

Request for Decision

Ski Hills - Marketing/Flex Pass Options

Presented To: Community Services Committee

Presented: Monday, Oct 21, 2013

Report Date: Wednesday, Oct 09, 2013

Type: Managers' Reports

Recommendation

WHEREAS at the July 8, 2013 Community Services Committee meeting additional information was requested regarding marketing and flex pass options for City of Greater Sudbury ski hills;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the recommended marketing strategies in the report dated October 21, 2013 from the General Manager of Community Development be implemented for the 2013-2014 ski season and that staff report back as part of a post season ski hill operating report, and;

THAT new rates corresponding to flex passes, promotional pricing and ticket upgrade strategies be brought forward as part of the 2014 User Fee By-Law for approval.

Finance Implications

Any marketing initiatives introduced will be supported by existing operational dollars.

New rates corresponding to flex passes, promotional pricing and ticket upgrade strategies will be brought forward as part of the 2014 User Fee By-Law for approval.

Background

In 2011, the Council of the City of Greater Sudbury approved the Leisure Services Strategic Plan (2011-2015) which established a number of goals for the division to strive for to advance the needs of the community in the areas of parks services, arenas and recreation. One of the main goals was to advance communication and access for citizens, user groups and partners.

On May 6, 2013, staff presented a ski hill post season operating report to the Community Services Committee (Appendix 'A'). As part of that report, a number of initiatives were identified to further advance communication with ski hill season pass holders, users and stakeholders. Initiatives identified included:

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Digitally Signed Oct 9, 13

Division Review

Real Carre
Director of Leisure Services
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Recommended by the Department

Catherine Matheson
General Manager of Community Development
Digitally Signed Oct 9, 13

Recommended by the C.A.O.

Doug Nadorozny
Chief Administrative Officer
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- Implement an annual user satisfaction survey for CGS ski hill membership holders.
- Expand use of traditional and social marketing to better promote and communicate CGS ski hill information to new and existing users.
- Examine a 'Ski All Three' pass and other similar promotions to encourage the use of all three CGS ski hills.
- Implement a modern pass sales system to increase customer service and allow online registrations and sales.

At the Community Services Committee meeting of July 8, 2013, staff were further directed to report back on marketing and flex pass options which would increase participation of the three municipally run ski hills (Adanac, Capreol and Lively).

Marketing of City of Greater Sudbury Ski Hills

Currently, municipally run ski hills are promoted utilizing the following communications tools:

- Television advertisements to promote season pass sales in late December.
- Section dedicated to ski hills in the Fall-Winter Leisure Guide.
- Inclusion in the Greater Sudbury Visitor's Guide and Ontario Snow Resorts Association (OSRA) Guide.
- Email distributions to season pass holders.
- A dedicated and descriptive section on the City of Greater Sudbury website.
- Public Service Announcements to inform about season start, closures, etc.

The Leisure Services Division has been working with Resort Development Solutions to develop a roadmap for the capital improvements required at CGS ski hills and improved utilization of the facilities for the next five ski seasons. As part of their preliminary findings, Resort Development Solutions noted the following marketing initiatives:

- Increased use of social media (Facebook and Twitter) is required to post daily ski conditions for all three ski areas, special events happening at the facilities and any hill closures. Resort Development Solutions recommends dedicated social media accounts for ski hills.
- Examine hourly ticket price strategy, especially for weekday evenings (4 p.m. to 7 p.m.).
- Hosting 'Happy Hour' events and activities on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays.
- Hosting more event based activities (music events, demo days, etc.) to attract new visitors.

Furthermore, as per the initiatives outlined as part of the post-season operating report, season passes will be made available online for the 2013-2014 ski season. Additionally, a user satisfaction survey will be developed and circulated at the conclusion of the upcoming ski season.

Flex Pass Options

Under current ski hill pricing, an individual must purchase a separate membership or pass for each of the three CGS ski hills (Adanac, Capreol or Lively). Flex passes and ticket upgrades are methods that can be introduced to offer existing customers at any of the three sites an opportunity to experience other facilities. These strategies will reduce congestion at peak times at one facility, and shift users to slower operating periods at other sites.

The following recommendations for flex pass and ticket upgrade strategies are as follows:

- 'Super pass' or 'Ski all Three pass' which would allow pass holders to use all three City of Greater Sudbury ski hills.
- Pass holders of Capreol or Lively ski hill could upgrade their ticket and use Adanac paying the difference (\$13) between a half day rate at their hill (\$11) and the rate of a half day pass at Adanac

(\$24). Upgrades would only be permitted during non-peak times (no weekends or holidays).

- Adanac season pass holders could utilize Capreol or Lively ski hills when there are ski hill races or special events taking place at Adanac ski hill. This will alleviate pressure off Adanac during event based activities and introduce the other two sites to new skiers and snowboarders.

As pricing for the 2013-2014 ski season has already been advertised, it is recommended that any new rates be introduced as part of the 2014 User Fee By-Law for the 2014-2015 ski season.



Request for Decision

Ski Hills - Post Season Operating Report

Presented To:	Community Services Committee
Presented:	Monday, May 06, 2013
Report Date	Wednesday, Apr 17, 2013
Type:	Managers' Reports

Recommendation

WHEREAS the ski hills post season report provides an analysis of the 2012-2013 operating season of the Adanac, Capreol and Lively ski hills, and;

WHEREAS as a result of the findings, goals and objectives have been established for the upcoming 2013-2014 season which are designed to increase participation and improve the experience for users of the ski hills, and;

WHEREAS as part of the evaluation, research was conducted on cold weather policies which have been developed to assist ski hill operators making decisions on operating facilities during extreme cold temperatures.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City of Greater Sudbury approve the Ontario Snow Resorts Association (OSRA) policy for the operation of ski hill facilities during extreme cold temperatures which would result in closing facilities when temperatures are colder than -35°C. The policy would be implemented for the upcoming 2013 - 2014 ski season.

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Overview

The City of Greater Sudbury Leisure Services Division operates the Adanac, Capreol and Lively Ski Hills. The 2012-2013 ski hill season saw over 16,000 visitors at the three locations combined. This report will provide highlights of the 2012-2013 ski season and will outline goals for the following season as per the Leisure Services Division Strategic Plan 2011-2015.

2012-2013 Participant Statistics

The Adanac Ski Hill continues to attract a significant number of users. The following are statistics for 2012-2013 ski season: 68 operating days/25 evenings, season pass holders (293), 5 day pass sales (215), program participants (219), private lessons (1,231), student visits (510) and day visits (14,300). Average

visits per opening shift is 153.8.

In 2012-2013, the Capreol Ski Hill had 36 operating days (average of 9.3 visits per day) and total visits (334). The Lively Ski Hill had 38 operating days (average of 51.8 visits per day) and total visits (1,968).

3 Year Comparison

Adanac Ski Hill							
Season	Operating Days	Season Passes	5 Day Passes	Program Participants	Private Lessons	Student Visits	Day Visits
2010-2011	71 days / 31 evenings	393	100	182	1000	569	14,850
2011-2012	62 days / 27 evenings	222	124	183	1100	616	14,200
2012-2013	68 days / 25 evenings	293	215	219	1231	510	14,300

Capreol Ski Hill			
Season	Operating Days	Season Passes	Total Visits
2010-2011	22	9	433
2011-2012	31	8	416
2012-2013	36	4	334

Lively Ski Hill			
Season	Operating Days	Season Passes	Total Visits
2010-2011	39	70	2343
2011-2012	35	73	2171
2012-2013	38	85	1968

2012-2013 Highlights and Activities

Canadian Ski Patrol Services

Canadian Ski Patrol Services (CSPS) volunteers contributed numerous volunteer hours promoting safe skiing and boarding and providing first aid coverage at Adanac and Lively Ski Hills. Leisure Services staff have worked with CSPS to develop a Joint Statement of Understanding which clearly recognizes the important functions that CSPS provides to CGS ski hills and the volunteer contributions of individual CSPS members.

Adanac Concession Services

Prior to the 2012-2013 ski season, a Request for Proposal was issued for the operation of the Adanac concession and awarded to 1876296 Ontario Limited. Initial feedback from Adanac patrons was positive, noting the improved food quality and variety. Having a private operator run concession operations has also allowed Adanac staff to devote attention to ski programming and other ski operations.

Adanac Ski Club

The Adanac Ski Club continues to make use of the Adanac Ski Hill for practices and events. The club has grown to over 100 members recently, up from 60 just a few years ago.

Improved Marketing and Website

A dedicated URL (www.greatersudbury.ca/ski) was used to promote all three ski hill facilities where residents could find information about ski hill conditions, runs open, pass and membership rates and general ski information such as the Alpine Code of Conduct.

Leisure Services staff also used email to directly keep those season pass holders up to date regarding ski hill closures, upcoming events, etc.

Races Hosted at Adanac

The Adanac Ski Hill was home to the Sudbury District Secondary School Athletic Association (SDSSAA) and Northern Ontario Secondary School Association (NOSSA) alpine ski championships. Additionally the Adanac Ski Club hosted a Northern Ontario Division Race, a provincial/national points race, at Adanac.

Walden Winter Carnival Opening Ceremonies

The Walden Winter Carnival Organizing Committee made use of the Lively Ski Hill as a fireworks launch point as part of their 2013 Winter Carnival Opening Ceremonies.

Ecole secondaire Hanmer use of Capreol Ski Hill

Ecole secondaire Hanmer continued its tradition of hosting their school winter carnival at Capreol Ski Hill providing students with the opportunity to downhill ski, slide and make use of the neighbouring Capreol Cross Country ski trails.

Great Cardboard Toboggan Event

Big Brothers Big Sisters hosted their annual Great Cardboard Toboggan Event at Adanac Ski Hill, providing those non-skiers and non-snowboarders an opportunity to enjoy the winter facility while raising funds for a great cause.

Ski Hill User Fee Comparison

The following charts detail the user fees associated with use of Adanac, Capreol and Lively Ski Hills in comparison with lift fees from other similar sized facilities in Northeastern Ontario.

Pass rates at Capreol and Lively Ski Hills are based on a 3.5 hour (weekdays) or 4.5 hour (weekend) opening therefore when comparing rates at Capreol and Lively to other ski hills, it is best to compare with half day rates.

Fees shown do not include applicable taxes.

City of Greater Sudbury Ski Hills			
Ski Facility	Adult Full Day Pass	Adult Half Day Pass	Adult Season Pass
Adanac Ski Hill	\$25.66	\$20.35	\$376.11
Capreol Ski Hill	\$9.29	-	\$119.47
Lively Ski Hill	\$9.29	-	\$119.47

Non CGS Ski Hills			
Ski Facility	Adult Full Day Pass	Adult Half Day Pass	Adult Season Pass
Onaping Ski Hill	\$28.00*	-	-
Laurentian Ski Hill (North Bay)	\$33.62	\$28.31	\$464.60
Kamiskotia Snow Resort (Timmins)	\$38.00	\$28.00	\$529.00
Boogie Mountain (Espanola)	\$31.00	\$24.00	\$319.00
Tri Town Ski Village (New Liskeard)	\$25.00	\$15.00	-
Mt. Dufour (Elliot Lake)	\$34.51	\$28.32	\$352.21
<i>*2011-2012 rate</i>			

Cold Weather Policy

During the 2012-2013 ski hill season, there were 6 days which temperatures were below -25°C before wind chill. Staff have contacted the Ontario Snow Resorts Association (OSRA) regarding policies for the operation of ski hill facilities during extreme cold temperatures.

OSRA has developed a scale that will enable the public to accurately reflect the level of comfort they may expect while engaged in winter recreation. This scale has been named Comfort Tips and specifically relates wind chill to a set of parameters the public can use to enable them to enjoy winter activities.

Temperatures Above -5°C

- Enjoy outdoor winter activities
- Consider wearing a hat and gloves

Temperature -5°C to -20°C

- Enjoy outdoor winter activities
- Dress in layers
- Exposed skin will be cold: consider wearing a hat, scarf, gloves/mittens and a wind-resistant layer

Temperature -20°C to -35°C

- Keep active while outdoors
- Dress in warm layers
- Limit amount of exposed skin
- Wear a hat, scarf, gloves/mittens and wind-resistant outer layer

Temperature Below -35°C

- Minimize outdoor activity
- Wear all essential winter clothing and layers
- Cover all exposed skin

Staff are recommending that the OSRA Comfort Tips be adopted and that language be included in ski hill promotions noting that the City of Greater Sudbury would close ski hill facilities when temperatures are colder than -35C. In instances when facilities are closed due to cold temperatures, the City will strive to reschedule during alternate dates and times to make up for hours missed.

Goals and Objectives for 2013-2014 Ski Season

The following are examples of how staff will work with the Leisure Services Strategic Plan 2011-2015 to increase participation and improve the experience at City of Greater Sudbury ski hills.

Continued effort in the infrastructure renewal of both small and large scale projects

- Develop life cycle analysis for ski hill assets including buildings and lift devices and identify capital and replacement needs
- Work with stakeholders on the replacement of the Lively Ski Hill chalet and development of the Lively Ski Hill venue as a four season recreation centre

Advance Communication with Citizens, User Groups and Partners

- Implement an annual user satisfaction survey for CGS Ski Hill membership holders
- Expand use of traditional and social marketing to better promote and communicate CGS ski hill information to new and existing users
- Examine a 'Ski All Three' pass and other similar promotions to encourage the use of all three CGS ski hills
- Implement a more modern pass sales system to increase customer service and allow online registrations and sales

Promote Sports Tourism and Special Events

- Promote CGS ski hills as opportunities for sporting events in partnership with local ski clubs, etc.
- Promote use of CGS ski hills as potential venues for year round special events (walkathons, fitness challenges, etc.)

Further develop inclusive, dynamic and fiscally responsible leisure and recreation programming under the Healthy Community Human Health and Well-Being Pillar

- Examine the operations of Capreol Ski Hill and explore opportunities for alternate use including tubing and off-season activities with stakeholders
- Work with Ontario Track 3 Association and local volunteers to re-introduce skiing and snowboarding lessons for children and youth with disabilities at CGS ski hills.