



CITY OF RICHMOND

REPORT TO COMMITTEE

TO: Community Services Committee
FROM: Kate Sparrow
Director, Recreation and Cultural Services
RE: Leisure Services Fee Subsidy Report

DATE: June 15, 2000

FILE: -

(00-011)

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council endorse the continuation of the Leisure Services Fee Subsidy Program

Kate Sparrow
Director, Recreation & Cultural Services

Att. 3

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STAFF REPORT

ORIGIN

On October 26, 1998, Council approved the Leisure Services Fee Subsidy Program as a pilot project with staff to report back on the results after the first year. The City, in partnership with Community Associations, implemented the program on January 25, 1999 with two components:

1. The administration of the Recreation Fee Subsidy Program.
2. The acceptance of the Recreation Access Card on a drop-in basis.

In the initial report (attachment 1), some limitations to the existing program were identified:

1. Issues of dignity and confidentiality.
2. The Recreation Access Card had become a "subsidy tool" rather than an incentive for participation.
3. Individual program budget concerns that limited access.
4. No method of tracking multiple subsidies.
5. No opportunity for leisure counselling to free or low cost opportunities.

The goal of the program was to improve access to recreational activities to those in financial need. The program was based on the following needs and principles:

- Improved access to recreation services and facilities for those in financial need
- Partnerships with community associations, other organizations, and ministries for referrals, supports, implementation and funding.
- Participants treated consistently and with dignity
- Confidentiality maintained
- Participants must pay a portion of the cost
- Subsidy limits based on available funding
- A wide range of recreation choices available
- Easy to implement
- Central screening, tracking and administration

Funding comes from the Community Associations and the City corporate donations fund.

ANALYSIS

The program was fully implemented in Spring 1999 and has met the goal of the program as outlined above.

Since the beginning of the pilot project, 335 new families have registered bringing the total number of families registered in the Recreation Fee Subsidy Program to 884. Some of the 335 families would have been registered as part of the Working Poor Christmas Fund. During this time, we have also provided new Recreation Access Cards to approximately 125 residents bringing the total to 1425.

Seasonal reports are provided to the Associations and Societies partnering with the City. Attachment 2 shows the number of families that utilized the subsidies provided at each facility and Attachment 3 shows the seasonal dollar contributions by facility.

To evaluate this pilot, staff sought feedback from Associations, staff and participants to identify some of the successes and challenges. Successes include:

- A consistent approach for serving the customer.
- Improved confidentiality for clients
- Participants are able to access a wide range of programs – less restrictive in choices.
- Improved access to programs financially
- Participants feel they are treated equally.

The main challenge that was identified included:

- Number of subsidies were down over previous seasons at certain facilities.

Staff are developing strategies to continue improving the program. These include tying the program in with the Bookit registration system, more publicity relating to the program, evaluating the dollar contributions of the associations on an annual basis, and having Associations contribute dollars on an annual basis rather than seasonal. Staff are also investigating strategies to support the contribution of dollars to the Corporate Donations Fund.

At the completion of the first year of the pilot project, a report with three recommendations was provided to the Community Associations to continue the program with some review procedures in place to ensure the program continues to meet community needs. The first two recommendations were:

1. The Board maintain the same level of funding as allocated in the pilot project, to be administered on an annual basis.
2. The Board review subsidy contribution amounts on an annual basis with staff.

The third recommendation was to address the change to the Recreation Access Card as part of the pilot project:

3. The Board support the continuation of the Recreation Access Card Program.

At this time, all of the Community Associations that contribute funding to the program have committed to their continued involvement in the program and have endorsed the above recommendations.

The annual review will allow us to adjust to meet the growing needs of the community. An indicator of the increasing rise of poverty in Richmond would be reflected in an annual 3% increase in the number of users at the Richmond Food Bank. The 1996 census information shows the incidence of low income in Richmond is 23% for economic families and 37% for unattached individuals.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

No financial impact at this time.

CONCLUSION

The Leisure Services Fee Subsidy program has helped to improve access to recreational services for financially disadvantaged residents of Richmond.

With the continuation of this program including the support expressed by the Community Associations, staff will be able to increase the level of participation in recreational activities in Richmond. An increased level of participation will provide great benefits to the individuals and the community as a whole.

Sean Davies
Special Needs Coordinator

SD:sd



CITY OF RICHMOND

REPORT TO COMMITTEE

TO: Community Services Committee

DATE: September 8, 1998

FROM: Mike Kirk
Manager, Leisure Services

FILE:

RE: Leisure Services Fee Subsidy Program

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

1. That Staff be directed to implement the Leisure Services Fee Subsidy Program for a pilot period of one year.
2. That Council endorse the recommended changes to the existing Recreation Access Card program to complement the implementation of the Leisure Services Fee Subsidy Program.
3. That staff be directed to report to Council in September 1999, with a status report of the Leisure Services Fee Subsidy Program.

Mike Kirk
Manager, Leisure Services

Att.5

STAFF REPORT

ORIGIN

City Staff have developed a proposal to improve the access to Parks and Leisure Services for Richmond residents who are in financial need. Initially Staff reviewed recreation subsidy programs in other cities across Canada and in the United States and talked with low income residents to find out what works best. At the February 10, 1998 Community Services Committee Meeting, the Recreation Fee Subsidy Proposal was presented to Committee and Staff were directed to prepare a comprehensive Fee Subsidy Proposal for all of Richmond's facilities. As a result, the Fee Subsidy Working group was formed to propose changes to the way City Staff currently:

1. Administer Recreation Subsidies
2. Accept the Recreation Access Card

With these two points in mind, Staff began a process of developing the Leisure Services Fee Subsidy Program for all of Richmond's leisure Service facilities. It is hoped that through the implementation of such a program, the community will be better served.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Who are Those in Need in Richmond?

Based on the most recent available information, approximately 17% of Richmond's Population (or about) 25, 000 people) are living with low income. There is evidence that poverty is on the rise in Richmond and this is reflected in the 10% annual increase in the number of Richmond Food Bank users. Many of those living with low income are the working poor, who are not supported through income assistance programs.

Lone parents and singles experience the highest incidence of low income in Richmond. As well, young families and youth are at high risk of poverty, with growing dependence on government supports.. Youth are the fastest growing group of income assistance recipients in BC and have unemployment rates double that of older adults.

Statistics Canada provides a summary in of 1995 Low income Cut-offs for the Greater Vancouver Regional Population (Attachment 1) which is included for information. It should be noted though that the Low Income Cut-offs published by Statistics Canada are a "consistent and well defined methodology which identifies those who are substantially worse off than the average."

Sources Attachment 2.

ANALYSIS

Currently community associations accept requests for recreation fee subsidies from September to June annually. Annual requests for Aquatic Services as well as requests for the community centres for the summer months are met by the Fund for the Financially Disadvantaged which is administered by the Special Needs Staff in Leisure Services. The majority of subsidy referrals come from Community Health Nurses, school counsellors, and other professionals who identify children and families in need. In addition to the annual requests for recreation fee subsidies, the Recreation Access Card is currently given to Richmond residents who are living with a permanent disability which seriously impairs daily living. The current fee subsidy process and application of the Recreation access card has many limitations including:

1. Issues of dignity and confidentiality, with the present system, low income families and individuals are required to discuss their financial need with different City Staff and or Association Staff at different facilities, often in a busy facility.
2. The Recreation Access Card has become a "subsidy tool" rather than an incentive for participation, allowing residents a 50% reduction in program fees regardless of the individual or families' ability to pay full price.
3. Due to program budget concerns, some facilities refuse program subsidy or access card use towards programs that run on limited budgets.
4. There is no way of tracking multiple subsidies being issued to families or individuals who travel from facility to facility, the distribution of subsidy monies is uneven and criteria for subsidy administration is "ad hoc" from facility to facility.
5. At present, there exists no policy for leisure counselling to free or low cost programs which are available in the City.

In response to the above limitations and at the request of the Council of Community Associations and the Community Services Committee, City Staff identified a process for Leisure Service Fee Subsidy administration. In the July 21, 1998 report Leisure Services Review Task Force approved by Council on August 24, 1998, Staff were directed to investigate the City's ability to implement City Wide initiatives. The Leisure Services Fee Subsidy Proposal is an example of a City wide initiative. Also included as an attachment to this report is a list of the Benefits of Recreation that are directly related to providing access to recreation to low income residents (Attachment 3).

1. Requirements of a Fee Subsidy Program:

Based on the experiences of other cities, both the challenges and successes, and based on discussions with Staff and the community volunteers about Richmond's current financial

assistance programs, the following principles were seen as essential to a coordinated fee subsidy program for Richmond:

- * Improved access to recreation services and facilities for those in financial need
- * Partnerships with community associations, other organizations, and ministries for referrals, supports, implementation and funding
- * Participants treated consistently and with dignity
- * Confidentiality maintained
- * Participants must pay a portion of the cost
- * Subsidy limits based on available funding
- * A wide range of recreation choices available
- * Easy to implement
- * Central screening, tracking, and administration

2. Centralization of Fee Subsidy Process

For administrative efficiency and improved customer service, the community associations would establish a preset ceiling or limit on the amount of subsidy which would be used by Special Needs Staff to negotiate subsidies on behalf of the respective community associations. Staff have received agreement from each of the community associations to “reserve” an amount of funds based on past and present demand for subsidy at a given facility. Commitments from the associations range from \$500 per year to \$2500 per year depending on the size of the facility. Staff propose to use the “reserved” amount as a guideline when administering subsidies to a given facility. If the reserved amount is depleted in the pilot year, staff would reimburse the community association from the existing corporate donations fund.

3. Registered versus Drop-in Programs/Eligibility for a recreation subsidy

It should be noted that recreation subsidies will only be issued to residents requesting subsidy for “registered programs,” and not “drop-in programs.” An example of a registered program may be a series of pottery classes, a basketball program, swimming lessons etc.

With respect to the recreation access card that is currently accepted for some (not all) registered programs, Staff recommend that the Access Card be changed to only permit the holder a discount of to casual or “drop-in programs” i.e. one-time-swim visits, one-time-weightroom use, one-time-skating admissions. Individuals who currently hold a Recreation Access Card will be referred to the Special Needs Section if a registered program subsidy is required and their eligibility and amount of subsidy will be negotiated as per the fee subsidy proposal.

Each request will be assessed on its own merits. The following criteria will be used in determining eligibility for a recreation subsidy:

- * Must be a Richmond resident
- * Evidence of financial need (Statistics Canada Low Income Cutoffs to be used as a guideline)
- * Subsidy will be for recreation purposes only- job training, day care, out of school care, and or certificate programs will be excluded
- * Financial participation by individual in the fee
- * Individual applications and agency referrals will be accepted

4. Tracking and Administration

The Leisure Services Special Needs Staff have developed a comprehensive tracking and reporting database to ensure all associations are kept up to date on the status of all subsidy monies applied to each association. A Sample client credit note (Attachment 4) and a visual diagram outlining the Fee Subsidy Tracking Process (Attachment 5) are included.

Each association will have the ability to use their discretion on enhancing the negotiated subsidy and offering subsidies outside of the fee waiving program when deemed necessary. Any personal data would be secured to ensure protection of privacy. At the end of the pilot year, the program will be reviewed and a financial report generated outlining the number and value of subsidies, the funding received from each community association, and any donations received. The level of funding required for the upcoming year would be determined by the level of demand and the community associations' ability to fund the program.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There would be no financial impact at this time.

CONCLUSION

The recreation fee subsidy proposal offers financially disadvantaged residents of Richmond an opportunity to access the wide variety of Recreation programs and services offered in the community centres and other facilities. By acknowledging the financial need of residents who have an interest and desire to participate in Richmond's Leisure Service programs, the collective of City Staff and Community Associations can cooperatively increase the level of participation to those in need. The streamlined process outlined in this proposal creates a direct benefit to the community. If approved by Council, the Leisure Services Fee Subsidy Program will undergo a full evaluation after one year.

Michael Redpath
Special Needs Programmer

MER:mer

1995 Low Income Cut-offs (1992 base)

Size of family unit	Size of area of residence 500,000 and over
1995 (1992 base)	Dollars (\$)
1 person	16,874
2 persons	21,092
3 persons	26,232
4 persons	31,753
5 persons	35,494
6 persons	39,236
7 or more persons	42,978

Source: Statistics Canada, *Low Income Cut-offs*, January 1996.

Note: Families with incomes below these cut-offs usually spend more than 54.7% of their pre-tax income on food, shelter, and clothing, which is 20 percentage points more than the Canadian average.

Low income cut-offs are based on the size of area of residence.
For Greater Vancouver municipalities, the regional population is used.

Sources:

- BC Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour. *Youth in the labour market*. 1996
BC STATS *Infoline*, January 17, 1997, May 31, 1996
Cardle, T., *Who Are the Poor in Richmond? A Preliminary Profile*. June 1993.
Census of Canada
Richmond Health Board, *Richmond Community Health Profile*. 1994
Statistics Canada. *People with low income*. 1996
Statistics Canada "On poverty and Low Income" 1996, 1997 Chief Statistician of Canada

Benefits

Marketing Message # 6:

Pay Now or Pay Later! - Recreation reduces health care, social service and police/justice costs!

Outcome Statement:

Fitness and well-being reduces both the incidence and severity of illness and disability lowering healthcare costs.

Supporting evidence:

"If all adults 20 to 69 years of age reached a modest level of aerobic fitness, the immediate annual savings in health insurance payments would be \$79.8 million, and associated decrease of coronary factors would lower future health costs by an additional \$33 million per year.
(1990 consumer price index - Government of British Columbia, 1991)

Outcome Statement #2:

Recreation supports families - reducing costs of social service intervention and foster care.

Supporting evidence:

Tucson, Arizona Parks and Recreation Department saw the number of people falling below the poverty line increase to 20% of the population by 1990. This statistic reflects an 80% increase of individuals living in poverty between 1980 and 1990. Parks and recreation responded by creating KIDCO for elementary school children, youth and families. KIDCO is a place and opportunity to:

- pursue academic goals and engage in 'bi-literacy lab';
- promote self-esteem, listening, stress release, and re-inforce positive values;
- enhance physical fitness, learn to respect the body;
- develop children's interests and practice recreation skills;
- involvement in day programs and sports/arts camps;

In 1993-94, KIDCO served 6500 children between 5 and 12 years; reported crime declined by 52% and police attribute this phenomenal development to KIDCO and other enhanced park and recreational programs.(NRPA,1994).

Outcome Statement #3

Recreation reduces crime and social dysfunction reducing police, justice and incarceration costs.

Supporting Evidence:

Columbia, Missouri Parks and Recreation Department launched a pilot program; CARE - Career Awareness and Related Experience for economically disadvantaged Columbians.

-During the past 12 years (including 13 summer programs) there have been 1440 participants. Results showed that 1,050 remained with CARE for one year and 400 were employed by the program for two years; 80% of the total have successfully completed the program by entering the workforce and/or continuing education. (NRPA, Beyond fun and games, 1994).

Marketing Message #4

Recreation reduces self-destructive and Anti-social behaviour.

Outcome statement #1:

Recreation reduces isolation, loneliness and alienation.

Supporting evidence:

A study of the recreational needs of homeless and recently homeless people stated that good recreational opportunities are essential and can make substantial differences to the quality of life for those tending to survival matters like shelter, food, and jobs. Accessibility to recreation opportunities increases self-esteem and provides a wide range of choices for being involved in community activities. (Ward, 1990).

Marketing Message #1

Recreation and active living are essential to personal health - a key determinant of health status!

Outcome statement:

Recreation, fitness, sports, and active living, parks and arts/culture all contribute to mental health.

Supporting evidence:

Physical fitness is positively associated with mental health and well-being. Depression is a common symptom of failure to cope with mental stress and exercise has been associated with a decreased level of mild to moderate depression. Current clinical opinion hold that exercise has beneficial emotional effects across all ages and in both sexes. (Morgan, 1994).

Reference -

"The Benefits Catalogue" - Copyright 1997 - Canadian Parks/Recreation Association

City of Richmond
7577 Elmbridge Way
Richmond, B.C. V6X 2Z8

Parks and Leisure Services

Date: 07-May-98

Mike Redpath
Paper Airplane contest

please present this credit note at: Sea Island

for the following:

\$75.00

PROGRAM FEE

\$30.00

YOUR COST

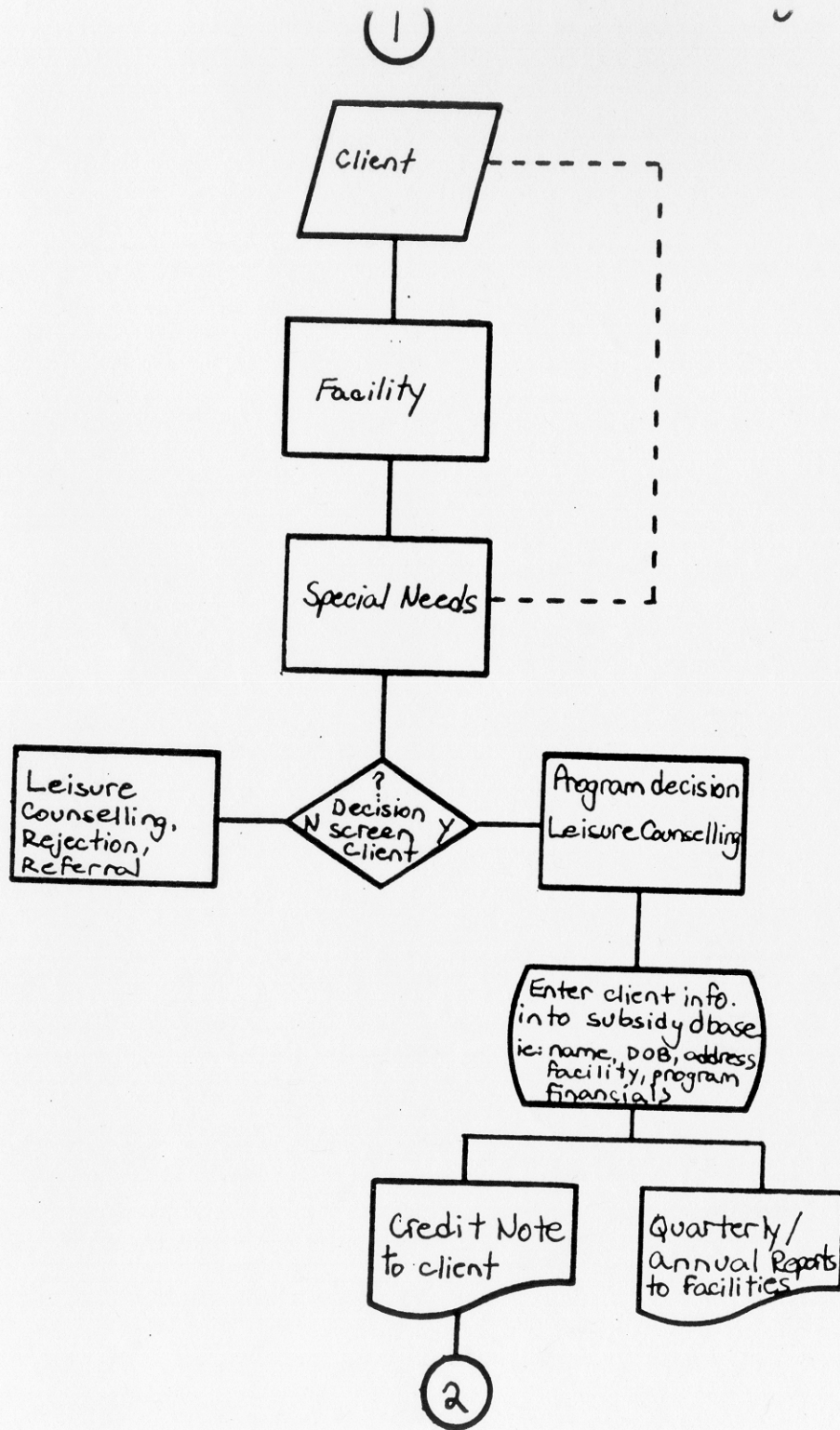
\$45.00

CREDIT AMOUNT

Note: You may be required to pay a membership fee at the time of registration at the centre.

This credit note has NO cash value and is non transferable.

Staff Signature: _____



NUMBER OF FAMILIES THAT RECEIVED SUBSIDY BY FACILITY WINTER 1999- WINTER 2000

Facility	Winter 1999*	Spring 1999	Summer 1999	Fall 1999	Winter 2000**
Art Centre	0	3	3	3	6
Britannia			1		
East Richmond	0	4	11	7	3
City Centre	1	2	14	1	1
Hamilton	0	1	1	0	0
Arenas	1	5	0	0	6
Nature Park	0	0	1	0	0
Sea Island	0	0	1	1	0
Sports Camp			3		
South Arm	0	5	11	11	11
Steveston	0	4	3	3	6
Thompson	1	5	6	2	3
West Richmond	1	6	10	6	3
Minoru Aquatics	37	30	30	43	45
Watermania	6	13	3	5	4
Totals	47	78	98	82	88

* Subsidy amounts during this season would also have been contributed at the locations directly due to the time of implementation – January 25, 1999.

** These figures are the amounts supplied in subsidy but confirmation of all registrants has not taken place at this time.

SEASONAL CONTRIBUTIONS BY FACILITY WINTER 1999 – WINTER 2000

Facility	Annual Contribution	Winter 1999*	Spring 1999	Summer 1999**	Fall 1999	Winter 2000***
Art Centre	1500	0	130	73.50	175	276
Britannia				120		
East Richmond	1500	0	123.60	852.50	328.52	91.50
City Centre	750	36	76	992	45	50
Hamilton	500	0	20	120	0	0
Arenas		15	196	10	20.50	110.50
Nature Park	150	0	0	15	0	0
Sea Island	500	0	0	120	25	0
Sports Camp				162		
South Arm	2200	0	275	952	582.25	303
Steveston	1500	0	169	106	259	272.20
Thompson	1500	29	301.60	345	142	74
West Richmond	1500	60	258	507.50	400.50	202
Minoru Aquatics		1559.25	1312.60	1063.30	1671.90	2056.55
Watermania		338.50	595.80	110	250.10	449.50
Totals		2037.75	3457.60	5548.80	3899.77	3885.25

* Subsidy amounts during this season would also have been contributed at the locations directly due to the time of implementation – January 25, 1999.

** Summer contributions came from the City donations fund.

*** These figures are the amounts supplied in subsidy but confirmation of all registrants has not taken place at this time.