

City of Toronto – Parks, Forestry & Recreation

Cricket Reference Group (CRG)

Meeting 3 Summary

June 2, 2021

Alex Lavasidis, Senior Public Consultation Coordinator
Matt Bentley - Facilities Master Plan Project Manager
Susan Fall – Supervisor, System Planning



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Attendees

Community Resource Group Members

Cricket Canada – Keith Deonaraine
Cricket Ontario – Shah Saleem Zafar
Global T20 Canada - Wendy Kane
Ontario Twilight Softball Cricket League – Azeem Khan
Open Member (Scarborough League Player) - Kannan Rajagopal
Scarborough Cricket Association – Shiv Persaud

Regrets:

Bangla Warriors Cricket Club – Abu Rubaid Alam
Brampton-Etobicoke and District Cricket League – Prait Persaud
CIMA – Ranil Mendis
Cricket Canada Masters Council – Akshay Pandya
Greater Toronto Cricket Club – Qhinathullah Mohammed
Ontario Softball Cricket League – Kumar Jaipersaud
Ontario Twilight Softball Cricket League – Azeem Khan
Superstar Colts Coach – Abdool Mudassar Samad
Toronto & District Cricket Association – Mohammed Shaikh
Toronto Police Cricket Club – PC Amir Butt
Toronto Sports Council – Heather Mitchell

City of Toronto

Alex Lavasidis –Sr. Public Consultation Coordinator
Ed Lewis –Parks Supervisor, Toronto East York
Julie Das –Community Recreation Programmer
Kelly Murphy –Manager, Policy & System Planning
Mari Caravaggio –Business Development Officer
Matt Bentley -Facilities Master Plan Project Manager
Paul Farrish–Manager, Park Planning
Susan Fall –Supervisor, System Planning

These minutes are not intended to provide verbatim accounts of discussions. Rather, they summarize and document the key points made during the discussions, as well as the outcomes and actions arising from the CRG meeting.

Introduction

This document provides a summary of the virtual meeting of the Cricket Reference Group held on June 2, 2021 from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

These meeting notes and the presentation, along with more information about the CRG and the development of the City's Cricket Strategy can be found on the project webpage at www.toronto.ca/CricketStrategy

Meeting Goals

Meeting goals included:

- Review and confirm the May 12 meeting discussion summary including reviewing new field location options based on Field Typologies (size) and discussing options for improving existing pitches.
- Identify opportunities to increase access to cricket programs and facilities
- Identify opportunities to build organizational capacity
- Share next steps

Discussion

City staff presented:

- A review of the May 12 CRG meeting outcomes around field location options and field typology sizes.
- An overview of opportunities for growing the sport through building organization capacity, increasing access to community cricket facilities, and increasing access to community cricket programs.
- Identifying issues to increase access to cricket programs and facilities.

The CRG discussion is summarised by topic, below.

Updates and Announcements

Each meeting will begin with program, park, and/or pitch updates from staff and CRG members as they arise

Ellesmere Reservoir

- The north artificial turf pitch will be repaired the first week of June, weather permitting.
- This repair is not considered one of the improvements identified in the Facilities Master Plan investments.

Centennial Park Master Plan

- Final Master Plan Open House was held May 25 and plans will be finalized by staff over the summer
- The draft plan has a proposed new stand-alone pitch north of the two existing fields. The new field may not be suitable for international competitive play as the preliminary siting show it to be slightly smaller than Cricket Canada standard and part of the field may be under the hydro lines.
- CRG advised that cricketers had approached the city to have a 3rd pitch there in the past but Hydro opposed the location. Staff will share this feedback with the Centennial Park Master Plan project manager.
- The Plan still needs Council approval and could not be implemented until after some planned Hydro One and Imperial Pipeline projects.

Toronto Islands Master Plan

- Public consultation has started for the Toronto Island Master plan and all "Big Ideas" for the future of the island are welcome. On-line survey for this phase of the consultation is open until June 13

Terry Fox Park

- Parks staff will be moving ahead to improve the pitch and will proceed to remove the base, re-lay the foundation and artificial turf. This work is expected to be completed by the end of June.

Review of May 12 Meeting Outcomes

Additional suggestions for new pitch locations to consider include:

- St Bede Catholic School and Littles Park
 - Challenge: St Bede Catholic School is next to Littles Park diamond field and when cricketers apply for permits, they have to get one permit for Littles Park and one for St Bede. Knowing where the borderline between the two facilities is a challenge
 - Staff will follow up.
- Summerlea Park:
 - New Pitch Suggestion: There is a soccer pitch in the back and there is a conservatory next to it, but on the opposite side of the road there is an area in which was previously considered for a new pitch location. It was always hung up because of lack of funding and authorization. But within that vicinity there is a big enough space to build a field (not the maximum size field).
 - Staff will follow up on this potential location
- Humburgrove Secondary School in Etobicoke (Across from Elmbank Middle School)
 - New Pitch Suggestion: There may be enough space for a cricket facility. Cricketers had been playing there for years. This could be a good area for youth cricket. There used to be another field at a school on Silverton as well.
 - The Cricket Strategy is looking for new pitches on parkland as the priority, but staff will follow up with the Toronto District School Board to see if they are looking to add cricket pitches to their properties.

Critical Amenities by Classification (Chart)

Suggested changes/additions include:

- Fields need to be leveled and smoothed for safety of the players.
- Annual rolling is not enough. Rolling should occur before the season, twice partway through the season, and at the end of the season.
- Include a "No Dogs" sign (pet waste concerns).
- Ensure permits are enforced so that fields are not ruined due to unpermitted playing in the shoulder seasons. Consider sending out bylaw officers to start handing out fines.

Exploring Ideas for Growing the Sport

Three ways of growing the sport were presented in the meeting: by building organizational capacity; by increasing access to community cricket facilities and; by increasing access to community cricket programs.

CRG members' suggestions and comments include:

- Partnerships:
 - The City should partner with Professional Sports Organizations (PSO) to capitalize on existing PSO development plans, community outreach programs, and relationships with existing organizations to grow and promote the sport.
 - The City of Toronto needs to partner with people who have cricket experience and are invested in the game. PSO is a great way to start because everyone is invested in the game and because they don't have a barrier for entry.
 - A CRG member offered to put together as PSO a plan with conjunction with what the City is working on.
 - Improve outreach to connect people between City programs and different leagues.
 - Currently the only way for parents to register their kids at young age to learn cricket is through an academy. They have proper structure and coaching but there is a disconnect between such programs and the City programs.
 - Because of the lack of facilities and programs, and little exposure for kids to participate in recreational cricket, parents who have financial resources end up sending their kids to an academy. Kids that have the passion for cricket, but whose parents don't have the financial resources to send them to an academy fall to the wayside, because there is no way for these kids to progress. The City of Toronto needs to mention their cricket programs more often and have a proper outreach plan.
- Staff and coaches:
 - Additional staff training on the technical aspects of cricket is needed.
 - The City has cricket programs in 4 of 5 districts that range from registered programs to drop-in programs, including one adult drop-in program. The City does connect with the coaching association of Ontario, but there is room for more education.
 - Further educating the staff on the game of cricket would be an asset so that they gain the knowledge needed to run the programs.
 - Staff Note: The main aim of the City of Toronto program is to introduce children to a specific sport, but not to train them for competitive games. Instead, they are to seek out clubs if they further want to improve their skills.
 - Coaches are available. Coordination is required to make sure that they are available in the winter.
 - Cricket Ontario certified 24 coaches recently, providing community coaches who can go to various community centers or sports camps and run these programs with the employees as well.
- Programming:
 - Programs need to continue year-round to keep children engaged in cricket and team building through the winter. It would be great to access an indoor facility; it doesn't have to be a huge facility and gymnasiums are fine for the non-technical training, skills development and fitness.
 - It is important to provide cricket programs with different levels of technical expertise and training.
 - The City of Toronto needs to consider how to administer these programs. Consider starting with the PSO.

- Raising Awareness:
 - A long-term goal of the cricket community is to get as many Canadian born kids that aren't aware of cricket playing and getting into cricket as part of a long-term athlete development program.
 - Consider cross promotion at different sport events
 - Consider educational programs as way of promoting the game/programs
 - Utilizing technology and presence on the web is really important:
 - Maximize the use of social media and different platforms.
 - Create a mailing list to promote events
 - Make cricket as a mainstream sport. This requires treating cricket as other sports when it comes to infrastructure planning, financial planning, and park creation. That is the part that is currently missing from cricket at the City of Toronto.

Next Steps

- Staff to research and pursue the ideas, opportunities and options we have discussed.
- Staff will circulate a meeting summary after June 9. Please review and provide any edits within a week.
- Tentative date for the next CRG meeting is Wednesday, September 1, 2021.
- Report on Sports Field Strategy to Committee will take place in the fall and at the next meeting the CRG will discuss an overview of the strategy.

Contact Us

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

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