

Development of a City-wide Recreation Service Plan

Date:	May 15, 2009
To:	Executive Committee
From:	Brenda Patterson, General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation Nancy Matthews, General Manager, Children's Services
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

This report seeks City Council approval for the principles of equitable access, quality, inclusion and capacity building as a foundation for the development of a City-wide, multi-year Recreation Service Plan. The Service Plan will guide decision-making in the management and administration of all recreation programs and services across the City.

This report outlines the principles, the service planning approach, a proposed work plan and timeline, including community engagement and involvement, and an interdivisional advisory team to support the development of the Recreation Service Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Managers of Parks, Forestry and Recreation and Children's Services recommend that City Council approve the development of a City-wide, multi-year Recreation Service Plan guided by the following principles:

1. **Equitable Access** -- providing equitable recreation access on a geographic and demographic basis for all residents of Toronto.
2. **Quality** -- providing the highest quality of programs and services to enhance the health, quality of life and well-being of residents.

3. **Inclusion** -- ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to access and participate in programs and services that are planned, delivered, and managed to recognize diversity and encourage participation of marginalized and racialized people and groups.

4. **Capacity Building** -- providing programs and services of social, economic and physical benefit to all participants and that create a sense of community, belonging, and vitality.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

This report has no immediate financial impact.

DECISION HISTORY

In 2004, City Council approved a strategic plan for Parks, Forestry and Recreation, 'Our Common Grounds' which set a direction for the future of recreation services.

At its meeting of January 14, 2008, the Community Development and Recreation Committee referred back to staff, for reconsideration, a proposed plan to improve access to recreation (CD12.7 – Improving Access to Recreation: “Everybody Gets to Play”).
<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2008/cd/agendas/2008-01-14-cd12-ar.pdf>

The General Managers of Parks, Forestry and Recreation and Children's Services were directed to develop a revised approach to this plan. This report recommends that City Council approve the principles of equitable access, quality, inclusion and capacity building to guide the development of a City-wide, multi-year Recreation Service Plan.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Toronto has made a fundamental commitment and investment in recreation to help residents live long, healthy, active and fulfilling lives. Toronto invests in recreation in a variety of ways, including direct service delivery, purchase of service delivery, partnerships, grants, permits and agreements. Recreation programs are designed and delivered in partnership with the public, communities, neighbourhoods, and private and non-profit providers.

Recreation is not just about programs that build strong bodies or life saving skills; and recreation resources are not just pools, rinks, fields and gyms. Recreation provides social, economic and physical benefits to all participants. Recreation programs enrich the City by training the leaders of tomorrow, developing skills and talents in individuals, and creating a sense of community, belonging, and vitality. Recreation programs are a key element of maintaining healthy, strong and vibrant communities and neighbourhoods in

Toronto. The Division offers a wide range of programs that promote the social and physical development for people of all ages and abilities, while providing the opportunity for meaningful interaction through participation.

Because recreation programs benefit both individuals and communities, it is critical that the City's planning for recreation ensures that all communities benefit from equitable access to quality recreation services. The multi-year recreation service plan will guide the management and delivery of the City's recreation services. Through the development of the Plan, the City will take stock of its current services and programs and develop future directions supported by a clear set of principles that balances Toronto's new and emerging needs while serving existing demands.

Service Planning Approach

The Recreation Service Plan guides the City's role in managing the continuum of recreation services to meet the needs of Toronto residents. A service planning exercise is a critical step for the Division to take to establish consistent processes and methodologies, along with a framework to: identify current service levels; articulate the diverse recreation and leisure needs of the City's many communities; provide a basis for decision-making; and establish priorities and principles for investments.

Recreation programs and services are key drivers for the City to achieve its goals of social inclusion and cohesion. They are the means to help ensure that all of the City's neighbourhoods are strong and healthy. Involvement in recreation programs offers opportunities to enrich people's lives by building skills and linkages to their community. Service planning is an important mechanism to ensure that Parks, Forestry and Recreation programs and services remain relevant to the diverse and changing needs of the City's residents and communities.

Similar to the development of the City's Child Care Service Plan, this approach will give direction to planning, priority setting and new investment, and will clearly articulate the City's core recreation programs and services in relation to the following principles:

1. **Equitable Access** -- providing equitable recreation access on a geographic and demographic basis for all residents of Toronto.
2. **Quality** -- providing the highest quality of programs and services to enhance the health, quality of life and well-being of residents.
3. **Inclusion** -- ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to access and participate in programs and services that are planned, delivered and managed to recognize diversity and encourage participation of marginalized and racialized people and groups.

4. **Capacity Building** -- providing programs and services of social, economic and physical benefits to all participants and that create a sense of community, belonging, and vitality.

Proposed Work Plan and Timeline

The development of the City-wide, multi-year Recreation Service Plan will be supported by an interdivisional advisory team, including key City agencies, boards, commissions and divisions. A strategy to engage staff, key stakeholders, and the broader community in the development of the Service Plan will take place over the next several months. Through focus groups, public sessions and web based engagement the plan will be informed by key stakeholders and broader public. It is expected that a multi-year Recreation Service Plan based on these principles will be submitted to City Council in early 2010.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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