

Town of Whitby

Staff Report

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Report Title: Update to the Ice Allocation Policy

Report to: Committee of the Whole

Date of meeting: June 3, 2024

Report Number: CMS 08-24

Department(s) Responsible:

Community Services Department

Submitted by:

John Romano, Commissioner,
Community Services

Acknowledged by M. Gaskell, Chief Administrative Officer

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1. Recommendation:

1. That Council approve the proposed amendments to the Ice Allocation Policy, Policy Number MS 010, Attachment 2 of Report CMS 08-24.

2. Highlights:

- The updated policy aims to support business practices and improve efficiency within the Recreation Client Services Department.
- The updated policy demonstrates the current process for allocation of prime-time ice for Town programming, Minor ice organizations, residents, and commercial users.
- The updated policy reflects the current standard of play for minor ice user organizations as governed by ice sport governing bodies.

3. Background:

The Town of Whitby recognizes and promotes the value of an active and engaged community and encourages participation in ice sports and skating to the benefit of the whole community.

[The Ice Allocation Policy MS 010](#) provides for the equitable, reasonable, and fair distribution and allocation of prime-time ice for community use, and the ongoing management of ice in the Town of Whitby and was adopted by Council May 24, 2011 (Attachment 1 - Staff Report CMS 28-11).

The purpose of this policy is to outline the allocation processes and responsibilities of the Town of Whitby and the community user organizations with respect to distribution of prime-time ice. It was developed to respond to current demand, projected growth, changing utilization patterns, shifting demographics, market supply and the successful management of the Town's inventory of ice.

4. Discussion:

The current [Ice Allocation Policy MS 010](#) has not been updated since 2011. Staff have updated out of date content and have made changes to the following sections of the policy to improve business practices, and continue towards making efficiencies for permit staff, and ice user groups:

Hockey/Ringette Levels of Play and Weekly Hours

Staff updated the current procedure used to determine what levels of Hockey/Ringette play each organization runs, and the subsequent allocation of weekly hours of ice for each level and team. The number of hours for each team and levels of play are set by the governing sport bodies such as the Ontario Minor Hockey Associations, Ontario Women's Hockey Association and Ontario Ringette. Staff consulted with Hockey/Ringette groups to ensure that the weekly estimates were accurate. In comparison to the previous standard of play, the new standard breaks down play levels further based on age. This should better clarify the requirements for the total number of hours of ice for each organization for the core season and ensure they get the hours set out. While this change better defines the requirements, no significant change in the amount of ice allocation is expected.

Submission of Documentation Deadline

A deadline was added for the submission of documentation by ice user groups to maintain their affiliated Town of Whitby sports user status. All minor user groups are asked to submit player rosters with residency, executive lists, AGM minutes, annual financial statement, proof of CGL insurance, and proof of not-for-profit status by April 1 based on the information from the previous season that concluded. Setting this date allows Town staff time to analyse residency percentage requirements which inform the decisions around how many hours of prime ice each organization is granted for the upcoming ice season.

Ice Return Deadline

Once the hours of prime ice is determined for each ice user organization, staff create an ice allocation matrix for the coming season. This matrix is shared with user groups at the annual ice user meeting at the end of May. Ice user groups then review the allocations on the matrix and can return hours of ice they won't be using during the core ice season (from the third Saturday in May for 23 weeks total). Originally groups had until September 1 to turn back ice. This date did not allow enough time for Town staff to

resell any unneeded ice to other minor organizations, or others in the allocation priority list., Staff have proposed that this deadline be moved up to August 1, to enable enough time to resell unused ice, and ensure that yearly ice revenues hit targeted budgets.

Residency Percentage Requirement

To ensure taxpayers have fair and equitable access to Town of Whitby Arenas for organized ice sport, the residency requirements for ice user organizations was raised from a “majority” to 80% Whitby residents. This percentage aligns with the ice allocation policies of the adjacent municipalities (Oshawa, Ajax).

Tournaments

Whitby annually hosts many ice tournaments that bring in significant revenue and an even greater tourism impact for the community. The list has been updated to include a more current listing of tournaments. Submissions for new tournament requests have been given an updated deadline of March 1, to allow staff time to review requirements of the proposed tournament and time to consult with affected user groups who would be forgoing their weekly ice time to accommodate the tournament.

To keep the impact of tournaments to a minimum, especially for the often-impacted House League hockey programs, staff have set a new limit of two weekend tournaments per month on non consecutive weekends. Two historical tournaments, the International Silverstick hosted by Whitby Minor Hockey Association, and Tournament of Heros hosted by Whitby Girls Hockey Association will continue to run on consecutive weekends as they have a long history with the set dates. Tournaments will typically run Friday to Sunday. Any weekday tournaments requests will be considered with the impact to regular season programming in mind.

Administrative Requirements

Administrative requirements of the department were also added to the policy to ensure that users are aware and informed about the need for signed permits, signed user permit agreements, timing for payments and account statements, and the recognition that we are held to a chart of ice use fees that are approved by council on an annual basis as part of the budget process. This ensures we are holding all organizations accountable to the same standard.

Expanding Non-Prime Hours for Summer Months

Ice costs are separated into prime and non-prime hours. This allows for lower fees to be charged during less favourable times of the day to encourage additional permits and revenue. Staff are proposing to expand the non-prime time hours for the summer months of July 2 to August 31 to include all day Saturday and Sunday, 7:00am-close, to entice interest in weekend summer ice permits which have been a historically under permitted. Staff hope this will off set some of the ice costs for unpermitted ice time. Previously Saturday and Sundays year-round were considered prime time 7:00am to close.

Addition of Vendor, Concession and Fundraising Rules

Rules and language around vendors and concessions brought into Town facilities by ice user organizations have been added to the policy to ensure there are no conflicts with existing tenants such as the pro shop, restaurant, and concessions. The addition of fundraising rules sets the standard that individual fundraising for teams is not permitted on Town premises. This is to control facility capacity and reduce soliciting of facility patrons. Ice user organizations may partner with the Iroquois Park Sports Centre Restaurant for fundraising opportunities. Organization wide fundraisers will be reviewed and granted upon staff approval.

Town of Whitby Affiliated Sports Partner Listing

Previously the listing of Town of Whitby Affiliated Sports Partners resided within the policy. Staff have removed this listing from the policy and instead created an attachment to allow for more frequent updating if needed.

5. Financial Considerations:

Most updates to the policy will not result in a change in revenue or expenses. However, the proposed updates, (including new deadlines, updating non-prime time ice hours during the summer) will allow staff to plan ice allocation more efficiently, result in better ice utilization, and could result in increased revenue to offset the costs of providing recreational space and programs.

6. Communication and Public Engagement:

Recreation Client Services staff provided Town of Whitby Affiliated Sports partners the opportunity to provide comment and edits on the current policy. Feedback was given and incorporated in the updated policy to ensure that it reflects current practices and meets the needs of participating organizations. Once the policy is updated it will be shared with ice user groups by email or hard copy upon request and available online in the policy database.

7. Input from Departments/Sources:

N/A

8. Strategic Priorities:

The Ice Allocation Policy supports the Community Strategic Plan and connects to the following pillars:

- Pillar 1 - Whitby's Neighbourhoods - Safe, Healthy, and Inclusive by ensuring fair distribution of Town of Whitby ice to ensure residents have access to recreational ice sports and skating.
- Pillar 2 – Accountable & Responsive by ensuring Recreation Client Services staff can use the policy to govern their decision making and respond to inquiries in an efficient manner to provide excellent customer service.

9. Attachments:

Attachment 1 – Staff Report CMS 28-11

Attachment 2 – Updated Ice Allocation Policy

Attachment 3 – Town of Whitby Affiliated Sports Partner Listing