CITY OF HAMILTON
HEALTHY AND SAFE COMMUNITIES DEPARTMENT
Recreation Division

TO: Chair and Members
Committee Date: March 21, 2019
SUBJECT/REPORT NO: Allocation Policy for Sport Fields, Diamonds and Arenas (HSC19013) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED: City Wide
PREPARED BY: Steve Sevor (905) 546-2424 Ext. 4645
SUBMITTED BY: Chris Herstek
SIGNATURE: Director, Recreation Division

RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Allocation Policy for Fields, Diamonds, and Arenas attached as Appendix “A” to Report HSC19013, and the Procedure Documents for Fields and Diamonds as well as Arenas respectively attached as Appendix “B” and “C” to Report HSC19013, be approved and in force effective April 1, 2019.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Currently, access to arenas owned and operated by the City of Hamilton is allocated in accordance with the historical Ice Allocation Principles (Report CS13040) and the Affiliation Policy for Hamilton Minor Sports Organizations (Report CS09039). While allocation practices within ice surfaces have been implemented since 2003, there have been no such allocation principles developed for outdoor sport assets. The current method of allocation in any environment has not accounted for the growth and decline of registration within organizations, thus creating a situation where many organizations are being allocated time based on data that is years out-of-date. The recommended policy incorporates the calculation of formulas that utilize current user data to allocate space for each Affiliated Minor Sport Organization’s core program. Core programming is defined as programming at the competitive or house league level and accounts for registration at one organizational entry point per athlete.

The objectives for the proposed policy include the following components:
• Guide decisions made when assigning fields and diamonds and their usage, based on need and sustainability for the season;
• Provide allocation procedures that will be transparent and uniformly applied;
• Align with the City’s strategic priorities;
• Assist in monitoring need and space demands for future facility planning;
• Support the maintenance schedules of outdoor assets; and,
• Ensure consistency with other Divisional allocation policies and principles.

The recommended policy will align with the City’s Corporate Culture Pillars and Strategic Plan, as well as the principles of Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD) all which contribute to the maintenance and improvement of a vibrant sport community.

The Policy includes formulas for most sports that currently have affiliated organizations (baseball, football, hockey, lacrosse, ringette, rugby, soccer, softball, and speed skating), as well as a listing of priority booking order based upon the Affiliation Policy for Hamilton Minor Sport Organizations, overall considerations for allocation, and the internal allocation process to be followed by City staff. In addition, an allocation guideline for figure skating is included, although the individual nature of this sport does not lend itself to the strict application of a formula. In general, the development of the formulas has been an inclusive process that has incorporated input with the sport organizations. While there is consensus in this direction, there may be individuals that are associated with an organization that may not agree with the approach that has been supported by their organization. The important aspect to note is that the application of the formula is a first intervention and not the only opportunity for Sport Services staff to work with the sport organizations.

It is the expectation of Sport Services staff that the application of the formulas outlined in the Allocation Policy for Fields, Diamonds, and Arenas in addition to the Procedures documents will enable City staff to allocate municipal recreation assets in a more equitable and transparent manner than current practices.

Alternatives for Consideration – Not Applicable

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: The proposed policy presumes to correct the issue of allocation in which some organizations are being given more than their program needs for core programming thus limits the programs of other associations that would want to grow. The redistribution of hours would lead to equitable allocation but would not result in any significant impact on revenue.

It is anticipated that it will take one to three seasons to fine-tune formulas for affiliated minor sport organizations, after which time a more accurate assessment of potential financial impacts from booking adjustments can be undertaken. It is expected, however,
that while there may be a reduction in hours booked by affiliated groups, non-affiliated sport organizations may book additional time at higher rates. This may result in a net increase in revenue from field, diamond, and arena rentals, but this likely will not be seen in the initial years of policy implementation.

**Staffing:** There are no staffing implications associated with Report HSC19013.

**Legal:** There are no legal implications associated with Report HSC19013.

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

In 2003, the Ice Allocation Policy was approved by Council following a review of ice allocation within pre-amalgamated centres and the policy was again reviewed in 2013 to make needed changes to Ontario Hockey Association junior level teams.

The City’s existing Ice User Rates & Allocation Principles (Report CS13040) was drafted at a time when there was great demand for ice in municipal arenas. In the early 2000’s, the City experienced a steady decrease in the number of hours of ice being rented which correlated with a decrease in membership being experienced by many ice user clubs and associations. The policy is now out-of-date and has not been applied uniformly since its inception.

The allocation of fields and diamonds has never been represented in a formal policy; rather staff has provided user groups with access to facilities based on historical allocations. In 2011, the Outdoor Recreation Facilities & Sports Field Provision Plan (Report CS11064) was presented to Council. There were over 150 individual recommendations delivered in the study; however, an important philosophical component came out in the recommendation to establish a Field Allocation Policy that is fair, equitable, and transparent for user groups.

As Recreation staff began the investigation of developing a new policy, the feedback from clients and other corporate staff was numerous. There were concerns regarding the misuse of assets (block booking and subleasing of fields/diamonds, both of which are not permitted), different sport demands for each outdoor sport, insufficient support for maintenance and renewal of assets and fluctuation of registration numbers that did not match the requested or booked hours.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS**

Approval of Report HSC19013 would affect the current Ice Allocation Policy; however, through the working groups, staff is extremely confident that the proposed policy addresses the current realities and needs of the sport user groups in all environments.
RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Engagement of user groups has been crucial to the process of Policy creation, including one-on-one interviews, small group discussions by sport, large group working sessions with a variety of organizations that use the same asset type (e.g., ice, fields, diamonds), and feedback sessions with both affiliated and non-affiliated organizations. Arenas were added during the policy development process as it became evident that ice users could also benefit from the transparency and consistency provided by the recommended formula and associated principles and procedures. A detailed account of stakeholder input is attached as Appendix “D” to Report HSC19013.

In addition to the stakeholders, Public Works Department, Parks Maintenance staff attended all working group meetings with field and diamond users, which presented opportunities for users and staff to discuss issues of facility quality, access, maintenance, and booking. They are in support of this proposed policy.

Allocation policies from approximately 13 municipalities across Canada were reviewed, including follow-up phone calls to discuss process and implementation and features from their policies, of which, some have been incorporated into the City of Hamilton’s Allocation Policy for Fields, Diamonds, and Arenas.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

Guiding Factors:
Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) is a guiding model that is supported in the sport community. It is a primary component of the Canadian Sport for Life (CS4L) movement, identifies the ideal types of training and coaching for each age group to promote the development of physical literacy and maintain involvement in sport and physical activity over one’s entire lifetime. More specifically, it outlines the allotment of time needed to be devoted to sport specific skill development.

Allocation formulas have been drafted based upon LTAD recommendations, user group consultation, and City staff input for most sports which had an affiliated organization. The formulas will be applied annually to registration numbers collected from organizations in the months leading up to their season to allocate for each organization’s core program. If registration numbers are not yet available, the previous season’s numbers will be used.

The Affiliation Policy for Hamilton Minor Sport Organizations aims to ensure that opportunities exist for children and youth to participate in organized and safe minor sports to the level of their interest and ability and that all youth have an equal level of municipal financial support. This priority listing is reaffirmed in the proposed policy and the City will continue to support youth access to municipal facilities.
The formulas are not the only component of the allocation process. The application of each allocation formula by Sport Services staff will provide a starting point that ensures all Affiliated Minor Sport Organizations receive adequate booking time to satisfy their core programming needs. Further consultation with Affiliated Minor Sport Organizations will be undertaken annually to fine-tune formulas.

The following factors have been identified by the policy working groups and are incorporated into the formula for each sport and for both house league and competitive Affiliated Minor Sport Organization teams:

- LTAD stage/age categories;
- Base number of players per team within each development stage; and,
- Number and length of practices and games per week.

The variable factors that will depend upon the annual application of registration and other data (e.g., season length prescribed by provincial organizations, etc.) include:

- Number of players registered by an organization within each stage (organizations will be asked to provide the most up-to-date registration numbers as possible in the months leading up to the start of their seasons);
- Number of weeks per season;
- Calculated number of teams based upon the base number of players per team;
- Calculated number of hours for practices and games per week;
- Total allocated hours per week by development stage; and,
- Total allocated hours per season by development stage.

Where appropriate, non-City bookings will be considered in the application of the formula, particularly if the City has limited assets that are suitable to satisfy a request (e.g., fields with football and rugby uprights, Olympic sized ice, etc.).

Benefits of the Allocation Policy

- Satisfy Core Programming - The application of the formulas in the new Policy will ensure that all Affiliated Minor Sport Organizations have their core programs (house league and competitive) satisfied prior to any additional allocations. Although formulas were developed for ice users in Report CS13040, those formulas were only applied to affiliated ice organizations in full at that time and were not adjusted in subsequent seasons regardless of fluctuating registration numbers. Over time, many organizations added bookings, but continue to express concern over releasing substantial amounts of time for fear of losing it for the next season.

- Limit Blanket Booking - Many organizations have a sense of ownership over the facilities at which they book time, particularly if there is no competition for their...
diamond, field, or arena. The low cost of renting fields and diamonds results in some organizations renting parks for the entire season to maintain ‘squatter’s rights’ on the asset and ensure that they maintain the booking for the following season. In some parks that have multiple requests for an asset, blanket booking results in animosity amongst users as one group sees a field they requested and were denied sitting empty. Additionally, blanket booking prevents City Parks, Recreation, and Facilities staff to be able to effectively plan maintenance and upkeep activities. The application of the new policy will ensure that all organizations are allocated only the time that they need to run their core programs based upon a user-driven formula. The policy does not preclude organizations from booking additional time, but this time will only be made available once all clubs receive their core bookings.

- Focus on Youth - Although City staff recognize the importance of providing opportunities for adults, youth use continues to be the priority. Should the application of the Policy to our affiliated organizations prove to free up sufficient non-prime time on assets, there may be the potential to consider standardizing allocation for non-affiliated organizations.

- Geographical Considerations - Historically, each community (Ancaster, Dundas, Flamborough, Glanbrook, Hamilton, and Stoney Creek) that now makes up the City of Hamilton had its own sport associations, many of which are still in existence today. This leads to ongoing strong connections to organizations, and competition for local players and facilities. The allocation procedures laid out within the proposed policy respect a certain amount of historical use, particularly regarding geographical location of facilities allocated to house league play. In general, it is expected that a certain amount of travel is associated with competitive sport, but every effort will be made to allocate local facilities to each organization wherever possible and appropriate.

- Subleasing - Unfortunately, in past practice, several organizations have subleased time on fields, diamonds, and ice to other organizations, both Affiliated and Non-Affiliated. This is unacceptable due to insurance liability and is a breach of the contract signed by each booking organization. Since the new policy will only allocate the hours based on core program needs, it eliminates excess hours for groups and reduces the possibility of subleasing.

The policy has met the initial objectives listed in Report HSC19013, but it also allows for the following:

- Provides Recreation staff with objective measures to ensure that affiliated minor sport organizations are allocated resources that equitably satisfy core programming;
- Allows Recreation staff to allocate recreation assets based on established priority;
- Rationalizes allocation based on researched LTAD standards;
• Provides stakeholder input to the allocation process as a measure of transparency and accountability; and
• Reinforces the role of the municipality as a facility owner to allocate resources in an effective manner.

In consultation with the sport stakeholders and staff in Parks and Recreation, the formulas that have been developed represent realistic opportunities to improve allocation. Those organizations that have historically benefitted from over allocation may voice concern over their future allocation; however, it provides Sport Services staff with an opportunity to further dialogue with local sport organization to better understand their needs. Sport Services staff are confident that there have been numerous opportunities for sport organizations to provide input to this process and do not foresee challenges. The changes do not drastically change the ability for an organization to effectively plan their program and such can be implemented before the start of their respective 2019 playing seasons.

Stakeholders will continue to be involved in the workgroups on an annual basis and organizations will contribute to the documentation that supports allocation.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

Not applicable.

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2016 – 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

Community Engagement and Participation
Hamilton has an open, transparent and accessible approach to City government that engages with and empowers all citizens to be involved in their community.

Healthy and Safe Communities
Hamilton is a safe and supportive City where people are active, healthy, and have a high quality of life.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix “A” to Report HSC19013: Allocation Policy for Fields, Diamonds, and Arenas
Appendix “B” to Report HSC19013: Procedure Document – Fields and Diamonds
Appendix “C” to Report HSC19013: Procedure Document – Arenas
Appendix “D” to Report HSC19013: Consultation Summary