



## Administrative Policies & Procedures

### Policy No. CORP XX – Recreation Access Policy

<b>Topic:</b>	Recreation Access Policy	<b>Affects:</b>	All Staff
<b>Section:</b>		<b>Replaces:</b>	N/A
<b>Original Policy Date:</b>	October XX, 2020	<b>Revision Date:</b>	--
<b>Effective Date:</b>	January 1, 2021	<b>Proposed Revision Date:</b>	October 1, 2023
<b>Prepared By:</b>		<b>Approval Authority:</b>	CAO

## 1.0 Policy Statement

The Access to Affordable Recreation Policy (The Policy) is aligned with the Aurora 2031 Strategic Plan Success Pillar of “Community” and the goal of “Supporting an exceptional quality of life for all.” The respective objectives and actions support the development of a Pricing and User Fee Policy that encourages participation for all residents.

### Aurora Strategic Plan Pillars of Success: Community

#### Objective 4: Encouraging an active and healthy lifestyle

- Develop a long-term needs assessment for recreation programs, services and operations to match the evolving needs of the growing and changing population
- Support multi-generational programming in cultural and recreational activities to encourage every age cohort to interact and share experiences
- Continue to develop awareness programs that promote the benefits of recreation in supporting a healthy lifestyle
- Continue to develop programs and policies that nurture and contribute to the development of youth

The Town embodies a strong belief that all residents should have equitable access to recreation as the benefits of participation strengthen one's physical, emotional, spiritual and mental capacities. Participation in recreation and active lifestyles also supports community pride and cohesion. The Policy applies specifically to Aurora residents experiencing low income and provides mechanisms for these residents to gain access to recreation services by reducing fiscal barriers that they may face.

## **2.0 Purpose**

The purpose of the Access to Affordable Recreation Policy is to provide seamless mechanisms for Aurora residents experiencing low incomes to access municipal recreation programs and services. The Policy is intended to treat all residents equitably so that they may gain the benefits of participating in a choice of active, creative, and general interest programs and services.

## **3.0 Scope**

The 2016 Census of Canada identifies approximately 4,000 Aurora residents as living below the Low-Income Cut-Off (LICO), including approximately 1,000 children under the age of 18. The scope of The Policy applies to a percentage of the residents living with low incomes who choose to participate in fee-based recreation programs and services offered by the Town of Aurora.

The Policy impacts the intentional efforts of the Director of Community Service to reach out and include *Low Income Residents* in active pursuits. The Finance Department will also be involved in calculating the fiscal impact of The Policy.

## **4.0 Definitions**

Common terms and definitions that apply to The Policy are outlined in Table 1.

**Table 1: Policy Definitions**

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Equity	The principle that each Aurora resident has the ability to access some form of recreational service delivered by the Town, regardless of their individual circumstances.

Term	Definition
Low Income Resident	A resident living below the Lower-Income Cut Off threshold, as determined by Statistics Canada, at which they devote a larger share of household income to the necessities of food, shelter and clothing compared to the average household.
Means testing	A measure of determining income and other eligibility criteria to inform whether an individual or household qualify for supports available through this Policy.
Subsidy	A waiving of a portion or all of the fees of a program or services. Subsidies may be associated with the ability to pay, age or ability of participants, etc.

## 5.0 Responsibilities

The Town of Aurora will:

- a) Determine an annual *Subsidy* amount for each age grouping of children, youth, adults and older adults/seniors. The amount would be equal to 100% of the cost of the average number of programs and services that Town of Aurora residents participate in annually (for example, 1 program per session, 2 weeks of summer camp for children annually etc.). The amount will fluctuate each year due to the current rates and fees.
- b) Work with other funding agencies to coordinate funding of certain programs and services.
- c) Appoint a Staff Lead who will promote The Policy, develop methods to increase participation of residents experiencing low incomes, work with like partners, train staff and volunteers, and evaluate the effectiveness of implementing The Policy.
- d) Promote existing and offer a range of no fee/low fee and fee-based programs to all Aurora residents.
- e) Provide universal programs (through partnerships and sponsorships) that are free to children and youth (including locating them in lower income areas if appropriate).

## Policy No. xx- Recreation Access Policy

- f) Dedicate funds within the Department's annual operating budget to subsidize recreation and active pursuits for residents experiencing low income.
- g) Offer leadership programs to lower income youth and young adult residents that may serve to increase the prospect of gaining future employment opportunities.
- h) Involve residents experiencing low income and support agencies to best understand needs in accessing recreation in a seamless manner and to evaluate the effectiveness of The Policy.
- i) Work with other agencies and institutions that provide funding for residents experiencing low income to participate in recreation, including sport groups accessing Town facilities. The purpose of these ongoing discussions is to implement approaches that increase the number of these residents engaged in active pursuits, create a seamless *Means Testing* protocol, and maximize public and private funds that are available for these purposes.
- j) Work with York Region Community Support, Children's Aid Societies, and the Public Health Unit at a minimum to develop seamless *Means Testing* protocols and promote use of The Policy with clients.
- k) Promote The Policy in the Town of Aurora Community Services Program Guide and develop other promotional materials and channels.
- l) Set and measure targets for participation in recreation programs among all age groups and ensure that participation targets for residents experiencing low incomes are similar.
- m) Monitor the use of The Policy and compare annual participation rates among residents experiencing low income.
- n) Report to Council and communicate to the public annually to account for the participation and successes of The Policy.
- o) Review The Policy and make any needed changes every three years at a minimum.

## **6.0 Procedure**

The Town of Aurora will:

- a) Prepare an implementation program to accompany the Recreation Access Policy that includes elements such as (but is not limited to) criteria to determine eligibility and testing financial means, application intake procedures, and a specified annual funding amount.
- b) Review the use of the Recreation Access Policy in preparation for the development of the upcoming year's proposed Operating budget.
- c) Propose a budget figure that will cover the costs of a percentage of the residents experiencing low income that have participated in recreation services over the course of the previous year with adjustments to account for increasing participation. This figure would also consider other funders, sponsorships, partnerships.
- d) Promote the Recreation Access Policy and refine promotional materials produced for social service agencies as to any changes in The Policy or respective procedures.
- e) Train staff in any onboarding processes, such as but not limited to offering a PIN number, Protection of Privacy, and/or assistance with registration as needed.

## **7.0 Regulatory/References/Codes/Standards**

### **Human Rights Code – Ontario**

All Ontarians have a right to live freely of discrimination, inequity and intolerance. The Human Rights Code guarantees Ontarians equal rights and opportunities without discrimination in areas such as jobs, housing and services.