APPENDIX A To Report PW17004 Page 1 of 18

Appendix A Review of the Proposed Sports Dome Over Tim Hortons Field



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Table of Contents

Introduction
The Proposal1
This Review Study1
Research and Consultation
The Proponent
Hamilton District Soccer Association 4
Indoor Turf Field Operators
Potential User Group Input7
Professional Soccer in Hamilton8
Consultation Summary9
Technical Considerations
Context
Capital Cost of the Project
Life of the Turf Field
Operating Costs
Field Warranty12
Options of the Dome

Introduction

The Proposal

In February 2016, Mr. John McGrane, in association with the Hamilton Tiger Cats, presented an unsolicited submission to the City of Hamilton that proposes the addition of an air supported sport dome covering the playing surface of Tim Hortons Field from November to April each season. In his presentation to Hamilton City Council, Mr. McGrane indicated the following.

- The dome will allow Tim Hortons Field to be used year round.
- The City would receive 500 hours on four fields representing 2,000 hours of field time that the City could allocate to community groups for recreational use.
- The proponent would pay for all capital costs associated with the project and that no funding requests would be made to the City.
- The proponent would pay the City \$100,000 rent annually for the wintertime use of the field.
- The proponent would be entirely responsible for the operations of the dome facility.
- The proponent would pay all operating costs related to operating the dome.
- The proponent would pay all incremental costs related to operating the Stadium facilities during the wintertime.

The proposal suggests that the sport dome would be large enough to allow the turf field playing surface to be separated into as many as five independent 85' by 185' playing surfaces rented during primetime hours at market rates. The proposal anticipates that while soccer groups would be the predominant field renters, other sports groups from the greater Hamilton area would also have access to indoor field time. The proposal also suggests that the dome project would facilitate the development of an academy system through which promising soccer athletes would be trained and groomed to eventually play on the proposed professional soccer team in Hamilton.

The General Issues Committee at its meeting of February 3, 2016 referred the presentation to staff for review and directed staff to report back to the General Issues Committee regarding the feasibility and options for a dome at Tim Hortons Field.

This Review Study

The JF Group was engaged to undertake a two phased study to assist staff with the review of the proposal. The first phase involved research and consultation about the capital cost of the project, potential users and use profiles of a new indoor turf facility in Hamilton, potential impacts of the proposed new facility on existing indoor field turf operations in the greater Hamilton area, as well as any other implications of which the City should be aware. The consultants first met with the Hamilton Tiger Cats and John McGane to develop a clear understanding of the proposition and to learn about the more granular aspects of the project

which would inform the analysis tasks of Phase Two. The consultant also met with the President of the Hamilton District Soccer Association to receive input about potential pent-up demand for indoor turf time in the Hamilton region. This was followed by a meeting with the operators of existing indoor turf facilities to receive their opinions of the project. Finally, a survey was circulated to potential indoor field users soliciting input about their current and future indoor field time needs.

During Phase Two, the feasibility of the proposed project is being examined through an analysis of the facts assembled during Phase One, confirmation of the capital cost of the facility and consultation with the proponent about alternative facility delivery approaches that might be considered.

This report summarizes the outcome of the study's research activities to provide staff with information necessary to update the General Issues Committee in accordance with its direction. Further project details will be presented to the Committee as they are finalized.

Research and Consultation

The Proponent

The consultant met and communicated with representatives of the Hamilton Tiger Cats and the proposed facility operator to clarify the contents of the proposed project and to determine the primary purpose of the new indoor facility. This input confirmed the following.

- The proponents believe that there is pent-up demand for an indoor field turf facility that would cater to the needs of children and youth residing in Hamilton. While the new facility would be available to a wide variety of users – including competitive soccer players – the primary purpose of the facility would be to provide wintertime recreational opportunities for children in Hamilton. As such, the proponents view the project as public and private partners coming together to create a community serving facility at no cost to the taxpayer.
- The proponent suggests that the location of the potential new facility is also a key element of the proposal. The site is located in an area where recreational opportunities are limited. The site is accessible by public transit and is adjacent to a public and secondary school, creating the opportunity to provide daytime student use during the winter season.
- Up to five 185' by 85' fields would be accommodated within the dome structure. One field would be reserved for the proponent's exclusive use while the remaining fields would be rented to user groups. While it is likely that soccer organizations would be the predominant renter of time, the proponent's intention is to cater to the needs of all sport groups needing indoor field time. Consequently, lacrosse, golf, ultimate Frisbee, rugby, football, baseball, etc. are all considered as potential renters.
- The proponents have offered to provide free daytime field use that the City could allocate to various users. In particular, the proponents believe that this time could be used by the school boards to expand their athletic program or to introduce new opportunities to promote increased levels of physical activity possibly through the physical education curriculum.
- Should a professional soccer team materialize in Hamilton, a soccer academy would be required to train and groom aspiring soccer professionals essentially providing a pathway for players to pursue elite level aspirations. The bubble would be the host venue for this academy. The academy would likely have three levels of players: (1) individuals acquiring fundamental soccer skills; (2) intermediate players likely in the 12 to 14 your age group that are progressing from level one; and (3) honing the elite skills of exceptional players. Players at the first two levels would access the academy on a fee for service basis while the third level would receive free coaching.

- The Hamilton Tiger Cat organization would own the project and Mr. John MGrane would operate the facility on the Ti Cats behalf. The facility would operate for approximately 20 weeks per winter season. Prime time in the facility would be 5:00 pm to 10:00 pm Monday through Friday and 8:00 am to 8:00 pm on weekends. Although most operating details would be finalized after the project receive approval, it is anticipated that field rental rates would conform to the price structures of existing indoor turf facilities.
- The proponents are clear that the project should not be a cost burden to the municipality. Consequently, the proponent's capital budget assumes it will pay for the dome structure, the anchoring system (called a grade beam), all necessary mechanical and HVAC equipment as well as all construction costs and site work. The proponent is also committed to pay 100% of all operating costs associated with the dome itself as well as any incremental cost increases of the stadium building necessitated by the addition of a new winter operation.

Hamilton District Soccer Association

The President of the Hamilton District Soccer Association (HDSA) provided information that is germane to the study.

- The Association is the governing body of soccer in the region and represents the interests of 26,000 registered participants 90% of which are under 18 years of age. It is estimated that about 4,000 other individuals are playing soccer in the region but are not affiliated with the Association. There are 35 member clubs that oversee multiple teams within each club. It is anticipated that 16 of 35 clubs play indoors.
- Soccer participation in Hamilton has plateaued. The number of soccer players
 registered with the Association has been flat for the past couple of years and there has
 been a drop off in youth registrations. On the other hand, there has been an increase in
 the number of academies in the area which could explain the reduction in the number
 of registrants with the Association. Unfortunately, academies are not registered with
 the Association and therefore tracking the numbers of new entities is difficult.
- The President believes that soccer participation at all levels would rise in the Hamilton region if a professional soccer team were to come to the City. Consequently, existing demand for both indoor and outdoor facility time would increase following the team's development in Hamilton.
- The President indicates that clubs frequently complain about an insufficient amount of locally accessible indoor field time. He suggests that this shortage is linked to certain clubs dominating available times at existing indoor facilities as well as clubs requiring contiguous field times in order to deliver their comprehensive program. Consequently

he is aware of several clubs that are traveling to other jurisdictions to access accessible time or simply not playing indoor soccer.

- The Association supports the development of the Tim Hortons Field project because it increases the amount of indoor field time that is available to local soccer groups while advancing recreational opportunities for children living in the inner City close to the stadium. The President foresees the project as a catalyst that could create an environment fertile for free sports education and development programs in a number of sports targeting youth. There may also be the possibility of a legacy program in keeping with the City's Pan Am obligations.
- The Association recognizes that operators of existing indoor turf facilities may not support this project based on their concerns of increased competition. However, the President is confident that there is sufficient unmet indoor field turf demand from soccer clubs and other sports organizations. He cites t-ball, softball, football, lacrosse and other field sports as potential users of the new facility.

Indoor Turf Field Operators

The consultant met with representatives of the five existing indoor turf facilities operating in the Hamilton area - a list of the facilities is presented in Appendix A. In addition to information shared at the meeting, operators responded to a questionnaire to provide operating details, pricing and field use rate data for their respective facilities. In doing so, operators gathered pertinent historical information from various sources to help inform the discussion about potential unmet demand and the implications of the introduction of a new indoor field facility in the City. In combination, the operators' input provides useful insight into the indoor field market conditions in the Hamilton region.

- With the recent introduction of a new facility in Ancaster, there are now 14 indoor turf fields offered by the six facilities in the greater Hamilton area. Field sizes vary from site to site.
- Operators suggest that convenience (i.e. location of the facility) and costs are the two
 most important determinants of where the groups will choose to rent field time or
 participate in a league. Operators estimate that individuals are willing to travel
 approximately 30 minutes to access field time. This drive-time radius represents each
 operator's primary trade area. Operators suggest that to some extent, there is overlap
 in their trade areas.
- Soccer leagues or field rentals to soccer clubs is by far the dominant type of field use at the five locations. Less than 10% of the total available field time is allocated to non-soccer uses.

- Operators either rent field time to soccer clubs or organize leagues for teams of various
 ages or skill levels. The proportion of field use allocated to each of these alternatives
 varies between locations. Most of the six operators have either seasonal or long-term
 contracts with soccer clubs although the proportion of the overall field time allocated to
 the contracted party(s) varies from site to site.
- Prices to rent prime time field time at the Hamilton based facilities ranges from \$150 to \$200 per hour. Non prime time prices range from \$75 to \$140 per hour. Prices vary based on normal commercial rationale including quality of the facility (field dimensions, age of field turf, ceiling height, etc.), the local competitive environment, historical relationships with renters, etc. Operators report that to remain competitive and in response to what they perceive as being a diminished demand for field time, prices have remained relatively stable for the past five years. Operators that have raised prices have restricted increases to 1% to 2% per year. Additionally, the majority of operators report discounting prices under certain conditions, such as for user groups that commit to multiple months of rentals or groups that guarantee a minimum number of hours per season.
- All operators rent field time or organize leagues for both adult and youth groups the proportion of time allocated to each age cohort is dependent on the business model adopted by the operator and the amount of unmet demand for each type of field use.
- Operators suggested that prime time field usage rates during December through February would shed light on the strength of the indoor field market and be somewhat indicative of local demand at the height of the indoor field season. Based on consensus at the meeting, operators were asked to provide the proportion of their facility's fields that were used for the weeks of December, 6th 2015, January 17th, 2016 and February 21, 2016 as these periods represent the highest utilization periods in each season. Based on the number of prime time hours per field and the number of available indoor fields at the five facilities that were operating at the time of the survey, operators report that an average of 80% of the available prime time was utilized during the time period described above. The 20% of vacant fields (144 hours) of unused time represents 12 prime time hours per week per field of unused time. Operators report non prime time utilization rates as low as 10% to 15% of available time.
- Operators report that there are currently five existing soccer academies operating in Hamilton. The proliferation of academies is perceived to be detrimental to the field rental and league business models promoted by most of the indoor operations.

In February 2016, the Hamilton Indoor Turf Operators Group made a presentation to Hamilton City Council which expressed concern about the introduction of a new indoor turf facility into a marketplace that they believe is already well served. They indicated that the addition of the five proposed fields at Tim Hortons Field represented a 40% increase - to what was then the

inventory of 12 indoor fields - at a time when there is unused capacity within the existing system. The Operators Group also questioned the level of municipal financial support for the proposed facility as well as the potential of a competitive approach to soliciting alternative service providers.

At the meeting with the consultant and in subsequent correspondence, operators reiterated their opposition to the proposed dome at Tim Hortons Field. They point to the amount of unused capacity in the current system as sufficient evidence that there is inadequate demand to support the introduction of 5 new indoor fields in Hamilton. They also object to the City's participation in the venture by virtue of allowing the use of a public asset for purposes that could do harm to their businesses.

Potential User Group Input

The consultant prepared and circulated a questionnaire to groups that were identified by staff as potential users of a new indoor turf facility at Tim Hortons Field. In total, eighteen (18) organizations received a questionnaire including eleven (11) soccer clubs, five (5) other sports organizations and two (2) school boards. A full list of groups invited to provide input is presented in Appendix B. It is noteworthy that this sample of possible field users is not comprehensive or all-inclusive and in no way reflects the total number of potential groups that might patronize a new facility at Tim Hortons Field. The input provided by these groups does however indicate general trends regarding historic market growth or retraction, future field needs in response to market factors, inclinations regarding relocating current use to another facility and emerging trends that could affect field use in the future. Consequently, their responses are meant to be an indicator of general market conditions and broad field rental tendencies rather than an accurate estimate of all unmet field requirements or an approximation of pent-up demand.

Responses were received from eleven (11) groups: five (5) soccer clubs; four (4) other sports organizations; and both (2) school boards. A summary of the combined input is presented below.

- Ten (10) respondents indicated that their number of registered participants has either remained the same or modestly increased in the past five years. One (1) group responded that the registration numbers had recently declined.
- Ten (10) respondents reported that they are currently utilizing indoor field time at one of Hamilton's existing field turf facilities. Two (2) respondents reported renting time in school gymnasia. In total, respondents confirmed renting a total of approximately 190 prime time hours from within the existing system. Prime time field rental rates that they are paying range from \$120 to \$200 per hour. Rates for school gymnasia were not supplied.

- Seven (7) organizations said that they would definitely consider renting indoor field time at the proposed Tim Hortons Field dome. Three (3) additional groups indicated they would possibly consider the new venue depending on the cost to rent field time.
- Four (4) organizations indicated that access to additional fields would facilitate programming improvements and augment their ability to serve more registrants. It was also suggested that the new facility would open up rental opportunities for more non-soccer organizations that currently have difficulty in accessing acceptable blocks of time. One (1) respondent suggested that the new venue would produce new programming possibilities in an area of the City that is in much need of additional recreational opportunities. Conversely one (1) respondent believes that the indoor field marketplace is already saturated. While not definitive, groups suggested that program expansion and new services potential could result in an increase in demand for as many as sixty (60) additional prime time field hours per week.
- In total, six (6) groups indicated that they would consider relocating time from their existing venue to the proposed Tim Hortons Field dome in order to access convenient or more preferable time slots.

Professional Soccer in Hamilton

For some time, the proponent has been working to bring a professional soccer team to Tim Hortons Field. As part of this dome proposal assessment process, Tiger Cat officials have committed that a pro team will be playing in the stadium no later than the 2018 season. The Canadian Soccer Association confirmed that the Association is continuing its efforts to initiate a Canadian professional league to support its mandate of creating pathways through which aspiring soccer players can develop into national or international level athletes. Additionally, the recently appointed President of CONCACAF verified that the formation of a Canadian professional soccer league is imminent and that it is realistic that the league's inaugural season would be 2018. He indicated that the Tiger Cat organization has been instrumental to the league's development and that Hamilton will certainly be home to a team once the league is formed.

Professional soccer teams require academies to provide development opportunities for players that may one day play for the "big club". An academy connected to a pro team usually involves several levels of players who are separated by skill levels. Most credible academies in Canada conform to Sport 4 Life's Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) model that promotes introducing athletes to a different level of development based on their age and state of readiness to advance through the model's seven (7) stages. The logic behind LTAD is to promote players through the developmental stages only when they are ready for advancement. Ultimately, the goal is to prepare individuals for a life-long involvement in physical activity through sport. While academies are constantly on the lookout for the "next star athlete" the vast majority of participants are recreational level players.

The development of a pro soccer team and the associated soccer academy in Hamilton is germane to this assessment because together they represent a new source of turf field demand in the City. While it is difficult to accurately predict the number of new field hours that will be generated by these new uses, it is reasonable to assume that the need for additional field time will increase from the field time required to accommodate the needs of existing users groups.

Consultation Summary

The proposed new indoor turf facility at Tim Hortons Field would add five new fields to the system thereby increasing the current field inventory by 35%. As illustrated in the previous sections of this report, there are mixed views about the amount of existing demand that would be satisfied by the introduction of this new facility.

The Hamilton District Soccer Association suggests that there is significant latent demand because clubs have registered complaints with the HDSA about the lack of convenient and available field time. Supporting this position, the proponent is confident enough in the strength of the market to consider investing considerable capital resources in the project. On the other end of the opinion spectrum are operators of existing indoor turf field facilities, who believe that there are currently a sufficient number of fields and available field time to meet current and potential future demand. As such, they strongly oppose the project based on their concern that the introduction of the proposed new project would harm their businesses - potentially to the extent of causing one or more of the existing facilities to fail.

Input from potential field users provides some clarity to the demand question. Groups involved in this process suggest that most of their current needs are met by the existing system. However, they also suspect that new programming opportunities would be made possible by additional available field time. They believe that this in turn would generate the need for more hours than are currently available in the system. But the anticipated growth in field requirements would certainly not translate into a sufficient number of hours to fill all prime time hours that would be available on the five new fields at Tim Hortons Field.

The introduction of a soccer academy to support a new professional soccer team in Hamilton would help to fill some additional time but not likely to the extent that all fields would be used to capacity. It is therefore reasonable to expect that there would be some unoccupied supply at the new facility which could attract interest by current users of existing indoor facilities. Consequently, it is likely that the new facility would result in some migration from existing indoor field operations to the Tim Hortons Field dome facility.

Technical Considerations

Context

As mentioned earlier in this report, should the project proceed, the proponent would be responsible for all capital costs associated with the proposed dome over the playing surface at Tim Hortons Field. The proponent would also be responsible for the cost of operating the domed structure as well as any incremental operating cost increases caused by the addition of the indoor field operation to the stadium.

Capital Cost of the Project

If the project proceeds, the domed structure at Tim Hortons Field would be the largest air supported dome Canada. As such, the anchoring system must be substantial. Additionally, individuals involved in the original construction of the stadium suggest that the amount of underground cables and buried services on the field's perimeter would significantly complicate the grade beam's installation. This circumstance could dramatically increase the capital cost of this important project element.

As of the writing of this report, the proponent had not yet finalized the cost to install the grade beam. However, detailed construction drawings and soil condition reports were recently provided to the proponent and are being reviewed by the proponent's contractors. The consultants have been notified by the proponent that provided there are no material issues with the anchoring system, the proponent intends to continue the pursuit of the project.

Life of the Turf Field

The consultant received the following information from the turf supplier.

- The turf field at Tim Horton's Field is guaranteed for eight (8) years. However, the supplier anticipates that if the field was only used during the summer season, the turf would last approximately twelve (12) years. The life of the turf will be dependent on a number of factors including the amount and type of uses.
- If the field were to be covered to facilitate winter use, the supplier anticipates that the field's life cycle would be shortened by four (4) years, meaning it would require replacement after eight (8) years.

The consultant contacted individuals responsible for the installation of air supported dome structures over other stadium facilities that have artificial turf fields (i.e. BMO Field, Lamport Stadium, etc.). Input from these individuals suggests that the amount of field use including the number of months the field is used as the indoor environment is the main factor in determining how frequently the field must be replaced. The consensus is that to comply with field quality

standards required to maintain a two (2) Star FIFA rating, a field used over both summer and winter months would need replacement in four (4) to six (6) years.

The Tiger Cat license agreement for the use of Tim Hortons Field states that the City must maintain the condition of the playing field "in a manner consistent with the condition at which a skilled and experienced operator of comparable facilities would reasonably and ordinarily keep a playing field". While the supplier suggests a twelve year (12) lifecycle for a summer use only field, it is very likely that the Tiger Cats would expect that the playing surface would be replaced more frequently.

In accordance with the foregoing and for the purposes of this assessment, the consultant has assumed a more conservative eight year (8) lifecycle for a summer only field. If the field were to be used for an additional four months (20 weeks) under the dome, it is reasonable to assume that the turf would require replacement in between five (5) and six (6) years.

The turf at Tim Hortons Field is one hundred and one thousand (101,000) square feet in size. The turf supplier reports that the removal and replacement of the turf would cost \$8.25 per square foot. Therefore, the cost of replacing the turf would amount to approximately one million dollars (\$1 M) including a project contingency of 20%.

If the City were to annually contribute to a turf replacement fund in equal installments, the required contribution would be \$125,000 per year for a field with an eight (8) year lifecycle. This amount climbs to a required contribution of between \$166,000 and \$200,000 per year if the field's useful life is shortened by two (2) to three (3) years. Based on these estimates, the City's annual turf replacement cost would climb from between \$41,600 and \$75,000 as a result of expanding the use of the field by an additional twenty (20) weeks.

Operating Costs

The proposal contemplates that users of the new facility would access the dome through the stadium building. Additionally, it is anticipated that certain dome patrons would utilize change rooms and washroom facilities within the stadium building. Consequently, the stadium's operating hours must conform to the contemplated hours of the dome – adding hours beyond the stadium's typical winter operating profile. Also, there will be other operating implications such as the need for increased security, additional snow removal, more use of consumable supplies, etc. City staff have prepared initial estimates of the anticipated incremental cost increases associated with these items. These financial estimates have been presented to the proponent to illustrate the magnitude of the City's additional operating costs should the dome project proceed. In view of the estimates, the proponent has confirmed that its financial proposal remains valid and that the proponent would annually pay for any incremental cost increases associated with the dome project.

Field Warranty

As mentioned earlier, the turf supplier warranties the field for eight (8) years. If the project were to proceed, the supplier recommends that the City, the turf supplier and the proponent meet with the dome manufacturer to gain a full understanding of the anchoring requirements and to formulate a scope of work pertaining to lifting and reinstalling the turf to install the grade beam. This information gathering exercise is to ensure that the capital work of installing the grade beam will in no way jeopardize the warranty on the existing field turf.

Options of the Dome

Staff have been directed to report to the General Issues Committee about options for a dome at Tim Hortons Field. Staff suggests that an examination of options relates to two areas of interest: 1) procurement methodology; and 2) alternative sites for the dome.

The extent of alterations required to install the dome at Tim Hortons Field would represent major capital work requiring detailed design. Section 7.4 of the Tiger Cats License Agreement to occupy Tim Hortons Filed specifies the rights and responsibilities of the City and the Licensee pertaining to alterations to the Stadium requested either by the City or the Licensee. Section 7.4.1 (Additional Licensee Work) specifies that the City has the right to review and approve (or not) design plans for alterations requested by the Licensee. Section 7.4.2 (Additional Owner Work) specifies that the Licensee has the right to review and approve (or not) design plans for alterations requested by the City. In view of the fact that work required to install the dome at Tim Hortons Field could not proceed in the absence of detail design plans, and given that the proponent has design plan approval rights, the dome project could not proceed at the Stadium without approval by the Tiger Cats. It is reasonable to assume that the Tiger Cats would not approve the design plans for a dome project at the Stadium proposed by another proponent including a dome project proposed by the City itself. Therefore, for a dome project to proceed at the stadium, the Tiger Cats would be the exclusive provider. This circumstance emasculates any contemplation of undertaking a competitive process to search for an alternate service provider for the dome project at Tim Hortons Field.

As stated earlier in this report, there are varying opinions about the level of pent up demand for indoor field time in the Hamilton region. However, the introduction of a soccer academy to support a professional soccer franchise in Hamilton would certainly increase the level of future demand thereby strengthening the feasibility of the proposed project. For some time, the Tiger Cats have been pursuing a professional soccer team. Further, the organization is a significant contributor to the CSA's efforts to formulate a Canadian Soccer League. There is evidence linking the existence of a soccer academy (to support a professional soccer team) to the viability of a new dome project in Hamilton. The fact that the Tiger Cats will ultimately control the academy would influence not only the organization's involvement in a new dome project but also any potential alternative sites that may be considered for the project.

Should a professional soccer team be formed in Hamilton, the team would require a suitable soccer field on which to practice. If soccer practices were organized in the stadium, the amount of field time available for community use would be reduced. A fundamental intention of the stadium is to provide enhanced amenities capable of accommodating a wide variety of community programming. Should the City decide to protect community program time at the stadium, it may elect to work with the Hamilton Tiger Cats to find a site that allows for pro soccer practices outside the stadium. It would also be reasonable that the site be able to accept a dome facility that would allow development of the aforementioned soccer academy. The scope of this assessment did not include an investigation into all potential sites capable of accommodating a new soccer field. However, if a new turf field and dome site were to be pursued, ensuring that the site is in reasonable proximity to Tim Hortons Field would be a prudent development strategy.

Appendices

APPENDIX A To Report PW17004 Page 17 of 18

Appendix A

Indoor Turf Field Operators Consulted

Players Paradise Redeemer College Wenthworth Arena Soccer World Mountain Sports Complex Ancaster Sports Complex (opened in the fall of 2016)

APPENDIX A To Report PW17004 Page 18 of 18

Appendix B

Potential User Groups Invited to Submit Input

Soccer Clubs

Ancaster Soccer League East Hamilton Soccer Glanbrook Youth Soccer Hamilton Sparta Soccer Mount Hamilton Youth Soccer Saltfleet Go Ahead Soccer Stoney Creek Soccer Club Central City Soccer Chantilly Forever FC Hamilton Croatia Soccer Hamilton United Soccer League

Other Sport Organizations

Hamilton Mighty Football Factory Hamilton Lacrosse Association Hamilton Hurricanes – Football Hamilton Minor Football Association Hamilton Varsity Tiger-Cats - Football

School Boards

Hamilton Wentworth District School Board Hamilton Wentworth Catholic District School Boards