



## Staff Report

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**Report To:**                    **General Government Committee**

**Date of Meeting:**    November 30, 2020

**Report Number:** CSD-013-20

**Submitted By:**        George Acorn, Director of Community Services

**Reviewed By:**        Andrew C. Allison, CAO

**By-law Number:**

**File Number:**

**Resolution#:**

**Report Subject:**    Outdoor Sports Field Management Policy Overview

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### Recommendations:

1. That Report CSD-013-20 be received for information.

## Report Overview

The Community Services Department is providing an information report to Council to advise of the development of an operational policy for the effective allocation and permitting of outdoor sport fields. Through a collaborative approach, Community Services along with Public Works will formalize operating procedures that will clearly identify roles and responsibilities of each department. This work will identify areas for improvement related to the administration and operations of Clarington's outdoor sport fields.

In August, as recommended in the Grant Thornton Organization Structure Review, the responsibility for the allocation and permitting of sport fields formally transferred to Community Services and specifically to the Client Services team, while the responsibility for field maintenance and upkeep remained with Public Works.

Staff have identified the main issues that need to be addressed through this process review and are committed to implementing changes in order to make the management of outdoor sports fields more customer focussed and address outstanding challenges that the groups within Clarington face with field space.

A Project Charter has been established (Attachment 1) for Council's information. Staff within the two departments will continue the work identified to achieve the milestones set out in the charter with the main goal of improving customer service and the delivery of outdoor fields to Clarington residents and organizations.

## 1. Background

### Transition of Outdoor Permits

- 1.1 Prior to August 2020 all outdoor sport field allocation and scheduling was the responsibility of the Operations Department. While under the leadership of the Operations Department, it was identified that several key issues needed to be addressed in order to make the ongoing allocation of sports fields, especially as it related to baseball, more efficient and sustainable. The current challenges related to allocation of sports fields will only compound with a growing population and the potential growth of these sports and the increased demand for fields.
- 1.2 At the time, the Manager of Operations and the Manager of Client Services met to lay out some of the efficiencies from a permitting, rates and fees and process perspective that could help to support the necessary changes that were required.

- 1.3 Through the recommendation in the Grant Thornton Report, it was recommended that the permitting process be transferred from the new Public Works Department to the Community Services Department. Specifically, this responsibility landed within the Client Services Division, Customer Services Business Unit. The transition of this responsibility was completed in August of 2020.

## **2. Proposal for Development of Outdoor and Sport Field Permit Management Policy**

### **Development of Project Charter**

- 2.1 Based on previous conversations between staff, it has been determined that there are several pieces to the management of all outdoor permits. In order to be successful, it will require members of the Public Works Department, specifically Parks Operations and Community Services, Client Services Unit to work cooperatively.
- 2.2 The first step to this collaboration was to identify the issues that needed to be identified. The result of this collaboration was the development of the Outdoor Sports Field Management Project Charter which includes other Outdoor Permits. The details are contained in Attachment 1.
- 2.3 The main objectives of this project are focussed on improving the customer experience and to ensure a fair and transparent field allocation process that will accommodate future participant growth as well as the introduction of additional sport fields across the Municipality. Staff will work to develop Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) for sports field maintenance standards which would include a categorization of fields to delineate level of play or appropriate use for sports fields and other outdoor permissible space. Lastly, we intend to improve the cancellation process and communication between the two departments and the sport organizations in the case of inclement weather and the need for the cancellation of permits.
- 2.4 Staff will work collaboratively over the next year, with specifically laid out milestones to develop a policy framework. This framework will rely on research and benchmarking, community engagement with groups and individuals that use the services, leveraging the Lean methodology to improve service delivery and service standards. At key periods, staff will bring separate reports back to Council for consideration which will support the development of the overall policy. The goal would be to bring the policy back to Council for consideration prior to the holiday break in 2021.

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### Scope of Project Highlights

- 2.5 Rates and Fees Structure: The goal in this area would be to simplify the rates and fee structure to work more efficiently within the Active Net System, used to complete the permitting process. The goal would be to move to a more consistent pricing model and structure to other Recreation, Sport and Leisure pricing structures. The goal would be to minimize the impact on the customers and evaluate the impact to user fees. As the approval of rates and fees is the responsibility of Council, any proposed changes to the rate structure and specific rates will be brought before Council for approval.
- 2.6 KPI's for Sports Field Maintenance: Review the current maintenance standards at all outdoor spaces. Propose a new maintenance standard that will take into consideration staffing, changes to the structure of permitting. The costs associated with this standardization will be considered and will be blended and inform future rates and fees.
- 2.7 Categorization of Existing Fields: This will ensure that the correct type of play (based on use and age group requirements, sport requirements) will be permitted on the correct types of fields. This will tie into the evaluation of requirements for potential future projects to add or eliminate additional sports fields.
- 2.8 Identification of Fields that do not Meet Standard of Play: This is key to be able to complete capital forecasting for potential upgrades required based on demand for use.
- 2.9 Development of Allocation Policy: Like other areas, this will help to establish a priority for staff when allocating and permitting space. This will allow organizations and staff to be clear on the distribution of playing time, location and order to which that will be completed.
- 2.10 Throughout the process, staff will plan engagement with our main user groups. This will ensure that users are part of the decision making process and will fully understand why changes are necessary. This program will also assist our outdoor sport organizations to better plan in terms of expansion, setting of user fees and other operating challenges.
- 2.11 As with any project, there are items that are not included in the scope and are left to specific staff responsible to complete outside of the project. This project will not include: Public Works Capital budget submissions for the cost of fields to bring up to standard of play, requirement of any staffing requirements to achieve the ideal maintenance standards, or a future plan to ensure inventory of sports fields meets the required demand.

### **3. Concurrence**

- 3.1 This report has been reviewed by the Director of Public Works who concurs with the recommendations.

### **4. Conclusion**

- 4.1 The staff of both Community Services and Public Works are confident this program will provide the outdoor sport field user community an improved level of service both on the field and in the administration of field allocation and permitting. Through their involvement in this process we expect these improvements will be well received by all.

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Staff Contact: Lee-Ann Reck, Manager Client Services, 905-623-3379 ext. 2508 or lreck@clarington.net.

Attachments:

Attachment 1 - Project Charter: Outdoor Sports Field Management Policy

Interested Parties:

There are no interested parties to be notified of Council's decision.