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Town of Aurora
Memorandum
Community Services

Re: Sport Plan Refresh – Status Update
To: Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee
From: Lisa Warth, Manager, Recreation
Date: November 21, 2024

Recommendation

1. That the memorandum regarding Sport Plan Refresh – Status Update be received for information.

Background

Over the past several months, staff in Community Services have been working with consultants from Optimus SBR, to refresh and update the Town’s existing Sport Plan. An engagement plan was developed to gather information from Local Sport Organizations (LSO’s), community organizations and the general public to gather information on status of sport in the community from various perspectives. Engagement activities included focus groups, interviews and surveys and research.

This memorandum provides a summary of the preliminary findings gathered through the engagement activities.

Analysis

Who we heard from:

- 19 Local Sport Organizations
- 7 Community Partners
- 268 Public surveys
- 5 jurisdictional scans
- 1 staff engagement
- 1 Council engagement

What we heard:

Facility Availability and Quality

- Concerns that facilities for some sports do not meet the needs or expectations of users with respect to access and functionality
- Better access in general

Program Accessibility and Affordability

- Financial barriers were a recurring theme, especially among newcomers and low income families
- Affordability is a barrier to participation
- The scheduling of programs and services is a barrier to some

Leadership Development and Volunteer Support

- Concerns over sustainability of volunteer base for many organizations
- A need for leadership training particularly for underrepresented groups
- A need for coach's training
- High satisfaction with the Town's current role in providing leadership and support for sport programs

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)

- DEI issues were mentioned frequently with a focus on cultural sensitivity in programming
- 75% of survey respondents felt the sports landscape was fostering diversity, equity and inclusion
- There are language barriers and a need for multilingual marketing materials

Communication and Booking Systems

- Challenges with the existing booking system (outdated)
- Better communication in general about sport events and programs is needed
- Multilingual communication may assist some community members in accessing sports programming

Sport Tourism and Community Engagement

- There are opportunities to expand sport tourism, but some limitations due to facilities
- Enhanced community partnerships could help promote sport tourism and community events
- Sponsorships and partnering with national and international organizations would help grow sport tourism

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Strong community support for sport programs
- Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion
- Engaged community
- Positive momentum regarding the Town's leadership in Sports

Weaknesses

- Barriers to participation
- Volunteer burnout
- Limited leadership development
- Challenges associated with administrative support for LSO's
- Facility availability and access

Opportunities

- Increased sport tourism
- Expansion of inclusive programs
- Leadership and volunteer training
- Promotion of multilingual and culturally sensitive programming
- Upgrading of facilities

Threats

- Volunteer fatigue and attrition
- Economic barriers
- Competition for hosting events

As this project progresses, this information will be used to develop actions and an implementation plan to update the existing Sport Plan. This updated plan is scheduled to be presented to Council early in the new year and staff will follow up with the Parks and Recreation Advisory committee at that time.

Attachments

None