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Town of Aurora
General Committee Report
No. CMS20-020

Subject: Pandemic Recovery Planning – Update No. 2
Prepared by: Robin McDougall, Director of Community Services
Department: Community Services
Date: September 8, 2020

Recommendation

1. That Report No. CMS20-020 be received.

Executive Summary

This report summarizes some of the proposed reopening dates for various Town of Aurora facilities, programs and amenities as we continue to adjust to Stage 3 of the Provincial Restart Phase.

- As York Region moves to Stage 3, additional facilities, programs and amenities are being reopened in a phased and coordinated manner
- Various Protocols have been created in collaboration with National/Provincial/Local Sport Guidelines and Public Health Guidelines
- A Working Remotely Toolkit has been created to help guide staff who continue to work from home
- Health screening for employees and patrons of facilities is required by the Provincial Order
- Accommodations to the Allocation Policies have taken place in order to support the Town's regular user groups

Background

The Province released its *Framework for Reopening* on May 14, 2020. This Framework included 3 Phases (Phase 1: Protect and Support, Phase 2: Restart and Phase 3: Recover). Phase 2 was divided into three stages.

On June 23, 2020 staff provided an update on the current state of facilities, programs and amenities as Aurora progressed to Stage 2 in the Provincial Order.

On July 24, 2020, the Province announced that York Region could move to Stage 3 and subsequently staff have been evaluating and developing plans for reopening.

Analysis

As York Region moves to Stage 3, additional facilities, programs and amenities are being reopened in a phased and coordinated manner

With the latest announcement that York Region could move to Stage 3, additional facilities, programs and amenities can be considered for reopening. Through coordination with National/Provincial/Local Sport Organizations, Public Health and Chief Medical Officer Guidelines, the following plan builds on the recommendations from the June 23, 2020 staff report (CMS20-18).

In preparation for the reopening schedule (Table 1), staff continue to consider restarting services by evaluating the ability to provide a safe and healthy environment, user needs and capacity to provide the services. This coordination also includes working with surrounding municipalities to help facilitate the development of standards that will meet the need of our residents and visitors.

Development of communication tools/signage, sign-in/screening protocols and sanitization cleaning standards have also been developed and will be in place with each new amenity or program reopening. Regardless of when the facility, program or amenity is opened, the public will need to be diligent about personal hygiene and sanitization as it is not practical or possible for the Town to ensure that all sites are sanitized at all times.

Table 1

Facility, Amenity or Program	*Proposed Opening/ Start Date	**Requirements/Level of Service
Town Hall	To Remain Closed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closed to the public until future phases • Minimum staff working at Town Hall • Staff continue to provide full range of services working remotely • The following services are being offered from Town Hall:

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All planning & building permit applications continue to be accepted and processed ○ By Appointment: marriage licenses, commissioning ○ Residents are encouraged to continue to make payments online or in-person through their bank or by cheque using the drop box ● In-Person Council meeting August 25, monitor format for future meetings
Joint Operations Centre (JOC)	Closed to the Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Closed to the public until future phases ● Operations/Bylaw Services continue to provide services out of JOC ● Other staff continue to provide full range of services working remotely
Splash Pads	Open	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Inspection and cleansing daily as per Ministry of Health regulations ● Trash collection/litter pick-up daily and as required ● Public will need to be diligent about personal hygiene and sanitization as it is not practical or possible for the Town to ensure that all sites are sanitized at all times
Public Washrooms in Parks	Open	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Daily inspections/deep cleaning and twice daily wipe down of common touch surfaces as per Ministry of Health ● Public will need to be diligent about personal hygiene and sanitization as it is not practical or possible for the Town to ensure that all sites are sanitized at all times
Sports Fields	Open	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Commence issuing Permits ● Turf mowing ● Line painting for ball/soccer on select fields ● Infield grooming for ball ● Public will need to be diligent about personal hygiene and sanitization as it is not practical or possible for the Town to ensure that all sites are sanitized at all times

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Return to Sport – Sports Field protocols finalized and issued to permit holders
Playgrounds	Open	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public need to be diligent about personal hygiene and sanitization as it is not practical or possible for the Town to ensure that all sites are sanitized at all times
Library	August 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Computer access via reservation Curbside pickup will continue Online programming will continue Hours will be limited Second floor will be closed
Pool	<p>Open AFLC pool</p> <p>Sept. SARC pool</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private lessons Lane swim Aquafit classes Swim Clubs in September Limits on number of participants Change room use needs to be closely monitored, cleaned and disinfected to maintain standards Parent of younger participants can provide assistance, no spectators Limited hours of operation Hot Tub/Spa pool cannot be opened at this time Screening being completed by Town and/or permit holder Return to Sport – Aquatics protocols finalized
Ice Pad	<p>August 17 2 pads – ACC 1 pad – SARC</p> <p>Sept. 16 1 pad – SARC AFLC pad</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commence issuing permits Training and modified games, no dressing rooms, no spectators (parent of younger players can provide assistance, but once they are on the ice, parent is to wait outside facility) No Spectators Screening being completed by Town and/or permit holder Return to Sport – Arena protocols finalized and issued to permit holders
Fitness Centre/Studio	August 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-registration only, no drop in

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeslots available to a maximum per hour • Membership model revised • Fitness classes to be available • Screening will be completed by Town
Gymnasium	August 31 Fitness Classes Only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fitness Classes only at this time • Sport play – considering protocols
Seniors Centre	Mid Sept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reopening protocols prepared in consult with OACAC and public health • Pre-registered programs only • Limited numbers • Limited programs, some programs not permitted at this time
Program & Meeting Rooms	End of Sept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some Town Programs may commence end of September
The Loft	Unknown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considering protocols
Walking Track	Unknown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considering protocols
Squash Courts	Unknown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considering protocols
Rock Wall	Unknown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not permitted at this time

*Each of these dates may be impacted by changes in the Provincial Orders.

Various Protocols have been created in collaboration with National/Provincial/Local Sport Guidelines and Public Health Guidelines

With each facility, program and amenity reopening, consideration is made to the development of new policies/procedures, communication to the public and user groups, and evaluating the feasibility of starting up (cost and resource implications).

The following Town of Aurora documents have been created for the reopening of a particular amenity or program:

- Pandemic Recovery Playbook – issued to staff – June 19
- Return to Sport – Outdoor Fields – issued June 30
- Return to Sport – Aquatics – issued July 17
- Return to Sport – Indoor Arenas – issued August 11
- Face Coverings in Enclosed Public Spaces – issued July 17
- Working Remotely Toolkit – issued August 20
- Return to Fitness Club – issued August

A Working Remotely Toolkit has been created to help guide staff who continue to work from home

As the COVID-19 situation continues to evolve, many Town employees are continuing to work from home full-time. For some, the experience of working from home is new, especially for a prolonged period of time. Some are balancing responsibilities with children and/or sharing their space with another adult who is also working at home. Work provides a lot of social interaction – more than you may realize and it goes without saying that these are very different times, which will now require new routines.

While the Pandemic Recovery Playbook (issued June 19 to employees) focusses on returning to the workplace, the Working Remotely Toolkit is a resource for staff who are still expected to work from home encouraging employee health and well-being.

Health screening for employees and patrons of facilities is required by the Provincial Order

The purpose of developing the screening application is to minimize opportunities for COVID-19 to be transmitted and ensuring that Town employees, patrons and work spaces are kept safe during the pandemic.

Part of the Return to Sport Guidelines requires that all permit holders perform screening of their participants at the time of entering the facility. Similarly, the Town will be screening all program registrants at the facility entrance. With both of these measures in place, the Town will be able to conduct contact tracing in the event an outbreak occurs.

For members of Council, employees, visitors to Town Hall or Joint Operation Centre, and 3rd party vendors/contractors, the Town has developed an electronic screening tool. This screening tool can easily be accessed via mobile phone or the internet and it asks questions about an individual's symptoms, recent travel, and contact they may have had with people who have had or been exposed to COVID-19. The data collected is maintained by the Town but will not be shared.

Accommodations to the Allocation Policies have taken place in order to support the Town's regular user groups

At the time of closing facilities (March 2019), many user groups/rentals were impacted by this unexpected closure. In order to assist the user groups/rentals, refunds were provided for the permit times unused. Subsequently, the user groups were able to

provide refunds to their registrants. In doing so, the permit cancellation fees were waived as the need to cancel permits was out of the organizations control.

As staff looked ahead to accepting new permit requests for upcoming seasons, the deadline to submit requests has passed based on the definition in the Town's Allocation Policies. Therefore, to accommodate the unexpected situation, the deadline dates have been temporarily waved and continue to be reset as the Town adjusts to the ability for user groups to restart their programs.

Also, as certain amenities come back online while others remain closed, accommodations have been made to changing locations for some permits. For example, the Magna fields and St. Andrew's College fields will not be available this season. Additionally, it was only recently that the York Catholic District School Board grass fields became available. A similar situation is occurring with ice user groups with only 3 ice pads open at this time (typically there are at least 4 in the summer). In all cases, adjustments to where typical permits are located are being balanced with requests.

Indoor facilities require the implementation of additional health and safety measures due to the enclosed spaces (capacity limitations, cleaning frequencies, public directional flow through facilities, etc.). As an example, additional time is required between ice user permits to ensure participants do not cross paths with other user groups (one group needs time and space to leave the facility before the next group comes in). Also, time to clean high touch points needs to be incorporated into the operational schedule. With the startup of only 3 ice pads, staff have been able to test an operational model and will adjust where possible before additional ice pads are reopened. The reality of this adjusted operational schedule results in reduced capacity on the ice, even when all 5 ice pads are open. Staff are monitoring the demand versus available time to maximize operational revenue potential while maintaining quality health standards. It is important to note that staff are receiving requests from groups looking for time that they cannot get in other municipalities or private facilities they have used in the past. Staff are doing their best to issue permits where possible. Preference to space will continue to be considered for Aurora's regular user groups, then consideration will be given to other user groups, thereby, honouring the relationships with regular user groups.

With this unique situation, it is important for user groups to know that their regular use of facilities will not be impacted next year. With 2020 being an anomaly, the Allocation Policies needed to be adaptable for this year, but it is important that user groups can plan for their future and are not penalized for the unique circumstances this year.

Therefore, the grandfathering clause in the policy will honour 2021 requests based on 2019 (typical year) use.

All of these accommodations are deemed to be temporary and in response to the unexpected impact of COVID-19 on our regular user groups.

Advisory Committee Review

Not Applicable

Legal Considerations

The Town is responsible for ensuring that its operations are in compliance with the advice, recommendations and instructions of public health officials, including any advice, recommendations or instructions on screening, physical distancing, cleaning or disinfecting. Staff have implemented the appropriate measures to ensure that the operations detailed throughout this report are consistent with the provincial orders, as continuously amended, and the public health guidelines. In addition, clauses have been added to the online registration process and permits that obligate users of the facilities to be compliant with all provincial orders and public health guidelines, including self-screening, as may be amended from time to time.

Financial Implications

Throughout the duration of the pandemic, the Town has been regularly evaluating its impact on the Town's finances. As this event has progressed the Town has examined the financial implications of multiple possible scenarios. The presented pandemic recovery plan roughly aligns with the assumptions used by the Town in its most recent forecast update to Council which projected a small net surplus. The primary deviation from the Town's most recent forecast assumptions is the earlier partial opening of the Town's indoor facilities. The assumptions for staff's next forecast update to Council will be updated to fully align with the above presented pandemic recovery plan.

The nature of this pandemic is unpredictable and should the Town have a COVID-related deficit, the funding provided through the Safe Restart Agreement will be used to offset the impact.

Communications Considerations

The Town of Aurora will use 'Inform' as the level of engagement for this project. There are five different levels of community engagement to consider, with each level providing the community more involvement in the decision making process. These levels are: Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate and Empower. Examples of each can be found in the Community Engagement Policy. These options are based on the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum and assist in establishing guidelines for clearly communicating with our public and managing community engagement. In order to inform, once recreational programming is confirmed the Town will communicate key messages by using a series of communications tools i.e. media release, website, Notice Board, social media etc.

Link to Strategic Plan

This project supports Goal #1: Supporting an exceptional quality of life for all - Objective #4 – Encouraging and active and healthy lifestyle.

Alternative(s) to the Recommendation

Not applicable

Conclusions

As we have advanced to Stage 3 in the Provincial Order, the community is eager to start up programming, sports groups are eager to get back to playing and the general public is interested in utilizing various recreation amenities. Our top priority is the health and safety of our staff and the public, therefore, the Town will continue to plan accordingly to ensure proper safety measures are in place before reopening.

Staff have updated the reopening plan (previous June 23, 2020) based on the guidance from the different levels of government and following guidelines set out by health officials. It is important to note, that these proposed dates may change if the Provincial Orders are amended.

Attachments

None

Previous Reports

CMS20-018 – Pandemic Recovery Planning – Update, June 23, 2020

Pre-submission Review

Reviewed by CAO on August 25, 2020

Approvals

Approved by Robin McDougall, Director, Community Services

Approved by Doug Nadorozny, Chief Administrative Officer