

Cricket Infrastructure Report

Presented To: Community and
Emergency Services
Committee

Meeting Date: April 20, 2026

Type: Correspondence for
Information Only

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Report Summary

This report provides information regarding Council Resolution CES2025-29 directing staff to provide information on the growth of the sport of cricket both nationally and locally and to identify potential strategies and action plans to enhance infrastructure to support league and tournament play.

Relationship to the Strategic Plan, Health Impact Assessment and Climate Action Plans

This report refers to proposed investment in infrastructure to support community recreation with a focus on quality of life which supports the Council strategic priority of Creating a Healthier Community.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Background

At Community and Emergency Services Committee meeting of August 14, 2023 staff were directed to prepare a business case for the 2024/2025 budget which will include the following:

- Consultation with local cricket leagues and players (formal and informal)
- A review of potential locations for the development of new cricket pitch(es) for recreational, tournament and league play
- Capital and operational costs for any new infrastructure
- Identification of potential sources of external sources of funds to support cricket infrastructure development

As directed, a business case, along with supplemental information was produced for the 2024/2025 budget process. The business case did not advance.

At the November 24, 2025 Community and Emergency Services committee meeting the following resolution was carried:

WHEREAS the sport of cricket continues to grow both nationally and locally;

AND WHEREAS staff presented a business case and supplemental information during 2023 budget deliberations which highlighted recent developments of the sport of cricket locally and potential strategies to enhance infrastructure to support league and tournament play;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Greater Sudbury directs that staff present a report to the Community and Emergency Services Committee by the end of Q1 2026 that outlines an action plan for local cricket infrastructure developments to meet the needs of the future growth of the sport

Parks, Open Space and Leisure Services Master Plan (2014)

The Parks Open Space and Leisure Services Master Plan Review (2014) did not include specific actions pertaining to the sport of cricket in the Greater Sudbury Community. The Plan noted there are no fixed dimensions for the field, but its diameter can be as large as 150 metres, which requires an oval piece of land approximately two hectares (five acres) in size. A cricket ground is about twice the size of a rectangular sports field requiring two such fields situated side-by-side for cricket with the proper slope. At the time of the Plan in 2014, there were approximately 15 cricket players in the City of Greater Sudbury, not enough to substantiate the development of a dedicated ground.

A business case to update the 2014 Parks, Open Space and Leisure Master Plan was approved through 2026 budget process. A new plan will provide guidance on strategic management of parks and recreation facilities for the next 10 years and consider our changing demographics and evolving needs of residents and user groups, including cricket infrastructure.

Cricket infrastructure guidelines and sport growth are included in Parks and Recreation master plans for several other Ontario municipalities including but not limited to: the City of Toronto and the City of Brampton.

The following report provides an update on the status of cricket in Greater Sudbury including citizen participation, facilities, sport development across the province and high-level recommendations for the future

Current State of Cricket in Greater Sudbury

Currently, the City of Greater Sudbury has one full sized hard ball cricket ground located at Doug Mohns Park in Capreol and one recreational softball cricket ground located in Copper Cliff. The ground in Copper Cliff is smaller than Capreol and unable to host hard ball cricket due to lack of space and lack of a proper bowling pitch (the pitch is a 30m by 3m cement pad covered in specialized turf for cricket).

The minimum size for a ground is 120m x 140m, however best practices show having 150m x 150m for optimal play and space for teams and spectators. Playing surface generally requires 5.5–7 acres, depending on layout and amenities

The two grounds have seen significant increases in bookings for regular play and weekend tournaments over the past three years with the growth of new clubs/teams in Greater Sudbury.

Year	Capreol Ground Hours	Copper Cliff Ground Hours	Total hours	Percent Growth Year over Year hours
2022	57	Not Applicable	57	Not Applicable
2023	195	Not Applicable	195	242%
2024	227	63 Pilot Year (month of September only)	340	74%
2025	272	192.5	464.5	36%

Although the grounds are primarily utilized on weekends with many tournaments spread over Saturdays and Sundays 2025 saw more weeknight usage at the Copper Cliff Ground given its closer proximity to the city core and transit services. Many tournaments that take place at both grounds attract teams from across Ontario.

In addition to field bookings a small number of indoor gym rentals (Minnow Lake Place and Falconbridge Community Centre) have also started to occur for clubs to practice indoors during the winter months. Many clubs also utilized the indoor soccer bubble, Baseball Academy batting cages and school gymnasium spaces for off season training

Year	Indoor Gyms Rental hours	Percent Growth Year over Year hours
2024	20	Not Applicable
2025	48	140%

Over the past two to three years several new official cricket clubs have formed and begun booking City of Greater Sudbury grounds for matches and hosting tournaments with out-of-town teams. In addition to the official clubs listed below there are hundreds of recreational players who play pick up cricket at local baseball fields without formal bookings or sign up to participate in friendly tournaments hosted by the clubs listed below.

- Big Nickel Cricket Club (BNCC)
- Kings Cricket Club
- Super Smashers Sudbury
- Bangladeshi Cricket Association (Northern Wolves)
- Sudbury Royals Cricket
- Cambrian College Cricket Team(s)

It is estimated that there are more than 1000 citizens playing cricket in Greater Sudbury both through clubs, tournaments and leagues (formally) and informally through pick up games and casual play.

Growth of Cricket Infrastructure Across Ontario

Municipalities across Ontario consistently cite rapid growth in participation, youth demand, and immigration trends as key drivers in the growth of the sport and need to increase infrastructure (cricket grounds), with Toronto formally labeling cricket one of the city's fastest-growing sports. Cities are moving from shared/makeshift fields to formal strategies (or targeted business cases) and integration in master plans that standardize design, safety buffers, and scheduling to help reducing conflicts with baseball/softball and enabling tournament hosting.

The Greater Toronto Region leads the way with progressive strategies and investments in stand-alone cricket grounds, increases in formalized leagues and programming and field conversions to support recreational play.

Toronto's implementation of its cricket strategy (site conversions, new builds, and design-standard rollouts) demonstrates and long-term vision. The City of Brampton's Gore Meadows East Project is a large, multi-field cricket hub slated to anchor regional play and events by late 2026. Waterloo Region has pursued a collaborative, tri-municipal Regional Cricket Strategy, involving the City of Cambridge, the City of Kitchener and the City of Waterloo. Cambridge has taken the most advanced step toward implementation, and The City has allocated approximately \$1.5 million over the 2026–2027 capital budget for the development of two new cricket pitches. Kitchener's role to date has focused on support infrastructure and indoor facilities, including the inclusion of cricket practice nets in the RBJ Schlegel Park Recreation Complex and Waterloo has identified the Cricket demand through the City's existing Outdoor Sports Field Strategy.

Northern Ontario's approach differs from large southern municipalities in that infrastructure growth has been incremental, conversion-based, and partnership-focused, rather than driven by large standalone strategies. That said, the City of North Bay represents a significant milestone for Northern Ontario cricket infrastructure. In July 2025, the City of North Bay received \$1.675 million in provincial funding through Ontario's Community Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Fund (CSRIF). This funding will support construction of North Bay's first regulation-size cricket ground.

The City of North Bay's new cricket ground will be made of artificial turf, rather than natural grass with only the pitch being turf. The City has identified several operational and financial challenges associated with maintaining natural grass fields for cricket long term and when considering the increased operating costs of maintaining short natural grass, the shorter playing season, and the associated loss of revenue, North Bay concluded that the higher upfront capital cost of artificial turf represents the more financially and operationally effective option. Unlike typical field sports, cricket requires a significantly shorter grass height between 1" and 1.5", with an absolute maximum of 2" to ensure proper ball roll. The City of North Bay feels that maintaining natural grass at the required shorter height demands substantially more mowing, watering, and intensive cultural practices.

The City of Thunder Bay Thunder Bay has experienced rapid organic growth driven largely by international students (Lakehead University and Confederation College). Since 2021 the City has converted a baseball diamond at (Chapples Park) for cricket, and developed a second, larger cricket ground at Current River Park, selected for its ability to accommodate near-regulation dimensions and amenities

Opportunities in Greater Sudbury

To meet the growing needs of the sport of cricket in our community now and in the future, the following are possible strategies for cricket infrastructure development for recreational, league and tournament play. There are no current budgets in place to support this infrastructure.

Further development of Copper Cliff Field

To enhance usability for players and teams, it is recommended that the Copper Cliff Field be upgraded through the installation of a cement-pad pitch topped with turf. The current dirt pitch requires ongoing proof-rolling and compaction to achieve the appropriate bounce and ball response, which can limit play quality and consistency. Establishing a proper, dedicated cricket ground with new pitch will improve playing conditions, support both league and tournament-level cricket, and increase the field's appeal for bookings from softball-cricket groups, leagues, and event organizers. A permanent installation will result in the inability to use the field for baseball. The field has not been booked for baseball play in a number of years.

Estimated cost to add a cement pad pitch and turf is \$60,000 which could be achieved as a community-led project by working with existing clubs to fundraise for the initiative.

Adapt one existing baseball field/under-utilized greenspace to accommodate recreational cricket play, most commonly in the form of tapeball/softball cricket. Ideal location in Sudbury proper, near post-secondary institutions to meet the needs for international students and recreational family play. Conversion would be cutting a section of outfield grass to mimic a cricket pitch as has been done at Copper Cliff. Ground would

most likely not be full-sized and only applicable for recreational softball cricket play.

Potential locations include:

- McFarlane Lake Playground Baseball Field (1548 Pioneer Rd.) – 0 hours booked in 2025
- Ridgemount Playground (3088 Claude Street) – 40 hours booked in 2025
- Downe Playground (1309 Gemmell Street, Sudbury) – 55 hours booked in 2025

Establish one new premier cricket ground to meet the growing needs of the sport which will also enable local and provincial hosting for tournaments. When considering a new premier cricket facility, it would be ideal to construct in a way that enables two FIFA sized soccer fields in conjunction with the cricket ground with considerations for lighting from conception or in the future. Based on size requirements, the following locations are potential sites for a future premier cricket ground in/near the City core:

Gerry McCrory Countryside Sports Complex property was previously identified in the Parks, Open Space and Leisure Master Plan as a recommended location for additional soccer fields. The attached schematic (Appendix A) provides a visualization of how the site could accommodate a premier cricket ground, which also would have two full size soccer fields for use. A Class C estimate was developed in 2023 for a cricket ground at this site, with an estimated project cost of \$2.044M, including an 8% design and project management allowance and a 10% contingency allowance. The estimate was produced with the scope being a natural grass facility with artificial turf only for the cricket pitch between the two fields.

The Moonlight Baseball Field receives limited bookings for baseball annually and is often used for pick up recreational cricket. This site would require conversion and expansion. There would be significant costs involved with tree removal, site leveling and groundwork. The site also has limited parking and other supporting amenities.

Staff anticipate that a more detailed vision, strategy, and set of recommendations will be developed through the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update process scheduled to begin in 2026.

Summary and Next Steps

The City of Greater Sudbury aims to increase its population to 200,000 by 2050, with immigration playing an essential role in supporting economic growth and enhancing the cultural diversity of the community. As part of this vision, the City strives to be a welcoming and inclusive place, offering amenities and facilities that support all residents and individuals who choose to make Greater Sudbury the best place to live, work, and play. Cricket represents a meaningful opportunity to advance this goal while contributing to the health and wellbeing of residents.

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update, currently under development, will guide the strategic management of parks and recreation facilities for the next decade. It will consider shifting demographics and the evolving needs of residents and user groups, including requirements related to cricket infrastructure. In the interim, staff will continue to explore temporary or short-term solutions to support the growing participation in cricket across Greater Sudbury.

Resources Cited

Parks, Open Space and Leisure Master Plan Review (2014)

<https://www.greatersudbury.ca/city-hall/reports-studies-policies-and-plans/report-pdfs/parks-open-space-and-leisure-master-plan-review-2014/>

2023 Business Case and supplemental information

<https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=51997>

City of Toronto Cricket Strategy

<https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/construction-new-facilities/parks-facility-plans-strategies/cricket-strategy/>

City of Brampton Cricket Information

<https://www.brampton.ca/EN/residents/Recreation/Bookings-Rentals/Pages/Cricket.aspx>

Waterloo Region <https://www.engagewr.ca/CricketStrategy>

City of North Bay <https://www.northernontarioconstructionnews.com/north-bay-to-build-cricket-pitch-with-1-7m-provincial-funding/>

City of Thunder Bay <https://www.tbnewswatch.com/pursuit/surging-growth-in-sport-leads-to-new-thunder-bay-cricket-field-7770919>