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Town of Aurora  
**Committee of the Whole Report**  
No. CMS24-038

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**Subject:** Mapping Recreation for Persons with Disabilities – Final Plan Presentation

**Prepared by:** Franco De Marco, Recreation Supervisor – Community Programs

**Department:** Community Services

**Date:** October 1, 2024

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## Recommendation

1. That Report No. CMS24-038 be received; and
2. That Council endorse the recommendations contained in the attached Mapping Recreation for Persons with Disabilities Plan 2024-2029.

## Executive Summary

This report is to provide Council with the Mapping Recreation for Persons with Disabilities Plan (the Plan) for approval and to reference the Plan as a guide for future recreational program needs and preferences of persons with disabilities.

- The Plan guides decision making with respect to recreation programming and services for persons with disabilities in the Town of Aurora over the next five years (2024-2029).
- Considerable community, staff and Council consultation was undertaken in the development of the Plan.
- A summary of recommendations, including priority and timing is included in the Plan and staff shall provide a status update to Council on an annual basis.

## Background

J Consulting Group Inc. were retained in October of 2023 to complete the Plan. This is the Town's first dedicated recreation plan for persons with disabilities. The

development of this Plan was recommended in the Town's 2023 Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

## **Analysis**

**The Plan guides decision making with respect to recreation programming and services for persons with disabilities in the Town of Aurora over the next five years (2024-2029).**

The Town of Aurora is dedicated to fostering an inclusive community where everyone can enjoy and participate in recreational activities. A key action item within the Town of Aurora Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2023) is to engage under-represented populations and conduct a Recreation Needs Assessment for Persons with Disabilities. Mapping Recreation for Persons with Disabilities is an extension of that commitment and is aligned with several national and international policy frameworks advocating for the rights and inclusion of disabled people.

The purpose of the Plan is to establish a comprehensive framework that ensures recreational activities are inclusive, accessible, and responsive to the needs of persons with disabilities. This Plan serves as a proactive commitment to recognizing recreation as a fundamental human right crucial for the well-being and integration of all community members.

The importance of this Plan is underscored by the growing diversity and needs within the community, which reflect a significant segment of the population living with a range of disabilities. By fostering an environment that prioritizes accessibility and inclusivity, the Plan aims not only to enhance the quality of life for persons with disabilities but also to enrich the community as a whole by promoting broader participation and engagement.

The objectives of the Plan include:

- Developing an understanding of community needs and desires with respect to participation in recreation activities
- Identifying and addressing existing barriers and gaps to participation in recreational activities
- Exploring opportunities to address community needs and eliminate barriers to participation

**Considerable community, staff and Council consultation was undertaken in the development of the Plan.**

Beginning in the Fall of 2023, a number of measures were taken to obtain input from the community, persons with disabilities, disability organizations, staff and Council, including:

- Consultation sessions with front-line Recreation staff in the Community Services Department
- Telephone Surveys for persons with disabilities, parents/caregivers
- Focus Groups with persons with disabilities, parents/caregivers
- Focus Groups with disability organizations
- Public Open House
- Consultation sessions with members of Council
- Consultation sessions with the Town's Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee and Accessibility Advisory Committee

A Draft Plan (What We Are Hearing Report) was then developed (April 2024) and shared with the Accessibility Advisory Committee and Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee for review and feedback. The Draft Plan (What We Are Hearing Report) was also made available as follows:

- Provided to both school boards
- Provided to all previously engaged stakeholder groups
- Posted on the Town's website for public viewing

All feedback in response to the Draft Plan was reviewed and considered in the development of the Final Plan as presented.

**A summary of recommendations, including priority and timing is included in the Plan and staff shall provide a status update to Council on an annual basis.**

By approving this Plan, the Town is not bound to implementing the recommendations or delivering recreation programs and services in the order, amount or timing indicated; rather, this Plan provides guidance on community priorities and sets a general course for meeting the needs as they are presently defined.

Through annual planning and budgeting processes, staff will update and/or establish the estimated capital and operating costs associated with each recommendation prior to approval and implementation.

Some priority items include:

- Inclusive programming – ensure diversity of programming
- Quality of care and support – prioritize well trained staff and resources
- Accessible spaces and programs
- Representation and Engagement
- Adaptive equipment and supports
- Communication and Awareness
- Strengthening community partnerships

## **Advisory Committee Review**

Accessibility Advisory Committee

June 6, 2023 – Study introduction

December 6, 2023 – Consultation

May 8, 2024 – What we heard summary

July 30, 2024 – Final Report

Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee

June 15, 2023 – Study introduction

Dec. 21, 2023 - Consultation

January 18, 2024 – Follow up

May 16, 2024 – What we heard summary

## **Legal Considerations**

None.

## **Financial Implications**

There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report.

The implementation of any recommendations contained within this Plan will be included in the appropriate future operating or capital budgets.

## Communications Considerations

The approved Plan will also be posted on the Town's website as well as [engageaurora.ca](http://engageaurora.ca).

## Climate Change Considerations

The recommendations from this report does not impact greenhouse gas emissions or impact climate change adaptation.

## Link to Strategic Plan

The Plan supports the Strategic Plan goal of *Supporting an exceptional quality of life for all*. By fostering an environment that prioritizes accessibility and inclusivity, the Plan aims not only to enhance the quality of life for persons with disabilities but also to enrich the community as a whole by promoting broader participation and engagement in the Town's recreation programs and services.

## Alternative(s) to the Recommendation

N/A

## Conclusions

The Mapping Recreation for Persons with a Disability shows a true commitment by the Town towards inclusivity and ensuring that recreation opportunities are available to all members of the community. The Town of Aurora is one of the first communities in York Region to have completed a plan specific for persons with disabilities and can be a leader in recreation programming for persons with disabilities.

## Attachments

Attachment 1 – Mapping Recreation for Persons with Disabilities Plan

## Previous Reports

N/A

## **Pre-submission Review**

Agenda Management Team review on September 12, 2024

## **Approvals**

**Approved by Robin McDougall, Director, Community Services**

**Approved by Doug Nadorozny, Chief Administrative Officer**