



INFORMATION REPORT

TO: Chair and Members Emergency & Community Services Committee	WARD(S) AFFECTED: CITY WIDE
COMMITTEE DATE: November 25, 2013	
SUBJECT/REPORT NO: Recreation Needs Assessment for Persons with Disabilities Progress Update (CS13043) (City Wide) (Outstanding Business List Item)	
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SIGNATURE:	

Council Direction:

The Recreation Needs Assessment for Persons with Disabilities Report (CS12013) was approved by Council on November 12, 2012. Council directed staff to implement the related Action Plan recommendations and to report on the progress annually.

The year one Action Plan, with a detailed status of each recommendation, is attached as Appendix A to Report CS13043.

Information:

Recreation Division began to address and monitor the action items identified in the Needs Assessment for Persons with Disabilities (Report CS12013). The recommendations from the report informed the work plan for the Inclusive Program Lead.

The primary focus in year one centred on the development of a guiding philosophy and strategy for Inclusive Recreation and soliciting the support of corporate partners and community agencies.

With the foundation now in place, the following report details Recreation's response to key initiatives as taken from the 35 identified year one action items.

Service Improvements

Service Improvement recommendations focus on strengthening staff skills, expertise and networking opportunities to engage persons with disabilities while expanding the "Fit for Everyone" culture of the Recreation Division and providing greater inclusiveness and innovation.

In year one, the Recreation Division focused on developing a framework for the delivery of inclusive recreation. The Service Delivery Model was developed to communicate the Recreation Division's role and guiding philosophy as it pertains to the provision of services for persons with disabilities. This Service Delivery Model clearly defines the line of responsibility for accessible facilities, inclusive programming and sport and specialized or adapted programming. The Model depicts how the Recreation Division will work in concert with community agencies to engage persons with disabilities as a means to facilitate social inclusion.

In addition, a multi-level inclusive training plan, based on the principles of the Service Delivery Model was developed to ensure recreation staff are equipped to best accommodate persons with disabilities. A pilot training session dedicated to inclusion techniques was implemented in the summer services section. The training focused on developing the skills required for working with persons with disabilities in a one to one ratio environment. By increasing the total number of training hours, adding specialized clinics and inclusion specific certifications, the staff was better equipped to support persons with disabilities in these camp setting one to one ratio programs.

Based on the successes identified during the pilot training, a comprehensive training for all recreation staff has been developed for implementation in November 2013. The emphasis of the training will be on the introduction of the Service Delivery Model, a review of related policies and procedures, and the instruction on program adaptation techniques for persons with disabilities in traditional recreation centre programming.

Partnership Development

Partnership Development recommendations focus on the expansion of the Recreation Division's work with existing partnerships, the development of new partnerships and building upon existing networks for persons with disabilities in the Hamilton community.

The Recreation Division has focused on soliciting support from other departments within the corporation and the engagement of community groups as required through their process.

The Recreation Division regularly consults with the corporate Access and Equity office to ensure the development of recreation specific initiatives align with corporate standards for the inclusion of persons with disabilities. Recreation has engaged Risk Management, Legal and Human Rights Specialists to ensure a high level of customer service accompanies processes that reduce the Division's liability when supporting persons with disabilities. Further, the Recreation Division has initiated the sharing of information and resources with other City departments when parallels are identified between services offered, for example; Children's and Home Management Services Division. The Recreation Division also solicited the approval of the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities to ensure the developed service delivery model addressed the need in the Hamilton community, as identified by the Recreation Needs Assessment for Persons with Disabilities.

In addition, the Recreation Division has initiated relationships with community organizations and committees for the development of training, program delivery and program promotion.

Public Awareness and Marketing

These recommendations identify effective methods to improve Recreation's publications, making them more accessible by incorporating inclusive thinking into marketing initiatives and communication plans.

The Recreation Division focused on improving the accessibility of inclusive recreation information and streamlining the communications between the division and the community.

Recreation implemented an email address (accessiblerec@hamilton.ca) as a centralized method for persons requesting translations services, including braille, or requesting other accessibility information. In addition, a link on the Recreation home page has been added for information on Inclusive Recreation Services.

The Recreation Division worked with their marketing team to ensure recreation publications included images representing persons with disabilities. A separate publication highlighting services and offerings in the Recreation Division for persons with disabilities was designed and circulated as a removable insert in the Spring/Summer 2013 Recreation Guide.

The promotion of recreation services for persons with disabilities to neighbourhood community providers was increased through committee involvement, community presentations, and the distribution of the recreation guide and adapted program information.

Programs and Facilities

Programs and facilities recommendations suggest a renewed commitment to capital projects to support accessible facilities. The intent of these projects is to improve the design and delivery of inclusive and adapted programs for persons with disabilities.

Within year one, the Recreation Division focused on defining facilities that meet accessibility standards, identifying where facility upgrades are required, improving inclusive programming and developing new adapted programming.

Through the opening of the Westmount Recreation Centre, the City of Hamilton established a flagship facility and a leader in design features that exceed AODA accessibility standards. The Recreation Division continues to maintain the minimum accessibility standards for other recreation centres in each district. In order to do so, the Recreation Division identified hub centres with either “Primary” or “Secondary” designation. The “Primary” hubs are the centres in each district that have the highest level of accessibility features, amenities, adapted equipment and programming.

Currently all recreation programs are inclusive to individuals of all abilities. In year one the Recreation Division has refined procedures to further support inclusive recreation including the External Support Persons Procedure and the Behaviour Management Procedure. In addition, Recreation developed a new procedure for persons with disabilities to voluntarily communicate their personal accommodation requirements to Recreation Staff.

A dedicated program space for persons with a disability was established at the Westmount Recreation Centre. The Sensory Room features Snoezelen equipment and multi-sensory capabilities. A Snoezelen room is an artificially engineered space utilizing equipment that stimulates the primary senses through various sounds, lighting, gentle vibrations, and tactile sensations. Research has shown that sensory environments offer a number of benefits for persons with disabilities including, increased communication, self-control, autonomous discovery, and reduction in tensions and behaviours. The Sensory Room is a unique program space for drop in program offerings, adapted programs and rental availability for persons with disabilities.

Performance Measures and Evaluation

The performance measures recommendations suggest the annual reporting to track progress made in response to the Recreation Needs Assessment for Persons with Disabilities.

In year one, the Program Development Unit of the Recreation Division focused on providing annual information updates to Council, relevant stakeholders and Recreation Management on the progress of Action Items.

Recreation continues to develop standards and best practices for inclusive recreation services through program evaluation, municipal benchmarking, program satisfaction levels, total number of training hours and evaluating the percent of recreation facilities that meet accessibility standards.

Summary

An extensive amount of work has been completed in response to the identified year one Action Items. A comprehensive summary of all 2013 progress is attached as Appendix A to Report CS13043.

Next Steps

Identified year two Action Items will be addressed, monitored and reported on in 2014.

The Recreation Division will continue to implement action items through delivery and evaluation of the Inclusion Training Plan for all on-boarded recreation staff. In addition, develop and revise procedures that support recreation for persons with disabilities.

The Recreation Division will improve existing partnerships, and will work to develop new partnerships for the delivery of inclusive recreation services and engage community groups to evaluate the successes.

In year two, substantial efforts will be placed on the increase of programs for persons with disabilities including fitness, warm water programs and adapted programs on a geographical basis to provide a range of opportunities throughout the City. The provision of providing support workers within year round recreation programs will be evaluated to determine feasibility.

Year One Action Plan

Recreation Needs Assessment for Persons with Disabilities Update

	Year 1	Status/ Details	Lead
Service Improvement Action Plan			
1. Communicate the City's role in the provision of recreation services for persons with disabilities to provide accessible facilities, integrated programs, communications, promotions and marketing, and capacity building with support agencies who can provide specialized/adapted programs.	X	Complete. Approved by Recreation Management March 2013. Developed Service Delivery Model for Inclusive Recreation to communicate City's role in inclusive recreation; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible Facilities • Inclusive Programs & Sport • Partnerships with Community Organizations • Adapted Programs and Sport • Engage Persons for Social Inclusion 	Director of City Wide Services
2. Develop, revise and implement policies and procedures supporting equitable access to recreation services for persons with disabilities, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AODA and its application in recreation services and facilities; • allocation of public spaces; • access for person from low income backgrounds; • the provision of support workers; • behaviour management/zero tolerance; and, • an intake policy. 	X	In progress. Current procedures that have been modified/ developed; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour Management Procedure • External Support Persons Procedure • Individual Accommodation Plan 	Program Development
3. Continue the reference group made up of representatives of support organizations, persons with disabilities, and other underserved groups with quarterly meetings to discuss the progress on the <i>Recreation Needs Assessment for Persons with Disabilities</i> , collaboration, program and service development, and performance measures, producing an annual report on progress.	X	Ongoing. Presented progress on Service Delivery Model to Needs Assessment Reference group and Hamilton Accessibility Advisory Committee	Program Development
4. In City Wide Services rename the Supervisor of Special Needs position to a Supervisor Social Inclusion in Recreation Services, and broaden	X	Complete. Approved 2011. Job title changed to Program Lead for Inclusive Programming	Program Development

Year One Action Plan

Recreation Needs Assessment for Persons with Disabilities Update

the position scope over time to address all underserved populations.			
10. Develop a staff training and professional development program to build staff and volunteer skills in welcoming and providing services for persons with disabilities (e.g., self-study resources and materials, training manuals and staff/volunteer support sessions and touring specialized facilities).	X	In progress. Developed Inclusive Training Plan for Recreation Division and Increase Total number of training hours for Summer Camp 2013 (<i>Position Dependant</i>): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer Supervisors (14hs) • Summer Counsellors (4 –14hrs) Increase Inclusion Certification Opportunities (NVCI) for Summer Camp 2013: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25 Summer Students • 7 Full Time Recreation Coordinators 	Program Development
11. Establish staff procedures to handle situations of intolerance, addressing issues of safety within facilities and at special events.	X	Complete. September 2012. Included in Recreation Division Policy and Procedure Manual Version 1.	Program Development
15. Monitor and report to the Community Services GM on the Division's compliance with the requirements of the Access for Ontarians with Disabilities legislation.	X	Ongoing. Updates on Recreation compliance with the AODA provided annually.	Program Development
Partnership Development Action Plan			
19. Identify partners able to assist in service delivery and develop standardized partnership agreements which include deliverables, risk, contributions from each party, forecasted service levels and a performance review process.		Ongoing. Partnerships initiated with Mohawk College, Community Living Hamilton, and Community Transition Network (CTN) Committee.	Sport & Community Development
Public Awareness and Marketing Action Plan			
21. Ensure inclusive images representing the diversity of the City including persons with disabilities are used to promote City programs and services.		Ongoing. Recreation Guides updated with inclusive images representing persons with disabilities (Spring/ Summer and Fall 2013)	Business Support
23. Distribute the Recreation Guide directly to support agencies for persons with disabilities. Consider	X	Ongoing. Recreation Guides distributed to City	Business Support

providing Guides to schools.		Departments, Community Events including Special Olympics and CTN Recreation Event, Chedoke Autism Services.	
28. Produce a separate resource document that depicts how recreation and support services are provided to persons with disabilities, how best to access programs and services, and links to all related service agencies and their programs.	X	Ongoing. Spring 2013 Recreation Guide included City of Hamilton services for persons with disabilities in a separate document.	Program Development
Programs and Facilities Action Plan			
33. Create a program to introduce warmer water pools into the swimming and aquatic exercise pools to increase the comfort level of persons with physical disabilities and older adults.	X	Ongoing. Assisted in developing a resource which consolidated pool accessibility information, including equipment, warm water pools/ temperature and accessibility levels for individuals transitioning from therapeutic pool to community pool.	Program Development
38. Plan and deliver programs on a geographical basis to provide choices and a range of opportunities throughout the City.	X	Ongoing. Increase in direct delivery programs based on demonstrated need. New program offerings at Westmount Recreation Centre include; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teen Connections (designed for teens ages 16-21 with disabilities) • Adapted Gym (gym time reserved for individuals with disabilities) • Adapted Swim (swim time reserved for individuals with disabilities). • Community Sensory Room, with Snoezelen capabilities (drop in programming, rental opportunities, and unique specialized equipment for sensory stimulation) 	Program Development
47. Track the number of program opportunities and participation for persons with disabilities to ensure the demand/need is met or gaps identified.	X	Ongoing. Centralized tracking of available community programs/ initiatives, services and City of Hamilton program requests.	Program Development

Year One Action Plan

Recreation Needs Assessment for Persons with Disabilities Update

Performance Measurement Action Plan

52. Report on the completion of the Action Plan's recommendations in the <i>Recreation Needs Assessment for Persons with Disabilities</i> on an annual basis; plan the next year's deliverables based on progress and report to Recreation and Community Services management.	X	Ongoing. Annual updates utilizing identified performance measures.	Program Development
53. Report annually to Recreation management on each Action Plan according to the performance measures in the following table (see Section 6.5).	X	Ongoing. Annual updates utilizing identified performance measures.	Program Development