



## **Basketball Net Pilot Project Update**

**To:** Committee of the Whole

**Date:** 29 January, 2019

**Report No.:** 01-20-3830

### **Strategic Directions**

1. Build Strong Relationships and Partnerships Within School Communities to Support Student Learning and Well-Being

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that.

1. Basketball Nets remain up at all locations unless the location meets the approved criteria.
2. Basketball Nets be removed nightly at locations where one of the following criteria is met:
  - The basketball court is located within 25 feet of an adjacent home.
  - There is lighting that the TDSB cannot control, which allows play after dusk.
  - The courts are designed for children and are being used by adults.
3. Staff to review the availability of alternative areas for play in neighbourhoods being considered for daily net removal.
4. Where there is insufficient alternative play areas in the neighbourhood, consideration be given to:
  - a) Basketball nets remaining up Monday to Friday until 6 pm
  - b) Relocation of nets to existing paved play areas where noise disruption can be reduced.

## Context

In June 2019, in response to requests from our school communities, we began a Basketball net pilot project to ensure individuals, particularly younger children, across the city would have access to these important recreational spaces beyond 6 pm, when nets were often taken down. This was a departure from our prior practices at a number of sites where nets were removed at the end of each school day. The net removals occurred as a result of concerns from residents living adjacent to schools sites. These concerns revolved around a number of issues, including excessive noise, vandalism, loitering and other illegal activities. Decisions around the nets were a local school based decision and as a result many neighbourhoods had little to no access to nets after hours and over the weekend.

At the time of the pilot, we recognized that isolated issues may arise and we created an email address so that members of the community could provide feedback and input into the pilot project. Any concerns received via the telephone or other email addresses were also recorded in the Nets email address.

During the pilot, we received both positive and negative comments. The positive comments typically thanked the TDSB for providing these recreational opportunities, and asked that the pilot become permanent. The negative comments/complaints were primarily related to noise, age of participants and hours of use. Our review of the complaints indicated number conditions that contributed the concerns, including proximity of the nets to adjacent houses, availability of artificial light, the age of participants, (especially adults) and the degree to which the basketball court was shielded from street view and thus provided greater opportunities for illegal activities to take place.

Each complaint was reviewed and steps taken to address them if possible. During these reviews, we looked at whether one or more of the conditions above were present. In some cases, we reverted to the prior practice of removing the nets nightly, in others we advised the complainant to call the city re noise by-law issues. In the future, staff will be reviewing each site that receive complaints to determine how we may address the concerns, including a review of the caretaking hours of work and if the nets can remain up until just prior to dusk, whether external conditions can be adjusted to ensure that evening play is not allowed, including signage, adjustment of lighting schedules etc.

## **Action Plan and Associated Timeline**

1. Staff to review the availability of alternative areas for play in neighbourhoods being considered for daily net removal.
2. Where there is insufficient alternative play areas in the neighbourhood, consideration be given to:
  - a. Relocation of the nets to existing paved play areas where noise disruption can be reduced.
  - b. Basketball nets remaining up Monday to Friday until 6 pm or until dusk if caretaking staff are available until that time.

## **Resource Implications**

N/A

## **Communications Considerations**

Staff will work to develop a communications plan to be shared with school communities.

## **Board Policy and Procedure Reference(s)**

N/A

## **Appendices**

N/A

## **From**

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