

## **Priorities Committee Meeting\_Jul09\_2024**

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### **REPORT FOR INFORMATION**

#### **Women's Only Swim Pilot Update**

##### **Report Purpose**

To provide Priorities Committee with the outcomes of the Women's Only Swim Pilot and evaluation findings.

##### **Our Strategic Goals**

Goal 2 - Healthy and Safe Community

Goal 4 - Municipal Excellence

Goal 2 Priority - A diverse, welcoming, inclusive, and an accessible community for all

Goal 4 Priority - A workplace culture that is connected, inclusive, diverse, and promotes employee development

##### **Report**

Strathcona County is committed to supporting and developing an inclusive community that embraces, respects, accepts and values differences and works towards removing barriers to participate in recreational activities. On October 25, 2022, Strathcona County Council passed a motion for a six-month Women's Only Swim Pilot at the Kinsmen Leisure Centre. The pilot commenced on February 18, 2023, and ran on the third Saturday of each month until July 15, 2023. Participation gradually increased month over month with 7 attendees in February and 35 in July. Despite this gradual increase, participation over the six-month pilot was relatively low with a total of 122 participants. The program was promoted through various Strathcona County social media channels, website, digital and print signage, and Recreation and Culture Program guide. In addition, local groups with members that may benefit from the program were contacted and informed of the pilot program. To ensure multiple options existed during this six-month pilot, times were available for private Women's only groups bookings for those that prefer private/dedicated use for their group or prefer alternative dates.

During the six-month pilot, most participants paid a daily admission fee with very few utilizing an active pass. Facility staff received some general feedback from participants who noted that they were not County residents, however, administration did not request participants to provide residency information to confirm this information.

Following this pilot, on September 19, 2023, Council approved a six-month extension to gather additional information from swim participants and further evaluate the need for a Women's only swim. The same parameters were put in place for the six-month extension that ran from October 21, 2023, to March 16, 2024, the third Saturday of each month from 7:30pm to 9:00pm. The same marketing and promotional strategies were employed as in phase 1, in addition to boosted social media posts, a newspaper advertisement, facility digital signage, and the Recreation and Culture Network.

During phase 2, the following data was captured:

- participant residency,
- type of user (child, youth, adult, senior),
- type of admission,
- where participants learned about the swim, and

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- qualitative feedback from participants.

Over the course of the six-month extension, a total of 296 participants attended the swim. Of these 296, 286 participants shared their postal code, and 85 or approximately 30% of the total participants noted to reside in Strathcona County. In addition, over the course of the extension, there was not significant growth in participation from Strathcona County residents; 14 residents participated on October 14, 2023, and 16 residents participated on the last swim on March 16, 2024. In response to a survey question asking participants why the swim was important to them, the responses included: provided an opportunity to swim while adhering to personal religious and modesty beliefs (51), being more comfortable without makes in attendance (19), the swim feels private (13) and fun with friends (8). To summarize, the evaluation indicated that majority of the swim participants were not Strathcona County residents and accounted for approximately 30% of the total. Most of the participants were repeat users, and there was not significant growth from local residents as the pilot progressed.

Administration does not recommend offering the Women's only swim as a permanently scheduled drop-in service but will continue to support private Women's only swim bookings and their special requests at the Kinsmen Leisure Centre. In addition, administration will continue to engage local groups and evaluate if demand increases to consider offering a dedicated drop-in Women's only swim.

### **Council and Committee History**

September 19, 2023	THAT a six-month extension of the Women's Only Swim Pilot, be approved; and THAT Administration prepare a report for Council's consideration by the end of Q2 2024 with an evaluation of the pilot and any recommended next steps.
October 25, 2022	THAT the proposed six-month Women's Only Swim Pilot at the Kinsmen Leisure Centre, based on the parameters as set out in the October 25, 2022 Recreation, Parks and Culture report, be approved; and THAT Administration prepare a report for Council's consideration by the end of 2023 with an evaluation of the pilot and any recommended next steps.
April 26, 2022	THAT Administration prepare a report for Council's consideration by the end of the fourth quarter of 2022 on the feasibility of a six-month pilot project for a women's only swim program at the Kinsmen Leisure Centre, based on the following conditions: Swim time to take place once a month, during the weekend; windows must be covered, and an all-female staff be present; and children, male and female, under the age of eight can be included in the swim time.

### **Other Impacts**

**Policy:** Strathcona County Diversity and Inclusion Policy

**Financial/Budget:** n/a

**Legislative/Legal:** n/a

**Interdepartmental:** n/a

**Master Plan/Framework:** Strathcona County Social Framework, Recreation and Culture Strategy