



Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Council Report

Item 5

Subject: Leisure and Community Services Master Plan Update (R00)

Staff Report No. LCS-027-18

Department: Leisure and Community Services

Date: July 17, 2018

Recommendation:

- 1) That Council approve the Leisure & Community Services Master Plan, attached as Appendix 1; and
- 2) That Council receive the draft Concept Plan for Memorial Park, attached as Appendix 2 for information; and
- 3) That Council direct staff to commence implementation of the recommendations found within the Leisure & Community Services Master Plan, including the submission of items for Council's consideration through future annual capital and operating budget processes; and
- 4) That Council direct staff to prepare an implementation plan for all Short-term recommendations, but more specifically for 2018 and 2019, and report back on priorities; and
- 5) That Council direct staff to report annually on the progress of the Master Plan's implementation.

1. Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to present and seek approval by Council on the Leisure & Community Services Master Plan, herein referred to as LCSMP, which outlines directions for the planning and provision of the Town's Parks, Recreation, Culture, Facilities and evolution of Services over the next ten-year timeline (2018-2028).

2. Executive Summary:

The LCSMP outlines current and future needs and prioritizes facility and program investment over the next ten-year period, up to and including 2028. The Master Plan is intended to provide residents with equitable access to programs/events and facilities that enhance and promote healthy and active living. It assists in guiding the location and creation of new facilities, outlines strategies for the optimal use of existing facilities and the development of parks services, provides recommendations for increased participation in a variety of programs and, where possible the enhancement and effective delivery of services.

Staff launched the development of the Leisure and Community Services Master Plan in 2017 which involved 3 phases of development and an extensive community consultation process. The process incorporated numerous studies and research activities, reviews and best practices and the development of an interim report which outlined principles, goals and objectives and priorities of the LCSMP.

The final “draft” LCSMP identifies a total of 154 recommendations, of which 96% are deemed short-term (1-5 years). Of that total, ten (10) recommendations are deemed to be a priority and completed in the first 2 years of implementation.

3. Background:

The Leisure and Community Services Department initiated the development of a LCSMP in June 2017. The consulting firm of Sierra Planning Inc. was selected to guide the development of the plan which involved a three-phase process as follows:

Phase 1: Research & Background Review

This phase involved Data Collection and Research; Field Review and Conditions Report, Initial Consultation and Community Engagement; Financial and Operational Review; Interim Report.

Council received a presentation from Sierra Planning Inc. on December 12, 2017 providing an overview of the scope of the project and a summary of the initial public consultation process and feedback, including the methods by which residents, stakeholders, user groups and staff were engaged. Resident and stakeholder engagement was critical in this phase and included a User Group and public on-line survey, community workshops (2), external stakeholder interviews, interviews involving staff from varying department, and interviews with Mayor and Council.

In developing the LCSMP, staff and the consultants examined information on demographics, facility supply and utilization, reviewed trends, service levels and best practices as compared to other municipalities and looked at adequate resources in order to plan, build, maintain and monitor service provision.

The final component of phase one was the completion of the Interim Report, which was presented to Council at its meeting of May 1, 2018. Sierra Planning Inc. presented key findings and a summary of proposed directions for consideration.

Phase 2: Development of Key Ingredients

The second planning phase included a recommended Range of Options; 2nd Community Consultation; Development of Principles, Objectives and Strategy for the Master Plan

Following the May 1st presentation to Council, work began immediately on reviewing a range of options for consideration with respect to the future programs and services, facility improvements and additional infrastructure.

Additional community consultation occurred through a public meeting held on May 10, 2018 and as well on June 2nd at an open house during the Leisure Complex Grand Re-opening event to share findings and garner further input. Staff reached out to key stakeholders and residents who provided input throughout the initial consultation process to ensure ongoing community engagement.

Phase 3: Final Plan (Completion of Plan; Presentation to Council)

Considering input received by residents and community groups, the final LCSMP was tweaked to reflect the growing needs of the Whitchurch-Stouffville community.

Community Consultation & Strategic Communication

The Town's Corporate Communication division worked closely with Leisure Services Staff throughout the project to ensure that various communication tactics were deployed to provide ample opportunity for engagement and input. The Town used a variety of social media platforms to promote the opportunities for input and as well as a number of traditional advertising channels, including the development of a dedicated page on the Town's web site.

Staff are confident that the public consultation process garnered the appropriate details to make well informed decisions that will lead us well into the future. While it is difficult to achieve 100% consensus on strategic planning efforts, staff believes that the public's voice has been heard, and furthermore, that the plan reflects the current and future needs of the community.

4. Analysis and Options:

The LCSMP recognizes the importance of quality of life as an indicator of a great Town and sets the direction for the Town's Leisure and Community Service priorities from now to 2028 with an emphasis on environmental stewardship, youth and community

development and lifelong active living. The plan is intended to provide residents with equitable access to facilities that enhance and promote healthy and active living. It assists in guiding the location and creation of new facilities, outlines strategies for existing facilities, and provides recommendations to ensure optimal use of existing and future park development.

Master Plan Recommendations/Highlights:

There is a total of 154 recommendations, each targeted to a specific area for action. For effective implementation, the recommendations have been identified in suggested time frames (Short 2018-2023; Long Term 2024-2028). While a total of 96% of the recommendations were identified as short-term, ten (10) were identified as top priorities for 2018 & 2019.

The findings of the LCSMP reveal that many recreational activities continue to experience growth and will require additional or expanded facilities to accommodate anticipated future requirements. Based on public input and consultation, the greatest needs appear to be related to continued expansion of the Leisure Complex to include a second aquatic facility and new change facilities; further development of Memorial Park which could include Pickleball facilities and the relocation of Lawn Bowling; Youth program development; and the inclusion of more diverse program opportunities and services as well as greater community engagement, to name a few.

More specifically, the following ten (10) recommendations have been identified as priorities for 2018 and 2019:

- Conduct a detailed Concept & Feasibility Study for additional aquatics facilities
- Undertake a cost/benefit analysis for the Soccer City facility
- Undertake community and stakeholder consultation on the recently prepared Conceptual Master Plan, as options for the future enhancement of facilities and spaces at Memorial Park
- Maintain the existing Skate Park at Memorial Park and plan for a second location, using the Town's modular skate park equipment, in a highly visible park location
- Work with the Whitchurch-Stouffville Cricket Club's to encourage growth in the sport and as growth warrants, invest in a dedicated cricket field at a suitable site
- Invest in multiple outdoor pickleball courts, most likely in the community of Stouffville, preferably at a site where there is access to washroom/changerooms and shelter
- Undertake a joint departmental review (Public Works/Leisure Services) of the Active Transportation Servicing Plan and seek to collaboratively determine the capital and operational implications of implementing priorities
- As part of a User Fee Study for Leisure Services, a comprehensive review of fees for municipal cultural assets and programs should be conducted, including a benchmarking exercise against facilities/programs in other municipalities and market tolerances

- Develop a Municipal Special Events Policy/Standard to regulate non-municipal event hosting within municipal facilities
- Update and formalize the Leisure and Community Services Department User Fee Policy to provide for increased cost recovery as appropriate

Conclusion

The recommendations found within the LCSMP are evidence-based, and take into consideration all relevant factors, including past and current facility programming and utilization, the condition of infrastructure, the Town's demography and its projected growth, the communities evolving diversity, and trends in the parks and recreation industry.

The completion of the LCSMP does not represent the end of infrastructure and service planning for Leisure and Community Services, but rather, marks the beginning – a period in which the Town can commence detailed implementation efforts, commit to undertaking additional detailed studies, and move forward knowing that the Town is building upon a solid foundation to create an even greater community.

5. Financial Implications:

There are no immediate financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report and respective LCSMP and Memorial Park Concept Plan. The implementation of recommendations contained in the LCS Master Plan will have impacts on future capital and operating budget processes, which will be brought forward for Council's consideration as required.

6. Attachments:

1. Master Plan
2. Memorial Park Concept Plan

7. Related Reports:

June 6, 2017 - Report No. LCS-013-17 - Contract Award for WS-RFP-17-58 - Leisure & Community Services Master Plan 2017 Update (F18)

May 1, 2018 – Report No. LCS-013-18 – Leisure and Community Services Master Plan Interim Report (R00)

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