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COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA
Monday, January 22, 2024
2:00 PM

Councillor Freeman in the Chair

1. **TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**
2. **MOMENT OF REFLECTION**
3. **DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST AND THE GENERAL NATURE THEREOF**
4. **PRESENTATIONS**
 - a) **Community Services Business Plan**
Mark Dykstra, Commissioner, Community Services;
Kevin Van Ooteghem, Director, Facility Design and Management;
Robin Milne, Director, Parks, Forestry and Cemetery Services;
Jillian Fleming, Director, Recreation Services;
Jim Bowman, Director, Community Programming & Outreach Services;
Nicole Papke, Director, Municipal Enforcement Services; and,
Richard Hepditch, Chief, Fire Rescue Services.

5. **CONSENT MOTION**

That consent motion items (a) through (b) be approved.

- a) **Title:** [Waterloo City Centre – Lease Renewal – Raymond James](#) **Page 5**
Report No.: COM2024-005
Prepared By: Liz Badley

Recommendation:

1. That Council approve report COM2024-005.

2. That Council approve the lease renewal for Raymond James Ltd. at the Waterloo City Centre according to the Terms and Conditions as outlined in report COM2024-005.
3. That the Mayor and Clerk be authorized to sign the Lease Amending Agreement and any other necessary documents, subject to the satisfaction of the City's Solicitor.

b) Title: [Neighbourhood Strategy Implementation and Supports in 2023](#) [Page 7](#)

Report No.: COM2024-003

Prepared By: Julie Legg, Halie Gilmore, Amy McCullough

Recommendation:

1. That COM2024-003 be received as information.

6. ITEMS REMOVED FROM THE CONSENT MOTION

7. STAFF REPORTS

a) Title: [2023 Facility Accessibility Update](#) [Page 18](#)

Report No.: COM2024-008

Prepared By: Amy Ross, Swati Vekariya

Presentation: Amy Ross, Swati Vekariya

Recommendation:

1. That Council receive report COM2024-008 as information for the annual update on the status of Accessibility improvements at City owned facilities.

b) Title: [Supporting Neighbourhood-Led Initiatives Policy](#) [Page 27](#)

Report No.: COM2024-004

Prepared By: Halie Gilmore, Julie Legg, Amy McCullough

Recommendation:

1. That Council approve report COM2024-004.
2. That Council approve the Supporting Neighbourhood-Led Initiatives Policy (M-016).

c) **Title:** RIM Park Skate Park
Report No.: COM2024-006
Prepared By: Hala Al Amine

Recommendation:

1. That Council approve report COM2024-006.
2. That Council approve the release of the 2024 capital funding for the Neighbourhood Action Sports Parks – City Wide non-routine project in the amount of \$796,000, funded \$531,000 from the Parkland Dedication Reserve Fund (PUB) and \$265,000 from the Development Charges Reserve Fund (DC), as per the staff tabled 2024-2026 capital budget (ref #280), as approved for early release via CORP2023-049 Early Approval of Capital Projects on December 11, 2023.

8. CONSIDERATION OF NOTICE OF MOTION GIVEN AT PREVIOUS MEETING

None

9. NOTICE OF MOTION

None

10. COMMUNICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE

None

11. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

12. QUESTIONS

13. NEW BUSINESS

14. ENACTMENT OF BY-LAWS

Recommendation:

That the By-laws listed below be read a first, second and third time and finally passed, numbered sequentially commencing with By-law Number 2024-003 and that the Mayor and Clerk be authorized to sign them accordingly.

- a) By-law Establishing (Widening) a Public Highway known as Woolwich Street
- b) By-law to confirm all actions and proceedings of Council, January 22, 2024

15. ADJOURNMENT



STAFF REPORT
Facility Design & Management Services

Title: Waterloo City Centre – Lease Renewal - Raymond James
Report Number: COM2024-005
Author: Liz Badley, Leasing Real Estate & Service Contract Specialist
Council Date: January 22, 2024
File: N/A
Attachments: None
Ward No.: 7

Recommendations:

1. That Council approve report COM2024-005.
2. That Council approve the lease renewal for Raymond James Ltd. at the Waterloo City Centre according to the Terms and Conditions as outlined in report COM2024-005.
3. That the Mayor and Clerk be authorized to sign the Lease Amending Agreement and any other necessary documents, subject to the satisfaction of the City's Solicitor.

A. Executive Summary

Raymond James Ltd has agreed to renew the current lease for 1516 square feet of the first floor space in Waterloo City Centre, under the following terms and conditions:

Space: 1516 sq. ft. (first floor, Unit 175)
Terms: November 1, 2023 – October 31, 2026
Use: Office

B. Financial Implications

Loss of revenue should the Lease Amending Agreement not be approved.

C. Technology Implications

None

D. Link to Strategic Plan

(Strategic Priorities: Reconciliation, Equity, Accessibility, Diversity and Inclusion; Environmental Sustainability and Climate Action; Complete Community; Infrastructure and Transportation Systems; Innovation and Future-Ready)

(Guiding Principles: Equity and Inclusion; Sustainability; Integrity; Workplace Wellbeing; Community-centred; Operational Excellence)

Operational Excellence: We will act in accordance with good governance best practices to ensure operational excellence.

E. Previous Reports on this Topic

None



STAFF REPORT
Community Programming & Outreach Services

Title: Neighbourhood Strategy Implementation and Supports in 2023
Report Number: COM2024-003
Author: Julie Legg, Supervisor, Neighbourhood Services
Halie Gilmore, Neighbourhood Coordinator
Amy McCullough, Neighbourhoods and Policy Associate
Council Date: January 22, 2024
File: N/A
Attachments: None
Ward No.: City Wide

Recommendations:

That COM2024-003 be received as information.

A. Executive Summary

The vision of the Neighbourhood Strategy is that Waterloo is a city of caring, vibrant, engaged neighbourhoods where everyone belongs. To guide the work of neighbourhood services in supporting neighbours, the goals of the Neighbourhood Strategy are to encourage neighbourhood interactions, empower neighbours to lead, and commit to a corporate City culture that supports neighbourhood-led and delivered initiatives.

This report outlines progress on the Neighbourhood Strategy throughout 2023 and summarizes key neighbourhood highlights for the year, which include areas of:

- Learning and capacity building
- Accessing City resources for neighbourhood-led projects
- Recognizing neighbours
- Celebrating vibrant neighbourhoods
- Reviewing and creating neighbourhood grants, including processes and policies
- Connecting with post-secondary neighbours
- Supporting neighbourhood programs in parks

As another resource for neighbourhood-led initiatives, grant funding is provided to support community applicants to lead opportunities for connections in their own neighbourhoods.

The neighbourhood services team helps to support residents to make ideas possible with a variety of grant options and in-kind resources. 2023 allocations included:

- 39 mini grant projects for up to \$300 each towards neighbourhood community building initiatives such as street parties, pollinator gardens, badminton program, card making workshop, raised garden beds at a community garden, gardening workshop, and other neighbourhood socials and celebrations.
- \$50,000 through the Neighbourhood Matching Fund to support 14 neighbourhood-led projects including bike racks, park opening celebration, outdoor movie nights, basketball court improvements, community gardens, and more.
- Launch of a new Artists in Neighbourhoods program to enable 4 artist and neighbourhood collaborations in community spaces.

The report also includes opportunities for future improvement and a chance to look ahead to what's planned in 2024 neighbourhood work. The neighbourhood services team wants to encourage Council to continue celebrating all that neighbours do to make the City of Waterloo strong and connected. Staff will work alongside the community to support caring, vibrant, and complete neighbourhoods in 2024.

B. Financial Implications

None - this report speaks only to financial resources allocated as approved by Council.

C. Technology Implications

Available resources continue to involve technology aligned with the current corporate products such as the neighbourhood microsite and gathering spaces map.

D. Link to Strategic Plan

(Strategic Priorities: Reconciliation, Equity, Accessibility, Diversity and Inclusion; Environmental Sustainability and Climate Action; Complete Community; Infrastructure and Transportation Systems; Innovation and Future-Ready)

(Guiding Principles: Equity and Inclusion; Sustainability; Integrity; Workplace Wellbeing; Community-centred; Operational Excellence)

Complete Community: Objective 3 of complete neighbourhoods is to continue to implement and revise the Neighbourhood Strategy to improve neighbourhood interaction, safety, relationships, and neighbourhood grants.

Community-centered: Supporting strong and liveable neighbourhoods is an important goal of the Neighbourhood Strategy and ongoing supports available for neighbours. This includes engagement and participation in a variety of community-centred opportunities.

E. Previous Reports on this Topic

COM2018-013 Neighbourhood Strategy - May 14, 2018

COM2019-030 People, Resources and Processes: Progress on Neighbourhood Strategy Implementation Year 1 – Oct. 19, 2019

COM2021-003 Neighbours helping Neighbours: Progress on Neighbourhood Strategy Implementation Year 2 – Jan. 18, 2021

COM2021-005 Funds distributed for neighbourhood grants in 2020 – Feb. 22, 2021

COM2022-003 Neighbourhood Grants – Funds Distributed 2021 – Jan. 31, 2022

COM2022-011 Progress on Neighbourhood Strategy Implementation Year 3- May 30, 2022

COM2023-006 Neighbourhood Strategy Implementation and Supports in 2022

COM2023-021 Community Grants Renewal- June 19, 2023



Neighbourhood Strategy Implementation and Supports in 2023 COM2024-003

Neighbourhood Strategy Background

The vision of the Neighbourhood Strategy is that Waterloo is a city of caring, vibrant, engaged neighbourhoods where everyone belongs. To guide the work of neighbourhood services in supporting neighbours, the goals of the Neighbourhood Strategy are to:

- encourage neighbourhood interactions;
- empower neighbours to lead; and
- commit to a corporate City culture that supports neighbourhood-led and delivered initiatives.

The following report outlines progress on the Neighbourhood Strategy throughout 2023 and summarizes key program highlights for the year. While some implementation timelines have changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the eighteen action areas are completed, in progress, within future timelines, or modified to meet changing community needs.

Highlights from 2023

The neighbourhood services team continues to provide community access to and participation in a number of ongoing resources developed through the Neighbourhood Strategy. Resources include the neighbourhood microsite, staff support navigating a range of City processes, volunteer capacity building opportunities, and more. In addition to these continuous supports, key areas of impact from 2023 are included below:

Learning and Capacity Building

- Developed new how-to guides to support neighbours in responding to hate-motivated incidents, understanding municipal bylaws, and planning an outdoor movie. 26 guides are now available to empower neighbours to lead in their community.
- Reintroduced the Food and Funds event. This event, which was paused during the COVID-19 pandemic, allows interested neighbours to learn more about grant opportunities, share ideas, and connect about available resources. It is a great way to connect with neighbours, educate them on available opportunities, and inspire ideas for future community projects.
- Led the annual Neighbourhood Summit with opportunities to connect with local organizations, hear about supports for responding to hate-motivated incidents, participate in a sign workshop to help welcome others to the place neighbours call

home, and enjoy many other ways to connect as neighbours across Waterloo. Community partners from Community Justice Initiatives, Coalition of Muslim Women KW, Waterloo Regional Police Services, Level Up, and Municipal Enforcement all shared how they contribute to responding to hate and supporting neighbours in further inclusivity. Additional community partners shared information and resources on how neighbours can engage in creating an inclusive community.

- Continued building relationships with Homes Associations by facilitating two meet-up opportunities for board members to connect, share information, and network. Developed resources including group directory and list of available City supports to assist these groups.

Accessing City Resources for Neighbourhood-Led Projects

- Increased use and addition of new items to further support to the neighbourhood event equipment program. This provides neighbours with free and easy access to items needed for community gatherings. Popular items include pop-up tents, large lawn games, and an outdoor movie kit, with 428 item uses from all available equipment in 2023. That's over a 350% increase in use from last year's inaugural program.
- Added new spaces and updated information in the Gathering Spaces Map to ensure this resource remains relevant and useful for neighbours.
- Provided affiliated neighbourhood association supports for neighbourhood skates, swims, events, and other great activities. These annual foundational funding resources assist groups to provide free opportunities for neighbourhood recreation and connection.

Recognizing Neighbours

- Organized volunteer recognition opportunities for over 500 volunteers that support neighbourhood programs and groups. Volunteers contribute in many great ways including neighbourhood associations, homes associations, block connectors, community gardens, outdoor rinks, and partners in parks programs each year.
- Spread neighbourliness by helping neighbours nominate and thank great community members through the Neighbourhood Kindness program. Some kindness highlights include neighbours who help shovel snow, plan events, offer a listening ear, share tasty treats, and spread other forms of local kindness. So far over 180 neighbours have been recognized through this program.

Celebrating Vibrant Neighbourhoods

- Supported over 25 dedicated neighbourhood volunteers through the Block Connector Program. Provided staff guidance to help them deliver exciting neighbourhood projects and hosted two block connector meet-up opportunities to encourage information sharing and capacity building.
- Collaborated on the neighbourhood picnic table program with Arts and Creative Industries team members, neighbours, Parks, Forestry, and Cemetery Services team members, and local artists to bring 9 new pieces of art to local parks. Check out the [video summary](#) of this year's projects.

- Celebrated the third annual Chalk Challenge to bring neighbours together to create temporary art creations and chalk messages across Waterloo neighbourhoods. Neighbours of all ages shared their creations.
- Distributed the bi-weekly “Neighbours Helping Neighbours” e-newsletter to inspire, inform, and connect neighbours to resources encouraging a more inclusive and engaged Waterloo. Over 100 editions have been shared with neighbours! Each edition highlights what community members are doing to connect in their neighbourhoods, information about projects and resources across Waterloo Region that impact community life, and other important things to know throughout the city.

Reviewing and Creating Neighbourhood Grants

- Conducted a neighbourhood grant review to improve the supports and processes for eligible neighbourhood applicants. Council approved the updated direction in June 2023. We celebrated the final year for the Neighbourhood Matching Fund (transitioning to the Neighbourhood Fund) and the many amazing neighbourhood-led projects that have been possible due to this funding and support since its implementation.
- Designed and introduced the Artists in Neighbourhoods program which supported four collaborative, community art projects across Waterloo neighbourhoods. This program supports connections between neighbours and artists and helps to beautify neighbourhoods, support connection to place, and foster neighbourhood identity.

Connecting with Post-Secondary Neighbours

- Refreshed the Town and Gown Terms of Reference based on feedback and analysis of the current approaches for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Focusing on strong community and student (first being the Town and second being the Gown) relationships is an important way Waterloo creates a connected and vibrant community.
- Welcomed post-secondary students to Waterloo with the annual Waterloo Fest in the public square in September. A number of internal divisions, external organizations, and uptown businesses attended to connect with students about active transportation, municipal bylaws, fire safety, library services, public transit, and more. Over 2,000 students were estimated to have attended. Neighbourhoods staff collaborated with representatives from the University of Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier University, and Conestoga College, to deliver this event. With live music, informational booths, games, and food trucks, it was a fun afternoon!

Supporting Neighbourhood Programs in Parks

- Delivered another year of the Community Garden Program with the Parks, Forestry, and Cemetery Services team from May to October to support seven garden locations, lots of fresh produce, and neighbourhood connections. Two new garden groups are working through steps to implement gardens in the coming year which will bring the number of community gardens on city property to nine.
- Supported over 350 volunteers in the Outdoor Rink Program to create 35 rinks across Waterloo neighbourhoods with the Parks, Forestry, and Cemetery Services

team. While the weather was not ideal for the rink season, many neighbours came together to create opportunities for this well-loved winter recreation when possible.

Neighbourhood Grants Allocated in 2023

Each year, grant funding is provided to support community applicants to lead opportunities for connections in their own neighbourhoods. The neighbourhood services team helps to support residents to make ideas possible with a variety of grant options and in-kind resources. The following section summarizes the grant opportunities available in 2023, number of applications received, funds awarded, and examples of ideas implemented.

Mini Grants for Neighbours

Mini Grants for Neighbours (mini grants) are a small amount of funding with a big impact. These grants support Waterloo residents working on projects that promote belonging and community building in neighbourhoods.

This program provides support to individual initiatives in neighbourhoods that:

- respond to emergent needs and opportunities;
- contribute to community building, social cohesion and integration;
- support and promote community connections;
- encourage neighbourhood interactions; and
- empower neighbours to lead.

Funds for mini grants are allocated each calendar year (January 1 – December 31). Applicants can receive funding from this program twice in any 12-month period based on funds available. The maximum funding available is up to \$300 to support eligible expenses for individual initiatives in neighbourhoods in the City of Waterloo.

Below is a summary of applications for mini grants throughout 2023:

Funds Distributed	Requests Received*	Initiatives Supported
\$10000.68	59	39

*Requests received include initiatives that did not meet the guidelines, did not follow through with the additional information needed to make a funding decision, or were supported in an alternate way.

Initiatives vary by applicant, some examples that received funding include:

- street parties
- pollinator gardens
- outdoor rink supports
- arts program
- neighbourhood food group
- community BBQs
- badminton program
- neighbourhoods sports day

- performers at neighbourhood events
- card making workshop
- raised garden beds at a community garden
- neighbourhood-based seasonal events like Halloween, Eid, and winter
- youth activity kits
- gardening workshop
- other neighbourhood socials and gatherings

Neighbourhood Matching Fund Grants

The Neighbourhood Matching Fund (NMF) program is another way the city supports grassroots neighbourhood projects and helps residents build strong communities. It encourages neighbourhood projects to be inclusive and welcoming to support neighbour-led placemaking. It provides financial resources and guidance from staff to help community members working with their neighbours to make their projects, events, and activities happen. The Neighbourhood Matching Fund is intended to inspire residents to become more involved in their neighbourhood and to play a role in making their neighbourhood even better. Grants are available for up to \$7,500 and applicants must demonstrate how they will match this funding with volunteer hours, in-kind resources, donations, or other contributions.

Below is a summary of grant applications throughout 2023:

Grant Deadline	Funds Distributed	Requests Received	Initiatives Supported
February	\$7,895.00	6	4
May	\$23,540.00	7	6
October	\$18,564.99	6	4
Total	\$50,000.00	19	14

Examples of projects funded include:

- block parties
- live music in the park
- bike racks
- park opening celebration
- outdoor movie nights
- basketball court improvements
- community gardens
- community message board
- neighbourhood cultural celebrations

In addition to the summary of awarded funds and projects, the positive impacts of the NMF program are further illustrated through community feedback. Neighbourhood Matching Fund applicants expressed the importance of this grant funding in allowing neighbourhood ideas to come to life. One neighbourhood shared, “We had a great multigenerational turnout and about 8 volunteers for the [event] who have never

volunteered before. We also had several families sign up for membership. We had lots of positive comments on our socials as well as email.”

Other neighbourhood organizers shared their gratitude for the funding availability, “The NMF grant is an excellent program! This allows us to get our neighbourhood community together and meet each other and have some fun. The NMF process is very user-friendly and easy to complete. Thank you, City of Waterloo, for giving us this opportunity once again.”

These neighbourhood-led ideas and projects show the ways neighbours are using grant resources to lead opportunities and engage in their own communities. All grants in 2023 were allocated within existing budgeted funds. To meet growing demand, the Mini Grant for Neighbours program reallocated Neighbourhood Strategy funding resources from budget areas with availability to support more neighbourhood initiatives.

Changes to the Neighbourhood Matching Fund approved by council in 2023 will see this grant move to the Neighbourhood Fund in 2024 for all operations, communications, and reporting. The [Neighbourhood Grant Policy](#) summarizes criteria for the Neighbourhood Fund, mini grant, and operating grant streams to be implemented.

Artists in Neighbourhoods

New in 2023, the Artists in Neighbourhoods program launched with collaboration amongst the Neighbourhood Services and Arts and Creative Industries teams. Through the Artists in Neighbourhoods program, collaboration occurs between a professional artist and neighbours to work together to create and deliver community art. Eligible applicants can apply for up to \$5,000 per project. The first ever Artists in Neighbourhoods projects provided lots to celebrate in our community!

Funds Distributed	Expressions of Interest	Initiatives Supported
\$10,000	17	4

Supported projects included:

- nature art paint-making station with paints made from rocks, soils, and clays
- fence art project illustrating neighbourhood heritage through the creation of a mural-like wooden pictorial of the creatures that live in the neighbourhood
- a woven pod from natural weaving materials like willow, grapevine and invasive buckthorn saplings that are growing abundantly in the city
- textile weaving in a neighbourhood park

Feedback from one involved artist highlights the strong impact of neighbourhood art opportunities has within the community:

“As an artist new to the region of Waterloo, I found that the Artists in Neighbourhoods Program was an excellent opportunity for me to further understand and connect with the community I work in. Sharing my art practice with community members (of any age!) is fulfilling in many ways. I have the chance to teach others about sustainability in art and hopefully inspire them to use natural

resources found locally to make their own art materials. I received feedback and am grateful for the chance to talk about my art passion with my neighbours!"

A musical performance, photography, storytelling, and visual art are just some of the proposed projects the fund received during the introductory year. The program will return in 2024 to encourage further opportunities for artists and neighbours to connect in creating a vibrant community.

Opportunities for Future Improvement

This report highlights exciting successes associated with the Neighbourhood Strategy implementation and neighbourhood grants. Along with the opportunities for celebration throughout the year, there have also been challenges associated with supporting neighbours. The neighbourhoods team is exploring the following opportunities for future improvement:

- Determining processes for neighbourhood entrance signs in collaboration with impacted and involved City divisions. This is needed to address past operational challenges and resource allocation concerns, while also considering the goals of neighbourhood identity.
- Placemaking and neighbourhood engagement involve staff time to support new ideas or proposals. To help these projects come to life and over time long after they are implemented, there are lasting operational impacts. Supporting operational needs for unique neighbourhood projects and requests involves collaboration amongst divisions and budget and capacity constraints can make these projects more challenging. The neighbourhoods team looks to continue collaborations in ways that are effective for City staff, including support to address operational needs to allow community projects to be possible.
- Volunteerism is changing throughout Waterloo and across Canada. The Neighbourhood Strategy identifies ways to explore collaborations with community partners on capacity building, education, and inclusivity to encourage neighbourhood involvement. In addition to increased supports and opportunities, the City's balance of community benefit and risk mitigation are important to navigate as we offer different ways for neighbours to engage beyond historical programs or contexts. Doing things differently may require additional supports outside of well-known structures such as involvement outside of formal associations or use of neighbourhood spaces that are not City-owned.
- Continued concern about the impact of climate change on neighbourhood-based outdoor programs and events. Council and staff need to be proactive in planning for the future of these opportunities such as the outdoor rink program, community garden program, and use of neighbourhood outdoor spaces given the impacts of climate change.

Looking Ahead to 2024

Neighbourhood services will continue to work alongside the community to support connected, caring, vibrant, and complete neighbourhoods in 2024. Council, staff, and community members can look forward to the following highlights in the coming year:

- Implementation of the neighbourhood grant refresh to streamline and improve access to neighbourhood grant opportunities. Mini Grants for Neighbours will continue to be available along with a refreshed Neighbourhood Fund (previously Neighbourhood Matching Fund), and operating grant. The operating stream will be new in 2023 (to replace previous Community Cash Grant supports), neighbourhood grants committee members will participate in neighbourhood-focused funding decisions, and updated eligibility will help clarify supported applicants.
- Launch of the Neighbourhood Naming program to encourage neighbours who live in an area without a well-known name or identity to participate in learning about neighbourhood resources and improving place-based connections.
- A new Support for Neighbourhood Initiatives Policy to help remove red-tape and reduce barriers to neighbourhood-led gatherings and activities.
- Creation of additional how-to guides to continue to support and inspire neighbours to lead a variety of connections in their own communities.
- Continued opportunities to participate in the Food and Funds event to encourage community members to explore neighbourhood grant options and connect about their great ideas. New in 2024, these evenings will feature an opportunity to highlight the Artists in Neighbourhoods fund for collaboration between local artists and neighbourhoods.
- Implementation of two new community gardens for neighbourhood-led connections in parks.
- New learning opportunities and connections at the annual Neighbourhood Summit, block connector gatherings, and volunteer capacity building workshops.
- Ongoing support, evaluation, and improvement to neighbourhood resources to help neighbours to lead and connect.



STAFF REPORT
Facility Design & Management Services

Title: 2023 Facility Accessibility Update
Report Number: COM2024-008
Author: Amy Ross, Accessibility Advocate
Swati Vekariya, Senior Project Coordinator
Council Date: January 22, 2024
File: None
Attachments: None
Ward No.: City-Wide

Recommendations:

1. That Council receive report COM2024-008 as information for the annual update on the status of Accessibility improvements at City owned facilities.

A. Executive Summary

An estimated 20% of the population in Waterloo Region over the age of fifteen live with a disability. This report provides an annual update of the work that is needed to meet and exceed minimum Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) standards in the built environment to better meet the needs of residents and visitors with disabilities.

Through development of the City's new Multi-Year Accessibility Plans (MYAP), the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee (GRAAC) has confirmed prioritization of built environment improvements as critical to improving lived experiences in Waterloo. Staff outline the approach to achieving optimal accessibility at City owned facilities to become a leader in accessibility within the built environment:

1. Assessing current facility accessibility through audits.
2. Assembling a detailed inventory of improvements needed across facilities.
3. Seeking increased funding.
4. Developing consistent facility accessibility design standards.
5. Creating a matrix to set prioritization of the inventory of improvements needed across facilities.
6. Adding accessibility to the Waterloo Asset Management Decision Support System (DSS).

7. Convening an inter-departmental team alongside GRAAC to confirm the Accessibility Facility Upgrades (AODA) short and long-term work plan priorities for 2024-2034.

B. Financial Implications

The 2023 Approved Capital Budget, Ref #130 allocated \$194,000 for accessibility upgrades and forecasted \$2.753 million in funding from 2024-2032. Council also approved menu item M6 in the 2023 budget adding a Construction Coordinator, who will bring expertise and consistency to implementing these AODA improvements city-wide.

The Facility Accessibility Audits staff report COM2023-009 estimated a total budget cost for accessibility upgrades at City owned facilities of approximately \$20.3 million, to meet the City's accessibility goal. This report outlines high priority accessibility elements which need to be addressed in the short term and will require funding of approximately \$10.6 million over the next 10 years, meaning an average \$1.06 million per year.

Reconciliation, Equity, Accessibility, Diversity and Inclusion (READI) and Facility Design and Management Services (FDMS) staff initiated a conversation with the Budget Committee in March 2023 to consider an increased capital allocation for Accessibility Facility Upgrades (AODA) via the priority allocation process as part of the 2024-2026 capital budget. Through the priority allocation process supported by the Budget Committee, staff have included \$6.8 million in funding over 10 years for Accessibility Facility Upgrades (AODA) (capital ref #130) in the staff tabled 2024-2026 Capital Budget and 2027-2033 Capital Forecast, with an average of \$0.7 million being available each year, subject to Council approval.

In addition, the City's grant application was successful for the AMCC Electrification and Accessibility Retrofit Green and Inclusive Community Buildings (GICB, Intake #1); as a result, \$2.4M of grant funding will be provided by the Federal government along with a City contribution of \$0.6M. The City will move forward with the project which includes the addition of a universal washroom and the conversion of existing building washrooms to include accessible single occupant stalls.

The City has also applied for the second intake of the Green and Inclusive Community Buildings grant program (COM2023-004) for the proposed projects:

1. RIM Park Low Carbon and Accessibility Retrofit (project valued at \$25 million);
2. Albert McCormick Community Centre Electrification and Accessibility Retrofit (total project valued at \$2,999,999);
3. Moses Springer Community Centre Low Carbon and Accessibility Retrofit (project valued at \$6,900,000).

If the GICB second intake grant applications are approved, the City will be able to resolve the high priority and majority of the medium priority deficiencies at these facilities as per the accessibility audit.

C. Technology Implications

None.

D. Link to Strategic Plan

(Strategic Objectives: Reconciliation, Equity, Accessibility, Diversity and Inclusion; Environmental Sustainability and Climate Action; Complete Community; Infrastructure and Transportation Systems; Innovation and Future-Ready)

(Guiding Principles: Equity and Inclusion; Sustainability; Integrity; Workplace Wellbeing; Community-centred; Operational Excellence)

This report directly supports Reconciliation, Equity, Accessibility, Diversity and Inclusion by investing in accessibility and inclusion to enhance belonging across municipal facilities.

E. Previous Reports on this Topic

- COM2023-009 Facility Accessibility Audit Staff Report – April 17, 2023
- COM2023-004 Green and Inclusive Community Buildings - Grant Second Intake – February 27, 2023
- COM2021-019 Green and Inclusive Community Buildings Program Grant Application – June 14, 2021



2023 Facility Accessibility Update COM2024-008

According to [Statistics Canada \(2019\)](#), there are more than 87,500 People with Disabilities over the age of 15 living in Waterloo Region. That is approximately 20% of the total population. These are people we know -- family, friends, and neighbors. They are customers of local businesses but struggle to have their needs fully met in these spaces for a variety of inconsistencies such as light levels, noise, difficulty reaching shelves, and/or lack of accessible washrooms among others. Some are students at the three post-secondary institutions but find it difficult to secure appropriate affordable and accessible housing and needed support services while here. Some are employed, though many are not, or are under-employed due to limited points of entry, lack of role flexibility, lack of mentorship, and/or limited advancement opportunities plus additional barriers. Most are eligible to vote but face obstacles to being candidates or being well represented in their ridings as well as getting to polling stations to cast their ballot. Many desire opportunities to participate in recreation and leisure activities to reduce isolation.

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) sets the legislative framework requiring organizations to adhere to specified standards to make accessibility a reality for individuals with disabilities in Ontario by 2025. This directive applies to all tiers of government, private businesses, and non-profits, to comply with the standards of the AODA. It requires municipalities with a population of 10,000 or more to develop Multi-Year Accessibility Plans (MYAP) that at minimum uphold the AODA standards and report on standards compliance every two years.

Planning for the development of the City's new MYAP began a few years ago through completion of the Corporate Accessibility and Inclusion Review led by the Abilities Centre and assessing facility accessibility through audits. During the MYAP consultation, the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee (GRAAC) has confirmed prioritization of built environment improvements as critical to improving lived experiences in Waterloo. To reach optimal accessibility at municipal facilities and become a leader in accessibility within the built environment staff are following a strategic approach that includes:

- Assembling a detailed inventory of improvements needed across facilities.
- Seeking increased funding.
- Developing consistent facility accessibility design standards.
- Creating a matrix to set prioritization of the inventory of improvements needed across facilities.
- Adding accessibility features to the Waterloo Asset Management DSS.

- Convening an inter-departmental team alongside GRAAC to confirm the Accessibility Facility Upgrades (AODA) short and long-term work plan priorities for 2024-2034.

In April 2023, Staff from Facility Design and Management Services (FDMS) and Reconciliation, Equity, Accessibility, Diversity, and Inclusion (READI) shared the COM2023-009 Facility Accessibility Audit staff report. This report highlighted the results of the Facility Accessibility Audits of seventeen municipal facilities completed by DesignABLE Environments Inc. (DesignABLE) and reviewed by the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee (GRAAC). The report focused on the three-year work plan developed by DesignABLE that identifies the accessibility upgrade needs across the facilities and organizes the tasks into priorities to meet the minimum accessibility standards, along with associated costs. The high priority accessibility elements which need to be addressed in the short-term have funding needs of approximately \$10.6 million over the next ten years, an average of \$1.06 million per year.

Staff continue to recognize that in the long-term the City cannot rely on outsourcing accessibility upgrades. With demand for this work being high and limited suppliers, costs will continue to be high and timelines lengthy. In the future, FDMS and READI staff will recommend internal contract labourer support as critical to fulfilling the projects funded through the Accessibility Facility Upgrades (AODA) budget line ref #130.

The table below presents a summary of the costs associated with accessibility upgrades for the audited facilities:

- Priority 1: Required upgrades needed to meet minimum accessibility standards, such as:
 - Parking
 - Exterior Routes, Stairs, and Ramps
 - Entrances
 - Doors and Exits
 - Interior Routes, Stairs, and Ramps
 - All washrooms (gender neutral/multi-stalled, change rooms and universal)
 - Signage and Wayfinding
 - Life safety
- Priority 2: Enhanced accessibility requirements that require low to minimal cost to retrofit.
- Priority 3: Enhanced accessibility requirements that require significant alteration or construction costs beyond the minimum baseline in Priority 1.

Staff have raised the idea that accessibility and inclusion cannot only be considered a service level priority. The staff tabled 2024-2026 Capital budget and 2027-2033 Capital Forecast includes \$6.8 million in capital funding (ref #130) to bring City owned assets into alignment with current minimum accessibility standards at pace to support residents with disabilities appropriately.

In the interim, the Accessibility Advocate and Manager, Capital Program and Project Management prioritized 2023 deficiencies work with feedback from GRAAC's Built

Environment Sub-Committee. Through the technical support of the new Construction Coordinator and FDMS teammates, numerous accessibility improvements have already been initiated, including:

- 5 new Automated Door Openers at the WPL Harper Branch Library/YMCA
- 1 new Automated Door Opener at RIM Park
- Regrading of the lower entrance to Crematorium
- Braille buttons added to Waterloo Public Library Main Branch elevator
- A labelling system for easier drop off/pick up identification and safety were installed at 4 entrances at the Waterloo Memorial Recreation Centre (WMRC)
- Listening system upgrades for RIM Park and City Hall
- Reconfiguring Automated Door Openers at WMRC
- Revising parking space signage at WMRC to better support older adults
- Improving amplification at the Community Pavilion for Day Program participants
- Development of facility accessibility design standards document
- Two hybrid carts have been assembled at WMRC and City Hall to support participation options for community members and staff
- Universal Autonomous Washroom to be installed at the Heritage Green Parkette in 2024
- Preliminary designs for new universal and barrier free washrooms to be installed at City Hall in 2024
- Preliminary designs for a new universal washroom to be installed at the Button Factory in 2024
- Preliminary planning for a new universal washroom and a prayer/quiet room as part of the renovation for the Albert McCormick Community Centre

To continue to advance the larger scope of work, FDMS and READI staff have also partnered with the City of Kitchener, the Townships of Wilmot, Wellesley, and Woolwich to create a comprehensive facility accessibility design standard for both interior and exterior spaces. Working with SPH Planning and Consulting Ltd., the City of London's accessibility standard is being adapted to ensure a more consistent user experience across facilities across area municipalities. The project team is collaborating with GRAAC and engaging the community to gather valuable local feedback. It is anticipated that these accessibility design standards will be finalized in the spring of 2024. These standards are anticipated to provide a foundational reference document for facility development or upgrade work at the City.

The full list of tasks from DesignABLE has been assembled with additional items from GRAAC into a detailed inventory of improvements needed across facilities. This inventory is the foundation for the development of a priority matrix to systematically rank the accessibility audit inventory in alignment with the City's operational framework. This prioritization model aims to set high-priority accessibility enhancement initiatives across municipal facilities with weighting criteria including but not limited to:

- type of facility
- elements involved

- number of complaints received
- estimated cost and time
- upcoming projects at a facility
- available grants
- health and safety considerations
- human rights, and
- the risks associated with delaying the work

The cumulative score for the criteria determines the overall priority, resulting in a comprehensive list of the highest-priority tasks. Table 1 below provides an illustrative sample of the priority matrix model.

Table 1. Sample of the Priority matrix model

No	Criteria 1	Criteria 2	Criteria 3	Criteria 4	Criteria 5	Criteria 6	Total Score
No	Facility	Element	Other Factors	Complaint received	Estimated time for completion (months)	Estimated Cost	Total Score
1	Waterloo Public Library	Doors	Health & safety	<5	<3	0-25,000	380
2	Moses Springer Community Centre	Individual Gender-Neutral Washroom	Grant available		<3	0-25,000	300
3	Rink in the Park	Interior Stairs	Upcoming projects	<5	<3	0-25,000	340
4	Canadian Clay and Glass Museum	Exterior Stairs	Funding uncertain	5-10	3-6	25,000-50,000	190
5	Manulife Financial Sportsplex (RIM)	Universal Washroom	Upcoming projects	<5	6-12	50,000-100,000	400
6	Albert McCormick Community Centre	Doors	Human rights	50-100	<3	25,000-50,000	400
7	Manulife Soccer and Sports Centre (Bechtel Park)	Parking	Risk involved with delay in work	10-50	3-6	25,000-50,000	260

To set long-term effectiveness FDMS, READI and Asset Management staff are developing a process to add accessibility features into the Waterloo Asset Management DSS to correctly capture future asset upgrades, cost, and sequencing.

Finally, an inter-departmental team alongside GRAAC will be formed to meet quarterly to continuously update the Accessibility Facility Upgrades (AODA) short and long-term work plan for 2024-2034 based on the priority matrix. Staff will use this information to set project work plans to address accessibility improvements.

This Facility Accessibility work has been captured in the MYAP. GRAAC has confirmed prioritization of municipal built environment improvements as critical to improving lived experiences in Waterloo for people with disabilities. These improvements also benefit people with temporary disabilities and people without disabilities. READI staff will bring the draft MYAP and a detailed corporate implementation plan to Council for consideration in the spring.



STAFF REPORT
Community Programming & Outreach Services

Title: Supporting Neighbourhood-Led Initiatives Policy
Report Number: COM2024-004
Author: Halie Gilmore Neighbourhood Coordinator, Julie Legg
Supervisor of Neighbourhood Services, Amy McCullough
Neighbourhood and Policy Associate
Council Date: January 22, 2024
File: NA
Attachments: Supporting Neighbourhood-Led Initiatives Policy
Ward No.: All Wards

Recommendations:

1. That Council approve report COM2024-004.
2. That Council approve the Supporting Neighbourhood-Led Initiatives Policy (M-016).

A. Executive Summary

Neighbourhood-led initiatives promote vibrant and complete communities where neighbours feel safe, welcome, and included. These events, activities and projects, are planned and implemented by neighbours within their neighbourhood and include outdoor movie nights, block parties, community gardens, and more. Annually, the neighbourhoods team helps neighbours plan and deliver over 110 neighbourhood-led events, activities and projects across Waterloo. To support these initiatives, the neighbourhoods team, in partnership with divisions across the City, has crafted the Supporting Neighbourhood-Led Initiatives Policy.

Staff recognize that a new, council approved policy is required to support the unique nature of neighbourhood-led initiatives, as they tend to be outside the scope of other policies, like the [Significant Festivals and Events Policy](#). This new policy approach advances the implementation of the [Neighbourhood Strategy](#) by strengthening financial supports for neighbourhoods and making it easier for neighbours to plan initiatives. This policy also aligns with the City's strategic priority of fostering complete communities.

The Supporting Neighbourhood-Led Initiatives Policy outlines a definition for eligible neighbourhood-led initiatives, lists available supports including fees that will be waived, a

process of accessing supports, and clear responsibilities for organizers. Overall, this new policy supports the following objectives:

- Makes it easier to plan and deliver neighbourhood initiatives by removing financial barriers and red tape
- Promotes safe events by following practices for effective review and support
- Aligns with City staff and external review needs by encouraging neighbours to work within published timelines and processes for obtaining permits and licences for initiatives
- Ensures clarity, consistency, and transparency related to waiving fees and providing supports
- Aligns with changing volunteer landscape and better supports block connectors and neighbourhood volunteers that are not part of formal associations

The policy is one way the neighbourhoods team will support neighbourhood-led initiatives moving forward. Beyond the policy, the neighbourhoods team will continue to work with staff across the City to help neighbours deliver projects, events, and activities. This may involve developing educational resources, exploring insurance requirements, and providing grants for neighbourhood-led initiatives.

B. Financial Implications

As the policy outlines fees to be waived for eligible neighbourhood-led initiatives, it will impact the revenue generating capacity of various divisions as listed below. These estimates were calculated based on the highest annual number of permit and licence applications (received from 2019-2023) and costs outlined in the 2023 Fees and Charges Bylaw:

- Municipal Enforcement – \$980 per year
- Parks Services – \$175 per year
- Fire Services – \$350 per year
- Transportation Services – No revenue impact as the fees associated with special event permits are already waived for neighbourhood-led initiatives

With anticipated changes to the Noise Bylaw, the cost of the exemption permit is forecasted to be less in the future. This change would reduce the financial impact of the Supporting Neighbourhood-Led Initiatives Policy as outlined above.

Divisions impacted by this policy are supportive of the approach and associated implications. The lost revenue is minimal and the costs can be absorbed into the applicable divisions' annual operating budgets. Additional funding to accommodate operational impacts associated with neighbourhood-led initiatives may be requested by impacted divisions in the future if the number of requests for waived fees or other supports continues to grow.

C. Technology Implications

No technology implications.

D. Link to Strategic Plan

(Strategic Objectives: Reconciliation, Equity, Accessibility, Diversity and Inclusion; Environmental Sustainability and Climate Action; Complete Community; Infrastructure and Transportation Systems; Innovation and Future-Ready)

(Guiding Principles: Equity and Inclusion; Sustainability; Integrity; Workplace Wellbeing; Community-centred; Operational Excellence)

Complete Community: Supporting neighbourhood-led initiatives encourages stronger, more vibrant, and connected communities where residents feel safe, welcome, and included. Reducing red tape and enhancing supports for neighbours advances the implementation of the Neighbourhood Strategy.

Community-Centered: Reducing financial barriers associated with organizing neighbourhood-led initiatives supports a more community-centred way of operating.

E. Previous Reports on this Topic

CAO2023-003 - Significant Festivals and Events Policy Revision



Supporting Neighbourhood-Led Initiatives Policy COM2024-004

Background

Neighbours across Waterloo come together to organize neighbourhood events, activities and projects that bring neighbours together and foster strong and connected communities. Initiatives include outdoor movie nights, community gardens, campfires, block parties, concerts, picnics, and more. Annually, the neighbourhoods team helps neighbours plan and deliver over 110 neighbourhood-led events, activities, and projects across Waterloo. These initiatives led by neighbours:

- Promote safe, more inclusive neighbourhoods where neighbours know each other
- Support enhanced connection to place and contribute to neighbourhood identity
- Improve sense of belonging and reduce loneliness and isolation
- Add vibrancy and activate parks and public spaces in Waterloo neighbourhoods
- Provide opportunities for recreation and activity
- Build capacity among neighbourhood volunteers

The City of Waterloo provides supports to help neighbours deliver these initiatives. Supports include access to a staff liaison for guidance and assistance navigating City requirements, online instructional resources, special event equipment to borrow, and opportunities to apply for grant programs. Historically, through the Significant Festivals and Events Policy, eligible neighbourhood initiatives could also apply to have fees waived for certain permits and licences (business licences, noise exemption permits, etc.)

The Significant Festivals and Events Policy, developed by the Arts and Creative Industries team, defines significant festivals and events and outlines supports offered by the City (supports include staff assistance and fee exemptions for certain permits and licences). Although this policy fits the needs of larger scale events, like the Uptown Jazz Festival, it was not meeting the needs of smaller scale neighbourhood-based events. Because of this, neighbourhood events were recently removed from the purview of this policy (as approved in [report CAO2023-003](#)). Staff have identified that a new policy approach is required to better align with community needs and support neighbourhood-based events.

Through conversations with neighbours, staff have identified a number of challenges that impact neighbours and how they plan neighbourhood-led initiatives. Challenges include:

- Lack of clarity - Confusion about what events, activities, and projects are neighbourhood-led and what are not.
- Financial barriers to planning and participation - Neighbours have expressed that the costs associated with delivering neighbourhood-led initiatives, specifically costs of required permits and licences, are significant barriers that impact how they plan neighbourhood initiatives. Some organizers share that the added costs deter them from planning initiatives or obtaining the required permits and licences.
- A shift in volunteer capacity - More neighbours are opting to volunteer informally and lead initiatives with one or two neighbours, rather than having a formal position with a neighbourhood association. This changing volunteer landscape has required a shift in how neighbourhood supports are currently provided and a new policy to support that update.
- A formal policy for waiving permits and licence fees - It is a common practice to waive certain permit and licence fees for neighbourhood-led initiatives, however, there is no policy in place to formalize this approach. A council approved policy will help provide clarity, consistency, and transparency for the future.
- Raised awareness around resources and supports available to neighbours – Some neighbours are unsure of what resources and supports are available for them.

Advancing the Neighbourhood Strategy

Pursuing a policy of this nature is also required to advance the implementation of the Neighbourhood Strategy – a priority outlined in the City’s Strategic Plan for 2023-2026. A new policy will specifically support two action items in the Neighbourhood Strategy:

Action 13: Strengthen existing financial and in-kinds support to neighbourhoods.

As identified in the Strategy, financial and in-kind supports provided through the City are important to supporting resident-led community building. Waiving fees for select permits and licences helps to reduce financial barriers for neighbours and ensures they have more funding to use towards initiatives.

Action 16: Streamline city processes and revisit select policy directions to make it easier for residents to implement neighbourhood projects.

By standardizing available supports and clarifying eligible neighbourhood-led initiatives, the policy will make the process simpler and clearer for neighbours. Formalizing staff support, in-kind benefits, and waived fees will also help reduce red tape and remove barriers.

Overall, the introduction of a new policy supports the strategic objective of creating complete communities and continues to advance the implementation of the Neighbourhood Strategy to improve neighbourhood interaction, safety, and relationships.

Supporting Neighbourhood-Led Initiatives Policy

To meet the needs of neighbours, address challenges, and advance the Neighbourhood Strategy, the neighbourhoods team partnered with staff across impacted divisions

(including Municipal Enforcement Services, Transportation Services, Parks, Forestry and Cemetery Services, and Fire Rescue Services) to develop the Supporting Neighbourhood-Led Initiatives Policy.

Elements of the Policy

The policy outlines:

- A definition for neighbourhood-led initiatives, including criteria to clearly define what events are eligible to access supports
- A clear list of supports available for eligible neighbourhood-led initiatives
- A process for accessing supports
- Responsibilities for neighbourhood organizers

Purpose of the Policy

The Supporting Neighbourhood-Led Initiatives Policy will encourage the following outcomes:

- (1) Remove financial barriers for neighbours. Neighbours and neighbourhood groups are grassroots in nature and often have limited budgets available to deliver their events, activities, and projects. They share that the costs associated with things like permits, licences, and event equipment, can greatly impact their planning choices and ability to deliver events. Implementing this new policy and formalizing the supports available will help reduce financial barriers and encourage more neighbourhood-led initiatives.
- (2) Motivates block connectors and individual neighbours to plan gatherings for neighbours. The volunteer landscape is changing in neighbourhoods. Rather than formally developing or joining neighbourhood associations, more and more neighbours are becoming block connectors and/or opting to volunteer informally to plan an event or project. Without annual operating funding, it can be challenging for these informal volunteers to cover the costs of required licences and permits. Waiving select fees for eligible initiatives will encourage more neighbours to take action.
- (3) Encourages neighbours to follow published timelines and processes for obtaining permits and licences for events. The policy outlines that fees will be waived for groups that adhere to the published timelines and processes. This will incentivize applicants to submit required documentation on time, promote safe and well-organized community initiatives, and help City staff effectively review and approve permit and licence applications.
- (4) Promotes safe events that adhere to required licences and permits. The costs that are associated with permits and licences can deter organizers from obtaining them. Failure to obtain required permits can heighten risk and compromise community safety and wellbeing. Waiving fees for eligible initiatives will encourage organizers to follow the required processes.

- (5) Supports safe, inclusive, and connected communities. The easier it is to host neighbourhood initiatives, the more organizers will take the lead and plan these beneficial activities. Strong neighbourhood relationships encourage many additional benefits as noted earlier in this report.
- (6) Ensures clarity, consistency, and transparency related to waiving fees and providing supports. In the past, initiatives that were not eligible have found details confusing. This policy helps clarify details and definitions on what is involved in a neighbourhood-led event, activity, or project. In the past, the City has waived permit and licensing fees informally based on staff process rather than with a formal policy in place. Having a policy that outlines eligibility criteria and a published process, will promote consistency and transparency for community members.

Financial Impacts of Policy

The annual financial impact of this policy is associated with the number of permit and licence fees that will be waived each year. The estimated annual impacts reflected in the table below are based on the highest number of permit and licence applications received from 2019-2023 for neighbourhood-led initiatives.

Estimated Annual Financial Impacts of Policy

Division	Annual Impact	Applicable Permits or Fees
Fire Rescue Services	\$350	This amount is comprised of lost fees from open burn on city property permits.
Municipal Enforcement	\$980	This amount is comprised of lost fees from noise exemption permits and vendor market licence and temporary vendor licence.
Parks Forestry and Cemetery Services	\$175	This amount is comprised of lost fees for passive park permits. The fees associated with park access permits are already waived for neighbourhood events or activities.
Transportation Services	\$0	No financial impact as the fees associated with road closure permits are already waived for neighbourhood events.
Total	\$1,510	*The estimated total annual impact based on 2023 Fees and Charges Bylaw.

Across the impacted divisions, the annual forecasted impact totals \$1,510 per year. With anticipated changes to the Noise Bylaw, the fee associated with the Noise Exemption Permit may be reduced moving forward. With this update, the financial impact noted in the table will be less.

Divisions impacted by this policy are supportive of this approach. The lost revenue is minimal and the costs can be absorbed into the applicable divisions' annual operating

budgets. Should the number of neighbourhood-led initiatives increase, which this policy aims to support, operating expenses may increase across impacted divisions. Financial impacts will be monitored and tracked by staff within each division. The policy and associated financial impacts will be reviewed as needed.

Staff from the neighbourhoods team will continue to track the revenue impacts of this policy to share with City Council annually as part of regular Neighbourhood Strategy reporting.

Additional Actions

Beyond this policy, other actions will be explored to ensure neighbours are informed and supported throughout the process of delivering initiatives. Actions may include but are not limited to:

- Supporting improved education and capacity building opportunities for neighbours
- Exploring the idea of updating application processes for permits and licences to make them easier for applicants
- Encouraging staff across the City to learn about neighbourhood-led initiatives, their value to the community, and the processes for supporting them
- Exploring insurance requirements for unique neighbourhood-led initiatives
- Continue to focus on the goals and actions of the Neighbourhood Strategy to support strong, connected, and vibrant neighbourhoods and City processes and programs that support this work

Beyond neighbourhood-led initiatives, the City of Waterloo also provides supports for other types of community events. These supports are provided by other divisions across the City and include:

- [The Significant Festivals and Events Policy](#) – Through this policy, large scale events such as the Uptown Jazz Festival, can apply for “Significant Festival and Event” designation. With this designation they have access to supports including waived fees for select permits and approvals.
- [Indigenous Communities Use of Space](#) – The City of Waterloo waives rental-related fees for using city spaces for eligible Indigenous cultural and ceremonial events. Rental-related fees include space rental fees, city fees for associated permits if applicable, and insurance coverage.

Conclusion

Overall, the Supporting Neighbourhood-Led Initiatives Policy will support neighbours and their efforts to organize neighbourhood events, activities, and projects. This policy approach aligns with the City’s strategic priority to foster strong, connected, and complete communities.

CORPORATE POLICY



Policy Title: **Supporting Neighbourhood-Led Initiatives Policy**
 Policy Category: **Municipal Services**
 Policy No.: M-016
 Department: Community Services
 Approval Date: **To be entered.**
 Revision Date: N/A
 Authors: Halie Gilmore, Neighbourhood Coordinator, Julie Legg, Supervisor Neighbourhoods and Amy McCullough, Neighbourhood and Policy Associate

Attachments:

Related Documents

/Legislation: Business Licensing Bylaw (201-085), Municipal Parks Bylaw (2014-077), Noise Bylaw (2010-073), Significant Festivals and Events Policy (A-017), Use of Corporate Resources and Election Campaign Activities (G-004)

Key Word(s): Events, Neighbourhoods, Connection, Placemaking, Noise, Parks, Fire, Street Closure

POLICY STATEMENT:

The City of Waterloo (the City) recognizes that neighbourhood-led initiatives, such as events, activities, and projects, promote vibrant, inclusive, and connected communities where members feel safe and welcome. The Supporting Neighbourhood-Led Initiatives Policy formalizes how the City supports and reduces barriers for eligible neighbourhood-led events, activities, and projects.

PURPOSE:

This policy outlines a framework for supporting neighbourhood-led initiatives, removing barriers, and waiving select fees for eligible events, activities, and projects. It also defines eligible initiatives, lists available supports, and outlines a process for neighbours to access supports.

DEFINITIONS:

Affiliated Neighbourhood Association: A community organization of neighbours from a Waterloo neighbourhood that work collaboratively with, and is recognized by, the City of Waterloo through the City's Affiliation Policy.

Block Connector: A City of Waterloo neighbour that supports neighbourhood connections by planning one or more initiatives per year to connect neighbours. Block

Connectors must be signed up through the City's Block Connector Program and have completed necessary orientation.

Homes Association: Group of people who live in the same geographic area defined by a covenant or previously subject to covenants, which manage common property through elected boards with representation from the property owners. For this policy, a Homes Association refers to groups that have recreational facilities and payment tied to property use.

Neighbourhood: A district where people live. Neighbourhood boundaries can change over time and can be defined differently depending on individual sense of belonging. For this policy, the term neighbourhood will refer to a single neighbourhood or a combination of nearby neighbourhoods working together. It will consider neighbourhoods to have flexible boundaries that comprise a portion of the City of Waterloo.

Noise Exemption Permit: A permit process that allows an initiative to be exempt from certain elements of the Noise Bylaw.

Not-for-profit organization: An organization that does not pursue a profit and allocates all funding to support its goal or cause.

Open Burn on City Property Permit: A permit process that allows neighbours to host a campfire in a location approved by Parks, Forestry and Cemetery Services and Fire Rescue Services staff on City property using a City-provided campfire kit for a neighbourhood-led initiative.

Park Access Permit: A permit required for motorized vehicles to access park property.

Passive Park Permit: A permit required to use a neighbourhood park for a passive recreational purpose as defined in the Municipal Parks Bylaw.

Place of worship: An organization whose space, identity and mission are derived from a religious or spiritual tradition, and which operate as registered or unregistered, not-for-profit, voluntary entities.

Special Event Permit (Road, Sidewalk or Trail): A permit process required for events that interfere with the normal flow of traffic or require a full sidewalk or road closure. This may include events such as parades, fundraisers, races, block parties, festivals, carnivals, demonstrations, and other events impacting the roadway.

Temporary Vendor Licence: A business licence required for a vendor to sell or offer goods or services for a period less than 90 days.

Vendor Market Licence: A business licence required for a collection of temporary vendors operating from one location to sell or offer to sell goods or services to the general public.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to neighbourhood-led initiatives as defined in section 1.0.

POLICY COMMUNICATION:

This policy will be communicated by posting on the City website and the City intranet available to City staff (staff). Staff will be advised of the policy via direct distribution to interested and affected divisions at the City.

POLICY:**1.0 Defining eligible neighbourhood-led initiatives**

1.1 To be considered an eligible neighbourhood-led initiative, an event, activity, or project must meet all of the criteria listed below:

- Be organized by an affiliated neighbourhood association, a homes association, a block connector(s), or one or more Waterloo resident(s) from a neighbourhood
- Be focused on a neighbourhood(s) within Waterloo city limits, not across the entire city
- Occur on public land or private land that is open for all neighbours, can be readily accessed by all neighbours, and is not restricted to members in any way
- Be free or low cost for participants
- The primary purpose is not profit generation, unless funds raised are to be used by a neighbourhood group for neighbourhood focused initiatives
- Have or be committed to pursue, with staff support, all required permits and permissions prior to implementation
- Have or be committed to provide notification to neighbours as required by staff
- Be coordinated and led by neighbours on a voluntary basis and demonstrate involvement from neighbours
- Be inclusive, accessible, and encourage diverse involvement/participation
- Contribute to neighbourhood community-building, wellbeing, connection to place, and/or belonging

1.2 Examples of ineligible initiatives include, but are not limited to the following events, activities, and projects:

- Initiatives being hosted by educational institutions or members of an educational institution that are not open to all neighbours
- Initiatives being hosted by places of worship that are faith-based in nature and/or restricted to membership in any way
- Initiatives that a focus on promoting a specific for-profit or political interest
- Initiatives organized by not-for-profit organizations that are city-wide in scope and/or not neighbourhood-led
- Initiatives related to election campaigning for federal, provincial, municipal, or school board candidates, including promotional activities and advertising

- Initiatives that are planned by individuals for private purposes, such as weddings, birthday celebrations, family gatherings, and other social gatherings that are not neighbourhood-based

2.0 Supports available for eligible neighbourhood-led initiatives

2.1 Eligible neighbourhood-led initiatives, as defined in section 1.1 may receive supports from neighbourhood services staff. Supports include but are not limited to:

- Support from a neighbourhood services staff liaison for guidance and help delivering initiatives
- Access to in-kind supports including use of select special event equipment and printing
- Online resources that provide instructional information related to neighbourhood-led events, activities, and projects
- Opportunity to access neighbourhood grants provided by the City, where eligible
- Access to learning and capacity building opportunities

For more details on available supports, connect with [neighbourhood services staff](#).

2.2 In addition to supports listed in section 2.1, fees to obtain the following licences and permits will be waived for eligible neighbourhood-led initiatives:

- Vendor Market Licence
- Temporary Vendor Licence
- Noise Exemption Permit
- Open Burn on City Property Permit
- Passive Park Permit
- Park Access Permit
- Special Event Permit (Road, Sidewalk, or Trail use)

Additional fees, beyond those listed above, are not eligible to be waived.

The list above (2.2) does not include all the permits and licences that may be required for initiatives. Other required permits and licences must be appropriately obtained and the required fees must be paid.

2.2.1 Conditions for having fees waived

To be eligible to have fees waived, organizers must follow the process outlined in section 3.0 and meet all responsibilities outlined in section 4.1.

Organizers that fail to follow required processes and timelines for obtaining permits and licences, will not be eligible to have fees waived.

For annual initiatives, organizers must apply for required permits and licences each year, even if they were deemed an eligible neighbourhood initiative in the past.

3.0 Steps for determining eligible neighbourhood-led initiatives

- 3.1 To access supports, organizers interested in planning a neighbourhood-led initiative must connect with [neighbourhood services staff](#) well in advance to discuss their proposed initiative. Organizers must adhere to published timelines for permits and licences and connect in advance of this.
- 3.2 Neighbourhood services staff will collect information about the initiative from the organizer(s), and will determine if the proposed event, activity, or project is a neighbourhood-led initiative (as defined in section 1.1).
 - 3.2.1 If the initiative is eligible, neighbourhood services staff will confirm eligibility and help guide the organizer through next steps. Neighbourhood services staff will direct organizers to the required permits, licences and any supports needed for their initiative. They will also inform other relevant or required staff of the neighbourhood-led initiative as required to access supports.
 - 3.2.2 If the initiative is ineligible, neighbourhood services staff will follow up with the organizer to explain why and share guidance on next steps where applicable.
- 3.3 In situations where the decision made by neighbourhood services staff regarding eligibility is disputed and a resolution cannot be reached, the Commissioner of Community Services (or their delegate) will make a final decision on whether an event, activity, or project is deemed an eligible neighbourhood-led initiative based on this policy.

4.0 Responsibilities of organizers

- 4.1 In order to be eligible to access supports listed in section 2.0, organizers of neighbourhood-led initiatives must comply with all of the following responsibilities:
 - Maintain accounts in good standing with the City of Waterloo
 - Complete and obtain necessary permit and licensing documentation within the time outlined in the applicable processes and by-laws
 - Provide the City of Waterloo with required information outlined in permit and licensing applications within required timelines to allow for staff review
 - Provide additional information as requested by staff
 - Obtain required insurance coverage for initiatives as outlined by staff

- Make all reasonable attempts to avoid public nuisance complaints during their event, activity, or project. This could involve sharing letters and notices with neighbours in the surrounding area in advance of the initiative
- Advise staff of any significant changes to their initiative
- Affiliated neighbourhood associations must comply with all requirements of their Service Agreements
- City of Waterloo volunteers must comply with conditions outlined in volunteer agreements and position responsibilities

5.0 Reporting

5.1 Neighbourhood services staff will track the fees that are waived each year for eligible neighbourhood-led initiatives. Staff will prepare an annual report to City Council that outlines the impacts of this policy and the amount of fees waived.

COMPLIANCE:

In cases of policy violation, the City may investigate and determine appropriate corrective action.

Failure to comply with responsibilities and conditions outlined in this policy may impact future eligibility to access supports for eligible neighbourhood-led initiatives.



STAFF REPORT
Parks, Forestry and Cemetery Services

Title: RIM Park Skate Park
Report Number: COM2024-006
Author: Hala Al Amine, Associate Landscape Architect
Council Date: January 22, 2024
File: 190008
Attachments: Appendix1- Park Location Map and Perspective View
Ward No.: 4

Recommendations:

1. That Council approve report COM2024-006.
2. That Council approve the release of the 2024 capital funding for the Neighbourhood Action Sports Parks – City Wide non-routine project in the amount of \$796,000, funded \$531,000 from the Parkland Dedication Reserve Fund (PUB) and \$265,000 from the Development Charges Reserve Fund (DC), as per the staff tabled 2024-2026 capital budget (ref #280), as approved for early release via CORP2023-049 Early Approval of Capital Projects on December 11, 2023.

A. Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with updated information on the RIM Park Skate Park and to request release of the budgeted funds to enable the project to proceed with tender and construction in 2024.

The RIM Park Skate Park is located at RIM Park East, adjacent the International Rotary Peace Park, and it is the last project of the four action sports parks.

The design for the four action sport parks (including community engagement) was completed in 2019. The Albert McCormick Community Centre (AMCC), being the first of the four designed action sports facilities was officially opened in July 2021. The RIM Park West Bike Park was opened in June 2023, to become the second action sports park to be constructed. And the Harper Library – Stork Family YMCA, as the third action sports park is currently under construction and is expected to open in the spring of 2024.

Similar to the other action sport parks, the skate spot has been designed and detailed to include feedback through past community engagement opportunities and the tender documents have been prepared.

Project updates will continue to be provided to the community during the pre-construction and construction phases of the project to ensure that community members are aware of the details of the project and have the opportunity to engage.

Approval of this report will enable staff to proceed with a) continued engagement, b) project tendering and award of construction tender within budget and c) construction of the park in 2024.

B. Financial Implications

The current available funding for the Neighbourhood Action Sport Parks – City Wide project #190008 is \$394,000. The staff tabled 2024-2026 capital budget for this project (ref #280) totals \$796,000 for 2024. The funding of \$531,000 from the Parkland Dedication Reserve Fund (PUB) and \$265,000 from Development Charges Reserve Fund (DC) for the 2024 year is currently available for release. Council approved the early release of these funds on December 11, 2023 as part of the Early Approval of Capital Projects report CORP2023-049.

C. Technology Implications

None at this time.

D. Link to Strategic Plan

(Strategic Priorities: Reconciliation, Equity, Accessibility, Diversity and Inclusion; Environmental Sustainability and Climate Action; Complete Community; Infrastructure and Transportation Systems; Innovation and Future-Ready)

Complete Community:

- Vibrant Public Spaces - The skate park will expand the City's inventory of free, action-oriented sport and leisure opportunities and support community well-being through skill-building, active lifestyles and social-interaction.

E. Previous Reports on this Topic

COM2021-014	Action Sport Parks Implementation in 2021 and 2022
COM2020-012	Award of Tender RFT20-09 Albert McCormick Community Centre – Central Plaza
COM2019-022	New Active / Action Park Facilities
CORP2018-016	Neighbourhood Action Sport Venues
COM2013-006	City of Waterloo Action Sport Strategy



**RIM Park Skate Park
COM2024-006**

1. BACKGROUND

In spring 2013, Waterloo City Council (“Council”) approved an Action Sport Strategy to guide the planning of a network of smaller neighbourhood-oriented action sport venues for skateboarding, biking, and other wheeled sports.

In spring 2018, Council approved four action-sport sites in support of this strategy (Staff Report CORP2018-016). The project funding and construction targets for the four action sports parks were to be established within the 2020-2024 Capital Budget.

- A. Albert McCormick Community Centre and Albert McCormick Branch Library – constructed and opened in July 2021.
- B. RIM Park West Bike Park constructed and opened in June 2023.
- C. John M Harper Library and Stork Family YMCA Skate Park – under construction anticipated opening in the spring of 2024.
- D. RIM Park East Skate Park– to be constructed in 2024 pending approval of this report.

2. PROCESS TO DATE

The City retained consulting services from Newline Skateparks, Transitions Bike Parks, Dillon Consulting and Walter Fedy in July 2018 to assist with final detailed site, assist with community engagement and design the four new action sport parks and design additional amenities unique to each location.

Site analysis, topographical surveys, preliminary plan development and engineering reports were prepared by October 2018. Community engagement for all four parks was activated in November 2018 and continued through February 2019 resulting in the submission of ideas and comments from 384 people and a diversity of ideas that shaped the park designs.

The final tender documents were prepared for all of the four parks. The AMCC central Plaza, Rim Park West Bike Park, and the John M Harper Library and Stork Family YMCA action sports facilities were tendered between the years 2021 & 2023, and the tenders were awarded to the successful bidders.

3. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Community Engagement Strategy for this multi-park project was based on four primary outreach activities.

- 1) Online: The online outreach campaign was activated in November 2018 and included a social media campaign to a) raise awareness of the park project, b) identify interested parties and c) engage on the design concepts by way of EngageWaterloo Q&A and Surveys. 254 people interacted in the online consultation by providing their park preferences and design ideas.
- 2) Workshop: A two-day Technology Challenge was held at Conestoga College in February for students in grades four to eight. Over 130 students participated in small teams to design and build models of action sport parks.
- 3) Event: In June 2019 an event was held to unveil design concepts for each of the four parks and included the opportunity for further input from community members.
- 4) Neighbourhood Engagement: Focused community and neighbourhood engagement will continue leading up to the park tendering and construction to keep residents aware and opportunity for information exchange open.

4. DESIGN CONCEPT OVERVIEW

The skate park at RIM Park East will serve the youths and skaters from nearby neighbourhoods, it is located adjacent the International Rotary Peace Park in an area that is visible from both the University Avenue East and the Millennium Blvd.

The design for this skate park is geared towards visitors with beginner to intermediate level skills (generally age range of 7-15 years), though visitors of any skill level and age may use the amenity.

The skate park will include one main bowl with featured elements, shade structure, two seating areas, waste receptacle and site landscaping / remediation as required.

5. PROJECT SCHEDULE & IMPLEMENTATION

The RIM Park Skate Park will be tendered in the winter of 2024. A contractor is anticipated to be awarded and construction is anticipated to start in 2024.

6. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The current available funding for the Neighbourhood Action Sport Parks – City Wide project #190008 is \$394,000. The staff tabled 2024-2026 capital budget for this project (ref #280) totals \$796,000 for 2024. The funding of \$531,000 from the Parkland Dedication Reserve Fund (PUB) and \$265,000 from Development Charges Reserve

Fund (DC) for the 2024 year is currently available for release. Council approved the early release of these funds on December 11, 2023 as part of the Early Approval of Capital Projects report CORP2023-049. The funding for the project will be allocated as outlined in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Funding and Estimated Costs:

Description	Report Number	Approval Date	\$ Amount*
FUNDING:			
Current available funding Neighbourhood Action Sports Parks project 190008			\$394,000
2024 Funding Neighbourhood Action Sports Parks – City Wide project (Ref #280)	COM2024-006	15-Jan-2024	796,000
Total Funding			\$1,190,000
PROJECTED EXPENDITURES:			
City Overhead			\$32,000
John M Harper Library and Stork Family YMCA remaining project costs			\$158,000
RIM Park Skate Spot estimated project costs including contingency			\$1,000,000
Total Projected Expenditures			\$1,190,000
BALANCE:			\$0

*Note: non-recoverable portion of HST included

APPENDIX 1 to COM2024-006
RIM Park Skate Park
Park Location Map



Perspective View

