

Date: June 7, 2022	Originator's files:
To: Chair and Members of General Committee	
From: Jodi Robillos, Commissioner of Community Services	Meeting date: June 29, 2022

Subject

Sports Field Management Policy Revision

Recommendation

That the revised Sports Field Management Policy 08-03-07, attached as Appendix 1 to the Corporate Report dated June 7, 2022 entitled "Sports Field Management Policy Revision" from the Commissioner of Community Services be approved.

Executive Summary

- The Sports Field Management Policy, formerly the Outdoor Sports Field Management policy 08-03-07, addresses field allocation priorities, tournaments, seasons and field maintenance guidelines. The revised policy is reflective and responsive to changing needs and demand for space while ensuring equitable and fair access.
- In reviewing the policy, staff evaluated best practices from other municipalities and consulted sport field user groups for feedback on the current effectiveness of the policy to identify areas for improvement.
- Informed through the community group consultation, staff recommend the following updates to the policy:
 - Addition of indoor sport fields to the allocation process.
 - Revision of the allocation standards of play for the sport of cricket to balance the needs of the user groups requesting permits more equitably.
 - Updates to allocation priority listings to include Tourism Mississauga bookings and events requested by National or Provincial governing bodies.

Background

The City of Mississauga Recreation Division allocates approximately 400 outdoor sports fields and three indoor turf facilities to over 140 user groups annually. The Sports Field Management Policy is the tool that outlines the space allocation process for permitting fields to these user groups.

In 2013, the first Outdoor Sports Field Network was established with the aim of enhancing the customer's experience, promoting ongoing communication and providing a venue for stakeholder consultation. This Network meets bi-annually and includes representatives from both the Mississauga Sports Council as well as representatives from a variety of affiliated and non-affiliated sport groups (i.e. soccer, baseball, softball, cricket, football, rugby, track and field, lacrosse and field hockey). The Network continues to play a significant part in developing and implementing strong policies and were instrumental in developing the initial 2016 Outdoor Sport Field Management Policy.

Present Status

The Sports Field Management Policy has been an effective tool to help provide transparency and fairness in both the allocation and maintenance of the City's sport field assets. The Policy has been well regarded by user groups and a valuable resource for staff to guide the decision making process for sport fields.

While the policy has been effective in many ways, some existing gaps exist and have been addressed through the following policy revisions:

1. An allocation process and priority is included for indoor sport field assets.
2. An allocation formula specific to Cricket groups that is reflective of the fact that the majority of permitted play is currently adult-based.
3. An update to allocation priority lists to include Tourism Mississauga and requests from National and Provincial governing bodies.
4. Various minor administrative housekeeping amendments with minimal policy impact, but intended to provide better clarity.

Comments

The proposed policy updates aim to continue to ensure a fair, transparent and equitable allocation process of Mississauga outdoor sports field resources while maximizing facility utilization and maintaining high quality playing fields.

The initial policy was developed through extensive consultation with the Sports Field Network to establish priorities, criteria, guidelines and standards of play for the management and allocation of sports fields. Most recently, the proposed policy updates were again developed through consultation with the Network, and specifically with cricket user groups.

Cricket allocation is unique due to the majority of its usage by adult users, which does not have direct governing body oversight regarding participant totals. This update is the first step towards improvements to the policy that works for the sport and our local groups. There will be a continued dialogue with all cricket groups to ensure open communication and continued improvements of this formula.

In the proposed standards of play for cricket, priority continues to be given to youth allocation before engaging in the adult formula, which considers an organization's participant totals to inform field allocation. Based on feedback from the user groups and in an effort to minimize impacts to the users, additional language is included in the policy to indicate that no group shall gain or lose more than 10% of their allocated field time from the previous year due to this part of the allocation process.

Additionally, as part of the policy review, staff conducted benchmarking of other municipalities' allocation process, to assess industry best practices. In total, staff reviewed similar policies in nine nearby municipalities. In short, all municipalities have slightly different processes for how they formulate their sport field policies. Benchmarking focuses on how recently they have updated the policy, if it included indoor spaces, priority ranking format and formula used. Mississauga is positioned well within this benchmarking, with a comparatively detailed and actionable policy.

Strategic Plan

The Sports Field Management Policy is linked to the following City of Mississauga strategic pillars:

- Connect – completing Our Neighbourhoods
- Belong – Ensuring youth, older adults and new immigrants thrive

Engagement and Consultation

Staff conducted four stakeholder engagement sessions with sport user groups regarding the policy review.

These were divided into two meetings at the start of the review process, one with all cricket user groups and another open to all other sport user groups. Meetings were divided in order to consult individually with cricket users as their allocation formula would be the most impacted as a result of these changes. These meetings were used to hear directly from the sport groups if

the policy was meeting its mandate, any potential suggestions for updates and for staff to outline some areas the intended review would look to address.

Once the policy review had been conducted, staff met again with both groups to outline the proposed changes to the policy, how their feedback has been incorporated into the policy and to outline the future steps to implement the updated policy. All meetings were well received by the user groups.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact resulting from the recommendation in this report.

Conclusion

This Sports Field Management Policy, supported by stakeholders, ensures a fair, transparent and equitable allocation process of Mississauga sports field resources, while maximizing field usage and preservation. The policy has been an effective tool since its creation in 2016 and the updates to the policy to include both indoor sport fields, addressing the gap to the allocation policy and improved cricket formula will help improve the policy as we move forward.

Attachments

Appendix 1: Revised Sports Field Management Policy

Appendix 2: Comparison and Rationale



Jodi Robillos, Commissioner of Community Services

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