



CITY OF ST. ALBERT ADMINISTRATIVE BACKGROUNDER

TITLE: Spontaneous Recreation Opportunities

On May 2, 2016, City Council passed the following motion:

That the City of St. Albert develop a policy by the end of Q2 2017, for the use of St. Albert aquatics and other recreational facilities. The intent of the policy is to provide direction to civic organizations and to the general public related to hours and facilities available for organizational use and those times retained for public spontaneous use.

BACKGROUND:

A specific policy providing direction to civic organizations and to the general public, related to hours and facilities available for organizational use and those times retained for public spontaneous use, is not required at this time as this information will be embedded as part of C-CAO-15: Program and Service Review.

Policy Development and Public Communication of Recreation Hours

Through C-CAO-15: Program and Service Review, the services and existing service levels are documented in the “Services and Service Levels Inventory” which is reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

Sections C.01.53 – C.01-85 of the Services and Service Levels Inventory speak to the provision of Recreation Facilities. As part of this documented standard, Administration has included the overall facility hours for directly operated recreation facilities (i.e. Servus Place) and whether each amenity is booked or spontaneous. For some specific recreation facilities, hours have also been included.

As part of the annual review, in Q1 2018, Administration will ensure that the current service hours for all recreation facilities are included in the Services and Service Levels Inventory. The inclusion of the hours will provide direction to civic organizations and to the general public related to the hours and facilities available for organizational use and those times retained for public spontaneous use.

Example of Updated Standard:

Recreation and Sport				
Ref #	Service Name	Service Definition	Service Component	Current Service Level
C.01.53 - C.01.57	Aquatic Facilities	Provision of public access aquatics facilities for scheduled and spontaneous recreation and sport activity according to the Pool Standards Act, Aquatics Lifecycle and the Lifesaving Society standards.	Lane Swimming	<p>FOUNTAIN PARK RECREATION CENTRE</p> <p>Minimum of one lane available for spontaneous lane swimming.</p> <p>5:30am – 10:00pm – Monday to Friday</p> <p>6:00am – 8:30pm – Saturday</p> <p>7:00am – 8:30pm – Sunday</p> <p>SERVUS PLACE</p> <p>Minimum of one lane available for spontaneous lane swimming.</p> <p>7:00am – 9:00pm – Monday to Sunday</p>

This information will also be incorporated on the City’s website under a new section called “What Can I Do Today?” where the community will always be able to readily access the hours of operation and spontaneous use at recreation facilities.

Additional Background Information

Spontaneous Recreation Opportunities

Spontaneous recreation is activity that is able to occur without pre-meditation and without instruction or direction. These opportunities provide optimal flexibility for the community to participate in physical activity and recreation opportunities even if they cannot commit to signing up for a scheduled team or program.

Historically, recreation opportunities were primarily spontaneous in nature, occurring in parks and green spaces, and, over time, more structured opportunities and facilities have developed to compliment the spontaneous opportunities.

The key to sustaining and increasing participation in recreation is providing environments that allow both spontaneous and structured activities (Recreation Master Plan 4.1, 2012).

The provision of spontaneous recreation opportunities is a cornerstone of the recreation program in St. Albert, allowing the community to achieve physical and mental health and well being and be nourished through both personal and community development. The importance and community value of this service is continually demonstrated through the usage patterns for these areas (page 4).

Current Provision of Spontaneous Recreation Opportunities

Throughout the community, a variety of spontaneous recreation opportunities are offered as outlined below:

Recreation Facility or Activity Type	Always available for Spontaneous Use in St. Albert at at least one location	Available for Spontaneous Use when not Booked or Programmed
General Spontaneous Recreation Opportunities		
Ball Diamonds	X	
Beach Volleyball Courts	X	
Community Gymnasium	X	
Indoor Artificial Turf Fields		X
Indoor Dry Floor		X
Indoor Playgrounds	X	
Fitness Equipment	X	
Leisure Ice	X	
Outdoor Natural Turf Fields		X
Outdoor Playgrounds	X	
Outdoor Rinks	X	
Pickleball Courts		X
Picnic Shelters		X
Skateboard Parks	X	
Social Ice Surface	X	
Track	X	
Tennis Courts		X
Tarmac Areas	X	
Athletic Park		X
Aquatics Spontaneous Recreation Opportunities		
Leisure Swimming	X	
Lazy River	X	
Lane Swimming	X	
Hot Tubs	X	
Sauna	X	
Steam Room	X	
Spontaneous Water Play (seasonal)	X	

Administration is continually evaluating the spontaneous opportunities provided in the community, directly and through community partners. Staff also work with the community to ensure that the programs, services, and functions provided are relevant to citizen needs, as it is important that recreation opportunities are flexible, dynamic and respond to societal value shifts.

The chart below includes a summary of the spontaneous users at several of the different types of spontaneous recreation opportunities that are offered in St. Albert.

This list does not include all spontaneous recreation users. Administration continues to expand and develop systems to better capture the spontaneous use of City recreation spaces.

Spontaneous Users of City Spaces			
Service Area	2014	2015	2016
Aquatics Facilities - Landrex Water Play Centre	270,270	274,520	287,413
Aquatics Facilities - Woodlands Water Play Park	96,946	110,807	81,812
Aquatics Facilities - FPRC - Lane Swimming*	N/A	N/A	36,833
Fitness Equipment - Servus Place Fitness Centre and Track	346,495	291,338	287,599
Gymnasiums - ReidBuilt Community Gym	49,511	51,408	57,228
Ice Surfaces - Leisure Ice	14,785	14,013	13,450
Ice Surfaces - Outdoor Rinks – Manned**	N/A	N/A	2,000
Playgrounds - Indoor Playgrounds	39,952	39,438	39,166
Specialty Sport Parks - Skateboard Park	18,160	16,838	12,961
TOTAL	836,119	769,962	818,462

* 2016 was the first year of formal collection of the number of lane swimmers at Fountain Park. Previously, this number had been maintained informally.

** Spontaneous users at Manned Outdoor Rinks are only tracked for eight hours per day, five days per week. 2016 is an estimate based on the average number of users and the number of operating days.

This information is available publicly in the annual State of Recreation and Parks Report to Council.

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