

## Community Engagement for Recreational Amenities in Lively

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Recommended by:	Chief Administrative Officer

### Report Summary

This report proposes the process for gathering public input on options for recreational amenities in the Lively area as a result of the closure of Meatbird Park. Staff anticipate this process, while focusing on the immediate need for public input resulting from the park's closure, will also inform related work to develop an approach for consulting stakeholders about assessing municipal infrastructure renewal options when existing infrastructure is underutilized or has reached the end of its useful life. The report also summarizes responses to comments received from residents in the Lively area as outlined in the petition delivered to Council on April 13, 2021.

### Resolution

THAT the City of Greater Sudbury directs staff to undertake a public engagement process with the objective of informing a plan for recreational amenities following the closure of Meatbird Lake Park with, at minimum, the following features:

- a) A robust public engagement process that includes online and continuous dialogue with interested stakeholders
- b) Criteria for evaluating potential recreational amenities that reflects, at a minimum, existing municipal Financial, Planning, Recreational and Environmental policies
- c) An Advisory Committee with membership as described in this report and Terms of Reference that are subject to review and approval by City Council
- d) A promotion and marketing plan to ensure broad awareness and current information about this work

as outlined in the report titled *Community Engagement for Recreational Amenities in Lively* from the Chief Administrative Officer presented at the City Council meeting on June 29, 2021.

### Relationship to the Strategic Plan, Health Impact Assessment and Community Energy & Emissions Plan (CEEP)

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan in the area of Strengthening Community Vibrancy by involving community groups and community members to collaborate in the project leading to outcomes that make residents integral to, and partly responsible for, the project's success.

The community engagement process outlined in this report will reflect the Community Energy and Emissions Plan (CEEP). In particular, all recommendations emanating from this process will consider the goals outlined in the CEEP, as revised in March 2021.

## **Financial Implications**

Costs associated with the implementation of the community engagement strategy are estimated to be \$14,200, including 160 hours of staff time, translations, printing, advertising and mailouts, to be covered by the existing 2021 operating budget in the Leisure Services, and Communications and Community Engagement Divisions.

## **Executive Summary**

Staff developed an engagement strategy to obtain feedback from the community regarding recreation amenities in Lively. This report summarizes the engagement approach for approval by Council.

## **Background**

At the September 22, 2020, Council meeting Vale Canada presented a proposal to purchase Meatbird Lake from the City of Greater Sudbury. The purchase would allow Vale to undertake tailings dam improvements, including an erosion control project located near the park. It also affords Vale the opportunity to perform environmental remediation work on the site and to discontinue pumping potable water to the lake, resulting in water conservation.

Additional conversations regarding the sale of the land were held in closed session in accordance with the Municipal Act, which permits closed discussions regarding real estate matters.

The sale of Meatbird Lake Park was finalized on May 7, 2021. The agreed upon price for the property was \$4 million which will be reinvested in recreation projects in Lively. A community engagement process will play an important part in determining specific plans.

Meanwhile a supervised beach at Centennial Park, located at 400 Graham Rd. in Whitefish, is available for residents until a new recreation opportunity is established. The Park, a 12-minute drive from the core area of Lively, is also accessible by GOVA Zone.

On April 13, 2021, a petition was presented to Council from residents of Lively expressing their concerns regarding current recreation amenities in the Lively area, including Anderson Farm and Centennial Park. This report responds to the petition and presents the engagement process to ensure residents of Lively play an active role in the determination of current and future recreational amenities in their community.

### Public Engagement

The engagement process will collect resident opinions, ideas and perspectives about the future of recreation in their community. Early and continued engagement will emphasize community ownership of the project while maintaining open lines of communication between residents and the City. Staff expect the process to enable a continuous exchange of information that ensures residents are involved throughout the process.

There are several criteria that must be used for any plan to assess its fit within the context of the municipality's overall strategic objectives and policy guidance. This will be achieved through the formation of a committee comprised of Lively area residents. For example, it will be important to ensure preferred options, among other elements, fulfill budget, zoning and environmental considerations, now and in the future. Options should also reflect the directions provided by the Parks, Open Space and Leisure Master Plan.

## Implementation

The public engagement approach will reflect COVID-19 protocols. Engagement will be achieved mainly through digital channels including virtual meetings, surveys, idea boards and social media with project updates and information available on Over To You, the City's engagement portal. Progress and results from the public engagement will be shared regularly to ensure residents and stakeholders are well informed every step of the way, and feel value in taking the time to provide their input.

## Creation of a Citizen Advisory Committee

The implementation of a Council-appointed Citizen Advisory Committee, comprised of residents of the Lively area, will ensure results of the engagement are reflective of the needs of the community. The application and nomination processes will ensure the committee represents the community at large. Together, the committee will work to develop consensus on recommendations, with the assistance of City staff and any additional required experts. These recommendations will be then be presented to City Council for approval.

It is important to note that consideration for appointment includes demographic representation of Lively area, and support for values represented by cultural diversity and equitable access.

Based on past committee memberships and the demographics of the Lively area, the committee will be comprised of the following nine members:

- The Ward Councillor
- The Director of Leisure Services
- A staff member of the Communications and Community Engagement section
- 2 Lively residents who are youth (12 to 18)
- A Lively resident who is a parent/guardian (child/children under 18)
- A Lively resident who is an older adult
- 2 community members
- A member of an active Lively area neighbourhood association or community group

## Meetings/Communication with stakeholders

Staff will contact stakeholders based in Lively, including neighbourhood associations and recreation groups, via email and virtual meetings to share information about the project and engagement opportunities.

## Web Presence

A comprehensive page on the City's engagement portal, Over To You, will be developed and updated as the process moves forward. Residents have the opportunity to sign up to follow the project through the webpage. As milestones or updates occur, notification will be sent out to these residents.

## Virtual Public Meetings

Public meetings will provide a venue for residents and stakeholders to discuss the project with staff, ask questions and discuss ideas. Meetings will be held virtually or in person based on COVID-19 restrictions in place during that time.

## Information Sharing

City recreation facilities will be used to share information about the project and opportunities about engagement. Signage will be placed at parks and trails and any facilities that are open and accessible. The T.M. Davies Community Centre and Arena billboard, as well as the library digital board will be used to share the information in addition to social media, public service announcements, mailouts and emails to stakeholders. Additionally, local business and social media groups will be contacted to help share engagement opportunities. Other advertising opportunities, such as GOVA Transit, will also be leveraged.

## Petition received on April 13

The petition delivered to the City of Greater Sudbury addressed three specific concerns:

1. *Poor compensation for the loss of Meatbird Lake. We need a pool/recreational facility as compensation for our loss.*
2. *Lack of funding for Anderson Farm.*
3. *Centennial Park Campers being removed from campgrounds.*

While the balance of this report clearly identifies the process to be used to address the first concern related to Meatbird Lake Park, staff are also able to provide updated information on the second and third items of concern:

Anderson Farm – As part of the proposed 2021 Municipal Budget, funding for museum staff and programming was eliminated. The budget for site maintenance and utilities was not proposed for reduction and a commitment was made to develop a new operational model for Anderson Farm. As part of the budget deliberations, Council passed an amending motion to reinstate the full museums budget for 2021 on a one-time basis and directed staff to undertake a full review of Museum Services and report back by the end of September.

Work on this review is underway and this assessment will include opportunities for input from both stakeholders and the public. Full details on this engagement will be announced in the next few weeks and the petition itself will be considered as part of the process.

Centennial Park – Municipal campgrounds have been raised many times as part of services and user fee reviews. Concerns have been expressed about the level of subsidy for a limited number of campers, as well as the perception that this is a service that could be adequately delivered by the private sector.

At the present time, staff have been directed to set fees that recover the full operational costs of running the campgrounds at Centennial Park, Whitewater Lake Park and Ella Lake Park.

## **Next Steps**

Due to the strong community interest in this project, initial engagement will begin in July.

Council will be presented the Citizen Advisory Committee terms of reference in July Council will review applications and select advisory committee members at a Nomination Committee meeting in August The Advisory Committee will have its first meeting shortly thereafter.

This timetable will allow staff to begin initial engagement, with the Advisory Committee able to engage with the results. Recommendations to City Council will come forward in the fall of 2021. It is anticipated that the community of Lively will be further consulted on these recommendations.

Council will be updated on a regular basis on all the issues raised in this report.

## Resources Cited

City Council Meeting, September 22, 2020, Vale Canada Limited Meatbird Lake Recreation Area  
Presentation to City Council (<https://pub-greatersudbury.escrimemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=fbb042f9-3ae3-4f14-9dfd-573e0c13ed93&Agenda=Agenda&lang=English>)

<https://pub-greatersudbury.escrimemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?documentid=39064>