

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 4, 2013

Item 2, Report No. 26, of the Committee of the Whole (Working Session), which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on June 4, 2013.

2 PROGRAM REVIEW – SERVICE LEVEL COMPARISONS – SENIORS' PROGRAMMING

The Committee of the Whole (Working Session) recommends:

- 1) That the recommendation contained in the following report of the Interim City Manager, the Commissioner of Community Services, the Commissioner of Strategic and Corporate Services and the Director of Innovation and Continuous Improvement, dated May 28, 2013, be approved;**
- 2) That staff report back detailing full cost comparisons with other municipalities and that all costs dedicated to Seniors including older adult clubs and general programs, facilities, utilities, etc. be included to provide proper comparisons of costs; and**
- 3) That Communication C1, presentation material entitled, "*Program Review – Service Level Comparisons*", be received.**

Recommendation

The Interim City Manager, the Commissioner of Community Services, the Commissioner of Strategic and Corporate Services and the Director of Innovation and Continuous Improvement, in consultation with the Director of Recreation and Culture, recommend:

- 1) That this report be received for information and discussion purposes; and,
- 2) That the current levels of service associated with Seniors' Programming provided by the City be maintained.

Contribution to Sustainability

As the City grows, the expectations and requirements of its residents and stakeholders will continue to evolve and change. Program service levels define how the City strives to meet these expectations and provide insight into the effectiveness, efficiency and economy of the City's service delivery models.

Comparison of service levels for similar programs in comparable municipalities provides the City with an opportunity to identify areas where changes in service level may be considered in order to provide residents with reduced levels of service with associated lower costs. Information gathered in these reviews will enable Council to determine how and where to allocate scarce resources, look to recover service costs through realistic user fees (where feasible) and, in some cases, identify ways in which to reduce environmental impacts which are all elements supporting the City's focus on sustainable use of resources (Goal 1 – Green Directions).

Economic Impact

Some of the service levels associated with Senior's Programs are higher than those provided by other comparable GTA municipalities. As no change is being proposed to Seniors' Programming service levels, there is no economic impact associated with this recommendation.

Communications Plan

As no changes to Seniors' Programming service levels are being proposed, no additional public consultation or communication is required.

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 4, 2013

Item 2, CW(WS) Report No. 26 – Page 2

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide a comparison of GTA municipal service levels for Seniors' Programming as identified in Item 1, Report No. 42 of the Committee of the Whole (Working Session) and adopted by Council on October 30th, 2012. The municipalities used as comparators were Brampton, Burlington, Markham, Municipality X, Oakville, Richmond Hill, Toronto and the Region of York.

Council specifically directed staff to compare the service levels of the following programs with other GTA municipalities and to identify any potential options for changing the level of service provided by the City:

- Winter Control / Sanding and Salting
- Winter Control / Road Snow Clearing
- Path / Sidewalk Snow Clearing
- Animal Services
- Seniors' Programming.

The Winter Control and Path / Sidewalk Snow Clearing programs are addressed in the accompanying service level review report. Additionally, Animal Services was addressed as Item 3, Report No. 1 of the Finance and Administration Committee 2013.

Background - Analysis

Program 87 – Seniors' Programming

Seniors' programming and support provided by the City falls into the following three types:

- Seniors' specific programs, i.e., programming developed specifically for seniors;
- Seniors' / Older Adult Club support, i.e., in-lieu services provided to third parties who are delivering further programming / support to seniors; and,
- Seniors' discounts for general programs, i.e., age-related / eligible discounts for such programs as fitness, swimming and bocce.

The table in Attachment 1 provides a comparison between the City of Vaughan's level of service for seniors' programming and those of comparable GTA urban municipalities. The Region is not included in this comparison as its focus is more on delivering seniors' programming associated with long term care, independent living and housing support. (The City of Toronto is also responsible for services similar to those provided by the Region and they have also been excluded from this comparison.)

There is no consistency across the municipalities as to the age at which an individual becomes eligible to take advantage of seniors' or older adult programming. Oakville has a low eligibility age of 50, while the City, Mississauga and Toronto have an eligibility age of 60. The City (together with Brampton) has the lowest percentage of its overall population that is eligible to participate in its seniors' programming 16% as opposed to 33% in Oakville (where the eligibility age is set at 50).

Dedicated seniors' programming is offered by both the City and third party seniors' groups, with the City alone providing over 450 hours of programs in the Spring / Summer calendar – the level of discount (when compared to adult fees) on these courses ranges from 70% - 92%. In 2012, the average enrollment in each of these programs was over 18, over 80% of available spaces were utilized, and the net incremental direct cost of running these programs was approximately \$90,000.

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 4, 2013

Item 2, CW(WS) Report No. 26 – Page 3

Some municipalities have provided dedicated facilities for seniors, e.g., Burlington Seniors' Centre, while the City provides space at both Community Centres and "storefront" leased facilities free of charge to 20 seniors' groups. In 2012, the cost of providing the leased facilities to four clubs operating out of these locations was approximately \$125,000.

The City provides the largest discount to its older adult population of any municipality, ranging from a maximum of 48% for fitness memberships to 80% for bocce memberships. In total in 2012, over \$560,000 of discounts to membership fees were taken by the City's seniors (when compared to the adult fees) – it should be stressed that had these discounts not been available, then there is no guarantee that participation would have been at the same levels and that the City's adult membership fees are the highest in the comparator group. While the discount on fitness memberships is the largest in percentage terms within the group of comparison municipalities, the annual membership fee charged to seniors is the second highest at \$310.20.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

A comparison of service levels between the City's programs and those of other similar municipalities provides an opportunity to identify any significant differences in the services delivered to residents in different jurisdictions.

On-going review of service levels and dialogue with service recipients enables the City to identify ways in which service levels, or service delivery models, could be changed so as to ensure that residents are provided with the required services with the most appropriate cost structure.

The Service Level Reviews are consistent with and support the City's strategic goals of Service Excellence by enabling the City to "demonstrate excellence in service delivery".

Regional Implications

Not applicable.

Conclusion

A comparison of the City's current service levels for Seniors' Programming with other urban GTA municipalities demonstrates that, for many, the City's residents are provided with a high level of service.

The provision of higher levels of service is, all other things being equal, associated with either higher costs or lower revenues (associated with discounts, services-in-kind etc.). As the most recent Ipsos-Reid survey demonstrates that residents "believe they receive good value for their tax dollars" with over 85% *VERY SATISFIED* or *SOMEWHAT SATISFIED* with recreation and fitness services provided by the City, the survey suggests that residents are comfortable supporting the current service levels. The Ipsos-Reid report also identified Recreation and Fitness programs as areas for maintenance, i.e., services of relatively high importance where satisfaction is good and where the focus is on maintaining current levels of service.

Changes to service levels are not without associated challenges as any changes that increase charges to participants, could impact the ability of those on fixed incomes to take advantage of the City's programs and facilities and conflict with the City's Service Excellence objective of "promoting community safety, health and wellness".

City staff recommends that Council does not change the current level of service associated with Seniors' Programming.

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 4, 2013

Item 2, CW(WS) Report No. 26 – Page 4

Attachments

Attachment No. 1: Seniors' Programming – Municipal Service Level Comparison

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(A copy of the attachments referred to in the foregoing have been forwarded to each Member of Council and a copy thereof is also on file in the office of the City Clerk.)