

DATE: October 26, 2021

FILE: 8020-02

TO: Chair and Members
Comox Valley Recreation Commission

FROM: Russell Dyson
Chief Administrative Officer

Supported by Russell Dyson
Chief Administrative Officer

R. Dyson

RE: Adult Ice Users Public Engagement Plan

Purpose

To obtain support from the Comox Valley Recreation Commission (Commission) to move forward with the proposed Adult Ice User Public Engagement Plan.

Recommendation from the Chief Administrative Officer:

THAT the Comox Valley Recreation Commission supports proceeding with the proposed Adult Ice User Public Engagement Plan, as outlined in the staff report dated October 26, 2021.

Executive Summary

The purpose of the Adult Ice User Public Engagement Plan is to connect with adults (18+) who currently use or wish to use the ice in the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) area and to gather information on their needs, wants and preferences.

The engagement approach will:

- Inform – Provide the public with background information and history of the Ice Allocation Policy through ConnectCVRD.
- Consult – With both current and new potential users through a survey, ConnectCVRD and focus group sessions.

The cost of implementing the proposed engagement plan will be approximately \$16,000-\$18,000.

Prepared by:

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Concurrence:

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Concurrence:

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Doug DeMarzo
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Background/Current Situation

In the Spring and Summer of 2021, recreation staff worked with the Comox Valley Sports and Social Club and the 19-Wing Comox Recreation Department to develop the Comox Valley Hockey League (CVHL) that started in October of this year. The program has been very successful to date, with 12 teams competing in the league and another four on the waitlist. There is obviously still demand for more hockey league ice time and, believe there may be additional demands on the ice we may or may not be fully aware of (i.e. additional time for adult ringette, sledge hockey programs, old-timers hockey league and beginners hockey league etc.). Recommendations from the 2017 Indoor Recreation Facilities Master Plan stated that reviews of the current and future demand on the ice, both in this study and previous studies, indicate the need for additional ice.

The existing Ice Allocation Policy gives preferential treatment to those groups/individuals that have been using the ice for a number of years. The policy has been in place for approximately 20 years and has not received a major overall during this timeframe. Existing users do not want to be displaced by the CVHL or other relative “newcomers” (i.e. ringette) and, newer users have difficulty finding acceptable ice time. The proposed Adult Ice Users Public Engagement Plan would also engage stakeholders on the ice allocation process, options and policy.

The CVRD needs to understand what users want/need and collect input from current ice users and users who may wish to participate in an ice sport but aren’t currently. To ensure all Comox Valley area residents are heard, staff would like to implement an Adult Ice Users Public Engagement Plan.

Communication objectives for this proposed plan are:

- To have open discussions with current ice users regarding their needs wants and, preferences for ice space use and allocation in the Comox Valley.
- To gather feedback from Comox Valley adult residents (18+) regarding what ice sports interest them, what they would like to participate in and what that might look like.
- To engage with stakeholders on the ice allocation process, options and policy.
- To ensure staff are aware of the engagement process, ways to get involved and opportunities for input into the process.

The engagement approach would:

- Inform – Providing the public with background information and history of the Ice Allocation Policy through ConnectCVRD.
- Consult – With both current and new potential users through a survey, ConnectCVRD and focus group sessions.

Please see Appendix A for more information on the proposed Adult Ice Users Public Engagement Plan and timeline.

Please note: Youth are not addressed in this plan as their current ice needs are being met and remain a priority.

Policy Analysis

The following COVID-19 response and renewal framework for the CVRD services is supported:

- Adapting to changing community priorities – assessing recreation facilities/services for updates and improvements.

Fiscal responsibility is one of the CVRD’s strategic key drivers:

- Fiscal responsibility through the careful management/modification of existing services to better meet the needs of area residents.

Accessibility is one of the CVRD Recreation Commissions strategic priorities:

- Strategic Goal 4 – Accessibility - improving access to ice sports for local residents.

Options

1. To support proceeding with the proposed Adult Ice User Public Engagement Plan.
2. To support proceeding with a modified Adult Ice User Public Engagement Plan that only engages current ice users and focuses on hockey league development.
3. To not support proceeding with the proposed Adult Ice User Public Engagement Plan.

Staff are recommending option 1.

Financial Factors

The cost of implementing the proposed Adult Ice User Public Engagement Plan is between \$16,000-\$18,000 which includes communication contractor's fees of approximately \$12,000.

Legal Factors

There are no legal concerns generated by this report.

Regional Growth Strategy Implications

- Public Health and Safety: Support a high quality of life through the protection and enhancement of community health, safety and well-being.
 - Objective 7A-5: Support the promotion of healthy lifestyles and invigorating community spirit through physical activity.

Intergovernmental Factors

Participants in the service include the City of Courtenay, Town of Comox, Village of Cumberland and Baynes Sound – Denman/Hornby Islands (Electoral Area A), Lazo North (Electoral Area B) and Puntledge – Black Creek (Electoral Area C).

Interdepartmental Involvement

The Recreation Services Department is collaborating with the Communications Department on the development and implementation of the Adult Ice User Public Engagement Plan.

Citizen/Public Relations

In order to ensure a high quality of life for residents in the Comox Valley, it is critical they have access to recreational opportunities that are affordable and promote and maintain a healthy, active lifestyle. Engaging residents to find out what their ice needs and wants are will help ensure we are offering the best programs and services for the community.

Attachment: Appendix A – Adult Ice Users Public Engagement Plan Timeline

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