

## **Lively Recreation Advisory Panel and Community Engagement Process Update**

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### **Report Summary**

This report provides information on initial findings from the Lively Recreation Advisory Panel, and results of the first round of community engagement for recreational amenities in the Lively area as a result of the disposition of Meatbird Lake Park.

### **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 reflects the Community Energy and Emissions Plan (CEEP). Future recommendations emanating from this process will consider the goals outlined in the CEEP, as revised in March 2021.

### **Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

### **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.

Resolution CC2021-105 was passed at the April 12, 2021 City Council meeting which read:

THAT the City of Greater Sudbury dispense with the procedures outlined in Property By-law 2008-174 and Parkland Disposal Policy By-law 2010-158;

AND THAT the City of Greater Sudbury authorize the sale of 785 Municipal Road 24, Lively, legally described as PIN 73377-0106(LT), SRO, being Part 5, Plan 53R-15225, and Parts 1 to 5, Plan 53R-7549, Township of Waters, City of Greater Sudbury;

AND THAT a by-law be presented authorizing the sale and the execution of the documents required to complete the real estate transaction;

AND THAT the net proceeds of the sale be credited to the Capital Financing Reserve Fund -General, dedicated to the improvement of leisure infrastructure in the Walden (Lively) area.

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.

At the June 29, 2021 meeting of City Council, a report titled 'Community Engagement for Recreational Amenities in Lively' was presented. The report proposed a process for gathering public input on options for recreational amenities in the Lively area as a result of the closure and sale of Meatbird Lake Park. The Council directed staff to undertake a public engagement process which included the following features:

- A robust public engagement process that includes online and continuous dialogue with interested stakeholders.
- Criteria for evaluating potential recreational amenities that reflects, at a minimum, existing municipal Financial, Planning, Recreational and Environmental policies.
- An Advisory Committee with membership as described in this report and Terms of Reference that are subject to review and approval by City Council.
- A promotion and marketing plan to ensure broad awareness and current information about this work.
- This report indicated that staff would return with information from the initial engagement in the Fall of 2021.
- City Council approved terms of reference for a Lively Recreation Advisory Panel at the City Council meeting of July 14, 2021. The mandate of the panel is to serve as a link between the City of Greater Sudbury, various stakeholders and the community at large, in the development of a plan ensuring future recreational amenities in Lively reflect local needs in alignment with Council's strategic priorities. Primary objectives of the panel are:
  - To advise municipal staff on new or upgraded recreation opportunities that will meet the needs of the Lively community and that supports the creation of a plan for applying the proceeds from the sale of Meatbird Lake Park.
  - To provide input and insight on location development or improvements for recreation infrastructure.
  - Assist city staff in preparation of final recommendations to Council.

As per the approved terms of reference, the Advisory Panel is comprised of 10 members:

- 7 citizens as appointed by Council, including:
  - 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
  - The Ward Councillor
  - The Director of Leisure Services
  - A staff member of the Communications and Community Engagement section

Citizens were appointed to the Lively Recreation Advisory Panel at the Nominating Committee of August 18,

2021. The following citizens were appointed by Council:

- Mikella Morin and Andrea Ormerod to the Lively (residents who are youth)
- Kendra MacIsaac (resident who is parent/guardian of a child or children under 18)
- Barbara Gliberry (resident who is an older adult)
- Richard Eberhardt and Stacy Fahey Paajanen
- (two community members from anywhere in Greater Sudbury)
- Karen Makela (member of an active Lively area neighbourhood association or community group)

## **Community Engagement Process Update**

Initial engagement took place from September 17 to November 8, 2021. A survey and idea board were available on Over to You, the City's online community engagement portal, where residents could submit their input on how well existing community recreational activities are contributing to quality of life, and how the \$4 million received from the sale of the Meatbird Lake Park property might best be re-invested to serve the future needs of the Lively/Walden community.

There were several online tools and information sources available, including background reports, frequently asked questions, posters, a survey and an idea board. The site was updated regularly as additional information became available, and interested residents were able to sign up for update notifications. Recordings of the Lively Recreation Advisory Panel virtual meetings were posted to the site to ensure transparency throughout the process. Paper copies were available at Citizen Service Centre/Library locations, and residents could submit their feedback via 311.

The survey was promoted throughout the Lively area with posters at various private businesses and City facilities, including the arena, Library/Citizen Service Centre and park locations. Community groups, Community Action Networks (CANs) and neighbourhood associations assisted through promotion to their networks. The information was shared on the City of Greater Sudbury website, through paid social media advertising, digital billboards and with media partners through Public Service Announcements.

### **Summary of Survey Responses**

The Over To You site received a total of 3,000 visitors with 513 engaged visitors.

Traffic to the site was most often directly to the Over To You website or via social media.

The survey received 396 responses through the online portal, 311 and paper copies. The total number of visitors to the survey was 805.

Most of the responses were from individuals who identified as living in Lively and Naughton. The survey was completed primarily by residents in between the age of 30-49 and 60-69 years old. Responses were received from individuals in the following age categories:

- 2 responses from individuals 17 years of age and under
- 37 responses from individuals aged 18-29 years old
- 100 responses from individuals aged 30-39 years old
- 96 responses from individuals 40-49 years old
- 60 responses from individuals 50-59 years old
- 72 responses from individuals 60-69 years old
- 26 responses from individual 70-79 years old
- 3 responses from individuals 80 years and older

The common responses in the survey showed the many residents are looking for:

- Swimming options or amenities
- Affordable, multi-use facilities that are accessible and inclusive
- Investment in indoor and year-round facilities
- Upgrades to exciting parks, recreation facilities and open spaces

Some of the key questions and responses are highlighted below. A full report of the survey results can be found in Appendix A.

*What do you feel are the most important public recreation opportunity?*

The responses with the highest engagement included:

- 195 walking and hiking
- 171 swimming (outdoor)
- 157 swimming (indoor)
- 126 cross country skiing.

*What are the most important factors when it comes to recreational amenities?*

The important factors were:

- 258 affordability
- 239 multi-use facility
- 209 accessibility and inclusivity.

*From the list below, please select what you feel are the most important factors when considering improvements needed to serve the Lively/Walden?*

The most important factors were:

- 213 providing swimming opportunities
- 190 invest in indoor, year-round facilities
- 161 upgrade existing parks, recreational facilities, paths and open spaces.

*What features are important to you in a swimming amenity?*

The most important features were:

- 265 changing area and locker room
- 221 easy accessibility for seniors, families and people with special needs
- 195 picnic area.

*Prioritize the City-owned facilities noted below, in order of your location preference for new or enhanced recreational amenities in the Lively/Walden area. (1 being the highest priority)*

The City-owned facility Anderson Farm was ranked the highest, with Centennial Park ranked the lowest.

The top three were:

- 2.70 Anderson Farm
- 2.95 Green Space Behind Lively Citizen Service Centre/Library
- 3.25 Lively Ski Hill Property

Common responses on investments in current locations:

- Many agreed with the importance of upgrading and providing a new swimming opportunity
- Upgrades included: Baseball fields, pools, stake park, rink, splash pads
- Upgrades to current infrastructure: Ski Hill, tennis courts, ski chalet.

*Please list any other municipal properties and/or non-City owned properties you would like to see considered for new recreation amenities in the Lively/Walden area (up to three). Provide your ideas for improvements/enhancements at these locations.*

The most common ideas were:

- Sixth Avenue Golf Course mentioned 70 times
- Walden Cross Country Ski mentioned 20 times
- Expand Walden Arena mentioned 11 times
  - Hillcrest mentioned 7 times.

## **Idea Board**

A total of 411 visitors viewed the idea board with 138 contributors and 522 contributions (likes, comments on

contributor ideas). Ideas with the most votes, in order, were:

- Purchase new land (Sixth Avenue Golf Course was the most popular location)
  - Clean up Simon Lake for swimming
  - Skate Park
  - Outdoor Pool
  - Walking Track
  - Add to Tom Davies Arena
  - Add to the outdoor space at the library

## **Lively Recreation Advisory Panel Update**

The initial meeting of the Lively Recreation Advisory Panel was held on September 22, 2021. The Panel has met virtually biweekly since, with meeting agendas including updates on the community engagement process. In the interest of transparency, meetings were recorded and posted online at <https://overtoyou.greatersudbury.ca/livelywalden>. In addition, City staff provided Panel members with the following information to guide future discussions with respect to recreation infrastructure development in the area:

### **Parks, Open Space & Leisure Master Plan Priorities**

The City's Parks, Open Space and Leisure Master Plan (2014) identifies the following gaps and needs for parks and recreation infrastructure in the Walden (Lively) area:

- Walden should be considered for the installation of fully accessible barrier-free playground (estimated cost \$250,000 to \$350,000).
- Consider the provision of three additional mini soccer fields in Walden (estimated cost is between \$200,000 to \$300,000).
- Interest was expressed through the public open houses for a new skate park in Lively. Estimated cost for a new skate park (module equipment) is estimated in the range of \$125,000 to \$250,000.
- Walden has the highest per capita supply of active parkland in the City.
- Between 2011 and 2036, the child and youth population of Walden (ages 0 to 19) is forecasted to grow by 9%, the highest growth rate in the City. Based on this projection, investment in play and assets such as basketball courts, skate parks, etc. to be considered.

### **Existing Approved Recreation Projects**

Panel members were provided information regarding previously approved capital projects which will see improvements in the Lively and Walden areas, including plans for the Outdoor Court Revitalization and Playground Revitalization projects.

### **Update on State and Utilization of Existing Recreation Infrastructure**

City staff provided information on capital requirements called for in Building Condition Assessments of various recreation facilities in the Lively and Walden areas. Where available, utilization trends and data were provided. Information about the following facilities was shared:

- Anderson Farm
- Centennial Park
- Lively Ski Hill
- Sixth Avenue Playground
- TM Davies Arena

### **Parkland Requirements & Green Space Advisory Panel Recommendations**

The City currently maintains a total of 1,400 hectares of parkland over the municipal district. This service level of 7.3 hectares per 1,000 residents is higher than the provision level of 4.0 hectares per 1,000 residents established by the City's Parks, Open Space, and Leisure Master Plan. With respect to parkland requirements for the Walden/Lively area, the Parks, Open Space & Leisure Master Plan Review (2014) noted that the area was measured to have 31.6 hectares per 1,000 residents.

The Green Space Advisory Panel provided an Interim Green Space Advisory Panel Report in 2013, which

identified parkland gaps at a community level. The report noted two small gaps in Lively for a neighbourhood level parks in the Little Creighton and Jacobson Drive areas. The report also identified a gap for a linear park for Lively which has since been realized through the development of parkland as part of the Sugarbush subdivision. There were no other parkland gaps noted in the Walden service area.

### **Planning Services Presentation**

Staff from the City's Planning Services Division provided information relating to demographic information and trends for Walden/Lively areas. An overview of the City's Community Energy and Emissions Plan (CEEP) and goals was also presented.

### **Key Findings from the Lively Recreation Advisory Panel**

Based on the initial community engagement results, and the background information provided regarding demographics, master plan priorities, and other relevant strategic documents, the Panel has identified several key and emerging themes to help guide future project work:

- Targeted engagement is required to ensure more youth feedback is obtained about future recreation needs, considering the demographics and projection trends of the area.
- An approach to Atikameksheng Anishnawbek should be undertaken to determine their interest in the project and explore opportunities to collaborate.
- Several ideas submitted through the engagement process, while exciting, would likely require investment beyond the proceeds received from the disposition of Meatbird Lake Park (\$4 million). It will be important to continue to emphasize the project budget involved to manage community expectations.
- Investment should be targeted in facilities and amenities that provide universal, accessible, and low and no-cost access for residents.
- The enhancement/establishment of a swimming feature for the community has emerged as a central theme to be further explored.
- An emerging theme is to focus on investment in outdoor spaces versus vertical infrastructure (buildings).
- Enhancements and/or creation of active, outdoor amenities, such non-motorized trails, skate parks and pump tracks, are also viewed as an emerging priority for investment consideration.
- Emphasis should be placed on the co-location of amenities and multi-purpose facilities versus standalone features. Considerations for community gathering/socialization spaces should be considered.
- While there was significant support for investment in the Lively Service area, there was also a great deal of support for investment in other areas of the larger Walden community which should be further explored.

### **Next Steps**

Considering the feedback received from the initial round of community engagement, and the key findings summarized by the Lively Recreation Advisory Panel, staff will conduct extensive community consultation and report back to City Council by the end of the second quarter of 2022. Staff anticipate that the report will include recommendations on potential investment in recreational amenities in the Lively/Walden area.

The key findings, as identified by the Advisory Panel will guide the development of the engagement strategy, with a separate plan focused on engagement with youth. The Advisory Panel will support and assist staff in the development and implementation of these plans.

### **Resources Cited**

Vale Canada Presentation – Meatbird Lake Recreational Arena, City Council (September 22, 2020)  
<https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=fbb042f9-3ae3-4f14-9dfd-573e0c13ed93&Agenda=Agenda&lang=English>  
<https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?documentid=39064>

Report - Community Engagement for Recreational Amenities in Lively, City Council (June 29, 2021)

<https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/FileStream.ashx?DocumentId=40377>

Report – Lively Recreation Advisory Panel Terms of Reference, City Council (July 14, 2021)

<https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/FileStream.ashx?DocumentId=40484>