

January 17, 2019

To: Members  
Community & Protective Services Committee

Re: Recreation Master Plan

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### RECOMMENDATION

1. That the attached Recreation Master Plan be approved, authorizing the use of the document to guide recreation program and service delivery decisions.
2. That Administration be directed to provide an annual progress report regarding the implementation of the Recreation Master Plan.
3. That this report be forwarded to the January 28, 2019 meeting of Council for approval.

### CONCLUSION

Administration has worked with consulting firm RC Strategies + PERC (RC Strategies) to prepare a Recreation Master Plan (RMP) to guide the City's work in the delivery of recreation programs and facilities (see Appendix A). The RMP aligns with *Design Regina: The Official Community Plan* (OCP) and supports the *Framework for Recreation in Canada: Pathways to Wellbeing* (National Recreation Framework). Alignment with these guiding documents enables the City to promote and further recreation goals on a national level as well as to implement the policy directions established in the OCP.

It is important to note that the RMP is a guiding document that will assist Administration with the delivery of recreation services; however, any recommendations requiring funding will need to be considered and approved by Council through the annual budget process.

### BACKGROUND

The City's current RMP was completed in 2010 and was intended to provide direction for a ten-year period. While the City has been successful in implementing a number of recommendations through community partnerships, implementation of large capital recommendations remains a challenge due to funding pressures. At the same time, recreation facilities continue to age, with many requiring significant investment to remain sustainable and/or to meet contemporary program needs. Population growth and changing demographics have further contributed to a need to confirm the City's role in recreation programs and services and to establish priorities within the current financial reality.

In 2016, Administration secured the services of RC Strategies to develop a new RMP for Regina.

As the successful proponent, RC Strategies was directed to consider the following as part of the development of the plan:

- Delivery of recreation programs and facilities in other municipalities
- Alignment with the OCP and other related City policy documents
- Alignment with the National Recreation Framework and other national recreation policy
- Trends and gaps in recreation
- Service standards for outdoor recreation amenities
- Condition of existing facilities
- Capacity and usage of existing recreation facilities
- Associated facility costs
- Public opinion as it relates to recreation programs and facilities

RC Strategies then undertook a planning process that included the following phases:

- Phase I: Background Review
- Phase II: Public Engagement & Research
- Phase III: Draft Master Plan Development
- Phase IV: Internal & External Review
- Phase V: Final Master Plan & Implementation Strategy

At the conclusion of Phase II, a State of Recreation Report was prepared (Appendix B). This report provides information on the following:

- Inventory & Utilization of current spaces
- Facility Condition
- Community Input (via a household survey, interviews and meetings with stakeholders, the community group survey, a student survey and public events and open houses)
- Comparative Analysis (comparison to other cities)
- Trends & Issues
- Population & Demographics
- Review of Relevant City Plans (including the OCP, Cultural Master Plan, Transportation Master Plan and others)

Throughout the process, a community advisory committee comprised of service delivery partners was invited to provide feedback. This committee included Economic Development Regina, Homebuilders Association, Provincial Capital Commission, Regina Board of Education, Regina Catholic School Board, Regina Exhibition Association Limited, Regina Police Service, Regina Public Library, Saskatchewan Health Authority, Sask Polytechnic, University of Regina, White Butte Recreation Group and the YMCA.

The State of Recreation Report was reviewed with staff and the Community Advisory Committee. It then formed the basis for development of the Recreation Master Plan.

## DISCUSSION

Although the OCP provides overarching policy direction and guidance regarding recreation service delivery, in order to achieve the City's vision, further articulation regarding the desired outcomes of public investment in recreation is necessary. A key component of the research was public engagement. This included a statistically valid telephone survey, an online survey, meetings with stakeholders and a community advisory group, and two public open houses. Results of the engagement included:

- 600 responses to the telephone survey (a statistically significant sample size)
- Over 1,300 responses to the online survey
- 55 personal interviews with user groups and stakeholders
- 615 survey responses from youth in 32 schools
- 185 responses from user groups

One of the foundations of the RMP is that as a core public service, recreation activity creates benefits that all residents cannot escape, whether they use the services directly or not. When consulting with the residents through the development of the Plan, 91 per cent of households in Regina agreed that recreation programs and services are important to their quality of life. Furthermore, 97 per cent of residents agreed that the community as a whole benefits from the recreation programs and services in Regina, whether or not they benefit directly. Through engagement with the community, Administration was also able to confirm the public's support of other foundational pieces of the plan such as the vision, outcomes and principles.

Through initial research and analysis of current facility condition assessments RC Strategies was also able to determine that City (bricks and mortar) recreation facilities were an average age of 40 years with outdoor pools being the oldest facilities at an average age of 64 years. The consultants determined that, in order to sustain the current recreation infrastructure inventory into the future, an investment of approximately \$350 million to repair and replace infrastructure to current standards would be required. Through public engagement, residents expressed a low willingness to pay to invest in recreation infrastructure, which means that difficult decisions regarding the levels of service for some recreation assets may be required.

Once the State of Recreation Report was complete, the foundations of the RMP were confirmed with stakeholders and the community. The foundations of the plan included the vision, outcomes and base level of service which align with the National Recreation Framework and OCP.

### Vision

Four season sport and recreation opportunities improve quality of life and make Regina a more vibrant and attractive place to live, work and visit.

## Outcomes

Outcomes relate to the wellbeing of all citizens:

1. All citizens have a basic level of physical literacy, fitness and wellbeing
2. All ages and abilities have basic skills in a variety of leisure pursuits
3. Advanced level skill development is available for some pursuits through partnerships, opportunities exist to compete and excel in leisure pursuits
4. Social opportunities and environments support a sense of inclusion, self-confidence and self-worth

Outcomes related to enhancing community health and wellness:

5. Citizens are proud of their community, its facilities and spaces, the events and opportunities it offers and its level of volunteerism
6. Recreation opportunities are accessible and welcoming; connecting and including individuals and families as well as attracting and retaining residents
7. Feelings of isolation are minimized and feelings of inclusion prevail

Outcomes related to providing healthy indoor and outdoor environments:

8. Citizens have access to, appreciate and understand nature. Parks and open space provide a medium for residents and visitors to connect with nature
9. Indoor and outdoor facilities and spaces are aesthetically pleasing and sustainable. Facilities and spaces are highly functional, multipurpose and adaptable, accessible, well maintained, reinvested in and are planned and operated in an efficient, collaborative and effective manner.

Once these foundations were confirmed the base level of service statement below was developed.

“Every resident will have reasonable access to publicly supported opportunities.”

From there, a prioritization framework was defined considering alignment with the RMP foundations, public demand, user group and stakeholder demand, community accessibility, financial impact, alignment with expected trends and demographics, current provision, cost savings through partnerships and economic impact. Using this framework, the consultants were able to categorize recommendations for the future of recreation delivery into five areas.

1. Increase provision, both quantity and quality of indoor aquatics facilities, picnic sites, accessible playgrounds, dedicated athletic fields, cricket pitches and outdoor skateboard parks/pods.
2. Reduce quantity but enhance quality of indoor ice arenas, ball diamonds, outdoor tennis courts, outdoor basketball courts, outdoor pools and spray pads.
3. Consider partnership requests for the development of indoor fields, community gardens, bike parks (BMX, mountain bike), curling rinks, indoor climbing walls, indoor skateboard parks, gymnastics and indoor racquet sports.

4. Consider developing only when appropriate opportunities exist (ie. fitness/wellness spaces, indoor playgrounds and arts and culture program spaces).
5. For all other categories of amenities consider supporting (in some way) projects proposed by others only when it makes sense to do so.

RC Strategies and Administration understand that the demands for additional and new recreation infrastructure are increasing and at the same time there are limited resources and low willingness to pay by the community, based on input gathered through the planning process. It is for this reason that RC Strategies has focused on the following five priorities.

1. A replacement city-wide outdoor pool
2. Enhanced indoor pool capacity at the city-wide level (ie. Expansion of the Lawson Aquatic Centre)
3. Additional trail connections as outlined in the Council approved Transportation Master Plan
4. Enhanced quality of some dedicated athletic fields, ball diamonds and spray pads
5. When outdoor pools and arenas require significant investment, only invest in some

Currently these are the top priorities of the RMP, however Administration recognizes that factors such as trends or partnership opportunities may influence priorities over time. The prioritization tool developed by RC Strategies will allow Administration to address changes as they may arise.

Through the annual budget process, in alignment with the RMP, Administration will also continue to address renewal of recreation facilities such as playgrounds, athletic fields and pickleball/tennis courts.

## RECOMMENDATION IMPLICATIONS

### Financial Implications

The RMP considers both the capital and operating/maintenance costs associated with sustaining current infrastructure levels into the future. However, any of the priorities proposed by RC Strategies would require more in-depth detailed analysis and a business case that would be considered through the budget process.

It should also be noted that to meet the policy directions of the OCP and RMP new recreation amenities will need to continue to be constructed by developers through green field development. These facilities are then turned over to the City to maintain and require the addition of operating and maintenance funding, which is also considered through the budget process.

### Environmental Implications

There are no environmental implications associated with this report.

Policy and/or Strategic Implications

The RMP provides further policy direction to City Council’s vision for Regina. More specifically the implementation of the recommendations in the RMP support the OCP community priority to *develop complete neighbourhoods*. The RMP provides more detailed direction on policies in Section D7 - Parks, Recreation and Open Space as well as the direction from the Transportation Master Plan to promote active transportation for healthier communities.

Other Implications

There are no other implications associated with this report.

Accessibility Implications

Accessibility is one of the eight principles forming the foundation of the Recreation Master Plan. This principle states that *all residents in the city shall have equitable access (financially, physically and socially) to public recreation opportunities*.

Access to recreation was a consideration throughout the development of the RMP and forms part of the base level of service statement; “Every resident will have reasonable access to publicly supported recreation opportunities”.

COMMUNICATIONS

As noted earlier, the communications plan for the development of the RMP included a statistically valid telephone survey, an online survey, meetings with stakeholders and a community advisory group and two public open houses were conducted.

Once the draft plan was complete, an online survey served as a check-in with the community on the foundations, categories of recommendations and short-term priorities, to determine if the community was supportive. Findings from that online survey were positive.

DELEGATED AUTHORITY

City Council approval is required for the recommendations contained within this report.

Respectfully submitted,  	Respectfully submitted,  
Laurie Shalley, Director Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services	Kim Onrait, Executive Director Citizen Services

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