

City of Toronto – Parks, Forestry & Recreation

Cricket Reference Group (CRG)

Meeting 7 Summary

August 11, 2022

Matt Bentley, Facilities Master Plan Project Manager
Susan Fall, Supervisor, System Planning



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Attendees

Community Reference Group Members

Canadian Police Cricket Club League - Melvin John
Community Sport Collective – Heather Mitchell
Ontario Twilight Softball Cricket League – Azeem Khan
Scarborough Cricket Association – Shiv Persaud

Members not in attendance:

Bangla Warriors Cricket Club – Abu Rubaid Alam
Brampton-Etobicoke and District Cricket League – Prait Persaud
CIMA – Ranil Mendis
Cricket Canada Masters Council – Akshay Pandya
Global T20 Canada - Wendy Kane
Greater Toronto Cricket Club – Qhinathullah Mohammed
Ontario Softball Cricket League – Ian Baldeo
Open Member (Scarborough League Player) - Kannan Rajagopal
Superstar Colts Coach – Abdool Mudassar Samad
Toronto & District Cricket Association – Mohammed Shaikh
Toronto Police Cricket Club – PC Amir Butt

City of Toronto Staff

Cathy Hargreaves – General Supervisor, Parks Scarborough
Kathleen Stevens – Landscape Technologist
Matt Bentley – Project Manager, Facilities Master Plan
Peter White – Manager, Parks Toronto East York
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 Cricket Reference Group (CRG) meeting held at L'Amoreaux Cricket Centre on Thursday August 11, 2022 from 3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

These meeting notes, 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

This was the first in-person meeting of the Cricket Reference Group.

The meeting was an opportunity to:

- Meet in person, as requested by CRG members
- Share summer 2022 updates
- Discuss field and amenity design, maintenance, and general suggestions for improving cricket facilities city-wide, using L'Amoreaux cricket field and practice pitches as examples

Presentation

Land Acknowledgement

To open the meeting, a land acknowledgement was provided:

The land I am standing on today is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. I also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit, and the Williams Treaties signed with multiple Mississaugas and Chippewa bands.

The land acknowledgement given was for Scarborough and is different from the rest of Toronto as it recognizes the Williams Treaties. Participants shared personal reflections on land stewardship and recognized the importance of the work being undertaken to strengthen and support Indigenous Nations in many countries, including Guyana.

Updates & Announcements

Staff provided the following updates:

Toronto Sport Hall of Honour

The Toronto Sport Hall of Honour celebrates the exceptional contributions and accomplishments of those who have inspired and/or brought recognition to Toronto through sport in the following categories:

- Athletes of the Year
- Builder
- City of Sport Lifetime Achievement
- Coach of the Year
- Community Sport Volunteer
- Corporate Builder

- Spirit of Sport Diversity and Inclusion
- Sport Legend
- Team of the Year

Nominations are open until October 31, 2022. See the [City website](#) for more information.

Budget

- Council has ended for the term and the election on October 24 will bring new council members.
- Staff are preparing the 2023 budget and advocating for funding for new fields and state of good repair.
- Staff will provide update on the budget at the October CRG meeting.

Field Updates

- Summerlea Park and Cedarvale Park pitches have been improved this summer
- Players remarked the Cedarvale Park pitch renovation was really well done (although the run-up area could have been longer)
- Player advised there were 10 groups wanting to permit the field when the permits opened
- Humber Arboretum and Flemingdon Park pitches will be improved by the end of the summer.
- G. Ross Lord Park practice cages have also been flagged for improvements.
- Staff continue to work on identifying new field opportunities
 - Centennial Park Master Plan identified a new field opportunity, once Hydro construction is completed
 - Re-establishing the lit pitch at McCleary Park and improving the existing practice pitches
- Staff continue to work on field conversion opportunities, for example, baseball diamond conversions into small community-sized softball cricket fields (permitted for non-hardball cricket play only).
 - Staff are establishing a design standard for conversions and associated cost estimates for budgeting.
 - At Farquarson Park, the unpermitted ball diamond is being used for cricket 5 nights a week. Players are working with Parks staff to consider this park as a good candidate for converting to a non-hardball cricket pitch
 - Littles Park – further investigation of baseball permitting is required before a conversion would be considered.
- Staff are investigating other location requests for new fields and field conversions in Scarborough.

Maintenance Updates

- Parks would like to move to a concrete pitch base as a standard in the future
 - CRG members agreed that it is a functional base that can withstand a lot of use.
- Staff have been working with the new roller this spring/summer and are learning best practices for its use.
- Recognize that sports field maintenance practices are not consistent in the spring and fall and are working with staff to improve.
- Key Parks Maintenance Staff visited some cricket fields and met with Parks staff in Brampton to see how their fields are maintained.
- Mowing heights are harder to achieve because new equipment (and funding) is required however Parks staff are mowing the cricket fields twice a week and are executing one cut close to the end of the week to support better Friday night/weekend play experience.
 - Players have noticed improvement in the field maintenance and mowing this summer at many of the fields.

Discussion

The following comments, suggestions, and questions are from CRG members, unless otherwise indicated to be from staff. Questions (Q), comments from CRG members (C), and responses from staff (R), are summarized below.

Field Demand

C. Players noted that demand is exceeding supply of permitted fields in 2022 and have already received more team requests for the 2023 season.

C. Games are occurring before permits are issued (9 a.m. weekends) so demand for play is much greater than the number of permits/permit hours are reflecting. Those without permits are often damaging the pitch and leaving that damage and garbage for permitted teams.

C. The City needs to plan for efficient resource allocation. For the best return on capital and invest in maintenance, it is important to focus on keeping grounds playable for specific forms of cricket (each has different needs and standards).

Access to Other Fields

C. Some teams book Toronto District School Board fields for softball play however they have significantly increased their field fees and are restricting access for non-profit play. For example one location was \$75 in previous years but is now \$495.

C. Fairtree Park cricket field in Markham is a good example of a great field.

Design and Maintenance - Pitches

C. Need to have the fields well maintained because they are supporting the development of provincial and national league players.

C. Parks staff must better understand the needs and expectations of players to ensure the fields are well maintained.

C. Maintenance needs to be done in a timely manner but also correctly done so the problems don't persist and no new issues are created.

C. Requires improved communication between Park staff and players. For example Ellesmere pitch repairs were done quickly to allow play to start in the spring 2022 but were not done correctly which created the need for additional repairs in the summer

C. Maintenance issues should be fixed quickly, to ensure the problem does not grow and become more costly/complex to fix. For example the pitch surface is worn at Ellesmere and players (without permits) have made their own holes in the artificial turf to relocate the wickets to create a better playing surface. While the turf was repaired, the holes were not addressed and surface is still compromised.

C. Repairs become critical if the artificial turf is worn through, the artificial turf is buckling and creases have formed on the pitch and when the run-up area is so worn/eroded that there is a tripping hazard between where the grass should be and the edge of the pitch.

Repair suggestions:

C. The artificial turf on the pitch needs to be peeled back and the surface rolled every two seasons

C. Prevent run up area erosion by filling missing soil and replacing the sod seasonally

C. The run up area erosion can be addressed by extending the length of the artificial turf run up as discussed in the new design standards. This new design standard will reduce the end of season sod repairs.

C. Establish concrete as the standard pitch base to reduce the need for maintenance. The Ashtonbee 1 & 2 pitches are holding up well, however the pitches at Terry Fox, L'Amoreaux and Wexford have asphalt/shale base and need maintenance.

C. Establish two, side by side turf pitches (short cut, rolled flat grass) in a field to support tennis ball/tape ball play. Two pitches would allow players to rotate pitches. Might be a good plan for Littles Park and Ashtonbee Reservoir for a fourth pitch between the soccer fields

Design & Maintenance - Practice Pitches

Staff noted that practice pitch design standard are being established and existing pitches will be improved to that standard in coming years.

Field Enforcement

C. Because the demand for play exceeds the number of fields there is need for greater field enforcement for a few reasons:

- Full teams, without uniforms so as to look like pop-up/ unscheduled/ organized players, are playing on the fields early in the morning before the permits are issued.
 - Those players often do not want to leave when the permit holder teams show up causing confrontation.
 - Appreciate that fields can be played on without a permit when not in use, however they are not documented users of the field and any damages they make are associated with the last permit holders.

- Suggestions:
 - Have staff on site at Ashtonbee or L'Amoreux like at G. Ross Lord or Sunnybrook.
 - Have permit-only play on some fields.
 - Consider increasing the classification of more fields to improve the quality of play given the demand and growth of cricket is at all levels of play.

C. There is a disconnect between 311, Park Supervisors and Enforcement. Teams have called 311 and have been advised that enforcement would be on site within 24-36 hours. The on-call supervisor is not available and there are only 8 enforcement staff across the city. They concentrate on those parks where there are the most complaints/issues. Can enforcement be proactive on those fields where there are repeat problems with teams playing without permits who refuse to leave for permitted team play?

C. Need improved messaging about permitted facilities. Even if signs are posted at the field, non-permitted players believe/say play is on a "first come first serve" basis.

C. Consider posting permits on-line to better communicate the field has been permitted or is available.

Q. Is there a way to keep non-permit players off the fields?

C. The Toronto Police Cricket Field has metal barriers on the pitch to prevent non-permitted play.

C. Parks staff have used snow fencing in the spring/fall to prevent play while the field are being maintained but it is often removed by those wanting to play

Permitting Schedule

C. Permits are issued from Mid-May to the end of September but extension should be considered as there is good weather before and after these permit dates.

R. Permits can be extended by request only, however field maintenance needs to occur in the fall when the weather is still nice. The weather in October can be unpredictable and turn from very warm and nice to almost freezing the next day. Parks needs time before it turns too cold to maintain fields and audit for spring repairs.

Next Steps

- CRG to send any additional questions to Susan.
- Next meeting will discuss how to best draft the Cricket Strategy to be reference document for players and staff as a source to understand the work and investment priorities of the Division.

Contact Us

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

Matt Bentley

Facilities Master Plan Project Manager

Telephone: 416-392-3949

Email: Matt.Bentley@toronto.ca

Susan Fall

Supervisor, System Planning

Telephone: 416-392-1341

Email: Susan.Fall@toronto.ca