

Update on Affordable Access to Recreation Initiatives by Third Parties Leasing Municipal Facilities

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Report Summary

This report provides information regarding affordable access to recreation initiatives delivered by third parties who are leasing municipal recreation facilities in alignment with the City's Affordable Access to Recreation Strategy.

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

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan in the areas of Creating a Healthy Community and aligns with the Population Health Priority of Play Opportunities. The inclusion of lease language requiring tenants to deliver inclusive, affordable programs, supports the City's Affordable Access to Recreation Strategy and reduces barriers for residents to participate in play opportunities.

This report has no direct connection to the Community Energy & Emissions Plan (CEEP).

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Executive Summary

This report provides Council with information about affordable access to recreation initiatives delivered by third parties who are leasing municipal recreation facilities. Council has directed that the inclusion of lease language requiring tenants to deliver inclusive, affordable programs to support the City's Affordable Access to Recreation Strategy. The report will detail programs offered by the Sudbury Indoor Tennis Centre, Northern Water Sports Centre and Kivi Park.

Background

At the City Council meeting of June 26, 2018, Council received a report titled Affordable Access to Recreation Strategy. The report outlined a number of recommended approaches in the areas of fee assistance, universal programming and access to community spaces. The report noted that the City leases space to a number of

community organizations providing recreation and leisure activities. The report included the example of the Northern Water Sports Centre lease agreement, which included language to ensure that universal and low cost programs are offered, and to ensure community access to space. The report recommended that, as lease agreements with municipal facilities are considered or renegotiated, that affordable access language is included in all agreements.

At the Finance & Administration Committee of June 4, 2019, a report to consider tax relief for the Sudbury Indoor Tennis Centre was presented. In consideration of the request for tax relief, Council approved the designation of the Sudbury Indoor Tennis Centre as a Municipal Capital Facility. Further, Council directed that the Sudbury Indoor Tennis Centre “develop an accessible, community program for our vulnerable population of limited financial needs as part of their policies, and that the club be required to come back in one (1) year with an update to the Community Services Committee for review”.

The City is in the final stages of reentering into a Right of Occupation Agreement with operators of Kivi Park with respect to park operations on municipal parkland. Recognizing the importance of providing affordable access to recreation, park operators have established an endowment fund for those individuals who cannot afford to pay user fees.

Parks, Open Space and Leisure Master Plan Implications

The City's Parks, Open Space and Leisure Master Plan Review states that access to affordable and high quality leisure programs is an essential component of a healthy community. The Master Plan includes the following action plans related to affordable access to recreation:

- Formalize the Affordable Access to Recreation policy in order to bolster universal access to physical activity and recreation opportunities.
- Encourage all agencies and leisure organizations to be advocates by recognizing, celebrating, and advertising their support towards affordable access.

This action item in the Leisure Master Plan has been accomplished through the development of the Affordable Access to Recreation Strategy. It ensures that lease agreements with third parties using municipal spaces require tenants to provide affordable recreation.

Overview of Affordable Access to Recreation Initiatives

The following is an overview of the affordable access initiatives developed and provided by the Sudbury Indoor Tennis Centre, Northern Watersports Centre and Kivi Park. It should be noted that the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the ability for the organizations to provide programming and report back to the City within the requested one year time period.

Sudbury Indoor Tennis Centre (SITC)

Sudbury Indoor Tennis Centre is a tenant on the municipally owned property located at 0 Cypress Street, Sudbury, which is utilized by the City as a public park and recreation area commonly known as Queen's Athletic Field. In 2018 the club sought tax relief and in response, the facility was designated as a Municipal Capital Facility by Council. As directed by Council, language has been included in the Municipal Capital Facility Agreement with the club to ensure that accessible and affordable programs are available. It is as follows: to actively promote the sport of tennis and both club members and the public have access to various activities; to participate in Affordable Access to Recreation programs developed by the City; develop and deliver affordable programming and report to the City annually on such programs.

The following initiatives and programs have been developed by the Sudbury Indoor Tennis Centre:

- Semi-annual open house - attended by 300 residents (2019 figures)

- Sponsorship of one youth per junior program – intention to increase awareness for this initiative
- Sponsorship of two youth per Professional Development Day, fully day camps and special summer camps
- Donation of several cases of tennis balls to Big Brothers, Big Sisters for free distribution.
- Ongoing conversations with local Jumpstart program to further create open and accessible programming
- Intention to create low cost, summer tennis memberships to allow indoor use to the community during summer months
- Free lending of tennis racquets within youth camps, special events (membership not required) membership
- Collaboration with the Greater Sudbury Pickleball Association to allow low access to facility at an affordable rate of \$5 per hour. Strong response by local pickleball players and anticipate continued partnership
- Tennis mentorship program is a volunteer program in which SITC members mentor an up and coming tennis player and serve as a hitting partner.

Northern Water Sports Centre (NWSC)

The Northern Water Sports Centre is located on City owned land, forming part of Bell Park. The facility is occupied by the Sudbury Canoe Club and Sudbury Rowing Club in accordance with a lease agreement. In 2017, Council designated the facility as a Municipal Capital Facility in response to the group's request for tax relief. The lease agreement includes language with respect to the provision of affordable access to recreation, specifically, to offer affordable recreational programs to the public; participate in affordable recreation programs which may be instituted by the City from time to time; and ensure that membership to the facility is readily accessible and affordable to members of the public.

The following summarizes the affordable access initiatives offered:

- Sudbury Canoe Club created specific programming for youth with various accessibility challenges, accessible sport to individuals in a club setting; assisted families in finding subsidies; created local employment training and skill development for students and adults.
- Sudbury Rowing Club offered various programs including Learn To Row programs for high school students, university students, adult recreational participants and adaptive rowing participants.
- Parasport program offered two free events from the Northern Water Sports Centre, facilitated by NWSC volunteers
- Community use for Northern Cancer Centre families and patients was hosted on Wednesday mornings (Coffee by the Lake) from mid-June to mid-September with approximately 80 people attending over the summer.
- Seated yoga workshops were offered in conjunction with the local Alzheimer's Society, attracting 60 people over the three workshops.

- Currently six athletes in accessible rowing program. Half of these athletes are paying reduced fees to ensure affordability and efforts made to ensure that any interested parties have access to the program without financial means being a barrier.
- In 2019, the Northern Water Sport Centre hosted the Northeastern Ontario Recreation Association delegates for the afternoon as part of their annual conference. Approximately 50 delegates, were given an in depth facility tour, demonstration of the sport of dragon boating and the opportunity to paddle as a group in dragon boats.
- Plan to add open houses, free event day(s) for community members who are interested in trying the equipment and visiting the facility.
- Since COVID-19, membership have dramatically reduced and NWSC membership fees were reduced to recognize financial challenges in the community due to the current COVID-19 situation.
- An affordability policy has been developed in order for the Board to review requests for subsidization. Decisions are made based on budget, program goals and the financial need of the applicant. The Board is actively working on effectively communicating this policy and criteria to prospective members.

Additionally, the City has worked with the Northern Water Sports Centre board of directors to ensure that the community hall facility is available for public bookings, in line with processes established for other municipal community halls (available one year in advance for bookings, opposed to the 3 month period previously used).

Kivi Park

Kivi Park is a unique facility with both municipal parkland and private recreational land in the same location. Necessary support facilities for warming, changing and equipment storage have been placed on City property at the expense park operators. The City is entering into a Right of Occupation Agreement with park operators to enable the infrastructure to be placed on City property and for use of the City parking lot. The creation of the Right of Occupation agreement between Kivi Park and City of Greater Sudbury is in the final stages and will include language indicating the obligation to provide affordable access to recreation programs and the necessity to provide annual reporting of the information.

Kivi Park operators provide the following programs and services in support of the City's Affordable Access to Recreation Strategy:

2021 Affordable Access to Recreation Initiatives and provision of free passes:

- Big Brothers Big Sisters - 75 adult passes and 70 youth passes (value of \$11,000); 150 family day passes (value of \$3,700)
- Autism Ontario 25 annual passes (value of \$25,000)
- Children's Aid Society – Full access for anyone with a CAS card.
- Sudbury Library – 130 family day passes (value of \$2,250)
- Para-athletes - 5 annual passes (value of \$500)
- Red Oak Villa – 8 adult passes (value of \$800)
- School Board access (4@ \$5000 each) for a value of \$20,000 (due to COVID the schools were unable to attend)
- Rainbow Routes received free passes for Kivi Park to add value to their membership.
- Boy Scouts, Girl Guides and Brownies utilized Kivi Park free of charge for their outdoor meetings during COVID-19.
- YMCA Northeastern Ontario partnered with Kivi Park to subsidize two day camps per summer for fishing camp at Crowley Lake

- Kivi Park supports the SPARKS (Sudbury Police Adventure and Recreation at Kivi), who bring underserved youth to Crowley Lake
- Annual planning includes four free community access days per year.
- 33 Individual Affordability Fund Applications (Adult Annual) with a value of \$3,300
- 65 Individual Affordability Fund Applications (Family) with a value of \$15,600

As of August 10, 2021, 211 annual passes and 205 day passes were provided free of charge during 2021 operations.

Free passes are advertised through the Kivi Park website or through the marketing campaign on social media. Information was provided on social media, for not for profits and charities, who may be interested to apply to receive free passes.

In 2022, Kivi Park intends on expanding its affordable access by offering bus/taxi services to partners to ensure transportation is not a barrier in accessing Kivi Park. The facility has also been offered to various not-for-profits who require a fundraising venue. Kivi Park continues to look for ways to support affordable access to recreation and make strong partnerships in Greater Sudbury.

Next Steps

As lease agreements with municipal facilities are considered or renegotiated, affordable access language will continue to be included in agreements.

Information about affordable recreation opportunities will be shared with staff for referral purposes and included along with appropriate sections of the City's website.

Resources Cited

Affordable Access to Recreation Strategy, City Council (June 26, 2018)

<https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?documentid=5378>

Northern Water Sports Centre Request for Tax Relief, Finance & Administration Committee (April 12, 2017)

<https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?documentid=9014>

Sudbury Indoor Tennis Centre Request for Tax Relief, City Finance & Administration Committee (June 4, 2019)

<https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?documentid=3002>

Kivi Park Update, Community Services Committee (September 16, 2019)

<https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?documentid=2215>

City of Greater Sudbury Parks, Open Space and Leisure Master Plan Review (2014)

<https://www.greatersudbury.ca/play/parks-and-playgrounds1/parks-open-space-and-leisure-master-plan-review-2014/>