



Town of Whitby Staff Report

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**Report Title: Temporary Cricket Field at Brooklin Memorial Park
[Revised]**

Report to: Council

Date of meeting: March 7, 2022

Report Number: CMS 04-22

Department(s) Responsible:

Community Services Department
Operations Department

Submitted by:

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Community Services

**Acknowledged by M. Gaskell, Chief
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1. Recommendation:

1. That Council approve Brooklin Memorial Park as the location for the development of one temporary cricket field (Attachment 1);
2. That Council approve a new 2022 capital project in the amount of \$52,000 for the establishment and construction of one temporary cricket field at Brooklin Memorial Park. To be funded from the Growth Capital Reserve Fund;
3. That cricket be considered in the research and development of the 2022 Parks and Recreation Master Plan; and,
4. That staff be directed to develop a strategy for the creation of cricket facilities as guided by the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

2. Highlights:

- Cricket has been identified as a new and emerging sport in Whitby with increasing demand for cricket fields.
- In the fall of 2021 Council directed staff to explore opportunities to create a temporary cricket field within existing Town owned facilities.
- A review of field sizes and locations has identified that Brooklin Memorial Park is of a suitable size to develop a cricket field and these modifications could be undertaken without negatively impacting existing field users.
- Costs to undertake the necessary field modifications have been identified as \$52,000.

3. Background:

Cricket has been identified as an emerging sport in the Durham Region. Community Services staff has worked with Whitby Cricket to permit multiuse fields for temporary cricket pitches since the 2020 season, and have received requests from other cricket organizations for permitted space.

In the 2015 Sports Facility Strategy, the consultants recognized that a number of G.T.A. municipalities had or were in the process of positioning themselves to respond to field sport needs of diverse cultural communities. Cricket pitches are the most notable example with communities such as Mississauga, Ajax, and Brampton having already developed facilities for such purposes. Increasingly, a service level target of one cricket pitch per 100,000 population was becoming common in sports field planning at the time. The recommendation in the strategy was to construct one new multi-use field (artificial or natural turf surface to be determined), potentially in partnership with a local school board. Contingent upon achieving a successful operating profile for this field, a second multi-use field may be developed if warranted by future needs.

The first request for a space to play cricket came in January 2020. Due to Covid-19 restrictions the 2020 season was much shorter than expected running from September to October 2020 with practices only. Permits were issued for Country Lane ball diamond for cricket play.

Play expanded and for the 2021 season after Covid-19 restrictions lifted Whitby Cricket began their season at Baycliffe Park soccer field in July. The amount of time required grew significantly from 2020 to 2021 and the amount of permitted time for cricket play on weekends expanded to accommodate that growth. The increase in play resulted in a variety of complaints from the Baycliffe community. On August 28, 2021 Whitby Cricket was relocated to Gordon Street fields. This location allowed for increased play with room for three cricket pitches, as well as parking for participants and spectators. The Gordon Street Field was created in 2008 to accommodate a request for outdoor field space by the minor Lacrosse

Lady Blue Knights. The Lady Blue Knights use the field for 10 hours per week from May to end of July. Once the Lady Blue Knights season concluded their 2021 season the space was available for cricket to permit for the remainder of the season.

At the September 20, 2021 Committee of the Whole meeting, a motion regarding a temporary cricket field and future cricket amenities in the Town was introduced. Subsequently, at the regular Council Meeting held on October 4, 2021, Ryan Turnbull, MP, Whitby appeared before Council and stated that he met with members of the community during the Federal election campaign who were playing cricket at Baycliffe Park. MP Turnbull indicated his support for the recommendation and noted the importance of permanent cricket pitches in the future. MP Turnbull stated that the Town is known as an inclusive community and that opportunities for sport should reflect that inclusivity. He advised that there are over 250 players in the Whitby Cricket Club and suggested forming a reference group from their membership to give advice to the Town on the development of cricket pitches and growing the sport in the community.

During the Regular Council Meeting October 4, 2021, in support of the delegation, Council passed Resolution # 246-21:

“Whereas the Town of Whitby is in a period of significant growth; and,

Whereas that growth is changing the community interest and desire for new recreational amenities and opportunities; and,

Whereas a number of community members continue to express interest in the opportunity to play cricket; and

Whereas the Town of Whitby does not currently have cricket facilities;

Now Therefore be it Resolved:

1. That Staff explore opportunities to create a temporary cricket field within existing Town owned facilities, and update Council by year end on next steps; and,
2. That the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, to begin in late 2021 and be completed in 2022, be informed in part by the use of the temporary cricket field in order to determine future needs for cricket fields in the Town; and,
3. That, in conjunction with the development of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, Staff be directed to explore opportunities to add cricket amenities at the Whitby Sports Complex.”

4. Discussion:

Staff reviewed options for the temporary location for cricket for the 2022 season and beyond. Gordon Street fields, Consumers fields, and Jeffery Park were explored as options for the future temporary site for Cricket. Gordon Street Fields has been permitted to Lady Blue Knights Lacrosse since 2008. Staff met with Lady Blue Knights Lacrosse to explore an alternate location for Lacrosse but the organization had many concerns about moving to a new location. As a result of the concerns raised by the Lady Blue Knights, Gordon Street Field was eliminated as an option.

Staff met with representatives of Whitby Cricket to review the remaining options. Consumers Fields and Jeffery Park were also proposed as options but ruled out by the Cricket organizations due to size concerns. As a result of the size of the space required and in consultation with Parks Operations, Parks Planning, and the Recreation Client Services, Brooklin Memorial Park was identified as the preferred site for a temporary Cricket field in Whitby (Attachment 1).

Representatives from Whitby Cricket, have participated in staff research and planning sessions to consult on needs for the space from the perspective of the local cricket community. Parks planning staff have researched and connected with surrounding municipalities on best practices for the formation and maintenance of cricket pitches.

Staff have also consulted with the President of the Brooklin Spring Fair, Brooklin Agricultural Society to discuss possible field amendments and to mitigate any issues with the shared use of space understanding the historical significance of the location to the Brooklin Agricultural Society.

While Brooklin Memorial Park offers a good temporary home for cricket, it is important to note that this site as a multi-purpose property will never become a premiere level sports field. There is a master plan exercise for the future development of Brooklin Memorial Park and Luther Vipond Memorial Arena which is recognized as an important Town Park.

While staff have received inquiries from multiple parties interested in space for cricket, only one group, Whitby Cricket, followed through to the issuance of a permit. It is anticipated that the Town may receive requests from other Cricket organizations once cricket fields are developed. Staff are in the process of developing a Field Allocation Policy that would include cricket fields and identify how organizations/requests will be prioritized. In the absence of a policy, requests would consider the availability of requested time, and would give priority to existing field type users.

Historically the Brooklin Memorial Park field has not been operated or maintained as a sports field and therefore significant work is required to prepare the area for play. These improvements include work on the playing surface and turf grass to lessen the rough and uneven characteristics of this property. Additional improvements to the field would include the installation of one artificial cricket pitch

matt and a precast concrete storage unit for maintenance equipment and matt storage during the winter.

This renovation work involves heavy mechanical rolling, that would be completed in the spring of 2022. Parks Operations would also employ aeration, over-seeding, fertilization and cutting programs to improve the turf quality.

It is expected that there will be annual incremental cost for Parks Operations of \$10,000.00, to provide increased maintenance and waste receptacles excluding staffing.

It is anticipated that the above work will be completed and the field would be available for cricket to commence play between June 20 and July 4, 2022 dependent on weather and field conditions. Staff are currently reviewing options that would allow Whitby Cricket to begin their season in May until the Brooklin Memorial field is available at another park location.

5. Financial Considerations:

The total capital cost to establish the proposed temporary cricket field at Brooklin Memorial Park through the refurbishment and modification of the existing fields is estimated at \$52,000 and is detailed in Table 1 below.

Table 1:

Brooklin Memorial Park Cricket Field	
<u>Capital Costs</u> (Inclusive of applicable taxes)	
<u>Item</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Earthworks, Excavations and Field Rolling	\$14,000
Precast Concrete Storage Unit	\$12,000
Cricket Pitch Construction	\$17,000
Mobilization and Construction Testing	\$4,000
Sub-total	\$47,000
Contingency	\$5,000
Total Capital Cost (Budget Request)	\$52,000

It is recommended that a new capital project for the construction of the cricket field be established in 2022 for \$52,000 funded from the Growth Capital Reserve Fund.

Park Operations anticipates that there will be an incremental annual operating cost of \$10,000 to provide increased maintenance to the park/cricket pitches and waste receptacles. This cost will be partially offset by projected incremental revenue of \$6,700 related to the permitting. The balance of 2022 costs will be offset by other 2022 budget savings. Staff will review the actual costs and revenues after the 2022 season to determine budget pressures, if any, for the 2023 budget related to the provision of cricket pitches at Brooklin Memorial Park.

6. Communication and Public Engagement:

Community Services staff have engaged Whitby Cricket in discussions regarding the suitability of the Brooklin Memorial Park location as well as field design to ensure proposed field will meet the needs of the organization and cricket players in general. Staff have also met with the President of Brooklin Spring Fair to discuss possible field amendments and to mitigate any issues relating to shared use of the park.

7. Input from Departments/Sources:

Parks Operations recognize the importance of working together to find a suitable temporary home for cricket in Whitby until a permanent location can be secured and developed.

In anticipation of the Brooklin Memorial site becoming the new temporary home for cricket, Parks Operations completed an initial round of turf aeration in November 2021. In 2022 and moving forward, additional incremental maintenance to this field will include: twice yearly aeration and fertilization; increased frequency of mowing from once every 16 days to once weekly (minimum); annual top-dressing and/or over seeding and/or sod repairs; field and turf repair each June following the Brooklin Spring Fair; increased placement of garbage receptacles and increased frequency of litter and debris collection.

Please note that due to the shared usage of this field with the Brooklin Spring Fair, additional resources will be required annually, over and above those normally required for a typical sports field, to maintain the field in a playable condition. It is anticipated that the field damage created annually by the heavy equipment at the Brooklin Spring Fair, will require that the cricket grounds are closed for up to two weeks after the fair to insure safe and suitable playing conditions.

8. Strategic Priorities:

This report aligns with Council's Goals 2018-2022 specifically:

- To ensure Whitby is clearly seen by all stakeholders to be business and investment friendly and supportive; and to continuously improve the

customer experience and the effectiveness and efficiency of communications, service delivery and approvals.

- To become the destination of choice for visitors; to realize the economic, cultural and social potential of our downtowns, waterfront, green spaces and major attractions; to support and facilitate new community events and increase recreational opportunities along our waterfront.

This report also aligns with the following strategic goals and priorities in the Town of Whitby Corporate Strategic Plan:

1. Customer: We will provide a consistent, optimized and positive customer service experience.

9. Attachments:

[Attachment 1 – Brooklin Memorial Cricket Field](#)

