

# Clarke Stadium Enhancement

## Recommendation

That the August 15, 2018, Citizen Services report CR\_5944, be received for information.

## Previous Council/Committee Action

At the April 18, 2018, Community and Public Services Committee meeting, the following motion was passed:

That Administration:

1. Consult with other users of Clarke Stadium about design and bring forward a capital profile as part of the 2019-2022 Budget Process to enhance Clarke Stadium to meet the requirements of the Canadian Premier League / FC Edmonton;
2. Work with FC Edmonton and the Edmonton Eskimos on the operating framework and report back to Committee on any impacts to the facility operating budget and impacts to other Clarke Stadium users; and
3. Determine the ability of other artificial turf facilities and what modifications might be required to those facilities to meet the needs of users, and specifically high school football, impacted by proposed alterations to Clarke Field.

## Executive Summary

In early spring 2018, FC Edmonton notified Administration that the Club was exploring joining the new Canadian professional men's soccer league, the Canadian Premier League. Initial conversations with Administration focused on the need for a dedicated soccer stadium. On April 18, 2018, Administration provided an information report to Community and Public Services Committee (Citizen Services report CR\_5815) that outlined the infrastructure and facility requirements for game day operations based on these preliminary conversations.

On June 8, 2018, FC Edmonton confirmed that the team will play in the Canadian Premier League beginning in spring 2019, and reiterated its desire to use Clarke Stadium as its home facility.

The Canadian Premier League has established several infrastructure and business operations requirements for teams wishing to join the league. Specifically, Fath Sports,

owners of FC Edmonton, seek to make several enhancements to Clarke Stadium such as increasing seating capacity to allow for 7,000 spectators, increasing food and beverage services, providing better access to washroom facilities, and upgrading dressing and training rooms. Facility technical requirements include improving sound and audio capacity, field lighting, and creating additional broadcast and media areas and coaches' viewing boxes.

Administration continues to work with FC Edmonton on a number of key elements of this request, including operating budget implications to the City, capital cost estimates for any facility upgrades or improvements, and impacts on the community and other Clarke Stadium users. The Fath Group is developing a business case that clearly identifies FC Edmonton's short- and long-term needs for Clarke Stadium so that a capital profile for the necessary capital upgrades can be included for consideration in the 2019-2022 capital budget.

### **Report**

In April 2018, FC Edmonton began conversations with the City to discuss their entry into the new Canadian professional men's soccer league, the Canadian Premier League. A key requirement to join the league is dedicated stadium space. Administration has met with FC Edmonton and the Edmonton Eskimos to discuss operating impacts and the facility requirements resulting from FC Edmonton's participation in the Canadian Premier League.

Adjustments to FC Edmonton's request related to Clarke Stadium have been made to maintain football field dimensions for the Edmonton Eskimos, as well as to accommodate ongoing amateur football and other multi-sport users in the short-term. These interim adjustments to Clarke Stadium do not address FC Edmonton's long-term desire to play in a "soccer-specific" stadium. FC Edmonton has agreed that any additional seating at Clarke Stadium will be located a safe distance from the end zone boundary on the north and south ends of the stadium that are used during football games. Discussions regarding a permanent locker room for FC Edmonton at Clarke Stadium have progressed to consider use of Commonwealth Community Recreation Centre. This option would require facility modifications to existing field house locker rooms and storage areas.

Administration hosted a Clarke Stadium users meeting on June 27, 2018. Primary representatives included FC Edmonton, Edmonton Eskimos, Huskies and Wildcats Junior Football, Alberta Football, Metro Athletics High School, MacEwan University, and Capital District Minor Football. The meeting included discussion of the operating model and scheduling opportunities for Clarke Stadium and other premier artificial turf fields.

Based on this stakeholder engagement, Administration would suggest that Clarke Stadium maintains a shared-use operating model where football, soccer, and other sports organizations can access the facility through the City of Edmonton's fair and equitable allocation process. The Edmonton Eskimos and FC Edmonton would receive priority bookings at Clarke Stadium as part of their license agreement with the City.

FC Edmonton is requesting a new license agreement as the prime professional soccer tenant of Clarke Stadium that would include priority field booking and access for all events at Clarke Stadium, access to a trainer's room, coaches' office and storage, use of the press box and public address system, ability to engage in sponsorship agreements and use of signage inside the stadium, and to retain 100 percent of merchandise sales. While Administration has been informed of these requests, any business or revenue considerations that will have implications for the City should be incorporated into the business case being developed by Fath Group which will be reviewed by Administration. If Clarke Stadium is expanded and enhanced, operating costs will increase. These costs include: utility costs, site and facility maintenance, site servicing, and custodial services. The business case will include a clear strategy that outlines how these costs will be recovered and the impacts of those costs on all users.

The impact to other Clarke Stadium users would be mitigated through ongoing scheduling and user group engagement to ensure field allocation remains accessible. This model was used successfully from 2013 to 2017, and adjusted in 2017 to allocate Friday and Saturday night spring games to satisfy FC Edmonton broadcast requests.

Clarke Stadium would continue to be operated and maintained by the City of Edmonton, including coordination of event schedules between Clarke and Commonwealth Stadiums.

Administration continues to meet with Clarke Stadium users and stakeholders to discuss amenities required to host games and the use of alternate sites, such as Jasper Place Bowl. The City will also continue to work with Metro Athletics for high school football allocation to ensure that Thursday and Friday games in the fall can be accommodated at Clarke Stadium. Commonwealth Stadium can also be accessed by high school and minor football groups for significant events in the fall if there is no conflict with prior stadium bookings or the Edmonton Eskimo Football Club. Currently Commonwealth Stadium is the host of the Provincial High School Football Championships in November 2018.

### Alternative Artificial Turf Facilities for Clarke Users including High School Football

The City of Edmonton currently operates five artificial turf facilities, each equipped with a variety of amenities. There are an additional five artificial turf facilities in the metro Edmonton region including Foote Field at the University of Alberta, Emerald Hills Regional Park in Strathcona County, Larry Olexiuk Park in St. Albert, Fuhr Sports Park in Spruce Grove, and Taurus Field in Fort Saskatchewan (Attachment 1).

Artificial turf facilities allow for field access earlier in the spring and later in the fall, multiple games throughout the day, and playability in poor weather conditions. These facilities also benefit the public and sport sector by increasing participant safety, supporting efficiencies in land use, and increasing the City's ability to host events. They are widely used to facilitate the needs of minor, high school and junior football and soccer, as well as provide citizens and communities excellent facilities for their recreational use.

Each of the artificial turf fields have similar features; however, there are some differences in various aspects of the field amenities available. In recognition of the needs of the football community, Administration can provide clubs with alternative options for scheduling that would have minimal impact on league play. The demand for football spans a period of approximately 12 weeks from mid-August to November. While Clarke Stadium and Jasper Place Bowl are near capacity, Mill Woods and Clareview artificial turf facilities still have capacity to accommodate additional field bookings; however, they may require modifications to meet the requirements to host high school football games. The additional five artificial turf facilities in the surrounding region meet the requirements of high school and junior football. The City would work with these organizations and municipalities if it was determined City capacity did not meet user needs.

Terwillegar Heights District Park and Londonderry District Park Artificial Turf have been identified as future locations for artificial turf facilities to support growing demand. Funding has been allocated to complete schematic design for an artificial turf facility at each location.

### **Budget Implications**

Administration will bring forward a capital profile for planning and design for Clarke Stadium improvements for City Council's consideration as part of the 2019-2022 capital budget. Operating impacts of an expanded facility are also being prepared and will be identified in the capital profile business case.

In addition to Clarke Stadium enhancements, Administration is assessing two artificial turf field facilities as a potential for City Council's consideration as part of the 2019-2022 capital budget: Terwillegar Heights Artificial Turf Facility and Londonderry Artificial Turf Facility. The estimated costs for delivery of each facility is approximately \$15 million. If approved, both facilities would include amenity improvements to meet all requirements for high school and junior football users and will have operating cost impacts.

### Public Engagement

Community input has been collected using various approaches. Administration meets regularly with the Clarke Stadium user group, which includes representatives from the football and soccer sports community, together with the community leagues and the Public and Separate School Boards. With the possibility of increased demand and modifications to Clarke Stadium, further public engagement activities will be undertaken to engage the community.

### Corporate Outcomes and Performance Management

<b>Corporate Outcome: The City of Edmonton has sustainable and accessible infrastructure</b>			
<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Measures</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>Targets</b>
Clarke Stadium is accessible to the community	Percent of available time booked by FC Edmonton at Clarke Stadium	2017 - 62 percent 2016 - 46 percent	TBD
Facilities meet the needs of football users	Percent of games booked by high school football teams	2017 - 64 percent	Maintain or increase over prior year
<b>Corporate Outcome: Edmontonians use facilities and services that promote healthy living</b>			
Increased participation by youth in organized sports	Number of Edmonton teams participating in high school football	2018/2019 - 22 (to date) 2017/2018 - 24	Maintain or increase over prior year

### Attachments

1. Alternative Artificial Turf Facilities for Clarke Stadium Users Including High School Football

### Others Reviewing this Report

- A. Laughlin, Deputy City Manager, Integrated Infrastructure Services
- M. Sturgeon, Acting Deputy City Manager, Communications and Engagement
- S. Padbury and R. Kits, Acting Deputy City Managers, Financial and Corporate Services