

DATE: April 13, 2021

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Darrel Robertson, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Neighbourhood Park Development Funding — Soraya Hafez
(Response to Request for Information #96)

ORIGINATOR: Kathy Muhlethaler, Assistant Superintendent

**RESOURCE
STAFF:** Roland Labbe, Shaminder Parmar, Christopher Wright

REFERENCE: N/A

ISSUE

At the March 9, 2021, Board meeting, Trustee Draper requested that Administration confirm whether or not the Soraya Hafez School Playground Committee is eligible for Neighbourhood Park Development Program (NPDP) grant funding for a proposed playground at the Soraya Hafez School site. Trustee Draper expressed concern that limitations on communities being able to access the NPDP grant may be preventing community leagues from adequately addressing the playground needs for large neighbourhoods that have multiple schools and park sites.

BACKGROUND

The NPDP funding grant is a City of Edmonton grant available to support community-initiated park development, which is allocated per city neighbourhood. Each city neighbourhood is eligible for the following funding levels through the NPDP grant:

- Basic Projects: \$15,000 in *matching funds* for basic projects every five years
- Intermediate Projects: \$75,000 in *matching funds* for intermediate projects every 10 years
- Extensive Projects: \$250,000 in *matching funds* for extensive projects every 15 years

Neighbourhoods may only access one of the funding levels in a single year and funding levels cannot be combined. Not-for-profit groups can reach out to their designated City of Edmonton Neighbourhood Resource Coordinator to access resources and support to help them through the park development process.

CURRENT SITUATION

Administration has been in communication with the City of Edmonton regarding accessing NPDP funding for playground development on the Soraya Hafez School site. The City's Neighbourhood Resource Coordinator for the McConachie neighbourhood has been working with the Horse Hill Community League regarding their efforts to construct a playground at the Soraya Hafez School site.

In 2017, the Horse Hill Community League applied for and received the entirety of the NPDP Extensive Projects funding level grant (\$250,000) to develop a playground at Christ the King Catholic Elementary/Junior High School in the McConachie neighbourhood. As a result, the Extensive Project

level funding is not scheduled to be available again for the McConachie neighbourhood until 2032. The Soraya Hafez School site is eligible for the Intermediate Project funding level (\$75,000), which is the next highest amount available.

The City of Edmonton has indicated awareness of the challenges that limited funding has for larger neighbourhoods like McConachie and is currently working on updating the strategy phase for the City Parkland Development Process. Engagement regarding this update will include a survey which will be sent to residents, stakeholders and parents. The City of Edmonton will contact Edmonton Public Schools to fill out this survey. As part of our feedback, Administration will communicate concerns regarding limited funds for playgrounds in large neighbourhoods that include multiple school sites. Administration will also ensure that the survey is shared with the school parent community through our school principals.

KEY POINTS

- Eligibility restrictions for obtaining the NPDP grant are preventing neighbourhoods that have multiple schools and park sites from adequately addressing their playground needs.
- The NPDP matching grant levels include extensive (\$250,000 every 15 years), intermediate (\$75,000 every 10 years), and basic (\$15,000 every five years).
- In 2017, the Horse Hill Community League received a \$250,000 Extensive Project level NPDP grant for a playground at Christ the King Catholic Elementary/Junior High School in McConachie.
- The McConachie neighbourhood will only again become eligible for the Extensive Project level NPDP grant starting in 2032, although it remains eligible for the Intermediate and Basic level grants.
- The City of Edmonton is considering updates to the NPDP grant program and will be engaging residents, stakeholders and parents.
- Administration will ensure that the survey is shared with the school parent community through our school principals.

SP:or