

City of Toronto – Parks, Forestry & Recreation

Cricket Strategy

Stakeholder Meeting Feedback Summary

June 24, 2020



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Introduction

This document provides a summary of the Cricket Strategy Stakeholder Group Meeting that was held on June 24, 2020.

Stakeholder Group Meeting #1

The purpose of this workshop was to seek input from the cricket community to inform the development of the Cricket Strategy. Prior to the meeting, stakeholders were provided the meeting presentation, which included an introduction to the Cricket Strategy's direction and timelines, and an overview of the City's current cricket field classification system. Members were asked to review the presentation and bring their questions of clarification and comments to the Stakeholder Meeting.

Feedback Summary

Project staff presented the Cricket Strategy background, direction and timelines, and provided an overview of the current cricket field classification system. Participants provided questions of clarification and comment throughout the meeting. A summary of the feedback is presented below, organised by discussion topic:

Discussion Topic: Scope of Work

Key Messages

- **The 5 new fields and improvements to 3 fields identified in the FMP do not go far enough in addressing existing and future demand.**
- **There is concern that this will become “another forgotten study” or is derailed following an election.**

Additional Discussion

- Several participants mentioned that this plan is a start, but more needs to be done to improve existing facilities and provide new ones.
- One participant noted that demand has been high for the last 10-15 years, and that there is no capacity at existing fields. He predicted that we will see 10-15 times the demand in coming years.
- Noted that improving 3 fields is not enough and that every field in Toronto should be improved as many are not regulation size.
- Noted that State of Good Repair (SOGR) is an issue at many fields and should be prioritized.
- Staff noted that they are aware of this issue and it will be noted in this study and potentially an upcoming council report. Staff highlighted that the formal 5 year review of the FMP presents an opportunity to identify additional needs.
- Staff addressed concern that plan would not go anywhere by noting that the FMP is approved in concept and from a funding perspective.

Discussion Topic: Quality of Existing Facilities

Key Messages

- **State of Good Repair of existing facilities is poor and a key issue.**
- **Competitive play occurs on all classifications of pitches and they need to be safe for players.**

Additional Discussion

- Noted that current facilities are small.
- Concerns raised about deteriorating quality of existing fields.
- Conditions are getting to the point where it is impacting player development, with impacts to international representation.
- Grass is too long at pretty much all the pitches in Scarborough.
- Practice pitches in Ashtonbee are in bad shape and the community has been asking for improvements.
- All the pitches in Toronto are being used for competitive play right now.
- Issue across GTA with City personal dealing with permitting and maintenance not having knowledge or experience of cricket.
- Erosion of grass an issue from play on either side of pitches from (softball?).

Topic: Field Classification and Standards

Key Messages

- **The City's current classification system does not reflect the demands of the sport. Participants consider the only true premier field in Toronto to be at the Toronto Cricket Club.**
- **Turf maintenance is crucial for cricket facility quality, not just size of pitch / outfield.**
 - **A premier field needs low cut grass, irrigation, and regular maintenance. Grass height is very important.**
 - **City staff need to be trained in cricket field maintenance**
- **Size of a field can vary, but generally 120 – 140 m is acceptable.**
- **There is support for building smaller fields for youth development**
- **The City can consider artificial turf**

Additional Discussion

- Noted that staff are using the wrong basis for classification (regarding the table that was being filled in with discussion)
 - Currently designated Premier Pitches do not meet cricket standards. Example of Ross Lords Park location needing improvements and grass cutting to 1/2 -1 inch to be closer to the premier standard
 - Toronto Cricket Club is the only true premier field in Toronto
- Noted that field maintenance is key when considering quality
 - A premier field needs low cut grass, irrigation, and regular maintenance to the needs of games schedules
 - When the grass is an inch or higher it lowers the quality of play
 - For pitch the grass should be like golf green, for outfield should be close but doesn't have to be quite as good
 - Fields need to be rolled with heavy rollers several times a month to make it smooth
 - Fields need to be aerated or they will become too hard
 - The end of each pitch needs to be maintained for erosion from bowler's running.
 - Boundary lines must be marked
- Artificial turf
 - Noted that artificial turf can be installed and noted fields like Ross Lord still use matting
 - Noted satisfaction with conversion of Fergie Brown fields to artificial turf

- Size
 - Size of outfield is not the main issue
 - Various numbers mentioned
 - Can have anything from 120 m
 - 70m from bowl of the pitch
 - Size is 120-140 m diameter, you can have a good field with 60 on each side
 - Can add 5 m for a buffer.
 - 70 yard is the minimum standard
 - 60 yard is for youth
- Importance of certain standards of wicket (not enough to put matting down?)
- Suggested that the City build all new fields to international standards
- Noted that there is support for special sized fields for youth development
- Noted importance of having City staff familiar with permitting and maintenance of cricket fields.
- Suggestion that staff refer to ICC standards available online
- Suggestion that staff look to Brampton for good examples
- Offer to develop the standards and present them back to the city

Topic: Siting New Fields

Key Messages

- **Participants suggested addressing space concerns by using shared spaces, such as a combined soccer & cricket model.**
 - Staff noted that this will be looked at – both in terms of space but also permitting.
 - Staff noted that the sport field strategy will be looking at fields of all types, such as ball diamonds. If they have low use we can investigate conversions.

Topic: Amenities

*Did not have time to discuss. **Staff will send a follow-up survey to gather feedback.***

Topic: Cricket Reference Group

Key Messages

- **Participants felt that everyone that needs to be in the Cricket Reference Group was on this call, with the exception of Cricket Canada (invited)**

Additional Discussion

- Suggestion to craft Terms of Reference in advance
- Question in chat of how many people would be in the Reference Group.
 - Question was not answered

Topic: Partnerships

Key Messages

- **Cricket Canada and Cricket Ontario are doing consultative work that may overlap with this study. The City should consider partnering with these organizations to avoid overlap]**
- **Existing organizations are willing to help the City improve cricket facilities with expertise and financially (e.g. through fundraising).**

- **There may be an opportunity to partner with post-secondary institutions to improve their facilities or other municipalities to collaborate on sport-plexes.**

Additional Discussion

- Suggestion that Staff reach out to grounds curator at Toronto Cricket and Curling Club who is assisting the City of Mississauga on cricket work.
 - Toronto & District Cricket Association can provide additional contacts.
- It was noted that the Cricket community is available to provide resources and information and help with infrastructure development. There are also opportunities to partner in fundraising.
 - Cricket Ontario willing to help.
- Canadian College Cricket suggested working with Humber and other post-secondary institutions who are interested in repairing cricket facilities but don't have resources to do so. This may represent an opportunity to partner and CCC is willing to help facilitate this.
- Possible partnership opportunity with City of Vaughan multi-sports park initiative noted.
- Noted that in the fall the City partners with Humber College, Toronto Sports Council and Toronto Accessible Sports Council to offer the Toronto Sport Summit. This may be an opportunity to promote this work.

Topic: Other

- Discussion noted that Cricket Ontario is working with Special Olympics
- Go Green Youth Centre to send follow-up email with more details on agreement negotiations with school board. Has experienced similar quality issues.
- Practice pitches with synthetic turf surface and increased lane size can encourage use for community and youth
- Terminology clarification – pitch and outfield are different
 - Pitch is the square in the middle where the bowlers do battle
 - Outfield is the rest
- Prioritization
 - Prioritize premier fields. Will help competition to be played at the highest level
 - Long term prioritizing of other fields that need to be improved and new fields

Questions

Q. Has a budget already been allocated for the development and how soon can we start progress?

- Staff have identified that we are looking for a new full-sized pitch immediately, and have money for 2021. Sports field improvements are also budgeted starting 2021
- Out of this work we want to identify locations that we can act on immediately.

Q. Does the plan address building and/or improving practice pitches?

- Yes

Q. Can the budget be utilized for cricket fields not owned by City of Toronto, however in city's boundaries, but deeply involved with cricket community from various backgrounds?

- Not answered
- Post Meeting Response – The Council approved Capital Plan for cricket improvements is for parkland under the City's jurisdiction and would include those fields on Conservation

Authority lands, Hydro Corridors and water reservoirs and where we have a use agreement. The Cricket Strategy will explore potential partnerships including other public land owners such as school boards.

Q. As the plan will be under review in 5 years, does that allow for the opportunity of additional pitches or maintenance to existing pitches?

- Yes, needs for parks and recreation facilities will be reviewed at that time.

Is there a plan to ensure and maintain a standard of pitches and practice facilities across the city?

- Not answered
- Post Meeting Response – The cricket grounds are classified based on by parks maintenance standards. See descriptions on the City website:
<https://www.toronto.ca/data/parks/prd/facilities/ratings/index.html#fields>
- The Cricket Strategy is seeking input on how and where the existing grounds should be improved to facilitate play including turf quality and drainage, level of maintenance etc.

Are the pitches at Ellesmere being counted to the pitches in the plan?

- No, they are already identified in the Parks Forestry & Recreation capital budget. The 3 improved and 5 new will be in addition to Ellesmere improvements.
- Toronto Water anticipate to have construction work completed and cleared from the Ellesmere fields by July 10th.
- There is a planned capital project in 2021 to replace the cricket pitch.

Is there a plan to improve the pitches at Centennial Park?

- Master planning exercise going on in Centennial which will take into account FMP recommendations, including those related to cricket
- Will look at opportunities to improve cricket facilities

Next Steps

- Participants have until Friday July 3rd to provide additional feedback.
- The notes from tonight's meeting will be shared with the participants to confirm accuracy
- The feedback gathered during the meeting (and through email until July 3rd) will be posted on [the City's cricket strategy website at www.toronto.ca/cricketstrategy](http://www.toronto.ca/cricketstrategy)
- This information will inform the development of the Cricket Strategy.
- A cricket strategy Town Hall meeting will be planned for September.
- Staff will draft a terms of reference to establish the Cricket Reference Group and will seek input from the stakeholders before the Town Hall meeting
- The project team will follow up with stakeholders to gather additional information as needed, through email.

Contact Us

For questions or comments related to this project, please contact:

Susan Fall, Supervisor, Systems Planning, Policy and Strategic Planning
City of Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation
susan.fall@toronto.ca