

Priorities Committee Meeting_Jul14_2020

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE AND UPDATE**Recreation, Parks and Culture Business Plan and Initiative Update 2020****Report Purpose**

To provide the Priorities Committee with an update on the 2020 – 2023 Recreation, Parks and Culture Department Business Plan.

Our Prioritized Strategic Goals

Goal 1 - Build strong communities to support the diverse needs of residents

Goal 6 - Provide facilities and services that are available and accessible to residents

Report

Recreation, Parks and Culture's mission is to generate recreation and culture opportunities to enhance Strathcona County residents' quality of life and build community.

In order to achieve this focus, we take a citizen-centered and customer service approach to all our work. Our goal is to understand our residents' interests and needs, mitigate barriers to access and participation and ultimately provide a wide variety of indoor and outdoor, planned and spontaneous, recreation and culture activities and experiences, including special events and sport tourism.

Department core business functions include:

- Community recreation – Plan, deliver and evaluate public recreation programs, services, and experiences, including special events and sport tourism, infrastructure and amenities.
 - Focus areas include reducing barriers to participation, offering recreation opportunities and continued client-centered service delivery.
 - Progress to date includes:
 - Ardrossan Regional Park project which includes an upcoming youth skate board park and additional parking planned completion this year
 - Indoor Fieldhouse feasibility study
 - Summerton Spray Deck planned completion in 2020
 - enhanced guest services in the NEW Recreation Online system
 - new opportunities for residents to enjoy community recreation such as additional dog off-leash areas and events
 - recreation web page www.starthcona.ca/freerecreation is a resource for residents to seek out and participate in recreation activities free of charge
- Community culture – Plan, deliver and evaluate as well as facilitate community-driven culture activities, experiences and diversification.
 - Focus areas include history and heritage research and awareness, reducing barriers to participate and offering cultural opportunities.
 - Progress to date includes:
 - celebration of the 100th anniversary of Smeltzer House
 - public art installations are underway at Ardrossan Park and Kinsmen Leisure Centre

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- supporting the operations and functional plan for the Strathcona County Museum and Archives
 - addition of public art in future facilities
 - free or low-cost cultural events such as art gallery exhibits
 - developing ongoing information to internal departments and the public on heritage and history
- Facilities and open space operations – Operate and maintain indoor and outdoor assets, infrastructure and amenities.
 - Focus areas include advancements in asset management, maximizing use of indoor and outdoor space and efficiency management.
 - Progress to date includes:
 - Millennium Place accelerated plans for the extended shutdown for replacement of ice plant, pool filtration, boilers and large aquatic play centre
 - efficiencies created using new technology for facility safety inspections, tree inventory and evaluating asset lifecycle
 - promote and program available spaces such as Emerald Hills Sports Pavilion and the upcoming Ecole Pere Kenneth Kearns school gymnasium partnership
 - established cross functional teams to collaborate and find efficiencies in asset management, projects and program delivery
 - continued focus on safety with the department safety committee
- Community development and capacity building – Lead and manage opportunities to collaborate with or involve the public, stakeholders and partners to generate recreation and culture opportunities.
 - Focus areas include public engagement, community needs and volunteer development.
 - Progress to date includes:
 - significant public engagement was conducted for the community focused Recreation and Culture Strategy in 2019 with the implementation plan targeting completion in 2020
 - community development through consultation and engagement on various projects
 - an extension of the one-year temporary Community Liaison has supported strategic partnerships to deliver on community development and capacity-building projects
 - provided support for community events

Recreation, Parks and Culture employee engagement initiatives include increased internal communication, alignment of workplans to business plans, opportunities to learn and grow as well as a work/life balance focus. Some initiatives this year include increased internal communications with staff storytelling and a new internal newsletter. Growth opportunities for staff include additional training on business planning and evaluation, opportunities to work on various projects or event planning committees, as well as enhanced online training opportunities.

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Recreation, Parks and Culture provide services and spaces that result in over one million annual visits to facilities, 14,000 Millennium Card members, 47,600 program registrants, 175,000 rental hours and 2,200 Everybody Gets to play participants. The most recent public satisfaction survey results for outdoor spaces, indoor facilities and cultural facilities were 96% or better.

Due to the pandemic, the department has had to rethink service delivery and manage expectations. This included closure of facilities, subsequent phased re-openings and Alberta Health restrictions which have limited recreation and culture opportunities. This has a financial impact as activities have either been on hold, reduced or are being phased in, with some activities remaining in Phase 3. Another unknown impact is the eagerness of residents to return to recreate. Other financial impacts include increase costs for additional safety protocols for cleaning and staffing.

Due to the closures 452 hourly staff and 225 contractors were laid off effective April 27, however those working reacted quickly on the closures, gradual reopening plans and re-opening of some facilities and spaces. The ability for staff to pivot quickly is evident with up to 93 staff redeployed to EOC, ESS and other departments such as Information Technology Services, Utilities, Transportation and Agriculture Services and Fleet Services.

Services provided have been impacted however staff have developed alternative opportunities such as Healthy at Home, a focus on outdoor recreation opportunities and new processes for the phased re-opening to support the safety of residents. With the province announcing recreation facilities opening in phase 2 (previously phase 3) staff rehiring and implementation of re-opening plans were actioned quickly.

In addition to managing a new way to operate, Recreation, Parks and Culture has continued to work on department initiatives. Those included in this update are all on time, in scope and on budget and include:

- Recreation and Culture Strategy Implementation Plan
- 2021 Alberta Special Olympics Summer Games
- Festival Place Website and Online Services Enhancement
- Annual Open Space Planning
- Annual Parks Infrastructure

Supporting information for this report is contained in Enclosure 1.

Council and Committee History

December 6, 2018 Council approved 2019-2022 Corporate Business Plan and 2019 Budget

December 5, 2019 Council approved 2020 Budget

Other Impacts

Policy: n/a

Legislative/Legal: n/a

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Interdepartmental: Facility Services, Human Resources, Procurement Services, Information Technology Services, Fleet Services, Utilities, Transportation Planning and Engineering

Master Plan/Framework: n/a

Enclosure(s)

1 Recreation, Parks and Culture Business Plan Update Presentation