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## **Artificial Turf Sports Field at Huron Heights Secondary School**

### **Staff Report to Council**

Report Number: 2026-25

Department(s): Parks and Facility Services , Recreation and Culture Services , and Community and Economic Innovation

Author(s): Kristi Carlen, Director, Parks & Facility Services, Colin Service, Director, Recreation & Culture, and Elizabeth Hawkins, Director, Community & Economic Innovation

Meeting Date: May 4, 2026

### **Recommendations**

1. That the report entitled Artificial Turf Sports Field at Huron Heights Secondary School, dated May 4, 2026, be received; and,
2. That Staff be authorized to explore opportunities for the development of an artificial turf sports field at Huron Heights Secondary School; and,
3. That Staff seek alternative funding sources, such as infrastructure grants, Warriors Football Booster Club, sponsorship and partnerships, to address capital costs; and,
4. That Staff explore a joint use agreement to access/program the field for community use with the York Region District School Board; and
5. That Staff report back to Council regarding the development of an artificial turf sports field at Huron Heights Secondary School as part of the budget process or as necessary; and
6. That Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to authorize staff to explore opportunities with the York Region District School Board (YRDSB) for the development of artificial turf sports fields in the Town of Newmarket at Huron Heights. Ideally any field developed would have multi sport capabilities (football, flag football, soccer, lacrosse, field hockey as well as track and field sports). As part of any agreement the Town would also seek community access to the field.

Artificial Turf Sports Field at Huron Heights Secondary

## **Background**

In the Town of Newmarket there are six (6) secondary schools. Four are with the York Region District School Board (Newmarket High, Denison, Huron Heights, and Sir William Mulock), one is with the York Catholic District School Board (Sacred Heart) and the sixth is a private school (Pickering College). Only secondary school properties are large enough for full-sized sports fields, often including space for a running track. Each secondary school listed above has at least one full sized field.

From the list of above noted school fields, currently there are two artificial turf sports fields in Newmarket, one is located at Dr. J.M. Denison Secondary School, York Region District School Board (YRDSB) and there is a joint use agreement with the Town for access to this field. The other artificial turf sports field is located at Pickering College, and the Town does not have an agreement with Pickering College for ongoing access to their facilities. It is also important to note that the Newmarket Soccer club has an indoor artificial turf sports field, but it is exclusively for soccer club use.

With the Town only having formal access to one artificial turf sports field, this per capita level of access is below many of our municipal comparators.

In 2025 there was a joint community/YRDSB effort, with support from the Town, to apply for provincial funding through the Ontario Community Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Fund (CSRIF), for the development of an artificial turf sports field and Huron Heights Secondary School. Ultimately this effort was deemed ineligible by the province and the application was unsuccessful.

The Town, of note, currently has a joint use agreement with YRDSB for the grass/earth turf field and Sir William Mulock. The Town made capital investments in this field and maintains it in exchange for community programming time during the evening, on weekends and over the summer months when not in use by the school.

## **Discussion**

The addition of an artificial turf sports field at Huron Heights Secondary School would support the Warriors football teams and provide them with a field that is reflective of their regional, provincial and international successes. The field would also be advantageous for other school sport programs, broader community use and would contribute to sport tourism in the Town. Staff would like to engage with YRDSB, the Warriors Football Booster Club and other interested parties to advance the development of an artificial turf sports field.

Current levels for the booking of premier sports fields in the Town is nearing capacity and it would be prudent for the Town to continue to plan for future needs and growth of various sports in the community. The addition of another field in Newmarket would be valuable to the Warriors teams, school sports programs, YRDSB and the residents of Newmarket.

Newmarket is nearly fully built out and as such looking to enhance and improve existing opportunities is a natural next step in community growth. Joint use agreements for fields that are located at secondary schools in the community is a proven model for success.

Artificial turf sports fields have several advantages over a grass/earth turf field, these include: a longer playing season, reduced frequency of maintenance (grass fields need to be maintained weekly or more frequently based on use), some evidence that suggests a reduced rate of sports related injuries and consistent quality of play conditions. It is for these reasons that artificial turf sports fields are desirable to higher performing sports teams and support the development of high-performing and elite athletes.

## **Consultation**

Staff will engage with YRDSB, the Warriors Football Booster Club and other interested parties to explore the development of additional artificial turf sports field(s) at Huron Heights Secondary School in Newmarket.

## **Conclusion**

Newmarket has a strong tradition of sports including the local success of many secondary school teams at the regional, provincial, national and international level. The Warriors Football teams are an incredible success story that has earned a home field to be proud of. Investing in this ongoing success supports the development of our youth, community wellbeing and contributes to sport tourism in our community. Newmarket on a per capita basis, when compared to other municipalities, has less access to artificial turf sports fields.

## **Council Priority Association**

This report aligns with the following Council Priority: Extraordinary Places and Spaces

## **Human Resource Considerations**

N/A

## **Budget Impact**

Staff will bring any opportunity for the development of an artificial turf sports field at Huron Heights to Council as part of the annual budget process (both capital and operating), or directly to Council as necessary, before advancing a project. Staff will also seek out alternative funding sources such as infrastructure grants, Warriors Football Booster Club, sponsorship and partnerships to support the development of artificial turf sports field at Huron Heights Secondary School in Newmarket.

## **Attachments**

N/A

## **Approval for Submission**

Jeff Payne, Commissioner, Community Services

Ian McDougall, CAO

## **Report Contact**

For more information on this report, contact [info@newmarket.ca](mailto:info@newmarket.ca).