



City of Port Moody

Report/Recommendation to Council

Date: January 23, 2024
Submitted by: Community Services Department – Recreation Services Division
Subject: Priority Recreation Registration for Port Moody Residents

Purpose

To provide Council with a proposed approach to provide Port Moody residents with priority access to register in recreation programs, effective for the Summer 2024 season.

Recommended Resolution(s)

THAT a pilot project for Port Moody residents to have priority access to register in recreation programs be approved, effective for Summer 2024, as recommended in the report dated January 23, 2024, from the Community Services Department – Recreation Services Division regarding Priority Recreation Registration for Port Moody Residents.

Background

Priority access for residents to register in recreation programs is a common practice within the communities surrounding Port Moody. Currently Port Coquitlam, Burnaby, New Westminister, and most recently, Coquitlam, permit priority registration to residents with early access ranging from one to three days in advance of non-residents. Port Moody is the only municipality within this region that has not adopted this approach; registration here is based on a first come first serve basis, resulting in a higher chance of residents missing out on participating in their preferred recreation programs, especially high demand programs that fill up quickly and often acquire waitlists.

At the July 11, 2023, Regular Council meeting, staff verbally provided Council with preliminary information that showed there were a significant number of recreation programs at full capacity and for programs with waitlists, more than half were Port Moody residents. For this report, staff have updated these numbers to reflect a full cycle of annual programming to show the demand for recreation services. These figures are summarized below:

- For the period between January 1 – December 31, 2023, 70% of the City's registered recreation programs were fully enrolled, with Port Moody residents making up 52% of the total registrations.
- Within those programs that had waitlists, 52% of participants on the waitlist were Port Moody residents.

- With nearly half of the registrations coming from non-residents and a significant number of Port Moody residents on waitlists, there is a demand from residents for recreation programs that is not supported through the current registration process. The data infers that priority access would improve the probability of residents securing enrollment in registered programs.

At the Regular Council Meeting of July 11, 2023, in discussing a Notice of Motion on priority recreation registration for Port Moody residents, the following resolutions were passed:

RC23/175

THAT staff report back in the viability and implementation of a Port Moody Residents priority registration policy, including an estimate of time and costs associated with implementation, for registered recreation programs;

AND THAT staff report back on options for increasing access to swimming lessons for outdoor pools, including lengthening the outdoor pool season and implementing priority registrations pilot for the 2024 outdoor aquatics season;

AND THAT the report include ways to mitigate unintended consequences for more vulnerable Tri-Cities residents, such as children or seniors attending more specialized programs or people with precarious immigration status.

This report reviews the viability and implementation of a Port Moody resident priority registration program, proposes an approach to implement priority registration for Port Moody residents, and further addresses the second and third resolutions above.

Discussion

Priority Resident Registration

Staff have reviewed program data more extensively and reviewed the lessons and experiences of other cities with resident priority registration. Staff recommend piloting priority registration for residents starting in the Summer of 2024 and continuing through to the end of 2024. Residents of Anmore and Belcarra would not be eligible for early access and would be considered as non-residents. Consistent with Port Coquitlam and Coquitlam, residents would be permitted to register two days (48 hours) in advance of non-residents, with registration for Summer 2024 programs starting at 8:00 a.m. on Tuesday May 14, 2024, for residents, and general registration beginning 48 hours later at 8:00 a.m. on Thursday May 16, 2024.

Staff reviewed the application of priority resident registration program for specific programs as opposed to all programs but recommend that it be applied across all programs for ease of administration and to avoid customer confusion. Accordingly, all registered recreation programs are proposed to be eligible for early registration, including skating lessons; programs in fitness, sports, preschool, children, youth, and seniors; and swimming lessons in the summer months. Drop-in programs would be excluded and would continue to be delivered on a first come first serve basis.

The time and costs to implement this change are expected to be minimal. The City's recreation registration system (PerfectMind) has the ability within its existing settings to prioritize resident registration and this modification would be enabled in time for the start of summer registration.

Access to Swimming Lessons and Lengthening the Pool Season

Extending the pool season into September is not recommended by staff due to high costs, expected low participation numbers, and challenges with securing staff who work seasonally for the City and would have less availability, with many returning to school or to work in other communities during the offseason. In addition to recreation staff challenges, staffing would also be difficult within the Facilities division which supports the pool operations.

Attempts to offer swimming lessons earlier in the season have been made in the past, but interest was low due to wet weather and cooler temperatures. With that in mind, increasing access to swimming lessons for Port Moody residents within the existing swimming season is suggested as the most viable option to increasing access to swim lessons for residents, and can be achieved through priority registration (as noted in the resolution), where residents will have the first chance to enroll in lessons during the summer months, compensating for challenges with indoor swim program registration in the fall and winter months particularly in Port Coquitlam and Coquitlam pools where Port Moody residents are disadvantaged.

Mitigating Unintended Consequences

No unintended consequences have been identified by staff at this time. Program offerings will continue to remain available to all users, once priority resident registration has taken place (i.e., after 48 hours). Further, staff have not identified any waitlists associated with more specialized programming that is serving more vulnerable residents within or outside of Port Moody. Staff will continually monitor impacts and provide options to mitigate any negative effects should they arise or as patrons share feedback. Communicating with neighboring communities will also be undertaken to share data and learn from their experiences with priority registration.

Conclusion

Priority access for residents to register in recreation programs would create a consistent approach within the Tri-Cities, ensuring residents are benefiting from the services and subsidies supported through their taxes. From the experiences of other communities who have implemented this change, staff expect the community to be in favour of the change. Staff would report back to Council at the end of trial period in the fall of 2024 with an analysis of program data including the number of Port Moody residents enrolled in programs and on waitlists, a summary of user feedback, and a review of any unintended consequences that have arisen and how these might be addressed. Council could then determine whether to permanently implement or cancel this practice moving forward, or to implement adjustments to the approach.

Other Option(s)

THAT the report dated January 23, 2024, from the Community Services Department – Recreation Services Division regarding Implementation of Priority Access to Recreation Program Registration for Port Moody Residents be received for information.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with the recommendations in this report.

Communications and Civic Engagement Initiatives

Communication initiatives to notify the public will include email communication to active users through PerfectMind, signage posted at City facilities, promotion through the City's social media channels and other forms of communication as required.

Council Strategic Plan Goals

The recommendations in this report align with the following Council Strategic Plan Goal(s):

- Strategic Goal 1.1 – Prioritizing core services (enhance and standardize customer service approach);
- Strategic Goal 1.3 – Lead with good governance (Maintain and improve the efficiency of City processes); and
- Strategic Goal 3.3 – Enhance community well-being (Provide recreation services and access to indoor and outdoor amenities for all ages and abilities)

Attachment(s)

None.

Report Author

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Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Port Moody Resident Priority Recreation Registration Implementation .docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Jan 15, 2024

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

Anna Mathewson, General Manager of Community Services - Jan 10, 2024

Stephanie Lam, City Clerk and Manager of Legislative Services - Jan 13, 2024

Lindsay Todd, Manager of Communications and Engagement - Jan 14, 2024

Paul Rockwood, General Manager of Finance and Technology - Jan 15, 2024

Tim Savoie, City Manager - Jan 15, 2024