
HALDIMAND COUNTY

Report CDP-01-2019 Community Partnership Program–Fields and Parks Management Program



For Consideration by Council in Committee on February 26, 2019

OBJECTIVE:

To obtain Council approval of a comprehensive Fields and Parks Management Program—as part of the overall Community Partnership Program—including a policy, agreements, funding models and operating standards.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT Report CDP-01-2019 Community Partnership Program-Fields and Parks Management Program be approved;
2. AND THAT the related Fields and Parks Management Program Policy 2019-XX be approved;
3. AND THAT the request to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Fields and Parks Management Groups currently identified through the Program be approved;
4. AND THAT the Mayor and Clerk be authorized, on behalf of Haldimand County, to sign the attached Memorandum of Understanding with the various Groups;
5. AND THAT the funding model to support the activities of the Fields and Parks Management Groups, as presented in Report CDP-01-2019, be referred to the 2019 Tax Supported Operating Budget for consideration as a New Initiative.

Prepared by: Katrina Schmitz, Community Partnership Liaison

Reviewed by: Sheila Wilson, Manager, Community Development and Partnerships

Respectfully submitted: Craig Manley, MCIP, RPP, General Manager of Community and Development Services

Approved: Donald G. Boyle, Chief Administrative Officer

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Haldimand County partners with many volunteer groups and other organizations to provide recreational and community services and operate/maintain municipal assets – a service delivery model recognized as a best municipal-management practice in 2013. During the past few years, the County has systematically updated its various partnership programs including Community Beautification and Community Halls, introduced the Community Partnership Program for Community Capital Projects and updated the fee structure of the programs it delivers directly. The final piece to be completed is to update the partnership and funding model for the groups managing fields, parks and trails on behalf of the County.

For many years, the municipality has had formal and informal relationships with a number of Groups which operate baseball and soccer programs/fields and assist in maintaining certain parks and trails in the County. These Groups have done an excellent job of providing these services but have also

indicated that, with increasing legislative and risk management requirements and aging equipment, they are struggling to keep programs affordable and upkeep to expected standards. A key purpose of updating the Field Management Program is to formalize the County's relationships with existing Fields and Parks Management (FPM) partners as well as create a mechanism for potential new community providers—which might wish to operate or maintain a municipal recreation asset on behalf of the County—to benefit from these arrangements.

The following steps have been taken in developing the partnership process and funding model:

- (i) Significant consultation with the FPM partners and County staff during the past three years;
- (ii) Development of an inventory of current amenities, equipment and practices; and
- (iii) Research into comparable partnership models in other municipalities.

From this, staff from Community Development & Partnerships, Facilities, Parks, Cemeteries & Forestry Operations, Finance and Legal & Support Services have developed a comprehensive FPM Program to support the Fields and Parks partnerships. Field Management Groups have been involved in the development of the Program and are in support of the proposals.

At this time, Council is being asked to approve:

- A comprehensive new Fields and Parks Management (FPM) Program as part of the overall Community Partnership Program;
- A Fields and Parks Management Policy;
- The proposed Memorandum of Understanding template, to be used for each of the partner Groups within the existing Field Management Program with minor adjustments specific to each Group; and
- The principles of a new FPM Program funding model—including funding criteria and rationale for operations and capital maintenance equipment—is to be used in the development of future Tax-Supported Operating Budgets, with the 2019 proposed funding as outlined in this report to be considered during the Tax-Supported Operating Budget deliberations.

Approval of the new FPM Program:

- Supports the efforts of the County's current community partners operating and maintaining fields, parks and trails on behalf of the municipality;
- Is in keeping with the County's strategic priority of enhancing community vibrancy through the investment in high quality, sustainable services which promote the well-being of communities; and
- Engages volunteer groups in the development of meaningful partnerships which maximize resources and reflect unique community recreation and service requests.

BACKGROUND:

Haldimand County (as well as the previous Towns of Dunnville and Haldimand and the City of Nanticoke) has always had informal arrangements with community groups to manage municipal fields/parks. Since amalgamation in 2001, the County has largely maintained these third-party arrangements but has identified the need to formalize the relationships with existing Fields and Parks Management (FPM) partners as well as create a mechanism for new groups/third parties to enter into these arrangements. Among the challenges to developing a consistent program framework is:

- The different types of groups maintaining these facilities (incorporated versus not incorporated);
- The various types of fields, parks and recreational properties and facilities being operated and maintained by groups on behalf of the County (baseball, soccer, community park, trail, etc.);

- The fact some Groups already have existing operating agreements with the municipality (Dunnville Soccer Park Corporation and Haldimand Youth Soccer); and
- Parameters for the funding of community groups based upon existing County policies and processes.

With the introduction of the Community Partnership Program (CPP) in 2011, Haldimand County took the first step towards taking a proactive approach to ongoing operating and capital development relationships with community groups. The CPP is intended to encourage and enhance strategic partnerships—on County property—to the benefit of community stakeholders and the municipality, offering a simple, streamlined and customer-focused approach. The Program balances the rigor of the review process—necessary to ensure legitimate public interest issues are addressed—with flexibility and respect for the volunteer commitment of the groups. It provides an overall framework that helps to achieve a level of consistency in terms of: (i) funding levels; (ii) eligible items; and (iii) responsibilities that attempt to balance flexible service delivery with appropriate risk management.

The proposed FPM Program remains the one outstanding County/community partnership arrangement to be formalized in keeping with the CPP.

Within the existing Field Management Program, the County has arrangements with eight community Groups to maintain 12 Fields/Parks; ten locations (Attachment 1) are County-owned or managed through a Lease Agreement and two locations are utilized through the County's Joint Use of Facilities (JUF) Agreement with the Grand Erie District School Board:

Field/Park Management Group	Park/Facility
Caledonia Athletic Softball Association (CASA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HCCC McKinnon Park/Belle Jones Diamond • Kinsmen Park • McKinnon Park Secondary School (non-County-owned; through JUF)
Dunnville Soccer Park Corporation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dunnville Soccer Park (including a portion of non-County-owned property through a Lease Agreement)
Fisherville Park Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fisherville Lions Park
Haldimand Youth Soccer (HYS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caledonia Soccer Complex (McClung Road) • Broecheler Park, Cayuga (non-County-owned property; accessed through Lease Agreement) • Hagersville Secondary and Elementary Schools (non-County-owned; through JUF)
Jarvis Lions Park Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jarvis Lions Park
Nanticoke Park Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nanticoke Park
Selkirk Park Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selkirk Park
Townsend Lions Park Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Townsend Lions Park (non-County-owned property; accessed through a Lease Agreement)

As part of the overall CPP—and in alignment with other related County policies—the proposed FPM Program will include a policy, memorandum of understanding template for agreements with Groups and a funding model to address operating and capital matters. As well, standards, processes and

support materials have been developed to address insurance, risk management, operations and maintenance.

ANALYSIS:

Historical Relationship with Fields/Parks Management Groups:

Haldimand County has provided grants to community groups operating fields and parks on its behalf since 2006. The Program, which was created following amalgamation, was based upon different amenities than exist now.

Currently, the County supports eight Groups in the maintenance of 12 Fields/Parks of varying size and with varying assets and amenities.

In response to changing requirements and feedback from the service delivery organizations about certain challenges they are facing, County staff initiated the development of a new Fields and Parks Management (FPM) Program, including researching if similar operating/funding models existed in other municipalities. There was little external precedent to help direct the development of the new Program and staff instead began working actively with the County's Fields/Parks Management Groups to create a more structured program that better meets the needs of the volunteer groups while ensuring County and provincial standards of maintenance and safety are met and documented. During this review period, and in recognition of the fact the Groups had not had an increase in grant funding since 2006, staff adjusted the existing grants in 2015 to reflect cost-of-living indexing. The current changes reflect the first comprehensive review of the Program in terms of how grants are calculated.

In addition to the foregoing, and with the course of time, new amenities and facilities have been constructed at some of the Fields/Parks, resulting in the need to amend practices, including policies and funding. For example, with the construction of the Fisherville Multi-Purpose Outdoor Facility—which replaced a former outdoor rink on the property maintained by the Fisherville Parks Committee along with all other recreation assets on the property—the Fisherville Lions Club agreed to take on operations and maintenance of the enhanced asset. In the new calculations, the allocation to the Parks Committee for care of the former outdoor rink was removed from its grant and will now be provided to the Fisherville Lions Club. This decision was supported through report PED-COM-36-2011 and results in the County providing grants to nine Groups. Attachment 2 provides an overview of the current assets at each Field/Park property.

New Fields/Parks Management Program:

In October 2017—following three rounds of consultation with current Fields/Parks partners—a multi-disciplinary group of staff began drafting the details of a proposed new Fields/Parks Management (FPM) Program based on the values and principles of the Community Partnership Program (CPP), including:

- A fair, clear and consistent approach to working with current and potential Fields/Parks Groups;
- An equitable distribution of resources;
- Maintaining a high level of community/group autonomy, seen as a key strength within the existing Program, and input into the ongoing management of their Field/Park;
- Meaningful support to ensure Groups are able to operate/maintain Fields/Parks to County standards;
- Encouraging the development of new partnerships with community groups interested in operating and/or maintaining County Fields/Parks assets;

- Creation of a framework to assess new partnership requests and related funding, keeping in mind CPP projects must take place on County property and any exceptions will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, including a staff review and presentation to Council;
- Flexibility to accommodate the unique operation and maintenance situations of each Field/Park;
- Continuing to facilitate a cost-effective way for the County to use its resources; and
- Recognizing the positive outcomes—tangible and intangible—to community engagement in operating and maintaining these recreation assets.

The intent of the new Program is to build on the best part of the past relationships; continuing to use what worked well and adding resources and tools to maximize the success of the groups.

Challenges Facing Fields/Parks Partners:

Among the reasons for the County's review of the existing Fields and Parks Management Program was a concern by the current partner Groups that the grant funding levels presented challenges and limitations to their being able to continue to manage these assets. Specifically, the Groups identified that:

- Operating standards and expectations have increased—through legislation or other health and safety-related requirements—to the point where volunteers are sometimes unable to do work they have in the past and contractors must be hired;
- In some cases, it has become harder to reliably have volunteers complete all the Field/Park work in a timely manner (especially at the beginning of the season when there is often a lot of preparatory work required in a short timeframe), requiring the hiring of students or other contractors;
- The grants haven't always reflected all the responsibilities and costs related to a particular Field/Park (e.g. assets being maintained); and
- The grants haven't taken into account the revenue-generation limitations related to operating a seasonal amenity; as well, the Groups maintaining smaller/passive parks have limited opportunity to charge fees or fund-raise.

As a result of these challenges, Groups have had to resort to the following to manage standards and operations:

- Charge and/or increase fees (for baseball and soccer users, to rent pavilions/other amenities);
- Fund-raise to further subsidize activities (beyond the volunteer input), which has resulted in limited success and further stretched volunteer resources;
- Solicit for third-party support and subsidies (e.g. local Lions Club or sports groups); or
- Reduce the level of work/care of the Field/Park asset.

One particular area of inconsistency identified during the review of the Program was the purchase and/or access to capital equipment for maintenance. Historically, in some cases, the municipality had purchased equipment for Groups or provided a contribution to the purchase of equipment (through a grant). In other cases, Groups were made entirely responsible for the purchase of any capital maintenance equipment. The proposed revisions to the Program include providing enhanced funding that the Groups will use to acquire and maintain equipment.

Fields/Parks Management Program Development:

In order to achieve the objectives outlined above, staff began developing the related documents to provide structure to the Program including a Fields and Parks Management Policy (Attachment 3) and a Memorandum of Understanding (Attachment 4) which could be used for each unique partnership situation. As well, staff have developed resource materials for maintenance standards,

risk management, rentals and revenue-generation. In order to ensure accountability related to the funding received, Groups will be required to provide annual reporting and reconciliation.

Policy:

The proposed Fields and Parks Management Policy is in keeping with the County's Community Partnership Program principles and outlines roles and responsibilities for both the County and the Groups. The policy addresses matters related to operating and capital as well as the ability of Fields/Parks Management Groups to access other County grant funding streams including the Community Capital and Community Beautification grants. As well, the policy references the requirement of the Fields/Parks Management Groups to adhere to other County by-laws and policies related to the Groups' activities (e.g. Haldimand County Parks By-law, Public Conduct on Haldimand County Property, Integrated Accessibility Standards, etc.).

Memorandum of Understanding:

In order to provide structure to the partnerships between the County and the Fields/Parks Groups, a Memorandum of Understanding template has been developed. This document—which is similar in intent to the agreements the County entered into with the Community Halls—is flexible enough to work with both incorporated or unincorporated organizations while supporting the County's need for accountability.

Risk Management/Liability:

As volunteers of the municipality, the Fields/Parks Management Groups are covered for third party liability under the County's Municipal Liability Insurance Policy while they are performing activities in a volunteer capacity for the County. As well, the County—as the property owner—is responsible for insurance related to the property, including buildings and structures. The County does not provide insurance for equipment or contents as this is the responsibility of the Groups.

Staff will continue to work with the Groups to ensure appropriate record-keeping and documentation related to risk management (e.g. inspections, maintenance, rentals, volunteers working on County property, etc.).

Opportunities for New/Enhanced Partnerships:

The County has received inquiries from a number of community groups regarding the possibility of undertaking more activities at the County's Fields/Parks or becoming part of the new Fields and Parks Management Program. As well, the new Program will be used in entering into arrangements with community groups/partners interested in maintaining County trails.

FINANCIAL/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Considerations:

In terms of developing the funding model, staff examined what it would cost the County to deliver the service and, in keeping with the Community Partnership Program (CPP) Policy, applied a 35% factor for operating costs, further including a lifecycle funding component for capital equipment identified for each park, field or trail. Specifically, the following FPM Program funding model (Attachment 5) was developed through extensive consultation with Facilities, Parks, Cemeteries & Forestry Operations and Finance staff and is based on the following:

Funding Rationale:

- An overview of the County's actual costs (labour, equipment, materials and supplies) to maintain and operate each of the Fields/Parks identified in the Program (based upon assets, acreage and amenities during the course of a 26-week season);

- Building/structure maintenance funded at 1% of replacement cost. This funding relates only to minor maintenance – e.g. painting, minor repairs. Major capital repairs or replacement of an asset would be the County’s responsibility in consultation with the group;
- A grant amount of 35% of what it would cost the County to maintain/operate that Field/Park. This funding model is consistent with:
 - The County’s intent with the historical funding model (2006-2018); and
 - The funding principles of the Community Partnership Program Capital Grants;
- The value proposition of having volunteers undertake this work on behalf of the County (much like the Community Halls Program), including:
 - Lower costs than if the County was conducting this work;
 - Meaningful community engagement;
 - Tangible/intangible benefits (maximized resources, building of community relationships); and
 - Recognition that community organizations can often acquire equipment/services they need through preferred costing provided by local suppliers;
- Consistent standards of maintenance and reporting;
- Opportunities to create new partnerships;
- Alignment with the direction of standardization in the anticipated Parks and Recreation Service Plan; and
- A clear outline of the roles and responsibilities (operating and capital) for both the County and the Groups.

Within the new funding model, Groups are responsible for all aspects of capital equipment management including purchase, insurance, inspections, maintenance, repair and replacement costs. The expectation is that Groups will establish a funding envelope to ensure they have adequate resources to address the above-noted items, including equipment replacement when required.

The combined implication of this funding model is that the current budgeted grants provided would more than double from \$96,220 to \$215,460 annually. Of this, 72% relates to increased costs associated with operating matters while 28% is for capital equipment/building maintenance. The revised program also includes funding for the operation of new amenities such as the Fisherville Multi-Purpose Outdoor Facility. The intent is the Groups would receive one combined grant provided annually and the Groups would be expected to save funds for capital equipment replacement over multiple years if necessary.

Overall, even with this increase in funding, the partnership approach allows services to be delivered for approximately one-third the cost if the County did it directly. Council is being asked to approve the principles outlined for the proposed Fields and Parks Management (FPM) Program funding model. Consideration of the proposed funding for the 2019 FPM Program through the Tax-Supported Operating Budget should be considered as part of the overall deliberations on the Tax-Supported Capital Budget.

As with the County’s other Community Partnership Programs, inspections related to legislated matters—such as health and safety—and structural integrity remain the responsibility of the County.

Other Funding Recommendations:

Staff recommended two additional areas of funding for inclusion in the new FPM Program:

1. Through the Joint Use of Facilities (JUF) Agreement with the Grand Erie District School Board, the Caledonia Athletic Softball Association (CASA) schedules baseball and tournaments at McKinnon Park Secondary School’s (MPSS) ball diamond as part of the programming it provides at the Haldimand County Caledonia Centre diamond. Staff recommend providing funding for the maintenance of the MPSS diamond to mitigate risk (as the School Board does not maintain the

field for organized play) and to protect the asset (as the County invested \$15,500 in the rehabilitation of the diamond in 2012 through the CPP); and

2. Inclusion of the Fisherville Lions Club as a new partner within the FPM Program for the maintenance and operations of the Multi-Purpose Outdoor Facility. The former outdoor rink on the property was maintained by the Fisherville Lions Park Committee; however, given the value of the enhanced asset, and the level of year-round maintenance required to operate this facility, it was approved through report PED-COM-36-2011 to have the Lions Club take on this responsibility and receive any related County funding.

Should Council approve the proposed funding model, it is the expectation of the County that the related financial support will be reflected in fees and charges being kept at levels that encourage and support affordable public access to the Fields/Parks.

Budget Impact:

The 2018 Tax-Supported Operating Budget included \$96,220 related to contributions to community Groups that managed municipal Fields/Parks. If approved, additional funds related to this proposed funding model would be included in the Draft 2019 Tax Supported Operating Budget for Council's consideration during its deliberations. Inclusion of this Program would result in a levy increase over and above the Council-approved budget guidelines.

2018 Grant Budget	2019 Proposed Grant	Dollar Increase	Percentage Increase
\$96,220	\$215,460	\$119,240	124%

Legal Considerations:

One of the challenges in developing the new FPM Program was the creation of an agreement framework which reflects the unique governance models of the existing Fields and Parks Management Groups and honours existing Lease/Operating Agreements. (Currently, Haldimand County has informal agreements with six Fields and Parks Groups as well as Lease Agreements with two incorporated organizations.) During significant consultations with the Groups and staff, it was suggested a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) would be the most appropriate approach as it creates structure while allowing flexibility to suit each existing partnership arrangement as well as future opportunities. If approved, the MOU will be a stand-alone Agreement between the County and unincorporated Groups; in situations where an existing Lease/Operating Agreement is in place, the MOU will serve as an addendum.

STAKEHOLDER IMPACTS:

The proposed Fields and Parks Management (FPM) Program has been developed through extensive consultation with the community Groups and County staff from various Divisions throughout the past three years.

Specifically, the Legal & Support Services Division has provided significant input related to the development of the Memorandum of Understanding template and risk management; Facilities, Parks, Cemeteries & Forestry Operations has helped develop the operating and funding standards; and, Finance has provided rationale for funding principles and vetted proposed funding amounts. Senior Management has reviewed the community input and staff recommendations and provided direction throughout the process.

The proposed FPM Program has also been reviewed by the County's eight existing FPM partners, which have indicated their support for the details.

All documentation related to the new Program (policy, memorandum of understanding, associated policies, funding parameters, operating standards and maintenance/inspection sheets) has been

reviewed by County staff and the FPM Program partners. Should the Program be approved by Council, it is the intention of Community Development & Partnerships Division staff to conduct additional information sessions with FPM Program Groups, particularly in terms of processes related to the new Program.

This report has been reviewed by staff from the Divisions of Facilities, Parks, Cemeteries & Forestry Operations, Finance and Legal & Support Services.

REPORT IMPACTS:

Agreement: Yes

By-law: No

Budget Amendment: No

Policy: Yes

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Location Maps - Current Fields and Parks.
2. Fields and Parks Location Partners – Inventory of Assets and Equipment; Investments to Date:
 - Caledonia Athletic Softball Association (CASA) – HCCC, Kinsmen Park, MPSS
 - Dunnville Soccer Park Corporation
 - Fisherville Lions – Multi-Purpose Outdoor Facility
 - Fisherville Lions Park Committee
 - Haldimand Youth Soccer – Caledonia (McClung Road)
 - Haldimand Youth Soccer – Cayuga (Broecheler Park)
 - Jarvis Lions Park Committee
 - Nanticoke Park Committee
 - Selkirk Park Committee
 - Townsend Lions Park Committee.
3. Fields and Parks Management Program – Proposed Policy.
4. Fields and Parks Management Program – Proposed Memoranda of Understanding for Groups.
5. Fields and Parks Management Program – Overview of Proposed Funding Model.