

## Request for Decision

### P6M Initiative - Leisure Program Marketing and Advertising Strategies

Presented To: Finance and  
Administration  
Committee

Presented: Tuesday, Nov 17, 2015

Report Date Thursday, Oct 29, 2015

Type: Managers' Reports

### Recommendation

WHEREAS the Citizen and Leisure Services Department presented details on Project 6 Million savings initiatives at the September 22, 2015 Finance and Administration Committee meeting;

AND WHEREAS as part of the Project 6 Million initiatives, a number of ideas have been submitted for consideration as operational savings;

AND WHEREAS one of the ideas submitted was to cease the publication of printed Leisure Guides;

AND WHEREAS the suggestion is in line with a new approach to marketing of leisure and recreation programs which has been under consideration in Corporate Communications and Leisure Services since 2013;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City of Greater Sudbury support the cancellation of the existing print version of the Leisure Guide after the Spring/Summer 2016 Edition;

AND THAT this new approach towards promotion and advertisement is expected to yield efficiencies as well as an initial minimal cost savings of \$10,000 towards Project 6 Million savings, with the possibilities of realizing further operational savings once the marketing tools have been developed, implemented and evaluated.

### Finance Implications

If approved, this Project 6 Million initiative will reduce the Leisure Services 2016 Operational Budget by \$10,000.00. Further savings may be realized after one year of operating under the new process. Further analysis will be undertaken at that time.

### Background

#### Signed By

**Report Prepared By**

Cindy Dent  
Manager of Recreation  
*Digitally Signed Oct 29, 15*

**Division Review**

Real Carre  
Director of Leisure Services  
*Digitally Signed Oct 29, 15*

**Recommended by the Department**

Ron Henderson  
General Manager of Citizen and  
Leisure Services  
*Digitally Signed Oct 29, 15*

**Recommended by the C.A.O.**

Kevin Fowke  
Acting Chief Administrative Officer  
*Digitally Signed Nov 9, 15*

The Leisure Guide is a static document distributed twice annually to residents of Greater Sudbury. A suggestion was received through the Project 6 Million process to cease printing of the Guide. This suggestion is in line with a new approach to marketing of leisure and recreation programs which has been under consideration in Corporate Communications and Leisure Services since 2013. Based on staff's analysis, as well as Council's increased focus on marketing and promotion of municipal services, it is recommended that the existing print version of the Leisure Guide be replaced by a range of diverse marketing tools, including printed and online materials, as well as a printed, seniors-specific guide to leisure and recreation opportunities. This change would take effect after the next issue of the Guide (Spring/Summer 2016), providing ample opportunity to ensure that residents understand where to go to find leisure and recreation programming information, and to develop targeted marketing tools and products.

This new approach towards marketing is expected to yield efficiencies, as well as minimal cost savings. An initial reduction of \$10,000 to the Leisure Services Promotion and Advertisement budget line is proposed, with further analysis of potential cost savings to be made once a year's worth of targeted marketing and promotion has occurred (Fall/Winter 2017).

This initiative is anticipated to allow staff to work more efficiently and will also offer a superior level of customer service to residents in terms of access to accurate and timely information. This direction would allow the City to move from a bi-annual static communication piece to an ongoing, dynamic conversation with Greater Sudbury residents and result in more efficient, strategic and targeted use of staff time and resources associated with marketing for leisure and recreation programming.

### **Production Analysis**

The City of Greater Sudbury issues the Leisure Guide twice annually: once in the spring/summer and once in the fall/winter. Guides are delivered to every household and apartment complex in the community in March and August. The Guides are delivered inside the Northern Life and Le Voyageur newspapers. Copies are also made available online on the City's website, and through Citizen Service Centres.

The Leisure Guide by the numbers (2015):

- 70,813 English copies delivered into households
- 8,000 French copies delivered into households
- 5,000 copies (English and French combined) for distribution to 13 Citizen Service Centres and to Leisure Services
- The annual budget allocation for Promotion and Advertisement is \$64,045. The annual cost of printing and distribution of the guide is estimated at \$56,000 per year.

### **Advantages to Diversified Marketing Strategies for Leisure Programming**

The move to more dynamic and diverse marketing methodologies for leisure and recreation programming will provide the following benefits.

- 1. Targeted Marketing:** In 2013, the City conducted a survey to ask residents for feedback regarding the Leisure Guide. The survey was placed in the Leisure Guide and delivered to every household in August 2013. It was also made available on the City's website, and promoted by a news release and social media. The survey received a low response rate of 92 respondents, and no changes were recommended on the basis of that survey.

However, the City's Open Government model and the survey conducted in 2014 on community engagement speaks to the need for accessible, dynamic, strategically targeted and ongoing communication with residents. Moving away from the print version of the Leisure Guide will ensure

that staff and financial resources are able to be used in delivering relevant information directly to our target audiences, using the most appropriate tactics. Because the print Leisure Guide contains such diverse information and is distributed to such a diverse group of residents, its content is not necessarily being received or noticed by the people who need it.

**2. Accuracy and Timeliness:** It is vital to the reputation of the City that the information provided by the municipality is as accurate as possible. Indeed, the City's review of community engagement practices in 2014 revealed a need for clear, timely, and increased access to information. As well, the principles of Open Government adopted by Council in 2015 support the move to a dynamic method of engagement and information sharing.

Accuracy and timeliness are very difficult to accomplish through a document that is intended to be used for six months. The existing Leisure Guide requires weeks to create and is then printed in such large quantities that it becomes cost-prohibitive to reprint if changes are needed. During the six-month period that the Leisure Guide is in use, many changes occur, which is inconvenient for both residents and City staff. Using an online format, changes can be made immediately, providing more timely and accurate information to the public, which also speaks to the Constellation City Report's recommendation that the City should "evaluate, revise, improve and promote municipal websites in order to promote usability".

**3. Efficient use of staff resources:** The Leisure Guide requires hundreds of hours of staff time to create. City of Greater Sudbury employees are involved with gathering, compiling, inputting and proof-reading information; designing and translating the document; as well as liaising with advertisers, printers and distributors. The following is an estimate of the time involved to produce one issue of the Leisure Guide:

Corporate Communications: 212 hours (30.3 full days)

Leisure Services: 530 hours (75.7 full days)

Total: 742 hours (106 days)

By moving to an online format, supplemented by targeted printed marketing for specific programs and activities, staff time and resources will be maximized and more intrinsically tied to customer satisfaction and service.

**4. Environmental impact:** Printing the Leisure Guide requires extensive amounts of paper. For example, for the Fall/Winter Guide, the City printed 82,300 copies of each Guide, which was 56 pages in length. This translates into 2,304,400 sheets of 8 ½ x 11" newsprint, plus 164,600 sheets of 8 ½ x 11" coated paper for the covers. From an environmental perspective, these numbers represent approximately 300 trees. Moving away from the current printed format of the Leisure Guide and replacing the content with targeted marketing tactics falls in line with environmental sustainability principles.

**5. Revenue generation:** With an increased focus on targeted marketing of leisure and recreation services, staff will also be targeting an increase in program registration and therefore increased revenue generation. Staff will be monitoring this and will report back to Council after a full year of targeted marketing strategies (Fall/Winter 2017).

**6. New software model for registration:** In 2016–2017, the CLASS registration system for leisure program and facilities will become defunct and be replaced by a new system. It is expected that this

new system will likely provide updated and current opportunities to advertise and market our Leisure programs.

**7. Expiration of printing contract:** The three year contract for the printing of the Leisure Guide expires in November 2015, with an option to extend an additional two years, making the time advantageous for changing the method of delivery of information for leisure and recreation programming.

### **Additional Considerations to Implementation of Change**

**1. Loss of revenue from advertising in the Leisure Guide:** ads are sold in the Leisure Guide to community groups to off-set the cost of production of the Guide. However, many of the groups wishing to advertise in the Guide maintain charitable status, and they benefit from reduced advertising fees; as well, demand for advertising space is minimal, due in part to the fact that many organizations are investing their marketing dollars in other areas. While it is possible to increase the space associated to advertising in the Guide, this will also result in requiring additional pages in the Guide – thereby increasing production costs. Advertising revenues per issue amounted to approximately \$10,000 on average in 2014, compared to \$56,000 for production of the Guides, making this barrier to implementation minimal, in terms of the impact.

**2. Residents without access to the Internet:** It should be noted that both income level and computer literacy can affect an individual's access to the Internet. While many Greater Sudbury residents regularly use the Internet in their homes, workplaces or public access locations, others may not have the opportunity to do so. Staff will work diligently to ensure that a diverse marketing approach is taken that respects and maintains ease of access to information for the community's diverse population. Some examples include:

- i. Produce a smaller version of the Guide with information specific to seniors, and printed in smaller quantities for distribution at municipal facilities and partner organizations such as older adults centres across the city.
- ii. Utilize print materials such as flyers and posters, and diversify advertising to promote specific programs in the most targeted locations, such as schools, community centres, and Citizen Service Centres.
- iii. Educate residents to attend CSC/Libraries for printing of any website information

It should be noted that these are examples of diverse marketing strategies and are not all-inclusive at this point.

**3. "Extra" information contained in the printed Guide:** There is a variety of information currently included in the printed Leisure Guide that is unrelated to leisure programs, but will still need to be conveyed to residents. Some of that information, such as community events and contacts, has already been moved to the website over the last year. In addition to placing the information in relevant sections of the City website, the following tactics may be implemented:

1. Ads placed in local wedding publications to promote gazebo and hall rentals.
2. Ads placed in annual Sudbury Tourism publication to promote items such as local beaches,

campgrounds, skiing, snowboarding, skating and hiking trails.

3. Confirm facility contact information placement in the local phone book.
4. Confirm City Council contact information placement in the local phone book.

### **A Diversified Approach to Marketing Leisure and Recreation Programs**

**1. Place all Leisure program information online:** Most leisure programs are already online and updated on a regular basis, however, in order to have appropriate information available online to supplement marketing materials, dates, cost and barcodes would need to be added to make it comprehensive and user-friendly. It is also important to ensure that this new section is as attractive and citizen-focused as possible, and as such, Leisure and Communications staff will make this a priority.

**2. Seniors:** There is a need to ensure that information relevant to active, healthy living is available to seniors. A large-font booklet will be developed and printed for seniors, containing information about leisure and recreation services specifically for seniors, in addition to other senior-focused information.

**3. Diversified communication strategies:** A comprehensive communication strategy for leisure programming is in development. The goals of the strategy are:

- a. To raise awareness of leisure programs available to residents of Greater Sudbury.
- b. To encourage residents to participate in leisure programs offered by the City of Greater Sudbury.
- c. To encourage residents to use municipally-operated recreation facilities.
- d. To raise awareness of and encourage residents to participate in community life.

The following tactics are examples of the way in which the messages will be disseminated:

- a. Flyer distributed to all elementary schools in the spring, highlighting summer camp and playground programs.
- b. Flyer distributed to all elementary and secondary schools in the fall, highlighting winter activities such as skiing and snowboarding.
- c. Social media sites – Facebook, Twitter, YouTube.
- d. Posters on board Greater Sudbury Transit and posted in City buildings such as Citizen Service Centres and recreation facilities.
- e. Use of City employees through 3-1-1 and Citizen Service Centres. These employees can assist residents by showing them where to find the leisure information on the City website, or by printing the appropriate pages from the website.

- f. Partnerships with local organizations to promote programs and engage in dialogue to enhance delivery of communication strategies.
- g. Final printed issue of the Leisure Guide (proposed for spring/summer 2016) will include information to advise residents of the coming changes and to show them where information will be available.
- h. Create a Leisure and Recreation Section on the website that promotes ease of registration and markets the services provided by the City.
- i. Develop and execute a strong social media strategy to increase participation in programs and services.

**Conclusion:**

The move from a traditional print Leisure Guide to a diverse, multi-faceted marketing campaign is well-supported by many of the City of Greater Sudbury's guiding documents and strategies. This transition would take place in the name of improved customer service, as well as fiscal and environmental responsibility. It is recommended that this change take place after the next issue of the Leisure Guide appears (spring/summer 2016). A reduction of \$10,000 from the 2016 Leisure Services Promotion and Advertising budget is proposed at this point. However, it is possible that further savings may be achieved once marketing tools and products have been developed. Staff will monitor expenditures and revenues and will report back to Council in the Fall/Winter of 2017.