



INFORMATION ONLY COUNCIL REPORT

To: Paul Gipps, CAO

Date: November 17, 2020

From: Erin Goodwin, Facilities and Recreation Manager

Subject: **COVID-19 Update – Recreational Facilities**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide Council background and an update on COVID-19 policies and procedures related to keeping City of West Kelowna (CWK) recreational facilities operating safely, effectively, and efficiently in a manner that meets the recommended guidelines of various provincial jurisdictions.

Attached to this report is a timeline and summary of the COVID-19 closures, the BC Restart Plan, and other provincial or regional COVID-19 influences that were taken into consideration when developing these policies and procedures.

BACKGROUND

In March 2020, the Province of BC declared a state of emergency, banned mass gatherings of more than 50 people, and imposed restrictions and orders that closed various types of businesses and facilities to the public, including CWK recreational facilities.

Since March, the City of West Kelowna has been meeting with multiple municipalities, organizations, and other provincial jurisdictions, on a weekly basis, to assist in developing and updating COVID-19 policies and procedures.

In May, the Province of BC implemented Phase 2 of the BC Restart Plan to try to reopen more businesses and facilities, including some recreational services.

To assist in creating guidelines associated with the BC Restart Plan, the province of BC tasked organizations such as the BC Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA), Via Sport, Recreation Facilities Association of BC (RFABC), and Life Saving Society to develop these guidelines to ensure sport, recreation, and recreational facilities can operate safely, effectively, and efficiently during the pandemic.

In June, Council adopted a policy stating that the City of West Kelowna will continue to get direction from the BCRPA when making decisions on guidelines and recommendations associated with operating our recreation facilities and keeping exposure rates from increasing. Adopting a policy to assist the CWK in making future decisions on COVID-19 was a recommendation from Municipal Insurance Association of BC.

For the most part, sport organizations and public are complying with the rules and guidelines created by the City, but we do continue to receive phone calls, emails, and comments where some of our rules and guidelines are being challenged or questioned. One comment frequently heard from the public is in regards to spectators inside CWK facilities and some of the restrictions placed on spectators.

The messaging staff would like to get out to the public is that the CWK is taking its direction from the Provincial Health Officer, Via Sport, and BCRPA when making decisions on policies and procedures, including spectators inside recreation facilities. Other factors such as COVID-19 activity in the region as well as what is happening elsewhere in the province is also taken into consideration when developing or updating these policies and procedures.

On November 3rd, it was reported in the Chilliwack media that multiple sport associations were shutting down and pausing their seasons due to a rise in COVID-19 cases in their region. Shortly afterwards the Provincial Health Officer issued new orders that took effect November 7th for the Fraser Valley and Coastal Health regions that placed stronger restrictions on gatherings in both public and private buildings, indoor and outdoor spaces, fitness and sport activities, as well as travel in and out of the region.

The City understands that the Fraser Valley and Coastal Health regions have higher case counts of COVID-19 than the West Kelowna area. However, it is a stark reminder of what we are trying to prevent to ensure our facilities can stay open and the CWK is able to provide a safe place for people to continue to enjoy recreational activities.

As confirmed cases climb in the region, we understand how fast this virus can spread. As a result, the City is following the recommendation from the BCRPA to focus on only allowing operational essential personnel at CWK recreational facilities during all recreational and sporting events. In an effort to continue sports and recreational activities, we recommend continuing to follow BCRPA guidelines

Operational essential personnel can be described as those people who need to be there to run a successful event. For a high performance hockey game, this may include, but is not limited to the following: players, coaches, referees, time keepers, score keepers, music operators, TV broadcasting, radio broadcasting, team managers, team trainers, first aid attendants, and COVID-19 ambassadors.

Spectators for all activities are being discouraged and only those personnel as described in CWK operating procedures can attend the events. Currently the procedures states the following:

- *The CWK will continue to permit one responsible adult per participant to act as a support person, if required, for each child 9 years old or younger.*
- *The CWK will continue to permit one responsible adult per participant who requires special assistance in order to participate in an event.*

See attached COVID-19 Arena Use Procedures for more information.

In conjunction with discouraging spectators to help keep our recreational facilities safe, on November 3rd, the CWK issued a press release stating that masks are required to be worn at all CWK operated facilities.

The CWK acknowledges that there is a lot of pressure to offer more services, including allowing spectators. However, the CWK also recognizes that we are in the middle of a pandemic and as a result, the CWK is trying to create policies and procedures to discourage gatherings of people at this time, instead of promoting or encouraging them.

The City of West Kelowna meets with the BCRPA and other municipalities on a weekly basis to discuss new orders, guidelines, or other topics to help understand what other municipalities are doing. One goal of the BCRPA has been to try to create a cohesive approach amongst BC municipalities where decisions are made together and guidelines are rolled out together. Such an approach creates consistency throughout the province and allows municipalities to be in line with what the majority of BC municipalities are doing.

The City West Kelowna has been a leader during this COVID-19 BC Restart Plan and has much to be proud of, including the following:

- Jim Lind Arena was the first public rink to reopen in BC.
- Royal LePage Place was the first public rink to host a BCHL hockey game.
- Multiple guidelines created by City of West Kelowna staff have been used as templates or the foundational framework when creating provincial recommendations.
- Many recreational park amenities, facilities, and programs are up, running, and currently open for public enjoyment.

TIMELINE

Below is a timeline and summary of the COVID-19 closures and BC Restart Plan associated with CWK recreation programs and facilities.

March 2020	Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Province of BC declared a state of emergency, banned mass gatherings of more than 50 people, and
------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

imposed restrictions and orders that forced various types of businesses and facilities to close their doors to the public, including CWK recreational facilities.

The closures also affected many recreational programs that led to public recreational services forced to shut down for approximately 3 months.

May 2020

The Province of BC implemented Phase 2 of the BC Restart Plan to try to reopen businesses and facilities, including some recreational services.

Recreation centers and social distance programs were allowed to reopen if facility owners and facility user groups had a COVID-19 Plan that followed Provincial guidelines associated with social distancing, sanitization, contact tracing, capacity limits, and other provincial recommendations.

Most of the guidelines required user groups to social distance at all times, no team or league play was allowed, and the focus was getting people to enjoy safe recreational activities.

June 2020

Council adopts a policy stating that the City of West Kelowna will continue to get direction from the BCRPA (BC Recreation and Parks Association) when making decisions on guidelines and recommendations associated with operating our facilities. Adopting a policy to assist the CWK in making future decisions on COVID-19 was a recommendation from Municipal Insurance Association of BC.

The City of West Kelowna reopened Jim Lind Arena after closing for about 3 months and was the first public rink in all of BC to reopen to the public. Rentals were limited to skill and drill development only. Guidelines for safe game play and league play had not been approved by the province.

The Province of BC implemented Phase 3 of the BC Restart Plan to reopen additional businesses and facilities, including more recreational services.

July 2020

CWK summer recreation programs were up and running, however, modifications to class sizes were made to accommodate the provincial guidelines associated with COVID-19.

Some of the programs included but were not limited to the following: park play days, art camps, hockey skills camp, farm camp, yoga,

pickelball, stick and puck, tennis camps, Zumba, and child day camps.

Dry programs were also offered at Johnson Bentley Memorial Aquatic Centre (JBMAC), however, aquatic and pool programs remained closed.

August 2020

The Province of BC approved Via Sport's Return to Play guidelines, which acts as the guiding document to support sport organizations and sports leagues to return to league and game play.

The guideline outlines event, league, and rental responsibilities and parameters associated with social distancing, sanitization, contact tracing, capacity limits, and other provincial recommendations.

Sports leagues such as hockey, soccer, baseball, football, and others started inquiring about CWK facility rentals for their league and sport organizations.

Royal LePage Place reopened for ice rentals.

September 2020

Johnson Bentley Memorial Aquatic Centre (JBMAC) implemented a COVID-19 Plan to reopen its aquatic facilities to the public.

Royal LePage Place became the first public rink to host a BCHL hockey game.

October 2020

Government of BC announced that the province had entered into the second wave associated with COVID-19 pandemic.

November 2020

BCRPA released statement regarding spectators and operating essential personnel.

Chilliwack announced that multiple sport and recreation organizations would be pausing activities, until further notice due to increased COVID-19 cases.

Government of BC imposed further restrictions and an order for the Fraser Valley and Coastal Health regions.

City of West Kelowna issued a press release on masks being required at all CWK operated facilities.

Three local schools within the West Kelowna boundaries reported cases of COVID-19.

BENEFITS OF RECREATION

There are many physical and mental benefits when offering recreational services during this pandemic period where people are coping with fear, anxiety, stress, financial concerns, sadness, boredom, and isolation.

Some of those benefits include, but are not limited to the following:

**(courtesy of Health Link BC)*

Health Link BC Benefits of Keeping Active	
Decreases in: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anger• Anxiety (worry and fear)• Confusion• Depression (you'll likely be better at preventing, reducing, and managing depression)• Headaches• Stress and tension (you'll likely be able to cope better with stress)	Increases in: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assertiveness (being able to ask for what you need and make decisions)• Confidence and feeling able to do things• Emotional stability (less troubled by life's challenges and disappointments)• Independence• Memory• Having a positive mood• Perception (better at noticing what's going on around you)• Positive body image (feeling good about the way you look)• Feeling of well-being• Self-worth and self-esteem (feeling good about the way you see yourself)

CONCLUSION

The CWK acknowledges that this pandemic has been a trying time for many. Our goal is to continue offering recreational services to the community and not have to shut down any of our facilities. The CWK will continue creating a safe environment by operating our facilities in a manner that complies with the Provincial Health Officer orders and the recommendations of organizations such as the BCRPA, Via Sport, RFABC, and Life Saving Society.

The City of West Kelowna would like to thank the public for their cooperation and patience during this unprecedented time.

REVIEWED BY

Warren Everton, Director of Finance/CFO

Shelley Schnitzler, Legislative Services Manager/Corporate Officer

APPROVED FOR THE AGENDA BY

Paul Gipps, CAO

PowerPoint: Yes ☒ No ☐

Attachments:

COVID-19 Arena Use Procedures