



Date: July 11, 2003

TO: Board Members - Parks and Recreation
FROM: General Manager - Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Ice Allocation Policy

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Board receive the Ice Allocation Task Force's report for information (Appendix A).

THAT the Board approve the Ice Allocation Policy (Appendix B).

POLICY

The Board's present Ice Rink Programming Policy was adopted in 1989 (Appendix C). This policy includes ice allocation.

Strategic Plan - Strategic Alliances Plan

Goals: Review and renew existing partnerships consistent with Park Board's mission, vision, and strategic objectives.

Provide appropriate opportunities for partners and stakeholders to influence policy and planning decisions.

BACKGROUND

In June 2002, staff met with rink stakeholders to develop a process to review the Board's Ice Rink Programming Policy. It was agreed that a task force made up of a cross section of rink user representatives and staff be established to participate in this process. The goal of the Task Force was to update and recommend a comprehensive ice allocation policy for the Park Board's consideration in 2003. This policy renewal will enable the Board to achieve the following objectives:

- operate the ice services and facilities in an equitable, cost-effective and fiscally sustainable manner;
- balance local services and needs with those of the City as a whole;
- provide rink users and stakeholders the opportunity to influence policy development;
- meet current and future demands for both organized and casual participants.

The Task Force was guided in its deliberation by a terms of reference (see Appendix D).

The Task Force committee consists of the following members:

Kim Hogan - Killarney Community Association	Sindney Mehlhorn - Women's Hockey
Renee Popov - Sunset Figure Skating	Helsa Nothof - Killarney Figure Skating
John Chiang - Vancouver Minor Hockey	Barbara Wagner - Kerrisdale Figure Skating
Margot Delorme - Kerrisdale Figure Skating	Ian Price - Sunset Rink - Public
Kevin Troughton - Kits Speed skating	Emily Trant - Vancouver Ringette
Sheila Youngman - Thunderbird Minor Hockey	Ron Bain - Rink Programmer
Debra Graham - Rink Programmer	Jukka Vuorma - Rink Programmer
Doug Taylor - Rink Programmer	Stew Jordan - Recreation Supervisor
Terry Walton - Recreation Manager	Diane Murphy - Recreation Manager

DISCUSSION

During the past ten months the Task Force has met monthly to discuss ice allocation and financial sustainability issues associated with the provision of ice rink facilities. The Task Force reviewed the 1989 Policy vs. current practices, discussed issues and concerns from both the user groups' and staff's perspective and examined and evaluated best practices from other city's ice policies (Surrey, Richmond, North Vancouver, Prince George and Winnipeg). Topics covered under ice allocation included: allocation committees, priorities for allocation, program service delivery, allocation entitlement including free ice allocations and the allocation of ice surfaces during the spring/summer months. Topics under financial sustainability include establishing rental fees including prime and non prime time and tiered pricing, defining qualifications for subsidized rental rates and maximizing use/revenue through marketing.

Prior to developing policy, the Task Force agreed that the following principles would serve as the framework for the development and evaluation of the new allocation policy:

- S access and equity: policy to ensure fair and equitable access to ice in terms of allocation as well as the application of fees;
- S efficiency: given the limited supply of ice, policy to ensure the effective and efficient use of facilities, both in terms of time and space;
- S diversity: policy to provide for a wide range of opportunities (balanced program);
- S youth sport development: in recognition of the role municipal rinks play in the development of minor sport, consideration to be given to accommodating youth activities;
- S partnership: policy to recognize the importance of partnerships in the delivery of rink based activities (minor sport and community associations);
- S financial sustainability: fees and charges structure must be within the financial framework of the Park Board.

These principles should continue to be considered when implementing and/or interpreting the various policy statements.

The Task Force's Report is a detailed summary of their work (Appendix A). The Board is only being asked to consider recommendations regarding ice allocation at this time (Appendix B). The Task Force will continue to work on financial sustainability options and will forward their recommendations to the Board later this fall. Staff would like to thank the Task Force members for their time and commitment to this project.

Stakeholders Consultation

A rink stakeholder's consultation meeting was held on Tuesday June 17th, 2003, at Killarney Community Centre to review the proposed Ice Allocation Policy report as well as the Task Force's report and recommendations. Thirty three participants attended the meeting which included representatives from minor sport groups, community centre associations, the public, task force members as well as staff.

Overall, there appeared to be general support from all of the stakeholders for the proposed Ice Allocation Policy. There was consensus that the Ice Allocation Policy needs to be a "working document" and should be reviewed on a regular basis. There were a number of concerns expressed about the aging status of our rink facilities and the need to focus on infrastructure renewal as addressed by the Long Term Rink Renewal Strategy.

The major issues, policy changes and rationale for this new ice allocation policy in comparison to the 1989 Policy are as follows:

1. Ice Allocation committees

The 1989 Policy focused on rink based allocation through a joint planning process committee between Park Board staff and a subcommittee of the local community association. The Task Force recommends that the Park Board shift from a rink based to a district based allocation committee as this structure better represents the organizational structure of rink users and should result in a more efficient and effective use of rink facilities. Two ice allocation committees would be established with one in the Queen Elizabeth District and one in the Van East District. The terms of reference for these committees would be developed and approved by the Board and the various ice rink stakeholders. These committees would operate on a consensus model.

Comments from the stakeholders meeting centered on the role and presence of the local community associations on these committees. It was clarified that community association representatives are an important and integral partner as they would represent the interests of the local community on the allocation committees.

2. Priorities for Ice Allocation

The 1989 Policy focused primarily on defining community-oriented programming and the joint planning process and did not define priorities for ice allocation. The Task Force recommends the following ice allocation priority be implemented:

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| First | Public skating and Programs |
| Second | Minor/Children and Youth Programs |
| Third | Adult Sport Groups |
| Fourth | Commercial Groups |

The Task Force believes that this priority for allocation matches the principles for allocation as outlined in the proposed allocation policy - diversity in programming, special consideration to youth programs, partnership etc.

The majority of stakeholders supported these priorities.

3. Program Service Delivery

The 1989 Policy does not have a clear definition of roles that the Park Board, local community associations and the minor sport groups play in the coordination and delivery of rink programs.

The Task Force recommends that the coordination of programs and services can be addressed through the Ice Allocation Committees in order to maximize program offerings and minimize duplication of services.

The stakeholders agreed that the community and all users groups need to work together to promote all programs that operate in the rinks for the benefit of the public. They also strongly suggested that the Park Board needs to develop a marketing plan and advertising campaign to promote the rink programs and facilities.

4. Ice Allocation Entitlements:

The 1989 Policy focused on allocating local Community Association up to 55 hours of prime ice time per week at subsidized rates. Ice entitlements ratios were developed only for minor hockey and figure skating.

The Task Force recommends that entitlements be based on allocation priorities and team or skater registration and not a fixed "55" hours per week or historical allocations. Ice allocation entitlements for all minor sport groups have been updated to meet the needs of each activity. For the most part the allocations for figure skating are acceptable. Minor Hockey has been adjusted to account for changes in programming and scheduling requirements and these entitlements will apply to both boys and girls minor hockey. Entitlements for Ringette and Speed Skating are now included in the entitlement schedule of the Ice Allocation policy.

A new entitlement for women's hockey allows for one game per week which should be scheduled after 9:00 pm during week nights (youth are given priority for earlier ice times). This allows for some access to prime time for this developing sport. Additional game or practice times will be processed as adult rental requests.

The Task Force recommends that a minor sport group's ice allocation be reviewed annually by the Ice Allocation committees to ensure the entitlements match team/skater registration and not historical allocations.

Stakeholders concurred that ice entitlements for all user groups should be reviewed on a regular basis and that the entitlement matches the requirements of the activity.

5. Allocation of Free Ice

The 1989 Policy included an association entitlement of up to 60 hours of free ice time each season for special events, minor sport tournaments, fundraisers etc. The Task Force discussions centered on clarification regarding the entitlement to the 60 hours, priority for allocating free ice, distribution between user groups and consistent application between rinks.

There was consensus by the Task Force that, given the revenue concerns for the rink facilities, free ice time should not be granted for regular and/or tournament ice use. The criteria to be used for granting free ice will be based on economic need, community benefit and fundraising opportunities which would be subject to the approval of the District Recreation Manager.

Stakeholders agreed that there should be equitable access to free ice time amongst all of the rinks but still wanted to ensure that fundraising opportunities would still be considered.

6. Allocation of Spring/Summer Ice

The 1989 Policy provided programming of ice usage for this period to be allocated for Park Board or jointly sponsored programs and non-subsidized rentals. The Task Force recommends that the priority for ice allocation during the spring/summer season should differ from that outlined for the winter season. Given that the Board will operate a substantially reduced number of rinks, priority should be given to accommodating city-wide needs rather than local users needs. Non-subsidized rentals should also be encouraged to maximize revenues during this period.

It is recommended that the Board annually conduct a cost/benefit analysis for the provision of ice facilities during the spring-summer months. The number of ice surfaces provided would reflect demand, revenue generation and cost of operation during this period.

The stakeholders suggested that the minor sport organizations, community associations and the Park Board need to continue to work together to explore and develop ice programs for youth during the spring and summer season.

Implementation of New Allocation Policy

If approved, the proposed Ice Allocation policy would be phased in throughout the upcoming season. Local rink committees have already been working together to determine the user groups ice allocations for the fall. For this season we will work towards a blend of the 1989 Policy and the new policy, wherever possible. At the very least, the 1989 Policy will be followed until the new policy is officially implemented in the spring 2004. During the fall and winter season the focus will be on the formation of the Ice Allocation Committees which will include the development of the terms of reference and identifying members to participate on the committees. These committees will be finalized and ready to proceed with the implementation of the new policy in the spring 2004.

Financial Sustainability

The Ice Allocation Task Force will continue to meet and focus on the second section of the Task Force Report - "Financial Sustainability". The work program consists of a comprehensive review of financial practices includes an analysis of the current fees and charges schedule for rinks, best "financial" practices from other cities as well as identifying and evaluating possible revenue generation options for rinks. An additional rink stakeholders consultation meeting will be held in the fall to solicit opinion regarding financial options prior to presenting a report to the Board on the financial sustainability for ice rinks. Any changes to ice rink fees and charges would not be ready for implementation until September 2004.

SUMMARY

The Ice Allocation Policy is a comprehensive policy that will enable the Board to meet the current and future demands for both organized and casual rink participants and will ensure that all users have fair and equitable access to Vancouver's arena facilities. It's development represents an impressive process of involving stakeholders in policy decisions.

Ice allocation represents the first phase in the development of a comprehensive policy for the operation of ice facilities. Once the financial sustainability recommendations are approved by the Board, staff will prepare a consolidated policy document for distribution.

Prepared by:

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