

Advisory Committee of Council Staff Report



To Accessibility Advisory Committee
Date Tuesday, February 20, 2024
Subject **Outdoor Sport Field and Surface Strategy**

Recommendation

1. That staff continue to engage the AAC throughout the Outdoor Sport Field and Surface Strategy at key milestones.
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Executive Summary

Purpose of Report

To notify the Accessibility Advisory Committee that City staff are developing an Outdoor Sports Field and Surface Strategy. We are seeking initial feedback on user experiences, specific accessibility needs or concerns, and emerging trends we should consider as part of the strategy.

Key Findings

We are developing an Outdoor Sport Field and Surface Strategy to:

- Dig deeper into understanding how we currently provide services for outdoor sports;
- Establish service level targets for outdoor sports fields and surfaces;
- Plan for the quality, quantity and type of infrastructure we will need in the future;
- Understand emerging trends and leading practices;
- Equitably provide services and facilities to all residents; and
- Guide management and maintenance of our sports fields and surfaces.

The strategy will build on the groundwork and direction set out in the City's [Park Plan](#) and [Parks and Recreation Master Plan](#).

The strategy is planned to start 2024 and continue through to early 2026. There will be opportunities for engagement throughout the project at key milestones. We will notify the AAC of the strategy's progress and engagement opportunities.

Strategic Plan Alignment

The Outdoor Sport Field and Surface Strategy is supported by the 'City Building' pillar of Guelph's Strategic Plan. Creating an Outdoor Sport Field and Court Strategy is a supporting key action of the 'Grow and care for our community spaces and places' objective and the 'Attract more people to our parks and programs by making them easier to access and enjoy' initiative.

Financial Implications

Financial implications will be presented as part of the final strategy. Approval of specific annual capital investment and associated operating impacts will be considered in future budget requests.

Report

Project Objectives

The [Park Plan](#) and [Parks and Recreation Master Plan](#) identified that we need to look more closely at how we plan, operate, manage, and maintain sports fields and surfaces in Guelph. An Outdoor Sport Field and Surface Strategy has been recommended to optimize sport field service levels.

More people will be using Guelph parks and sports fields as the population grows. Sports fields and surfaces are among the most intensely used park amenities and require a lot of resources such as land, staff, and capital/operating funds. The City will need to use limited resources more efficiently to keep up with user demands.

The strategy will review courts and fields—including rectangular fields, diamonds, basketball courts, tennis courts, pickleball courts, volleyball courts. It focuses on both booked and non-booked field and courts and City-owned or managed (under maintenance agreement) surfaces.

Our Outdoor Sport Field and Surface Strategy will build on the findings of the City's [Park Plan](#) and [Parks and Recreation Master Plan](#) and will:

- Dig deeper into understanding how we currently provide services for outdoor sports
- Establish service level targets for outdoor sports fields and surfaces
- Plan for the quality, quantity and type of infrastructure we will need in the future
- Understand emerging trends and leading practices
- Equitably provide services and facilities to all residents
- Guide management and maintenance of our sports fields and surfaces

The Outdoor Sports Field and Surface Strategy is a comprehensive 15+ year strategy that will guide the development, management, and maintenance decisions of Guelph's sports fields and surfaces.

Project timeline

The strategy is planned to start early 2024 and continue through to early 2026. The first phase of the project is to explore our current state, community desires and needs. Our second phase will be to draft strategies and recommendations for internal and external review. Finally, we will present a draft of the strategy to Council in early 2026.

There will be opportunities for engagement throughout the project at key milestones. Residents' unique perspectives are important for building a strategy that meets the needs of our whole community.

Next steps

Community-wide public engagement is planned for Q2 2024. We will notify the AAC through email of any public engagement opportunities they may wish to participate in as an individual. We will continue to engage the AAC at key milestones.

Financial Implications

Financial implications will be presented as part of the final strategy.

Approval of specific annual capital investment and associated operating impacts will be considered in future budget requests.

Consultations

The Sport Field and Surface Strategy will be developed in collaboration with many internal and external stakeholders.

We are currently in the project initiation phase of the project—which includes generating awareness of the project objectives, timeline, and options to participate in engagement activities throughout the project.

Any feedback from the Accessibility Advisory Committee will help inform the future Outdoor Sport Field and Surface Strategy.

Attachments

Attachment-1 Outdoor Sport Field and Surface Strategy AAC Presentation

Departmental Approval

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Report Author

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