



9.1 **SPORT SURFACE OPERATING GUIDELINES AND OUTDOOR SPORTS LIGHTING OPERATING GUIDELINES**

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1. PURPOSE

1.1 Council is asked to endorse the attached Operating Guidelines;

1. Outdoor Sports Lighting Guidelines, and
2. Sports Surface Guidelines

These guidelines will enable Council to ensure our existing facilities can meet the increasing demand from sporting clubs and community

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The City of Port Phillip sports facilities are at or overcapacity with the current level of participation in organised sport. There is also increasing pressure for use of sports grounds and courts from other groups such as schools, fitness trainers and the community for unstructured recreation, including dog walking.
- 2.2 Projected population growth, continued increasing participation in organised sport (especially juniors and female) and an increased demand for public open space for passive and informal recreation, presents a challenge for providing sport and recreation opportunities for the community. We need to ensure sports surfaces can accommodate increased use and the provision of lighting to enable evening use of facilities.
- 2.3 Port Phillip public spaces are heavily contested, resulting in several petitions requesting lighting at venues and/or change to ground surfaces to accommodate different uses.
- 2.4 There are no policy or guidelines to guide decision making on surfaces and lighting for Sports Facilities and Infrastructure. The establishment of such guidelines was identified as a task in the Sport and Recreation Strategy 2015-24. There are also no specific documents to guide decision making on key related areas.
- 2.5 The attached guidelines have been developed to provide guidance in addressing the pressures outlined above. The broad objective of the Guidelines are:
 - Sports Surface Operating Guidelines: to explore alternate sports ground surfaces that increase the carrying capacity of the ground (the number of hours that a ground can withstand without significant surface deterioration)
 - Outdoor Sports Lighting Operating Guidelines: to upgrade and utilise sports lighting to enable spaces to be used effectively in non-daylight hours and to address the capacity pressures that are placed on sporting sites for both formal and informal recreation opportunities.



3. RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 3.1 Notes a need for Guidelines which will help establishing and maintaining Sports Lighting and Sport Surfaces on Council facilities.
- 3.2 Notes action is required to ensure maximum use of sports facilities to meet increasing demand of growing junior and female participation rates in organised sport.
- 3.3 Notes there is also increasing pressure for use of sporting sites from schools and community for unstructured recreation, including dog walking at night, when organised sport is not programmed.
- 3.4 Notes several petitions have been received requesting sports lighting.
- 3.5 Notes Council has an established sports lighting upgrade capital program that is already improving our outdoor sports facilities annually.
- 3.6 Resolves to endorse the Outdoor Sports Lighting Operational Guidelines (Attachment 1).
- 3.7 Notes Council has already been renewing natural grass sports surfaces with improved subsurface designs to improve the programming capacity and performance of these grounds.
- 3.8 Notes Council has already been implementing hybrid grass and synthetic turf patches to manage high usage areas of a natural grass sporting surfaces.
- 3.9 Notes environmental factors commonly raised with synthetic surfaces have been considered in the development of the sports surface operating guidelines.
- 3.10 Resolves to endorse the Sports Surface Operating Guidelines (Attachment 2).
- 3.11 Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to undertake annual desktop reviews of these guidelines and make administrative amendments as necessary.

4. KEY POINTS/ISSUES

- 4.1 Our existing sporting grounds and related assets are all highly utilised and without enhancements will be unable to absorb the growing demand generated by increasing female and junior level participation in many sports and future demand created from population growth.
- 4.2 With the cost and availability of land to create new sporting sites becoming more challenging, maximising the use of existing sporting sites is seen as a more prudent strategy to meet the increasing demand challenge.
- 4.3 Council has existing capital programs to upgrade sporting surfaces to ensure surfaces are sufficiently resilient to accommodate increased use.
- 4.4 Council also has existing capital programs that enhance our sports ground lighting to allow increased utilisation at night safely.
- 4.5 Council has also been investing in improved pavilions, specifically unisex designed change facilities, to support female participation and informal recreation infrastructure to support our community achieve health and wellbeing outcomes.



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- 4.6 Sporting grounds are becoming more contested and popular for broader community activity, like utilising the spaces as a dog off lead area, when there are no sporting operations.
- 4.7 Council has received multiple community requests and/or petitions for broader community access to sporting grounds or sports lighting at the following sites over the last 12 months at;
- Peanut Farm
 - JL Murphy Soccer Pitches
 - Northport Oval
 - Lagoon Reserve
- 4.8 The creation of these guidelines will support our strategies to support improved sport and recreation outcomes through improved community access, addressing amenity impacts and appropriate environmental considerations.
- 4.9 The endorsement of these guidelines is being requested by Council to:
- 4.9.1 Provide guidance on appropriate surfaces when renewing or building new sports grounds
- 4.9.2 Respond to Council resolutions to develop guidelines for the use of sports lighting for community use.

Outdoor Sports Lighting

- 4.10 Sports ground lighting has improved significantly over the years. Past flood lighting solutions are now replaced with targeted sports lighting solutions that provide an even distribution of lighting across the entire playing surface and prevent light spill to Australian standards.
- 4.11 The additional benefits of modern lighting solutions are safety for participants, reduced amenity impacts from light spill, increased sporting programming opportunities and improved natural grass surfaces by avoiding overuse zones under lighting hotspots.
- 4.12 Through the Sports Fields Lighting Expansion Program, Council has completed and continues to deliver lighting upgrade projects. The following Council managed grounds have been upgraded to extend the hours of operation of the ground, increase opportunity for use from multiple groups, reduce light spill to adjacent land and ensure all areas of the ground are lit evenly, in accordance with Australia standards:
- Peanut Farm
 - RF Julier Reserve – (multipurpose courts upgrade)
 - Alma Park
 - JL Murphy Reserve– (Aanenson Oval, Woodruff Oval and Soccer Pitch 1)
 - Elwood Park (construction commenced)
 - Other grounds within the City either have no lighting or a level of lighting that is not suitable for sport and does not currently meet the Australian Standards
- 4.13 The Sports Fields Lighting Expansion program is ongoing and there is no policy or strategic document to guide decision making and ensure consistency and flexibility to



ensure that individual sites obtain the relevant standard and requirements for best practice, with the provision and use of outdoor sports lighting

- 4.14 The guidelines will provide guidance for the community as to what factors will be considered when determining when and how long sports lighting can be used
- 4.15 The guidelines support the use of sports lighting for alternate community access where it does not impact on sport operations and the condition of the surface is suitable for the alternate use.
- 4.16 These guidelines are specific for sporting reserves and do not consider dedicated dog park lighting.
- 4.17 Community engagement is always undertaken with surrounding residents when sports lighting projects are designed and delivered.

Sports Surfaces

- 4.18 All 15 Council managed full-size sports grounds (large fields) in the City of Port Phillip are comprised of natural turf. This surface type has a maximum carrying capacity of approximately 20-25 hours per week, or until they deteriorate.
- 4.19 City of Port Phillip also manages, leases and allocates space on multipurpose courts, indoor multipurpose courts (South Melbourne Primary School) and leased facilities for non-traditional sports such as Bowls, Croquet, Tennis, Hockey (Albert Park Tennis Hockey) as well as hard surface netball and basketball courts.
- 4.20 The City of Port Phillip has and will continue to install (through the Sports Fields Upgrade Program) patches of synthetic and hybrid turf on high traffic areas of sports grounds to reduce wear and tear. These are commonly used around high usage zones, like goal mouths and interchanged areas.
- 4.21 Councils throughout Victoria and Australia are installing synthetic sports grounds to address the sports ground shortage/carrying capacity challenge, specifically Inner Melbourne region to maximise existing facilities rather than land purchasing or repurposing. Synthetic active spaces within schools is also now a common practice for inner Melbourne schools.
- 4.22 Within City of Port Phillip, we already have synthetic bowling greens, tennis courts and some synthetic large sports fields within Albert Park Reserve land managed by Parks Victoria. Council does have a joint venture with Wesley to program community tennis and hockey at one of these fields.
- 4.23 Fishermans Bend precinct planning outlines the potential locations for future open space, including sports fields and the desire for synthetic surfaces to accommodate the increasing demand.
- 4.24 There is no policy or strategic document to guide decision making on the most appropriate sports ground surface types for different sites.
- 4.25 Enhancements are still required to support natural grass grounds as some grounds may have insufficient underground infrastructure (e.g. Drainage, irrigation), or turf / soil quality, or significant public access to adequately accommodate the various users. e.g. Peanut Farm has potholes, and poor drainage.
- 4.26 The guidelines have considered various environmental considerations and documented these including but not limited to urban heat island impacts and stormwater runoff management.



- 4.27 There is a proposal in the Council Budget 21/22 (funding allocated in budget) for the conversion of the natural grass Community Pitch at JL Murphy Reserve to a full synthetic pitch, with planning, design and consultation in 2021/22 and construction split over two years in 2022/23 and 23/24.
- 4.28 Future capital works may consider a full hybrid pitch if increased demand is required and the synthetic surface is not appropriate for that site.

5. CONSULTATION AND STAKEHOLDERS

- 5.1 Sporting clubs and relevant Sporting associations are engaged through the design and delivery of sports ground lighting and sports ground reconstruction projects.
- 5.2 Sport and Recreation Victoria were engaged as a potential funding partner towards future capital works.
- 5.3 The community have requested, through Council meetings, to continue providing greater access to sporting reserves and sports ground lighting for community use.

6. LEGAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Council is required to comply with Australian standards when delivering capital improvements.
- 6.2 Managing use is conditional on sports surface condition to prevent risk of injury to athletes and community.
- 6.3 Broad community access, like dog walking, is not permitted when sporting operations are permitted at a specific reserve.

7. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 7.1 The delivery of projects specified in the associated guidelines will be dependent on annual budget allocations, through Council's budget processes.
- 7.2 The delivery of projects identified through these guidelines may be a dependent on funding and commitment from other key stakeholders, such as the state government, and contribution funding from local clubs if required.
- 7.3 Council is currently absorbing the cost of utilities for sports clubs, which include the use of outdoor sports lighting, sports field irrigation, and this is currently under review to ensure that all clubs cover the cost of utilities as per their licence agreements currently in place, this will also be enforced through the Sports club fees and charges and allocation policy work.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 8.1 Consideration of the environmental factors has taken place, particularly regarding sports ground surfaces due to their interest and commitment to environmental issues and ensuring that the guidelines are aligned with the Environmental Protection ACT 2017. There has been acceptance internally to:
- Have the first full synthetic field installation considered as a pilot program, with pre and post testing of key sustainability indicators to enable more informed future decision making
 - Consider an independent sustainability sub-contractor be involved in the pilot project to ensure best practice



- Synthetic surfaces increase the overall sustainability as a solution by including end of life reuse and recycling options
- Overall benefits of increased sustainability of sports clubs (meet participation demands, less training/game cancellations)

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 9.1 Implementation of both guidelines will allow for increase in usable hours of sports fields, which will increase use for both formal and informal sport and recreation opportunities.
- 9.2 Improved broader community access to sporting sites and use of sports lighting can be achieved.

10. ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICY

10.1 Council Plan - Inclusive Port Phillip

- What we will work towards (our four-year strategies) - Port Phillip is a place where people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities can access services and facilities that enhance health and wellbeing through universal and targeted programs that address inequities.
- We will provide - Community spaces and facilities that are designed and programmed to be welcoming and accessible for all members of our community and to encourage social connection for all ages, cultures and backgrounds.
- We will provide - High-quality sport and recreation infrastructure designed for shared community use that enables people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities to participate, including major projects such as JL Murphy, Lagoon Reserve, 45 North Port Oval, RF Julier, Port Melbourne Netball Courts, Wattie Watson Oval and other sports field lighting and minor recreation infrastructure renewals, subject to available budget funding.

10.2 Sport and Recreation Strategy:

- Council's Sport and Recreation Strategy 2015-2024 references the dilemma that Council is facing with current sporting facilities being at or over capacity for formal sports use. This has prompted the following action items:
 - *Action 2.1. Ensure that all sporting surfaces and associated facilities are fit for purpose while meeting environmentally sustainable objectives*
 - *Action 2.1.1 investigating the use of synthetic surfaces at current sport and recreation sites to enhance their durability and increase use.*
 - *Action 3.2.1 to develop a sportsground lighting policy to guide decision making and management*

10.3 Linked documents and related work:

- Council's *Draft Public Space Strategy* (anticipated for completion December 2021) which may impact both Operating Guidelines. The draft allocation principles and open space classifications within the Draft Strategy have informed the Operating Guidelines. It is important to ensure alignment when the strategy is finalised and endorsed.



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- Both Council's *Act and Adapt: Sustainable Environment Strategy 2018-28* and the *Sustainable Public Lighting Guidelines* are key documents that have been consulted in the development of both the Outdoor Sports Lighting and Sports Surface Guidelines, and will continue to be a reference point in the implementation of these guidelines for open space and recreation projects
- These documents will also interact with planning for sports grounds and courts within the Fishermans Bend Urban Renewal area.

11. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

11.1 TIMELINE

- The guidelines can be published immediately on the Council website and reviewed annually under delegation.
- Current and future lighting projects will comply with these guidelines
- Current and future ground reconstructions including the proposed synthetic surface for JL Murphy Reserve (community soccer pitch) will comply with these guidelines.

11.2 COMMUNICATION

- In addition to publishing on the City of Port Phillip website, the guidelines will be referenced in an updated Sports Club User Manual for sports club committees.

12. OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT INTEREST

- 12.1 No officers involved in the preparation of this report have any direct or indirect interest in the matter.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Sports Ground Lighting Guidelines - Final July 2021
2. Sports Ground Surface Guidelines - Final July 2021