** using the information included in his accompanying advertisement.)* ♦
