



Adapted Recreation Plan - Final Report

Date	May 11, 2022
To	Executive Committee
From	City Planning & Community Development
Service Area	Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services
Item No.	EX22-61

RECOMMENDATION

The Executive Committee recommends that City Council:

1. Endorse the Adapted Recreation Action Plan (Appendix A).
2. Consider, through the 2023 budget process, an annual capital program beginning in 2023 of \$500,000 for the following five years for implementing the results of the Rick Hanson Foundation Accessibility Certification Audits being conducted on City facilities between 2021 and 2023, with a priority on recreation facilities.
3. Consider, through the 2023 budget process, an annual investment of \$258,000 toward improving participation, communications and engagement related to accessible recreation.
4. Approve these recommendations at its meeting on May 18, 2022.

ISSUE

Note: This report uses a combination of identity-first language (eg. “disabled people”) and person-first language (eg. “people with a disability”) throughout, to reflect the variety of language used in community.

In April 2021, City Council brought forward a motion to “Increase Recreation and Leisure Activities for People with Disability” (MN21-2, Appendix B), directing Administration to conduct consultations

toward the development of an Adapted Recreation Plan. The motion requested that Administration return to Council in Q3 of 2021 with a preliminary report, and in Q1 of 2022 with a final report.

MN21-2 directs a broad-based consultation with the general public, disabled people, care providers of children with disabilities, the recreation and leisure sector, and the provincial and federal governments in order to identify barriers and opportunities for improving the accessibility of local recreation and leisure activities. It also requests Administration to do a cost analysis for expanded programming and include budget recommendations with both the preliminary and final reports.

This report includes a summary of all consultation, assessment and engagement conducted as part of MN21-2, and related recommendations.

IMPACTS

Accessibility Impacts

The Accessibility Advisory Committee (ACC) was consulted on this report and their input has been integrated into the recommendations.

These recommendations are expected to significantly enhance the accessibility of City of Regina (City) programs and services for people with a wide variety of participation barriers.

Financial Impacts

The recommended budget considerations contained within this report will be brought forward to Council through the 2023 budget process.

They include:

- \$2.5 in capital expenditures (over five years) toward implementing the results of the Rick Hanson Foundation accessibility audits – allocated based on the priorities outlined in the audit reports; e.g. upgrades to entrances/approaches, parking, washrooms and wayfinding in neighbourhood centres, arenas, and major recreation facilities.
- \$258,000 annually in operational expenditures toward improving participation, communications and engagement related to accessible recreation, including:
 - \$75,000 for new or expanded programming
 - \$81,000 for improved and ongoing consultation, communications and engagement with people with disabilities

\$102,000 for a new resource (1 FTE) to the Communications and Engagement team with a speciality in accessible communications and lived experience of disability

Policy Impacts

This report has significant alignment with:

- *Design Regina: The Official Community Plan Bylaw No 2013-48*, including sections D7 (Parks, Recreation & Open Spaces, D8 (Culture), and D11 (Social Inclusion)
- *Recreation Master Plan*, which recognizes accessibility to recreation as an important catalyst in developing more connected and welcoming communities
- *Community Safety & Wellbeing Plan*, which includes “Accessibility” and “Inclusion” as two of its Foundational Commitments

Environmental Impact

The recommendations in this report have limited direct impacts on energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

OTHER OPTIONS

1. Status Quo: No immediate additional investment
 - Administration continues to run the activities approved in the preliminary report (Inclusion Support Service, training for recreation workers on disability and inclusion, and administering Adapted Sport and Recreation grants to community-based organizations).
 - Administration will continue to find ways to consult, communicate and engage with people with disabilities and their support networks using existing resources, but these efforts are likely to be less robust and less accessible to people with disabilities.
 - Administration will continue to seek external funding sources for larger capital upgrades, and to include accessibility-related upgrades within projects that are already approved and funded. Lower-cost upgrades to systems such as wayfinding will continue subject to future approvals of the Recreation Facility Program and Accessibility Improvements capital funding.
 - This option is not recommended because it would limit the effectiveness and reach of existing and new programs and services, and consultations conducted through this Motion have identified a clear need for the recommendations within this report.
2. Smaller capital investment: Consider a \$1.25M investment in capital upgrades to recreation facilities (\$250,000 over five years; half the recommended amount)
 - Administration could still respond to some of the highest-priority recommendations of the accessibility audits within this budget.
 - This option is not recommended because it limits the City’s capacity to respond to the accessibility audits and leaves many aspects of City recreation facilities inaccessible to some people.

COMMUNICATIONS

Administration is developing a multi-year adapted recreation communications strategy with an aim to improve overall communications accessibility and program awareness. This plan will include an inter-jurisdictional scan of best practice as it relates to adapted recreation, timelines, accountabilities and required resources. Administration has proactively identified a number of measures for inclusion in this plan, as identified in Appendix A. Thematically, these initiatives relate to capacity-building amongst City staff, and improvements to marketing content, channels and approaches.

DISCUSSION

Local Assessment/Engagement

To research the needs and opportunities for adapted recreation in Regina, Administration used the following strategies:

- Adapted Recreation Sector Reference Group – group of local non-profit organizations that support people with disabilities to access recreation, formed at the beginning of this project to guide Administration and provide input on each stage.
- Focus Groups – Consultants John Loeppky and Traci Foster from Listen to Dis' Community Arts Organization facilitated 20 focus groups with a total of 50 participants. See Appendix C for more details.
- Recreation and leisure sector engagement – an email was circulated to over 80 non-profit organizations, academics and other local stakeholders who work in recreation and leisure, providing the opportunity to provide input over email or participate in a virtual focus group.
- Public Survey – Consultant John Loeppky worked with Administration to develop and circulate a survey both online and in print. A range of measures were taken to ensure the survey was as accessible as possible. The survey was available on BeHeard and circulated by email and social media. The print version was dropped off at local organizations and all library branches. Posters were displayed on Paratransit buses, in libraries, and at City neighbourhood centres and recreation facilities. The survey garnered 210 responses. See Appendix C for more details.
- Assessment of Funding Availability – Administration compiled a listing of funding opportunities that support accessible recreation initiatives. The listing is attached to this report as Appendix E.
- Assessment of the Program Environment – Administration contracted Consultant Carla Harris to compile an inventory of current local recreation programs and activities. The inventory is attached as Appendix D.

Next Steps Based on Key Themes Identified

The following is a summary of proposed actions based on the key themes identified through consultations. The Consultants' report (Appendix C) elaborates on these key themes. For a full list of actions, see Appendix A.

1. **Communication and Promotion:** Access to information was the most prominent barrier to recreation identified through consultations. There is a strong desire to access programs and services that the City already provides, but a low level of awareness of those programs and services.

The following are some of the actions that have been identified to improve communications and promotion related to adapted recreation:

- Hire a FTE with lived experience of disability to the Communications & Engagement team to focus on accessible communications
- Expand accessibility information on Regina.ca and in the Leisure Guide
- Targeted campaigns promoting existing adapted recreation programs
- Add alt-text and image descriptions to all social media posts
- Develop a practice of better promoting programs through existing networks

2. **Accessibility & Availability of Programs, Services and Facilities:** Consultations pointed to a need to improve the physical accessibility of recreation facilities, reduce barriers to the registration process, and expand options to try programming before committing.

The following are some of the actions that have been identified to respond to this theme:

- Develop a new Inclusion Support Service to provide one-on-one, person-centered guidance and support to access recreation and leisure activities
- Accessibility audits of 40 public-facing City facilities
- Purchase additional adapted equipment
- Hold open houses & Try-It sessions prior to registration days

3. **Safety:** Safety was a high priority for consultation participants. This theme intersects with other themes, such as training, transportation and communications. Consultations noted a strong reliance on auditory information and alarms within City facilities, which poses a risk for people who are Deaf or hard of hearing.

The following are some of the actions that have been identified to improve safety in recreation for people with disabilities:

- Explore the installation of visual alarms and other emergency system upgrades
- Train recreation staff on emergency procedures for people with disabilities

4. **Transportation:** Consultations brought up a number of transit-related barriers to accessing recreation, including: concerns related to the Paratransit window and infrequent standard

buses on evenings and weekends, lack of capacity for spontaneity with current Paratransit service, desire for more consistency, and the option to bring recreation equipment on Paratransit. The Consultant also heard about long distances between parking and facility entrances.

The following are some of the actions that have been identified to respond to this theme:

- Provide 2 more Paratransit buses to support access to recreation
- Revise policies to allow recreation equipment on Paratransit buses

5. Cost: The cost of transit and recreation fees is a key barrier to participating in recreation for many respondents.

The following are some of the actions that have been identified to reduce cost as a barrier to recreation for people with disabilities:

- Promote Affordable Access Program through targeted campaign
- Provide 1-1 Inclusion Support Workers free of cost
- Provide Adapted Sport & Recreation grants to community-based organizations

6. Programs: Consultation participants expressed a need for: a balance between integrated and specialized programs, more hybrid programming, a wider variety of program times, more program options for teens and adults, more swimming opportunities, additional adapted fitness equipment and classes, and more adapted arts and culture programming.

The following are some of the actions that have been identified to respond to this theme:

- Develop new adapted programs for wider variety of ages
- Expand both inclusive and specialized programs
- Make existing programs more inclusive through staff training and adapted equipment

7. Training: There is a clear need for City staff to have more training related to accessibility. Priorities indicated within the survey results include disability etiquette and emergency procedures for people with disabilities.

The following are some of the actions that have been identified to respond to this theme:

- Train all front-line recreation staff in disability and inclusion, with an emphasis in 2022 on disability etiquette and emergency procedures
- Develop a training plan to ensure ongoing development of knowledge and skills
- Train Communications staff in accessible communications

DECISION HISTORY

On April 14, 2021, City Council directed Administration to conduct consultations and develop a plan to increase recreation and leisure activities for people with disabilities (MN21-2).


On September 29, 2021, City Council approved the Preliminary Adapted Recreation Report (CR21-128).

Respectfully submitted,

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Laurie Shalley, Director, Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services

4/14/2022


Deborah Bryden, Acting Executive Director

4/28/2022

Prepared by: Shayna Stock, Coordinator, Community Well-Being & Inclusion

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A - Action Plan with Preamble
Appendix B - Inclusive Recreation Motion April 2021
Appendix C - Consultant Final Report
Appendix D - Adapted Rec Program Inventory
Appendix E - Funding Opportunities for Accessible Recreation
Appendix F - Adapted Sport & Rec Funded Recipients
Appendix G - Adapted Recreation Survey
Appendix H - Accessibility Audit Summary