



REPORT

TO: Mayor Lawlor and Members of Council

FROM: Heather Kaufmann, Community Development Supervisor –
Community Partnerships and Sport Development

DATE: January 13, 2025

REPORT NO.: CSE-2025-007

SUBJECT: Proposal for Construction of a Cricket Pitch at Trafalgar Sports
Park

RECOMMENDATION:

That Report No. CSE-2025-007, dated January 13, 2025, regarding the Proposal for Construction of a Cricket Pitch at Trafalgar Sports Park be received;

AND FURTHER THAT Council endorse the proposal for a cricket pitch in Halton Hills to support the growing demand for cricket in the community, including providing equitable access to the new cricket pitch, which aligns with the Town's strategic priority of creating a safe and welcoming community, as outlined in Report No. CSE-2025-007;

AND FURTHER THAT Council approve the allocation and multipurpose use of the site at Trafalgar Sports Park, specifically the use of fields 8 and 9, to construct a 22-yard synthetic turf cricket pitch, as outlined Report No. CSE-2025-007;

AND FURTHER THAT Council approve and authorize the Mayor and Clerk to sign the Memorandum of Understanding between the Town of Halton Hills and the HHCC, as outlined in Report No. CSE-2025-007.

KEY POINTS:

The following are key points for consideration with respect to this report:

- Cricket is gaining significant popularity in Canada, with increasing participation and media coverage. Halton Hills is seeing rising interest in the sport, evidenced by the establishment of the Halton Hills Cricket Club (HHCC) and the growth of local involvement.

- The current ball diamonds in Halton Hills are unsuitable for cricket due to poor bounce and uneven surfaces. A proper cricket ground is necessary for legitimate gameplay, and neighboring municipalities already have cricket facilities to accommodate the sport's growing demand.
- The HHCC plans to expand by adding more teams, developing a youth program, and organizing community events. A proper cricket ground would enable the club to host larger tournaments, attract new participants, and foster a thriving cricket community.
- The proposal includes building a 22-yard synthetic turf cricket pitch at Trafalgar Sports Park, in between the multipurpose fields 8 and 9, and the fields form the rest of the cricket ground. The \$9,500 project will be funded by the HHCC (capital and operating), ensuring reduced maintenance and a high-quality playing surface.
- Town staff seek Council's approval to formalize an agreement with the HHCC, which would include responsibilities for construction, maintenance, and scheduling of the new cricket pitch. This partnership aims to support the growth of cricket in Halton Hills and helps to create a welcoming community, as outlined in Council's Strategic Plan.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION:

1.0 Cricket in Canada

Cricket in Canada has experienced steady growth, emerging as a popular sport with a diverse and enthusiastic following. Efforts by local clubs and Cricket Canada have been instrumental in promoting the game. The launch of the Global T20 Canada league in 2018 significantly raised cricket's profile. Brampton, aspiring to become the "Cricket Capital of North America," hosted the 2023 GT20 Tournament, further cementing the sport's place in Canada's evolving sports landscape.

In Halton Hills, addressing the rising interest in cricket requires strategic planning that caters to multiple sports groups. Cricket's appeal lies in its multicultural player base, fostering cultural exchange and mutual understanding. Increased media coverage and online streaming have broadened cricket's reach, transcending geographical and cultural boundaries. Milton, Mississauga, Guelph, Oakville and Brampton have successfully developed cricket grounds, leading to increased participation and community engagement. For example, Brampton's is striving to be the cricket capital of North America - hosting international tournaments, developing multiple cricket grounds and contributing to a rise in youth participation and regional tournaments, benefiting both the local economy and community cohesion. The growth in these areas showcases the positive impact that cricket infrastructure can have on a community.

2.0 How Cricket is Played

Cricket is a bat-and-ball game played between two teams of 11 players each. Matches are held on a ground with a rectangular 22-yard pitch in the center. The game involves batting, bowling, and fielding. One team bats to score runs by hitting the ball bowled by the opposing team while the other team fields to prevent scoring and dismiss the batsmen.

Below is a picture of the setup of a cricket ground:



A cricket pitch is a 22-yard-long (20.12 meters) and 10-foot-wide (3.05 meters) strip centred within the ground. The pitch is crucial to the game, as it is where the bowler delivers the ball, and the batsman attempts to score. A well-maintained pitch ensures consistent bounce and speed of the ball, making it essential for fair play. The bright green artificial turf rectangle in the picture above is the cricket pitch. The surrounding level grass area out to the boundary line, makes up the entire cricket ground. A cricket ground is significant in size (106m+ diameter) and is larger than a full-size soccer field.

3.0 About the Halton Hills Cricket Club (HHCC)

Established in 2021, the Halton Hills Cricket Club is the only registered not-for-profit cricket club in Halton Hills. With over 50 active participants, the club has grown rapidly, fielding multiple teams in leagues across the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). HHCC is dedicated to promoting cricket, fostering sportsmanship, and building an inclusive community through the sport. The HHCC, with 94% residency based on the Town's

Registered Group Program analysis, was incorporated as a not-for-profit organization in 2024, highlighting its growing importance in the local community.

In addition to the HHCC, Georgetown District High School has an official cricket team, and several community teams play informally on local ball diamonds.

In September 2024, HHCC hosted its first tournament, a successful event featuring six teams and a large spectator turnout.

4.0 Addressing the Need for a Cricket Pitch

Cricket has been gaining momentum in Halton Hills, reflecting the broader regional trend. The club plays games out of Town and continues to face significant challenges when utilizing ball diamonds for their games. Ball diamonds were used as there was no proper facility and it has been brought to the Town's attention that these facilities are inadequate, and unsuitable for proper cricket gameplay due to the lack of proper bounce, uneven surfaces, and orientation issues. Cricket demands a specialized pitch that provides the proper consistent bounce and playing conditions, which ball diamonds cannot provide.

While the Recreation and Parks Strategic Action Plan did not explicitly address the need for cricket facilities, the Town's Outdoor Sports Strategy (pending consideration by Council in the near future), acknowledges the demand for such facilities. The strategy will highlight the need to develop cricket infrastructure. The HHCC project is community-driven and can proceed without any additional Town funding, while strengthening community engagement, contributing to a welcoming community, encouraging inclusivity, and proactively responding to changing community recreation needs.

Fields 8 and 9 at Trafalgar Sports Park were designed and built with cricket in mind, offering a unique opportunity to expand the recreation offerings efficiently. This aligns with trends observed in neighbouring municipalities like Milton, Mississauga, Guelph, Oakville, and Brampton, all of which have developed cricket grounds to respond to the sport's increasing popularity. Brampton's establishment of multiple cricket grounds has led to significant benefits in terms of youth participation, community engagement, and economic impact from hosting regional tournaments. These trends underscore the importance of providing similar infrastructure in Halton Hills to ensure that the growing cricket community here has the resources it needs.

In response to this growing interest, the HHCC has plans to expand, including increasing the number of teams, launching a youth development program, and organizing more community events. A proper cricket ground and pitch would not only enhance the club's ability to host larger tournaments but would also make it easier to attract new participants. By providing the proper infrastructure, the Town would support the continued growth of cricket, offering local residents a chance to engage in a sport that is becoming increasingly significant in the broader Greater Toronto Area. The

establishment of this facility would position Halton Hills as a player in regional cricket development, expanding recreational opportunities and increasing community participation.

5.0 Proposed Cricket Pitch at Trafalgar Sports Park

HHCC has provided a proposal to Town staff (Appendix A) for the construction of a pitch and establishment of cricket ground. Through consultations with the Town and other interested residents, HHCC proposes that the cricket ground be established at Trafalgar Sports Park, utilizing multipurpose fields 8 and 9 and constructing the pitch in between those fields. TSP fields 8 and 9 were originally designed to be multipurpose, including allowing for Cricket, and while initially they were used for soccer, additional uses such as lacrosse and flag football have also been accommodated. These fields include a flat section suitable for the pitch, currently used for bleachers. The bleachers can be relocated, and a 22-yard by 10-foot synthetic turf pitch constructed, oriented to minimize sun glare during matches, and to not interfere with the soccer fields. Synthetic turf over a compacted gravel base pad will ensure durability and reduced maintenance while providing an even playing surface. The anticipated lifespan is approximately 5-7 years, subject to the level of use. The HHCC will be responsible for the replacement of the synthetic turf during its lifespan, and the maintenance of the gravel base is part of the regular park operations maintenance of these spaces.

Below is a picture of the proposed layout of the cricket ground on Sports Fields 8 and 9 at Trafalgar Sports Park.



The project, costing \$9,500, will be fully funded by HHCC. Contractors will comply with Town requirements, including insurance and WSIB coverage. Construction would take place between mid-to-late March and be completed by the end of April of this year. Construction is weather dependent.

Town staff have consulted with other sports organizations using fields 8 and 9 to address shared use and coordinate scheduling. The Georgetown Soccer Club raised concerns regarding the proposed cricket field at Trafalgar Sports Park, focusing on two key issues: spectator placement and field wear and tear. Soccer rules require spectators to be positioned on the opposite touchline from team benches. The proposed cricket field layout initially necessitated removing the bleachers between fields 8 and 9, which conflicted with these regulations. Additionally, fields 8 and 9 are among the few lit fields available for evening soccer use, with field 8 requiring careful management due to increased traffic from other sports, such as lacrosse and flag football tournaments. The club expressed concerns that additional use for cricket would further degrade the fields, limiting their availability and quality for soccer. These concerns will be addressed by relocating the bleachers and implementing rollaway player benches that can be moved during cricket matches. To mitigate wear and tear, the Town resolved to redirect a large portion of other tournament requests to other fields at Trafalgar Sports Park, enabling cricket and soccer to coexist effectively on fields 8 and 9. Cricket use is not expected to impact wear and tear on the fields due to the types of activities during game play.

The proposed cricket pitch construction project will have no budget impact on the Town, as the Halton Hills Cricket Club (HHCC) will fully fund and coordinate the construction of the pitch, with oversight from Town staff to ensure compliance with quality standards. Additionally, the fields where the pitch will be constructed are already maintained by Parks Operations, meaning no additional maintenance will be required. HHCC will be responsible for any required maintenance of the pitch itself. Town staff involvement is limited to providing guidance on the project and reviewing the group's proposed design. This ensures the project adheres to the Town standards without significant resources demands. This partnership allows the Town to support the growing demand for cricket in the community without any additional financial impact.

6.0 Town-HHCC Memorandum of Understanding

Town staff are seeking Council's approval to authorize for the Town to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with HHCC (Appendix B) to support the construction, use, and maintenance of a cricket pitch at Trafalgar Sports Park. This MOU outlines the responsibilities of both parties, with HHCC funding the \$9,500 project, overseeing construction to meet Town and International Cricket Council (ICC) standards, and maintaining the pitch to ensure its functionality. The Town will allocate the site, coordinate use permits, and facilitate equitable access in alignment with the Space Allocation Policy for the HHCC and other sports field user groups. While the HHCC has secured partial funding and has plans to fundraise additional funds, Council's approval is essential to support the group's fundraising efforts and assure the project's success. By formalizing this partnership, the Town aims to address the

growing interest in cricket within the community, expand recreational opportunities, and promote inclusivity and community wellness. Council approval will enable staff to finalize the MOU and move forward with this community-enhancing project.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This report identifies a safe and welcoming community as one of the Town's Strategic priorities.

Adding this recreation facility will contribute to creating a safe and welcoming community by providing inclusive, accessible spaces for residents to engage in physical activity, promote social connections, and celebrate cultural diversity through the sport of cricket.

RELATIONSHIP TO CLIMATE CHANGE:

This report is administrative in nature and does not directly impact or address climate change and the Town's Net Zero target.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

Public Engagement has been conducted through communication with community sports organizations who also use Trafalgar Sports Park sports fields 8 and 9. Concerns that were raised by the Georgetown Soccer Club can be addressed as outlined in the report.

INTERNAL CONSULTATION:

Staff within the Parks, Community Development and Environment division and Public Works (Parks Operations) were consulted during the preparation of this report, and the development of the agreement to ensure alignment with operational requirements and standards for the proposed cricket pitch project.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

This report is administrative in nature and does not have any financial implications.

Although the cricket pitch will cost \$9,500 to construct, the construction cost will be directly paid by the HHCC, as well as any ongoing operating costs.

Reviewed and approved by,

Kevin Okimi, Director of Parks, Community Development & Environment
Damian Szybalski, Commissioner of Community Services
Chris Mills, Chief Administrative Officer