



## THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF AMHERSTBURG

### OFFICE OF COMMUNITY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES

**MISSION STATEMENT:** *Committed to delivering cost-effective and efficient services for the residents of the Town of Amherstburg with a view to improve and enhance their quality of life.*

Author's Name: Rick Daly	Report Date: December 2, 2021
Author's Phone: 519 736-5712 ext. 2122	Date to Council: December 13, 2021
Author's E-mail: <a href="mailto:rdaly@amherstburg.ca">rdaly@amherstburg.ca</a>	Resolution #:

To: Mayor and Members of Town Council

Subject: Re-Opening Recreation Programming – Survey Results

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#### 1. **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that:

1. The report from the Manager of Recreation Services dated December 2, 2021, regarding the recreational needs assessment **survey results BE RECEIVED for information.**

#### 2. **BACKGROUND:**

In March 2020, all recreation programming, structured and drop-in sessions were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, all programming staff were and continue to be laid off. Prior to COVID, the Town planned, staffed and organized 69 programs with a total of 140 offerings (an offering is 8-10 weeks long). Of the 140 offerings 12 were cancelled due to low registration or lack of instructor.

In 2019, Pre-COVID, the Town offered:

<b>SPORTS</b>	<b>Total Programs</b>	<b>Number of Offerings</b>
Summer/Fall:	14	17
Winter/Spring	12	24

<b>GYMNASTICS</b>	<b>Total Programs</b>	<b>Number of Offerings</b>
Summer/Fall:	4	5
Winter/Spring	4	12

<b>ARTS</b>	<b>Total Programs</b>	<b>Number of Offerings</b>
Summer/Fall:	4	10
Winter/Spring	6	11

<b>COOKING</b>	<b>Total Programs</b>	<b>Number of Offerings</b>
Summer/Fall:	1	1
Winter/Spring	1	2

<b>DANCE</b>	<b>Total Programs</b>	<b>Number of Offerings</b>
Summer/Fall:	4	6
Winter/Spring	5	12

<b>EDUCATIONAL</b>	<b>Total Programs</b>	<b>Number of Offerings</b>
Summer/Fall:	6	11
Winter/Spring	3	6

<b>SPECIAL EVENT PROGRAM</b>	<b>Total Events</b>	<b>Number of Event Offerings</b>
Summer/Fall:	1	6
Winter/Spring	1	2

#### **Summer Day Camp**

- 9 weeks
- 113 registrants

#### **PA Day Camp**

- 1 Day
- 13 registrants

#### **March Break Camp – Junior and Senior Camp**

- Day 1 – 23 registrants
- Day 2 – 25 registrants
- Day 3 – 18 registrants
- Day 4 – 22 registrants
- Day 5 – 15 registrants

Total for the week: 103 registrants

In addition to the aforementioned programs, the Town offered public skating every Saturday for 2 hours between September and April. This program is a staple in our community that will continue to be offered to residents, provided the Town can do so in a safe environment during COVID restrictions.

To organize all programs and activities, the Town employs one part-time Recreation Programming Coordinator (32 hours per week) and 10 to 13 casual Program Instructors.

In most municipalities our size this position is a full-time position due to its supervisor roll and it oversees programming 7 days a week 365 days a year. Continuity in programming and well developed stakeholder relationships is key to delivering high quality programs that is a priority for residents.

### **3. DISCUSSION:**

As the province and county move towards lessening COVID restrictions in the recreation industry (i.e. greater room capacities, proof of vaccination etc.), the Town can consider slowly reinstating some recreation programming. In forecasting a slow return to normalcy, Administration created a series of needs assessment surveys targeting specific age groups. The goal of these surveys was to provide the residents with an opportunity to share their thoughts and feedback on past offerings as well as provide suggestions on future programming direction.

The needs assessments were broken down into six age ranges:

- Participants under the age of 6 years
- Participants between the ages of 6 and 12 years
- Participants between the ages of 13 and 18 years
- Participants between the ages of 19 and 35 years
- Participants between the ages of 36 and 54 years
- Participants 55 years old and older

An additional survey was created specific to one of the Town's most popular parent and tot programs, Turf Tots. This survey focussed on the type of equipment parents would like to see included in the drop-in program. This report however, focuses on the six age ranges listed above.

The surveys were posted on the Town's website October 30, 2021 and residents were given until November 30, 2021 to provide their feedback. Overall, Administration received 586 responses, broken down as follows:

<b>Age Range</b>	<b># of Responses</b>
Under 6	98
Between 6 and 12	129
Between 13 and 18	58
Between 19 and 35	39
Between 36 and 54	63
55+	118
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>586</b>

It should be noted that this total may not be individual residents responding. For example, a mother of a 5-year-old and 13-year-old can submit 3 surveys (including a survey on programming she would participate in). Appendix 1 through 6 are samples of the surveys used to gather the information.

Each survey asked a series of questions relating to:

- Place of Residence (Amherstburg resident vs non-resident)

- Structured and Unstructured Play (8 week sessions vs 10 week sessions vs drop-in)
- Virtual Recreation vs In Person Classes
- Usefulness of Recreation Programming
- Types of Programming offered and suggested programs for future implementation
- Advertising of Program Schedules

## **Advertising**

Administration utilized several methods to advertise the survey series. These included:

- North and South Gateway digital signs
- Libro Centre's corner digital sign
- Town's website – including front page banner and webpage specific (Live & Play button)
- River Town Times (back page calendar)
- Social Media Platforms – Living Amherstburg (Recreation centric) and shared with Town Hall News (Town-wide information) and Visit Amherstburg (tourism centric)
- Hard copies were also available at the Libro Centre and Town Hall

## **Programming Results**

Through the surveys, Administration extrapolated data that will help shape the direction of recreation programming for the foreseeable future. The data collected will provide Administration with a focus for re-opening programming for the top 5 programs in each age range. This will help streamline equipment and staffing requirements needed to operate programs. See Appendix 8 for the graphed results of the Top 5 Programs in each Age Category.

### **TOP 5 PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN UNDER 6 YEARS OLD**

1. Mommy and Me/Daddy and Me Activities
2. Gymnastics
3. Turf Tots
4. Arts and Crafts
5. Multi-Sport Programs/Soccer

(A sample of the survey can be found at the back of Appendix 1)

### **TOP 5 PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN BETWEEN THE AGES OF 6 AND 12**

1. STEM Programs (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math)
2. Soccer
3. Home Alone
4. Cooking/Baking
5. Arts and Crafts

*Note: Although the Essex EmPOWERment Girls Group was not in the top 5 programs due to past popularity and the continued support from Essex Power with respect to youth programming, the Essex EmPOWERment Girls Group will remain a staple of any programming schedule.*

(A sample of the survey can be found at the back in Appendix 2)

### **TOP 5 PROGRAMS FOR YOUTH BETWEEN THE AGES OF 13 AND 18**

1. Swimming
2. Cooking/Baking
3. Life Skills Lessons
4. Basketball
5. Fitness Classes and STEM (tied)

(A sample of the survey can be found at the back in Appendix 3)

### **TOP 5 PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS BETWEEN THE AGES OF 19 AND 35**

1. Cooking/Baking
2. Fitness Classes
3. Swimming
4. Volleyball
5. Yoga and Mindfulness

(A sample of the survey can be found at the back of Appendix 4)

### **TOP 5 PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS BETWEEN THE AGES OF 36 AND 54**

1. Fitness Classes
2. Yoga and Mindfulness
3. Cooking/Baking
4. Swimming
5. Arts and Crafts

(A sample of the survey can be found at the back in Appendix 5)

### **TOP 5 PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS 55+ YEARS OLD**

1. Fitness Classes
2. Swimming
3. Yoga and Mindfulness
4. Multi-Sport Programs
5. Cooking/Baking

(A sample of the survey can be found at the back in Appendix 6)

It should be noted that although the Town does not own a swimming pool, residents aged 13 years old and above have identified swimming as a top 5 program of interest. Similar to the 2019 swimming program that the Town offered, Administration will continue to work with LaSalle's recreation department to offer potential swimming programs (i.e. lessons, Amherstburg Sharks Swim Team).

In addition to providing feedback on programs, the residents also indicated that past programs did not necessarily meet their needs. The Town received only a 61% effectiveness rating on meeting the residents' needs in relation to recreation programming. This figure varied with the different age ranges. The Town's effectiveness was rated as high as 87% with youth and children programs, and as low as 48% with ages between 13 and 18 years of age.

With this new data, the Town will be able to focus staffing and equipment needs to eliminate these gaps, particularly in the 13-18 age range and the 55 + range.

Residents completing these surveys were invited to provide general comments. While the bulk of the comments were focused on programming, many were targeting infrastructure (swimming pool and gymnasium).

See Appendix 7 for unaltered comments.

Swimming and gymnasium programs were identified as a high priority for residents aged 13 and up with an emphasis on basketball, volleyball and fitness programs. With the current inventory of recreation infrastructure, the Town cannot provide these programs independent of any use agreement with a school board or neighbouring municipality. Programs that operate under user agreements with the school board are quite often affected by the school board's core services, meaning classes/sessions can be postponed or cancelled due to school events which can be frequent.

The Town has the potential to investigate economies of scale in providing a gymnasium at the Libro as part of the new Fire Hall. This space is required and has already been contemplated at new Fire Hall in the form of an Emergency Operation Centre (EOC). If designed properly the EOC can potentially be a shared-use facility in the form of a gymnasium for additional programming opportunities.

#### **4. RISK ANALYSIS:**

The surveys and feedback collected proved to be a valuable exercise that will help Administration target gaps in the Town's programming and available services. There are no inherent or financial risks in accepting the information presented in this report.

#### **5. FINANCIAL MATTERS:**

The needs assessment was carried out by in house staff. As result there are no budgetary impacts to the 2021 budget. The data from the six surveys will help focus future budgetary requests.

Considering the direction that the Town is moving in with respect to a new Fire Hall located on the premises of the Libro Centre, consideration could be given to looking at economies of scale at the construction phase by including residents' desire for a gymnasium that can double as not only the EOC but also a fitness location for the Town's firefighters.

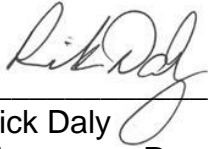
#### **6. CONSULTATIONS:**

Kristen Saunders, part time Recreation Programming Coordinator

#### **7. CONCLUSION:**

In conclusion, the needs assessment exercise clearly identified residents' interest in specific programming. Administration will focus its efforts on the Top 5 programs in each

age category to form a solid foundation for programming and expanded services moving forward.

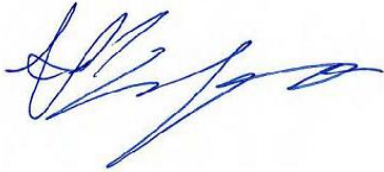


Rick Daly  
**Manager – Recreation Services**

### Report Approval Details

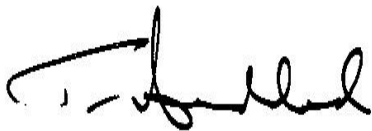
Document Title:	Re-Opening Recreation Programming.docx
Attachments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Appendix 1 - Children under 6.pdf</li><li>- Appendix 2 - Childrens 6 to 12.pdf</li><li>- Appendix 3 - Youth 13 to 18.pdf</li><li>- Appendix 4 - Adults 19 to 35.pdf</li><li>- Appendix 5 - Adults 36 to 54.pdf</li><li>- Appendix 6 - Adults 55+.pdf</li><li>- Appendix 7 - General Comments.pdf</li><li>- APPENDIX 8 – PROGRAM INTEREST BY AGE CATEGORY.pdf</li></ul>
Final Approval Date:	Dec 8, 2021

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:



Heidi Baillargeon

Tiffany Hong



Tony Haddad

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Valerie Critchley". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Valerie" and last name "Critchley" written in a single continuous line.

Valerie Critchley