



SUBJECT: Framework for community recreation

TO: Committee of the Whole

FROM: Parks & Recreation Department

Report Number: PR-11-19

Wards Affected: all

File Numbers: 900-01

Date to Committee: December 2, 2019

Date to Council: December 16, 2019

Recommendation:

Approve the Framework for Community Recreation in the City of Burlington ("New Framework") as presented in Appendix A of Report PR-11-19 to be the guiding policy document for the Department of Recreation Services; and

Rescind the following Council approved policies; Leisure Services Delivery Policy (PR-7-00), Community Development (Rec-017), and Gender Equity in the Allocation of Public Recreation Spaces (PR-05-07).

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to submit for Council's approval the new Framework for Community Recreation in the City of Burlington, Recreation Services Department. This initiative connects with the following strategic directions of the City's 2018-2022 Strategic Plan – From Vision to Focus (V2F):

A Healthy and Greener City

- Healthy Lifestyles
- Environmental and Energy Leadership

An Engaging City

- Good Governance
- Community Building through Arts and Culture via Community Activities

This initiative is specifically identified as a deliverable in V2F.

Background and Discussion:

The Recreation Services department works in a very complex and continually evolving operating environment that is affected by many factors including population growth and demand, changing demographics, new trends and interests in recreation, prevailing social policies aimed at improving inclusion, equity and access to services that enrich the quality of life and well-being of all citizens. At times, the city must make some difficult decisions on how to best use resources and funding available in a way that provides the best value and has the greatest impact to the broader community.

Over the years, the Recreation Services department has relied on several policies to guide decisions on service delivery, city investment and resource allocation. These policies have served the department well over the years, but now lag more current and progressive approaches, along with community values and expectations.

These key policies include:

- **Leisure Services Policy** (which provides a process to determine what services the city should be involved in and what the best delivery model should be)
- **Community Development** (working to build capacity in the community to provide services that are needed)
- **Gender Equity in the Allocation of Recreation Spaces** (ensures equitable allocation of recreational space to support participation interests of all genders)
- **Public Recreational Spaces Allocation** (prioritizes the allocation of recreational spaces and facilities to not-for-profit organizations providing programs open to the community and emphasizing youth service priority).

Over the past year, Recreation Services has worked on developing a new consolidated overarching policy Framework for Community Recreation to replace our older policies in order to better align with current federal and provincial policy/directions, the City's Strategic Plan and new community expectations. The City's proposed Framework is inspired by the [Framework for Recreation in Canada](#) developed by the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA) which is the national body that we align with.

"We envision a Canada in which every citizen is engaged in meaningful, accessible recreation experiences that foster individual, community and environmental well-being. The Framework for Recreation in Canada is our pathway to that goal.

The Framework for Recreation in Canada is the guiding document for public recreation providers in Canada. We have an opportunity to work together in ways that will enable all Canadians to enjoy recreation and outdoor experiences in supportive physical and social environments." CPRA

Staff are pleased to submit for Council's approval the new Framework for Community Recreation in the City of Burlington (attached as Appendix A). This document establishes a strategic foundation for the delivery of recreation services based on a common vision, values, principles and goals. It will help the City determine priorities for the allocation of city resources, investments and supports in a consistent and transparent approach. Fundamentally, the framework will work to support broader community access to recreational services.

Strategy/process

The development of the Framework for Community Recreation (Framework) involved a 2-year process that included the following steps:

1. Undertook a review of various current policies related to community access to recreation and sport including provincial and federal policy frameworks, provincial sport governing policies and other municipal models.
2. Undertook many project team meetings to develop a draft Framework.
3. Conducted a department-wide workshop on the draft Framework.
4. Undertook a Council workshop on the draft Framework to gain insight and perspectives.
5. Undertook a series of user meetings (ice, sport fields, gyms, pools, arts) to get feedback on the draft Framework.
6. Launched a public survey to get feedback on key aspects of the Framework.
7. Revised the Framework based on feedback received.
8. Final submission to Council for approval.

Next Steps

Subject to Council's approval of the Framework for Community Recreation, staff will undertake a variety of initiatives including:

1. Train all staff and volunteers in the new Framework.
2. Develop new and updated policies including:
 - Facility Rental Policy CL-21-03 (update)
 - Public Recreational Spaces Allocation Policy PR-05-07 (update)
 - Rates and Fees Policy (new)
3. Ensure that all new partnerships are aligned and adhere to the Framework. E.g. Aquatics Special Interest Groups RFP.

4. Update the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Master Plan to now align with this Framework.

Financial Matters:

The implementation of the New Framework will not have any direct financial implications. By use of the Framework in future, all and any financial implications will be addressed with direct relation and alignment to the Framework. To note, this Framework was also completed by the expertise of staff with strong involvement from the broader community. No consulting services were used in the development of this Framework.

Connections:

This policy philosophically aligns with:

- Burlington's Strategic Plan – Vision to Focus
 - Service Plans for Recreation and Organized Sport Services
 - Affordable Access to Recreation for Ontarians – Policy Framework
 - Community Hubs in Ontario: A Strategic Framework & Action Plan
 - A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015 Pathways to Wellbeing
 - Strategic Plans of most Sport Governing Bodies.
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Public Engagement Matters:

Staff consulted with many stakeholders on the new Framework for Community Recreation. Overall, staff feel that community stakeholders accept the principles of the Framework and believe that it is in the best interest of the community. It is hard to argue against the goal of promoting greater community access and participation in recreation services, especially those that are supported by tax-payers of the city. The following provides a high-level summary of some of the key points we heard:

City Council:

- Ensure there is a direct alignment between the department's Framework for Community Recreation and that of the City's vision, focus and direction.
- Promote broader community access to recreation.
- Prioritize the accommodation of general recreational interests over the elite program interests.

- Ensure special interests are considered and properly managed.
- Support city investments for multi-purpose facilities accommodating a range of uses and skill levels.
- Incorporate evidence-based decision making and data.
- Replace the hierarchy diagram from a “divisional” pyramid to inclusive circles.
- Ensure that inclusivity is based on a broad lens that may at times involve focusing on a specific need or underserved segment of the population.
- Change narrative from “removing barriers” to “creating opportunities”
- Can’t be everything to everyone.
- Need partnerships to address community needs.
- Ensure that partnerships are clearly defined, strategic, aligned and well managed.
- Consistent and transparent approach for making decisions.

Since the Council workshop on the proposed Framework in May 2019, many of the suggestions noted above have been incorporated in this final version attached to this report.

Service Providers/Special Interest Groups:

- Most organizations felt that it was appropriate to prioritize programs at the fundamental level.
- Many organizations felt that they have similar principles and saw how they fit in the new Framework.
- Most groups appreciated the opportunity to learn and have input into this policy initiative.
- Sentiment varied from one user group meeting to another. Mostly positive and respectful dialogue, with few organizations holding more cynical views of the policy and hidden agenda of the City.
- Some organizations were concerned about the impact to rep programs (e.g. facility time, rates).
- Some groups thought that the City already operates in a similar way to the proposed Framework.
- The hope that more facilities will be built to support the sport continuum.

- Better understand how the City will view items like inclusivity and affordability as related to the allocation of space.
- Would like to now see an updated Space Allocation Policy.

General Public:

Over the years, we have heard many different comments from the general community as related to our department and our service delivery. A core belief that a municipally tax supported service department should be in place to primarily serve its' residents first. In October this year, we put out a survey to solicit more specific feedback from the general community on the Framework for Recreation in the City of Burlington. The online survey was posted on the City's Get Involved web page. Below represents some of the feedback we received through the survey and through the ongoing dialogue we have had with the community over the years:

- Strong appreciation that access for the general community should come first.
- High value in ensuring there are a variety of opportunities for the public to participate in, while encouraging healthy and active living.
- Burlington residents should come before non-residents for access to city services.
- The department should look to create meaningful partnerships while ensuring the City offers programs that others do not, or that fill a specific need.
- There is support for funding programs that enable families in need to access recreational programs and services.

Conclusion:

The proposed "Framework for Community Recreation in the City of Burlington" is a policy framework that refocuses the priorities of the City with respect to recreational service investments and resource allocations that support broader community access and optimize our resources to achieve the greatest community impact. Staff are seeking Council's support of this policy framework to begin implementation. Staff are excited and look forward to moving into a new and progressive era of inclusive and accessible recreation for all.

Respectfully submitted,

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Appendices:

A. Framework for Community Recreation in the City of Burlington

Report Approval:

All reports are reviewed and/or approved by Department Director, Director of Finance and Director of Legal. Final approval is by the City Manager.